

What color is Alhambra? Didactic orientations to work in Early Childhood Education

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Abstract: This paper aims to provide a series of didactic guidelines for the early childhood education stage on how to work on the historical heritage of the city of Granada. For this, a key element will be the color. Throughout this article we intend to provide ideas and educational elements to future early childhood educators so that they can orient their activities to work on the local historical heritage through meaningful and competent learning. In this way, through games and active initiatives, we hope that our students will be able to learn while enjoying themselves. At the same time, we try to make this action conform to practical and active teachers, committed to a free education. The methodology used in this study was based on the pedagogical principles of the Escuela Nueva. We hope that future teachers will be able to contemplate alternative possibilities. At the same time, we propose that future lines of research be pursued along this line of development.

Keywords: education, historical heritage, didactics, early childhood education.

I. INTRODUCTION

The process of learning colors from the early years is the basis for development and the rest of learning. In addition, colors become an instrument of expression and communication where verbal language does not reach. Learning to recognize and distinguish colors is the door to exploring the world (Husband, 2012). That the little ones choose some colors or others, for example, is an expression of their creative freedom through which they are developing their personality. In addition, learning colors in games and activities will give them resources to be able to classify, develop their logical thinking and lay the foundation for their problem-solving skills. As reflected in current legislation, the purpose of the Early Childhood Education stage is to contribute to the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of the child (Royal Decree 1630/2010; Decree 428/2008).

Colors will also help to motivate students to learn. If you want a child to be motivated to learn something and retain it better, teach it with colors! In addition, at this educational stage, the learning that will support the basis of their later stages and developments are integrated. With this didactic proposal, we intend to address aspects of the three areas of early childhood education: Self-knowledge and personal autonomy, Knowledge of the environment and Languages: communication and representation.

In this article we intend to propose didactic orientations within the area of Knowledge of the Environment, whose objective is to favor in the students the process of discovery and representation of the different contexts that compose the environment. Its function is aimed at introducing the child to life and society. However, as reflected in the Order of August 5, 2008, these three areas are mutually dependent, so they work in synchrony, and their development must be adjusted to the characteristics of the students. The contents of the area to be developed acquire meaning from the complementarity with the rest, therefore, the didactic proposals developed should be interpreted from the globality of the action and learning with the elements of the environment, which with the entry into the school is diversified and expanded, should constitute privileged situations that will lead them to grow, to expand their knowledge about the world and to develop new skills, abilities and competences (Zabalza, 2017). The environment is thus conceived as the reality in which one learns and about which one learns (Royal Decree 1630/2010).

Lines of research in the field of didactics and school organization highlight the need for students to learn by establishing relationships with their immediate environment (Aranda, 2010), which is the objective of this document. The same Decree also states that with appropriate educational intervention, children approach the world around them, structure their thinking, internalize temporal sequences, control and channel future actions, and acquire autonomy with respect to adults. With the didactic proposal presented, the three blocks included in the area are put into play: Elements, relationships and measurement; Approach to nature and Culture and life in society. That said, the objective of the didactic proposal is that the students of the second cycle of infant education learn colors through experiences lived in the environment that surrounds them, in a playful and integrating way (Vilaboa, 2005).

II. DIDACTIC ORIENTATIONS TO WORK ON COLOR IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

In this section we are going to make a series of examples of how to work with color in early childhood education. In this way, our proposal is distributed throughout a school year by the center of Granada and is aimed at students in early childhood education. The objective is that our students learn about the heritage of their city and are enriched culturally. In addition, we want to promote from an early age the importance of preserving and respecting the environment around us. These didactic suggestions, besides containing directed activities such as the realization of visits, intend to work on topics such as traditional music and through the learning of colors.

By means of this study we intend to work on the monographic theme of color, but not to learn it in a boring and traditional way, but to break the barriers and take our children out of the classroom so that they learn in a symbolic, playful, meaningful and participatory way. We will achieve all this by helping us and taking advantage of the resources offered by the environment around us.

In each of the visits we will deal with an element and we will relate it to the theme of colors. Before starting any outing, we will work in the classroom on the topic so that we have previous information and the visit will be more stimulating. In addition, to reinforce the learning of colors and to distinguish ourselves from the rest of the visitors, we will wear the same color T-shirt. This color will be linked to each of the visits.

The topics that we will deal with in this guide will be the following: the conquest of the Catholic Monarchs; the beautiful tiles exhibited in the Alhambra Museum; activities to work on color inspired by the Arlequín children's center (located in Granada); traditional music; the Arab Baths located in the Albaicín and a painting from the Museum of Fine Arts. Granada is a city where color, joy and culture prevail. Therefore, working with color in this setting is a great opportunity. However, this didactic proposal can be adapted to other cities, gathering its most representative places, as well as it can be adapted to other educational stages.



Source: PIXABAY20

III. THE VALUE OF TIME IN DIDACTIC PLANNING

This didactic guide is designed to work with children in the second cycle of early childhood education during a school year. We will work one week of each month and we have distributed it in a balanced way.

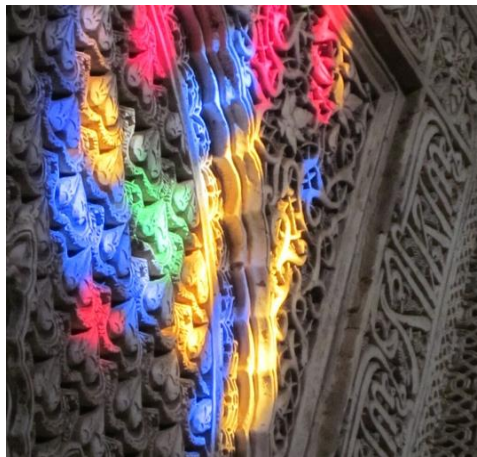
Before each visit, in a general way, we will explain to the students in assembly the importance of respecting the environment around us. We will review the rules of behavior, we will discuss how they should behave in the different

visits (do not touch when asked, keep their distance, throw papers in the trash, do not run in spaces that are not allowed or talk loudly in these spaces, be respectful with people who cross during the visit, follow the teacher's guidelines ...).

IV. THE STORY TO WORK WITH COLOR IN ALHAMBRA

Stories are a great tool to motivate students and introduce the activities to be done. We will begin with an assembly in which we will tell a story to our students. With this story we want them to have a first approach to the history of the conquest of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs, we want them to remember names such as Ferdinand, Isabella and Boabdil or to know that the last city to be conquered was Granada. For this, the purpose will be to represent the struggle through color. Representing the Christian conquest in purple and the Arab conquest in gray.

Once the story has been read, we will propose different questions to check the comprehension of the reading: Which city was still to be painted in purple, what were the names of the kings, and the king who wanted everything to be gray? What color was Granada painted?



Source: PIXABAY20

V. THE THEATER AS AN ANIMATING THREAD IN OUR DIDACTIC PROPOSAL

Learning to work with color is in itself fun for our students. However, if we combine this with the creation of a theatrical representation, it can be even more motivating for learning. Therefore, the children will be asked to draw the part of the story they liked the most. The drawings will be hung around the classroom so that everyone can see them. Once painted, we will perform the play. The children will dress up in costumes and fabrics that we will provide them with and they will act out the story in groups. In addition, as they already know the name and some facts about the Catholic Monarchs, we will show them their coat of arms and what they used it for. We will look at the coat of arms and all its colors, as well as the most significant elements. Finally, we will create our own class coat of arms, with the colors we like the most and chosen by all of us.



Source: PIXABAY20

VI. VISITS TO MAGICAL PLACES OF THE ALHAMBRA, APPRECIATING ITS COLOR

To reinforce the knowledge acquired, we will visit the Royal Chapel, explaining that the place was built by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella and that they have their tombs there. It is a place where they prayed and prayed to the Lord. We will ask them what colors they see in the place and the sensation they feel when they are there (the temperature, the smell...). Finally, we will ask them to look for the coat of arms that we worked on in class, they will see it with their own eyes.

After that, the next destination will be the Arab Baths. In the assembly we will talk about what the Arab baths are and their usefulness in the past. We will ask them what their baths are like and how they wash in their homes. We will show them pictures of the Arab baths and of a current bath so that they can establish differences. We will also explain to them that they did not have lamps and that they used to light the sunlight that entered through small holes of different shapes. We will also show them pictures of lights and shadows.

VII. LEARNING THROUGH THE SENSES IN A PLACE WHERE EVERYTHING IS COLOR

For this didactic section we will prepare a white bucket with cold water, a red bucket with hot water and a blue bucket with warm water. We will let the children experiment freely by putting their hands in each of the buckets and after a while we will ask them what they have noticed, which water is the coldest and the hottest. We can also propose that they quickly go from hot water to cold and vice versa. With this we can tell them that the Arabs divided their rooms in this way. After that, we will visit the Arab baths of the Albaicín and we will try to make the children imagine how that space could be with people, with water, with everything that comes to their imagination. We will also put a lot of emphasis on the light, how the baths are illuminated. In addition to showing them the different rooms so that they remember what they saw in the previous activity. Within the work on color, we also find it interesting to develop didactic activities with light. As we explained to the children in previous activities, the Arab baths are characterized by the entrance of light inside them in a peculiar way. There is darkness and clarity; children can relate it to black and white. To live this experience in the classroom, we are going to make in two large cardboards the size of the classroom windows, cuts with a cutter in a star-shaped, square and rounded symmetrically simulating the ceilings of the Arab baths. Due to the danger of the cutter, we will make the cuts ourselves. Once cut and prepared, the children will paint the cardboard with black finger paint. Once dry and finished, with adhesive tape we will stick it to the windows so we can see how the light enters through our figures.



Source: PIXABAY2

VIII. USE OF SOUND AS A MYSTERIOUS ELEMENT TO DYNAMIZE OUR PROPOSAL

Sound can be a revealing element in any didactic proposal. In this case, we propose the composition of an assembly, in which the teacher will provide the students with simple explanations about some of the different types of traditional music that exist in our country. We will focus on: romances, carols and funeral music. As one of the objectives of this guide is to work on color, a color will be assigned to each type of music, which will be decided by the whole class according to the type of song (for example: red if it is a romance, white for Christmas carols and black for funeral songs). Another didactic proposal could be to take the children on an excursion to a concert of the Lombarda group of traditional music so that they can learn and listen to music from the past and with great cultural background. In addition, they will be able to observe the curious instruments that were used to accompany these songs and they will be able to play them themselves.

In addition, other innovations along these lines would be advisable. An interesting activity would be to teach the students different songs from the areas taught in later activities. Once the songs have been learned, we will perform a small concert in the center's assembly hall and for this purpose we will divide the class into three groups: one group will sing a romance, another group a carol and the remaining group a funeral song. The children will be asked to wear clothes of the color assigned to each type of song.

Finally, we could propose the construction of a musical instrument of this period. This activity consists of creating an instrument with recycled material. We will propose to the children a series of instruments and they will choose one that will be the one they will later make. When they finish it we will sing the songs learned in the previous activities accompanied by the instruments created.

This activity will give the children the opportunity to make their own musical instruments and with this they will get much closer to music and will enjoy it more. Below are some of the instruments that we can make.

IX. LEARNING ART THROUGH VISITS TO LOCAL MUSEUMS

Extracurricular visits are key for students to connect the knowledge of their local heritage with intrinsic issues of the curriculum. In the proposed activity, the students will gather in an assembly and the teacher will give them a brief explanation of the types of paintings that exist (realistic and abstract). The children will be shown images of known paintings on the digital blackboard and will be asked questions such as: What colors did the painter use? Is it a realistic or abstract painting? What elements appear in it? After that, we will take the class to visit the Museum of Fine Arts located in the Alhambra, in the Palace of Charles V, so that they can see for themselves what a museum is like and how the paintings are arranged. In addition, they will be able to recognize some of the paintings that were shown to them in the assembly of the previous activity.



Source: PIXABAY20

After that, the children will paint a picture on a small canvas freely with tempera or water paint of whatever they want: a portrait, a landscape, an object... Subsequently, all the paintings made by the children will be exhibited in the school's auditorium, making an exhibition themselves as the one they could see in the visit of the previous activity and a day will be chosen so that the parents of the students can go to see the artwork of their sons and daughters. A winning painting will then be chosen and hung in the classroom for the rest of the year. This activity will also be linked to a small experiment that is very easy to do so that the children can observe and experiment with colors and understand one of the properties of water. To carry out the experiment we will need: food coloring of different colors, a plate, a cotton swab, liquid dish detergent and a dropper. The steps to follow are as follows. Pour some milk into a dish. If the milk is cold, let it equalize its temperature with the room temperature. With an eyedropper carefully pour a few drops of different dyes on the surface of the milk. Observe how the drops form separate circles on it. The dyes do not break the surface tension of the milk. With a cotton swab take some liquid detergent and dip it gently between the color drops. When touching the surface of the milk with the cotton swab with detergent, the colored circles break and the colors spread through the milk.

X. PATIO DE LOS LEONES AS AN EMBLEMATIC ELEMENT FOR LEARNING FUN

To dynamize our didactic proposal in this place, we will gather the children in an assembly in which the teacher will explain to the children where the Patio de los Leones is located, what colors predominate in it, in what era it was made, why it is called that way, who passed through it, etc. Afterwards, we will ask the children how they imagine it and we will ask them to draw it on a poster board.

After that, we will make an excursion to the Alhambra so that the children get to know the Patio de los Leones. The students will take with them the drawing they made in the previous activity so that they can contrast what they imagined with reality. The teacher will leave some free time in the courtyard for the children to explore it carefully. Afterwards, the teacher will sit all the students in a circle outside the space (since it is not allowed) and will ask them some questions such as: What colors can you see? What colors can you see, what did you like the most? Next, the children will make a model of the Patio de los Leones. To do this, the teacher will ask them to look for objects and recycled material at home with similar shapes to those they have seen during the visit and they should bring these materials to class and build together a simulation of the Patio de los Leones. The model will not be an exact replica of the Patio as the children will be free to add elements of their choice to build a personalized and colorful patio.

XI. MOSAICS AND INLAID TILES AS A DIDACTIC ELEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

In the assembly we will explain to our children what a mosaic is and we will show them examples of them. We will remind them of the visit to the Alhambra (when we went to the courtyard of the lions) and its decoration with beautiful colored tiles. In addition, we will bring colored tiles to class so that the children can carefully manipulate them, weigh them, check their texture... We can also ask them a battery of questions to find out their previous knowledge on the subject: What do you see? Where have you seen this beautiful wall? What colors are they? Is this tile warm or cold? Does it weigh a lot?

The next proposal will be to create a mosaic. Before we start creating our own mosaic, we will prepare the material for the activity. The students will create the material with our help. We will draw squares, stars, bones, triangles and circles of different colors (white, green, blue, black, yellow and pale blue) on the different materials (cellophane paper, cardboard and eva rubber), so that the children can cut them out. Once they are cut out, we will offer each child a white cardboard sheet and by tables we will put little piles of the cut-outs so that they can paste them on their cardboard, thus creating their tiling.

Once finished and when all the children have finished, the finished mosaics will be presented to the whole class. So that the whole school can enjoy our work of art, we will display the mosaics throughout the hallway. So that for a few weeks the school will be full of color and tradition. We will remind them how important it is to preserve our work and we will remind our younger classmates that they can not peel or tear the mosaics. We have to take care of them.



Source: PIXABAY20

XII. MUSEUM OF THE ALHAMBRA TO WORK ON THE ARTISTIC HERITAGE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

With everything we have learned about the Alhambra and its decoration, it is time to go to the museum so that we can observe it in its real context, knowing that our main objective will be to observe the mosaics and tiling which is what we have been working on. At the museum, the children will compare their mosaics, the ones they made in the previous activity, with the ones on display. In addition, they will observe the geometric figures that make up the tiles that we have been working on in the classroom. After that, gathered in assembly, we will comment and review the colors among the whole class, and we will ask what colors the children like the most, why, we will name some colored objects, etc. On the other hand, it would be interesting to build a big mural of colors. We will ask the students to bring colorful recycled objects and materials from home. Afterwards, we will place all the objects they have brought on the floor of the classroom and the children will have to classify them by color. Once classified, we will proceed to the realization of a mural in which we will paste all the materials by colors and we will obtain a large colorful mural like the one in the image. Afterwards, we will play a game in the school playground in which the children will have to touch an object that is in the playground in the color that the teacher says. The teacher will say: "You have to touch something of color: blue" and the children will have to run towards something of that color. With this game we will work on color discrimination.

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