

Special Educational Needs in the Mainstream Classroom. A didactic proposal for teaching English as a Foreign Language to dyslexic students

Atención a la diversidad en el aula. Una propuesta didáctica para la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera a estudiantes con dislexia

Aina M. Puigserver
Universitat Illes Balears
nani.puigserver@gmail.com

Received: 17 April 2017
Accepted: 11 July 2017

Abstract

Diversity is a natural characteristic of any ecosystem. Yet throughout Human History we have tried to look for unity, for ways of connecting and understanding. The aim of this article is to engage the idea of unity through the educational sphere with a particular focus on the concept of 'inclusive schools'. Such schools aim to provide every student with equal opportunities under the realms of equity. Even though teachers have the support of institutions, they need to know deeply the type of difficulties pupils may present and use the required tools to overcome them. Dyslexia is a specific difficulty linked to language and information processing, sequencing and memory. This paper will explore the specific educational support needs which should be addressed by inclusive teaching practices, involving differentiation and adaptations to help students achieve their potential.

Key words: differentiation, dyslexia, inclusion, learning difficulties.

Resumen

La diversidad es una característica natural de todo ecosistema. En la historia de la humanidad se ha buscado la unidad, maneras de conectar y entender. La idea de unidad se materializa en los sistemas educativos a través del concepto de "escuela inclusiva", que intenta proporcionar iguales oportunidades a todo el alumnado de forma equitativa. Aunque los educadores cuentan con el apoyo de las instituciones educativas, es necesario

que éstos conozcan las dificultades del alumnado en profundidad y utilicen las herramientas adecuadas para superarlas. La dislexia es una dificultad específica de aprendizaje relacionada con el procesamiento del lenguaje y de la información, así como con la memoria y la secuenciación. Estas dificultades requieren una serie de necesidades educativas especiales, que el profesorado tendrá que atender a través del conocimiento de los mismos y una serie de estrategias que darán forma a su estilo de enseñanza y metodología.

Palabras clave: diferenciación, dificultades de aprendizaje, dislexia, inclusión.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout the second half of the 20th century and onwards, national and international governmental institutions have been working on the acknowledged right of Education for all, stated in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). UNESCO's different documents serve as an influence for different legislations, such as the various Spanish Acts that constitute the Spanish Educational Systems and Balearic Islands curriculum, both of which promoted an inclusive educational model.

A great deal of literature in the field of inclusion and dyslexia research is supported by the different institutions, such as the British Dyslexia Association (hence forth BDA); the International Dyslexia Association (hence forth IDA); the Balearic association of Dyslexia and Family (hence forth DISFAM). These associations are known across the board and offer information about the Specific Learning Difficulty (hence forth SpLD) as well as guidance, resources and counselling. Names such as Reid and Peer are worth highlighting due to their several publications and research in this field.

For instance, Reid's *Dyslexia*, first published in 2005 is an informative and comprehensive guide for practitioners. Reid and Peer's co-edition *Multilingualism, Literacy and Dyslexia* (2000) and *Dyslexia – Successful Inclusion in the Secondary School* serve to reveal a number of articles regarding the management of inclusion, and more precisely dyslexia, for secondary education teaching and second language acquisition. The former addresses the challenges faced by dyslexic students in the learning of a foreign language and offers innovative methodological strategies; while the latter tackles the challenges of the treatment of special educational needs and dyslexia in Secondary Education.

Such publications, alongside Crombie and Elke Schneider, offer a number of strategies which can be applied to the foreign language learning and, while drawing on their work, I will offer my own methodology and teaching practices usable in inclusive learning.

2. AIMS

The overall purpose of this paper is to create a general picture of the concept of Special Educational Needs (hence forth SEN) and disabilities; to offer an analysis of the difficulties faced by dyslexic students when learning a second language; and to create guidelines for coping with dyslexic students in a foreign language lesson. The project is aimed at secondary school teachers whose subject specialism is English as a Foreign Language and who practice in mainstream secondary education centres.

Through an analysis of qualitative data, the study will focus on features of so-called “inclusive education”. This study will also review the procedures followed by educational institutions through the analysis of different legal documents, policies and codes of practice regarding inclusion and attention to diversity.

A study of different strategies and methods that are applied to deal with diversity in mainstream classrooms will be made, with special attention given to the particular challenges dyslexic students face in foreign language learning.

Finally, different learning activities and methodologies will be designed for fourth-year students of secondary school and adapted to students with varying abilities, including a dyslexic pupil. Such an approach is taken to promote inclusion in the classroom and will show how different teaching methods can help to make information both accessible and understood.

Our didactic proposal will serve as a model for English as a Foreign Language teachers to include those students with different capacities in a mainstream class.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

a. Inclusive education

Most European countries agree that every individual must receive an education, regardless of their academic ability (UNESCO: 2015). Attention to diversity focuses on the inclusion of students with special educational needs in the mainstream and it should be understood as a holistic approach, which involves an organisational scheme with fair and equal opportunities in the classroom. Good practice in the name of inclusion, however, can be challenging since the demands upon resources, training and restructure are increased.

i. *Inclusion and attention to diversity*

Professor Ashman (2009) in his book, *Education for Inclusion and Diversity* points out that the terms “inclusion” and “diversity” represent two concepts which are in tension with each other. While the former means integrity and is related to having equal rights within a group, the latter refers to variety, difference and heterogeneity. In fact, looking for

common ground among a variety of students can sometimes be tricky: how can we expect the same achievements from the sportiest student and an overweight student of the same class in an intense cardio sports session?

It would be unrealistic to ignore diversity in the educational background by enforcing generalised learning targets and assessing students only with uniform, fixed criteria. Educational practices need to help all students achieve their potential. As Ashman (idem) points out, education systems often aim to seek equality by appreciating difference and variety as a positive attribute.

Therefore, in order to cope with diversity, educational institutions have developed different policies to make those sometimes neglected individuals feel included in the mainstream hegemony.

ii. *Organisational aspects*

Moving focus towards the legislative framework governing and guiding the Spanish education system, the current Organic Acts on Education (*Ley Orgánica 2/2006* and *8/2013*) gives attention to diversity and equity as fundamental principles in the educational system, and are targeted to provide every student with an education adapted to their characteristics and needs.

As the teaching proposal of the present paper is potentially applicable in such context, focus will be given to the Balearic Decree (*Decret 39/2011*) related to Attention to Diversity, which recognises diversity as an inherent quality of human groups and hence as a social and educational reality.

Schools are in charge of applying and selecting appropriate measures for supporting diversity. Those measures will be for instance, in relation to specific educational needs, grouping students under heterogeneity criteria and applying specifically adapted materials and assessment (*Decret 39/2011*). One measure that responds to individual educational needs is differentiation. Other measures include the organisation of flexible groups in specific subjects and extra support in classrooms, such as language assistants or educational technician assistants in certain centres.

Despite the legislation that models a system on inclusion, teachers still face the challenge of dealing with diversity. Therefore, inclusive classrooms will depend very much on teachers' daily practices, accessible resources and their knowledge of their students.

b. The inclusive school

The *Salamanca Statement* (1994: 11-12) defines inclusive schools as those that 'respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning'. In accordance to the fact that learning difficulties 'tend to be resistant to

conventional teaching methods' (BDA, n.d.) different inclusive approaches help mitigate the effects of learning difficulties in the classroom.

i. Inclusive educational methods

A study carried out in various countries by the European Agency for Special Needs Education (2003) shows some approaches that contribute to effective inclusive practices. Experience acknowledges that students from inclusive environments perform better than students from segregated ones. SEN-friendly settings should include the following: cooperative teaching (also termed team teaching or co-teaching); cooperative learning (also called peer tutoring), which combines quite well with project-based learning; and heterogeneous grouping or differentiated instruction.

Apart from these, one of the most named approaches to tackle difficulties in the dyslexia research literature is the so-called multisensory approach (Reid, 2007; Schneider and Crombie, 2003). The stimulation of all senses is claimed to be effective for both processing and retaining information, as opposed to the use of sight and hearing in traditional teaching. Baines (2008) conveys that learning in a multisensory way involves engaging the lesson through hands-on, visual, auditory, olfactory stimuli.

Another method that considers inclusion is the multiple intelligence approach. Puchta and Rinvulcri (2005) distinguish seven different intelligences, which include intrapersonal, interpersonal, logical, linguistic, musical, spatial and kinaesthetic intelligences. As the authors rightly assert, "students' motivation depends on how addressed they feel in class" (idem: 16). This is the reason why only focusing on the linguistic domain in the FL subject might cause frustration.

When teachers use various ways of presenting content, students are offered an opportunity to use their learning style. For the importance of learning styles, Jameson (2000) remarks on assessment over testing, since continuous assessment allows the student use their own style to demonstrate their knowledge.

The importance of ICT in schools has been widely spoken about in literature and some remark on the suitability of computers, recorders, and other electronic devices to support students with dyslexia (Baines, 2005; Dimitriadi, 2000; Scully 2001). For example, Dimitriadi (2000) shows that various media, such as videos and images helps to access the curriculum and unlock the more difficulty aspects of language learning in a fun and engaging way.

Agreeing with Mackay (2001), a dyslexia-friendly classroom should be a supportive environment, where making errors is free from judgement or punishments, different intelligences are valued; where learning targets are achievable, the purpose and structure

of the lesson is clear beforehand; and where access to the content is possible due to the multiplicity of channels it is transmitted on.

ii. Differentiation

There are a number of strategies that teachers can use in order to make the teaching accessible to the whole class, including those students with different types of difficulties. In this section, strategies addressed to SEN - and especially dyslexic - students will be offered.

As Schneider and Crombie (2003) state, accommodations in the Foreign Language classroom are a 'set of enabling arrangements which are put in place to ensure that the dyslexic person can demonstrate strengths and abilities, and show attainment' (pages x-xi).

The IDA (2002) offers a set of accommodations that can be applied by teachers in mainstream lessons and classifies them according to accommodations involving materials, interactive instruction and student performance. It is widely discussed that most of the accommodations are always beneficial for the whole group and not only for SEN students (Schneider and Crombie, 2003). Another differentiation strategy could involve curricular adaptations.

In the following section, focus will be given to the different types of special educational needs presented by students and, more specifically to which difficulties are experienced in students with dyslexia and how they can be identified.

c. The student with special educational needs

Having defined concepts of inclusion and diversity in relation to abilities and the needs of individuals, different learning difficulties and the needs they require will now be discussed. How these difficulties manifest themselves in dyslexic students and how they affect foreign language learning is the focus of the following section.

i. Learning difficulties and disabilities: Special educational needs

Both current Spanish Acts on Education (*LOE* and *LOMCE*) include under the umbrella term 'Specific Educational Support Needs' (NEAE after Spanish *necesidades educativas de apoyo educativo*) to refer to those students who need different educational attention to the ordinary ones because of their special educational needs (SEN in English, NEE after Spanish, *necesidades educativas especiales*), specific learning difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (hence forth, ADHD), high intellectual capacity and late entry to the education system or personal condition. Although SEN in English should correspond to Spanish NEE with Spanish NEAE; the acronym SEN will be used in this project to refer to NEAE.

When referring to SEN, people might think of students with a specific learning difficulty or disability, however, any type of learning difficulty may demand a type of special educational need. The *Code of Practice for SEN* of the UK defines learning difficulty as having greater difficulties for learning than the majority of students of the same age.

Although the educational needs of children and young people are not always easy to categorise, they can be grouped according to the difficulties resulting from a particular disorder. *The SEN Handbook* (Spooner, 2006) classifies difficulties as: communication difficulties; behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; specific learning difficulties, like dyslexia; general or global learning difficulties; sensory impairment; physical difficulties, and medical conditions.

ii. *Dyslexia*

Different authors and institutions have given various definitions for dyslexia. Reid (2007) also conveys that there are many potential overlaps with other types of learning difficulties. Before offering an accurate definition, Reid emphasises the idea of difference over deficit; that is to say, dyslexic people process information differently to the majority of other people.

In terms of meaning, the Greek root of the word gives us basic hints as *dys* stands for “difficulty with” and *lexicos* or *lexic* stands for “words”. However, it is not specific enough and it is only used to refer to written language (Schneider and Crombie, 2003: ix).

The IDA (2016) defines dyslexia as “*a specific learning disability or difficulty that is neurobiological in origin*”. It is characterized by difficulties with:

- *accurate and/or fluent word recognition/reading*
- *poor spelling and decoding abilities*
- *phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed*

To these difficulties, the British Dyslexia Association (BDA, n.d.) adds:

- phonological processing
- rapid naming
- working memory

Others define dyslexia as “*a combination of abilities and difficulties which affect the learning process in one or more of reading, spelling, writing and sometimes numeracy*” (Peer, 2001: 2).

Research (BDA, n.d.; Reid, 2007) agrees that dyslexia is individual and should be understood as a continuum. This is the reason why supporting different students with dyslexia may require learning plans and adapting the lessons, materials and interaction.

The overlap of different difficulties will depend on the student's individuality and will affect their learning differently.

Every definition of dyslexia applies best to different contexts and Schneider and Crombie's definition meets the purposes of this paper as it refers 'to those who have a difficulty with literacy which results in them requiring a set of accommodations to be made to enable them to demonstrate their abilities' (Schneider and Crombie, 2003: x). This definition shows that dyslexia should not be understood as lack of abilities, but as a different way of learning. Enabling the students to use their capacities will depend on the identification of the learning difficulties in time, through accurate assessment.

As part of the definition, dyslexic students are said to learn differently. In Reid (2007), difference is referred to the way information is processed, the style and speed of processing and the strategies needed to learn effectively. However, other authors including Miller and Bussman Gillis (2000: 218) discuss dyslexia as a "deficiency in language processing".

Generally speaking, there are two tendencies in dyslexic learners. Peer (2001) distinguishes between those who have visual and creative ability, but with oral difficulties; and those who are orally proficient but have certain difficulties in visual, spatial and hand skills. He adds that although some learners share both, all of them have competency in some of the areas and they all have difficulties in processing language.

iii. Foreign language learning with dyslexia

English as a foreign language is a compulsory subject in the Spanish national curriculum (LOMCE 8/2013). Even though students have no choice whether they study a foreign language or not, it should not be thought of as detrimental to the academic success of the student. Learning a FL is not impossible for dyslexic people, but the teaching method will determine the process and outcomes of the learner.

1. Foreign language learning

It is widely assumed that bilingualism (or multilingualism) is an additional factor to the multilingual individual's learning and actually beneficial for the speaker. Difficulties and abilities in the first language (hence forth L1) are often transferred to the second language (hence forth L2) or foreign language (hence forth FL), which does not mean that the dyslexic trends worsen. However, it should be assumed, Turner (2000) admits, that if bilingual people have a double load when managing languages, dyslexic people will have a triple load due to their difficulties with language.

Different researchers agree that FL learning may prove difficult for dyslexic people (Robertson, 2000; Miller and Bussman Gillis, 2000) and that Modern Foreign Languages

might not be the favourite subject of students with dyslexia (Schneider and Crombie, 2003). However, it is not an impossible task if both student and FL educator are aware of the dyslexia student's difficulties and are able to find appropriate solutions to FL learning problems. In addition, Jameson (2000: 229) remarks that dyslexic children pick up the new language when they move abroad. Therefore, social interaction, relaxed environments and no academic pressure serve as positive environmental factors in this regard.

Apart from the benefits of being able to communicate in English in contemporary society, there is a personal component that motivates or discourages a person to learn English. Shneider and Crombie (2003) agree that personal motivations, interests and purposes for the learning of the foreign language will trigger a positive or negative attitude towards it. Unfortunately, English language is said to be a non-transparent language, which makes it an even more difficult process due to its inconsistency in spelling. Unlike Spanish, Catalan or Italian, which are transparent languages, English language spelling does not always coincide with its pronunciation. It is therefore, extremely difficult to guess its spelling and phonetics. Indeed, one of the most common difficulties for dyslexic children is spelling; and English has 26 letters, 44 different sounds and 176 ways of spelling them (Dyslexics.org.uk).

2. Weaknesses and strengths

It is believed that difficulties in L1 affect L2 and linguistic capacities in the first language serve as a basis for the acquisition of the second or foreign language (Crombie and McColl, 2001). Difficulties dyslexic students encounter when learning a FL are due to their weaknesses in sequencing, and in short- and long- memory as well as working memory and phonological skills.

Sequencing refers to the ordering of sounds to form words, and words to make sentences. Crombie and McColl (2001) argue that phonological processing involves being able to discriminate certain sounds and translate them into written symbols, as well as sounding verbally letters and words into sounds, which is decoding and encoding oral and written language. Difficulties in short- and long-term memory involve remembering which sounds stand for which written symbols and vice versa; and consequently, pronouncing them and/or spelling them accurately. Working memory helps to work out the sounds certain letters or clusters would correspond to, and how sounds should be discriminated. Therefore, they claim that speaking, listening, writing and reading should be taught and/or learned in interaction to prevent failure.

It is also said that dyslexic students are normally right-brained (Reid, 2007). The right hemisphere (in right-handed people) is used for visual-spatial processing (important for spatial information), the analysis of perceptual aspects of letters/words; and works with novel information. The left hemisphere is normally used to process language and therefore important for accurate reading skills, phonological skills (decoding sounds) and also processing familiar information. Robertson (2000) recognises the importance of dual hemisphere involvement in reading. This is the reason why activation of the left hemisphere, where language acquisition takes place first, should be reinforced by transferring the information from the right hemisphere.

Regarding language processing, therefore, dyslexic learners can find certain difficulties in reading or writing activities. As listed in Nijakowska et al. (2011), difficulties encountered in writing and reading a second language will be: limited vocabulary in FL; problems reading 'visually challenging' materials; insufficient knowledge of syntax and/or morphology; difficulties in ordering ideas; slower speed; lack of meta-cognitive strategies; difficulties establishing letter sound correspondences.

However, learning a foreign language needs to be seen as a motivating experience. As Schneider and Crombie (2003) state, a large barrier to success in FL learning is the students' negative attitudes towards the target language; therefore, the strengths of students with dyslexia have to be reinforced in the MFL classroom to increase student's confidence, participation and engagement in lessons. Ultimately, working on linguistic aspects while focusing on motivational activities will depend on the teaching approach and the school ethos.

4. TEACHING PROPOSAL: SUGGESTIONS FOR DIFFERENTIATION IN THE CLASSROOM OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE REGARDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

a. Introduction and contextualisation

Our teaching proposal is based on the adaptation of different tasks for a dyslexic student and would take place in an average English Language lesson in a Spanish secondary school. The proposal, which is an individual curricular adaptation, would ideally be applied in a setting with the following characteristics. The set of activities suggested below would be carried out in classroom of the 4th year of a mainstream secondary school (*4º de E.S.O.* after Spanish nomenclature) in a Majorcan locality. The class group would be of 27 students and the general level of English shifts in between an A2 and a B1, according to the

Common Reference Framework of Languages descriptors. The majority of students of this classroom can (Cambridge University Press, 2013:5).

Apart from setting an SEN-friendly environment by applying different strategies, the adaptation would have been arranged in collaboration among the four language teachers – a Catalanian, Spanish and two English teachers; their learning mentor, a psycho-pedagogue from the Counselling Department, in agreement with the student and their family. Hence, the adaptation of different tasks for the dyslexic student will be the object of our didactic proposal.

b. Solutions to dyslexia in FL learning

Robertson (2000) is one of the authors to claim that weaknesses of dyslexic students should be overcome by modifying the FL teaching approach. In fact, pitfalls in different areas, which are necessary for the acquisition of languages, will make the learning challenging.

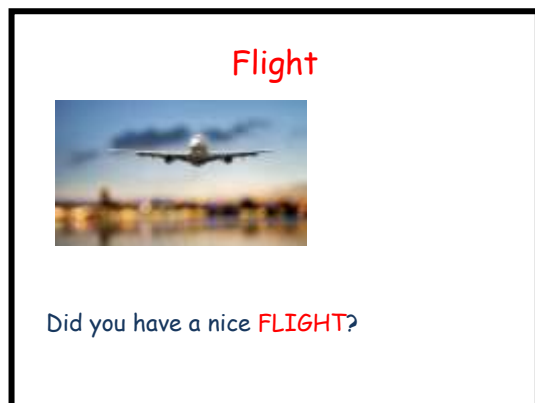
As dyslexia creates problems for language processing, some authors, like Miller and Bussman Gills (2000) say that knowledge of language structure is key to remediation. In order to acquire a new language successfully, the dyslexic student needs to learn basic structures of both languages, L1 and FL. In addition, languages need to be taught in a multisensory way.

Miller and Bussman Gills (2000) divide the learning of languages into four different levels. Among others, they suggest teaching FL focusing in those interdependent levels. As it is well known, the simplest unit of sound is a phoneme, which has different written symbols and combinations, then morphemes, which have a grammatical and semantic charge and help position words on the sentences, and finally, semantics that is the understanding of sequences of those words and sentences.

Therefore, students need to be able to correlate those sounds with written symbols and then they need to be able to combine them into meaningful units. As morphemes give us clues to meanings and help to qualify words, so they are markers that help where to put them into sentences. Difficulties with segmentation of words, which affect decoding and encoding, can be overcome by explicit learning of phonemes and morphemes, put in context. Subsequently the learning of syntax and semantics, regarding sentence structure and meaning respectively, is essential to acquire communication skills.

Schneider and Crombie (2003) prove that explicit teaching is highly useful for dyslexic students due to their difficulties in recognising language patterns and memory. Hence, the development of meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic skills is necessary in the FL lesson. In addition, the modern languages teacher needs to discuss strengths and weaknesses with

the student. This implies self-awareness on behalf of the students, not only of their abilities and difficulties, but also of the learning style and strategies that work best for them.



i. Task 1: Starters. Phonological level

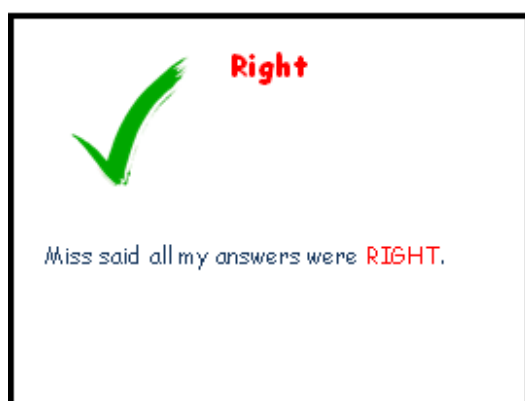
This activity should not last more than 10 minutes. The teacher would pronounce some words that have a specific sound and spelling in common. Students would write those words on a small white board and

show them to the teacher independently.

This type of activity can be done recurrently in the English classroom and its procedure would be always similar. First of all, the students would see the word on the board and listen to it at the same time; secondly, the students would repeat it aloud in unison; then the word would be covered and they would write it down. The words should be written individually on the board and not pronounced in isolation, but appear in a sentence or attached to an image displayed by the projector.

This starter activity focuses on the pronunciation and spelling for specific clusters, *-ight* in this case. The introduction of vocabulary is not restricted to new words; on the contrary students may have already acquired most of them. In addition, this activity will pave the way for the assimilation of some irregular past-tense verbs that should be practiced afterwards.

Figure 1. Power Point screenshots.



The *-ight* words suggested in this activity are: right, light, moonlight, tight, flight, sight, lightening, lighthouse, night, fight, might.

The purpose of this playful activity is to gain familiarity with the relationship between a specific sound and its corresponding codification. And the targets are to consolidate the spelling and pronunciation of *-ight* as well as the meaning of the words mentioned.

The dyslexic student could have the word list beforehand, so that they can be supported if in doubt. In addition, phonological awareness and spelling strategies are reinforced, so information can be transferred to other areas, such as reading and memory. The use of visual aids to reinforce phonological awareness and spellings helps students overcome their difficulties in language processing. By means of using visual stimuli and engaging them to work in a playful way, they participate like the rest of students. This activity involves individual effort but also interaction within the group. Seeing it, hearing it, saying it, covering it, writing it, and checking it involves different sensory channels and learning styles as well.

ii. Task 2: meta-cognition. Morphological level

Learning the list of irregular past tense verbs has to be specifically difficult to some students. However, this is a must in the secondary education curriculum. Instead of learning the list by heart, which is not at all helpful for dyslexic students, who have got memory and decoding difficulties, it can be introduced by learning a song.

Figure 2. Screenshot of the video Fluency MC (Nov.1st 2010)



Figure 2 shows the video shot in which the song is played interruptedly, so that the students can actively participate and fill in the silences. As can be seen, the three verb forms are tricoloured. Listening and watching to the rap song by Fluency MC (2015), while tapping with a pencil on the desk, a couple of times in different lessons can aid the learning. Students should be provided with the transcript.

The aim is to be able to fully understand the use of the irregular past forms of verbs as well as pronounce and spell them and to learn the song. By listening to the rap song,

students get used to the sound of the past-tense verbs. Phonological awareness is developed and pronunciation and fluency abilities are enhanced.

This is a dyslexia-friendly task since it follows multi-sensory principles and every step focuses on different senses in relation to language; students are able to see it, listen to it, say it, write it and repeat it. Tapping with a pencil on the table allows students to learn in a kinaesthetic way. In addition, every verb form is colour coded on the video and grouped in categories, according to patterns, so the student can colour and organise each group of irregular forms.

The activity is based on the multi-sensory approach and uses different channels such as kinaesthetic, by tapping a pencil on the desk; visual, by colours, video and sheets; and auditory by listening to the song. Musical intelligence is essential in this activity which can be motivating for those who have musical abilities.

iii. Task 3: Reading comprehension. Syntactic and semantic level

This activity is based on the reading of a piece of the first chapter of Elizabeth Laird's *The Fastest Boy in the World*. The opening of the story gives the reader a picture of the life of an eleven-year old Ethiopian boy, who describes a bit of his life. In addition, reading a story set in Africa allows different subjects to work in a cross-curricular manner and offers an opportunity to work in cooperation within different departments, such as Geography or languages.

Pre-reading activities are firstly suggested, such as creating a spider diagram in small groups describing the cover of the book and making predictions. They could answer questions to describe what they see on the cover, from 'what colours are there?' or 'what is the boy doing?' to 'where is the story set?' Another activity before reading is to look for 4 different facts about Ethiopia and its young people.

After sharing outcomes together as a whole class, students would be put into mixed ability pairs. Student A and student B would read the corresponding extract (A or B) and do the "while-reading" activities independently. Then they would explain what their extract is about to their partner (preferably in the target language). To answer the "after-reading" questions, students will work cooperatively and tell the answers to each other.

The learning aim is to understand a text and be able to extract grammatical aspects and meaning. The text contains mainly past tense verbs. What is more, students practice descriptions, sequencing of events and opening of stories.

This activity is mostly implicitly differentiated, since it can be applied to both students with and without learning difficulties. As the text might be tiring and long for the dyslexic student, it can be printed in a coloured paper (cream, yellow or pale blue) and should

always be printed in non-bright paper (International Dyslexia Association, 2002) and the text can be read to him after attempting. This is an example of cooperative teaching and cooperative learning. Pair work and group work involve interaction among the students.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Diversity existing in society is reflected in education and the way to include difference is through the establishment of equity as a principle. In fact, equity, quality and equality are actual principles of different educational systems, such as the Spanish one. These principles are achieved through good practice for inclusive education, where difference is considered as a positive attribute.

Therefore, inclusive education involves flexible educational practices emphasising the integration of all students, including those with specific educational support needs. Thus, organisation of schools will be determined by different measures, such as the arrangement of heterogeneous groups; specific adapted material; accommodations in class, learning plans and teaching methods; which are also observed in the Balearic Islands Decree which regulates the curriculum.

Despite the wide range of needs, being caused by different difficulties in one or various areas, dyslexia is considered a specific learning difficulty in relation to language processing and has an impact on the way information is processed, sequencing and memory. Therefore, students being diagnosed as having dyslexia will possibly find foreign language learning specifically challenging. Even so, learning a foreign language is not an impossible task and the way it is taught will definitely make all the difference.

Inclusive methodologies, such as cooperative teaching and learning, multi-sensory approach, multiple intelligences approach, and differentiation in the mainstream Foreign Language classroom need to be applied if teachers want to include students with learning difficulties. Therefore, a primary step is knowing the student's weaknesses and strengths so that strategies can be put into place.

Due to the lack of phonological awareness, dyslexics find it hard to distinguish sounds, to decode and encode information from written/oral text. Difficulties in syntactic processing skills are also common in dyslexia, and consequently semantic processing skills can be affected too. Hence, a possible solution in foreign language teaching is structuring the language in different levels: from the single unit of sound to the text. Correspondingly, the steps to understand language would be:

- Focusing on phonemes at the first level, then making words from sounds. This is reflected in the starter tasks of our proposal, where focus to specific words with a common spelling *-ight* is given.
- Being aware of morphological information of words afterwards, as portrayed in the second task, where the irregular past tense is explained.
- Ordering words to make meaning as we have put forward in the reading comprehension task.

Coping with diversity is a teaching requirement, but differentiation will be also determined by the organisational aspects of the context in which it takes place. This is the reason why, apart from the above mentioned, individual curricular adaptations and continuous assessment can be the solution to overcome learning difficulties. The curricular adaptation proposed in this project should be a product of teachers' abilities and provisions to serve the totality of their students. As seen in our proposal only by knowing the students' strengths and difficulties in detail, we can start to adapt our teaching methods.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Ashman, A.F. *Education for Inclusion and Diversity*. Adrian Ashman and John Elkins (eds.), Australia: Pearson Education Australia, 2009.

Baines, L. "A Teacher's Guide to Multisensory Learning. Improving Literacy by Engaging the Senses". *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*. 2008. Retrieved on the 20th June 2016 at <<http://www.mylibrary.com?ID=182714>>

British Dyslexia Association. (n.d.) "Definition". *Arch The British Dyslexia Association*. Retrieved on the 27th of May 2016 at <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexic/definitions>

Cambridge University Press. "Introductory Guide for the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for English Language Teachers". Retrieved on the 26th of June, 2016 at <http://www.englishprofile.org/images/pdf/GuideToCEFR.pdf>

Crombie, M. and McColl, H. "Dyslexia and the Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages". Peer, L.; Reid, G. (eds.), *Dyslexia – Successful Inclusion in the Secondary School*. Published in association with the British Dyslexia Association. London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001, 54-63.

Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People (1978) *The Warnock Report. Special Educational Needs*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office 1978 © Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of

the Controller of HMSO and the Queen's Printer for Scotland. Retrieved on the 29th of May, 2016 at <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/warnock/warnock1978.html>

Dimitriadi, Y. "Using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to support Bilingual Learners" in Peer, L.; Reid, G. (2000) *Multilingualism, Literacy and Dyslexia. A Challenge for Educators*. 2000. (p.102-210). David Fulton Publishers. London.

Decret 39/2011, de 29 d'abril, pel qual es regula l'atenció a la diversitat i l'orientació educativa als centres educatius no universitaris sostinguts amb fons públics. BOIB 05/05/2011 núm. 67. Govern de les Illes Balears. Palma. Retrieved on the 28th of March, 2016 at <http://boib.caib.es/pdf/2011067/mp7.pdf>

Decret 34/2015, de 15 de maig pel qual s'estableix el currículum de l'educació secundària obligatòria a les Illes Balears. BOIB núm. 73, de 16 de maig de 2015. Govern de les Illes Balears. Palma. Retrieved on 2nd July, 2016 at:

http://weib.caib.es/Normativa/Curriculum_IB/versio_consolidada/Versio_consolidada_Decret_342015_ESO.pdf

Department for Education and Skills. *Special Educational Needs: Code of Practice. LEAs, Head Teachers and Governors of Schools, early education practitioners and other interested parties*. 2001. Retrieved on 27th of May, 2016 at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273877/special_educational_needs_code_of_practice.pdf

Doyle, J. *Dyslexia. An Introductory Guide*. Whurr Publishers. London and Philadelphia. 2002. Retrieved on the 4th of April at

https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=CoPckyxP_CsC&printsec=frontcover&hl=ca#v=onepage&q&f=false

Dyslexics.org.uk (n.d.) *The methods used to teach reading*. Dyslexics.org. Retrieved on the 28th of June, 2016 at http://www.dyslexics.org.uk/main_method_3.htm

Education Act 1981. Chapter 60. Government of the United Kingdom. Crown Copyright. Retrieved on the 27th of May, 2016 at

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/60/enacted>

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. *Key Principles for Special Needs Education Recommendations for Policy Makers*. Belgium and Denmark. 2003. Retrieved on the 25th of March, 2016 at www.european-agency.org

European Agency for Development in Special Needs. *Spain-Overview*. Web. Retrieved on the 1st of April, 2016 at

<https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/spain/national-overview/complete-national-overview>

European Dyslexia Association. *Inclusive Education and Effective Classroom Practices.* Edited by Cor J.W. Meijer. 2001. Retrieved on the 3rd June, 2016 at https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/inclusive-education-and-effective-classroom-practice_IECP-Literature-Review.pdf

European Dyslexia Association. *Dyslexia in Europe. About Dyslexia. All the Things you wanted to know about Dyslexia.* EDA Web. 2014. Retrieved on the 31st of May, 2016 at <http://www.eda-info.eu/dyslexia-in-europe>

Fundación CADAH. *Tipos de adaptaciones curriculares individualizadas.* Web. 2012. Retrieved on the 2nd of April, 2016 at <http://www.fundacioncadah.org/web/articulo/tipos-de-adaptaciones-curriculares-individualizadas.html>

Instrucció 4/2015, d'1 de setembre, del director general d'Innovació i Comunitat educativa per als Departaments d'Orientació dels centres públics d'Educació Secundària per al curs 2015-2016. Govern de les Illes Balears. Conselleria d'Educació i Universitat Direcció General d'Innovació i Comunitat Educativa. Palma. Retrieved on the 15th of June, 2016 at

<http://www.caib.es/sacmicrofront/archivopub.do?ctrl=MCRST4325ZI200007&id=20007>

International Dyslexia Association. *Definition of Dyslexia.* 2016. Retrieved on the 15th of May of 2016 at: <https://dyslexiaida.org/definition-of-dyslexia/>

International Dyslexia Association. *Accommodating Students with Dislexia in All Classroom Settings.* Fact Sheet. Mercer, C. Ed. D of the University of Florida, 2002.

Jameson, M. "Dyslexia and Modern Language Learning: Strategies for Success" Peer, L.; Reid, G., *Multilingualism, Literacy and Dyslexia. A Challenge for Educators.* London: David Fulton Publishers, 2000, 229-234.

Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación. «BOE» núm. 106, de 4 de mayo de 2006. *BOE-A-2006-7899.* Jefatura del Estado. Retrieved on the 28th of March, 2016 at <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2006/BOE-A-2006-7899-consolidado.pdf>

Ley orgánica para la mejora de la calidad educativa (LOMCE) (Ley Orgánica 8/2013, 9 de diciembre). Boletín Oficial del Estado, nº 295, 2013, 10 diciembre. Jefatura del Estado. Retrieved on the 28th of March, 2016 at <http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2013/12/10/pdfs/BOE-A-2013-12886.pdf>

Mackay, N. *Dyslexia – Successful Inclusion in the Secondary School.* Peer, L. and Reid, G. London: David Fulton Publishers Published in association with the British Dyslexia Association, 166-173, 2001.

- Miller, S.** and **Bussman Gillis, M.** "The Language Puzzle: Connecting the Study of Linguistics with a Multisensory Language Instructional Programme in Foreign Language Learning". Peer, L.; Reid, G. (2000) *Multilingualism, Literacy and Dyslexia. A Challenge for Educators*. London: David Fulton Publishers, 2000, 218-228.
- Nijakowska, J., Kormos, J., Hanusova, S., Jaroszewicz, B., Kálmos, B., Sarkadi Á. I., Smith, A.M., Szymanska-Czaplak, E. and Vojtkova, N.** *Dys TEFL. Dyslexia for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language. Trainee's Booklet*. 2011-2013. www.dystefl.eu. Retrieved on the 2nd of July, 2016 at http://dystefl.eu/uploads/media/DysTEFL_Booklet_Trainee.pdf
- Peer, L.** "Dyslexia and its Manifestations in the Secondary School". Peer, L., Reid, G. *Dyslexia – Successful Inclusion in the Secondary School*. Published in association with the British Dyslexia Association. London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001, 1-9.
- Peer, L.** and **Reid, G.** "Multilingualism, Literacy and Dyslexia: a Challenge for Educators". London: David Fulton Publishers, 2000, 1-11.
- Puchta, H.** and **Rinvolucrí, M.** *Multiple Intelligences in EFL. Exercises for Secondary and Adult Students*. Helbing Languages, 2005.
- Reid, G.** "Biological, Cognitive and Educational Dimensions of Dyslexia: Current Scientific Thinking". Peer, L.; Reid, G., *Dyslexia – Successful Inclusion in the Secondary School*. Published in association with the British Dyslexia Association. London: David Fulton Publishers, 2001, 10-19.
- Reid, G.** *Dyslexia. 2nd Edition*. The SEN series. London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007.
- Robertson, J.** "The Neuropsychology of Modern Language Learning" in Peer, L.; Reid, G. (2000) *Multilingualism, Literacy and Dyslexia. A Challenge for Educators*. London: David Fulton Publishers, 2000, 203-210.
- Schneider, E.** and **Crombie, M.** *Dyslexia and Foreign Language Learning*. British Dyslexia Association. New York: David Fulton Publishers, 2003.
- Scully, M.** "Using the Internet as a Multimedia Method of Teaching a Modern Foreign Language to People with Dyslexia". Peer, L. and Reid, G. *Multilingualism, Literacy and Dyslexia. A Challenge for Educators*. London: David Fulton Publishers, 2000, 257-263.
- Spooner, W.** *The SEN Handbook for Trainee Teachers, NQTs and Teaching Assistants*. Nasen. David Fulton Publishers, 2006.
- UNESCO** *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. 1948. Retrieved on the 26th April of 2016 at http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf
- UNESCO.** *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*. Adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality.

Salamanca, España, 7-10 de junio de 1994. United Nations: Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization and Ministry of Education and Science, Spain. Retrieved on the 27th of May, 2016 at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000984/098427eo.pdf>

UNESCO. *Education for all 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges. EFA Global Monitoring Report.* UNESCO publishing. 2015. Retrieved on the 27th of May, 2016 at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232205e.pdf>

Universidad de Talca. Dirección de comunicaciones. *Necesidades Educativas Especiales: el informe Warnock.* 2014. Retrieved on the 25th March, 2016 at <http://www.educativo.otalca.cl/link.cgi/Profesores/Especial/Documentos/1072>

❖ Didactic resources

Fluency MC. *Verb Shout-out!! StickStuckStuck ESL English Irregular Verb Grammar Rap Song with Fluency MC!* Youtube.com. 2010. Retrieved on the 02nd July, 2016 at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsDtO3kf570>

Fluency MC. *Learn English Irregular Verbs Fluency MC Rap Song Stick Stuck Mikkel Zeeb, DJ Alejan* Youtube.com. 2015. Retrieved on the 02nd July, 2016 at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWnemzU-GFE>.