Universidad de Alcalá

Centro Universitario Cardenal Cisneros

GUÍA DOCENTE

EXPLORING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Degree in Primary Teacher Training
Bilingual Programme
Foreign Language (English) Specialization
Universidad de Alcalá
C.U. Cardenal Cisneros

Academic Year 2026/27
4th Course – 1st Term

STUDY GUIDE

Subject:	**Exploring Children's Literature in English**
Code:	**520025**
Degree:	**Degree in Primary Teacher Training Bilingual Programme Foreign Language (English) Specialization)**
Department:	**Teaching Specific Sciences**
Character:	**Optional**
Credits:	**6**
Course and term:	**4th course – 1st term**
Lecturers:	**Dra. Carolina Benito Cox**
Office hours:	**T and Th 12-13h**
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Language:	**English**

1. PRESENTATION

Literacy is considered as the **lifelong ability** of making and sharing meaning through oral and written texts. Having this in mind, it seems essential that children learning English as a foreign language develop literacy skills in a **text-rich environment** which works hand in hand with both **imagination and creativity**. To do so, teacher trainees should be acquainted with **Children's literature** as well as with the wide range of **models, strategies, techniques and resources** that may be applied to their everyday practice with children aged 6 to 12.

This subject aims to make students go further with their knowledge on literacy, acquired in the subjects **Foreign Language I and II, exploring Children's Literature from a practical point of view.** Also, it will be working on their **communicative and thinking skills** in an integrated way, as the **Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)** approach will be used.

When carrying out any academic work, it is important to **consult the teaching staff about the permitted use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools.** If it is not expressly stated in the guide or instructions for the specific activity or practice, it is understood that AI must not be used in any case. The improper use of these technologies, such as the generation of work without express authorisation, may constitute academic fraud. Therefore, reviewing university regulations on the use of AI is strongly recommended. Always act responsibly and transparently in the learning process and consult with the teaching staff if you have any doubts in this regard.

Requisites and Recommendations

- Have a minimum B2 level (recommended)
- Be officially enrolled in the subject.
- Have an active and participative attitude during lessons.
- Be committed to improving their level of English using all the possibilities offered both inside and outside the classroom.
- Work effectively individually and in groups.

2. COMPETENCES

Cross-Curricular Competences:

1. Promover el respeto a los derechos fundamentales y de igualdad entre hombres y mujeres. (CCC12)

2. Promover el respeto y promoción de los Derechos humanos y los principios de accesibilidad universal y diseño para todos de conformidad con lo dispuesto en la disposición final décima de la Ley 51/2003, de 2 de diciembre, de Igualdad de oportunidades, no discriminación y accesibilidad universal de las personas con discapacidad. (CCC2)

3. Promover los valores propios de una cultura de paz y de valores democráticos. (CCC3)

4. Adquirir y comprender los conocimientos necesarios de las distintas áreas de estudio que conforman el título de tal forma que capaciten para la profesión de Maestro en Educación Primaria (CCC4).

Generic Competences

At the end of this study programme, students will be able to:

Competencia nº 2 Diseñar, planificar y evaluar procesos de enseñanza aprendizaje, tanto individualmente como en colaboración con otros docentes y profesionales del centro.

Competencia nº 3 Abordar con eficacia situaciones de aprendizaje de lenguas en contextos multiculturales y plurilingües. Fomentar la lectura y el comentario crítico de textos de los diversos dominios científicos y culturales contenidos en el currículo escolar.

Competencia nº 4 Diseñar y regular espacios de aprendizaje en contextos de diversidad y que atiendan a la igualdad de género, a la equidad y al respeto a los derechos humanos que conformen los valores de la formación ciudadana.

Competencia nº 5 Fomentar la convivencia en el aula y fuera de ella, resolver problemas de disciplina y contribuir a la resolución pacífica de conflictos. Estimular y valorar el esfuerzo, la constancia y la disciplina personal en los estudiantes. .

Competencia nº 10 Reflexionar sobre las prácticas de aula para innovar y mejorar la labor docente. Adquirir hábitos y destrezas para el aprendizaje autónomo y cooperativo y promoverlo entre los estudiantes.

Competencia nº 11 Conocer y aplicar en las aulas las tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación. Discernir selectivamente la información audiovisual que contribuya a los aprendizajes, a la formación cívica y a la riqueza cultural.

Specific Competences:

At the end of the process, students will be able to:

1. Acquire a good communicative competence (introduction to C1 CEFR) (C1[1])
2. Have an extensive training in the field of Foreign Language teaching at Primary Education level, considering both theoretical and practical implications (C2)
3. Develop classroom research and reflection on the teaching-learning process in the Foreign Language classroom. (C3)
4. Be able to use the knowledge and procedures which contribute to autonomy in relation to professional practices and lifelong training. (C4)

[1] C stands for Competence. The number corresponds to the order in which this information appears in the official documents describing the Degree Programme.

3. CONTENTS

1. The discovery of “Children’s Literature”
   1.1. What is Children’s Literature?
   1.2. Literacy in its initial stages
   1.3. Remembering myself as an initial reader
   1.4. Working with nursery rhymes, big books, chants and fingerplays

2. Becoming an independent reader
   2.1. Choosing the appropriate book
   2.2. Literacy development at this stage
   2.3. Characters and stereotypes
   2.4. Working with Fairy tales and popular books in English

3. From reading into writing
   3.1. The reading/writing habit
   3.2. Exploring genres: poetry and drama
   3.3. Planning from reading into writing

4. Designing and delivering EFL lessons using literature
   4.1. Planning activities around literary texts
   4.2. Reflecting on own practice and improving proposals
   4.3. Digital resources for teaching literature

Modules	Credits/hours
1. The discovery of “Children’s Literature	1 ECTS/25h
2. Becoming an independent reader	1 ECTS/25h
3. From reading into writing	2 ECTS/50h
4. Designing and delivering EFL lessons using literature	2 ECTS /50h

4. TEACHING-LEARNING METHODOLOGY. FORMATIVE ACTIVITIES

The teaching-learning methodology will be based on the methodological approach CLIL **(Content and Language Integrated Learning**). Therefore, it will be active and dynamic, having as its main aim to help students have a reflective and critical mind regarding the use of literature in the classroom. Also, a communicative atmosphere will be fostered involving students actively in high-order thinking processes. Students are expected to improve their **teaching knowledge, skills and attitudes towards literacy development through the use of literature in the Primary Classroom.** Also, students will be **improving their competence in the English language as well as reflecting on this progress, enabling them to transfer their learning experience to their teaching practice.**

Students will be grouped using three different modalities: whole-group, half-group and seminar. This does not mean, however, that whole-group sessions will be entirely devoted to cover theoretical areas. The distribution of students does not indicate a specific methodology or content.

Apart from the above detailed **50** hours of lesson attendance, the student must also complete **100** hours of independent work at home, which will include finishing activities from class, preparing presentations, reading articles, doing some research, organising information, and revising the subject contents. They could also attend tutorial hours to have their doubts and questions answered by the teacher.

4.1. ECTS distribution

Total number of hours (6 ECTS): 150	
Number of hours of classroom attendance: 50	**30** hours of whole-group lessons **15** hours of practical lessons **3** hours of seminars
	2 hours for assessment tasks
Number of hours of independent learning: 10	**100** hours

4.2. Methodological strategies, materials and didactic resources

Methodological strategies will be based on the CLIL approach (Content and Language Integrated Learning), thus working on **Cognition, Communication, Content and Culture**. Students are expected to develop a **critical awareness of literacy development through the use of literature in the Primary Classroom.** Also, they are expected to use and improve their **Communicative skills in the English language,** and to be able to **promote them when working with Primary students in the English classroom.** Apart from this, students are expected to acquire a basic knowledge on the **history of Children's Literature in English**, becoming acquainted with those works which have a higher potential to ensure learning in the Primary classroom. Finally, students will be asked to **show and develop a cultural awareness** when selecting and using literature in the classroom, and to be able to **promote it** at Primary Education levels.

Throughout this subject, the lecturer will act as an instructor as well as a facilitator. Students will handle a variety of materials, which will be available on our Virtual Community https://portal.cardenalcisneros.es/auth

Students will often use monolingual, bilingual and collocation dictionaries. They are advised to buy a monolingual dictionary (either in paper or an electronic one).

Teaching methods will encompass didactic projects, problem-solving activities and cooperative learning. When possible, students will be offered with the chance of planning lessons to be implemented with groups of children coming from different schools in the neighbourhood, thus meeting their needs and contributing to the educational community in a **service-learning** basis. Also, this subject includes critical reading and analysis through **dialogic talks**, an instructional strategy favouring dialogue in the classroom. Collaboration with international partners will be pursued to foster **intercultural awareness**. Organisational modes will involve more theoretical classes guided by lectures, practical sessions, seminars and autonomous work (100 hours).

5. ASSESSMENT

In the following tables you can find the **specific competences** the subject deals with, the **assessment criteria** set and the **appraisal criteria** the teacher will apply to measure these outcomes and, finally, the **assessment system**, divided into the **tools** which will be used. This table may serve as a guideline to know how the competences will be assessed.

Specific competence	Acquire a good communicative competence (introduction to C1 CEFR) (C1)
Assessment criteria	Acquisition of a communicative competence equivalent to B.2+ (CEFR)
Appraisal criteria	➢ Demonstrating appropriate, accurate and fluent English above B2+

Specific competence	Have an extensive training in the field of Foreign Language teaching at Primary Education level, considering both theoretical and practical implications (C2)
Assessment criteria	Production of effective lesson plans which include or go around a literary text.
Appraisal criteria	➢ Creation of effective activities and lesson plans dealing with literary texts.

Specific competence	Develop classroom research and reflection on the teaching-learning process in the Foreign Language classroom. (C3)
Assessment criteria	Identify weaknesses and strengths in their own performance and in others reflect on these areas, and suggest improvements.
Appraisal criteria	➢ Correct identification of weaknesses and strengths, ability to reflect on them, and to suggest feasible changes and action for improvement.

Specific competence	Be able to use the knowledge and procedures which contribute to autonomy in relation to professional practices and lifelong training. (C4)
Assessment criteria	Choice of appropriate materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set Integration of previously acquired knowledge, such as classroom management techniques, L1 literacy development, etc.
Appraisal criteria	➢ Appropriate selection of materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set. ➢ Development of cross-curricular skills which help them link new knowledge with previous knowledge.

Appraisal criteria	Definition	%
Production of appropriate, accurate and fluent English at B2+ level.	Shows a communicative competence which is at B2+.	30
Creation of effective activities and lesson plans dealing with literary texts.	Designs and implements effective didactic units working with or around a literary text	30
Correct identification of weaknesses and strengths, ability to reflect on them, and to suggest feasible changes and action for improvement	Reflects on peer's performance and/or his/her own performance and is able to suggest ad accept advice, integrating improvements into his/her practice.	10
Appropriate selection of materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set.	Selects materials and resources according to the teaching-learning and is able to produce a justification to support this choice.	20
Development of cross-curricular skills which help them link new knowledge with previous knowledge	Shows awareness of his/her learning as a whole, and is able to link prior knowledge to new knowledge acquired	10

Los resultados de aprendizaje recogidos en la memoria de verificación del título de Maestro de Educación Primaria correspondientes a esta asignatura son:

Learning outcomes: Exploring Children's Literature	Code
To achieve level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and initiation into level C1.	**RALE 1**
To acquire extensive theoretical and practical training in the didactics of teaching and learning Foreign Languages in Primary Education.	**RALE 2**
To develop reflection and research in the classroom on the processes of teaching and learning a foreign language.	**RALE 3**

Report Criteria

Although **attendance will not be marked,** students who are unable to attend 80% of the classes and/or submit works within the submission deadline set should choose **final assessment.** If students submit one or more assignments in the continuous assessment evaluation, they cannot opt for the final assessment, even if this happens during the first two weeks.

The final **assessment** will be articulated according to the current legislation established by the University of Alcalá. These regulations establish, among others, the following criteria:

- This subject has an ordinary exam in January/February, and an extraordinary exam in June.

- If a student cannot follow the continuous assessment proposed for the ordinary exam, he/she should ask for a final assessment exam to the lecturer in charge of the subject during the two first term weeks. This proposal will be approved or rejected by the Head Department.
- The extraordinary exam is set for those students who have not passed the ordinary exam, (either ordinary or final)
- The characteristics of the continuous and final assessment are explained in this study guide.
- To access more information on the assessment regulations, you should visit the UAH https://www.uah.es/export/sites/uah/es/conoce-la-uah/organizacion-y-gobierno/.galleries/Galeria-Secretaria-General/Normativa-Evaluacion-Aprendizajes.pdf

To pass the course is essential for the **student to have reached all the competences contained in this guide** through the various instruments provided for measurement.

All assignments must be passed with a minimum grade of 5 to be able to pass the subject. Late submissions without a prior informed and appropriately justified reason will not be accepted, and will result on failing the assignment and so, the subject.

The student must perform all assessment tasks set out in this guide as a requirement to pass the subject both in the continuous or final evaluation process in the first or resit assessment processes.

Each of the assessment tasks in this subject is linked to the attainment of linguistic and communicative goals in the foreign language (English) which correspond to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages descriptors (B2+). If the attainment of these goals is not demonstrated, the assessment task will be considered not to have been passed.

Continuous and Final assessment – first call (ordinary and extraordinary)

All students will be asked to complete a literature project and a reflection log as well as to prepare and deliver several oral presentations. Students whose request for final assessment has been approved should complete these assignments by using digital tools the lecturer will indicate. They will also be required to record videos to supply for their impossibility to carry out oral presentations in class.
Regarding the extraordinary exam for this subject, the lecturer will take into account those assignments marked with a passing grade in the first call, and will indicate the students which assessment tools and competences need to be worked and how.

Appraisal criteria	Literature Project	Reflection Log	Oral presentations /Microteaching	%
Production of appropriate, accurate and fluent English above B2 level.	X	X	X	30
Creation of effective activities and lesson plans dealing with literary texts.	X		X	30
Correct identification of weaknesses and strengths, ability to reflect on them, and to suggest feasible changes and action for improvement		X		10
Appropriate selection of materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set.	X		X	20
Development of cross-curricular skills which help them link new knowledge with previous knowledge		X		10
TOTAL	**35**	**30**	**35**	**100**

During the development of the assessment tests, the guidelines set out in the Regulations establishing the Rules of Coexistence of the University of Alcalá must be followed, as well as the possible implications of irregularities committed during these tests, including the consequences for committing academic fraud according to the Disciplinary Regulations of the Student Body of the University of Alcalá.

The teaching-learning methodology and the evaluation process will be adjusted when necessary, with the guidance of the CUCC Guidance Service and/or the UAH Diversity Attention Unit to apply curricular adaptations to students with specific needs, upon submission of documentation certifying such need.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following references will constitute the basic bibliography for the course, and more specific textbooks or journal articles will be provided throughout the term for each of the units of the syllabus.

Basic bibliography

Bland, J. (2018). *Using Literature in English Language Education: Challenging Reading for 8–18 Year Olds*. Bloomsbury.

This book deals through practical examples how literature can be used for teaching literary literacy, creative writing, intercultural learning, critical pedagogy and deep reading in school settings where English is the teaching medium.

Clements, J. (2017). *Teaching English by the Book: Putting Literature at the Heart of the Primary Curriculum*. Routledge.

It offers techniques and activities to teach grammar, punctuation and spelling, provides support and guidance on planning lessons and units for meaningful learning, and shows how to bring texts to life through drama and the use of multimedia and film texts.

Clipson-Boyles, S. (2012). *Teaching Primary English through Drama: A practical approach and creative approach*. Routledge.

This book offers ideas and techniques for teaching English skills through the medium of drama.

Corbett, J. (2021). *An Intercultural Approach to English Language Teaching* (2nd edition). Multilingual Matters.

The book offers a practical introduction to intercultural education for teachers of English as a second language. It provides a concise summary of the intellectual and pedagogical traditions that have shaped intercultural language education, from ethnography to critical pedagogy and cultural studies.

Corbett, P. (2003). *How to Teach Story Writing at Key Stage 1*. Routledge.

This book is a practical manual for teachers focusing on growing the roots of story writing through story telling and reading, and begin with the importance of learning a few well-known tales. There are ideas for drama, role-play and art, and a few model stories are provided for story telling.

Corbett, P. (2016). *Talk for Writing in the Early Years: How to teach story and rhyme, involving families 2- 5 years*. Open University Press.

A book based on the Talk for Writing storymaking approached developed by author Pie C orbett. It is focused on the need to develop oral skills to internalize language patterns useful to create stories. It develops children's imaginative and linguistic repertoire.

Dominguez, E., Bobkina, J. & Stefanova, S. (eds) (2018). *Teaching Literature and Language Through Multimodal Texts* (Advances in Linguistics and Communication Studies. IGI Global

The book explores the latest developments in text-based teaching in which language, culture, and literature are taught as a continuum. It provides innovative insights into multiple language teaching modalities for the teaching of language through literature in the context of primary, secondary, and higher education.

Ellis, G. & Brewster, J. (2014). *Tell it Again! The New Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers*. https://bit.ly/3NZ1tDk

A revised version of the popular book full of ideas on how to use children's storybooks in class.

Gill, A., Stephenson, M., and Waugh, D. (2021). *Developing a Love of Reading and Books: Teaching and nurturing readers in primary schools* (Transforming Primary QTS Series). Learning Matters.

This book focuses on the importance of supporting children to become readers, enjoy reading for pleasure and develop higher level reading skills. It includes guidance, case studies and theoretical perspectives to show trainee teachers how they can develop children's reading.

Halbach, A. (2022). T*he Literacy Approach to Teaching Foreign Languages*. Palgrave Macmillan.

This book describes a new approach to teaching foreign languages for primary and secondary school that shifts the attention from learning the language to communicate skillfully in the foreign language. The approach focuses on developing students' literacy skills as a way to discover language and make it meaningful.

Hawley, S.W.& Spillman, C.V. (2003). *Literacy and Learning. An Expeditionary Discovery Through Children's Literature*. The Scarecrow Press.

A book founded on Outward ound's ten design principles of expediationary learning. Each chapter provides a fresh approach to familiar literary landscapes.

Leland, C.H; Lewsion, M.& Harste, J. C. (2018). *Teaching Children's Literature. It's Critical* (2nd Edition). Routledge

This text offers a fresh perspective on how to integrate children's literature into and across the curriculum in effective, purposeful ways.

Maley, A. & Peachey, N. (eds) (2015). *Creativity in the English Language Classroom*. British Council. https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/creativity-english-language-classroom

This book focuses on practical activities which can help to nurture, develop and motivate our students

Meisel, M. (2007). *How Plays Work: reading and performance.* Oxford University Press.

A volume focused on presenting drama as a literary genre who can be further explored and enjoyed through reading. It deals with the ways in which theatrical language operates and how we can make the most of reading theatre plays.

Nicolás Román, S. & Torres Núñez, J.J. (2015). *Drama and CLIL*. Peter Lang

A volume compiling works on the use of drama techniques and drama-based approaches in the context of subject matter teaching through and additional language

Reilly, J & Reilly C. (2005). *Writing with Children*. Oxford University Press.
A book full of activities to be used during pre-writing stage. It includes ideas to work at letter, word, sentence and text level.

Rinvolucri, M. (2001). *Grammar Games: cognitive, affective and drama activities for EFL students.* Cambridge University Press.
A teachers' handbook with an innovative perspective into teaching (using) grammar in the EFL classroom. It includes a section on drama activities ready to use in your lessons.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1995). *Literature as Exploration*. The Modern Language Association of America. (Original version 1938).
An essential book to discover and reflect on the role of the reader, the text and the reading process. It is based on the transactional model of reading

Watts, E. (2006). *Storytelling.* Oxford University Press.
A volume inside the Oxford Basics for Children series which explains the nuts and bolts of storytelling in the Infant and Primary classroom.

Waugh, D., Neaum, S. & Waugh, R. (2016*). Children's Literature in Primary Schools*. Sage.
It explores different genres and includes case studies that model good practice using literature across the curriculum.

Winch, G., Johnston, R., March, P. & Ljungdahl, L. (2010). *Literacy. Reading Writing and Children's Literature*. Oxford University Press
A comprehensive guide to Literacy which includes a complete section on Children's Literature. Even if it is directed to native speakers, it contains valuable information to organise effective teaching-learning lessons in the ESL/EFL classroom.

Wright, A. (2009). *Storytelling with Children*. Oxford University Press
A useful teacher's handbook to get to know effective strategies and techniques to use storytelling in the English classroom.

Webliography

Brit Lit Project. https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/resources/primary/stories-poems
A website by the BBC and the British Council devoted to promoting, supporting and spreading projects working on the use of literary texts to learn English as a second or foreign language.

Children's literature books archives or collections

American Literature. https://americanliterature.com/short-stories-for-children
Short stories for children

ByGosh.com. https://bygosh.com
Classic illustrated short stories, poems and short novels

Children's Digital Library. http://www.childrenslibrary.org
Access to the best of children's literature from around the world.

Free Children Stories. https://www.freechildrenstories.com

Learning English Kids. https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/es/short-stories
Short stories for reading and listening with lots of activities.
Magic Keys. http://www.magickeys.com/books/

Creation of Children's Books
Comic Life. http://comiclife.com
Storybird. https://storybird.com
Storyjumper. http://www.storyjumper.com/
Languages Online Carton Maker: https://www.education.vic.gov.au/languagesonline/games/cartoon/
Make Beliefs Comix. https://www.makebeliefscomix.com