A look at the classics in initial teacher training
from Easy Reading

Manuel Francisco Romero Oliva[i] ID
Universidad de Cádiz, Cádiz, España

Hugo Heredia Ponce[ii] ID
Universidad de Cádiz, Cádiz, España

Paula Rivera Jurado[iii] ID
Universidad de Cádiz, Cádiz, España

Abstract
We present an experience from which it has been intended, on the one hand, to include Easy Reading in the initial training of teachers of the degree in Primary Education at the University of Cadiz as a strategy for approaching the classic works and authors for a literary education and, on the other hand, to address this methodology from the Global Work Projects. In this way, we gather the development of the experience – from an experiential point of view – along three moments: firstly, from the initial phase of exploration of the approaches of the Easy Reading; secondly, from the processes of adaptation of the classic text and, finally, from the design of Global Work Projects from the adapted text. The results have shown a growing interest in this type of proposals for the understanding and enjoyment of classical texts and the need for training in this line of work among future teachers.
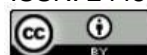
Keywords
Easy Reading. Classics. Global Work Projects. Initial training.

Una mirada a los clásicos en la formación inicial de maestro
desde la Lectura Fácil

Resumen
Presentamos una experiencia desde la que se ha pretendido, por un lado, incluir la Lectura Fácil en la formación inicial de los maestros del grado en Educación Primaria de la Universidad de Cádiz como estrategia para el acercamiento a las obras y autores clásicos para la educación literaria y, por otro lado, abordar esta metodología desde los Proyectos de Trabajo Global. De esta manera, recogemos el desarrollo de la experiencia – desde un punto de vista vivencial – a lo largo de tres momentos: en primer lugar, desde la fase inicial de exploración de los planteamientos de la Lectura Fácil; en segundo lugar, desde los procesos de adaptación del texto clásico; y, por último, desde el diseño de los Proyectos de Trabajo Global a partir del texto adaptado. Los resultados han mostrado un

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interés creciente por este tipo de propuestas para la compresión y disfrute de los textos clásicos y la necesidad de la formación en esta línea de trabajo entre los futuros docentes.

Palabras clave
Lectura Fácil. Clásicos. Proyectos de Trabajo Global. Formación inicial.

Um olhar sobre os clássicos no treinamento inicial
de professores desde a Leitura Fácil

Resumo
Apresentamos uma experiência a partir da qual se pretende, por um lado, incluir a Leitura Fácil na formação inicial de professores do Ensino Fundamental da Universidade de Cádiz como estratégia de abordagem das obras clássicas e autores para uma educação literária e, por outro lado, abordar esta metodologia a partir dos Projetos Globais de Trabalho. Dessa forma, reunimos o desenvolvimento da experiência – do ponto de vista experiencial – em três momentos: primeiro, a partir da fase inicial de exploração das abordagens da Leitura Fácil; segundo, a partir dos processos de adaptação do texto clássico; e, finalmente, a partir do desenho dos Projetos Globais de Trabalho a partir do texto adaptado. Os resultados têm demonstrado um interesse crescente neste tipo de propostas para a compreensão e apreciação dos textos clássicos e a necessidade de formação nesta linha de trabalho entre os futuros professores.

Palavras-chave
Leitura Fácil. Clássicos. Projetos Globais de Trabalho. Treinamento inicial.

1 Easy Reading and Global Work Projects: meeting point between two methodologies

This experience arises from the encounter between these two methodologies, considering that the union of Easy Reading (hereinafter ER) - as a fundamental instrument in the field of diversity - and the Global Work Projects (hereinafter GWP) - as a way of intervention that prioritizes a procedural perspective in the teaching and learning process - can contribute to the approach to classical texts and authors within the initial teacher training.

1.1 The Easy Reading

The ER movement originated in the Nordic countries, specifically in Sweden. As explained by Mata (2012), a promoter of Easy Reading Euskadi:

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La primera iniciativa en la materia nació en 1976 cuando el gobierno sueco contrató a un experto en lingüística para organizar una modernización sistemática del lenguaje en documentos gubernamentales como leyes, decretos y documentos normativos. Más tarde, esta práctica de simplificar el lenguaje se extendió a otros niveles de gobierno, a la academia e incluso a la iniciativa privada.

In Spain, the ER method is relatively new. Since 2002, the Easy Reading Association has been working to make reading, culture and information accessible to everyone, with particular emphasis to those with reading and comprehension difficulties - such as people with intellectual disabilities, the elderly, recent immigrants or primary school students, among others (Figure 1), "[...] mediante la aplicación de un conjunto de recomendaciones o pautas lingüísticas y ortotipográficas a las que deben atenerse los materiales creados al amparo de dicho concepto" (ANULA, 2005, p. 4).

Figure 1 – Main target groups for ER materials
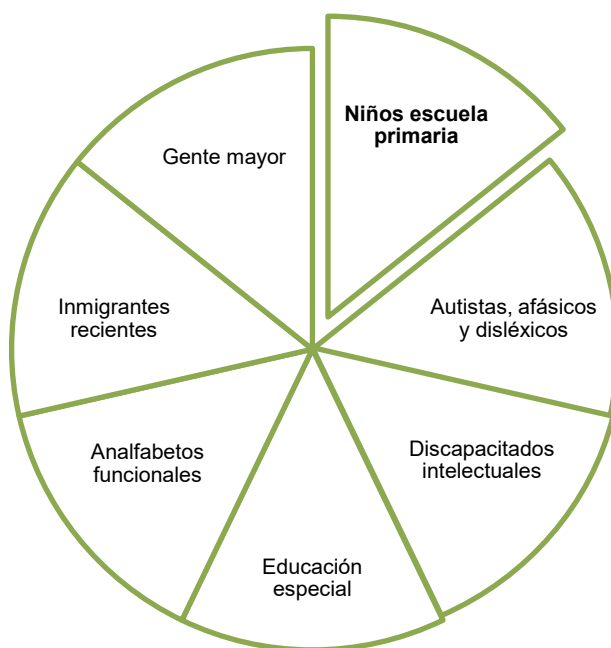
Source: Mayol (2003).

Therefore, two lines of action seem to be drawn that justify this methodology to be inserted in the initial training of the future teacher: on the one hand, primary school students as one of the main target groups of ER materials and, on the other hand, access to culture, literature and information as a need and a right for all people. Often, those with reading difficulties and understanding are deprived of this right and the pleasure of reading because

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they cannot find books suitable to their reading level (ANANIAS; SANTOS, 2019). In this sense, in Salvador's opinion (2007), whether they are transitory or permanent difficulties, texts prepared according to ER criteria are a valuable support to help them acquire or recover the pleasure of reading and not to feel excluded from society (SALVADOR, 2007).

1.2 Global Work Projects

In education, it is expected that the teacher will seek innovative methodologies to integrate students in the classroom and, in this way, all can participate regardless of their strengths and difficulties in learning. In this sense, Project-Based Learning appears - from now on, ABL - which, as expressed by Esteban and Amador (2017, p. 23):

> Pretende ofrecer una metodología que rompa con los esquemas tradicionales que rigen actualmente, en la mayoría de los casos, el actual sistema educativo, basándose en un marco teórico que fundamente y sustente estos criterios docentes universitarios. De ahí que el ABP se considere como un método de aprendizaje que favorece el desarrollo de las capacidades, competencias, habilidades y valores del alumnado.

In addition, the teacher will start from their previous ideas and, above all, he or she will solve "problems" of the daily life developing the Zone of Proximal Development of the student. That is why the beginnings of the ABL were in the constructivist learning. In this sense, Trujillo (2012, p. 7) indicates that "[...] la enseñanza basada en proyectos o tareas integradas supone hoy la mejor garantía didáctica para una contribución eficaz al desarrollo de las competencias básicas y al aprendizaje de los contenidos del currículo". Therefore, from the first levels of concretion, those negative aspects that are still observed in the classrooms could be improved.

Zabala (2005) distinguishes four types of projects: Decroly's centres of interest, Kilpatrick's project method, research on the environment of the Italian *Educational Cooperation Movement* and the GWPs, focusing on the latter. The latter is defined by Dominguez (2003 *apud* MÉRIDA *et al.*, 2011, p. 66-67) as:

> [...] una propuesta de aprendizaje de carácter global, que parte de los intereses del alumnado y se apoya en sus hipótesis de trabajo, articulándose de forma flexible en torno a una temática determinada y que, desde la diversidad de los aprendices, se desarrolla en un contexto de interacciones, indagación y actividad permanente.

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Like every project, there are a number of phases. They are set out below, although they will be developed in the following section (ZABALA, 2005):

– Choice of topic;

– Planning the development of the theme;

– Searching for information;

– Information processing;

– Development of the different sections of the index;

– Elaboration of the synthesis dossier;

– Evaluation;

– New perspectives.

Therefore, the incorporation of this type of project in the classroom makes it possible to work in an interdisciplinary way, developing many subjects in a globalizing activity (BRANDT; HOBOLD, 2019).

2 Methodology

This research is based on the following general objective: to analyze the knowledge that students have in their initial teacher training about ER. From this point onwards, some objectives are broken down as follows:

a) To study the importance that the ABL methodology has for them in projects;

b) To analyze the adaptation process of the students.

Moreover, the looks and voices involved in this experience are divided into two perspectives, on the one hand, we will project our vision as mediators in the context of a participatory research and, on the other hand, we will try to give students give the word, the real protagonists of the process.

In order to develop this research, a mixed methodology was followed, specifically a case study following the four phases established by Rodríguez, Gil and García (1996): reflective, field work, analytical and informative. As for the participants, we can say that this experience was carried out in the subject of the mention ABL, Communicative Competences in the integrated curriculum of the third course of the Degree in Primary

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Education of the University of Cadiz (Spain). This was developed in the academic year 2015-2016 where a total of 25 students, 20 women and 5 men, participated.

On the other hand, the instruments used for this research were the diary, the questionnaire and the discussion group (Table 1).

Table 1 – The relationship of the instruments to the phases

Instruments	Purpose	Phase
Diary	In order to be able to write down as a researcher-teacher all the impressions.	In all phases
Questionnaire	With this instrument we wanted to analyze the beliefs that students had about ER and ABL. And also, to find out what they thought about the experience.	Reflective and analytical
Discussion Group	To deepen in the results that have been obtained in the questionnaire.	Reflective and analytical

Source: Own elaboration (2020).

3 Experience

This experience is based on two key objectives: on the one hand, to include ER in the initial training of teachers as a strategy to approach classical works and authors for literary education and, on the other hand, to approach this methodology from the GWP.

In order to complete this training for today's teachers, this work was carried out for three other reasons:

1. Regarding ER, we work from the diversity of students that we find in our classrooms;

2. ER, through its strategies, can bring the classics closer to the adolescents, since we find that it is a scourge in our education, since the students have difficulties in reading on their own due to the complexity of the syntactic structures, the lexicon, in such a way, the reading habit would not be encouraged;

3. We must promote a constructivist methodology where the student is the protagonist of the teaching-learning process. And, for this reason, we need to incorporate globalized works.

We will now go through the phases to explain how this experience was processed.

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3.1 Reflexive phase

In this phase, through the discussion group and the questionnaire, we wanted to analyze previous beliefs about the ER and the ABL in projects.

As for the ER, 100% of the students did not know what that concept referred to and furthermore, they commented that it was the first time they had heard it. On the other hand, most knew what ABL was – this was obvious because being an elective, they had selected it themselves. When asked what ABL suggests to them, these were the results "*Working through the competences so that the student acquires in a better way the contents*" (STUD_14)[1]; "*It suggests me to work between several subjects without having a watertight compartment*" (STUD_11); "*Collaboration between students and teachers to carry out a class*" (STUD_02).

3.2 Fieldwork phase

Once the initial situation has been analysed, we begin to establish our proposal, which is divided into the following phases:

Phase 1. *Exploration of ER methodology*

The lack of knowledge of the university students about the ER methodology led us to dedicate the first session of the experience to explore, on the one hand, the European Guidelines of the ILSMH (International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicaps) and, on the other hand, the origins of the Easy Reading Association, its approaches and its justification in the initial teacher training.

Both institutions served to focus the starting point of the methodological proposal and to initiate new readings for the formation of students from the assumptions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Toda persona tiene derecho a tomar parte libremente en la vida cultural de la comunidad, a gozar de las artes y a participar en el progreso científico y en los beneficios que de él resulten" (ONU, 1948).

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[1] To keep the anonymity of the students it has been coded with STUD and a number (STUD_nº.)

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Phase 2. *Adaptation of the Quixote's windmill chapter to ER*

After the presentation of the principles that justify the ER, the next step was to adapt an excerpt from Don Quixote to make it easy to read and understand. Before tackling this task, the students needed to know the guidelines required by this methodology, as well as to carry out various tests before achieving the definitive adaptation that would serve as the basis for the GWP.

Stage 2a) *Initial tariffs*

This phase was oriented towards the knowledge of the guidelines required by the ER before starting the process of adapting the text; in such a way that the session involved reflection on:

1. The content: what do we want to communicate?, for what purpose?
2. The addressee: what are the characteristics of the public I am addressing?
3. The medium: what medium will I present the content in?
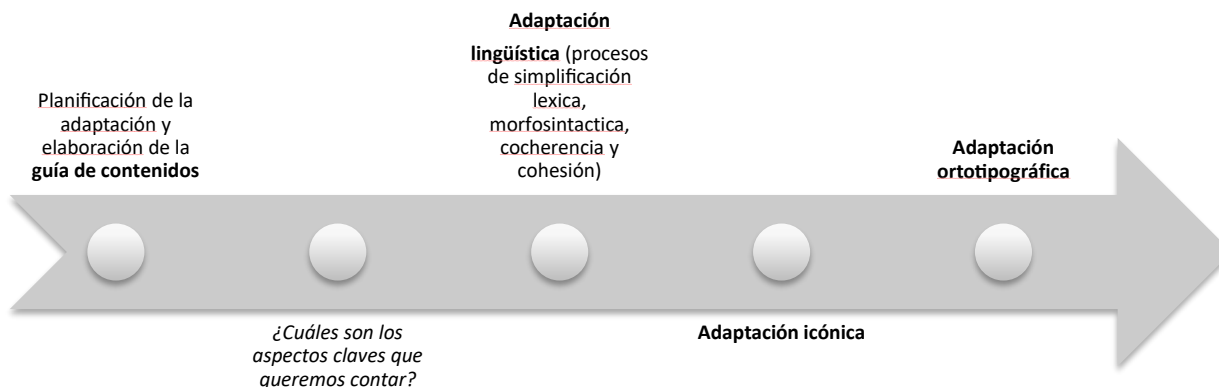4. The criteria of adaptability of the chosen text.

The Universo Cervantes website served as a reference and analysis of these initial questions, as it contains some examples of adaptations that helped students write their first essay.

Phase 2b) *Testing*

The phase dedicated to carrying out the tests took the approaches of Anula (2005) as a reference on the different processes through which the texts adapted to ER pass (Figure 2):

1. Planning the adaptation and elaboration of the contents guide;
2. Linguistic adaptation of the text (processes of lexical, morphosyntactic, textual and inferential or pragmatic simplification);
3. Iconic and orthotypographic adaptation;
4. Review of the adaptation.

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Figure 2 – *Process of linguistic, visual and orthotypographic adaptation in ER*

Source: Own elaboration of the phases proposed by Anula (2005).

Phase 2c) *Final adaptation*

For the validation process of the adaptation, the text was revised according to the parameters established by Anula (2005):

1. The adaptation must be faithful to the intention and meaning of the text;
2. The adaptation must reflect the main action of the text;
3. The adaptation must not be childish;
4. The linguistic adaptation must meet criteria of simplicity.

However, the readers to whom it is addressed should also be those who approve the adapted text. Hence, the interest in including this adaptation as a starting point for a globalised project for Primary Education readers, what must be done, following Salvador (2007), taking into account the metalinguistic reflection of the teacher who acts as a mediator in the classroom:

As for the lexicon:

– Have abstract concepts been avoided?

– Have words in common use been used?

– Have you tried to be systematic in your use of words (despite repetition that has affected your writing style)?

– Have words from another language been avoided?

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– Have the use of jargons, abbreviations or initials been avoided?

– Are nouns repeated to name characters throughout the play?

– Have synonyms been sought for words that may have fallen into disuse?

– Have synonyms been sought for ease of understanding?

As for the syntax:

– Are parallel structures used, respecting the order of subject + verb + complements?

– Are complex structures avoided?

– Are short sentences mostly used?

– Is a single main idea included in each sentence?

– Is positive language used, avoiding denials as they tend to create confusion?

– Are active versus passive voices used?

– Is the use of the subjunctive avoided?

As far as cohesion is concerned:

– Does cohesion ensure overall understanding of the meaning of the text?

– Are the narrative parts separated from the dialogues by blank lines?

– Does each paragraph form a semantic or textual unit?

– Does each paragraph consist of a set of sentences, separated from each other by a full stop?

– Are the discursive connectors present in the original work preserved, as long as they are not archaic and do not make the text more difficult to understand?

Phase 3. *Design of a Global Work Project*

For the design of the project, the students have followed the phases proposed by Zabala (2005, p. 171-172) for the realization of a GWP:

1. *Choice of topic.* The theme of the project revolves around *Don Quixote* and Miguel de Cervantes due to the commemoration of the fourth anniversary of the author's death, during the academic year 2015/2016. This event will be the backbone of a project that will not only gather the knowledge of the author and the work, but also other aspects such as the historical context or the relationship with other universal authors. All this will allow to design an integrating and globalized project starting from the text adapted to ER.

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2. Planning the development of the theme. After the choice of the theme, each group made a proposal for an index of the different sections of the project. They also established how to distribute the time and tasks to be carried out in different sessions to find the information that has to answer the sections of the index. In this way, the students have planned a project to be developed over 10 sessions and aimed at the third cycle of Compulsory Primary Education, specifically for the 6th year. For the planning of each session they had to fill in a form like the one shown in Table 2. indicating the title of the session, date, objectives, contents, materials, evaluation, work routines and any other observation.

Table 2 – *Session planner*

Session title	Date
Objectives	
Contents (subjects)	Resources/materials/space...
Evaluation	

Source: Romero y Jiménez (2016).

Likewise, a second card -Table 3- indicates those key competencies of the session and how it is contributing to their acquisition and development.

Table 3 – *Key Competency Acquisition and Development Sheet*

Key competencies	Contribution to acquisition and development
Linguistic Communication Mathematical competence and science literacy and technology Digital Competence Learning to learn Social and civic competences Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship Cultural Awareness and Expressions	

Source: Romero (2016) adapted to key competencies.

3*. Searching for information.* Once the index was configured as a work script, the students went on to select the most appropriate and accessible links so that the students of 6th grade of Primary Education could look for the information that would give an answer to those sections of the index. A proposal for a working script from one of the groups can be seen in Table 4:

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Table 4 – *Working script sections*

1	Introduction
2	Cervantes and *El Quijote*
2.1	Cervantes: - Historic context of the time - Life - Works
2.2	*El Quijote* - Argument - Characters
2.3	Connection between Cervantes and Shakespeare
2.4	The footprints and legacy of *El Quijote*

Source: Own elaboration (2020).

In this way, the students have tried to select links of different linguistic complexity to achieve accessibility to information for all students in this cycle. Likewise, under this criterion, they have provided virtual spaces in different formats: presentations, videos, texts and photographs.

4*. Information processing.* According to Zabala (2007, p. 158), this is one of the most significant phases of the project since the student has to:

> Poder seleccionar y reconocer lo que es esencial de lo que es anecdótico; distinguir entre hipótesis, teorías, opiniones y puntos de vista; adquirir las habilidades para trabajar con medios y recursos diferentes; clasificar y ordenar la información; llegar a conclusiones y establecer procesos de descontextualización para poder generalizar y, finalmente, plantear nuevas preguntas.

Therefore, to tackle this phase, the students have designed well-defined work routines for the project's targets, which are:

a) Opening of the session. The teacher opens the session by asking each group of students to present the information gathered in previous sessions to the rest of the class;

b) Treatment of the information. In order to select the relevant information and acquire the most significant skills of this phase, the students have to elaborate summaries and other synthesis tasks, as well as reworking complex statements and searching for unknown words;

c) Closing the session. At the end of the session, the teacher asks each group of students for a comprehensive reading of everything elaborated to verify the previous work routine and to correct mistakes.

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5. Development of the different sections of the index. Based on the processing of the information, the contents of the different sections that make up the index will be drawn up with the aim of designing the summary dossier.

6. Elaboration of the synthesis dossier. The synthesis dossier is the culmination of all the previous work, i.e. the product of the project. In this experience, the synthesis dossier has taken the form of a dossier, a home-made book, produced by the students, with an integrated and interdisciplinary perspective, as we can see in Image 1:

Image 1 – Example of a craft book: laap-book by *El Quijote*

In short, this final product will serve as a central axis for the performance of the key competences included in the LOMCE and its integrative character will contribute to the development of contents and objectives of various subjects.

7. Evaluation. The final process is evaluated, according to Zabala (2007, p. 158-159) into two levels:

> Uno de índole interna, que realiza cada chico y chica y en el cual recapitula sobre lo que ha hecho y lo que ha aprendido; y otro de índole externa, en el cual, con ayuda del profesor, los alumnos tienen que profundizar en el proceso de descontextualización, aplicando a situaciones diferentes la información trabajada y las conclusiones obtenidas, estableciendo relaciones y comparaciones que permitan la generalización y la conceptualización.

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Thus, two instruments have been proposed by the students for the internal evaluation: on the one hand, the synthesis report, of group character, where the students have to reflect their achievements and difficulties during the whole process, the role that each component of the group has adopted and all those aspects that have remained open and have raised their interest to investigate. And, on the other hand, a self-evaluation document, of an individual nature, where the position of the student must be reflected in relation to the work and the project itself.

For the external evaluation, the students have proposed a session dedicated to oral presentations where each group will present its final synthesis dossier, the home-made book, highlighting those obstacles, fears and motivations that have occurred during the development of the experience.

3.3 Analytical phase

Once the experience was over, the aim was to find out what their impressions were, that is, to evaluate the experience.

At first we asked them what they thought of the experience, which 100% of the students indicated that it was very good. In addition, we wanted to know what they thought about how ER can contribute to the taste for reading: "*To the extent that the student is able to codify and understand the text immediately, without having difficulties in reading*" (STUD_5); "*It helps to motivate the reader and to continue reading*" (STUD_17); "*It contributes favourably, since the child can thus understand everything and thus become interested in what he or she is reading*" (STUD_2).

On the other hand, 100% of the students commented that ER helps to bring the classics closer to the youngest students for the following reasons: "*It is a way to make our students see that a classic text can be adapted, so that they can understand it better, and in this way, feel more attracted to the work*" (STUD_9); "*Because they understand it better*" (STUD_1); "*Because normally, the classics use a language that is not very close to the students and, in this way, they can read everything while understanding it*" (STUD_20).

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3.4 Information phase

After finishing the experience and having obtained the results, we discussed it with the class in order to be able to replicate it in other academic courses and this is how it was: in the following courses we wanted to adapt a classic to ER and work through the ABL.

4 Conclusions

The assessment and conclusions of the experience are based on the improvement of the creative potential of teachers and the improvement of teacher training (KONDRASHOVA *et al.*, 2020), hence the importance of contrasting with the testimonies of those involved:

From the initial formation and the experiences of the future teachers:

a) The evaluation of the experience was highly positive and allowed them to face specific situations in a real classroom: promotion of reading, search for strategies to approach classical texts, attention to diversity, learning difficulties, among others;

b) The discovery of the methodology in ER and its inclusion in the GWPs has offered them a new alternative from which it contributes to the comprehension and enjoyment of reading of classical texts among the child population:

> *To the extent that the student is able to code and understand the text immediately, without having difficulty in reading.* (STUD_5).
>
> *It helps to motivate the reader and to continue reading.* (STUD_17).
>
> *It contributes favourably, since the child can thus understand everything and thus become interested in what he or she is reading.* (STUD_2).
>
> *It is a way of making our students see that a classic text can be adapted, so that they can understand it better, and in this way, they feel more attracted to the work.* (STUD_9).
>
> *Because normally, the classics use a language that is not very close to the students and, in this way, they can read everything with understanding.* (STUD_1).

From our vision as mediators of the experience:

a) We consider that we have responded to those competencies and learning results that appear in the design of various subjects of the curricular itinerary of the Degree

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in Primary Education, such as designing intervention programs for the treatment of differences and learning difficulties;

b) The pleasant reception of the experience has suggested the continuity of this line of work with the adaptation to ER of other classic texts from the Spanish and universal literature and its projection from the possibilities of the GWP.

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Manuel Francisco Romero Oliva, University of Cadiz, Department of Didactics of Language and Literature
[i] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6854-0682
Doctor and professor of the Department of Didactics of Language and Literature at the University of Cadiz, his lines of research focus on linguistic and literary education in an interdisciplinary perspective, where different areas of knowledge converge. He participates in various publications and, at present, his work focuses on literary education not taught in middle and high schools, as well as on conferences and courses in schools.
Authorship contribution: Rationale, methodological design and conclusions.
E-mail: manuelfrancisco.romero@uca.es

Hugo Heredia Ponce, University of Cadiz, Department of Didactics of Language and Literature
[ii] http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3657-1369
Doctor and professor of the Department of Didactics of Language and Literature at the University of Cadiz. The research focuses on reading among adolescents and the use of new technologies.
Authorship contribution: Classroom design and experimentation, data collection and conclusions.
E-mail: hugo.heredia@uca.es

Paula Rivera Jurado, University of Cadiz, Department of Didactics of Language and Literature
iii https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4191-1367
Doctor and professor of the Department of Didactics of Language and Literature at the University of Cadiz. Her lines of research focus on the processes of teaching and literary reception. Currently, her studies deal with reading and literary training from an intertextual, intercultural and interdisciplinary approach.
Authorship contribution: Classroom design and experimentation, data collection and conclusions.
E-mail: paula.rivera@uca.es

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