MÁSTER EN PROFESORADO DE EDUCACIÓN SECUNDARIA OBLIGATORIA Y BACHILLERATO, FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL Y ENSEÑANZA DE IDIOMAS

MASTER´S DEGREE THESIS

TEACHING STRATEGIES AND LEARNING COGNITIVE PROCESSES OF THE PREPOSITIONS *AT, IN* AND *ON*

Educational Research

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Abstract

This thesis explores the importance of teaching strategies and methods for prepositions´ learning, from a cognitive linguistic perspective. Prepositions are very difficult to be used correctly in English and they can cause more problems than any other parts of speech. Even though they are quite short, they play an important role and are crucial markers to the structure of a sentence. The present thesis consist of the following:

First I discuss briefly the importance of English language nowadays and the role of English grammar in the teaching and learning process. Then I dedicate special attention to two strategies for teaching grammar, the deductive and the inductive approaches, and I explain the advantages and disadvantages of these two methods through the analysis of previous literature on the topic.

After that I focus on the main topic of this thesis, which is prepositions and how they can be taught from a meaningful learning perspective. I describe first what prepositions are and their importance in English. Then, I investigate on the cognitive approach, its implications and ways about how to incorporate the teaching and learning of prepositions into Secondary School classes and their effectiveness.

The last part consists of a research I carried out in a Secondary School during my practice period. In my research I make use of both traditional and modern methods taking into account that modern methods do not replace traditional methods but they are just additional resources. I use particularly the following techniques: the deductive and inductive methods and visual aids such as pictures. I also make use of games as very common technological tools for the young generation nowadays. The results show that both approaches, deductive and inductive, are effective with a slight difference in favour of the deductive strategy associated with the cognitive approach based on meaningful learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning English nowadays has become essential and all around the world many countries included English as a foreign language (henceforth EFL) or as a second language (henceforth ESL) in their school syllabus. English has become the most commonly spoken language in the world, apart from being the language of science and of the media industry according to the British Study Centre. It is very well known that, in accordance with the Common Reference Framework for European Languages, learners of English have to master the four skills, reading, listening, speaking and writing. But to master all these four skills, learners also need grammar and vocabulary. In fact grammar and words are the path that leads to a good speaking and writing as well as to a good understanding like listening and reading. So grammar is not separated from the four skills nor from other aspects of a language.

In spite of being along the time one of the most important aspects of a language, grammar and its teaching in foreign language classes has been a main issue. Grammar went through a period of favour and disfavour since grammarians like Krashen (1981) thought that language should be acquired through natural exposure and that there was no need for rules and grammar in formal instruction. Traditionalists were also focused more on intuitive perspectives, language was divided into form and meaning and grammar and vocabulary were taught independently. But many studies have shown that intuition is not always the best way to understand the structure of a language. According to Sinclair (1991a: 10) "every sense or meaning of a word has its own grammar and there is an inter-relation between form and meaning". Leaver, Ehrman & Shekhtman (2005) stated that knowledge of form and syntax is vital due to the fact that vocabulary is not enough to communicate information exactly. Thornbury (1999) also explained that having a deep knowledge of grammar enables us to communicate meanings of a very precise kind.

Apart from the issue of whether grammar should be taught or not, many different approaches discussed also the idea of how to teach English grammar. Teachers and researchers tried to study different methods in order to meet students´needs, to guide and support them in the most proper way along the teaching and learning process. It is highly believed that the proper method of teaching has an influence upon students´ achievements as well as on their attitude toward learning a foreign language. In teaching and learning grammar there are several methods among which there are two kinds that

deserve to be explored widely in learning a foreign language: deductive and inductive approaches.

1.2. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis investigates on the benefit of these two approaches and frames the following general objectives:

a) Identifying what a successful teaching and learning of prepositions implies.

b) Investigating the effectiveness of the deductive and the inductive methods in the teaching and learning of prepositions.

c) Observing students´development and improvement after using the deductive and the inductive methods.

d) Supporting and easing students´ learning with visual resources and exploring their effectiveness along the teaching process.

e) Motivating and encouraging students´ interaction and collaborative work.

f) Detecting problems that students may face when dealing with prepositions and proposing tips for a better acquisition and learning.

In my desire to understand the effect of the selected strategies in the teaching and learning of prepositions, I start my research with the following questions:

RQ1: Is the rule-driven strategy a mere transmission of knowledge?

RQ2: Is the deductive method appropriate for young learners?

RQ3: Are learners motivated by the inductive method?

RQ4: Will the two groups involved in different teaching approaches obtain the same results?

RQ5: Have modern methods such as visual aids and games a good impact on students?

RQ6: Are students with a higher level more receptive than those with a lower level?

2. DEDUCTIVE AND INDUCTIVE APPROACHES- GENERAL COMPARISON

The two approaches have been applied to grammar teaching and learning. Over time there was a conflict between direct and indirect in order to identify natural versus grammatical learning of a foreign language. As Nassaji & Fotos (2011) state "the controversy has always been if grammar should be taught explicitly through a formal presentation of grammatical rules or implicitly through natural exposure to the language use".

Many foreign language methodologists have studied the value of deductive and inductive approaches in the teaching of grammar and they agreed that a grammatical rule that is explained before being applied, leads to a better knowledge and understanding. Galotti (1997) made an experiment in order to study how children of fourth grade distinguish deductive and inductive problems. She found out that the deductive approach was more successful because children were faster with the deductive problems and their ratings were higher. A study by Jean and Simard (2013) with junior high school students proved that the majority of them had preference for the deductive method, but in general both methods were considered to be effective.

 In contrast, there are many other teachers who believe that it is more useful for students to discover by themselves a grammatical rule and consider that the inductive method is the most suitable in acquiring grammar knowledge. Shaffer (1989) carried out a research to determine among various hypotheses if the inductive approach should not be used for difficult concepts. The findings of the study did not support the scholars´ belief since the structures considered to be the most difficult benefited most from the inductive approach. Herron and Tomasello (1992) pointed out the effectiveness of the inductive instruction in the learning and retention of the grammatical rules. According to Hammerly (1982) the inductive approach plays its own role in the classroom but he recognizes that it is more difficult and should be used for simple grammatical structures. There are also theorists in favour of both methods like Littlewood (1975) who makes a distinction between the two methods. He explains that as a starting-point for language use, students need an explanation of the rule, that is the use of the deductive method, while the inductive one is defined as formulation of hypotheses and rules after a language aspect has been practised for some time. Apart from this distinction, Littlewood asserts that "the two approaches are not exclusive and they may function in varying proportion".

According to Thornbury (1999: 29), in a deductive approach, the grammar rule is presented firstly and learners engage with it through the study and manipulation of examples.

In other words, the deductive approach involves the learners being given a general rule, which is applied to specific language examples and then acquired through the practice of exercises. As claimed by Alcaraz-Varó (1990), the deductive method consists of the production of hypotheses departing from an assumed theory. He also states that the arguments of each one of the hypotheses would be in fact, the arguments of parts of the theory. So the deductive method is a hypothetical-deductive method and is based on explanation and prediction in contrast with the inductive method which is based only on description. An induction derived just from observation is incomplete and cannot explain the hypothesis of a general rule. In contrast, the deductive method is based on rationalism that highlights reason rather than experience as the most important cognitive tool, in the acquisition of knowledge. There are linguists interested in the recollection and organization of data that focus on the use of language, as well as in the development of theories about this collected data. But there are also linguists who turned their attention to explicative hypotheses about a fact which was then tested, verified and compared with the available data, making use of deduction. In this sense, the deductive method is very much related to explanatory theories. As Silver, Strong, & Perini (2007), highlight, the deductive approach is related to the deductive reasoning and goes from the more general to the more specific. The teacher starts with a general theory and then narrows down to specific hypotheses.

 Chastain (1988), states that deductive teaching proceeds from rules to examples and states that the most effective way to learning a language is to comprehend, understand, use and apply rules. As the deductive approach deals with rules and they play an important role, Swan (1994) explains what makes a rule a good rule and lists six criteria of grammar rules claiming that a rule should be governed by the following aspects:

a) Truth - a rule must be similar to reality in its explanation.

b) Demarcation - a rule should show the limits on the use of a form.

c) Clarity - a rule should be clear and without obscure terminology.

d) Simplicity - rules should not overburden students with sub-categories and sub-sub-categories, there must be a limit to the great amount of exceptions.

e) Closeness – a rule or explanation should make use of structures that are familiar to students.

f) Relevance – a rule should answer those questions that students need answer. For example, questions with prepositions at the end of the clause may be challenging for some students. Some English learners need a different treatment of this structure than other learners who have similar structures in their native tongue.

According to Harmer (1998: 49) a deductive approach often fits into a lesson structure known as PPP that stands for Presentation, Practice, Production. This method can be used for most isolated grammatical items and in this type of lessons, the teacher explains and demonstrates the meaning and form of the new language (e.g. prepositions, future tense, etc.). Then the students can practise. This stage of practice according to Harmer is called controlled practice and contains activities guided and controlled by the teacher, before going on to the production stage in which students can practise more freely the new language acquired.

The deductive approach is also known as a rule-driven method and as Thornbury (1999: 30) claims there are some advantages and disadvantages of this type of approach:

a) The rule-driven is time-saving. The teacher can quickly explain many rules and then allow time for application and practice.

b) The deductive approach is suitable for learners with an analytical learning style.

c) It is worth pointing out that this type of approach deals with the cognitive processes in language acquisition.

d) Last, but not least, the deductive approach allows teachers to deal with language points as these come up.

The disadvantages according to Thornbury (1999: 30) are the following:

a) Some students may associate the learning of a language with the knowledge of a set of rules.

b) Learning may be understood as mere transmission or transfer of knowledge with few implication of the students in the interaction process.

c) A lesson that starts with grammar presentation may be unattractive for learners or they may not have the proper level of metalanguage or grammar terminology.

As we can see from the advantages and disadvantages mentioned above, in the deductive strategy the teacher plays an important role since this approach is more teacher-centred. The teacher conducts the lesson, guides, leads, explains concepts and then helps the students to practise the concepts already acquired.

Over the time the inductive learning was identified as being a discovery and problem-solving learning strategy. According to Thornbury (1999:49) the inductive approach is a rule-discovery method. Without knowing the rule, learners study examples from which an understanding of the rule derives. The inductive rule is, in fact, the way through which language is acquired, this means, exposure to a lot of input until the patterns of the language become evident. Learning through experience is the natural way of acquiring knowledge, since students are involved in detecting patterns and working out the rule for themselves. In the opinion of Alcaraz-Varó (1990), the inductive teaching is based on particular aspects of a language that are studied and observed until the learner achieves to understand more general aspects. The inductive approach has its foundation on empiricism that emphasizes the role of experience, evidence and sensory perception in the formation of ideas. According to him inductive teaching implies the following four steps:

a) statement of a problem

b) collection of data through observation

e) formulation of hypotheses

d) verification and analysis of the formulated hypotheses.

As specified by Chastain (1988), inductive teaching assumes that students learn better when they use examples to infer and formulate their own rules.

Harmer (1998) calls the inductive approach the boomerang sequence and explains that with this method students see examples and try to work out the rules for themselves. That means that students are involved in discovery activities as they have to work rather than receive everything from the teacher. As specified by Harmer (1998), with discovery activities, students enjoy working things out and the language they acquire through this method is powerful because they have to make an effort. However, not all students feel comfortable with this approach.

There are advantages and disadvantages of working a rule out. The pros would be the following in accordance with Thornbury (1999:54):

a) Through rule-discovery the learning process becomes more meaningful and memorable because learners are more opened to their existing mental structures than rules they have been presented with.

b) The mental effort involved leads to a memorable and meaningful learning.

c)In this learning process, learners are active not passive and this fact motivates them to pay more attention.

d) It favours pattern-recognition and problem-solving abilities. It is more suitable for learners who like to be involved in such a method.

e) If the problem-solving is done in groups, learners can get extra language practice.

f) The inductive approach leads learners to autonomy and helps them to be self-reliant.

Some of the disadvantages of the inductive teaching in agreement with Thornbury (1999: 55) are the following:

a) Students may believe that rules are the objective of language learning rather than a means.

b) Students need time to work out the rule, so, there can be little time for productive practice.

c) Students may hypothesize and deduce a wrong rule.

d) Teachers need to organize the lesson carefully, in order to guide learners to a correct deduction of the rule and it can place heavy demands on teachers in planning their lessons.

e) Some students may feel frustrated and they would prefer to be told the rule.

So, inductive learning is rather a student-centred approach and is based on students´ implication and noticing of the concepts presented by the teacher without giving any explanation about how the concept is used but always guiding and leading students in the way of inferring and discovering. After students explore the concept they can formulate hypotheses and determine the grammar rule.

3. TEACHING PREPOSITIONS FROM A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

3.1. PREPOSITIONS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN ENGLISH

In this thesis I make reference to teaching prepositions as the selected grammar aspect and object of study. I then focus on how prepositions can be taught by means of both methods, deductive and inductive, and the role of the cognitive approach in teaching prepositions.

James (2007) affirms that each language has its own set of grammar rules and when

someone wants to learn a foreign language, there is a point of conflict between the rules already known in the mother tongue and the rules of the foreign language.

In English prepositions are very difficult to be used correctly. Even though they are quite short, they can cause more problems than any other parts of speech. However, learners of English have to know how prepositions function because these are necessary markers to the structure of a sentence. There are over 100 prepositions in English and the majority of the sentences that people produce contain at least one preposition. Compared with the vast number of nouns, adjectives and verbs, prepositions are very small in number. According to Grubic (2004) the most common are: *at, by, for, in, of, on, to* and *with* and the top 50 prepositions included also: *at, in and on*. However, three out of ten most frequent words of English are prepositions, this means that the number of times people need to use a particular preposition is much higher than for an ordinary word such as a noun, adjective, or verb. Prepositions are used steadily in English, but it is often difficult to know which preposition to use. According to Lindstromberg (2010) prepositions are one of the most difficult areas because they are confusing and some prepositions appear to be "polysemous".They tend to be the hardest for learners of English due to the fact that they have multiple meanings and usages. (e.g. *at, by, on*). An English learner has to understand the nuances of English prepositions in order to be able to use them and pin down what they want to express. As stated by Quirk et. al (1993) prepositions represent the relationship between entities, that is, a relationship in space between an object and another object, a relationship in time between events and relationships such as cause and instrument. Watcyn-Jones & Allsop (2010) also define prepositions as words that express relationships in space and time as well as other more abstract relationships: cause, purpose, possession, exception, result and many others.

Prepositions are difficult taking into account that a small number of words cover a very wide range of concrete and abstract meanings, and the differences between them are not always very clear or systematic. It is important to know which preposition to use in order not to say the wrong thing. Huddleston & Pullum (2002) when explaining the traditional definition of prepositions assert that they are words that govern and normally precede, a noun or a pronoun and which express the latter's relation to another word.

The term "govern" indicates that the preposition determines the case of the noun or pronoun. In agreement with Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) prepositions are classified depending on form, function and meaning.

Depending on form they are simple (e.g. from, of, to, etc.) and complex (e.g. in front of, next to, etc.). As stated by Lindstromberg (2010) prepositions are classified by domain of application. There are prepositions of time (e.g. after, before, at, in, on, for, till until, etc.) of place (e.g. beside, inside, in, on, at, over, under, etc.) of direction and movement (e.g. from, towards, across, onto, into, etc.) or of instrument and cause (e.g. with, by, of etc.).

Watcyn-Jones (2010) and Eastwood (2013) classify prepositions by their usage as follows: verb+ preposition (e.g. think about, believe in, arrive at, pray for, etc.), noun + preposition (e.g. the opposite of, an interest on, a demand for, etc), preposition + noun+ preposition (e.g. by virtue of, in addition to, in favour of, etc.), verb+ noun+ preposition (e.g. pay a visit to, take advantage of, have confidence in, etc.), adjective + preposition (e.g. afraid of, angry with, happy about, keen on, etc.)

Watcyn-Jones, P. & Allsop J. (2010) say that prepositions have several functions and another classification could be by their function. For example, the preposition `at´ has as many as 18 different functions. There are some examples taken from Lindkvist (1950: 75-88, 208-218, and Eastwood (2013: 290): time (clock time and meal time), e.g. at ten o´clock, at lunch; space, e.g. at school, at the airport; events, e.g. at the party; reaction, e.g. surprised at, amazed at; level of ability, e.g. good at; measurement, e.g. three at a time.

3.2. PREPOSITIONS AND THE COGNITIVE APPROACH

It is generally believed that learning how to use prepositions correctly is a problematic area because prepositions seem to be everywhere and it is difficult to provide students with rules explaining how to use them. The most common strategy employed by teachers was teaching the multiple senses of prepositions by rote. For a long time, it was considered that prepositions have no explanations and the only way to learn them was in a natural way through examples or learning them by heart. Taking into account this idea, the deductive approach could not be used in the case of prepositions because there were no rules nor explanations to help learners to understand their uses.

As an alternative to this situation the cognitive constructivism theory, based on meaningful learning, emerged in the ´80s and ´90s.

As specified by Cooper (2009) this theory pointed out that meaning is "created through some form of representational equivalence between language and mental context".

With this representational equivalence, meanings can be understood and language can be acquired. The cognitive procedure of meaningful learning processes information and provides basis for explaining language usages, in our case, prepositions uses. According to Fischer (1979) the deductive approach has been associated with the cognitive method while the inductive was associated with the audio-lingual method. With the audio-lingual method the student was encouraged to learn in a natural way without any explicit rule.

The development of the cognitive teaching with preference for the deductive approach has its origin in cognitive psychology. Ausubel (1968) affirmed that it is important to state general principles before learning tasks. Selinger (1975) demonstrated that the deductive approach implies a long-term retention of language aspects. As we have already seen, grammar plays an important role in teaching a language and as stated by Richards and Renandya (2002) to be a communicative speaker, one should master the rules of a language but also should know how these rules convey meaning in communication.

Little space is devoted to prepositions in English language teaching course-books. They give just a general overview but do not provide explanations or specific rules on their uses. Important aspects of prepositions are not mentioned. However there are some theorists that studied in detail the case of prepositions and thanks to them, we can use today the deductive approach in teaching prepositions through meaningful learning based on a cognitive perspective.

Cognitive linguistic researchers like Rohlfing (2001), Evans & Tyler (2005), Lindstromberg (1996), Lakoff (1987), Boers & Demecheleer (1998) dedicated their attention to the semantic nature of English prepositions. The majority of studies based on teaching prepositions from a cognitive perspective focused both on the literal meaning as on the extended uses of prepositions due to the fact that prepositions are polysemous items and the spatial sense of prepositions is extended to abstract domains and conceptual metaphors.

This study is based both on basic uses as well as on some extended uses of prepositions as I consider that English learners still face difficulties in understanding prepositions.

Through the meaningful learning we are able nowadays to understand why "There is a notice **on** the door" but "There is somebody **at** the door"; "Rommel is **in** Cairo" but also "Rommel is **at** Cairo", I am **at** Intur" but I am **in** the hotel Intur", "The cow is **on** the bottle" but not "The cow is **in** the bottle".

Rohlfing (2001) asserts that languages differ in the way they categorize space. Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1998) affirm that even in closely-related languages there may be a huge difference in the way prepositions are used. Let us have a brief comparison of the Spanish preposition "*en*" for some basic spatial relations and how it matches up with English equivalents.

(1) The child put the piece of glass ***in*** his pocket.

   El niño metió el trozo de cristal en su bolsillo.

(2) The child wrote his answer ***on*** the board.

   El niño escribió su respuesta en la pizarra.

(3) The concert was **at** the university.

   El concierto fue en la universidad.

As we can see, scenes that may be placed into separate categories in one language, may be placed into the same category in another language. The Spanish preposition "*en*" matches up with three English equivalents: *at, in and on (in,* should be conceived of as an enclosed space; *on,* implies objects touching each other with a relationship on horizontal or non-horizontal surface*; at,* indicates location where an activity takes place).

This mismatch between the two languages poses major challenges and without understanding the specific nuances of these prepositions, learners of English may find them difficult to understand. However meaningful learning enhances learners´ understanding and provides a way for effective teaching.

As Currie (2008) states cognitive constructivism is based on progressive teaching and cognitive structures are the basic mental processes people use to make sense of information.

In this study I will discuss one by one the prepositions *at, in* and *on* and I will use the terms "Subject" and "Landmark" that Lindsromberg (2010) uses to explain prepositions as I consider that for secondary school learners these terms are easy to understand.

The "Landmark" is the object of a preposition and indicates that a preposition may say something about where one thing is or moves in relation to a point of reference or landmark.

"Subject" refers to what stands in a relation of place or path to a landmark:

e.g. <u>The cat</u> is on <u>the mat</u>.

Subject   Landmark
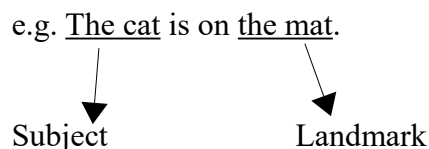
3.3.1. THE PREPOSITION *AT*

In the opinion of Lindstromberg (2010:174) to understand the preposition *AT* in the spatial sense implies a mental act of adjusting the perspective of an image to view a larger area as if viewed from farther away. Sometimes *at* is quite vague in the relationship between Subject and Landmark. But *at* is not vague in all aspects and at least there are three quite clear functional meanings.

<u>*AT* for zooming out, intersections and junctions</u>

Lindstromberg (2010) explains that *at* in terms of viewpoints such as distal (far) or proximal (near) involves mentally viewing the Landmark from distance, in contrast with *on* that involves a proximal viewpoint.

So the difference between: "something at a street corner" and "something on the street corner" would be explained with the figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1

Something **on** a street corner
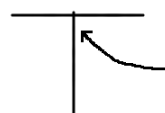
Conceptualizer´s view point is proximal.

Figure 2

Something **at** a street corner

Conceptualizer´s view point is distant

In Figure 1 the orange circle is the Subject and the corner street is the Landmark. We can visualize both of them and how they are physically arranged. In contrast Figure 2 represents the same Subject and Landmark but how we mentally view the scene because the image has been zoomed out. The depiction of this visualization has to include an arrow to indicate the Subject and the Landmark.

<u>*AT* for points on a route-way stations, ports of call, pause points, end points</u>

At is used for actions or events that take place at points along a route:

(1) We got off the ship **at** all ports.

If the landmark is a city as a whole, we can deduce from the context that the landmark can be an airport, a train or bus station, a dock or any point of dis(embarkation).

(2) Our flight from Islamabad to Manchester had a stopover **at** Dubai.

A "route point Landmark" also includes boundaries, borders, frontiers and edges, a turning point or pause points on (semi-) metaphorical routes.

(3) A visit to Canada begins with a stop **at** customs.

(4) He pause **at** the edge of the semi-circle, waiting politely for her to finish.

(5) Make a right turn **at** the first light.

(6) I stopped **at** page 7. [cf., Lindkvist, 1978:52]

In example 6, *at* is vague as we do not know is the reader stopped before the first word of page 7, just after the last word, or somewhere in between.

<u>*AT* for contact with edges, ends and extremities in general</u>

The difference between *at* the edge of something and near/by/close to the edge, is that *at* indicates that the Subject is in contact with the Landmark when this is an extremity of something.
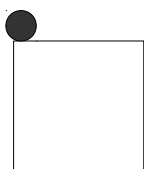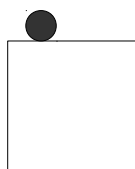

Figure 3	Figure 4
(7) A circle **at** the edge of the square	(8) A circle **near/by/close to** the edge of the square.

<u>*AT* with hotels and restaurants</u>

There is a difference between phrases such as **at** the Ritz, **at** the Morelli´s, **at** the Odeon and *in* the hotel/*in* the restaurant/*in* the theatre. Lindkvist (1978: 63) explains that *at* is more common before proper names like Ritz, Morelli´s, Odeon than before "building" nouns like hotel, restaurant or theatre.

The explanation for this difference between *at* and *in* is that nouns like hotel or restaurant designates an enclosure space with roof and walls.

<u>*AT* as an expression of typical activity-related connection</u>

At indicates that the Subject has a typical, practical connection with its Landmark.

(9) There is someone **at** the door.

This means more than just the fact that someone is outside and near the door. It means that someone is there for a typical, place-related purpose as for example to enter the house and to speak to someone.

<u>*AT* as an indicator of "focal point"</u>

With verbs such as look, gaze, stare and gape, the preposition *at* indicates sharp focus on the Landmark.

(10) Look at that!

When the viewer focus is not sharp some other prepositions may be used.

<u>*AT* used with a view to general localization in the form of a point in space where something is present</u>

In the opinion of Lindkvist (1950: 209) *at* is used also to denote cities, towns, villages, suburbs to indicate that something is located within the areas constituted by them, with areas containing buildings serving certain purposes such as farm, estate, camp, station to indicate that something is located within these areas but to give a general localization in the form of a point in space where something is present.

(11) **At** Philadelphia the famous Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776.

(12) The most striking perhaps is the great stone barn **at** Chale Manor Farm.

<u>*AT* for a place where a particular activity happens within a space or area</u>

According to Lindkvist (1950: 2037-238) *at* is used with buildings located within the spaces they form to indicate that they are the centres of activities peculiar to them.

(13) **At** theatres evening dress is nearly always worn in the boxes and stalls, and generally in the dress circle.

Similarly Swan & Walter (2011) add that <u>*AT* is used to talk about where something happens</u>: a meeting place, a point on a journey, somebody´s workplace; things that people do or the places where they do them: *at* a concert, *at* the office, *at* work, *at* a restaurant.

(14) I´ll meet you **at** the cinema.

(15) Turn left **at** the traffic lights.

<u>*AT* used for addresses and events</u>

As stated by Bolton & Goodey (2001) *at* is also used in addresses and express events such as: party, concert, festivity, etc.

(14) Carmen lives **at** 23, Mill Street.

(15) She met him **at** a party last night.

Swan &Walter (2011) highlight that <u>*AT* and *IN* are often both possible</u>, we prefer *IN* when we think more about the place itself.

(16) He gave the talk **at** Central College.

(17) There were over 800 people **in** the hall.

AT is not used with names of very big places:

(18) We rented a car **at** Heathrow.

(19) We rented a car **in** London.

3.3.2. THE PREPOSITION *IN*

The uses described for the preposition *IN* according to Lindstromberg (2010: 31) are the following:

<u>*IN* for something surrounded on all sides, enclosure within a surface or area</u>

We use *IN* when we think of the Landmark as something with a boundary and an interior, that is a Subject which is enclosed by a Landmark on all sides. The preposition *in* keeps the focus on the result (enclosure) and in a context it is clear that enclosure was preceded by movement.

(1) We slept **in** the car but * We crashed **in** the tree.

Cienki (1989), Herskovits (1986), Miller & Johnson-Laird (1976) describe the preposition *in* as appropriate when the Subject is located wholly or in part at the interior of the Landmark. Vandeloise (1991, 1994) clarifies that the functional relation between the Subject and the Landmark includes containment.
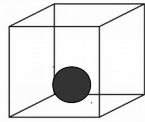
15

Figure 5　A circle **in** the square.

According to Lindkvist (1950:7) *IN* has the following usages:

<u>*IN* for books and publications</u>

In is used with complement as books and publications to indicate that a representation in print or writing is contained within the space denoted by the complement.

(2) He could cry over the stories he read **in** his magazines.

<u>*IN* for atmospheric, physico- geographical and similar phenomena</u>

It is used with complements denoting the space above or around the earth: air, sky, heavens and indicate that something is within these spheres.

(3) The night did not darken, for the moon was **in** the sky.

<u>*IN* for big areas</u>

In is used with complements that covers a large part of the surface of the earth: sea, ocean, lake, river.

(4) A little later when the ice **in** the lakes and streams had melted, the skins were packed in bales and placed in large birch-bark canoes.

<u>*IN* for location within or along a line</u>

In is used with complements to indicate that one or more objects dwell or move within or along a real or imaginary line. It is also used with complements denoting streets, roads, squares, open spaces in towns along their outer lines.

(5) **In** King Street, west of the Square, are the Orleans Club and the St. James´s Theatre.

Herskovits (1986) describes the preposition *in* with a geometry-based approach.

<u>*IN* for inclusion of a geometric construct in a one-, two-, three-, dimensional geometric construct.</u>

(6) Spatial entity in container: the milk **in** the glass.

(7) Gap/object "embedded" in physical object: the nail **in** the board.

(8) Physical object "in the air": the bird **in** the air.

Regarding the example (8) Evans and Tyler (2003) clarify that *in* denotes spatial scenes in which an atmospheric condition is conceptualized as enveloping the Landmark (e.g. The flag flapped **in** the wind. The child shivered **in** the cold.)

(9) Spatial entity in part of space or environment: the chair **in** the middle of the room.

(10) Spatial entity in area: a line **in** the margin.

(11) Physical object in a roadway: a truck **in** the road.

As stated by Bowerman & Choi (2001) there is a difference between inclusion and contact/support via an external surface of the Landmark.

IN for difference between inclusion and contact

(12) a pear **in** a bowl

(13) a handle **on** a cup

In (12) the Subject is loosely in contact with the Landmark while in (13) the Subject is incorporated into the landmark, this means, being inside and tightly attached to an external surface or point.

Sinha & Kuteva (1995) highlights another criteria to determine prepositions selection that includes attributed intention.

IN for attributed intention

(14) Rommel is **in** Cairo.

(15) Rommel is **at** Cairo.

In, in (14) suggests that the Landmark is the Subject´s final destination, in contrast with the preposition *at* in (15) that suggests that the Subject has merely reached the Landmark en route to its final destination.

Evans and Tyler (2003) explain the proto-scene for the preposition *IN* and clarify that constitutes a spatial relation in which the Subject is located within a Landmark which has three elements: interior, a boundary and an exterior.

(16) The horse munched grass in the field.

The Subject (the horse) is "contained" by the Landmark (the field) and there is a containment relationship because the field has an interior (that part which constitutes the

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field), a boundary (a track, a road, a fence, a hedge which marks the perimeter), and an exterior (that part which is not the field).

Similarly, Evans and Tyles (2003) add that <u>IN mediates the spatio-functional relation in spatial scenes</u> involving: continents, seas, countries, cities, towns, regions, provinces, etc.

(17) China is **in** Asia.

(18) London is the largest city **in** the United Kingdom.

(19) She lives **in** New York City.

3.3.3. THE PREPOSITION *ON*

The uses described for the preposition ON according to Lindstromberg (2010: 52) are the following:

<u>*ON* for contact and support</u>
It refers to the spatial meaning of *on* when the Subject is in contact with a Landmark that is supporting a surface.

(1) The book is **on** the table.

<u>*ON* for contact at ends and edges</u>
In this context there can be a supportive contact that blends into non-supportive contact.

(2) Only a rattlesnake has a rattle **on** the end of its tail.
The Subject (the rattle) is part of the snake and this implies the notion of "contact" and also the notion of "support" because without a firm attachment, the rattle would fall off.

(3) Both of these campgrounds are right **on** the ocean.
In this case, we have a variation from the basic meaning due to the fact that the Landmark (the ocean) does not supports the campgrounds

<u>*ON* for forceful contact from above</u>
We can find expressions having to do with downward movement of a Subject into a position of contact with a Landmark.

(4) A cat pouncing **on** a mouse.

ON for contact from any direction, including very forceful contact

On refers to contact usually from above but in fact can come from any angle. When we tap or knock something, our action affects the whole object. But if we tap or knock *on* something, or action affects the thing in a more superficial way. With the preposition *on*, there is an impact-reducing cushion between subject and verb.

(5) knock **on** the door vs knock the door.

ON and the landmark as an object of slower action

In this case the landmark is the object of slow and/or long-lasting action.

(6) Scratch your name **on** a wall.

Herskovits (1986) describes the preposition *ON for geometric construct X to be contiguous with a line or surface.*

(7) Spatial entity supported by physical object: the man **on** the chair

(8) Physical object attached to another: a dog **on** a lash

(9) Physical object transported by a large vehicle: the children **on** the bus

(10) Physical object contiguous with a wall: a chest of drawers **on** the wall

(11) Spatial entity located on geographical location: the players **on** the football field

(12) Physical object over another: the dark clouds **on** the island

Cienki (1989), Herskovits (1986), Miller & Johnson-Laird (1976), Lindkvist (1950) attribute to the preposition *ON the value of contact between the Subject and the Landmark.* So, the preposition *on* is appropriate only when the Subject is in contact with the Landmark or when the contact is approximated. Apart from "contact" it is also important the "support" of the Subject by the Landmark. The importance of "contact" and "support" when we use the preposition *on*, determines us understand why *on* is used in certain situation and not in others.
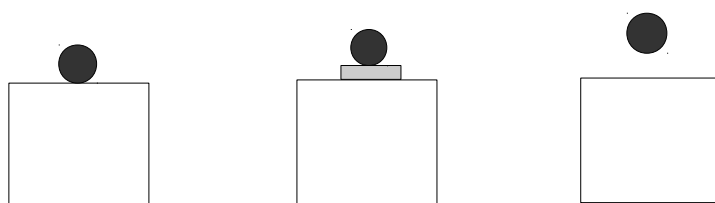

Figure 6 (a)   (b)   (c)

(13) The circle is **on** the square in (a) and (b) but not in (c).

In (a) the Subject is in contact with the Landmark, in (b) the contact is approximated by the Subjects´contact with an object which is in turn in contact with the Landmark.

The same linguists mentioned above Cienki (1989), Herskovits (1986), Miller & Johnson-Laird (1976), Lindkvist (1950) and Lindstromberg (1996) described <u>*ON* for support of the subject by the Landmark.</u>

In this case the Landmark exerts a force on the Subject. This force can come from below: e.g. a book rests atop a table, from the side: e.g. a magnet is stuck to a refrigerator, or from above: e.g. a puppeteer moves a marionette.

The importance of "support" is demonstrated by the unacceptability of the example:

(14) The circle is **on** the square, in Figure 7, because neither support the other, they are just in contact.
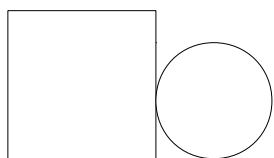
Figure 7

Boggess (1978) clarifies that "support" without "contact" can be sufficient for use of *on*. A ball in a box *on* a table, despite the lack of contact between the ball and the table, the ball can be said to be *on* the table.

Swan & Walter (2011) explain the use of the preposition <u>*ON* in comparison with the preposition *IN*.</u>

They state that *on* is used with two-dimensional Landmarks such as: floors, tables, walls, ceilings., while *in* is used with three dimensional Landmarks such as: rooms, boxes, towns, etc.

(15) There is a spider **on** the ceiling.

(16) There was a bird **in** my room.

The same authors, Swan & Walter (2011) clarify that <u>clothes and jewellery are *ON* people while people are *IN* clothes.</u>

(17) She has got three lovely bracelets **on** her arm.

(18) Who´s the man **in** the dark coat?

3.4. The role of visual aids in explaining meaning

As stated by Harmer (1998) one way of explaining the meaning of something is to show it. We can use pictures, drawings or real objects taking into account that visual aids have a great importance in the teaching process. Virginia French Allen (1983) states that visual aids are available in many forms: pictures cut from newspapers and magazines, flashcards, wall charts, transparencies projected onto the board and drawings.

Hill (1990) says that visuals have the advantages of being inexpensive, available in most situations or personal, that is, they are selected by the teacher. This leads to an automatic sympathy between teacher and materials, and consequent enthusiastic use by bringing images into the artificial world of the language classroom.

Bowen (1991) says that pictures help to teach listening, speaking, reading, and writing and allow the teacher to integrate these skills constructively. They inspire imaginativeness in both teacher and students and provide variety at all levels of proficiency. Drawings catch the students' attention, cause enjoyment and amusement. The teacher can organize different activities through drawing on the board. Drawing is a simple way to engage the students´ body as well as their creativity when they are learning about prepositions. The secret of explaining meaning effectively is to choose the best and proper method to fit that aspect of language that needs to be explained.

3.5. Games in the teaching process

McLester (2005) states that, through games in the classroom, students learn best actively and visually. In an effort to create an engaging learning environment many teachers have incorporated games in their teaching process. Independently of the format, traditional games such as board games and dominoes or more modern games such as: Kahoot, The wheel, etc., gaming activities benefit the learners because encourages experimentation, problem solving, interactivity and collaborative working.

Kahoot, for example was designed for social learning, with learners gathered around a common screen such an interactive whiteboard, projector or a computer monitor. The game design is such that the players are required to look up from their devices.

I chose this tool for the following relevant characteristics:

It is flexible: teachers can create a learning game for all ages, in a few minutes.

It is simple: it works on any device with internet connection and no account or log in is required for players to join a game.

It is diverse: it can be used to reinforce knowledge, to introduce new topics, to review or use it for tests.

It is engaging: it fosters social learning and unlocks learner´s potential.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. PARTICIPANTS

The present experimental research was carried out in a Secondary School from Almazora. During the first practice period I observed and chose the groups for my research. For collecting the data, two classes of 10th grade were selected with a total number of 47 participants and an average age between 15 and 16. The 10th A grade, which was the deductive experimental group consisted of 22 subjects, 8 female and 14 male. The 10th B grade, which was the inductive experimental group consisted of 25 subjects, 6 female and 19 male.

Both groups were experimental groups due to the fact that in my research I made use of the deductive and the inductive teaching strategies and my aim was to apply different teaching techniques and methods in order to see which one is more adequate and helpful for students during the learning process.

4.2. MATERIALS AND INSTRUMENTS

MATERIALS

While preparing the materials for the research, I decided to focus just on the uses of the prepositions *at, in* and *on* as prepositions of place to be taught from a deductive perspective with one group and from an inductive perspective with the other group.

In the methodology used with the deductive group I prepared 6 lessons of teaching material of 15-20 minutes each (**see Appendix B, lessons 1-6**). The procedure is described in detail in the Procedure section below. After the presentation and teaching material through the rule-driven method, I engaged my students in a series of practical activities (**see Appendix D 1-3**) which were guided and controlled by the teacher.

I also made use of a domino game (**see Appendix F**) as a relaxing but educational tool and finally I prepared a revision exercise (**see Appendix H**).

For the inductive groups I prepared the same amount of lessons (**see Appendix C, lessons 1-6**) from a rule-discovery perspective. The procedure is described in detail in the Procedure section below. After the time dedicated to the rule-discovery method, I engaged the students in practical activities in order to foster their knowledge (**see Appendix E 1-3**) and I also used a board game to make the teaching and learning process a nice time (**see Appendix G**). Finally, for the revision time I used the same revision activity as the other group. (**see Appendix H**)

INSTRUMENTS

The instruments that I used for this research are: a pretest, a post-test and a questionnaire which are described as follows:

Before applying the teaching and learning methods with the selected groups mentioned above, I decided to start my research with a pretest (**see Appendix A**), in order to know both, previous knowledge of the students as well as types of problems that students may face with prepositions in general. In this pre-test I did not focus on a specific type of prepositions because I wanted to know general difficulties that students may struggle with. As stated by Celce-Murcia (2001), learners of English face three types of problems: omitting a needed preposition, using an extra preposition or choosing the wrong preposition.

My predictive test was designed with six multiple choice questions through which I could check out if students were omitting prepositions, using extra prepositions or choosing a wrong preposition. The length of the test was of 10-15 minutes. For every correct answer students obtained 1,5 points, which multiplied by 6 questions were 9 points, with 1 point ex officio. The total score was 10 points.

After the pretest and after applying the teaching material I finished with a post-test (**see Appendix I**). It was the same post-test for both groups and consisted of two parts: the first one contained 3 exercises related to the usage of the prepositions *at, in* and *on*. In the first exercise students were required to complete 7 sentences using *in, at* and *on* as preposition of place; for every correct answer, students obtained 0,5 points multiplied by 8 fill in blanks were 3,5 points. The second activity consisted in choosing the correct form between two given options, for every correct answer, students obtained 0,5 points,

which multiplied by 7 were 3,5 points. Finally, the last activity consisted in answering some questions about some pictures; for every correct answer students obtained 0,4 points, which multiplied by 5 were 2 points. The total grade point average was 9 with 1 point ex officio. The duration of the first part of the test was of 25 minutes.

For the second part of the post-test I decided to use a Kahoot **(see Appendix J),** which is a game-based learning platform used as educational technology in classrooms.

I knew that my students would enjoy playing and I also wanted to apply a modern method and something different apart from the common traditional tests. This type of activity was done in teams of 5 to 6 participants to encourage teamwork, given that not every student had a mobile phone and some of them did not have Internet access.

The aim of the activity was the development of the ability to recognise the use of prepositions and the objective was to practise prepositions of place. The task consisted in answering 14 questions choosing the correct option. The activity was done team versus team and the teacher provided the students with a game pin in order to participate. The game allowed the students to classify on three podiums depending on the number of correct answers. The duration of the second part of the test was of 15 minutes.

As a final aspect of the present study I decided to administer a questionnaire **(see Appendix K)** to 62 participants including also the deductive and the inductive experimental groups. The purpose of this questionnaire was to know their impressions and their difficulties as well as aspects that we, as teachers, could improve regarding the usage of prepositions. The questionnaire contained 7 questions with the following answers: "yes", "no" or "sometimes", and was completed anonymously in class and handed back on completion.

4.3. PROCEDURE

Each lesson consisted of approximately 15 minutes. This was the time I was offered at the end of each class. So, I thought that the best way was to start effectively by explaining the meaning of the three prepositions. The deductive approach consisted in a stage of presentation in which I explained and demonstrated the meaning and form of the selected prepositions through manipulation of examples and from a cognitive perspective. The teaching material also contained visual aids and activities appropriate for a rule-driven strategy.

The procedure applied for the deductive group is the following:

The first lesson was a warming-up lesson as well as an introduction to the selected prepositions and to some notions used with the deductive approach. The students were asked to look at three pictures and to answer three questions (**see Appendix B, Lesson 1**). After discussing the variety of answers, students could compare their answers with the correct ones and the teacher explained that the aim of the lesson was to learn how to distinguish the three prepositions: *at, in* and *on*.

Then they were given some definitions of specific notions such as "Subject" and "Landmark" used with the deductive approach (see the appendix B, lesson 1).

The second lesson was dedicated to teaching spatial usages of *at* in comparison with *in*. The teacher indicated that *at* is used for actions or events that take place at specific locations for example: an airport, a train station, a bus station, a pause point, an end point, while *in* mediates the spatio-functional relation involving big areas such as: continents, seas, countries, cities, towns, etc. (for detailed explanation s**ee the appendix B, lesson 2**). Visual aids such as pictures were used in helping students to understand the differences between the two prepositions. The teacher also gave the students more examples for better clarification.

Lesson three consisted in teaching the use of *in* for containment and *on* for contact and support. The teacher used some pictures so students could understand that *in* was used for something enclosed wholly or in part in the interior of a space. On the other side *on,* was attributed the value of contact and support (for detailed explanation **see appendix B, lesson 3**). The students had the possibility to practise these uses with some examples that the teacher wrote on the blackboard.

The fourth lesson was based on helping students to make differences between: "someone **at** the door", "someone knocking **on** the door", and "a notice **on** the door" (for detailed explanation **see appendix B, lesson 4**). Besides fully explanations of the uses of these prepositions, students were provided with helpful pictures. A connection with the Spanish equivalents was also discussed.

The fifth lesson was dedicated to teach the usage of *at* for places where particular activities happen in contrast with the usage of *in*. The students were also explained the difference between: "live *at* 23, Mill Street" and "live *in* Mill Street", which implies other uses of *at* and *in*. For detailed explanations (**see Appendix B, lesson 5**).

In the last lesson the teacher highlighted the usage of *at* and *in*, where both of them were possibles but with a slight difference depending on what was the intention

attributed. Then the students´attention was drawn to some uses of the preposition *on* in comparison with *in* (**see Appendix B, lesson 6**) for detailed explanation.

After the teaching process the students were involved in some practical activities in order to foster the knowledge acquired. The activities were varied: in the first activity (**see Appendix D, Worksheet 1**) the students had to look at some picture and answer a series of questions related to the pictures using the prepositions *at, in* or *on*. The second exercise consisted in filling in the missing prepositions.

The second worksheet (see **Appendix D, Worksheet 2**) consisted in recognizing the right preposition with the help of some picture in exercise 1 while exercise 2 consisted in underlying the correct preposition.

The last worksheet (see **Appendix D, Worksheet 3**) the students had to complete some gaps about preferences and habits using the prepositions *at, in* and *on*. The second exercise consisted in completing the rule for the prepositions of place.

The students had also the opportunity to enjoy a domino game (see **appendix F**) where organization and instructions are fully detailed. As the time was limited the revision worksheet (see **Appendix H**) was done at home and students received the key for this exercise.

The procedure and the lessons for the inductive group were quite different. As the inductive approach is a problem-solving learning, the students were not given the rules. The strategy implied formulation of hypotheses as well as verification and analysis of the formulated hypotheses as they sometimes hypothesized a wrong rule.

The procedure applied for the inductive group is the following:

In order to introduce the topic the teacher showed some pictures where the main character was Tim. The students were required to look at the pictures and discover some of the places Tim used to spend time. In this way they made use of the prepositions *at*, *in* and *on* and the teacher explained them which was the aim of the lesson as well as specific notions such as "Subject" and "Landmark" used with the inductive approach. (see **Appendix C, Lesson 1**)

Lesson two consisted in understanding the usage of the preposition *in* for enclosed spaces either wholly or partially as well as the use of this preposition for big areas or things covering a large part of the surface. They also could see the uses of the preposition *at* for specific locations and for junctions and intersections. The students made hypotheses being helped by a series of questions that the teacher prepared as a support in order to discover the rule. (see **Appendix C, Lesson 2**)

Lesson three consisted in understanding the usage of the preposition *on* for contact and support. The students´ attention was drawn to some pictures and were guided by the teacher through some questions that were designed to help the students to find a logical use of the prepositions.(see **Appendix C, Lesson 3**)

Lesson four consisted in three texts in which the three prepositions were used. The students were asked to read the texts and find examples and state rules for the uses of the selected prepositions. (see **Appendix C, Lesson 4**)

For lesson five the students were given some examples and were asked to categorize the prepositions in bold in three columns. Then the categories had to be sub-categorized. Through this type of practice the students had been able to distinguish between enclosed spaces, opened spaces, horizontal or vertical surfaces, places where activities happens, specific points, etc. (see **Appendix C, Lesson 5**).

The last lesson consisted in a mind map with several examples accompanied by small pictures. The students were asked to hypothesize each one of the examples on order to work out the rule and also to find similarities or differences between the uses of the three prepositions. (see **Appendix C Lesson 6**)

After the teaching time, the students were involved in several exercises in order to practise the use of the prepositions *at, in* and *on*.

The first worksheet (**see Appendix E, Worksheet 1**), consisted in completing some sentences with the prepositions *at*, *in*, or *on*. The second activity required the students to look at some pictures and decide which prepositions were suitable.

The second worksheet (**see Appendix E, Worksheet 2**) consisted in several pictures each one containing a sentence and three given answers. The students were required to choose the correct one.

In the third worksheet (**see Appendix E, Worksheet 3**) the students had the opportunity to practise the use of the prepositions *in*, *at* and *on* by filling in the correct prepositions. The students had also the opportunity to enjoy a board game by working in groups (see **appendix G**) where instructions are fully detailed. As the time was limited the revision worksheet (**see Appendix H**) was done at home and the students received the key for this exercise.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE PRETEST

Table 1. Deductive group. Grade point average pretest

Grade: 10th A – Deductive experimental group
No. students: 22
Grade point average: 5,84

Table 1 displays the number of students of the deductive experimental group who participated and the grade point average obtained on the pretest.
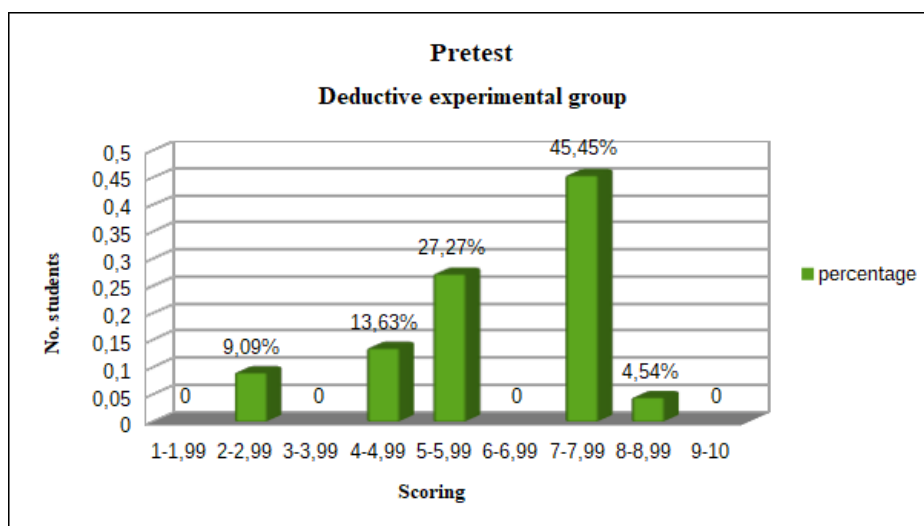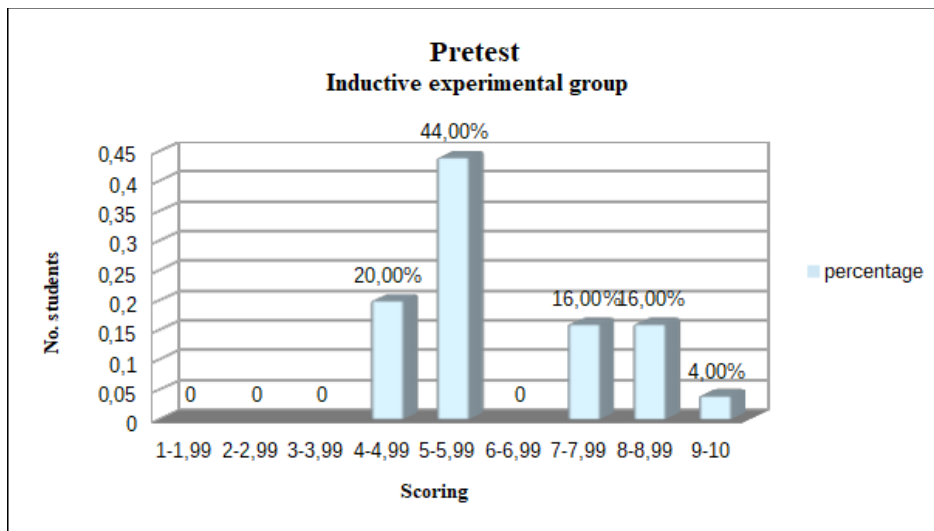

Figure 1. Deductive group. Pretest scoring

Figure 4 reports the results obtained by the deductive experimental group on the pre-test, in terms of percentages.

Table 2. Inductive group. Grade point average pretest

Grade: 10th B – Inductive experimental group
No. students: 25
Grade point average: 5,82

Table 2 displays the number of students of the inductive experimental group and the grade point average obtained on the pre-test.

Figure 2. Inductive group. Pretest scoring

Figure 2 displays the results obtained by the inductive experimental class and number of students with the same percentage.
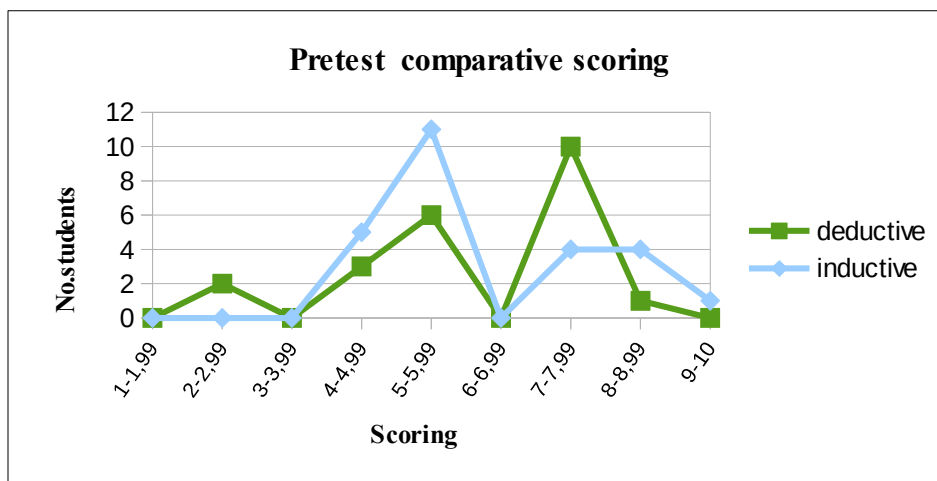
Figure 3. Pretest comparative scoring

Figure 3 reports the comparative scoring of both deductive and inductive groups and students with the same result.

As displayed in tables 1 and 2 and illustrated in figures 1 to 3, the students of 10th grade faced problems to identify the correct usage of prepositions. In the deductive experimental group more than half of the students used an extra preposition as for instance "At what time?" and a few of them chose to say "on what day?". This is due to the fact that students made use of their mother tongue common sense first and then tried to make the connection with English. This explains why students used the extra prepositions "at" in "at what time?" translated into Spanish "a que hora?" but only few

of them said "on what day?", "*en que día?*" which is uncommon for Spanish people, the correct form being "*que día?*". It is also curious the fact that some students who made a correct use of "what day?" instead of "on what day?" chose wrongly to say "on tomorrow".

Another aspect to point out is that more than half of the participants could not make the difference between the prepositions "in" and "on" and they wrongly chose to say: "The cow is in the bottle". Here again it is obvious the interlingual transfer because the students´s linguistic means fell short of achieving their communicative ends. This is understandable taking into account that the students´ exposure to the foreign language is limited to just three hours per week.

On the other hand 5 out of 22 students omitted a needed preposition, 6 out of 22 did not distinguish between "on the door" and "at the door" while only 11 out of 22 made a correct use of the preposition.

As I have already mentioned, I consider that three hours per week is not enough to acquire a high level in a foreign language. The students are not exposed to real contexts in order to practise the acquired contents and there is also few representation and explanation of prepositions in their textbooks.

Regarding the inductive experimental group, they also faced problems in making a correct use of prepositions. 60 % of the students chose the correct answer in the sentence "What time is she arriving?" and the majority of them were able to realize that there is no need to add an extra preposition in "What day is the conference?". For few of them "on what day?" sounded quite well, while 2 students seemed to be totally confused as, at first sight, they chose the correct answer, then crossed out it and chose the wrong one. It is also worth to mention that 92% of the students thought that there is no need for an extra preposition and only 2 students chose wrongly "on tomorrow" in "She is coming tomorrow".

Regarding their ability to choose the correct preposition and to distinguish between the prepositions "in" and "on", half of the participants were successful while the other half chose to say that "the cow was in the bottle". Concerning the omission of a needed preposition, only few of them made a correct use. Some omitted the needed preposition believing that "knock the door" was the correct answer, while others could not distinguish the difference between "knock at the door" and "knock on the door".

The results obtained by the inductive experimental group surprised me because this group was quite big. There were few girls and many boys. It was considered to have a

lower level than the deductive experimental class and it was quite famous for being full of energy and interested in anything else rather than learning. To my surprise and at the contrary I met teenagers who even though they were bouncy and zippy, they were also able to pay attention even though they seemed not doing it. During this research I could work quite well with this group and I learned not to be influenced by appearances.

As we can deduce from the results obtained, the students face problems with one of the three mentioned aspects in the research questions: omitting a needed preposition, using an extra preposition or choosing the wrong preposition.

5.2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE POST-TEST

Table 3. Deductive group. Grade point average post-test

Grade: 10th A –Deductive experimental group
No. students: 22
Grade point average: 6,31

Table 3 displays the number of students of the deductive experimental group and the grade point average obtained on the final test.
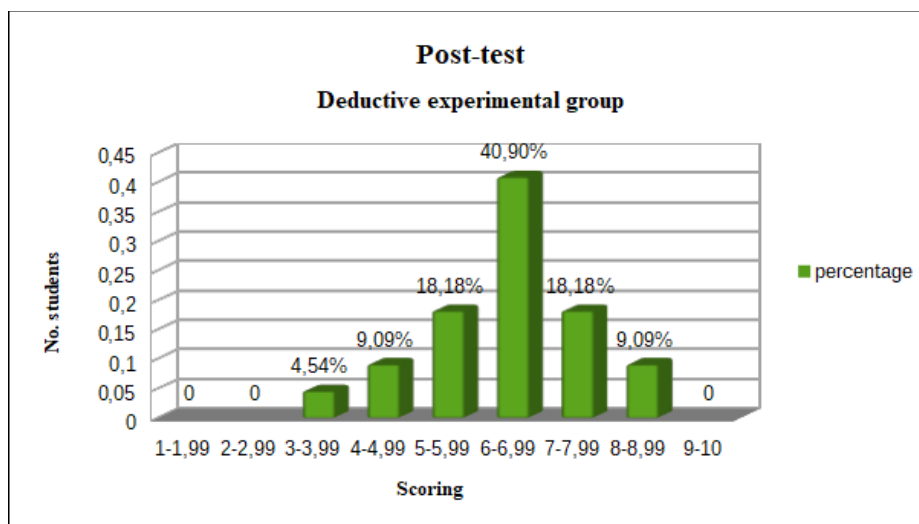
Figure 4. Deductive group. Post-test scoring

Figure 4 reports the percentage scoring obtained in the final test by the deductive experimental group.

Table 4. Inductive group. Grade point average post-test

Grade: 10th A – Inductive experimental group
No. students: 25
Grade point average: 6,27

Table 4 displays the number of students of the inductive experimental group and the grade point average obtained.
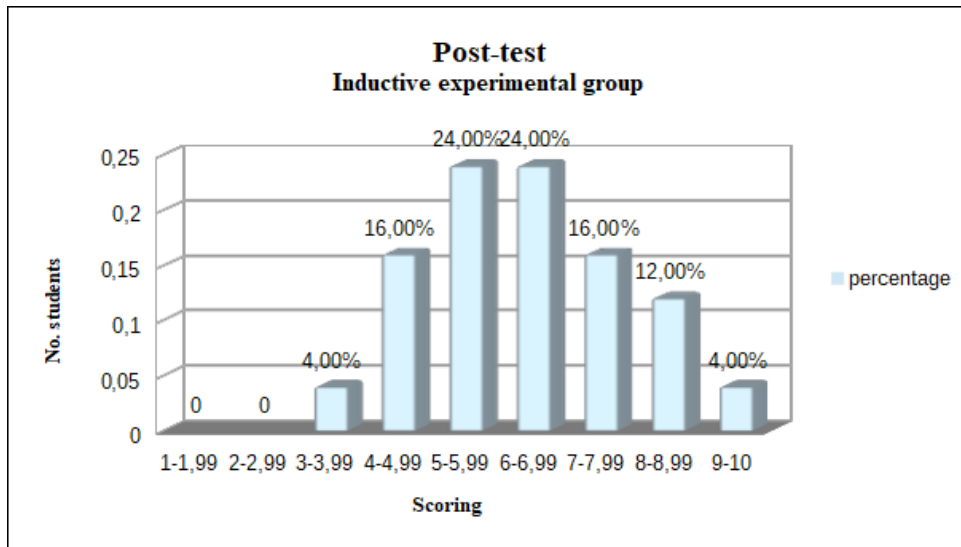
Figure 5. Inductive group. Post-test scoring

Figure 5 displays the results obtained by the inductive experimental group and the percentage of students with the same scoring
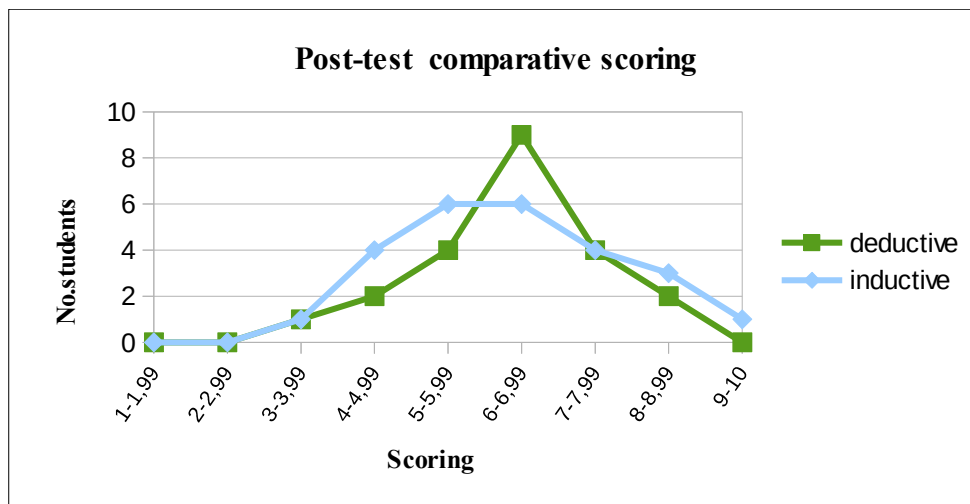
Figure 6. Post-test comparative scoring

Figure 6 reports the comparative scoring of both deductive and inductive groups and students with the same results.

As displayed in tables 3 and 4 and figures 4 to 6, there is a slight difference between the two classes regarding the final scoring. Both methods were effective and helpful for students even though they faced problems with some uses. For example the rule-driven method helped students to analyse and distinguish between uses. In the first and second activities more than half of the students made a good use of the preposition "in" when used for big areas and complements that cover a large part of a surface such as countries, cities, rivers, oceans, etc. More than half of the students used correctly the preposition "at" for particular locations and "on" used for vertical surfaces. Almost half of them were able to distinguish between "somebody at the door" and "a notice on the door". Taking into account these aspects and with respect to the RQ1 I can say that the deductive strategy is not a mere transmission of knowledge and that the cognitive processes play an important role in acquiring aspects of a language.

The only problem we faced was the limited time available and the fact that we did not dispose of a full lesson of 55 minutes for each session but rather several sessions of approximately 15 minutes. Taking into account these conditions, I am satisfied with the results even though they are not spectacular. I am sure that with the same participants, over a longer period of time, we would be able to obtain amazing scoring, as the teaching and learning process requires its due time.

Regarding my RQ2 the deductive method proved to be appropriate for young learners but some uses of some prepositions are still difficult for them to understand.

This is why some uses produced confusion in their minds and the most tricky were the following: "in your hand" and "on your nose"; and that "somebody can have something in his/her hand" but "have a mark on his/her nose".

As regards the third exercise (see Appendix I), the majority of the participants faced difficulty to distinguish "in" for enclosed spaces and containment versus "on" as relative position of an object with relation to another object implying contact and support, because they were influenced by the equivalents of these prepositions in their mother tongue. Of a total number of 22 participants 86,36 % passed the test, and only 13,64 % failed it. The grade point average was 6,31

Relative to the inductive experimental group and to the RQ3 respectively, the students seemed to be motivated by this strategy even though they also faced problems. More than half of the students identified correctly the usage of the preposition "in" for big areas and complements that covers a large part of a surface such as countries, cities, rivers, oceans, etc. Few participants understood and used correctly the preposition "on"

for horizontal and vertical surfaces as well as locations along a line, the majority made clear confusion between "in" and "on" and were influenced by their mother tongue. Regarding the usage of the preposition "at" almost all of them identified the correct use of "at" for addresses, but many failed to remember that "at" was used for places where particular activities take place. In contrast with the deductive experimental class, in the second activity students had the capacity to make a logical distinction between the uses of *in* and *on*, in "in your hand" and "on your nose". Almost half of the students did not face problems in understanding the difference between "*at* the door" and "*on* the door". The most tricky examples for the inductive experimental group were the difference between "the notice is on the door" and "the key is in the door". This is due to the fact that the key was in the door lock but on the image there was a door without specifying exactly "door lock". Of a total number of 25 students, 20% failed and 80% passed the test. The grade point average was 6, 27.

 Concerning RQ4, the two groups involved in the two different strategies obtained more or less the same result with a slight difference in favour of the deductive approach. Both groups were able to obtain better results than those obtained in the pretest. Comparing the pre-test and the post-test, in the deductive experimental group the number of students who had passed the test, raised. The percentage increased from 77,27% to 86,35 %. In the inductive experimental class, the percentage of students who had passed the test was the same 80% with the mention that 48 % obtained higher marks than in the pre- test. This means that the approaches and methods that I used along the period of acquiring and practising knowledge were helpful. The students demonstrated that they have potential in the use of prepositions, and the methods and techniques applied are useful.

As for RQ5, in both cases the visual aids resulted to be very helpful because they supported students in making connections and deducing the usage of the prepositions. Regarding games, in my opinion, they are catchy tools for students and I will talk more about this in discussing the results of the Kahoot in the second part of the post-test.

With reference to RQ6, comparing students with higher level and students with lower level, while reading the opinion of different theorists, some of them said that the inductive method should be applied with higher level students. I dared to do the contrary and I found that even if my students from the inductive group were considered lower students, they proved to be motivated and had the capacity to deal with the rule-discovery strategy.

Finally, after using these methods the development and improvement of students knowledge was significant even though not spectacular due to lack of time to assimilate the new information. The students did not obtain the same results, but there are very slight differences between the deductive and the inductive experimental groups.

5.3. Results and discussion of the Kahoot post-test

Table 5. Kahoot average score

DEDUCTIVE GROUP	INDUCTIVE GROUP
Players: 5 teams	Players: 6 teams
AVERAGE SCORE (POINTS)	
9729,80 points	10384,17 points

Table 5 represents the number of players for both, deductive and inductive groups and their average score.
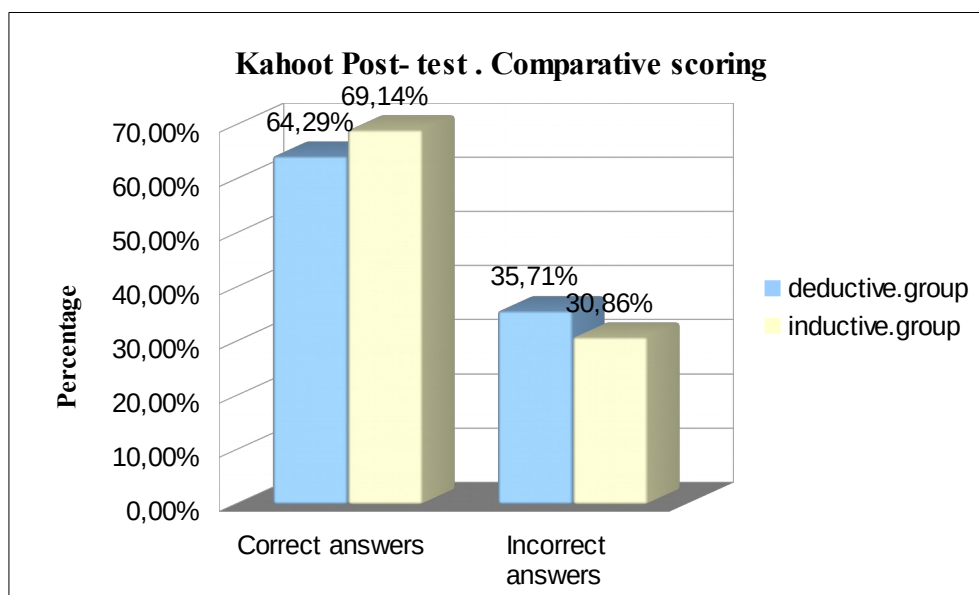
Figure 7. Kahoot comparative scoring

Figure 7 reports the comparative results obtained in playing Kahoot and percentages of correct and incorrect answers.

As a second part of the final test I decided to use a Kahoot game in order to test their ability to work in groups and cooperate. It was a successful tool to encourage the students´ creativity, interaction and collaborative work. I also knew that they would enjoy playing and that modern methods of assessment would catch their attention.

35

As displayed in table 5 and figure 7, both groups, deductive and inductive made a good use of prepositions. The inductive group obtained higher correct answers and lower incorrect. The deductive class obtained just a little bit lower results comparing with the inductive class. The questions that seemed to be the most difficult for both groups were the following: The water is in the glass/Peter got on the plane at the last minute/There is someone at the door.

Having participated in the teaching-learning activities, the students acquired new notions and developed their abilities regarding prepositions. The students made important progress regarding the use of prepositions taking into account the time available. Students need to acquire and practise both deductive and inductive approaches. We as teachers should adapt activities to their interests and take into account their preferences, making use of variety of technological tools. Students should be exposed to more hours per week in order to practise English as a second language.

6. QUESTIONNAIRE

As a final aspect of the present study I decided to administer a questionnaire in order to know the students´ impressions and difficulties as well as aspects that we, as teachers could improve regarding the usage of prepositions. The questionnaire contained 7 questions with the following answers: yes, no or sometimes. After the data gathering process, the next step was to synthesize and analyse the results.

Table 6. Questionnaire

Total	Yes	No	Sometimes	No. of statements
100 %	12,90%	37,09 %	48,38 %	1. I find prepositions more difficult to understand than any other parts of speech.
100 %	27,41	41,93	30,64	2. I think there is a poor presentation of prepositions in texts.
100 %	53,22	11,29	35,48	3. I can understand better simple prepositions (e.g. in, by, on, at, about) than complex prepositions (e.g. according to, out of, similar to, in case of)
100 %	45,16	25,80	29,03	4. When using English prepositions I translate directly from my mother tongue.
100 %	51,61	8,06	40,32	5. When I do not know the meaning of a preposition, I try to guess the right one.
100 %	41,93	20,96	37,09	6. Prepositions are difficult because they have multiple meanings and usages.
100 %	58,06	16,12	25,80	7. I can understand better the usage of prepositions when the teacher uses pictures, flashcards, videos, songs, games, etc.

Table 6 contains the participants´answers in percentages to the questionnaire regarding prepositions.

The statement which obtained the highest percentage (58,06%) is statement 7 which concerns the use of audiovisual aids in teaching prepositions. Students agree that they can better understand the usage of prepositions through the means of these teaching tools. Most respondents (53,22%) acknowledge that they can better understand simple prepositions than complex ones. Additionally, (51,61%) also recognise that they try to guess the meaning of prepositions when they do not know it.

With respect to whether prepositions are more difficult to understand than any other parts of speech, 48,38% say that sometimes they find it more difficult, while for 37,09% the answer is no, and only 12,90% acknowledge that prepositions are more difficult than other parts of speech.

However, while 27,41 % agree that there is a poor presentation of prepositions in texts, most respondents 41,93 % think the opposite and 30,64 % agree that sometimes, depending on textbooks, there is a poor presentation of prepositions in texts.

Nearly half of the subjects surveyed (45,16%) recognize that when using prepositions they translate directly from their mother tongue and 29,03 % use to do it sometimes.

In response to the question if prepositions are difficult because they have multiple meanings, 41,93 % agree, followed by 37,09 % who think that sometimes the multiple meanings of prepositions get them into trouble.

7. CONCLUSION

Previously to the elaboration of this work, I had never in my life had the opportunity to do research. I have just admired those research that our teachers along the Master´s Degree recommended us to read and I was amazed by how nice and interesting they were. When I had to decide on the type of thesis for this Master´s Degree I thought that this could be my only opportunity to try research. I wanted to learn something more than just didactic units, which I could handle quite well. If I had known from the beginning how difficult it is to conduct research maybe I would not have dared to take the step. All that I can say now that everything is already finished is that, if I could I would bring the time back and I would start to do research with the knowledge that I have now.

Not because I am now an expert, just because I have learned a lot from my mistakes and from my ignorance, inexperience and innocence.

Now I can predict things that work and things that do not work, the order of doing everything and the fact that someone need to be very well organized as well as the use of better material.

I can say that both, I and my students benefited from this experience, even though it was imperfect. I because I have really learned how to do research and my students because they have learned more about prepositions. The difference between the results of the pretest and the post-test, even if it is slight, means that it was worth investing time in learning more about prepositions. Our biggest limitation was time, just fifteen minutes for each session. The teaching and learning process require enough time for the new information to be acquired, "digested" and practised but we tried to benefit from what we had.

After investigating the deductive and the inductive methods, I can state that both approaches are effective and very useful. I consider that a successful teaching and learning of prepositions imply the combination of the two strategies. In this way the deductive method would not be perceived so tough. It implies meaningful and useful information but the students need to be involved and not be served everything like on a plate. On the other hand the inductive method is not less tough than the deductive one, because it is not easy for students to find by themselves the logic and the usage of prepositions, taking into account that these are quite difficult. Hypothesize a wrong understanding is also dangerous. I believe that the inductive method can be also turned into rote learning by the simple fact that seeing and working on many examples, our subconscious brain may remember the examples and may use them mechanically rather than appeal to the rule-discovery strategy. That is why I realized that the best way is to combine the two approaches. This means implication and interaction from both parts and involvement of the cognitive processes. Both methods being effective the difference is in the goals and contexts of the language teaching situation. Both methods had a good impact on students. They improved their knowledge regarding prepositions. The development was gradual but with a positive result.

Along this experimental research I realized that with the deductive strategy as well as with the inductive one, teachers can use visual aids such as pictures. The English-idiom "a picture is worth a thousands words", makes reference to the fact that a complex idea can be conveyed with a single image and that a picture can convey what might take

many words. I experimented this and I recommend the use of visual when explaining of prepositions. Pictures are effective and can support and ease students´ learning. The visual aids I used had a good impact on learners and helped them to build precise meanings based on what they saw. Pictures not only helped my students but also me to explain better differences between the uses of prepositions.

It is worth mentioning that students are receptive to everything that is new and they feel motivated by challenges because in this way their attention is caught. The young generation is very different from our generation and we as teachers should adapt activities to their interests and take into account their preferences, making use of variety of technological tools. Apart from investigating the effectiveness of visual aids I also realized that they are encouraged by collaborative work and they can get better results in group activities which give them the opportunity to interact and participate. Through the Kahoot game that students played in teams I could observe them involved in communication, decision-making and trust-building. It is important to encourage interaction and collaborative work because the students had the opportunity to experience more together than they would alone.

Regarding problems that students may face when dealing with prepositions I detected that students have the tendency to appeal to their mother tongue, and many times they get into trouble. How then, could we help students to make a good use of their mother tongue in learning prepositions? Reading a lot for my thesis I found a possible answer in articles of two scholars: Carroll (1968) and Fischer (1979). The idea of contrastive analysis of the native language to the foreign language would help the student avoid imposing the linguistic structure of the native language on the foreign language. The idea is that the presentation of foreign language differences should avoid negative transfer from the native language and the presentation of foreign language similarities should encourage positive transfer from the native language. It is believed that the inductive method may be employed when the foreign language rule is similar or dissimilar but simpler than the native language rule because as the students possess a rule, their linguistic competence will guide them to analyse the foreign language. On the other hand, the deductive strategy may be required when in the foreign language the rule is different or of equal or greater complexity than the native language, because there is an absence of corresponding rule in the native language.

It seems very interesting and I think it can be a tip for a better acquisition and learning but it should be applied to see whether it really works or not.

Another aspect that I would like to highlight is that I do not agree with the fact that the deductive approach must be applied with lower level students and the inductive with higher level students. My inductive group was considered of lower level and, to my surprise they obtained more correct answers in the Kahoot post-test. Moreover, their global results were slightly lower than the deductive group. I think it is much more a matter of analytical abilities and problem-solving abilities.

The last aspect I would like to mention refers to the organization and planning of the lesson and I believe that both methods place heavy demands on teachers and not only the inductive method as some theorists state. To apply both methods a teacher needs to search very carefully for the right material taking into account that some grammar aspects in textbooks are more developed and other less developed and that nowadays it is widely believed that grammar should not be taught.

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APPENDIX A
PRE-TEST (both groups)

NAME:_____   GRADE:_____

Choose the correct answer:

1. _____is she arriving?

☐ What time

☐ At what time

2. Come _____

☐ any day

☐ on any day

☐ in any day

3. There is a cow _____

☐ in the bottle

☐ on the bottle

4. She is coming _____

☐ on tomorrow

☐ tomorrow

5. _____is the conference?

☐ On what day

☐ What day

6. A thief does not _____

☐ knock the door

☐ knock on the door

☐ knock at the door

APPENDIX B

TEACHING MATERIAL FOR DEDUCTIVE APPROACH

LESSON 1:

 Look at the three pictures and answer the questions:

(wall)

(traffic lights)
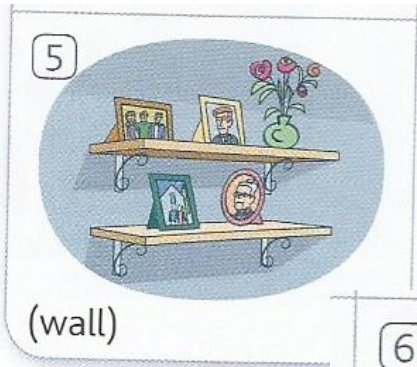
(Paris)

1. Where are the shelves?_____

2. Where is the Eiffel Tower? _____

3. Where is the car waiting? _____

Correct answers:

The shelves are **on** the wall.

The Eiffel Tower is **in** Paris.

The car is waiting **at** the traffic light.

Definitions of the terms "Subject" and "Landmark".

"Landmark" is the object of a preposition and indicates that a preposition may say something about where one thing is or moves in relation to a point of reference or landmark. "Subject" refers to what stands in a relation of place or path to a landmark:

e.g. <u>The book</u> is *on* <u>the table</u>.

    (the Subject)   (the Landmark)

LESSON 2:

Spatial uses of *AT* for points on a route-way and *IN* for spatio-functional relation in spatial scenes

AT is used for actions or events that take place at points along a route-way such as: stations, ports of call, pause points, end points. If the landmark is a city as a whole, we can deduce from the context that the landmark can be an airport, a train or bus station, a dock or any point of dis(embarkation).A "route point Landmark" also includes boundaries, borders, frontiers and edges, a turning point or pause points on (semi-) metaphorical routes.

IN mediates the spatio-functional relation in spatial scenes involving: continents, seas, countries, cities, towns, regions, provinces, etc.

Figure 3   Figure 4

Look at the pictures and complete the sentences:

The travellers got off the bus _____arrivals.

They arrived _____London.

(Correct answers: at arrivals, in London)

"The travellers" and "they" represent the "Subject" while "arrivals" and "London" represent the "Landmark". In Figure 3 the Subject is at a point on a route-way, this is, **at** arrivals which can be an end point if their journey has finished or a pause point if they make a stopover. In contrast, in Figure 4, the Landmark is a city as a whole, a big area, where all the other points on a route-way could be found.

Other examples:

e.g. A visit to Canada begins with a stop **at** customs.

e.g. China is **in** Asia.

e.g. London is the largest city **in** the United Kingdom.

LESSON 3:

Spatial uses of *IN* for containment and *ON* for contact/support

The preposition *IN* is used for something surrounded on all sides, enclosure within a surface or area. *In* is also appropriate when the Subject is located wholly or in part at the interior of the Landmark which has three elements: interior, a boundary and an exterior. The functional relation between the Subject and the Landmark includes containment.

To the preposition *ON* is attributed the value of contact between the Subject and the Landmark. So, the preposition *on* is appropriate only when the Subject is in contact with the Landmark or when the contact is approximated. Apart from "contact" it is also important the "support" of the Subject by the Landmark. The importance of "contact" and "support" when we use the preposition *on*, determines us understand why *on* is used in certain situation and not in others.
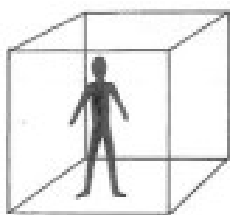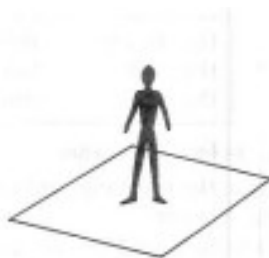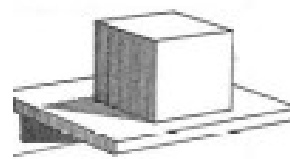
Figure 5   Figure 6   Figure 7

In figures 5 and 6 the Subject which is "the person" is enclosed within the space represented by the three dimensional square as well as by the simple square which is the Landmark. In figure 5 there is a wholly containment, surrounded by all sides, this can be for example a room, a shop, a car or the water, so we can say: *in* the room, *in* the shop, *in* the car, *in* the water. In Figure 6 the Subject is enclosed within an area but is not surrounded by all sides and this can be: a garden, a town, a city center and we can say: *in* the garden, *in* the town, *in* the city center which are opened spaces.

In figure 7 there is a value of contact between the Subject which is "the three dimensional square" and the Landmark which "the shelf". Apart from the contact, there is support of the Subject by the Landmark as the square is *on* the shelf.

Choose the correct option:

Angela works **in/on** a shop.

There are a lot of apples **on/in** those trees.

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LESSON 4:

Spatial uses of *AT* as an expression of typical activity-related connection and *ON* for contact from any direction as well as horizontal and vertical surfaces or position.

Focus on the following sentences:

There is someone **at** the door.

There is someone knocking **on** the door.

There is a notice **on** the door.

At indicates that the Subject has a typical, practical connection with its Landmark.

e.g. There is someone **at** the door.

This means more than just the fact

that someone is outside and near the door. It means that someone is there for a typical, place-related purpose as for example to enter the house and to speak to someone.

On is used for contact from any direction, including very forceful contact. Also *on* refers to contact usually from above but in fact can come from any angle. When we tap or knock something, our action affects the whole object. But if we tap or knock *on* something, our action affects the thing in a more superficial way. With the preposition on, there is an impact-reducing cushion between subject and verb.

e.g. There is someone knocking **on** the door vs knock the door.

We can also say "knock **at** the door" but refers to the sound that someone hears when another person tap the door.

The preposition ON is also used when we talk about horizontal or vertical surfaces.

e.g. There is a notice **on** the door.

LESSON 5:

Step 1: <u>Spatial uses of *AT* for a place where a particular activity happens within a space or area in contrast with IN</u>

AT is used with buildings located within the spaces they form to indicate that they are the centres of activities peculiar to them. That means to talk about where something happens such as a meeting place, somebody´s workplace; things that people do or the places where they do them: *at* a concert, *at* the office, *at* a party, *at* the cinema, *at* the university, *at* work, *at* a restaurant.

e.g. I´ll meet you **at** the cinema.

e.g. Jane is working **at** her desk.

at her desk

There is a difference between phrases such as **at** the Ritz, **at** the Morelli´s, **at** the Odeon and in the hotel/in the restaurant/in the theatre. *AT* is more common before proper names like Ritz, Morelli´s, Odeon than before "building" nouns like hotel, restaurant or theatre. The explanation for this difference between *at* and *in* is that nouns like hotel or restaurant designates an enclosure space with roof and walls.

e.g. I am **at** the Hilton.

e.g. I am **in** the hotel.

Step 2: <u>*AT* used for addresses & *IN* for location within or along a line</u>

What is the difference between the following sentences:

Carmen lives **at** 23, Mill Street.

Carmen lives **in** Mill Street.

AT is used in addresses such as: 23, Mill Street, 76 Camptown Road, 10 Downing Street

IN is used for location within or along a line*,* is used with complements to indicate that one or more objects dwell or move within or along a real or imaginary line. It is also used with complements denoting streets, roads, squares, open spaces in towns along their outer lines.

e.g. In King Street, west of the Square, are the Orleans Club and the St. James´s Theatre.

LESSON 6:

Step 1: _AT_ and _IN_ are often both possible

We prefer IN when we think more about the place itself.

e.g. He gave the talk **at** Central College.

e.g. There were over 800 people **in** the hall.

_AT_ is not used with names of very big places:

e.g. We rented a car **at** Heathrow.

e.g. We rented a car **in** London.

_IN_ for big areas. It is used with complements that covers a large part of the surface of the earth: sea, ocean, lake, river.

e.g. There were some people swimming **in** the sea/ **in** the river.

Step 2: _ON_ in comparison with the preposition _IN_.

Differences between _ON_ and _IN_.

ON is used with two-dimensional Landmarks such as: floors, tables, walls, ceilings., while IN is used with three dimensional Landmarks such as: rooms, boxes, towns, etc.

e.g. There is a spider **on** the ceiling.

e.g. There was a bird **in** my room.

Clothes and jewellery are _ON_ people while people are _IN_ clothes.

e.g. She has got three lovely bracelets **on** her arm.

e.g. Who´s the man **in** the dark coat?

Step 4: _IN_ and _AT_ for attributed intention

e.g. Rommel is **in** Cairo.

e.g. Rommel is **at** Cairo.

_In_, the first sentence suggests that the Landmark is the Subject´s final destination, in contrast with the preposition _at_ in the second sentence that suggests that the Subject has merely reached the Landmark en route to its final destination.

TEACHING MATERIAL FOR THE INDUCTIVE APPROACH

LESSON 1:

This is Tim. Use the following words: the bath, the disco, the traffic lights, the roof, the table, and guess where is Tim using the prepositions: *at, in* or *on.*
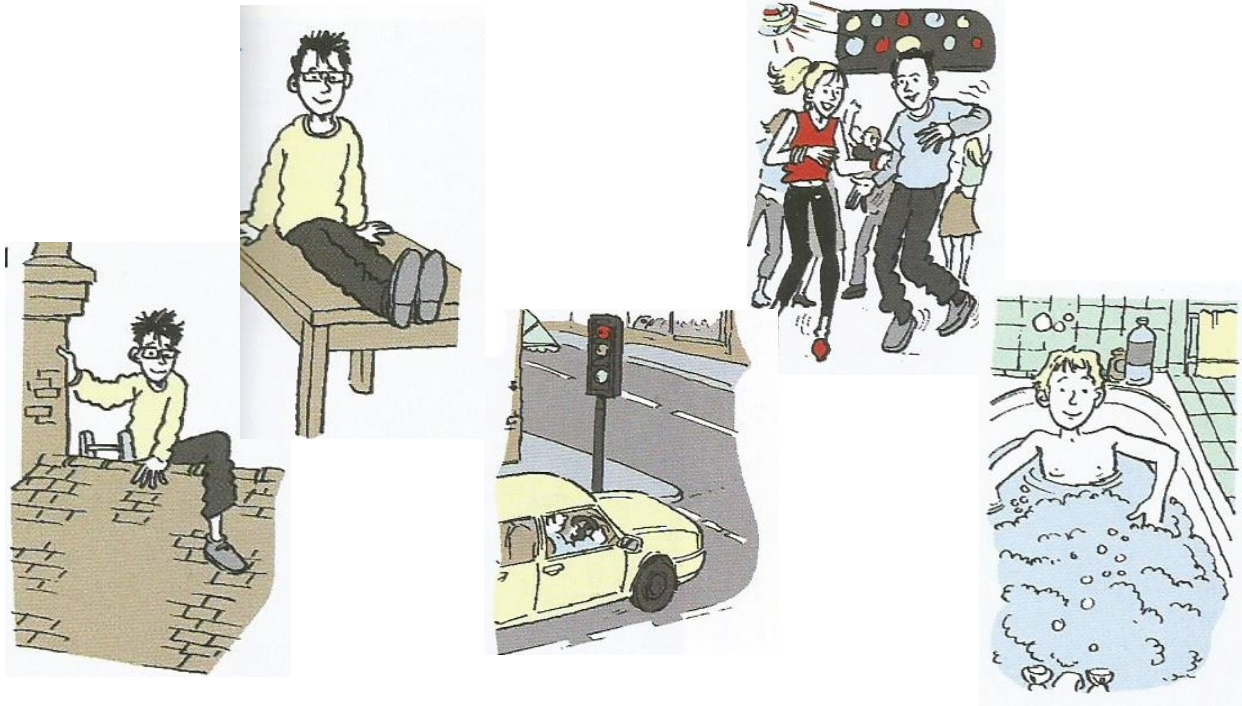
Correct answers:

Tim is *on* the roof./ He is *on* the table. /He is *at* a party. /He is *in* the bath. /Tim is *at* the traffic lights.

Definitions of the terms "Subjects" and "Landmark".

"Landmark" is the object of a preposition and indicates that a preposition may say something about where one thing is or moves in relation to a point of reference or landmark. "Subject" refers to what stands in a relation of place or path to a landmark:

e.g. <u>Tim</u> is *on* <u>the table</u>.

    (the Subject)   (the Landmark)

LESSON 2:

Look at the pictures below. All of them make use of the preposition *IN* but they have different usages and meanings.
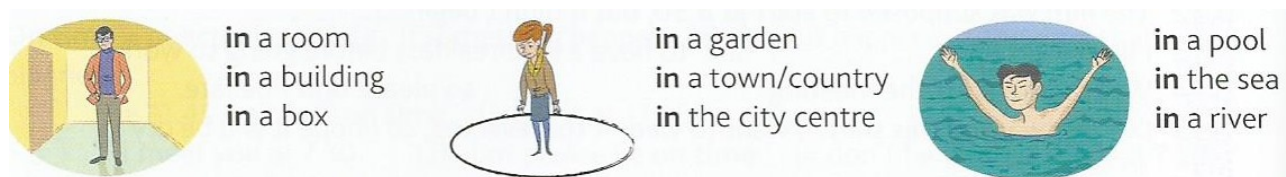
In the first picture which is "the Subject" and which is the "Landmark"?

How could you describe the relation between the Subject and the Landmark?

How do you describe the space in the first picture? Is it an enclosed space?

Is the space surrounded by all sides or it is partially surrounded?

In picture two what do you think the girl is? What about object such as: garden, town, city?

What relationship is between the Subject and the Landmark?

What about the space? Does it have an interior, a boundary or an exterior?

How could you describe spaces such as: towns, cities, countries?

In picture three who is the Subject and who is the Landmark?

Does the Landmark like sea, ocean, lake, river cover a large part of the surface of the earth?
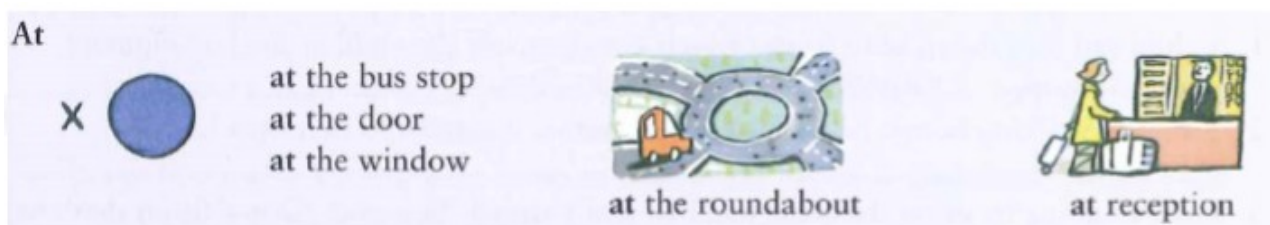
Have a close look at some usages of the preposition *AT*.

Is there any difference or similarity with the usages of *in* that we have already seen?

How do you describe complements such as: at the bus station, at the door, at the window?

Are they specific points? Can you compare Landmarks such as at the door, at the window with Landmarks such as building or room? What about the second picture? What does a roundabout represent? I it an intersection, a junction?

Who is the Subject and the Landmark in picture three? Is the Subject in contact or close to the landmark? If you compare the Landmark "reception" with a Landmark such as "hotel" which is the relation of a reception in a hotel?

LESSON 3:

Look at these pictures on the uses of the preposition *ON*:

Do you find any difference or similarities with the uses of the prepositions *in* and *at* that we have studied previously?

What about the Landmark "table"? Is table a surface or a space?

The Subject "X" as we can see in the picture is in contact with the Landmark "the table"?

Does the Landmark "the table" also support the Subject "X"?

How could you explain that the Landmark "table" is "*on* the floor" but "*in* a room"?

What do you thing is the difference between "on the wall" and "on the ceiling"?

Why do we say that "a fly" is "on your nose" and not "in your nose"?

What do you think is correct: "a rubber in my hand" or "a rubber on my hand"?

Which is the logical connection between: "letters on a page" and "pages in a book"?

What function does the Landmark "page" have?

What is the difference between "on an island" and "in the sea", "in the ocean"?

Do all of them refer to big spaces or areas? Which one is included in which one?

Which is appropriate when we think more about the place itself.

LESSON 4:

Categorize the prepositions in bold according to the three columns below:

1. She was sitting **at** the table waiting for her husband to arrive.

2. My mother lives **on** the second floor.

3. You can put the poster **on** the door if you like!

4. Where is he staying at the moment? **In** Germany.

5. Do you know where the key is? Yes, it is **in** your pocket.

6. Where did you learn about the accident? I read it **in** the newspaper.
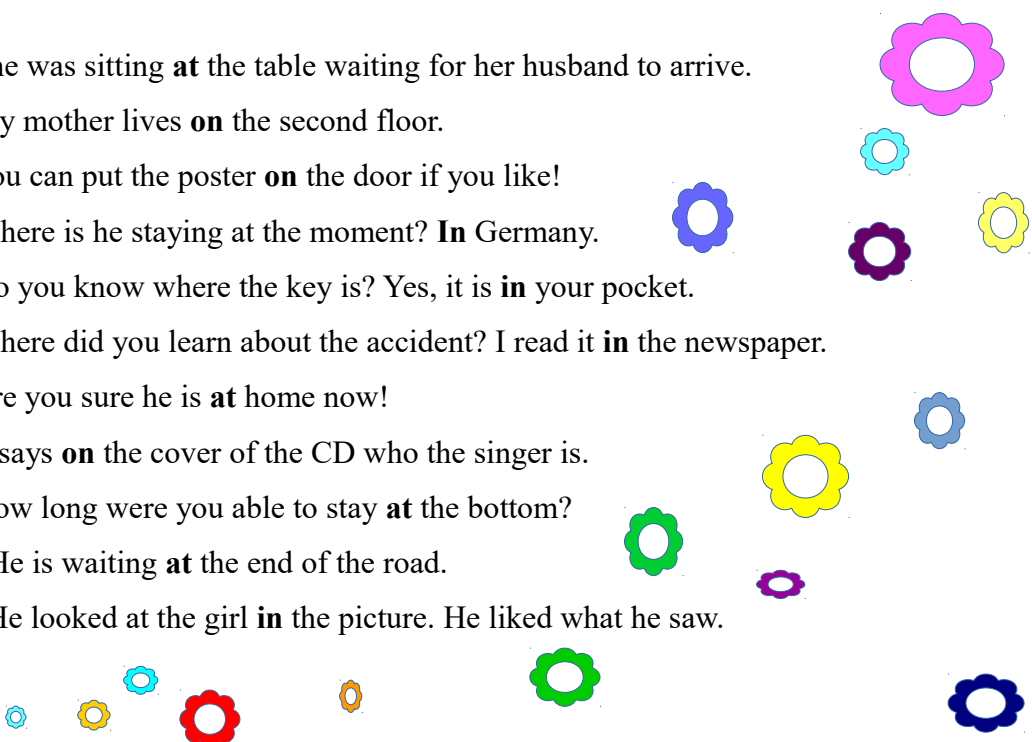
7. Are you sure he is **at** home now!

8. It says **on** the cover of the CD who the singer is.

9. How long were you able to stay **at** the bottom?

10. He is waiting **at** the end of the road.

11. He looked at the girl **in** the picture. He liked what he saw.

Enclosed spaces:	Surfaces:	A particular point:

Key:

in Germany, in your pocket, in the newspaper, in the picture make reference to enclosed spaces;

on the floor, on the door, on the cover make reference to surfaces

at the table, at home, at the bottom, at the end of the road refer to a particular point.

Step 2: Classify each category in sub-categories as follows:

Enclosed spaces:	Surfaces:	A particular point:
in Germany in your pocket in the newspaper in the picture	on the floor on the door on the cover	at the table at home at the bottom at the end
Spaces surrounded by all sides: Opened spaces: Big areas:	Horizontal surfaces: Vertical surfaces: Contact between surface and objects:	Places where activities happens: Certain points: Contact with edges, ends or extremities:

Step 3: Explain the difference between the two images. (Homework)

in the corner   at/on the corner
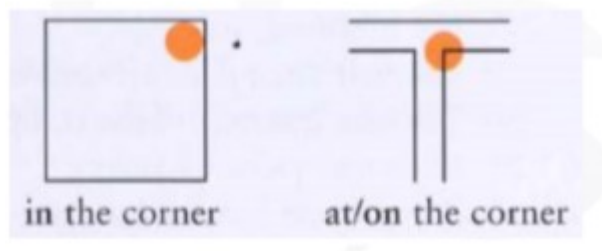
LESSON 5

Step 1: Read the texts below:

Carmen´s Spanish, but she lives ***in England.*** She lives ***in Brighton***. She works ***in the kitchen*** of a big restaurant. She lives ***in a flat***, ***in Mill Street***. It´s near the beach, but she never swims ***in the sea***.

Find examples in the text:

1. We use in for _____ : (in_____/in_____)

2. We use in for _____ like_____, _____, _____:(in England, in Brighton, in the sea)

3. We use in when something is part of _____: (in_____)
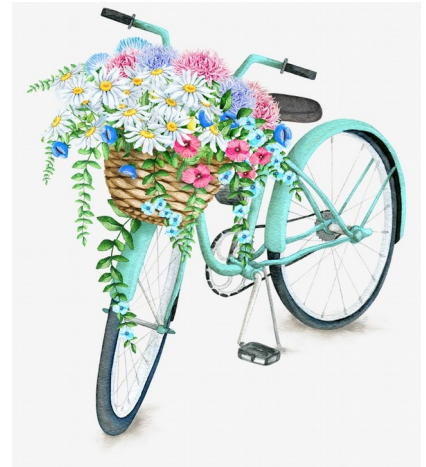
Look on the map of England. Can you find Brighton ***on the map***? It´s ***on the south coast.*** Carmen likes living there. There are picture of Spain ***on the walls*** of her bedroom. And she´s got a photo of her family ***on her desk***.

Find examples in the text:

1. We use on for _____ surfaces: (on_____/on_____)
2. We use on for _____ surfaces:(on_____)
3. We use on for lines like _____: (on_____)

Carmen lives *at 23, Mill Street*. Number 23 is *at the top* of the hill. There´s a bus-stop *at the end* of the street. She´s standing *at the bus stop* now. She´s *at the front* of the queue. She´s meeting a boy *at the cinema*. She met him *at a party* last night.

 Find examples in the text:

1. We use at for a _____ point: (*at_____, at_____, at_____at_____*)

2. We use at for an_____:(*at 23, Mill Street*)

3. We use at for a place where a _____ happens: (*at_____*)

4. We use at for an_____:(*at a party*)

 Step 2: Students are asked to practice the following exercise.

---

1. Choose the correct place preposition.

Don´t sit **on/in/at** the grass. It´s wet.

What do you have **at /on/in** your bag?

Look! There is a man **in/at/on** the roof. What´s he doing?

There are a lot of fish **in/at/on/** this river.

Our house is number 45 **in/on/at** the door.

Is the post office here? Yes, turn left **in/on/at** the

traffic light.

I have a small vegetable garden **in/on/at** the back yard.

My sister lives **at/on/in** Mexico City.

There´s a small park **in/on/at** the top of the hill.

I think I heard the doorbell. There´s somebody

in/on/at the door.

Munich is a large city **at/on/in** southern Germany.

There´s a gas station **in/on/at** the end of the block.

LESSON 6: Look at the examples and try to find differences between the usage of *at, in* and *on*.
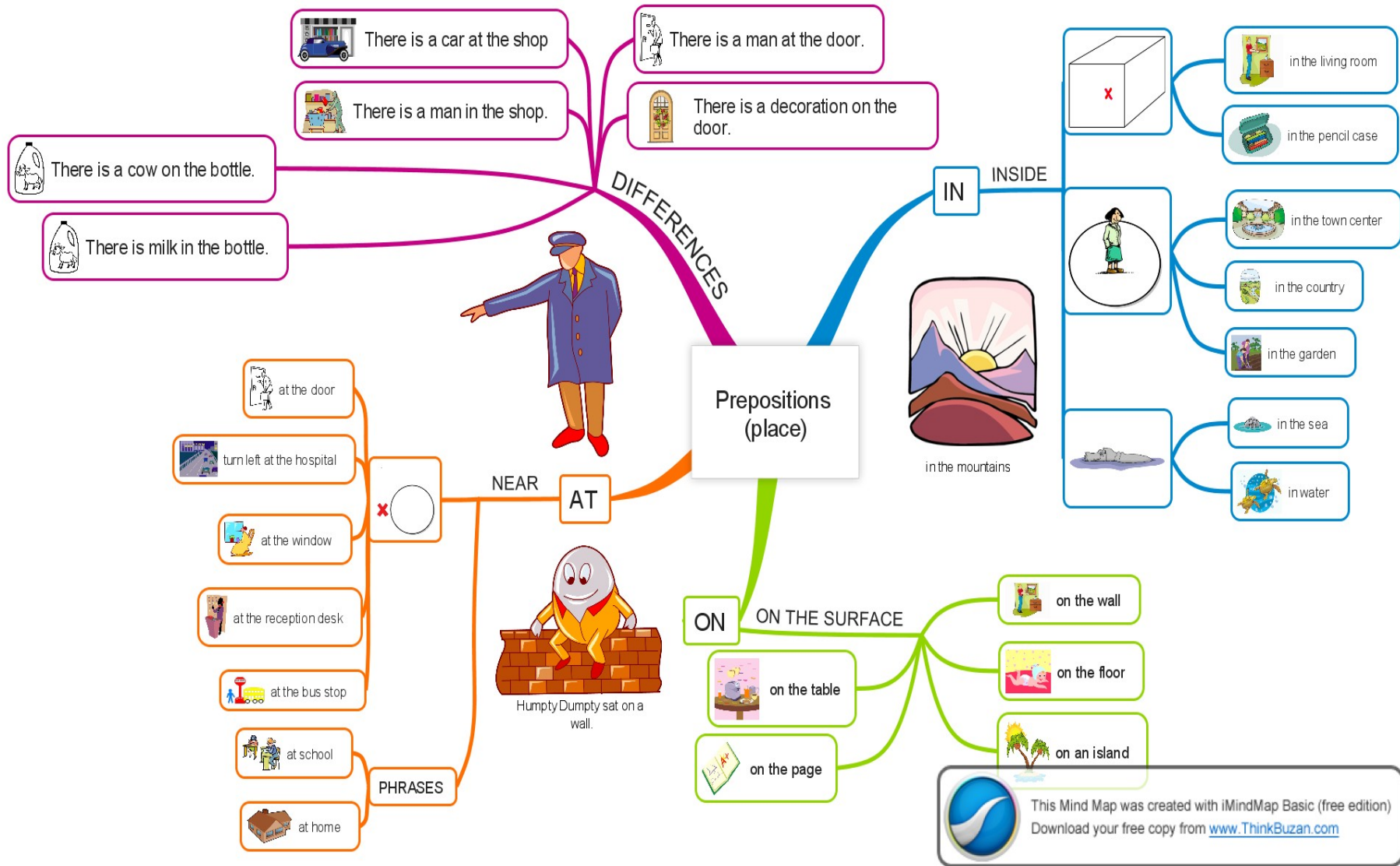
There is a car at the shop

There is a man at the door.

There is a man in the shop.

There is a decoration on the door.

There is a cow on the bottle.

There is milk in the bottle.

DIFFERENCES

Prepositions (place)

IN INSIDE

in the living room

in the pencil case

in the town center

in the country

in the garden

in the sea

in water

in the mountains

at the door

turn left at the hospital

NEAR AT

at the window

at the reception desk

at the bus stop

at school

PHRASES

at home

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.

ON ON THE SURFACE

on the wall

on the floor

on the table

on an island

on the page

APPENDIX D

PRACTICE MATERIAL FOR THE DEDUCTIVE APPROACH

WORKSHEET 1:

1. Answer the question with at, in or on.

1 Where is he? __In the kitchen.__
2 Where are the shoes? ....
3 Where is the pen? ....
4 Where is the clock? ....
5 Where is the bus? ....
6 Where are the horses? ....

7 Where are they standing? ....
8 Where is she swimming? ....
9 Where is he standing? ....
10 Where is the spider? ....
11 Where is he sitting? ....
12 Where is she sitting? ....

5. Fill in missing prepositions:

 The Photo

 I met my friend Liz __ the station. She decided to go to Paris and was going to buy tickets __ a train. She chose the train, bought tickets and we sat __ a bench __ a beautiful square not far from the station. We talked and she showed me her family photo. It was nice. Liz and her husband were __ the centre of the photo. Their elder son Pete was standing __ them. He studied __ the university. They looked fine.

WORKSHEET 2:

1. Look at the pictures and answer the questions. Use at, in or on.

1 (hospital)	2 (the airport)	3 (bed)	4 (a ship)
5 (the sky)	6 (a party)	7 (the doctor's)	8 (the second floor)
9 (work)	10 (a plane)	11 (a taxi)	12 (a wedding)

1 Where is she? _In hospital._ ....
2 Where are they? ....
3 Where is he? ....
4 Where are they? ....
5 Where are the stars? ....
6 Where are they? ....

7 Where is Steve? ....
8 Where is the restaurant? ....
9 Where is she? ....
10 Where are they? ....
11 Where are they? ....
12 Where are they? ....

2. Underline the correct preposition:

1. Tim is at/in the party.

2. There are a lot of stars on/in the sky.

3. Liz lives in/at Rose Road.

4. He will be at/on the airport soon.

5. My friend is at/in the conference now.

6. Tom lives at/on the ground floor.

7. What have you found in/on the newspaper?

WORKSHEET 3:

A. Complete the gaps in the statements about preferences and habits with the prepositions of place: in, on, at.

1. I enjoy going for walks _____ the countryside.

2. When I fly, I like to arrive _____ the airport before check-in time.

3. I like listening to music _____ the car.

4. I live _____ the 8th floor _____ 25 Cambridge Road _____ Bristol.

5. When I'm _____ home, I like to sit _____ the sofa and read a book.

6. I prefer being _____ a cinema, watching a film _____ a big screen, to being _____ my living room, watching a film _____ television.

7. I always keep some extra money _____ my wallet in case of emergencies

8. I prefer living _____ a city to living _____ a town.

9. I prefer a job where I don't spend all my time sitting _____ a desk _____ an office.

10. I'd like to go to Singapore _____ Southeast Asia. The country lies _____ the equator.

B. Complete the rules for the prepositions of place: in, on, at.

We use _____ with buildings, e.g. a house, the bank.

_____ with lines, e.g. the coast, the path.

_____ with enclosed spaces, e.g. a room, a building.

_____ with surfaces, e.g. the floor, the wall.

_____ with a point, e.g. the bus stop, the entrance.

_____ with limited areas, e.g. the park, Spain.

C. Tick the statements in Exercise A that are true for you. Then, write three more sentences about your preferences and habits using prepositions of place.

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX E
PRACTICE MATERIAL FOR THE INDUCTIVE APPROACH

WORKSHEET 1:

1. Complete the sentences with, at, in or on.

| 1 SUE (sales department) | 2 (second floor) | 3 (corner) | 4 (corner) | 5 (top / stairs) |
| 6 (back / car) | 7 (front) LIZ | 8 (left) | 9 GARY (back row) | 10 (farm) |
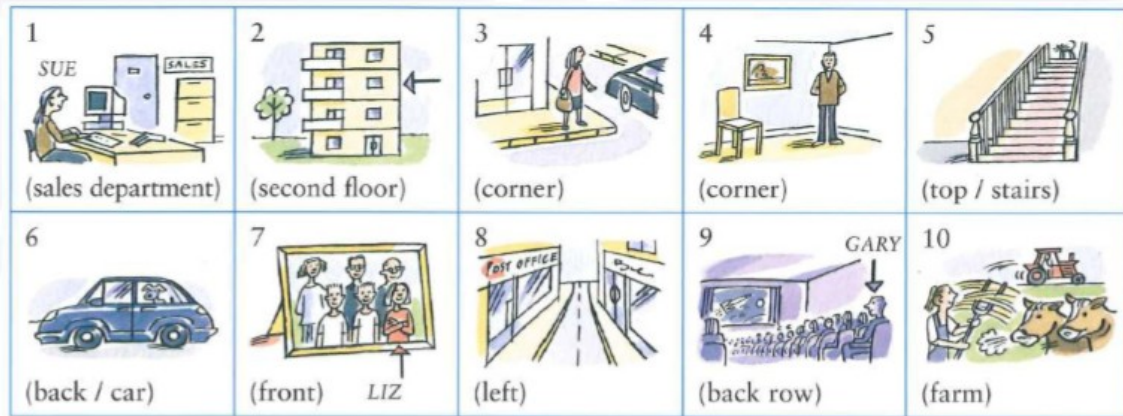
1. Where does Sue work? _____ the sales department.
2. Where's Sue's flat? _____ the second floor.
3. Where's the woman standing? _____ the corner.
4. Where's the man standing? _____ the corner.
5. Where's the cat? _____ the top of the stairs.
6. Where's the dog? _____ the back of the car.
7. Where's Liz? _____ the front.
8. Where's the Post Office? _____ the left.
9. Where is Gary sitting? _____ the back row.
10. Where does Kate work? _____ a farm.

| 1 (the airport) | 2 (a train) DAVE | 3 (a conference) KAREN | 4 MARTIN (hospital) |
| 5 JUDY (the hairdresser's) | 6 GARY (his bike) | 7 (New York) | 8 THE SAVOY THEATRE (the Savoy Theatre) |

1. You can hire a car _____ the airport.
2. Dave is _____ a train.
3. Karen is _____ a conference.
4. Martin is _____ hospital.
5. Judy is _____ the hairdresser's.
6. I saw Gary _____ his bike.
7. We spent a few days _____ New York.
8. We went to a show _____ the Savoy Theatre.

WORKSHEET 2:

IN - AT - ON

There are many people ...... the room.
a) in
b) on
c) at

I saw him .... the station.
a) in
b) on
c) at

There were many people ...... the concert.
a) in
b) on
c) at

The shop is .... the left.
a) in
b) on
c) at

They were having a picnic .... the park.
a) in
b) on
c) at

There is a little milk ..... the cup.
a) in
b) on
c) at

Do you take sugar ...... your coffee?
a) in
b) on
c) at

The garden is ...... the back of the house.
a) in
b) on
c) at

What was there ...... your room? There were many things.
a) in
b) on
c) at

All fishermen are .... sea.
a) in
b) on
c) at

There were many pictures ....that museum.
a) in
b) on
c) at

There wasn't any butter .... the fridge.
a) in
b) on
c) at

My mother is .... the hair-dresser's.
a) in
b) on
c) at

Were there many people ...... the library yesterday?
a) in
b) on
c) at

They had a pool ..... the backyard.
a) in
b) on
c) at

The picture was ..... the wall.
a) in
b) on
c) at

What was there ..... the radio?
a) in
b) on
c) at

I saw her .... the school bus.
a) in
b) on
c) at

There are many rooms ...... my house.
a) in
b) on
c) at

There is a lamp .... the room.
a) in
b) on
c) at

They have a house .... the mountains.
a) in
b) on
c) at

Was there a book ..... the table?
a) in
b) on
c) at

There was a girl .... the window.
a) in
b) on
c) at

There is a cat ...... the roof.
a) in
b) on
c) at

WORKSHEET 3:

Fill in the correct preposition:

1. I live _____ 16 Spring Road.
2. I live _____ West Road.
3. I live _____ Long Street.
4. We've just moved from our flat _____ 42 East Drive.
5. Children mustn't play _____ the street.
6. Talks are to be held _____ Paris.
7. We broke down _____ the Queens Highway.
8. The office of the company is _____ Rome.
9. The train stopped _____ every station.
10. My friend lives _____ a small village _____ the mountains.
11. Do you know the boy standing _____ the bus stop?
12. Does this train stop _____ Milan?
13. Tom is _____ Oxford studying politics.
14. Mona lives _____ Silver Street.
15. Shall we meet _____ the railway station?
16. We spent some days _____ Liverpool.
17. The town is _____ the Princess Highway.
18. Alec is doing his Master's degree _____ Birmingham.
19. Where's the man standing? _____ the gate.
20. Where's the bird? _____ the gate?
21. There is some water _____ the bottle.
22. There is a beautiful label _____ the bottle.
23. Look There is a man standing _____ the door. Who is it?
24. The notice _____ the door says "Do not disturb".
25. Where is your key? _____ the door.
26. There is thick ice _____ the river.
27. Turin is _____ the North of Italy _____ the river Po.
28. Look? Andrew is swimming _____ the river.
29. Helen is _____ the conference.
30. What is there _____ your hand?
31. Do you see a spider _____ the ceiling?
32. What's that _____ the floor?
33. Who is standing _____ the window?
34. What is there _____ the bottom of the page?
35. I left my book _____ the table.
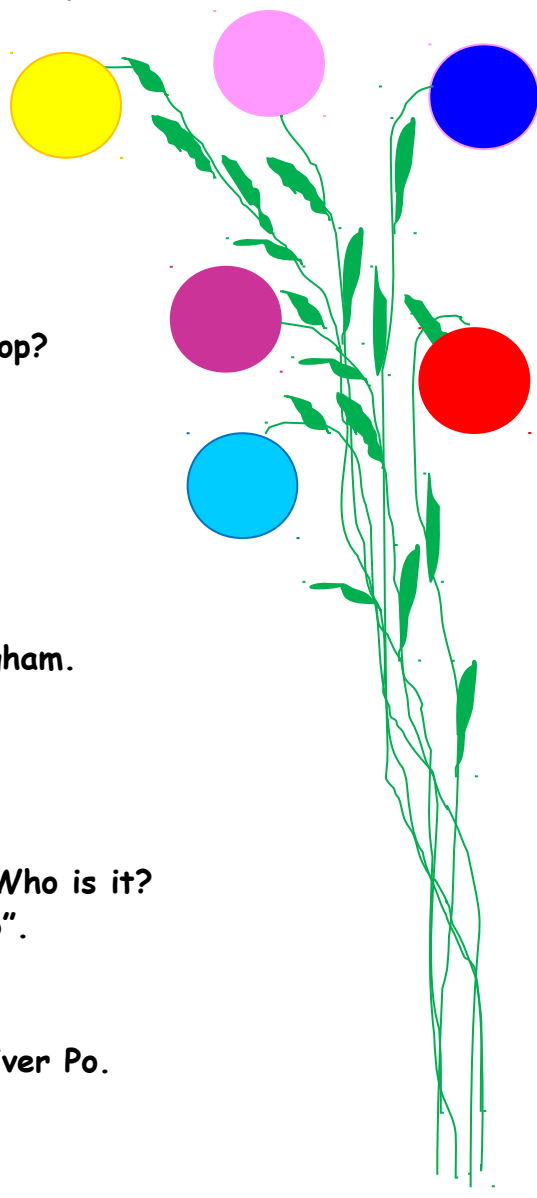
APPENDIX F

GAMES FOR THE DEDUCTIVE APPROACH

DOMINOES

Divide the students into groups of three.

Give each group a set of dominoes. Students will also need a pen and paper for keeping score.

Ask the students to shuffle the dominoes and deal out five each, leaving the rest in a pile face down.

Tell the groups to pick up the top domino from the pile and put it face up on the table.

The first player puts down one of their dominoes on either side of the domino on the table, making sure that the preposition of place matches with the noun (or vice versa) to make a prepositional phrase.

If the player matches the preposition of place successfully, he or she scores a point. For an extra point, the player then uses the prepositional phrase in a sentence.

The other players then take it in turns to match their dominoes in the same way by putting them down at either end of the domino chain and making a suitable sentence when a prepositional phrase is formed.

If a player cannot put down one of their dominoes, they take one from the top of the pile and put it down if they can.

If there are no dominoes left in the pile, play passes to the next student.

If another player thinks a prepositional phrase or sentence is wrong, he or she can challenge the player.

If the students cannot agree, they ask the teacher for help.

If a prepositional phrase is wrong, the player must take back the domino and play passes to the next student.

When a player has no more dominoes left in their hand, the game ends. The students then add up their scores. The player with the most points wins the game.

the bus stop	in	a box	on	the shelf	at
work	in	New York	on	the cover	at
the traffic lights	in	a car	on	a balcony	at
a party	in	the sea	on	the floor	at
the entrance	in	the garden	on	an island	at
a concert	in	the city centre	on	the ceiling	at
home	in	Brazil	on	the wall	at
the corner	in	the kitchen	on	the menu	at

GAMES FOR THE INDUCTIVE APPROACH
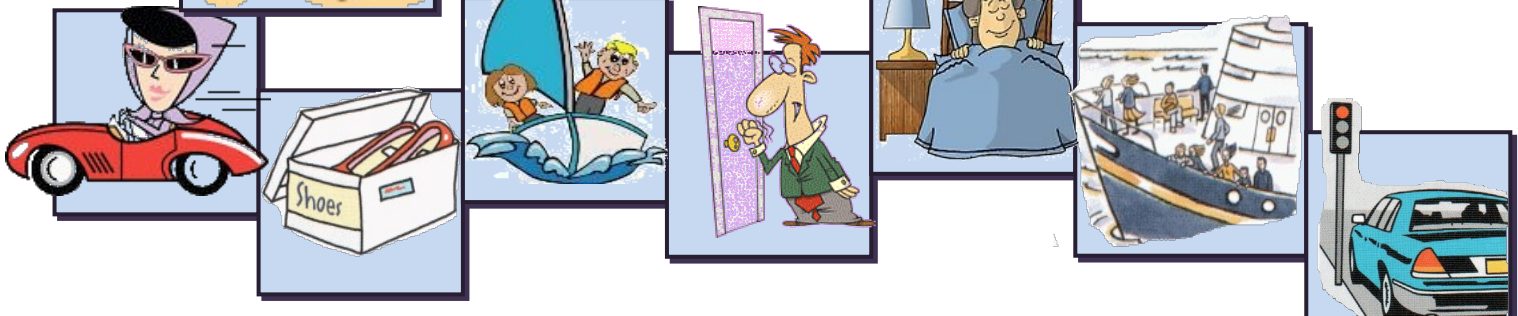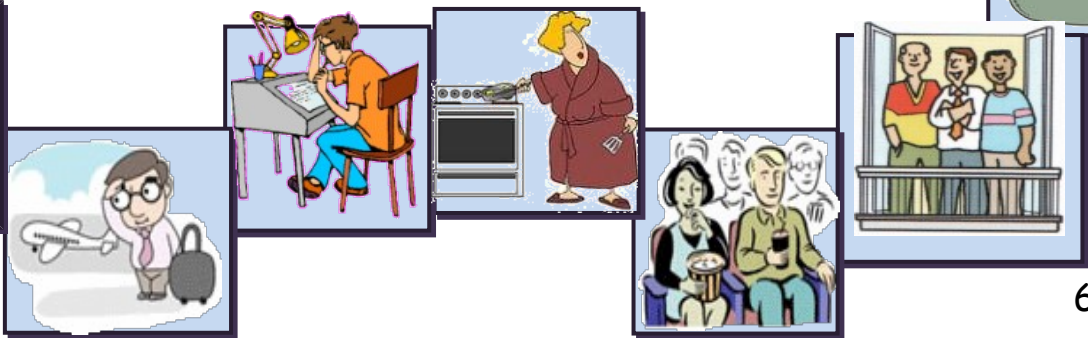
Rules:

1) Players throw the dice and move their tokens.

2) They should make a sentence according to the picture.

3) If the sentence is correct the player leaves his token where it is. If the sentence is not correct the token goes back to its previous position.

4) Continue until someone reaches the finish.

Answers:

on the bike, in the water, at the party, at the restaurant, at the window, at the bus stop, at the table, in the sky, at the doctor's, at school, on the wall, at the concert, on the beach, in the car, in the box, in the boat, at the door, in bed, on the ship, at the traffic lights, in the bath, on the balcony, at the cinema, in the kitchen, at the desk, at the airport.

Revision: Prepositions

APPENDIX H
FOR BOTH GROUPS DEDUCTIVE & INDUCTIVE

<u>Choose the correct preposition:</u>

1. My mother works ____ the hospital.	at-in-on
2. Ben's friend studies ____ the university.	in-at-on
3. Kate lives ____ the third floor.	in-at-on
4. ____ the way home we saw a beautiful bird.	on-in-at
5. Who is ____ the middle of the room?	at-in-on
6. What have you read ____ the newspaper?	on-at-in
7. They live ____ a small town.	at-on-in
8. I'll meet you ____ the station.	in-on-at
9. There were a lot of people ____ the party.	at-on-in
10. Who is that girl ____ this photograph?	on-in-at
11. There are a lot of stars ____ the sky.	on-at-in
12. I met my friend ____ the football match.	at-on-in
13. She came home ____ a taxi.	on-in-at
14. We arrived ____ the airport at four o'clock.	on-at-in
15. Is David ____ school now?	in-on-at
16. Will you be ____ the hairdresser's at five?	in-on-at
17. Tom is ____ the concert now.	at-in-on
18. Who is the best sportsman ____ the world?	on-at-in
19. Will Sam come here ____ the bus?	on-in-at
20. Don't phone me, I'll be ____ Mona's.	in-on-at
21. Look! His name is ____ the bottom of the page.	at-in-on
22. Nora's house is ____ the end of the street.	in-on-at
23. We saw a lot of children ____ the bus stop.	at-in-on
24. There are no books ____ the shelf.	at-on-in
25. Do you know that boy ____ the motor-bike?	in-at-on
26. When can you stop ____ the traffic lights?	on-in-at
27. What is there ____ the ceiling?	in-at-on
28. My friends prefer to live ____ the country.	at-on-in
29. You'll have to put a stamp ____ the envelope.	on-in-at

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KEY:

1. My mother works ____ the hospital.   **at**-in-on
2. Ben's friend studies ____the university.   in-**at**-on
3. Kate lives ____ the third floor.   in-at-**on**
4. ____ the way home we saw a beautiful bird.   **on**-in-at
5. Who is ____ the middle of the room?   at-**in**-on
6. What have you read ____ the newspaper?   on-at-**in**
7. They live ____ a small town.   at-on-**in**
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26. When can you stop ____ the traffic lights?   on-in-**at**
27. What is there ____ the ceiling?   in-at-**on**
28. My friends prefer to live ____ the country.   at-on-**in**
29. You'll have to put a stamp ____ the envelope.   **on**-in-at

APPENDIX I

POST- TEST

NAME:_____

GRADE:_____

1. Complete the sentences using **in, on or at**.

a) Camillo lives _____Brindisi.
b) Brindisi is a town _____the south east coast of Italy.
c) He lives _____45, Via Rosa, a street near the airport.
d) At the moment he´s _____England.
e) He´s studying English _____a language school _____Bristol.
f) Everyone likes Camillo because he´s always got a smile _____his face.

2) Choose the correct form:

a) What have you got <u>in/on</u> your hand?
b) I have a friend who lives <u>in/at</u> a small village in the mountains.
c) Who is the man standing <u>on/at</u> the door?
d) There is a dirty mark <u>on/in</u> your nose.
e) There is somebody <u>at/on</u> the door.
f) There is a notice <u>on/at</u> the door.
g) We have to get off the bus <u>at/in</u> the next stop.

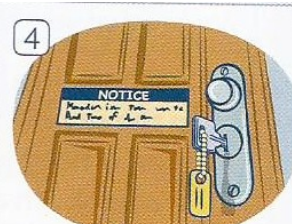3)Answer the questions about the pictures. Use **in, at, or on**.
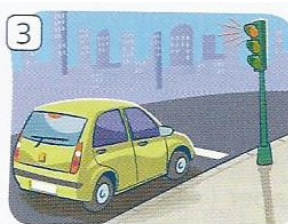
(bottle)   (arm)   (traffic lights)   (door)

a) Where´s the label? _____
b) Where is the fly? _____
c) Where is the car waiting? _____
d) Where is the notice?_____
   Where is the key?_____

Q1: The water is __ the glass

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q2: Paris is __ France

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q3: Peter got __ the plane at the last minute

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q4: Joan lives __ London

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q5: Sarah got on the plane __ the airport

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q6: There is someone __ the door

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q7: My rubber duck is __ the bath

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q8: The story was __ the newspaper

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q7: My rubber duck is __ the bath

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q11: There is a fountain __ my garden

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q8: The story was __ the newspaper

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q12: I have a computer __ home

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q9: They waited __ the bus stop

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q13: Joe is __ hospital with a broken leg

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q10: Sit down __ the chair, please

▲ in

◆ on

● at

Q14: I watched a film __ TV

▲ in

◆ on

● at

KAHOOT FINAL SCORES – DEDUCTIVE GROUP

Prepositions of place: in, on, at
Final Scores

Rank	Players	Total Score (points)	Correct Answers	Incorrect Answers
1	Carlosan (	12485	11	3
2	Esmeralda	12298	11	3
3	Sergio	10939	10	4
4	Apolivluan	8308	8	6
5	Daniela	4619	5	9

Overall Performance

Total correct answers (%)	64,29%
Total incorrect answers (%)	35,71%
Average score (points)	9729,80 points

KAHOOT FINAL SCORES – INDUCTIVE GROUP

Prepositions of place: in, on, at
Final Scores

Rank	Players	Total Score (points)	Correct Answers	Incorrect Answers
1	Og kush latreba	14501	12	2
2	Eeelloooos	11060	10	4
3	La Pili	10714	10	4
4	Cb'S	10070	9	5
5	Manguis	9754	9	2
6	Mariaunpajote	6206	6	8

Overall Performance

Total correct answers (%)	69,14%
Total incorrect answers (%)	30,86%
Average score (points)	10384,17 points

APPENDIX K

SURVEY ABOUT PREPOSITIONS

Please answer the following questions:

1. I find prepositions more difficult to understand than any other parts of speech.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

2. I think there is a poor presentation of prepositions in texts.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

3. I can understand better simple prepositions (e.g. in, by, on, at, about, under) than complex prepositions (e.g. according to, out of, similar to, in case of)

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

4. When using English prepositions I translate directly from my mother tongue.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

5. When I do not know the meaning of a preposition, I try to guess the right one.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

6. Prepositions are difficult because they have multiple meanings and usages.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

7. I can understand better the usage of prepositions when the teacher uses pictures, flashcards, videos, songs, games etc.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes