

READING TO STUDENTS:

KINDERGARTEN READING

By Bryce Hedstrom

This is an extremely popular part of my Spanish classes at all levels. As far as I know, Susan Gross came up with this term and the general format. Here is what has worked for me:

When I do "Kindergarten Day" (actually it is just the last part of one class, one day per week) I try to act like a Kindergarten teacher. The idea of the activity is that you "read" a book to your students in the target language and show them the pictures. What you are really doing is just creating an excuse to talk to your students about something interesting while using pictures and a story to make it understandable. Make it as close to the actual kindergarten experience as possible, and try to use words they all know. There is no need to discuss it in English first.

THE SET UP:

Everybody can see the pictures. With a small class, all of the students can sit on the floor, with larger classes, the first row or two may stay in their seats and the kids in the back will sit on the floor. Big books work great here.

Cookies! Have students volunteer to bring cookies (Bribe them with extra credit points, if needed). This sets up the mood of light-hearted learning and I think it reminds them of when school was more fun.

Teacher sits on the floor. This changes the entire dynamic of the class. You are all at the same level. You are sharing a story and your reactions to a story with one another.

READING TO THEM: You are interacting with the students as you would with a 3-4 year-old child sitting on your lap sharing a good book.
(*All reading and questioning is done in the target language.*)

- **Go slow.** You almost cannot go slowly enough.
- **Ask them questions** about the story.
- **Ask them to predict** what might happen next.
- **Ask them to describe** the characters in the story, and then try to relate it to them:
Do you have any friends who do things like that?
Who is your best friend? Etc.
- **Keep it Short.** Don't do Kindergarten Day for long periods of time--
No more than **15 minutes**.
- **Keep it in the target language.** Translate only the words that might be unfamiliar to them.
- **Check for understanding** to make sure they are following the story line.
- **You don't have to read every word.** Skip over or simplify the language of passages that are too difficult for most of the students.

AFTER READING:

Make the books available for the students to read on their own. My students especially like reading the Big Books by themselves during free reading time. In the corner of our classroom library there is a big book box that is labeled: "Big Books we Have Read".

Good training for this activity is to observe the best kindergarten teacher in your community for half a day once a year.