

5. VOWELS and CONSONANTS = pairing
TRANSLATION = writing and reading

5.1 Sound, forms and colours

Now it is necessary to distinguish and learn the sounds of the letters of our alphabet. In order to make the operation easier, only the vowels will be considered by using a bit of fantasy.

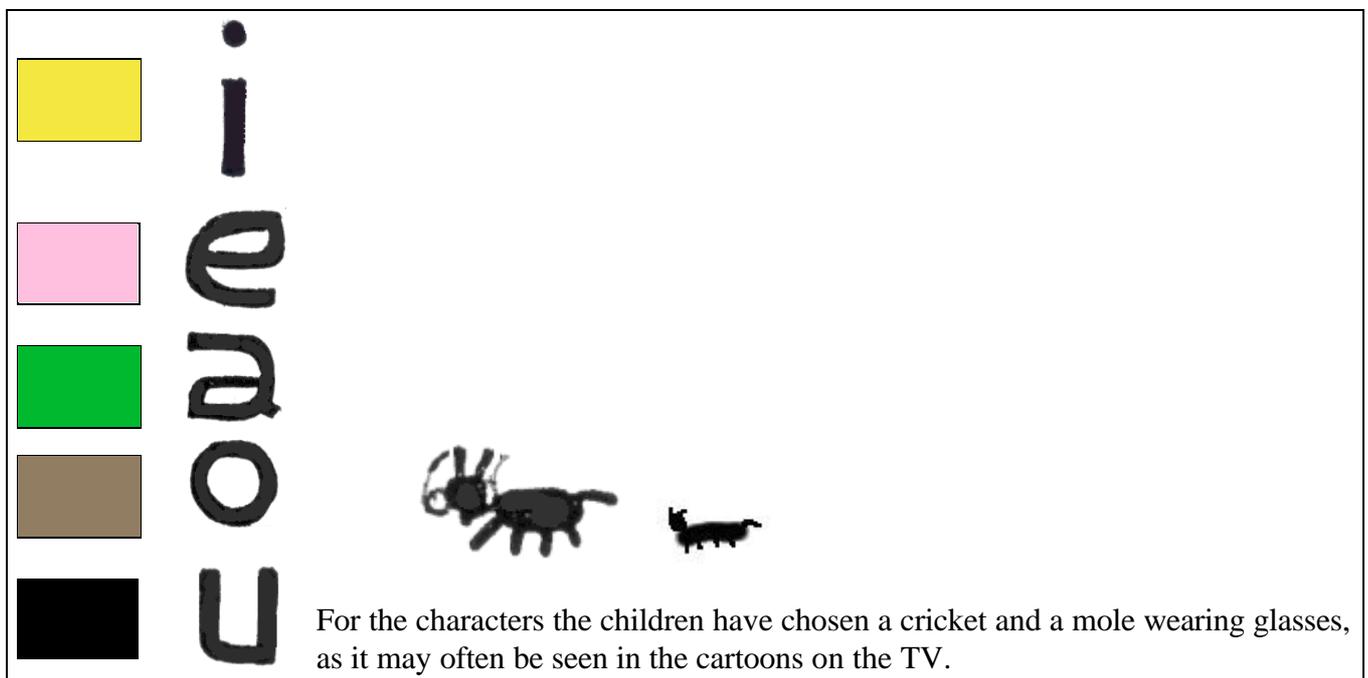
In this stage the teacher can rely on vague analogies (as a matter of fact, any vowel can be tuned in a deep way, normal or acute). Subtle discriminations on the same sign-sound will be faced in a second time.

After this specification, a colour and a spatial position are given to each vowel, from below to above, and on this coloured reality we invent a story with two animals as characters: a mole and a cricket.

- For the "i", yellow: sun
- For the "e", pink: flowers
- For the "a", green: grass
- For the "o", brown: dry soil
- For the "u", black: wet dark soil

They are animals usually living underground. They crawl upwards little by little to the surface to see shapes and colours and to hear the sounds freely.

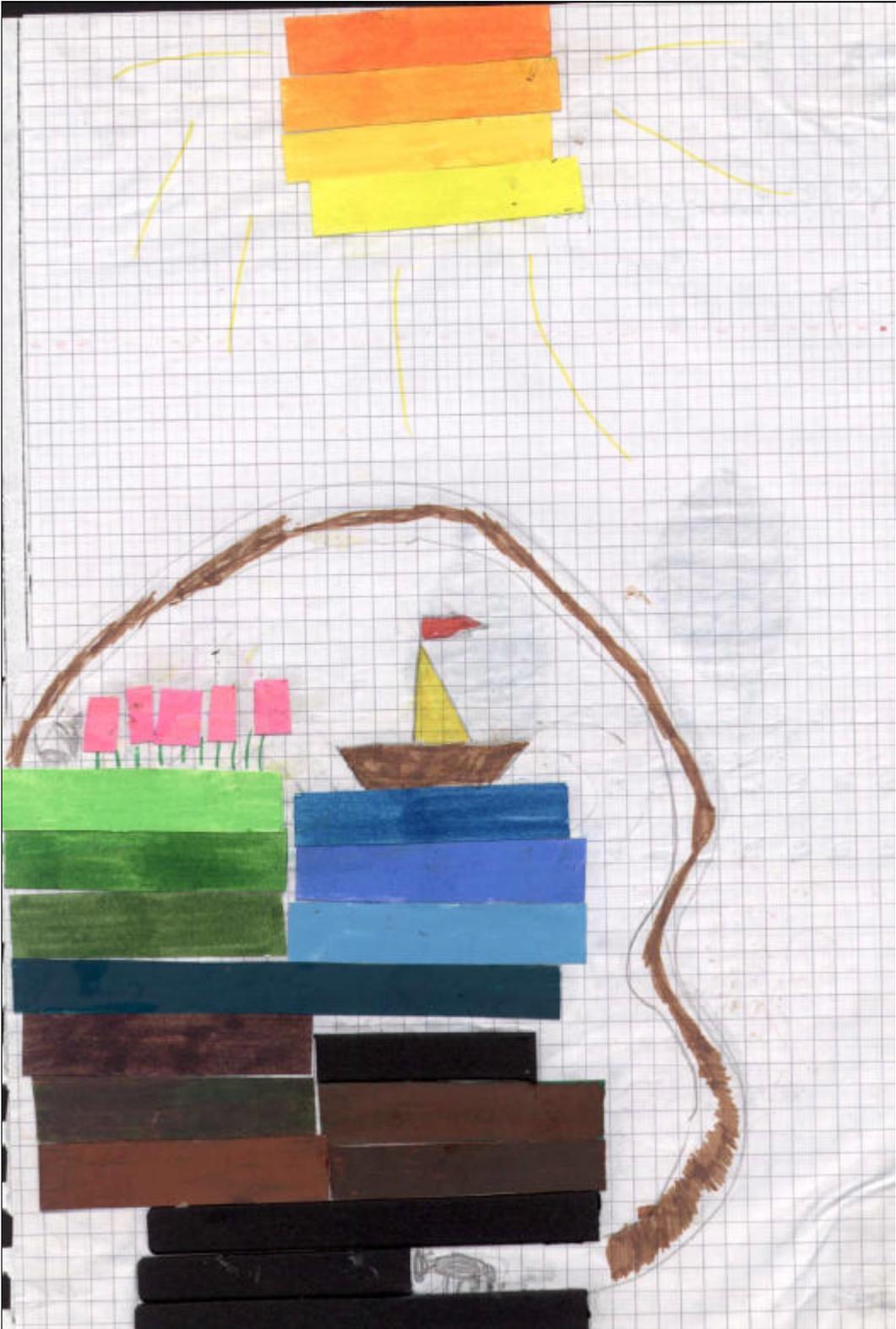
Once at the surface, they walk on the ground and see many new things. They meet also fences, different animals, countrymen, grass and flowers.

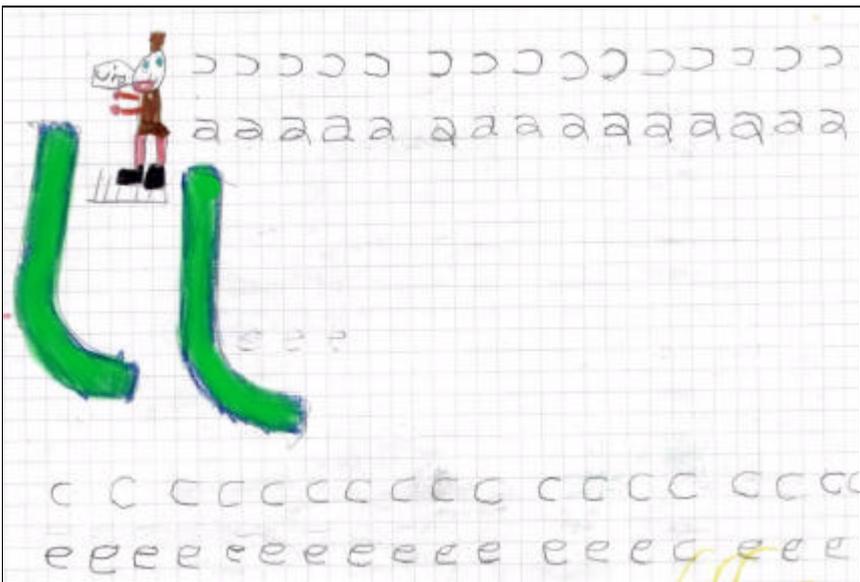
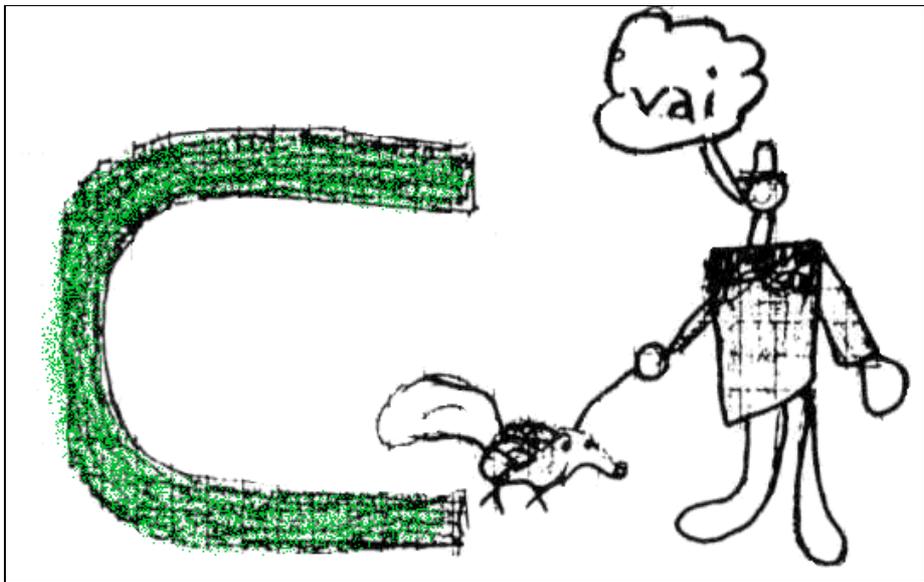


For the characters the children have chosen a cricket and a mole wearing glasses, as it may often be seen in the cartoons on the TV.

Composition, writing and listening of the sounds of the vowels

Patchwork made by the basic signs in coloured cardboard. It represents the travel of the animals from the deep to the surface looking for shapes, colours and sounds.





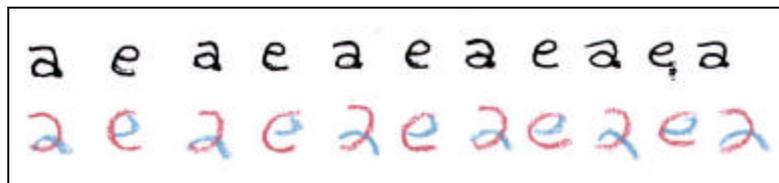
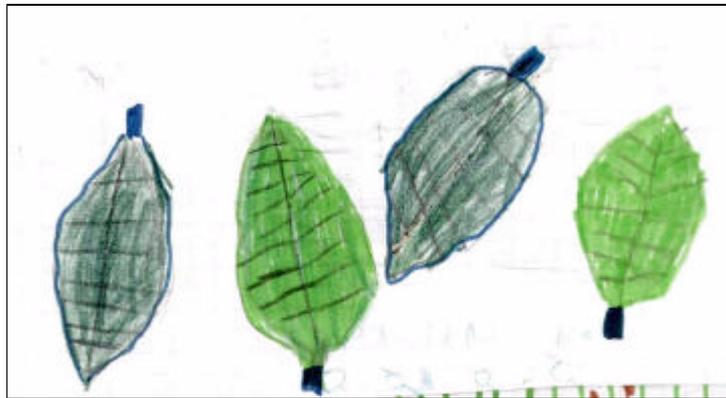
Once at surface, the mole and the cricket meet countrymen, fences with trees, grass, trees, insects, flowers, etc..

The shape of the vowels "a" and "e" shows a double difficulty: right-left, above-below. We can note it immediately by observing the children writing them.

Therefore here is a small exercise with some leaves.

We build up a rhythm: leafstalk above, leafstalk below, light green, dark green.

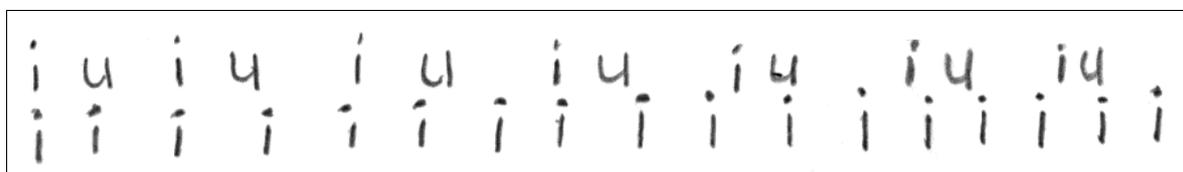
The children draw and repeat the rhythm shown with a series of "a" and "e".



The shape of the grass blades recalls the vowels -i -u; the children write them down and name them.



erba = grass



By pronouncing the sounds of the vowels, we put a hand to our mouth and feel the different movements of the lips with the fingers.



la talpa sente = the mole can hear le onde dei suoni = the waves of the sounds

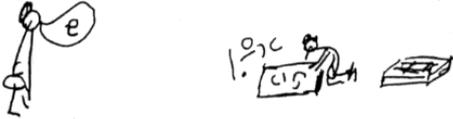
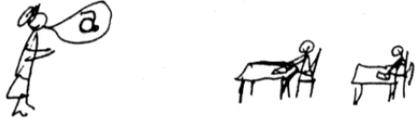
5.2 Translations (vowels)

With the introduction of sound we must insist on four different and basic operations:

- 1- given the sound, the child should be able to build up the conventional sign by means of the basic signs;
- 2-
- 3- given the sign, the child should be able to produce the sound;
- 4-
- 5- given the sound, the child should be able to find the sign;
- 6-
- 7- given the sound, the child should be able to write the sign.

We verify this by playing with the children everyday and by recording everyone's uncertainties.

Game of translation

<p>1- listen to this sound take the basic signs and try and build up the combination</p>	<p>Use of the basic signs</p> 
<p>2- how does this combination sound?</p>	<p>Use of the cards by the teacher</p> 
<p>3- listen to this sound can you find the card?</p>	<p>Use of the cards by the children</p> 
<p>4- listen to this sound can you write the combination?</p>	<p>Use of the reference cards</p> 
<p>5 - eventually, the teacher urges the children to try and point to the right vowel with the stick on the boards with the vowels hanging on the wall.</p>	

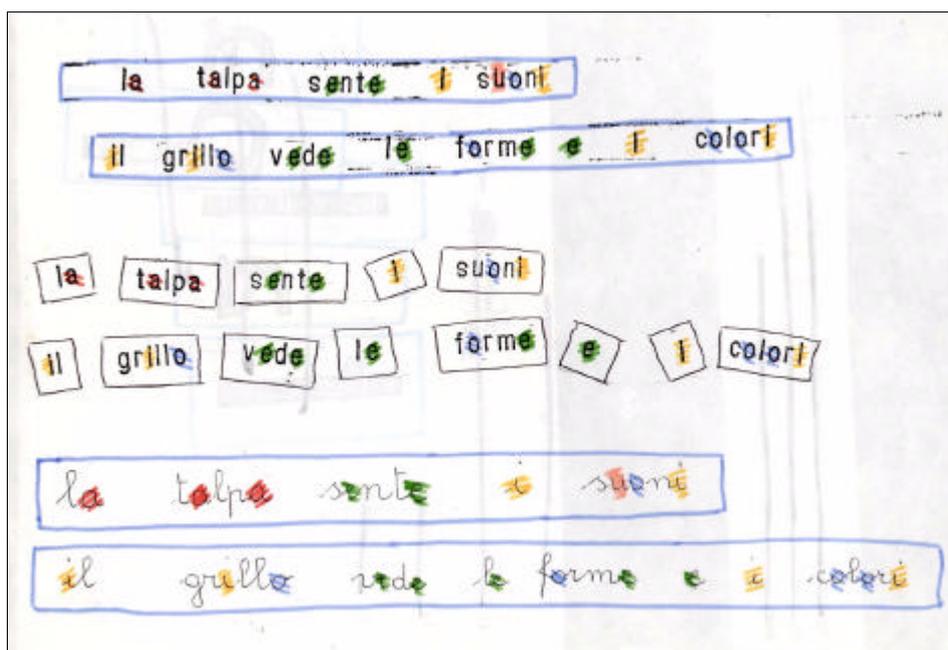
The tale about the travel of the two animals ends with a sentence made by the children and written on the blackboard.

Three empty spaces (marked with three dots) are left between two words and, by beginning a new paragraph, two empty squares (with two dots) are left.

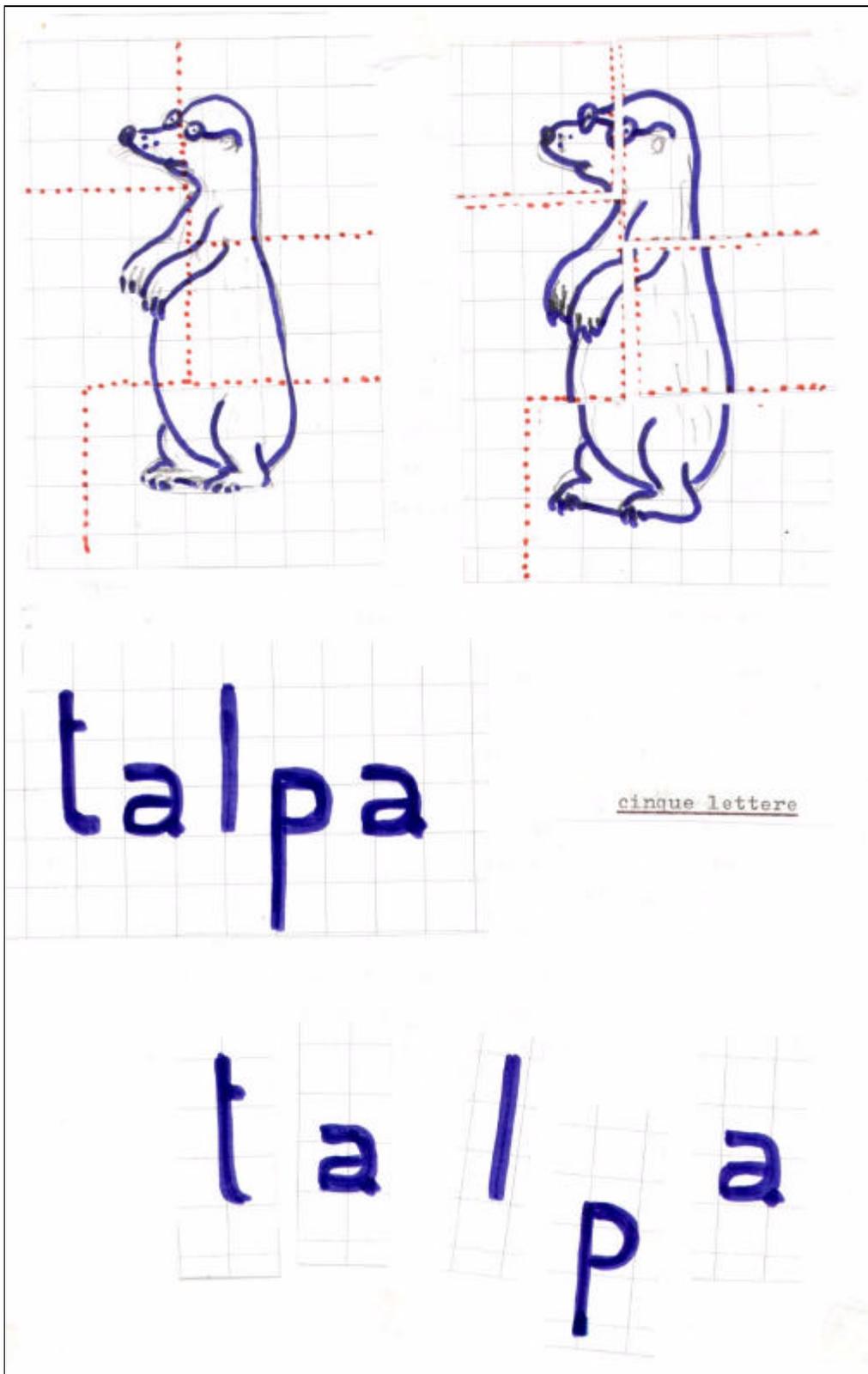


la talpa sente i suoni = the mole can hear the sounds
 il grillo vede le forme e i colori = the cricket can see shapes and colours

As usual the child receives the stripes written in printed case and italics. He/she builds up, disassembles, glues and paints the vowels with different colours.



Eventually we play with a mini-puzzle depicting the mole in five pieces, as the number of the letters building the name in Italian (“talpa”).



talpa = mole	5 lettere = 5 letters
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The children should have learnt everything well, but it may not always happen like this. So the teacher should repeat the lesson by varying the talk.

Example.

The teacher has composed or adapted a nursery rhyme and introduces it on seven big stripes:

- five little ships in the middle of the sea
- five children go fishing
- they fish “a”, they fish “e”
- they fish “u”, they fish “i”
- big or small they fish “o”
- five little ships in the middle of the sea
- five children go fishing

The teacher reads it aloud and during the reading he/she raises and shows both a stripe and the card with the vowel mentioned.

All together repeat the reading of the stripes and this time the children are in charge of the raising of the cards with the vowels.



The children make a patchwork and a drawing on the exercise-book

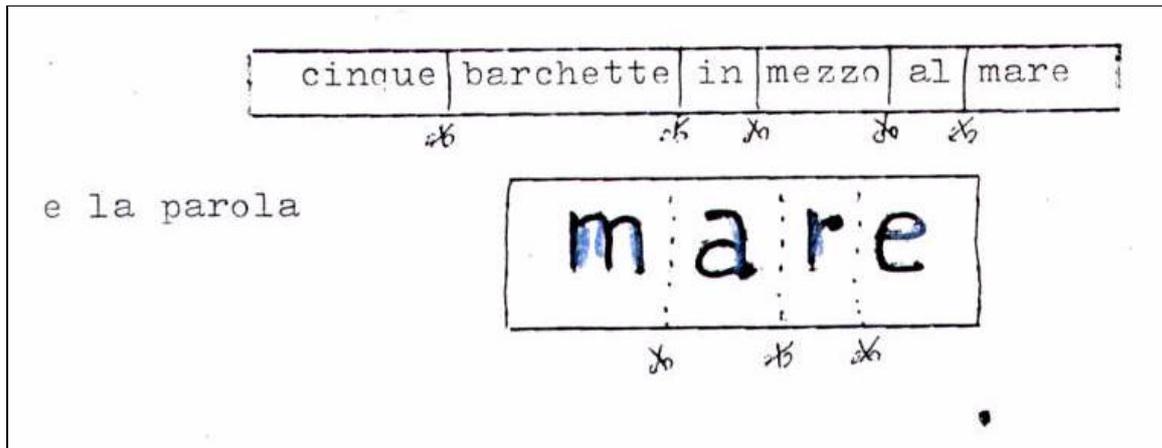
We conclude with a sentence

“five little boats in the middle of the sea”

with the word

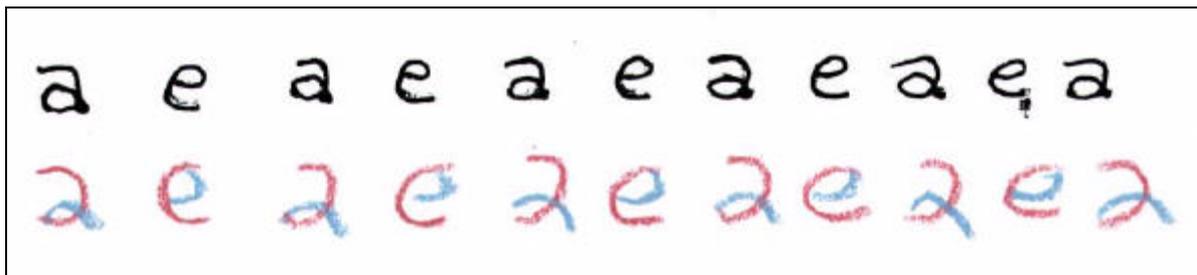
s-e-a-

cut and re-assembled.



cinque barchette in mezzo al mare = five little boats in the middle of the sea
e la parola = and the word mare = sea

We end the page with a rhythm of -a -e by felt pen.



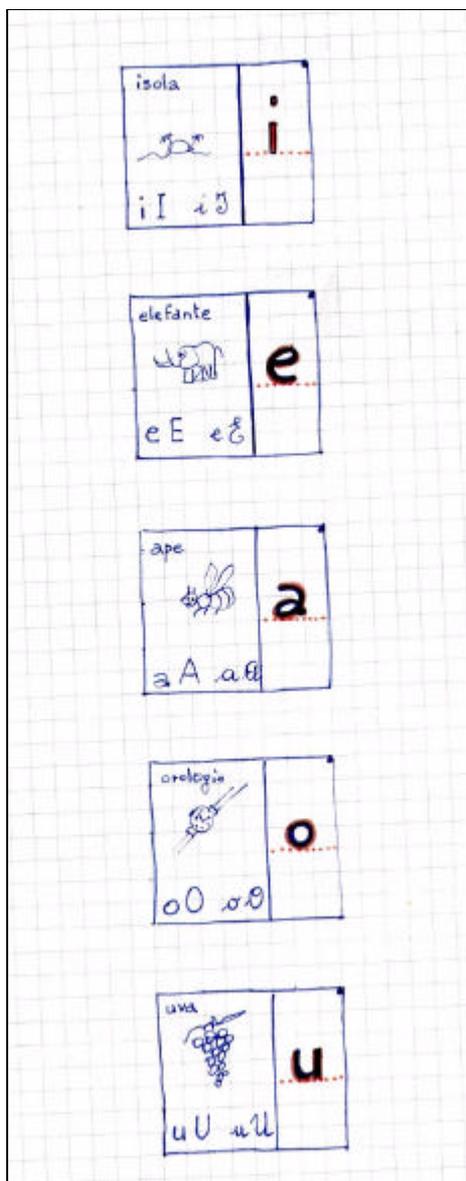
5.3 References and alphabet collection

Features and employment

On the wall of the classroom some cards are hung with reference signs and shapes in order to make up a reference wall alphabet.

The cards look like as follows:

on the right the combination of basic signs corresponding to the alphabetic sign and leaning on the baseline; on the left the shape drawn small with the name written in uppercase and with the four characters written in italics and printed style highlighted.



isola = island	elefante = elephant	ape = bee
orologio = watch	uva = grapes	

On the wall, the relative disposition of the cards is in vertical for vowels and in horizontal for consonants because this eases the games of coupling from both the visual and the operating viewpoints.

The disposition of the cards with the consonants should be as follows:

m n s z l r f v t d p b

The letters c g with soft and sharp sound
h q are on cards put slightly apart from the others.

The matching of similar sounds is intentional because, like in the recognition of two almost identical twins, also with the sound-signs it easier to catch what characterizes them by observing them close to one another. This may instead become difficult if their matching is sporadic and fortuitous. (*)

At will the children can put near each sign several objects whose name starts with the letter considered.

On the wall the global disposition of the alphabet is as follows:

m **n** **s** **z** **l** **r** **f** **v** **t** **d** **p** **b**

h

i
e
a
o
u

c	schi	sche	sca	sco	scu
	chi	che	ca	co	cu
	ci	ce	cia	cio	ciu
	sci	sce	scia	scio	sciu

g	ghi	ghe	ga	go	gu	gli	gn
	gi	ge	gia	gio	giu		

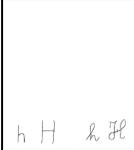
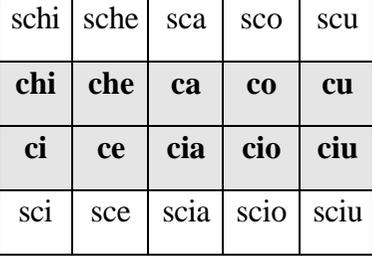
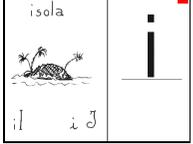
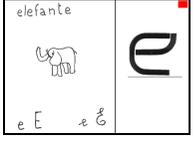
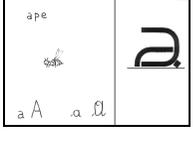
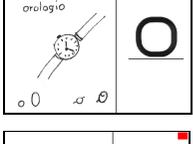
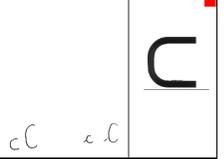
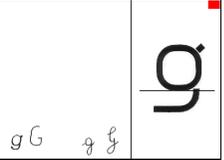
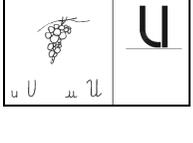
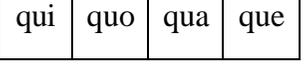
q	qui	quo	qua	que
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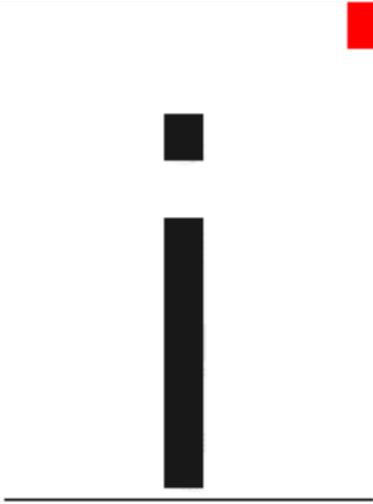
Everyday the children read the images on the wall alphabet and pronounce the sounds; in addition they read on their individual alphabet.

The alphabet collection that each child has (see the attached one on hard paper) should reproduce the exact disposition proposed for the wall alphabet, thereby strengthening its recalling function.

The size of the personal alphabet collection allows the reproduction by xerox copying on the basis of the number of the children at work. The ease of the drawings is done on purpose so that each teacher (especially if working with adults) can change the reference drawings on both the personal and wall alphabet according to the activities and personal interests.

Personal alphabet collection

mela  m M m M	sole  s S s S	luna  l L l L	farfalla  f F f F	tartaruga  t T t T	palla  p P p P
nave  n N n N	zanzara  z Z z Z	rosa  r R r R	vaso  v V v V	dado  d D d D	bandiera  b B b B
 h H h H		 i I i I	 e E e E	 a A a A	 o O o O
 c C c C	 g G g G	 u U u U			

<p>isola</p>  <p>il i I</p>	
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isola = island

<p>dado</p>  <p>d D d D</p>	
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dado = dice

5.4 Sound and time

The rhythm

In the previous exercises many sentences were built up. By writing they were put from right to left on the sheet. This is a well defined space positioning as well as the representation of a temporal sequence recalling something which develops according to a rhythm, a dance of shapes and sounds.

Silent times, the pauses contribute to the words, which are moved by the succession of sounds of consonants and vowels.

The word is not only a “thing” in the space. ()*

Therefore in the classroom we compose and sound a rhythm with drums and cans:

1 ---- 2 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 1 ----- 2

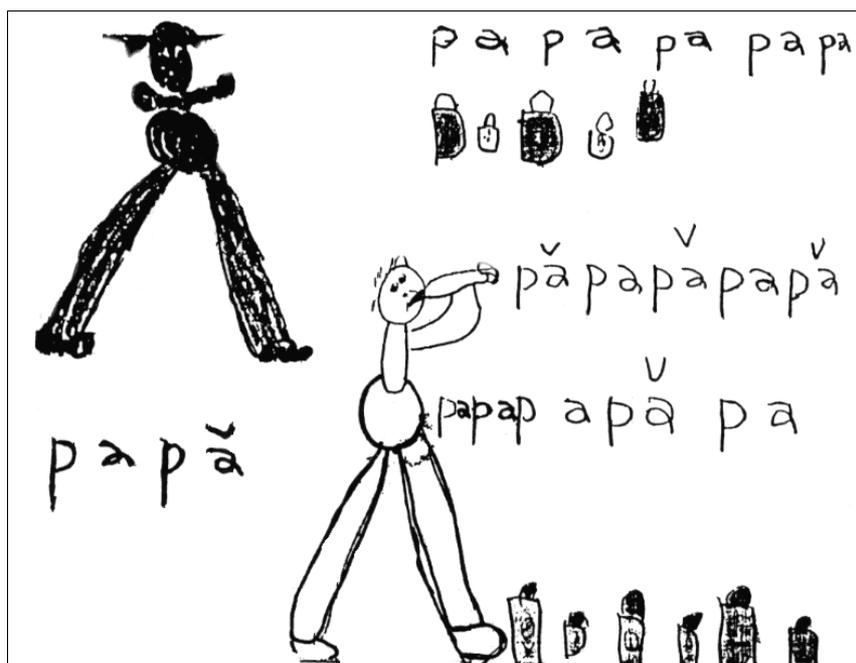
Then we introduce a pause every four beats:

a i a i ---- a i a i ---- a i a i ----

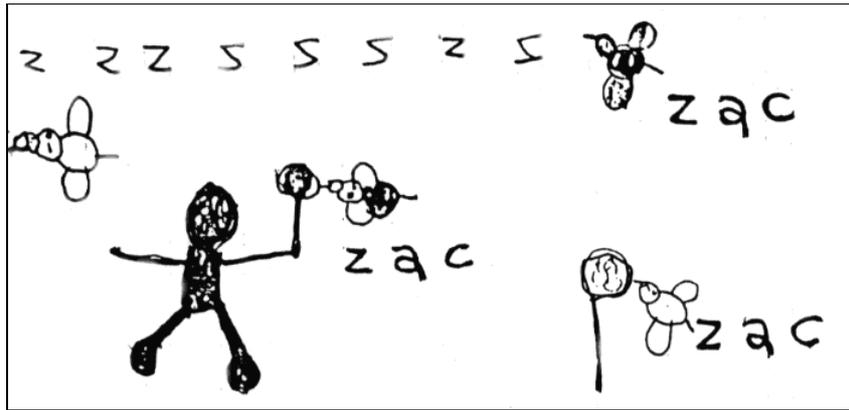
The sequence of shapes and of sounds catches the attention and isolates the inner visual and sound condition (classroom) from the visual and sound landscape outside.

Then, in the particular case considered, the pause splits up the homogeneous rhythm. In this way a “musical” object stands out which is an independent thing relative to the letters (of the rhythm) but which will be a part within a sentence.

Consonant + vowel ----	Consonant + vowel	=	a word
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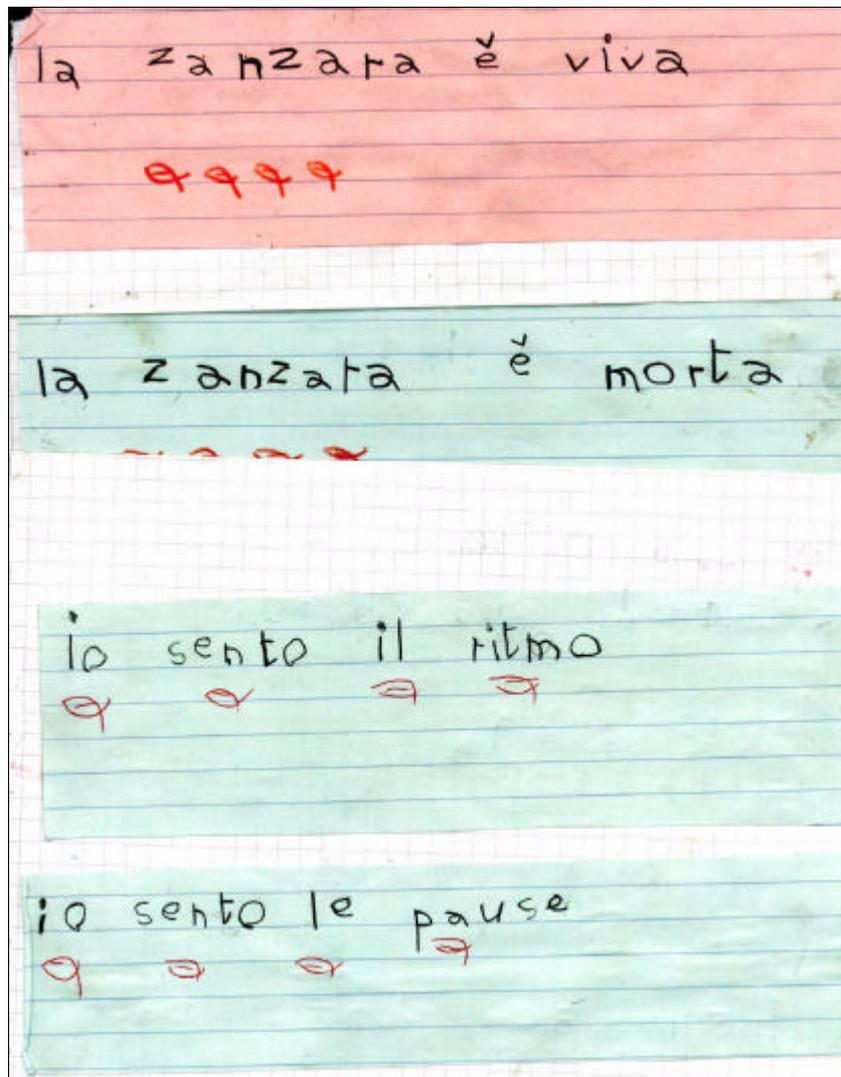
papà = Dad



Let's listen to continuous sounds = the buzz of a mosquito zzzzzzz

Let's listen to interrupted sounds = the blows to kill the mosquito zac zac zac zac

Short dictations (explanation at Chapter 7)



la zanzara è viva = the mosquito is alive la zanzara è morta = the mosquito is dead
 io sento il ritmo = I can hear the rhythm io sento le pause = I can hear the pauses

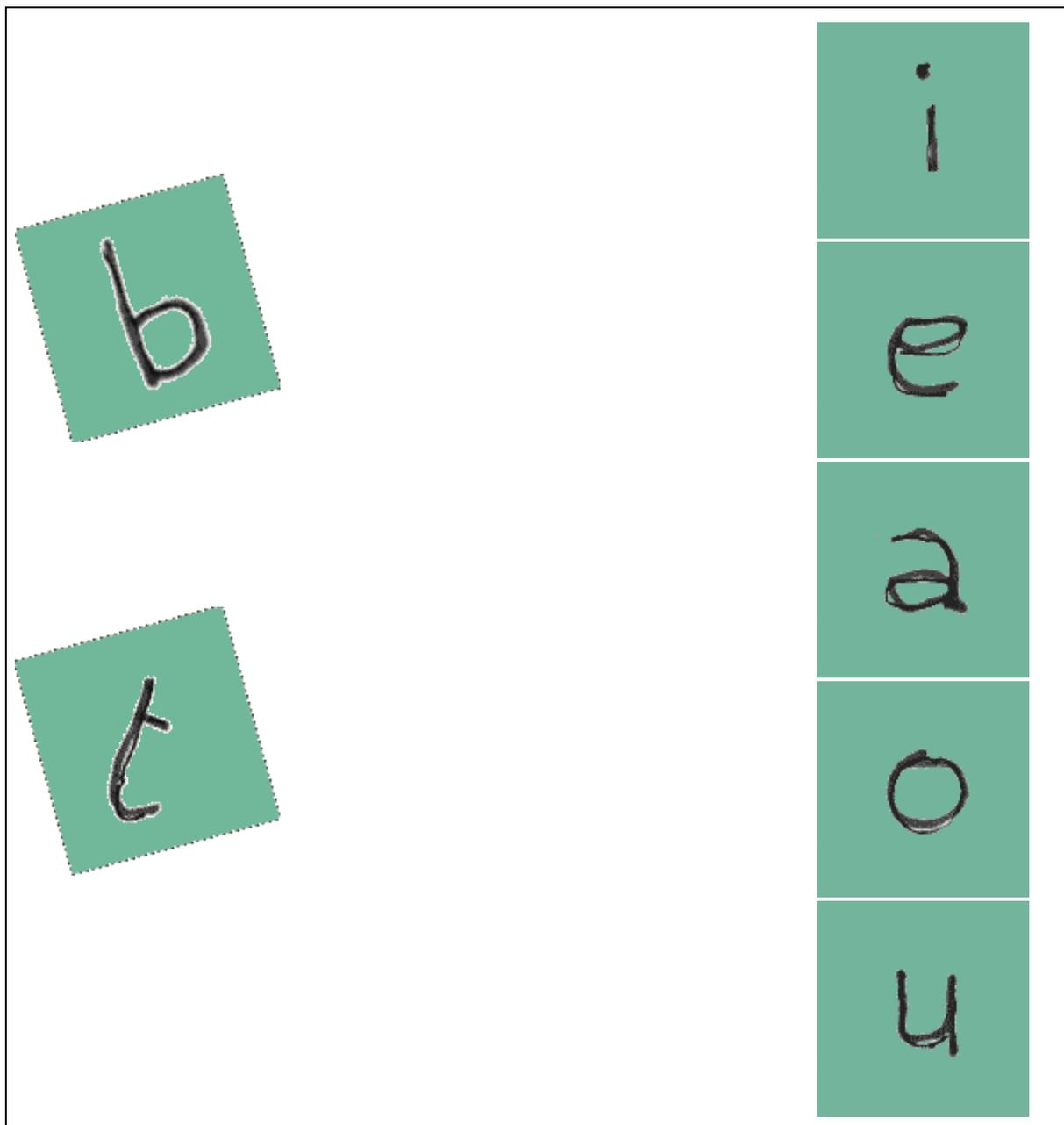
5.5 Matching games

We play by sitting on our own place. On the left of the table two green cards are placed which carry two consonants, whereas on the right a foldable stripe with vowels is put. By a command the consonants will be coupled with the vowels.

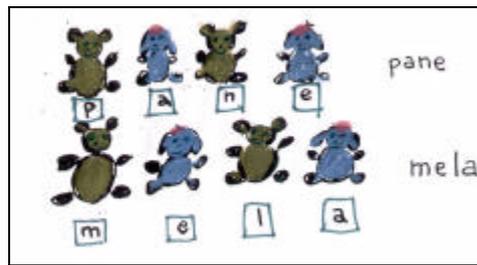
Example.

“If I say - bi- like “biro”, which card will you take? Close to which vowel will you bring it?”

“If I say -ta- , which consonant will move? Where is it going? and so on



We can also play with toy animals and small cards.



pane =
bread

mela =
apple

The words must be short (2-3-4 letters) and, as always, related to a central interest leading the talk with the child.

Examples.

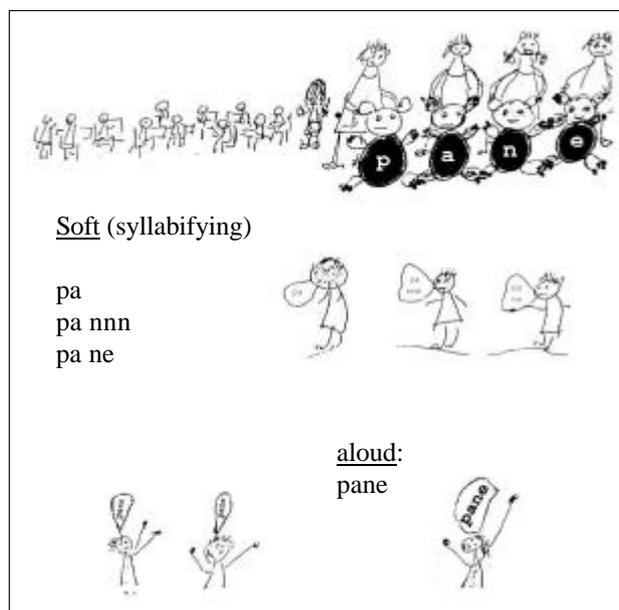
- bread, wine, apple, oil, salt, rice, pear, ...
- sun, sea, ship, sail, net, air, row, ...
- wolf, dog, frog, mouse, bee, owl, bear, ...
- night, dark, moon, black, house,
- nine, zero, one, three, six, two, eight, ...
- dwarf, pipe, fairy, ogre, tail, fur, hole, ...

With the opposite procedure we shall exercise in reading.

Here we have a pre-made word, done with the help of the children, in a sequence of bears and dogs with the cards carried on their bellies. These are introduced to the pupils. The teacher stays in the audience. All the children examine the word in a low voice and try the sounds of it until they are able to synthesize the phonetics of the word in a graphical way.

Only then the word can be pronounced aloud.

The teacher will not absolutely allow the children to pronounce the word into syllables, but he/she will wait quietly, will try and stimulate the children to understanding.



Another game

Many cards are made with words built up by two syllables and written half on each side. They are put on small wooden supports and offered to the child's attention. On one side the first syllable is printed: the child is invited to read it. Then the card on the support is turned and the second syllable appears, which the child must read in a soft voice:

me la (= apple)

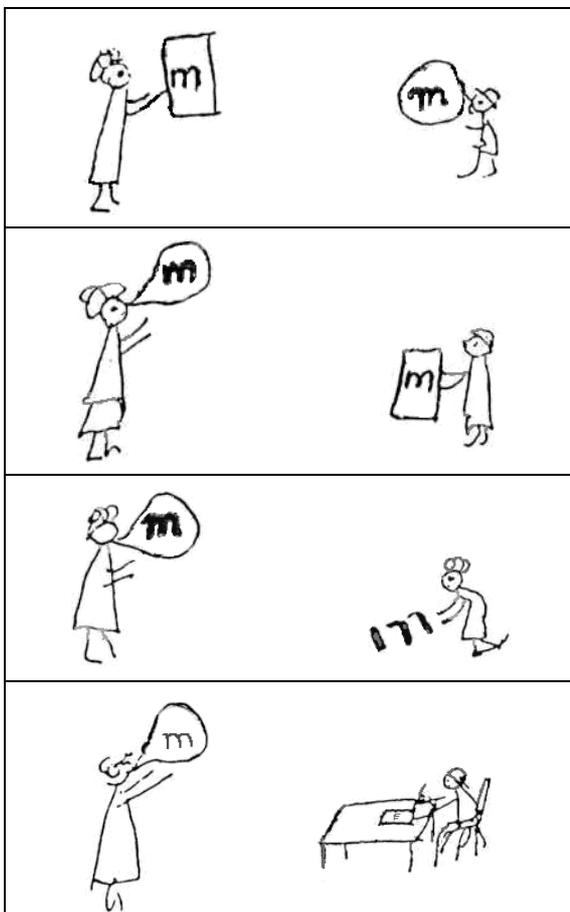
The operation is repeated once, twice, three times until the child understands and recognizes the word "mela" (apple)

me la me la me la mela

5.6 Translation of consonants

As with vowels, it is a good thing to play games with consonants to verify and record the situation of each child. Small cards, basic signs, reference cards are used and the following four operations are done:

- 1- given the sign, the child must be able to pronounce the sound
- 2- given the sound, the child must be able to find the card with the corresponding basic sign
- 3- given the sound, the child must be able to compose the conventional sign with the basic signs
- 4- given the sound, the child must be able to write the sign correctly on the reference cards.



Use of the small cards

Use of the small cards

Use of the basic signs

Use of the reference cards