

# **Using picturebooks as a prompt for spoken interaction and critical thinking skills among EFL learners**

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**Relatório**

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*Dedicated to my daughter and husband, the best part of me.*

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## Resumo

Este relatório analisa a forma como uma abordagem centrada na utilização de livros ilustrados como sugestões para desenvolver a interação oral dos alunos pode melhorar as suas competências de pensamento crítico. O estudo

foi realizado no ano letivo de 2023-2024, como um estudo de investigação-ação durante o meu estágio de ensino.

Durante o estágio, duas turmas do 10.º ano foram observadas durante quase cinco meses e depois lecionadas durante quatro meses. Em cada aula, os alunos tinham de refletir sobre um tópico específico, relacionado com o currículo de inglês, e discuti-lo uns com os outros, seguindo a abordagem dialógica. Os dados foram recolhidos através de gravações de ensino, que foram posteriormente transcritas, e de pequenas produções escritas dos alunos, baseadas na sua análise do tópico e do livro ilustrado, e nas suas reflexões.

Os resultados revelaram uma maior taxa de participação dos alunos durante os debates na aula. Além disso, a profundidade da sua contribuição no início da fase de observação e no final da minha fase de ensino revelou um nível mais elevado de autoconsciência relacionado com a sua capacidade de expressão oral.

**Palavras-chave:** picturebook, interação oral, ensino dialógico, pensamento crítico, alunos do ensino secundário, sala de aula de EFL

## Abstract

This report analyses how an approach centered on using picturebooks as prompts to develop students spoken interaction could enhance their critical thinking skills. The study was carried out in the 2023–2024 academic school year, as an action research study during my teaching practicum.

During the practicum, two Grade 10 classes were observed for almost five months and then taught for four months. In each lesson, students were required to reflect on a specific topic, related to the English curriculum, and discuss it with each other following a dialogic framework. Data was collected through teaching recordings, which were then transcribed, and students' short written productions, based on their analysis of the topic and picturebook, and their reflections.

Results revealed a higher rate of learner participation during class discussions. Additionally, the depth of their contribution at the beginning of the observation stage and at the end of my teaching stage revealed a higher level of self-awareness related to their speaking skills ability.

**Keywords:** picturebooks, spoken interaction, dialogic teaching, critical thinking, secondary learners, EFL classroom

## Table of Contents

<b>Resumo .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of abbreviations .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1. Theoretical background.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1. Oral interaction and critical thinking in the EFL classroom.....	3
1.2. The benefits of dialogic discussions in the EFL classroom .....	5
1.3. The benefits of using picturebooks in the EFL classroom .....	7
1.4. Combining dialogic discussions and picturebooks in the EFL classroom .....	10
<b>Chapter 2. Methodology .....</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1. Action research in pre-service education .....	12
2.2. Picturebooks and themes .....	13
2.3. Data collection choices and analysis.....	15
<b>Chapter 3. Practicum .....</b>	<b>19</b>
3.1. School context.....	19
3.2. Participants .....	19
3.2.1. Class 10A .....	20
3.2.2. Class 10B .....	21
3.3. The observation phase.....	22
3.4. The practice stage.....	24
<b>Chapter 4. Discussion of results and further research .....</b>	<b>31</b>
4.1. Results.....	31
4.1.1. Themes within the Data.....	31
4.1.2. Students' oral interaction skills development .....	31
4.1.3. Students' dialogic and critical thinking skills development .....	33
4.1.4. Written reflection assignments .....	47
4.1.5. Classes' challenges.....	48
4.1.5.1. Traditional teaching.....	49
4.1.5.2. Time management .....	49
4.1.5.3. Data collection improvements .....	50
4.1.5.4. The unexpected.....	50
4.2. Future research and solutions .....	51
4.3. Conclusion.....	53
<b>References.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>61</b>
Appendix A – Letter of Consent.....	61
Appendix B – Students' codes .....	66
Appendix C – Last Stop on Market Street lesson plan – part 1 .....	69
Appendix D – Last Stop on Market Street lesson plan – part 2 .....	75
Appendix E – <i>The Red Tree</i> lesson plan – part 1 .....	81
Appendix F – <i>The Red Tree</i> lesson plan – part 2.....	87
Appendix G – <i>The President of the Jungle</i> lesson plan.....	93
Appendix H – The debate lesson plan.....	103
Appendix I - Transcription of Class 10A students' Group 1 work <i>The Red Tree</i> .....	112
Appendix L – <i>The President of the Jungle</i> lesson transcripts .....	113
Appendix M – Notes from the reflective teacher diary .....	123
Appendix N – Groups' analysis on <i>The Red Tree</i> (Tan, 2001) .....	126

Appendix O – Debate lesson transcript .....129

## **List of abbreviations**

AR – Action research

CEFR – Common European Framework of Reference CT – Critical Thinking

DT – Dialogic Teaching

EFL – English as a Foreign Language IRE - Initiation-Response-Evaluation

T – Teacher

S – Student

SS – Students

## Introduction

When, in the Summer of 2023, I found myself pondering and thinking about a possible topic for my supervised teaching experience, the issue of oral education in compulsory schooling was the first subject matter that came to mind. As a student in Italy, I remember struggling to express myself in English, feeling insecurity and frustration. That is why, when the time finally came to choose an important issue in which I could present a possible solution, enhancing my students' spoken interaction skills, oral education was the evident choice.

Regarding the Portuguese educational context in secondary school, it seems that oral interaction also plays an important role in learning foreign languages. It also translates into building an identity as a global citizen, based on attitudes and values such as respect for others, responsibility, and cooperation between individuals and people, to become better individuals and citizens (Direção Geral da Educação, 2018).

Before diving into lesson planning, checking whether this issue was also present in Portugal and the specific context of my teaching specialization (middle and secondary education) was my objective. Indeed, during the first month of observation, confirmation that students struggled to express themselves in English came through, and my will to present a solution became even stronger.

Along with spoken interaction, critical thinking skills are also gaining increasing importance. Evidence (Schola Europaea, 2018) shows how fundamental critical thinking has become in secondary education curricula. In the context of language learning, the corresponding syllabi outline both subject-specific, and personal and social skills, aiming to promote critical thinking and problem-solving within individual subjects and across the entire curriculum (ibid.).

In this light, the driving question for my action research project during my practicum became "Would I be able to create lessons that, not only motivated the students to actively participate in class discussions, but also succeed in enhancing their oral interaction and developing critical thinking?"

After the observation stage during the first semester, seven problems that directly related to this question arose: 1) students saw English lessons as something abstract, useless in the future; 2) the focus of the English lessons was on isolated grammar topics; 3)

students, in general, were not motivated to participate in oral interactions; 4) oral interactions were short and followed a traditional teacher-centered format; 5) class discussions were not practiced regularly; 6) students' participation were usually linked to only answering a specific question; and 7) critical thinking skills were not fostered nor nurtured.

After becoming aware of the problems listed above, an innovative solution sprang to mind, one that could act as a stimulus to get students involved in class discussions, make them argue in a dialogical manner, and, eventually, develop their critical thinking. Picturebooks, as a multimodal type of text, could arouse students' interest, leaving enough room for interpretation and reflection. In this manner, my intervention consisted of reading and analyzing four picturebooks in two ninety-minute lessons for three of them and one ninety-minute lesson for the last one due to time constraints. The focus of the picturebook-based dialogic discussions was the development of different skills, with an emphasis on oral skills critical thinking, and oral interaction skills.

Bearing the above in mind, my report is structured as follows: Chapter 1 presents the literature review of the main concepts, such as how the picturebook serves as a vehicle to prompt meaningful discussion in the EFL classes, as well as how, together with dialogic teaching, it may enhance students' critical thinking. Chapter 2 presents the methodology I have applied according to the action research approach. Moreover, it explains the choice of data collection tools and how they addressed the question at hand. The following chapter focuses on the practicum, thus enlisting details about the context (i.e., the school and the students), how the activities were carried out with the picturebooks, and the benefits of the learners' spoken interaction. Finally, Chapter 4 discusses the results of the selected methods.

## **Chapter 1. Theoretical background**

In this Chapter, it is essential to describe the notions at the center of the report, such as the picturebook and dialogic teaching in the EFL classroom. This chapter presents these topics and how they can be brought into a classroom context to analyze whether speaking and critical thinking skills can be developed using picturebooks as a prompt for discussion in an EFL context.

Oral interaction and critical thinking skills are extremely relevant for adolescents, as they prepare to be 21st-century citizens, according to both national (Martins et al., 2017) and European documentation (Council of Europe, 2020). When adolescents finish secondary school, they are expected to become citizens who can critically analyze information in their daily lives and communicate appropriately in different contexts (Martins et al., 2017). Analytical and critical thinking skills seem to become more and more fundamental, both for learners to acquire while still in school, and to develop in their after-school professional and personal journey. Similarly, oral interaction skills imply that students should be able to proficiently use different languages and symbols associated with languages (mother tongue and foreign languages), apply these languages appropriately in different contexts, and master core comprehension and expression skills in oral, written, visual, and multimodal contexts (Martins et al., 2017).

Given the importance of oral interaction and critical thinking skills for young English language learners, several pedagogical methods have thus far been proposed to prompt the development of both skills. One of these methods is the use of dialogic discussions prompted by picturebooks, as further explained in this Chapter.

This chapter, therefore, presents the report's key concepts, namely: the definition of oral interaction and critical thinking in the EFL classroom (1.1), the benefits of dialogic discussions in the EFL classroom (1.2), the benefits of using picturebooks in the EFL classroom (1.3.) and, lastly, combining dialogic discussions and picturebooks in the EFL classroom (1.4).

### **1.1. Oral interaction and critical thinking in the EFL classroom**

One of the most important objectives of spoken interaction is for students to interact

using different forms of expressions and to reuse the language of the speaking task instructions (Direção Geral da Educação, 2018). The instructions should guide the learners to participate efficiently in class discussions about the different topics dealt with in class. Regarding oral production, learners should be able to express themselves clearly and accurately about the different topics of the course (ibid). Within such a context, the teacher's role becomes one of a guide inside the classroom, by helping students build their arguments, challenging their previous knowledge, or reinforcing it with stronger arguments (ibid).

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2020), peer interaction results as a fundamental skill among various proficiency levels of the foreign language. The CEFR defines this ability as "collaborating to construct meaning "(ibid, p. 99) and it provides a scale with the different skills of the different levels described. For the B2 level, which is the level concerning this project, the CEFR contemplates, for overall spoken interaction, that learners should be able to "Use the language fluently, accurately, and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational, or leisure topics, clearly marking the relationships between ideas." (ibid, p.99) Learners should also be able to communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control and to adopt a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances. They should be able to interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity with speakers of the target language by providing relevant explanations and arguments (ibid, p. 83).

Similarly, the European Council's (2018) recommendation for key competencies for lifelong learning emphasizes the importance of critical thinking skills as being "more essential than ever before in our quickly changing society...They are essential to generate new ideas, new theories, new products, and new knowledge." (European Commission, 2018, art.7).

The competencies associated with critical thinking involve students being able to:

“Think comprehensively and in-depth, logically, by observing, analyzing information, experiences, or ideas, arguing using implicit or explicit criteria. Learners could develop new ideas and solutions, imaginatively and innovatively, because of interaction with others or personal reflection, applying them to different contexts and areas of learning.” (ibid, p. 24).

Critical thinking is "purposeful, self-regulatory judgment" (Facione, 1990, p. 2) and is the result of an ongoing process that requires various skills. Critical thinking skills represent a deep engagement to build students' knowledge through reflection and analysis; as well as the importance of questioning and analyzing materials and encouraging learners' autonomy (Saleh, 2019).

According to Hughes (2014), finding a universal definition of critical thinking is difficult. Hughes (2014) also uses the expression 'growing picture' to highlight critical thinking's expanding importance in language teaching; it is a fluid concept that has been evolving and developing for years. According to Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), a set of subskills was created to define which skills are needed from lower-level thinking to a higher-level thinking learner. Hughes (2014) defined "A stairway of critical thinking", and the characteristics are, in order, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating. The author points out that "the five sub-skills are represented as a set of linear steps or stairway progressing steadily upwards in order of difficulty and sophistication" (ibid, p.3). According to Hughes (2014), among the strategies recommended during EFL classes to develop students' critical thinking, brainstorming seems to be the most effective one.

## **1.2. The benefits of dialogic discussions in the EFL classroom**

Given the importance of oral interaction and critical thinking skills for young English language learners, several pedagogical methods have been proposed to encourage the development of both types of skills. These methods emphasize creating a classroom environment that not only fosters language development, but also promotes open dialogue and reflective thinking.

In line with this, Alexander (2020) claims that classrooms should be places where all students feel comfortable, encouraged, and free to share their ideas and personal thoughts. Such an environment is crucial for nurturing both oral interaction and critical thinking, as it enables students to engage deeply with content and with each other in meaningful ways.

Alexander's (2020) six principles for dialogic talk, namely, collective, reciprocity, support, deliberation, cumulativeness, and purpose, represent a very important reference point. Collectivity, reciprocity, and supportiveness are specific to the classroom culture and determine the type of dialogue within the classroom (Alexander, 2018). Cumulation is the most difficult of the principles to achieve, as it depends on teachers' mastery of their insight

into students' understandings of the specific topic and "their interactive skill in taking those understandings forward" (Alexander, 2018, p.6). The study (Alexander, 2020) shows how teachers can use dialogic principles to plan and teach any kind of subject, and how they apply to every level of teaching.

Another study (Maine, 2024) shows how language in the dialogic classroom is a powerful tool, that can aid students in reaching better acceptance and understanding of each other. The researcher considers data collected from English primary schools' class observation to reflect on the position of language in the dialogic classroom. This empirical study weighs on evidence from a European project intended to foster children's cultural skills through the dialogic teaching of tolerance, empathy, and inclusion (DIALLS). By comparing two different educational contexts and backgrounds (England and Wales), Maine (2024) highlights the importance of oral language in primary education. According to the author, "ambiguous topics can provide authentic space for ideas to be shared where teachers are not perceived to hold the correct answers" (ibid, p. 4). The findings support the idea that dialogic pedagogy provides room for students' ideas and opinions, making it an effective approach in the classroom.

Furthermore, Cui and Teo (2024) claim that class discussions develop students' social and cognitive skills in various subjects, including language and the arts. Their study, which is part of a larger project on the development of EFL students' critical thinking through classroom dialogue, took place during 15-week EFL lectures at a Chinese university. The class was formed by 39 students (10 male and 29 female) and the intervention's goal was to improve students' listening and speaking skills, while employing different teaching materials to prompt students' oral interaction and opinions on specific topics.

As the results of the study conducted in China show, one of the key reasons for the study's success was the establishment and teaching of specific rules designed to ensure the most favorable outcome of dialogic pedagogy. These were the expressed rules: "everyone shares", "respect others' contributions", and "reasons are expected", established together with the students (Cui & Teo, 2024, p. 120). For Cui and Teo, if students are not assured that their opinions matter and that they are worth listening to, their oral participation may be affected, which may explain why students are not used to thinking critically and reflecting. Therefore, emotional and psychological support played an important role in motivating students to participate with their contributions through acknowledgment,

affirmative repetition, and positive feedback (Cui & Teo, 2024).

According to the same authors, those students who are not familiar with dialogic teaching might, at first glance, think that it has nothing special compared to other pedagogies, such as, for example, communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT), "where students actively interact with and learn from, one another as they share a communicative purpose or cause" (Cui & Teo, 2024, p. 115). On the contrary, the main difference between all the teaching strategies mentioned above, and dialogic teaching is the execution of the teacher. Indeed, Cui and Teo claim that, in dialogic pedagogy, the teacher has a crucial role in inciting, guiding and leading students toward dialogue that is not just spontaneous interaction, but helps them build knowledge by expanding others' ideas.

Matruglio (2023) also supports the idea that contemplating techniques can improve students' interactions and arguments, while learning the subject matter and effectively building their knowledge. She reports a dialogic intervention study in a teacher-centered secondary English language classroom in Singapore, consisted of 39 students from a secondary class (age 15) in a government secondary school. The results of the study showed that dialogic teaching helped to engage students in exploratory talk, a type of dialogue in which students can contribute and argue critically but constructively with each other's thoughts (Mercer, 2013). Finally, Matruglio claimed it also reinforced their thinking skills and suggested alternative ideas.

### **1.3. The benefits of using picturebooks in the EFL classroom**

According to Kümmerling-Meibauer (2023), "pictures include visual codes, whether basic, complex, or culture-specific, that thus contribute to the acquisition of visual literacy—the capacity to competently handle and understand any visual information whatsoever" (p. 11). As Heggernes (2023) suggests, there is an urgent need for recognizing the importance of visual literacy in EFL education as she claims that "visual literacy is an essential element of being critical and reflective members of society" (p. 204). One powerful tool which can be used to develop visual literacy is reading picturebooks, since "they invite emerging readers of English to engage with the text in detail" (p. 218).

Picturebooks are a combination of visual and verbal codes, and they are not just books with pictures; they are much more complex than that. Nodelman (1988) argues that

picturebook illustrations often play an essential role in conveying meaning, emotion, and plot, in an interdependent relationship between words and images, turning the picturebook into a unique medium of communication and artistic expression, and offering deeper nuances to its meaning.

Mourão's (2013) research with a group of upper secondary learners in Portugal demonstrated that the "inter-animation between picture and word fostered discussion as a motivator for language use, thus opportunities for inter-thinking" (p. 102). Thus, picturebooks offer countless opportunities to improve spoken interaction and critical thinking skills for older school learners (Alter & Merse, 2023; Heggernes, 2019). Picturebooks allow students to connect with multiple interpretations of what they perceive as their reality and to be more critical about it. Mourão (2013) also demonstrates that when more illustrations than text are present, there is more space for reflections and analysis, and students are more engaged in a critical way of learning.

Heggernes' (2023) study also explores how picturebooks can facilitate engagement, enhance critical thinking, and spoken interaction among students learning English as a second language. The study is set in the context of foreign language learning in Norway, where secondary-school students are exposed to picturebooks to observe how the interplay between images and text can stimulate deeper discussions, even for students who struggle with reading. During the intervention, students were introduced to a picturebook, and their responses were observed in group settings. The focus was on how the students interacted with both the verbal and visual components of the books. Data collection involved monitoring student engagement, particularly their questions, participation in discussions, and how they utilized the pictures to aid their understanding of the text. Observations were recorded to examine how the picturebook influenced students' engagement and comprehension. Heggernes found that the use of picturebooks allowed even struggling readers to actively participate in group discussions. For example, one student who had difficulties reading English was able to engage more fully by asking questions and examining the pictures, which prompted the group to delve deeper into the content (Heggernes, 2023, p. 218). This highlights the potential of picturebooks to foster critical thinking and engagement by allowing students to rely on visual cues, thus improving their spoken interaction and comprehension of complex topics. This represents a fundamental hypothesis for my research: students are constantly bombarded by visual stimuli, but it

seems they are not given the chance to analyze and interpret all these visual codes that surround them. Visually challenging picturebooks in ELT can be a portal to an expanded cluster of themes (Heggernes, 2023).

Through picturebooks, students can explore the effectiveness of communicating some important messages through pictures or very succinct sentences. This medium has enormous learning potential, especially in language education, but also encourages students' active engagement with different subject matters such as identity, gender issues, climate change, and social justice to the extent of fostering transcultural learning and critical thinking (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2023, p. 11). What makes them unique as a way of dealing with such topics, is the way they imply "complicated narrative devices such as metafiction, intertextuality, multiperspectivity, and irony which challenge the reader in many ways" (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2023, p. 12).

It is also worth noting that picturebooks are useful resources for the secondary classroom upon an adequate selection. Kümmerling-Meibauer (2023) argues that, since the early 1990s, more and more picturebooks have elaborately addressed controversial topics in depth. As Alter and Merse (2023) claim, due to some picturebooks' sophisticated and controversial content, they could be used after primary school, specifically for advanced learners from 13 to 18 years of age. This new potential of picturebooks has changed their target audience and consideration, as they are not children's books anymore, but a useful tool for learners of all ages, such as adolescents. Mourão (2013) developed a learning sequence around *The Lost Thing* (Tan, 2000), which she considers a "challenging picturebook" due to its multiple possible interpretations. These types of demanding picturebooks can provoke learners' curiosity through intricate picture–word interaction and are appropriate teaching resources for secondary school students. Mourão (2023) argues that picturebooks have proved to be an effective multimodal tool to deal with controversial issues, and they seem to be a precious resource to achieve higher achievements than the traditional methods for EFL learning. Research has shown that picturebooks have notoriously brought controversial topics into the classroom with successful outcomes and, therefore, could represent a useful resource for EFL secondary classrooms (Mourão, 2023).

## **1.4. Combining dialogic discussions and picturebooks in the EFL classroom**

As described above in section 1.3, picturebooks offer a gateway to conducting dialogic lessons, since different narratives can prompt learners to reflect on their life experiences in a deeper way and from different perspectives (Maine & Vrikki, 2021). Picturebooks also give learners a chance to produce authentic questions and take part in meaningful discussions (Maine & Vrikki, 2021), as well as highlight the importance of backing up learners' reasoning. In this scenario, the teacher's role becomes that of a guide who helps learners build their knowledge by discussing their opinions with each other.

Although not for language learning purposes per se, but relevant, Matruglio (2023) argues that for picturebooks to be used effectively as a learning means in the classroom, teachers need to create space for a dialogic metalinguistic conversation that allows learners to express their thoughts. This process can be implemented by following specific steps, such as creating space for reflection, expanding the possibilities to consider, and inviting learners to reflect on their own knowledge. Matruglio recognizes that the first three principles – collective, supportive, and reciprocal – "characterize the classroom culture within which dialogue is most likely to prosper" (2023, p. 131).

This complex and, at the same time, rewarding practice of dialogic discussion (Alexander, 2018) requires time and effort to prepare both teachers and students. Before even starting to instruct students to discuss in working groups, research has shown the need for explicit teaching of how to collaboratively talk to each other (Matruglio, 2023). Patience and determination from both the teacher and the students inside the classroom context are key components of successful dialogic-type classes. Students will eventually acquire the confidence to make their connections and critical reflection autonomously.

Several studies have shown the positive effects of the combination of picturebooks with dialogic practices. Heggernes (2019) developed a five-session clearing sequence based on the picturebook *The Wall* (Sís, 2007). The researcher proposes that dialogic transactions with literature, including multimodal texts like picturebooks, may enhance skills such as empathy and critical engagement. She also applies a few characteristics of dialogic teaching to her study. These include prompts for thoughtful responses and requests for clarifications and explanations. Heggernes (2019) claims that more student-centered classes, where

students are led to a more independent way of learning, allow them to autonomously build knowledge. Finally, it was also demonstrated that a high-quality picturebook challenges the students towards deeper interpretations related to dialogic teaching, enhancing critical thinking skills.

As Chow et al. argue (2023), the creative literacy activities for dialogic reading aim to promote children's creative use of second language vocabulary. Such creative activities mainly include using creative learning materials as stimuli to generate novel and interesting teacher-student interactions. Based on their findings, picturebooks represent a valid and creative prompt for students to use for their dialogic discourse and, therefore, their English language learning. Chow et al.'s research is based on a study that addresses the use of dialogic teaching to improve English language learning among Chinese children with varied levels of English vocabulary. It focuses on the effects of dialogic teaching on vocabulary knowledge and phonological awareness. Students took part in a 12-week dialogic teaching intervention implemented in daily English lessons. The results showed that students in the experimental group who experienced dialogic teaching significantly improved their vocabulary knowledge.

This chapter has displayed the current literature in an attempt to address the research question: "In a class of Grade 10 students, how can teachers elicit spoken interaction and critical thinking using picturebooks as a prompt?" In doing so, I make use of the literature to define what dialogic teaching is and its importance in the EFL classroom; discuss the benefits of picturebooks; discuss their potential as a dialogic teaching tool; and discuss how using them in the EFL classroom can help students develop their speaking and critical thinking skills.

## Chapter 2. Methodology

The methods used to answer my research question are described in this chapter. Section 2.1 outlines the inherent relationship between teacher training and action research approach, and how this relationship influenced the current report. Section 2.2 describes the chosen picturebooks and explores the pre-service national guidelines and how this project aligns with them. The chapter continues with a description of the data collection tools (section 2.3) to understand students' perception and reflection around using picturebooks.

### 2.1. Action research in pre-service education

According to Nunan (2006), Action Research (AR) is a form of self-reflection analysis aimed at improving one's teaching practice and better understanding its circumstances. Burns (2010) divides the AR process into four steps: 1. Planning. 2. Action 3. Observation, and 4. Reflection. These four steps could continue *ad infinitum* until the teacher-researcher finds the outcome they seek, since there is always space for improvement and reflection. Burns (2019) argues that AR is highly beneficial and is widely used method in the EFL classroom, and it should be extended in the practicum classroom. The most important benefit of AR is the space that it provides for teachers to reflect upon their teaching practices, improving and developing as professionals (Nunan, 2006). Another important aspect of AR is that teachers can become "active (co)-producers of knowledge and enactors of the classroom curriculum" (Cui & Teo, 2024, p. 116).

Concerning AR in the practicum classroom, Vieira (2016) claims that the choice of a topic for the practicum project is often aimed at solving a specific problem identified by the student during the observation period. Vieira also states that time is one of the most difficult limitations and obstacles of AR to overcome during the internship, which can be a major limitation, as the time that should be devoted to research by interns is limited by academic overload.

Focusing now on the specific case of AR in pre-service education, Vieira (2009) states that AR aims reflecting, analyzing, and finding solutions that contribute to the improvement of pedagogical practices and it proves to be a beneficial practice. Along with AR comes

investment in reconstructing more appropriate teaching tools to improve pedagogical techniques. This allows for a critical reflective posture that is always ready to question the effectiveness of current pedagogical practice (Vieira, 2009).

In the same line of thought, Vieira (2009) also proposes that there is a need for pre-service teachers to learn to question and research themselves. Similarly, the author highlights the relevance of reflecting upon one's work at different points of the internship, using tools such as the collection and analysis of relevant data to understand the nature, impact and constraints of the interventions implemented; a critical reflexive attitude towards pedagogical action, questioning its applicability and the factors that influence it; and consider the experiences as opportunities to improve the quality of educational learning. Vieira (2009) also identified that one of the main difficulties seems to be the critical interpretation of the internship experience. It is a very common problem in this kind of context, because the level of criticality is not yet well developed.

Finally, it is expected that professional practice promotes "a critical and reflective attitude towards the challenges, processes, and performances of everyday professional life" (Vieira et al., 2013). Future educators and teachers must, therefore, be both educated by investigation and investigate through education. According to this viewpoint, the trainee is a creative producer as well as a critical consumer of knowledge. As such, pedagogical supervision should be grounded in the ideas of democratic participation, critical intervention, critical inquiry, and emancipation. This will aid in the creation of intervention plans that are informed by a democratic conception of education in schools (Vieira et al., 2013). This last point presents itself as one of the valid reasons why it is important and useful to undertake AR despite its limitations. As Vieira (2016) asserts, notwithstanding a few challenges trainees may encounter, there is no doubt that pedagogical research, and especially AR, enhances their professional learning.

## **2.2. Picturebooks and themes**

During the practicum, the chosen picturebooks mainly considered the students' language and learning potential (Sections 1.3 and 1.4) and the topics of the course book chapters. With the purpose of properly and consistently framing lesson planning with the national curriculum, it is crucial to contextualize the choice of picturebooks and dialogic teaching.

The first picturebook used with the two Grade 10 classes was *Last Stop at Market Street* (de la Peña, 2015), in the context of Units 6 and 7 “Better Together” and “Thinking of optimistic solutions”, respectively, from their coursebook. The intervention with this picturebook was undertaken during the month of February 2024. It features CJ, a young boy who travels with his grandmother by bus throughout the city. He discusses with his grandmother how life can be seen from different perspectives and how it goes beyond materialistic wealth. The boy experiences several intercultural encounters that show him how a community can share the same urban space in harmony and show him different realities. After getting feedback from both the students and scientific supervisors, it was unmistakable that it was not the most appropriate picturebook for 16 and 17-year-old students, due in part to the fact that the main character is an 8-year-old boy. This first experience with picturebooks within a classroom was enlightening in choosing the subsequent picturebooks and activities.

*The Red Tree* (Tan, 2001), the second picturebook was chosen in to contribute Unit7: “Rose-tinted glasses (Cheering someone up, thinking of optimistic solutions)” of the coursebook. The picturebook describes, through pictures and words, unspecified moments of a day (or perhaps of a more extended time frame as one student suggested during a class discussion), of a young girl who seems to be manifesting some existential discomfort. It explores the themes of hope, which the students identified in the red leaf that appears on every page, and in the red tree that grew in the girl's room at the end. *The Red Tree* was used throughout two 90-minute-lessons, later in March. The time between the first and second picturebooks allowed me to reflect on my mistakes and improve my lesson plans. Considering the AR steps, the planning and action steps improved.

In the context of the topic “Take charge” in Unit 9, *The President of the Jungle* (Rodrigues et al. 2020) discusses issues such as democracy, civil rights, and activism, and learners were faced with different characters’ profiles which represented, in a stereotypical and simplified way, political ideologies (including monarchy), corruption, and justice. This intervention was undertaken during the month of April 2024. The picturebook deals with the topic of elections and their consequences in a fun and humorous way. It begins with Lion, the king of the jungle, doing something that provokes a strong reaction from his subjects, who then decide to hold elections. Owl explains the rules, and Snake, Sloth, and Monkey run for election. Lion runs as well but is disqualified after bribing some voters with

peanuts to vote for him. The animals hold rallies, debates, and speeches to prove why they would make the best president of the jungle. In a humorous and entertaining way, this picturebook takes us through the different stages of the electoral process, subtly explaining the principles of a democracy that respects human rights and social equality. In the end, Sloth wins and promises to always listen to his people.

One of the main activities during the lesson plan implementation was the picturebook read-aloud. According to Mourão (2023, p. 236), “this stage of the read-aloud is unique, as the learners are discovering the picturebook for the first time and are beginning to unravel the multimodal message(s).” To give greater room for interpretation, this step might be repeated, i.e., the picturebook read aloud more than once. The objective of using the picturebook in the classroom will determine whether to read it aloud again, but follow-up exercises should encourage students to reflect and think critically as well as provide personal answers and explanations for their unique interpretations. The ultimate goal is to provide possibilities for engaging in transactional and dialogic participation in the receiving process (Mourão, 2023).

### **2.3. Data collection choices and analysis**

Data were collected throughout the implementation of lesson plans and activities, linked with Grade 10 *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (DGE, 2018) themes that approach dialogic teaching with appropriate prompts. The lesson plans were implemented during the second semester, from February to May 2024, and data were collected during these five months (see Table 1).

As noted in Table 1, not all data collection tools were implemented during the classes with picturebooks. Unfortunately, both *Last Stop on Market Street* and *The Red Tree* classes lacked the necessary consent form with written permission to record the audio of the lessons. In addition, the choice of *Last Stop on Market Street* was inappropriate for the age of the students. As it was the first picturebook-inspired lesson, Written Reflective exercises to collect students’ input weren’t prepared in advance. For these two intervention lessons, my field’s notes and Teacher’s Diary are the only data available. Consequently, for *The Red Tree* lesson, having learned from the first negative experience and taking the advice of my academic supervisors, students’ reflections were collected with analysis questions. Permission to record the lessons did not come until April, so recordings of the students’

interactions was only undertaken for the lessons around *The President of the Jungle*.

**Table 1**

*Picturebooks used, on which dates, objectives and data collection tools used in each class*

<b><i>Picturebooks used</i></b>	<b><i>Dates</i></b>	<b><i>Objectives</i></b>	<b><i>Data collection tools used</i></b>
<b><i>Last Stop on Market Street (de la Peña, 2015)</i></b>	Two lessons of 90-minutes on the 5 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> of February	“Better together” in Unit 6	Teacher's field notes and Reflective Diary
<b><i>The Red Tree (Tan, 2001)</i></b>	Two lessons of 90-minutes on the 19 <sup>th</sup> and 21 <sup>st</sup> of March	"Thinking of optimistic solutions" in Unit 7	Written Reflective Exercises and Teacher's Reflective Diary
<b><i>The President of the Jungle (Rodrigues et al., 2020)</i></b>	Two lessons of 90-minutes on the 15 <sup>th</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> of April	“Take charge” in Unit 9	Lesson Recordings, Written Reflective Exercises and Teacher's Reflective Diary

The data collection tools used (see Table 2) throughout the action research helped collect data on students’ oral and critical thinking skills development in the context of analyzing the picturebooks proposed in the lessons.

**Table 2**

*Data collection tools used during the practicum*

<b><i>Data Collection Tool</i></b>	<b><i>Time Frame</i></b>	<b><i>Reason for using them</i></b>
<b>Teacher's field notes and Reflective Diary</b>	September 2023 - May 2024	Collect evidence of students' development of oral and critical thinking skills
<b>Written Reflective Exercises</b>	September 2023 - May 2024	Collect evidence of students' critical thinking skills
<b>Lesson Recordings</b>	March 2024 - April 2024	Collect evidence of students' oral interaction data

Since one of the issues noticed early on was the level of student participation, the names of the students who participated spontaneously were written down as field notes. After a few lessons, though, it was clear that reminding them at the beginning of class that their participation was considered for the speaking assessment was not sufficient motivation for all students. In this sense, this data collection methodology certainly proved to be a useful tool for observation and evaluation.

Within the lesson plans, tasks included written reflective exercises and oral tasks performed in front of the class. These were mostly post-reading activities, in which students had the chance to reflect, listen, and share their opinions with their classmates in the context of group work. For example, students had to prepare a short political speech, with vocabulary learned during the class, inspired by ideas that arose during the analysis and class discussion on *The President of The Jungle*. Students chose a political ideology, thought of a name for a fictitious political party, and decided upon a jungle animal with a specific character and symbolic profile, as in the picturebook. This example provided me with data to analyze the progress in their oral skills.

My reflection on the data was structured as a Teacher's Reflective Diary, based on

field notes collected during the intervention. These reflections aimed at gaining a better understanding of how to help my students acquire the confidence to express their thoughts and critical opinions. As P. Chambers (2003) argues, both the narrative itself and reflections upon the narrative help to better understand the research and acquire new knowledge and perspective.

The written reflective exercises were mainly the students' opinions and reflections, completed during group or individual activities in class, about how they think their dialogic argumentation skills and critical thinking have improved throughout the class sessions based on the picturebooks. These written tasks provided me with data for evaluating their critical thinking.

The oral interaction data collected were mainly audio recordings and transcripts of whole-class interactions during students' dialogic engagement with *The President of The Jungle*. The oral interaction data were collected to measure my students' progress in their spoken interaction and to assess their development in their critical thinking skills. For these data, consent forms from students' parents and carers were collected, guaranteeing that personal data protection is respected.

Chapter 2 presented the tools chosen to answer the research question and described how the activities during the lesson plans were applied, striving to solve the issues identified during the observation phase. It also explained how written reflective exercises collected from students, and my field notes and reflective diary and lesson recordings provided data on students' development in their spoken interaction and critical thinking skills.

## **Chapter 3. Practicum**

After presenting the theoretical background (Chapter 1) and the methodology implemented throughout the action research of my pre-service practicum (Chapter 2), this chapter illustrates the context in which the practicum took place (section 3.1), the classes themselves (section 3.1.1), the main findings during the observation stage (section 3.2), and a brief description of the planning stage of the practicum aiming to answer the learners' needs and the research question (section 3.3). It then provides a brief overview of the activities proposed during the intervention (section 3.4).

### **3.1. School context**

The practicum was conducted in a private Catholic school in Lisbon, Portugal. The school follows an educational model based on spirituality, solidarity, and inclusivity. It was founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to respond to the need for education and evangelization of children and young people, especially the neediest. The school's educational projects are all about closeness, simplicity, and family spirit. The school considers that education is important in the deep dimension of the person, and it believes in the constant renewal of methodological practices, attention to diversity, the inclusion of innovative learning methods, the importance of sport as a value of life, and the use of new technologies as tools for learning.

### **3.2. Participants**

The groups observed and taught were the Class 10A and Class 10B (pseudonyms). Both groups had two blocks of English lessons of 90 minutes each week. Each class has its own room, and the teachers move between the different rooms.

The class groups are large; some classes had more than 30 students. This factor has often been an obstacle during classroom dynamics, especially for class discussion activities, due to the scattered attention of some students with concentration difficulties. An effective strategy to overcome this difficulty was to move and go around the whole class to engage the students unanimously.

The general rule of the school is that students must raise their hands to intervene

during class. This rule is, in general, highly respected, although it was evident immediately that it did not leave room for authentic class discussions. The time the students had to share their opinions was limited. In addition, it was interesting to note how differently the two classes responded to social and behavioral rules during class, possibly due to their differences described below.

### **3.2.1. Class 10A**

Class Grade 10A started the school year in September 2023 with 26 students and lost two during the first semester. So, when the time arrived to implement the lessons planned and created, there were 24 students (10 girls and 14 boys). This was the smallest class group in the school, which was a great advantage in terms of working with the students, and also in terms of their attention and participation during lessons. The students were all between 16 and 17 years old (see Appendix L).

In general, this class was excellent in terms of learning and grades, including English. To illustrate this point, in one of the first classes observed at the beginning of the academic year, the students introduced themselves to the class, to the cooperating teacher, and to me. It was pleasantly surprising to hear how fluent most of them were while speaking English. It is also worth noting that many students began at the school when they were 3 years old, when they had begun learning English too.

One peculiarity of this class was that 15 students were part of a Descriptive Geometry course and the other nine (including 8 girls) were part of the Art course. Most of the students were white, of Portuguese nationality and from a middle/upper- class background.

In terms of behavior, from the beginning, it was a disciplined class that showed interest during the lessons. Later, especially near the end of the second semester, it also seemed to be a matter of pressure felt by the students to maintain a high-grade average, already thinking about entering university. Some of this pressure looked as if it translated into real anxiety in some students.

Although it was a hardworking class in terms of performance, there were four students with diagnosed learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and attention deficit. In general, these students were not an obstacle to the normal functioning of the English lessons, but over time two students stood out due to their needed additional support during the lessons, and, with the consent of the cooperating teacher, I was able to help

them when necessary. These students faced difficulties understanding some instructions and required added encouragement to participate in class discussions. Given their low self-esteem, speaking in English in front of their classmates represented a moment of discomfort. An effective strategy was to approach them while they were carrying out activities in class to ensure that they were not distracted and that they understood the instructions. Despite its effectiveness, it was not always a strategy well received by these students, as they did not want to be a target of special attention to be seen as different from their peers.

### **3.2.2. Class 10B**

Class 10B had 31 students, all between 16 and 17 years old. This was the Grade 10 class with the largest number of students with diagnosed cognitive and learning difficulties. There were eight students with an official diagnosis; although there were many more students who demonstrated difficulties during class (see Appendix L). Some difficulties were probably due to lack of study and some gaps from previous years, and some students had notable difficulties in concentrating or understanding activities. This class was a challenge for both me and the cooperating teacher.

In these cases, comparing both classes is inevitable. Certainly, due to the fact of being a large class and with many students with various diagnosed learning difficulties, it was sometimes a struggle to keep them interested and attentive during the various activities. Student difficulties were a constant concern also during the lesson development. All the lesson plans that included picturebooks should be the same for the two Grade 10 classes to compare the results. However, I have asked myself several times whether doing similar activities with two different classes was the optimal solution.

One of the most challenging students was on the autism spectrum and had hearing problems. He required constant attention and help, as he demonstrated great difficulty in understanding the instructions, vocabulary, and explanations. He was a student with very little developed emotional maturity and could lose control easily, often destabilizing the attention of the entire class. The start of my practicum with this class was quite stressful, as I was never sure how the students might react to the activities.

One of the most difficult times, both for me and the students, was on Thursday afternoons, when they exhibited some fidgety and restless behaviors. These tense

moments posed a challenge at the beginning of my internship, especially because, this was one of the classes with the most difficulty in English in the whole school.

### **3.3. The observation phase**

Considering Nunan's (2006) cycles of intervention in an AR method, section 3.3 describes the observation phase (September to January), when the concerns with the interaction and the participation of the students during the classes were detected.

The observation phase was crucial in many ways, as it served to take note of the teaching methods and various strategies of the cooperating teacher, to get to know the students and bond with them, and finally, to identify potential problems for the practicum. The observation stage took place between September 2023 and January 2024.

Wajnryb (1992) defines this initial phase of teacher training as the "silent phase", since the learning teacher has the chance to observe, learn, and reflect, without having to respond or produce. It is a phase in which the student-teacher must also face hidden assumptions or biases, as all student-teachers take some baggage when they start their teaching practice, whether this baggage corresponds to previous teaching experiences or experiences as students (Wajnryb, 1992). Britten (1988) also claims the instinct of non-native language teachers will be to follow certain preconceptions and poorly actualized methods acquired and internalized as students, despite having learned more effective techniques. Likewise, Botha (2020) shows that student-teachers begin their educational journey with some biases and concepts from their experience as students. They hesitate to doubt an initial vision and, most of the time, are very limited, failing to consider different ways of studying and learning. As Wajnryb (1992) argues, the student-teacher's role should be one of "collaborative and consultative, as the teacher is considered a co-investigator and co-explorer in the language classroom" (p. 11).

In my case, at the beginning of my observation period, I mistakenly assumed that, since I had accumulated some prior teaching experience, starting right away to support the cooperating teacher in various activities was the logical step. Of course, it only took a few weeks to realize how crucial the observation phase was. Nevertheless, as mentioned previously, some students required additional support, so I was not able to fully experience this first stage of the internship. Although the observation phase was not silent, there were still plenty of aspects to consider and observing effectively and comprehensively was a skill

that could be learned and practiced. On this basis, active engagement in my learning happened in various ways.

My reception by the students was immediately very positive, both classes were intrigued and interested that there was another teacher in their English classes, and they were welcoming from the first moment on. Students regarded me as supportive element during the activities, in turn, I was able to win their trust during the observation period.

It must also be specified that these two classes, along with all the Grade 10 classes of the school, were also new to the cooperating teacher, who was a qualified secondary teacher. So, they had no prior knowledge of the students, and process of getting to know them happened simultaneously. On the one hand, this fact brought advantages in the relationship with the students, who immediately saw me as an "ally" from whom they could ask for help, outside and inside the classroom. On the other hand, this confidence could undermine my authority during the practice stage. Despite this apprehension and partly because of my inexperience, building rapport and getting to know the students took their natural course.

In terms of behavior, there was a considerable difference between the two classes. Grade 10B class was more fidgety, inattentive, and difficult to motivate in class, an important aspect to take into consideration when lesson planning. Another important fact was the poor participation of the classes during the lessons. In both classes, the same three or four students participated spontaneously for each class.

When the first impressions' phase ended, a more detailed observation began, and taking notes on the level of attention and interest of the students proved to be useful for thinking about the topics, activities, and picturebooks chosen for the practice lessons.

It was clear that topics covered in the course book during the lessons failed to arouse much interest among the students who passively listened to the lesson and did the grammar exercises in the manual. There was a need for alternative ways that could motivate them to intervene, share their experiences, ideas, and opinions, and, in short, make English lessons something they felt were useful for their future and not just another subject they were required to study to finish high school.

During the first few weeks of observation and talking with the students, some interests, such as technology and music, arose. Music had a very important role in their routines, so it was important to include it in the lesson plans. Furthermore, the focus was

set on activities that gave more space to orality and that allowed students who had difficulties and who did not feel motivated to participate.

Given the classes' context, in October, it was decided that picturebooks as input for dialogic pedagogy could represent a possible solution, bearing in mind their potential to captivate learners' interest, and participation and, therefore, improve their speaking and critical thinking skills.

### 3.4. The practice stage

The implementation of the lesson plans with the picturebooks started in February 2024 at the beginning of the second semester. Each picturebook became a pedagogical tool for two lessons of 90 minutes each. The final stage of the practicum, set in the last two weeks of April, took into consideration the cooperating teacher's concerns with finishing the program, the students' speaking skills, and their knowledge of a few grammar structures, thus implementing more grammar classes.

The goal of the research question was to create activities with picturebooks aimed at improving students' oral and critical thinking skills. The choice of topics was strictly influenced by the ones in the coursebook, as seen in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*My intervention general planning*

<b>Number of lessons</b>	<b>Lessons dates</b>	<b>Picturebook</b>	<b>Suggestion of activities planned for the lessons</b>
2	5 & 7 February	<i>The Last Stop on Market Street</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Students focusing on the text of the picturebook to find the narrative main themes.</li> <li>-Students analyzing the relationship between the illustrations and the text.</li> </ul>

2	19 & 21 March	<i>The Red Tree</i>	-Students practicing on listening to the picturebook with their eyes closed identify the narrative main themes.
2	15 & 22 April	<i>The President of the Jungle</i>	-Students' read aloud and turn taking of the picturebook.  -Role-play activity

Although not suitable for 10th graders, the picturebook *Last Stop at Market Street* (de la Peña, 2015) led to the production of an interesting drawing by one group of Class 10A. Figure 2 below shows a comparison between the intercultural communities depicted in the picturebook (Figure 1) and their own class. The drawing was produced as an assigned group activity from the teacher (see Appendix B) where students had to select a double-page spread and share their thoughts on this development within their groups, in this activity students were given the chance to make their own drawings to interpret the picturebook spread.

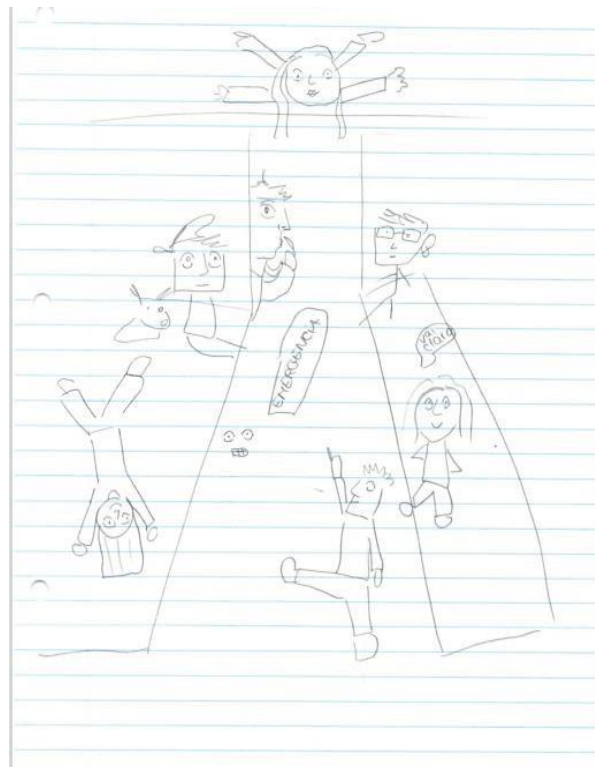
**Figure 1**

*Spread from Last Stop at Market Street (de la Peña, 2015) that students chose to represent by a drawing.*



**Figure 2**

*Students' representation of their class as a heterogeneous community*



Since the tests prepared by the cooperating teacher were based solely on grammar, after the first learning sequence plan, it was necessary to devote some lessons to grammar preparation. This created a great obstacle for the students, as they did not understand the usefulness of a learning sequence based on picturebooks. The grammar lessons were prepared with various exercises that students had to perform individually or in pairs. These exercises were provided on Teams before the lesson with various explanatory summaries and PowerPoint presentations as supporting materials.

With experience and as time went on, students began to make it clear how they preferred to start their lessons: with a song or video introducing the topic. A further discussion of other issues arose during and after the lessons' implementation can be found in Chapter 4.

Trying to find potential solutions to the research question, several activities were carried out to improve students' oral interaction and critical thinking development, relying on picturebooks as a prompt. The section below lists the most pertinent tasks and activities.

As mentioned in section 1.1, the potential of picturebooks for oral interaction and critical thinking development is very high, mainly because of picturebooks' wide scope for

interpretation and reflection (Alter & Merse, 2023). In general, the activities always started with reading the picturebook aloud, either by me or with the participation of the students, while analyzing the pictures and the text. At first, the students did not understand the direct relationship between both verbal and visual codes, which gave room for their interpretation and was the focus of the lessons. Starting from this initial activity of collective reading and analysis, various tasks were carried out to learn specific vocabulary, followed by a written analysis, and group dynamics with oral and written activities.

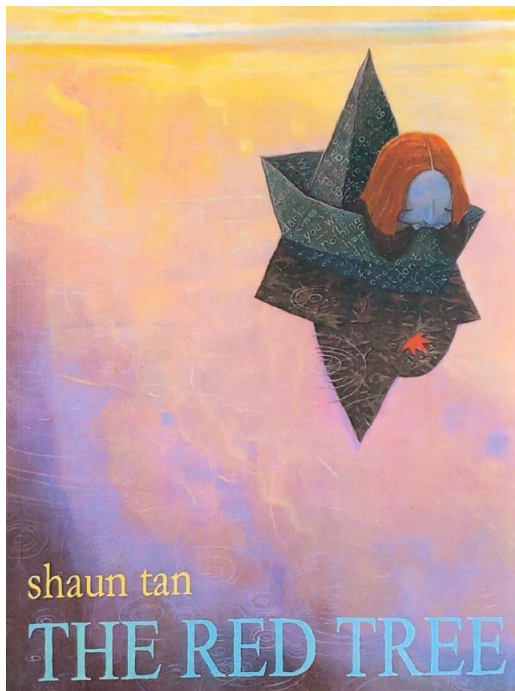
The Unit plan around *The Red Tree* (Appendices C and D) focuses on taking part in discussions within the thematic areas by trying to get students to discuss feelings and the ups and downs of life by sharing their own experiences. The first lesson plan begins with the song "Everything I Wanted" by Billie Eilish as an introductory activity to capture students' attention. After listening to the song, students discussed and tried to guess the story behind the song in groups of four by sharing their ideas and their personal experience, first within their groups, and later with the whole class. This activity was one of the first of this type in my classes, and it was a memorable experience for the students and me, since they embraced it with great enthusiasm. Later, they disclosed it was the first time they were able to express their opinions on the lyrics of a song and on the topics themselves: suicide, loneliness, and the price of fame. To quote one Grade 10A student's oral feedback regarding this class, these themes "were very interesting to discuss in class with their classmates."

This was one of the first times I had used a song by a popular artist among teenagers, as a means of reflecting and describing their personal experiences. It was also one of the first real class discussions, in which students could begin to practice and discuss dialogically, and when general rules were introduced to foster healthy discussions by expanding and arguing the ideas of their classmates (Alexander, 2020).

A particularly significant moment, in terms of developing the oral interaction through picturebooks, was the beginning of the analysis of *The Red Tree* (see Appendix C). The first approach was to show the front cover (Figure 3) and ask some interpretation questions, and what students noticed to begin to spark their interest.

**Figure 3**

*The Red Tree (Tan, 2001) front cover*



In the second half of this lesson plan, the students had the chance to develop a group writing activity. Each group was randomly given one quote from a famous person in History about hope and supporting others. They were then asked to construct a small text as a group, in approximately 25 minutes (see Appendix G).

At the start of the following lesson (see Appendix D) of this Unit plan, students watched a video about *The Red Tree*. The video was a representation of the picturebook with its image text and a piece of suggestive music. The point of this watching activity was for students to notice some extra details in the illustrations. The main activity was to read the picturebook again in groups of four and register extra details or different perspectives from the video. After the reading activity, each group was provided with a different worksheet to answer within their groups and prepare for a class discussion.

**Table 4**

*Group work questions based on "Tell me: children, reading & talk with the reading environment: how adults help children enjoy books" (A. Chambers, 2011)*

<b>Group 1 Questions</b>	<b>Group 2 Questions</b>	<b>Group 3 Questions</b>
a) <b>Was there anything you liked about this book.</b>	a) What caught your attention?	a) Were you surprised by anything your friends said?
b) <b>Was there anything you disliked about this book?</b>	b) Did anything bore, interest or surprise you?	b) What would you tell your friends about the book?
c) <b>Was there anything that puzzled you?</b>	c) Was there anything you thought strange?	c) What is the most important thing about this book for you?
d) <b>Did you notice any patterns or connections?</b>	d) Have you read any other stories like this? How is it different? How is it the same?	d) How long do you think it took the story to happen?

**Table 5**

*Discussion rules*

<b>Rules</b>
a) <b>All opinions count.</b>
b) <b>We must carefully listen to each other.</b>
c) <b>We try to expand on what a colleague has said, avoiding repetition.</b>
d) <b>There are no wrong or right answers.</b>

Students discussed the questions in Table 4 in groups to prepare for a whole- class discussion, following the discussion rules which were shared during class (see Table 5).

In the middle of the second semester, more precisely in April, a 90-minute class inspired by the picturebook *The President of the Jungle* (Rodrigues et al., 2020) was designed and implemented.

**Figure 4**

*The front cover of The President of the Jungle (Rodrigues et al., 2020)*



Through the final role-play activity, students could express their ideas of justice and democracy creatively, producing their political manifesto in a poster as group work. When it came to how to present the picturebooks, different approaches were put into action to trigger students' interest. Reading *The Red Tree* was preceded by a song analysis to contextualize and provide students with vocabulary useful for the subsequent discussion (Appendix C). For *The President of the Jungle*, students matched the right definition with specific vocabulary regarding elections, which was the topic of the picturebook (Appendix E). The goal of this activity was not only making sure they understood the meaning of the story, but also learning specific vocabulary to use in the role-play activity. The following debate (Appendix F) was an activity that many students had requested during an informal dialogue in which suggestions were gathered for future activities' incorporation into the lesson plans.

To sum up, this chapter presented the school and classes' context, and detailed the activities aimed at answering the research question. The following chapter consists of students' contributions, both written and oral along with my reflections on the results.

## **Chapter 4. Discussion of results and further research**

This final chapter presents a reflection of the results observed during my practicum, compared with my expectations (Section 4.1). After drawing some conclusions, it outlines possible improvements for the activities, in case of a future implementation, in the same or in other school settings (Section 4.2), summing up in section 4.3 the main findings and reflections during the internship.

### **4.1. Results**

This section presents an analysis and discussion of my notes and diary entries, the reflective tasks completed by students during class, and the transcripts of some recordings of the class discussions.

#### **4.1.1. Themes within the Data**

To collect the oral interaction data, the audio recordings of four lessons of 90 minutes each (see Table 1 in Chapter 2) proved crucial in detecting the difference not only in the amount of student participation but, more importantly, in their quality. The two lesson plans (see Appendices E and F) were given in each Grade 10 class. By analyzing these data, several conclusions came to light. Firstly, the student from Class 10B who has various learning difficulties (10B/S19 in Appendix K) revealed a much higher degree of attention and cooperation in group work followed by class discussions. Figure 2 (from Chapter 3) shows one of the first groups activity (see lesson plan in Appendix B) where students started to understand how to structure group work with my guidance and how to express their ideas in an effective way to their peers.

#### **4.1.2. Students' oral interaction skills development**

Another important observation was that class discussions and interactions between students were also getting longer and more spontaneous, toward the end of the second semester. For example, during the post-watching activity (see Appendix A), in which students had to answer a few questions to better understand the topic related to the short

film, most of them struggled to answer the questions in their groups, so after a few attempts, they answered the questions with my help in a class setting. The only students who participated were just the few who always did and felt more confident in sharing their opinions in English. It was also noticeable that most of the students from both classes did not feel comfortable with the theme and talking about homeless people. When they had to answer the question “Have you ever encountered a similar situation in real life? Would you like to share your experience?” (see Appendix A), only one student from Class 10A answered, sharing his experience as a volunteer in a homeless shelter. The former might be interpreted as another reason why the *Last stop on Market Street* cycle was less successful, considering also that homelessness is a sensitive topic and maybe the students from both classes did not have enough knowledge or maturity to fully comprehend it. The students from both classes also struggled to summarize their group’s answers, their justifications and arguments, so I did this task myself to show them how to do it.

Comparing this first attempt of class discussion with the lesson transcript of the debate from both classes, the students’ confidence in sharing their opinions and arguments in English improved.

Excerpt 1: from Lesson recordings of Class 10A debate.

10A/S13: young people are interested and always have something new to say, for example in 2019 in the UK thousands of students’ skipped school to take action on climate change. Teenagers are also affected by the law that adults vote for, for example the Parliament was debating about the military service that is something that affect us and that we, young people have no say about it.

T: thank, you. Very good arguments.

10A/S03: according to *Opinião Publica* 54% of young adults don’t vote because they don’t want to. And 25% of *Chega* so imagine what 60 years old could vote.

T: are this statics from last month elections?

10A/S6: about the abstinence of the voters from 18 to 30 years of age or the fact that they tend to vote for more radical parties, we believe that lowering the voting age could engage young people more in the elections and prevent the abstinence, creating a lifelong habit for them. This solution was implemented in Austria and it was proven to work.

T: does anybody would like to counter argue?

10A/S8: I would like to argue that, although they are many people interested in politics, there are some who lack maturity, life experience like working in job 9 to 5, buying food and things like that. So we think that 18 is the right age to vote.

As we can see in Excerpt 1 taken from the Lesson Transcripts (see Appendix H), external intervention was no longer needed to stimulate the discourse, and my role was solely that of coordinating students' interactions.

#### **4.1.3. Students 'dialogic and critical thinking skills development**

Despite their inexperience, the students' first encounter with dialogic discussion, prompted by Billie Eilish's "Everything I Wanted" (Appendix C) during *The Red Tree* cycle, was well received and served as a touchstone for other class discussions which ensued. Although some did not like the singer or the type of music, the students in class 10A welcomed the activity with great enthusiasm and, after listening to the song, discussed the story behind it. Afterwards, they talked about their ideas and reflected upon their own personal experiences, as mentioned in section 3.5.

##### Excerpt 2: from the written answers of Class 10A group work

"We never read any stories like this one. This picturebook mentions topics like depression, isolation, loneliness and even hope...."

Surprisingly, they all participated and even shared their thoughts and opinions on sensitive issues, such as depression, loneliness, and suicide. Some students associated this discomfort with depression, anxiety, and loneliness, which some declared to have

experienced during the pandemic, as we can see in Excerpt II.

Class 10B, despite its challenges (section 3.2.2), also participated in the brainstorming activity identifying keywords that could define the song's theme. They demonstrated sensitivity, and critical and reflective ability that, before that moment, they had not had the chance to explore. Taking this into consideration, I would like to analyze the contributions of the students who benefited from the insights solicited by the picturebooks.

Excerpt 3: some notes from the REFLECTIVE TEACHER DIARY

7<sup>th</sup> of Feb

(Original spelling is kept)

...About the first one with the first class I have implemented, the students had a lot to say about the Billie Eilish song, the discussion took half of the class. For the other half I have presented the picturebook, read it to them with their eyes closed, commented on the cover picture, etc. We didn't have time for the writing activity. In general, I think the students responded well and seemed interested. Considering the number of students with learning difficulties (ADHD, Autism and dyslexia) in Class, the group work is a bit more difficult for them. In general, I have noticed that both classes struggle with group work, and I think is because they are not used to do it.

Today's class went much better. It was a shame I could not record the class. Students' contributions discussing the PB were interesting. They showed more interest and a deeper understanding of the relationship between the images and the text. *The Last Stop on Market Street* (de la Peña, 2015) was probably not the best choice for 10th graders and a few students were not that interested. Today I asked them to join the same groups they had more time to think about the PB main themes and two groups made a connection between one of the images of the PB and their class. The groups were meant to have an attentive, closer look to the PB images and text and then share their reflections on the theme based on their interpretations.

25<sup>th</sup> of Feb

During the last week, I have implemented the two lesson plans about The Red Tree. Unfortunately, I could not record anything, but I was quite satisfied with the outcome. Regarding the second lesson plan about the PB The Red Tree, I had the feeling it went even better with Class A. The ss already knew the topic and they really liked the video; they said it helped them to understand better the PB. This is a good class with good students and good English level, there are just a few ss with difficulties and the coop. teacher believes that in these activities they stay behind because they are not able to follow (especially during group work). The coop. teacher asked me to reduce the discussion time and the group work for the other class, so I did. They did not respond that well to the group work and class discussion, there are many students who do not feel comfortable to share their opinions in English and they are probably not used to this kind of activity. I think that in general the activities went well. I can see that is something new for them, but I would love to continue working PB with both classes. I would reduce the groups to 3 people only. I would also change a few activities for Class 10B who has many ss with learning difficulties accordingly, but I am not sure how...

Above in Excerpt 3, we can see that the entry in my teacher diary on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February shows (Appendix I) how the experience with the picturebook *Last Stop on Market* was disappointing. The first activity of this lesson plan was well received by the students. However, the introduction of the picturebook was a fiasco (see Appendix A), but it was this lesson that was the most instructive for me of all. The students' unexpected reaction to the picturebook, their lack of interest and confusion shown in both classes showed me the importance of choosing an age-appropriate picturebook, especially in the case of teenagers. Before this first class, I had not considered how sensitive teenagers could become if they suspected we were using materials deemed "childish". This choice, coupled with the fact it was the students' first experience with picturebooks, could have had a negative impact, and created a misconception on these materials and what useful tools they can be, if chosen appropriately.

The entry in my teacher diary on 25 February (Appendix I) shows that, from the implementation of this second picturebook, I gained a new understanding of some objective problems as I had failed to consider the different levels and learning difficulties of the students when preparing the lesson plans, a challenge I had difficulty overcoming. One of my scientific supervisors suggested mixing levels in the small groups, preferably putting

good helpful students together with weaker students. She also suggested trying this strategy in a short group activity in one of the grammar lessons, experimenting with different approaches.

One of the strengths of the activities around *The President of the Jungle* (Appendix E) was the themes' choice, since it is current and of interest to the students: elections, democracy, and focusing on one's needs and desires for a better society. This attempt at integrating picturebooks into the classroom was better received from the students compared to the previous ones. This might have happened due to the themes themselves, as perhaps they are more concrete and up to date than those in *The Red Tree*, but also because, being already the third picturebook, the students were starting to get used to the dynamics, understanding how to read and interpret them.

#### Excerpt 4: Transcription of Class 10A students in Group 1 answers (see Appendix G)

The picturebook tells the story of a little girl, who feels that every day is always the same. For her, waking up every morning knowing that probably nothing new will surprise her, is a never-ending nightmare. Time seems to pass more and more slowly, and she just stares (as if she can't move) at other, happier lives...

Moreover, students showed an added interest and a deeper understanding of the relationship between the images and the text (see Excerpt4).

Research (Matruglio, 2023) shows that, with patience and determination from both the teacher and the students within the classroom context, they will eventually acquire the confidence to make their own connections and critical reflections autonomously. Students in general may not realize the significance of their own opinions or feel valued for their contributions since they rarely have the chance to express them. The section of the lesson that seemed the most beneficial was the post- reading activity of analyzing the main characters, their persuasive characteristics, and interpreting their inherent meaning. Throughout, students had the opportunity to utilize the knowledge and vocabulary learned in the first part of the lesson.

The interaction between the students in the lesson transcript above (Excerpt 1) is valid evidence of all the work done together throughout the semester in all our class

discussions, implementing all the discussion rules put forth. The students sound much more confident and aware of their opinions and critical thinking skills. Of course, this goal of feeling confident while speaking was not unanimously achieved by all students. However, the overall participation increased significantly, and most of the students were eager to participate and share their opinions in class 10A. Despite an initial apprehension regarding class 10B's reaction to this activity, students from both classes had an enthusiastic response to the lesson.

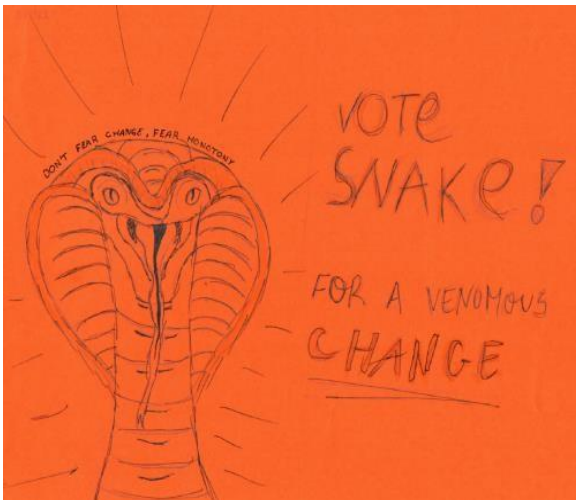
As Maine and Vrikki (2021) argue, picturebooks offer learners the opportunity to engage in valuable discussions. An example of a valid discussion might be the role-play which followed the picturebook reading in this learning sequence. It was a group dynamic, in which each group had a colorful poster where they could draw and choose an animal that represented them, a group name, and write a speech to present in front of the class. The outcome was a success, especially in seeing how committed the class was in its totality to the final election.

The students created meaningful and creative posters, and everyone was engaged and involved in the activity, even those students with more difficulty were collaborating and committed to the task at hand. As the students presented their posters, slogans and political projects to their classmates during the role-play, the result was pleasantly surprising. Their biggest improvement, in line with my research question, was that they productively used the vocabulary learned during class and internalized it in the creation of their political speeches.

Figure 3 is an example of how the students internalized the new vocabulary learned. This was the first group from both classes to present and it was a fantastic achievement: both in terms of the personalization and creativity with which they created the content and the irony present in the interpretation of the character.

### Figure 3

*Venomous Change (Grade 10A Class poster creation)*

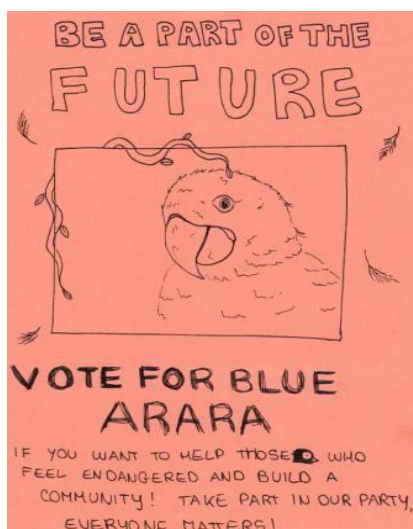


Excerpt 5: Class 10A group speech during *The President of the Jungle* picturebook learning sequence.

10A/S011: Today, yes you heard me, today everything will change. We don't want the kind of slow change where nothing seems to happen; we don't want all those fake promises. We want a venomous change. (The student's speech that refers to this poster can be found in Appendix H).

### Figure 4

*Blue Arara (Grade 10A Class poster creation)*



Excerpt 6: Class 10A group work speech during *The President of the Jungle* picturebook learning sequence.

10A/S06: We want to make a difference not only in our likings, but in everyone likings because everyone matters. And as our slogan says: BE PART OF THE FUTURE! (The student's speech that refers to this poster can be found in Appendix H).

As we can see in Excerpt 5 and 6, Class 10A students produced brilliant and creative speeches, showing how they internalized the picturebook cycle main themes using irony and sophisticated vocabulary learned during the cycles.

After implementing the picturebook *The President of the Jungle*, some possible improvements come to mind. Firstly, I would have varied the post-reading tasks more: instead of having all the questions the students had to answer in 15 minutes, I would have kept a maximum of two per group to allow time for different activities. While the students were answering in groups, there were moments of dispersion because, as mentioned earlier, it was always very difficult for students with learning disabilities to work effectively in groups.

Secondly, I could also have provided differentiated material that would have highlighted and deepened the concept of democracy. For example, an extract from a newspaper – perhaps historically related to the Portuguese dictatorship.

The role-play activity was well received by the students, who produced some excellent creations. During the preparation phase, despite being quite long, the issue of dispersal of students with difficulties did not recur. Nonetheless, if I were to use the same lesson plan in another class with some students, I would shorten the group activity and diversify the tasks, so that the students with ADHD would not struggle (see Appendix E).

Although I reiterated that there were no right or wrong answers, I could see that some students, especially in Class 10B, were still quite reluctant and intimidated to express their opinions because they might be "wrong." Research (Matruglio, 2023) has shown the need for explicit teaching for students to learn how to talk together in group work. For this purpose, a routine with the students was established, one that seemed to produce positive results (see Discussion Rules in Table 4, Chapter 3): reviewing a few important rules before all the class discussions. For example, one of the most important ones required constant

repetition was that there are no right or wrong answers. The students looked quite surprised the first time I gave them this affirmation, which explains why, upon asking them to share their opinions, they were all afraid, thinking that there was a specific right answer to my questions. In addition, most students were not aware of how deep and insightful their reflections and opinions could be. To encourage them to share, I praised them every time they participated.

Regarding the rule of expanding one's classmates' ideas, it was very interesting to observe how, in general, this action required a great deal of effort on the part of students who were not at all used to doing it. Interaction continued to be predominantly with the teacher, and so little attention was paid to what the classmates were saying. As Magutti and Drew (2014) argue, the Initiation-Response- Evaluation (IRE) structure remains prevalent in educational settings. In this format, the teacher elicits specific answers and does not encourage students to share their thoughts and opinions about the topics covered in class. Consequently, students often lack opportunities for critical thinking and reflection. This rule was the hardest one to implement for students, hence why I reminded them in almost every interaction, as can be seen highlighted in Excerpt 8 (below), in which I ask the student if he agrees with his classmate. In the same class discussion excerpt, we see another student agreeing with a peer spontaneously. This is evidence of how the class discussion done during the picturebooks' lesson sequences was effective.

Excerpt 8: Class 10A class discussion before they started preparing for the debate, during *The President of the Jungle* picturebook learning sequence.

T: Do you agree with 10A/S11?

10A/S13: I don't agree with her, but, (laughing) sorry, we could do like eh, I mean teenagers over 16 could vote, but like a poll where their vote wouldn't count but we could understand which party won among teenagers.

T: ok, and why not?

10A/S13: I think because, as 10A/S11 said, at our age we just vote for what our parents vote or what our loved ones say.

T: I see. But what if you could have the chance. The vote is private and nobody will ever know what you vote for. And what if you could prepare yourself and decide what you need?

10A/S13: even if I had the chance to vote already, I think is not a mission for me yet. I feel I am just starting to understand the world. We, as teenagers we still have no idea how to work, how companies work. We are still children; we don't have the idea of the actual living.

T: ok, I see your point. But there are a few things that might concern you already, like education. In two years' time you will go to university, and also the health system.

10A/S24: I agree with 10A/S13, I think the majority of people our age are not ready to vote yet. Some people are, but most of us no. These are things that adults have to deal with and not because we are not capable, but we are still in development and we are still discovering things about ourselves, so... (From Appendix G)

I would like to highlight the two parts of the transcripts where I asked the student if he agreed with his colleague and where, a few lines later, one of the students spontaneously said that he agreed with him. This is an achievement compared to the beginning, during the observation phase the students were not even able to listen to each other and only interacted with the teacher.

Comparing the attitude with the class observation from the 15 October (see Excerpt 9) and the transcript from April, there was a huge improvement. Pupils were more confident, analyzing the character's persuasive techniques using their critical thinking skills and knowing that they could share their opinions as they were not being asked to give a right or wrong answer.

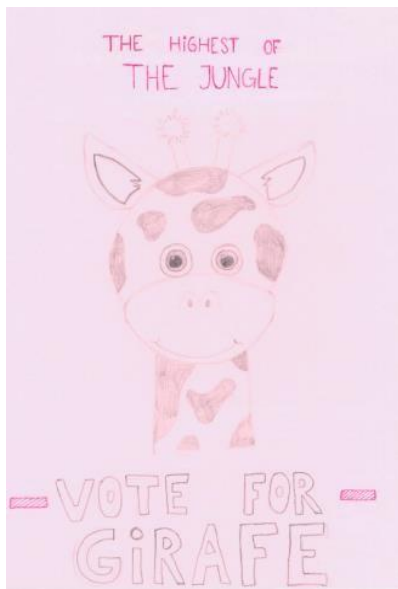
#### Excerpt 9: Class observation

15<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Today, for the first time, I took over during a speaking activity with the students. It was a speaking activity from the course book and the topic was technology, which the students were obviously very interested in. Although they seemed really engaged, I did not manage to have a class discussion. They were not listening to each other at all and when I asked if they agreed or disagreed with each other, no one replied. Class 10A seems to be a great class in terms of preparation, but I could see that they are probably not used to having class discussions and sharing their opinions... Something I found surprising was that when I asked them to share their experiences at the beginning, no one wanted to, but when the first one started and the rest saw that there was actually space to share and be listened to, they all wanted to. This is something that can definitely be worked on.

**Figure 5**

*Poster Vote for Giraffe (Class 10B students' poster creation).*



Excerpt 10: Class 10B group speech during *The President of the Jungle* (Rodrigues et al., 2020) picturebook learning sequence.

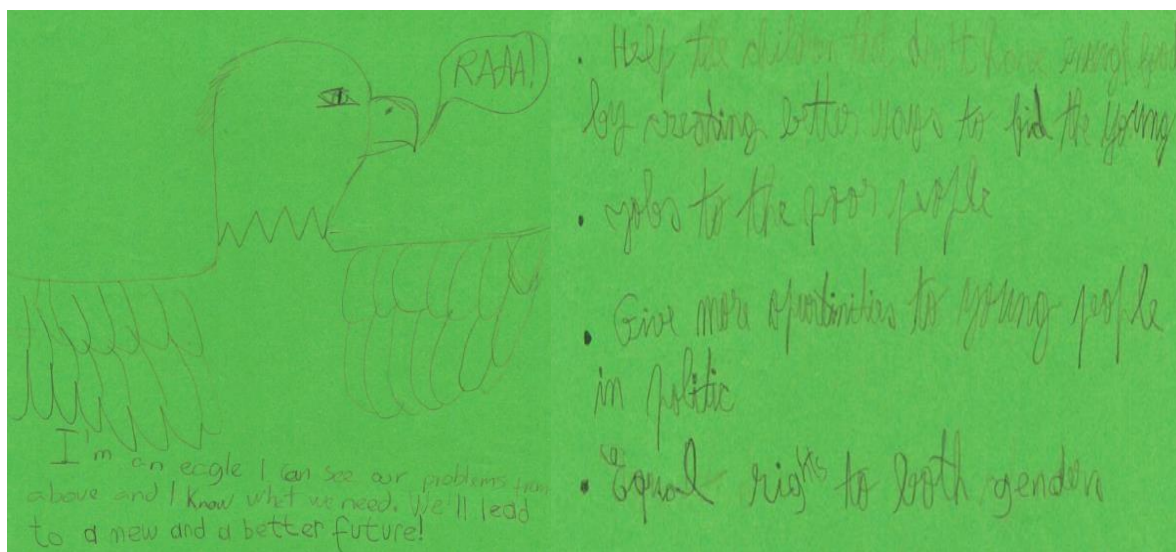
10B/S05: We will guarantee food from the highest trees for those who can't get to

them. We will protect the smaller animals that can't defend themselves from the hunters...and with these ideas we will promote you a higher and better future.

(The poster's speech can be found in Appendix H).

### Figures 6 and 7

10B/S19's poster



Excerpt 11: Class 10B group speech during *The President of the Jungle* (Rodrigues et al., 2020) picturebook learning sequence.

10B/S19: as a president I will help children who don't have food and I will also create jobs for poor people. More opportunities for people and finally equal rights for both genders. I am an eagle, I can see our problems from above and I know what you need for a new and better future.

T: very good speech.

....

(The poster's speech can be found in Appendix H).

The speech that student 10B/S19 was able to create (Excerpt 11) with his group and the fact that he wanted to read it in front of his peers is an amazing result. 10B/S19 is the student from Class B who is on the autism spectrum and has a hearing impairment

(Appendix K). Considering that 10B/S19 did not participate at all during classes and needed my constant help to understand vocabulary and instructions, the fact that he managed to execute the group assignment and volunteered to write and be the group leader is a big accomplishment. In Excerpt 9 we can also see a great result, considering that two students of this group work had learning difficulties.

Another key activity during my internship was the debate conducted with both 10A and 10B classes. As we can observe in Appendix F lesson plan, students were

meant to debate the possibility of lowering the voting age to 16 years of age in Portugal. Before the debate, students had the chance to share their opinion and to watch an introduction video where one girl from Dubai and one boy from Malta tell about their different experiences with the voting age. The fact that this time students had the opportunity to research and create their own informed arguments was the most important part of this activity. The class was divided in half: one half pro and the other against lowering the voting age (Appendix F).

As we can see in (Appendix H), the students in Class A were able to create appropriate and meaningful arguments and respond to each other from group to group. As for Class B (Figure 8 and 9), they also managed to internalize the information read during their research in such a way that they created their own arguments in an animated way, and wanted to continue the debate, despite the fact that the lesson was already over.

**Figure 8**

Students' argument against lowering the voting age (Class 10B group work poster creation to help them during the debate)

# Should we lower the voting age?

## NO

We are against lowering the voting age because teenagers are not yet mature enough to make a choice that will influence our country. According to The Student Room, 75% of teenagers think the voting age should be 18 and only 2% think it shouldn't.

A witness who proved this, said that "In general, 16-year-olds have no interest in politics and are not educated well enough in politics to make an informed vote."

Most 16-17-year-olds are still living with their parents, and can be easily influenced by their legal guardians in to their political perceptions, according to ProCon.org.

Once again, we see no benefit in the case, since in the United States of America, since the 1990s, elected officials in several states have made unsuccessful attempts

**Figure 9**

Students 'Argument against lowering the voting age (Class 10B group work poster creation to help them during the debate)

# ARGUMENT

- We believe that we shouldn't let people younger than 16 vote because the prefrontal cortex, the zone of our brain responsible for think about dilemmas and mainly to think about decisions in politics does not mature, at the age of 16 isn't prepared to make this types of decisions

- Complementing the first argument we believe that 16 years old have other interests so voting at that age is not good

As you can see in graphs of politics a few percentage of people that are younger than 25 years old and many more have number of people with 16 years old and that age, with this information we understand that most 16 years old live with their parents, so they don't have to think about serious problems

#### 4.1.4. Written reflection assignments

Considering the collected data and notes, students' participation and engagement improved. In terms of acquiring the vocabulary needed for interventions and class discussions, revision and exercises of some grammatical structures were necessary, e.g. reported speech. This work allowed students to express themselves more accurately both orally and in written reflections.

As I mentioned in Chapter 3.2, the students created a drawing in a group work (see Figure 2) that is a good example of how some students have taken one of the key messages of the picturebook and internalized the concept, adapting it to their reality through their critical judgment. This is the proof that the activities to analyze the picturebook can make it relevant, even though it was not the most appropriate choice for 10th grade students (see teacher's note in Appendix I).

With these changes, *The Red Tree's* (Tan, 2001) lesson sparked a very interesting discussion about the interpretation of the passage of time.

##### Excerpt 12: Students' (Class 10A) analysis of *The Red Tree* (Tan, 2001) group work answers

The book guides us through the story of a girl trying to find her way in life, experiencing emotions such as loneliness, sadness, regret and even hope.

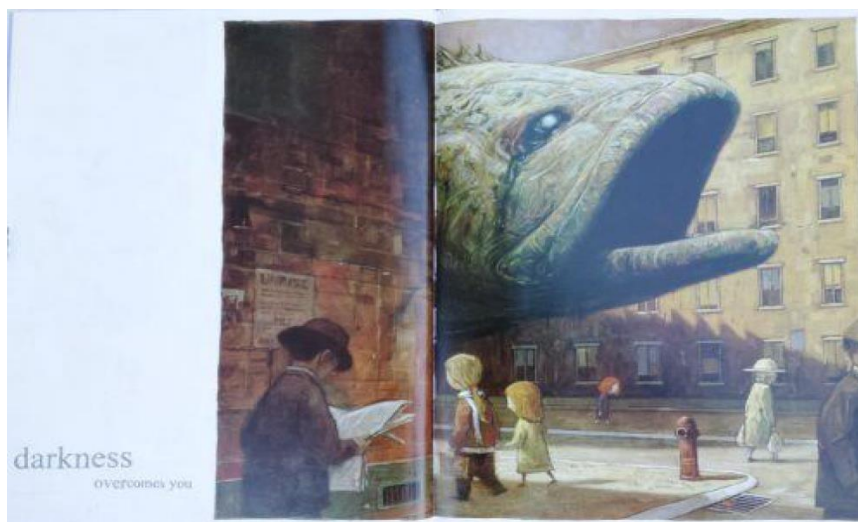
...In this last question, related to the duration of the story, we had divergent opinions; some of us thought the story lasted a lifetime while the rest of the group believed it lasted a day. The part that thought it lasted a whole lifetime, figured that the book represented a metaphor of meanings that would take a life to understand and learn...

Students answered these questions in groups in preparation for a whole-class discussion. As we can see in Figure 10 above, even though it was not easy to engage the students with the picturebook during the first reading, the students in Class A's answers within their groups show they had analyzed and interpreted the content of the picturebook and related it to their own experiences. Comparing the responses of the two classes, Class A was able to go to a deeper level of understanding and internalization of the picturebook's content than Class B. Perhaps Class B would have needed more lessons to better analyze

the picturebook due to the learning difficulties mentioned in Chapter 3.

**Figure 11**

*Picturebook opening the Class A students were really intrigued by*



As Mourão (2013) shows with her classroom-based research using the picturebook *The Lost Thing* (Tan, 2000) in a secondary classroom in Portugal, the learners had opportunities and appropriate prompts to develop and improve their spoken interactions and to have a deeper understanding of the topic.

**4.1.5. Classes' challenges**

Despite some limitations in implementing some activities, there were generally positive results in the interpretation and reflection of some students. Unfortunately, this goal was not uniformly and universally achieved by all students. This factor was due to several circumstances, but surely the most important one was the great difference in the English level among some students.

In retrospect, I could have implemented more suitable solutions which would have provided additional concrete data and evidence, for both students and myself. It would have been productive to break down the various unit plans throughout the year to get feedback from the students and have time to reflect on the students' reception of the unit plans.

#### **4.1.5.1. Traditional teaching**

The project was in and of itself a challenge since it went against the school's traditional method, and against how other English teachers usually teach their classes, which is to stick to and refer to the course book, even when deciding what topics to cover and in what order. Being a private school, parents have a lot of influence and when the books are not used, it is a reason for complaint.

One of the biggest challenges, as mentioned earlier, was to introduce picturebooks and their distinctiveness to students so that they could get the best out of them for their learning. This represented such a different approach to learning English that it caused some mixed reactions in students. They were perplexed about their effectiveness and usefulness, not only the students, but also the cooperating teacher, who was always very doubtful.

Another difficulty encountered was recording the evolution of their learning without the use of traditional tests. This was difficult during the practicum, to be able to integrate alternative modes of assessment to evaluate students, especially during picturebook inspired lessons.

#### **4.1.5.2. Time management**

Another limitation was time. Time was always limited, and it was difficult to develop and analyze activities in depth. The time for each teacher, given the extended teaching hours, is limited and is difficult to create authentic and differentiated material for the different needs and abilities of each class.

As for time management, it was the hardest obstacle for me to handle, as I had to learn to manage it throughout the practicum. When students started wanting to step in and share their opinions, the enthusiasm was so contagious, I could not stop the discussions even if aware of the time constraints for each activity. I would get excited upon seeing several raised hands to intervene in the various class discussions, and wanted everyone to participate – even more than once –, to feel comfortable, and to let them know their opinion was important. The solution was to find a compromise between some students' willingness and interest in wanting to speak and participate, and trying to keep me focused on the main objectives of each lesson. Integrating activities they could do in groups

represented an effective solution, so they could continue some discussions within their respective groups.

#### **4.1.5.3. Data collection improvements**

Concerning the collected data, in hindsight, it would have been beneficial to create a more suitable system for recording students' contributions, such as a chart or something equally visible for students to become aware of their participation. It could have motivated students in terms of valuing their effort, their commitment to reflective and relevant participation, thus refining their critical thinking. This method would have also been an excellent method of assessment for students, another element which was not adequately considered. If it were now, I would have created from the outset a clear and simple method for evaluating and motivating students' interventions. During these months of observation and practice, it was palpable how crucial the time of assessment is for secondary students, who feel a lot of pressure to keep their grades' average high, especially during the second semester.

Focus group interviews with the students after each Unit plan would have also added a more real and direct approach to students' thoughts and experiences with the picturebooks. Despite the lack of the contribution that focus groups might have made, at the end of the Units there was still the lingering impression that the students were able to achieve a greater level of understanding and analysis of picturebooks.

#### **4.1.5.4. The unexpected**

As for the solution to unexpected events with technology, it was to always have a backup plan and alternative activities. When, during a lesson, the Internet stopped working while I was showing a video, I decided to send the link to the students to watch at home later and moved on to the next activity.

As for the degree of student participation, it could have been an issue, since it was in general low and fading at the beginning of my intervention. It still represented a great challenge throughout my intervention, as there were days when after spending hours thinking, planning, and creating lesson plans I thought would be a great success and that

students would welcome the activities with great enthusiasm; only to realize during the lesson itself that my expectations in this regard were not being met.

Alongside the theoretical preparation, the factor of experience necessary in the classroom room, has its impact as well. At times the writing of a lesson plan may seem theoretically complete, interesting, and ideal for the students in each group, but, instead, once implemented in the classroom room, students' reactions to the activities may be unexpected. Only with practice and the experience of being able to cope with classroom management, despite difficulties, can one succeed. In this case, the main difficulties were time management, classroom management during group work, resource management of materials, and the technical problems that sometimes occurred during class.

With regard to class management during group work, it was the most complex to manage. An effective practice turned out to be to spend as much time as possible with certain groups to ensure that everyone was working. In group work, there is always a tendency for students to become more distracted, especially when it is not a practice they are used to.

Nevertheless, my ambitious project of creating a combination of dialogic pedagogy using picturebooks as a stimulus posed a great challenge in its implementation. I am defining my project ambitious for different reasons, but the main ones were the challenges I encountered during the practicum (4.1.5 section).

Considering the experience in its entirety and the data collected and analyzed, picturebooks will continue to be a part of my teaching in the future career years. I am now much more aware of how to use them, what activities to integrate, and what topics they could cover in an effective and motivating way.

## **4.2. Future research and solutions**

Taking into consideration the various benefits and potential of using picturebooks as a cue and mediation for the development of oral and critical thinking, I would recommend its use to other teachers and in other school settings. The data collected during my intervention show how picturebooks can be a useful resource to stimulate students' reflection during their English learning journey.

Students can give free rein to interpretation and, if welcomed in the right

environment, can get used to overcoming their insecurities and express their ideas and opinions, assuming that interpretation is not aimed at finding the right answer. It seems, though, that too much effort was put into the oral development, neglecting the written communication. If it were now, diversifying the activities would be a top priority, as well as introducing more materials in support of the picturebooks' analysis, and giving added space to writing by requesting real small individual texts to allow students to strengthen their writing skills.

Thinking about this project in other Portuguese school contexts, it is easy to see various limitations and difficulties regarding technological support materials. The students at the school are technologically equipped, since they use digital textbooks, each student has a PC or Tablet to work with, and each classroom is equipped with a good internet connection, a projector, and an excellent speakers' sound system. As for the picturebooks, ideally, each student would have his or her copy to carry out silent reading and analysis individually. Given the picturebooks' cost, technology, if available, is an asset and it was proved crucial during my practicum. For these reasons in other schools, I think this project would have been difficult to put into practice.

Different approaches could have been used during my practicum and the themes could have been analyzed differently. If it were today, I would have used more techniques, such as the flipped classroom, where students could have read the picturebook at home individually after reading it aloud in class for the first time, to be prepared to discuss it in class. This strategy would have helped the students to make additional reflections and to be more ready for class discussions and would have saved some class time for analysis. As students also have different reading and learning rhythms, the reading activity during group dynamics sometimes proved scattered and ineffective for students who tend to be easily distracted.

Lastly, I also realized how important choosing appropriate picturebooks according to students' ages was, after bringing *The Last Stop on Market Street* into the classroom. The fact that the main character in the picturebook was an 8-year-old boy may have led Grade 10 students to think that the subject matter was childish, and it was difficult for them to identify with the main character and his perspective. This was unfortunate because, for many of them, this was their first experience with picturebooks, and it may have negatively impacted their opinion on picturebooks in secondary education, as they are mistakenly

considered appropriate only for younger students.

### 4.3. Conclusion

My research question: "In a class of Grade 10 students, how can teachers elicit spoken interaction and critical thinking using picturebooks as a prompt?" was a result of my academic preparation in the first year of graduate school and it allowed me to share a new experience and way of motivating students, useful skills for my future teaching career. In this chapter I have displayed a few data as evidence that picturebooks can be used as a meaningful prompt to improve students' spoken interaction and critical thinking skills.

Although participation during my classes objectively increased, the biggest challenge was creating engaging activities altogether and coming up with complete, interesting and motivating lesson plans. Furthermore, I was able to think about didactics in more depth.

It was interesting to observe how the two groups of Grade 10 reacted differently to the proposed activities, and adapting, improving, and sometimes improvising became paramount. Being constantly observed and evaluated has not been easy to handle, especially when the activities and topics prepared are not those usually contemplated and shared by other teachers in the school.

While several students were gaining confidence and were comfortable expressing themselves in English and wanting to intervene, some students were difficult to engage with and motivate to participate, especially students with learning difficulties. For these students, accommodations included saying a few sentences or words in Portuguese to be able to express their ideas. This was perhaps not an optimal solution, but it was an attempt to make the more difficult students understand that their opinion was important, and the goal of their intervention was not the search for a right answer.

Regarding my intervention's design, the lesson plans could have been richer and more differentiated in terms of the proposed activities inspired by the picturebooks. For example, during the lesson plan inspired by *The President of the Jungle*, I could have presented an excerpt from a newspaper that alluded to democracy to allow students to analyze and explore this theme with different materials and perspectives.

Considering the evidence gathered during the practicum set forth in Chapters 3 and 4, students were able to evolve both from the standpoint of their oral skills and from the

standpoint of their analytical and critical thinking skills.

In conclusion, through my experience during the MA and practicum, picturebooks were used as an alternative for students to move away from the course book, creating materials that more satisfactorily meet students' needs and interests, thus counteracting the demotivation and disinterest adolescents often experience during class. Although my inexperience with students of this age and my poor time management skills have been an obstacle both in designing the lesson plans and in teaching, one of the most important takeaways from this experience is that teachers can show their students that their opinions and reflections are important and always worth listening to. Despite my lack of certainty in universally achieving this goal, I would like to improve the activities with picturebooks with my future students, as I believe in their enormous potential in developing students' oral and critical thinking. The intervention design and data collected and analyzed in chapters 3 and 4 can inform my future practice, proving that picturebooks could be used as a stimulus to develop oral and critical thinking skills.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A – Letter of Consent

#### Carta de Consentimento ao Diretor de Escola

**Assunto:** Pedido de autorização para realização de estudo no âmbito do Relatório Final de Estágio

Exmo. Diretor da [name of school],

O meu nome é [name], e no âmbito do Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 3º Ciclo do Ensino Básico e Secundário da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, estou neste momento a desenvolver a investigação conducente à realização do relatório final de estágio intitulado “[name of project]” (translation into Portuguese) no decorrer do presente ano letivo, na vossa instituição, e sob a supervisão pedagógica da professora cooperante [name].

Este projeto de investigação visa [short summary of the Project and its objectives]

A recolha de informação será realizada através de [the data collection tools]. Venho por este meio solicitar a vossa autorização para desenvolver o supracitado projeto com as turmas, sendo que, igualmente, solicitarei autorização aos alunos(as) e aos respetivos Encarregados(as) de Educação.

É ainda importante realçar que a participação neste projeto será voluntária, e que tanto a instituição bem como os participantes serão anónimos, atendendo à proteção da identidade e de dados pessoais. Salientar por fim, que toda a informação recolhida ao longo do projeto constituirá e será mencionada no meu relatório final de estágio e, eventualmente, em publicações no âmbito académico, sendo o tratamento de dados utilizado exclusivamente para este fim.

[Your name and signature]

[your supervisor’s name and signature]

Em caso de dúvidas ou necessidade de mais esclarecimentos, podem contactar-me através do email [insert email contact]. Agradeço, desde já, a vossa disponibilidade, atenção e apoio prestados e fico a aguardar a vossa autorização.

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Eu, \_\_\_\_\_, Diretor da [name of school], declaro que fui informado dos objetivos do projeto de investigação intitulado “[name of project]” e autorizo a proceder à recolha de informação junto de uma amostra de alunos e professores selecionada para o efeito.

Data: \_\_\_\_\_ Assinatura: \_\_\_\_\_

## Carta de Consentimento aos Encarregados(as) de Educação

**Assunto:** Pedido de autorização para realização de estudo no âmbito do Relatório Final de Estágio

Caro(a), Encarregado(a) de Educação,

O meu nome é [name], e no âmbito do Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 3º Ciclo do Ensino Básico e Secundário da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, estou neste momento a desenvolver a investigação conducente à realização do relatório final de estágio intitulado “[name of project]” (translation into Portuguese) no decorrer do presente ano letivo, na vossa instituição, e sob a supervisão pedagógica da professora cooperante [name].

Este projeto de investigação visa [short summary of the Project and its objectives]

A recolha de informação será realizada através de [the data collection tools]. Venho por este meio solicitar a vossa autorização para desenvolver o supracitado projeto com as turmas, sendo que, igualmente, solicitarei autorização aos alunos(as) e aos respetivos Encarregados(as) de Educação.

É ainda importante realçar que a participação neste projeto será voluntária, e que tanto a instituição bem como os participantes serão anónimos, atendendo à proteção da identidade e de dados pessoais. Salientar por fim, que toda a informação recolhida ao longo do projeto constituirá e será mencionada no meu relatório final de estágio e, eventualmente, em publicações no âmbito académico, sendo o tratamento de dados utilizado exclusivamente para este fim.

Por último, informar igualmente que foi obtida autorização para realização deste projeto de investigação por parte do respetivo Director da [name of school].

Em caso de dúvidas ou necessidade de mais esclarecimentos, podem contactar-me através do email [insert email contact]. Agradeço, desde já, a vossa disponibilidade, atenção e apoio prestados e fico a aguardar a vossa autorização.

[Your name and signature]

[your cooperating teacher's name and signature]

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Eu, \_\_\_\_\_, Encarregado(a) de Educação, do aluno(a) \_\_\_\_\_ que frequenta a Escola Secundária da [name of school], declaro que fui informado(a) dos objetivos do projeto de investigação intitulado “[name of project]” e  autorizo /  não autorizo a

proceder à recolha de informação que será recolhida no âmbito do referido estudo e utilizada para fins exclusivos de tratamento académico.

Data: \_\_\_\_\_

Assinatura: \_\_\_\_\_

## Carta de Consentimento aos Alunos e Alunas

**Assunto:** Convite para participação no estudo no âmbito do Relatório Final de Estágio

Caro(a), Aluno(a),

O meu nome é [name], e no âmbito do Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 3º Ciclo do Ensino Básico e Secundário da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, estou neste momento a desenvolver a investigação conducente à realização do relatório final de estágio intitulado “[name of project]” (translation into Portuguese) no decorrer do presente ano letivo, na vossa instituição, e sob a supervisão pedagógica da professora cooperante [name].

Este projeto de investigação visa [short summary of the Project and its objectives]

A recolha de informação será realizada através de [the data collection tools]. Venho por este meio solicitar a vossa autorização para desenvolver o supracitado projeto com as turmas, sendo que, igualmente, solicitarei autorização aos alunos(as) e aos respetivos Encarregados(as) de Educação

Neste sentido, venho convidar-te para participar neste estudo. A tua participação consistirá em responder a um questionário e uma entrevista de carácter informal, acerca do mesmo tópico de investigação. É importante referir que a tua [describe what they will be involved in, e.g. resposta ao questionário será anónima e que, durante a entrevista, apenas a tua voz será gravada e usada] para fins exclusivos de tratamento académico.

É ainda importante realçar que a tua participação neste projeto será voluntária e que estou disponível para esclarecer quaisquer dúvidas que persistam. Evidenciar que tanto a instituição bem como os participantes serão anónimos, atendendo à proteção da identidade e de dados pessoais. Salientar, por fim, que toda a informação recolhida ao longo do projeto constituirá e será mencionada no meu relatório final de estágio e, eventualmente, em publicações no âmbito académico, sendo o tratamento de dados utilizado exclusivamente para este fim.

Em caso de dúvidas ou necessidade de mais esclarecimentos, podem contactar-me através do email [insert email contact]. Agradeço, desde já, a vossa disponibilidade, atenção e apoio prestados.

[Your name and signature]

[your cooperating teacher’s name and signature]

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Eu, \_\_\_\_\_, aluno(a) da Escola Secundária da [name of school], declaro que fui informado(a) dos objetivos do projeto de investigação intitulado “[name of Project]” e  aceito /  não aceito participar no referido estudo, cuja informação será recolhida e utilizada para fins exclusivos de tratamento académico.

Data: \_\_\_\_\_

Assinatura: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B – Students’ codes

*Class 10A*

<b>Student</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Language ability</b>	<b>Identified learning difficulty</b>
10A/S01	16	Male	B2	
10A/S02	16	Male	B2	
10A/S03	17	Male	B2	
10A/S04	16	Male	B1	
10A/S05	17	Male	A1	
10A/S06	17	Male	B2	
10A/S07	16	Male	B1	
10A/S08	17	Male	B2	
10A/S09	16	Male	B1	
10A/S10	17	Male	B2	
10A/S11	16	Female	B2	
10A/S12	16	Female	B2	
10A/S13	16	Male	B2	
10A/S14	16	Female	B2	
10A/S15	17	Male	A1	
10A/S16	16	Male	A1	Dyslexia
10A/S17	17	Male	B2	Dyslexia
10A/S18	17	Female	A1	Dyslexia/ADHD
10A/S19	16	Female	B2	
10A/S20	16	Female	B1	
10A/S21	16	Female	B2	
10A/S22	17	Male	A1	Dyslexia/ADHD
10A/S23	16	Female	B2	
10A/S24	17	Female	B2	

*Class 10B*

<b>Student</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Language ability</b>	<b>Identified learning difficulty</b>
<b>10B/S01</b>	16	Male	B1	
<b>10B/S02</b>	16	Male	B1	
<b>10B/S03</b>	17	Female	B1	
<b>10B/S04</b>	16	Male	B1	Dyslexia
<b>10B/S05</b>	17	Female	B1	
<b>10B/S06</b>	17	Female	A1	Global learning difficulty
<b>10B/S07</b>	17	Female	A1	Dyslexia/ADHD
<b>10B/S08</b>	17	Female	B1	
<b>10B/S09</b>	16	Male	B1	
<b>10B/S10</b>	17	Male	B1	
<b>10B/S11</b>	16	Male	A1	
<b>10B/S12</b>	16	Female	A2	
<b>10B/S13</b>	16	Female	A2	
<b>10B/S14</b>	16	Male	B2	
<b>10B/S15</b>	17	Male	A1	
<b>10B/S16</b>	16	Female	A2	Dyslexia
<b>10B/S17</b>	17	Female	B2	
<b>10B/S18</b>	17	Female	A2	Dyslexia/ADHD
<b>10B/S19</b>	16	Male	A2	Dyslexia, Autism, hearing impairment
<b>10B/S20</b>	16	Female	A2	
<b>10B/S21</b>	16	Female	B2	ADHD
<b>10B/S22</b>	17	Female	A2	
<b>10B/S23</b>	16	Female	B1	
<b>10B/S24</b>	17	Female	B2	

<b>10B/S25</b>	16	Male	A2	
<b>10B/S26</b>	16	Female	B1	
<b>10B/S27</b>	17	Female	B2	
<b>10B/S28</b>	17	Female	A1	Dyslexia
<b>10B/S29</b>	17	Male	B2	
<b>10B/S30</b>	16	Female	B2	
<b>10B/S31</b>	16	Male	A1	

## Appendix C – Last Stop on Market Street lesson plan – part 1

**Syllabus fitting:** *AE 10 ano. Os Jovens na Era Global: Os jovens de hoje e do futuro.*

### General aims:


- Learning about "Better Together" (from Unit 6 of the textbook)
- To raise awareness of human rights, inclusion, building a community, and impacts on our society.
- Students should make a connection and reflect between what is discussed in class and their own experiences and their reality.
- To make students more aware of the topic of inclusion using other types of text, a picturebook in this case.

### Skills for oral interaction (based on *Perfil do Aluno*)

- To learn how to listen to their peers
- Research tasks based on criteria, with autonomy;
- Encouragement to search for and deepen information;
- Gathering data and opinions to analyze themes under study

### Duration:

**1 lesson of 90 minutes**

Learning objectives	Procedures	Interaction	Time	Materials and teaching aids
<p>-To identify the topic</p> <p>-To capture students' attention</p>	<p><b>-Brainstorming: pre-watching activity</b></p>  <p>T projects this image and asks ss to brainstorm about it and to express which kind of feelings it provokes. She writes ss' contributions on the board.</p>	Whole class	10'	<p>- Whiteboard;</p> <p>- Projector;</p>
<p>-To interpret meaning</p> <p>-To express a personal opinion related to the topic</p>	<p><b>-Watching activity:</b></p> <p>-Ss will watch the video "Dream of living":  <a href="https://dialls2020.eu/cllp-dream-living-ks3/">https://dialls2020.eu/cllp-dream-living-ks3/</a></p> <p><b>-Post watching activity:</b></p> <p>- After watching the film, T will project a few questions to better understand the topic related to the short film. Ss</p>	<p>-Whole class</p> <p>Group work</p>	15'	

<p>-To collaborate with peers</p> <p>-To share ideas and receive feedback</p> <p>-To promote critical thinking</p>	<p>will have to discuss the answer in a group setting.</p> <p>- Ss will be divided in groups of 4 to discuss the questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you think about the film ending?</li> <li>2. Which interpretations would you give?</li> <li>3. Why do you think the film is intitled “Dream of Living?”</li> <li>4. What is the character living situation?</li> <li>5. Have you ever encountered a similar situation in real life? Would you like to share your experience?</li> <li>6. What do you think are the film main themes?</li> </ol> <p><b>Class discussion:</b></p> <p>-After answering the questions each group spokesman will summarize the groups answers, their justifications and arguments to the T and to the whole class.</p>			
	<p><b>Pre-task activity:</b></p> <p>- After this activity, T ask a few questions to the whole class:</p>	Whole class	15’	

	<p>How can we ensure homeless people are included positively in our society? What can we do?</p> <p>Can you think of a couple of solutions to these problems?</p> <p>How could you take action? Even in your school community?</p>			
-To structure their ideas and communicate them	<p><b>Main task:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- T explains that Ss will now work with a picturebook. The Ss will be seated in a u formation for a better listening.</li> <li>- T will project a picturebook “Last stop on Market Street” from Matt De La Peña (2015)</li> <li>- T recommends Ss to focus first on the text of the picturebook and to see if they find any moral and what might be the narrative main themes, after that she reads it aloud to the class.</li> </ul>	Whole class	15’	- Picturebook <i>Last Stop on Market Street</i>
-To express a personal opinion related to the topic	<p><b>Post-reading activity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After the reading and a discussion about their ideas, the class is divided again in groups of 4. In their groups, ss are</li> </ul>	Group work	20’	- Picturebook <i>Last Stop on Market Street</i>

<p>-To promote critical thinking</p> <p>-To learn how to express opinions and ideas</p>	<p>given the picturebook and asked to take their time looking at the illustrations and reading the words.</p> <p>-After analyzing the relationship between the illustrations and the text, ss must think on how the images develop the narrative and possibly changed their understanding of the words.</p> <p>-Each group will select a double-page spread (two facing pages) and share their thoughts on this development within their groups</p> <p>-The groups ideas will be discussed in a class setting and the T will guide the discussion providing specific vocabulary to describe the illustrations.</p>			
<p>-To learn how to reflect upon sensitive topics</p>	<p><b>Reflective activity (writing):</b></p> <p>-T sets a creative writing task divided into several steps.</p>	<p>Group work</p>	<p>30'</p>	<p>- Picturebook <i>Last Stop on Market Street</i></p>

<p>-To share personal experiences improving their oral skills</p>	<p>- First, ss are asked to select an encounter they have had with someone belonging to a different cultural group. If they cannot or prefer not to think about a personal experience, they may choose an encounter described in a fictional work.</p> <p>-ss should adopt one of the characters perspectives and try to empathize with the character.</p> <p>-ss can also reflect and express if they would have behaved differently.</p> <p>- ss can choose the assignment layout. It could be a reflective essay, a poem or they can even create a series of comics.</p> <p>-ss will have to hand their creation in to the teacher as soon as they are finished. They can have some time in class, but they could also finish at home and hand the assignment in by next class.</p>			
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## **Appendix D – Last Stop on Market Street lesson plan – part 2**

**Syllabus fitting:** *AE 10 ano. Os Jovens na Era Global: Os jovens de hoje e do futuro.*

### **General aims:**

#### **Speaking skills (from AE):**

- Interact, asking for clarification, reformulation and/or repetition and use alternative forms of expression and comprehension;
- Resorting to rewording to make it more comprehensible;
- Interact with progressive efficiency, participating in discussions progressively; -- taking part in discussions within the thematic areas.

#### **Writing skills (from AE):**

- Plan and prepare a writing activity according to the type and function of the text and its addressee, within the thematic areas presented, integrating their experience;
- Reformulate the written work in order to adapt it to the proposed task.

#### **Intercultural Competencies (from AE):**

- Developing awareness of their socio-cultural universe and how it relates to the cultural universes of others.
- Relate their culture of origin to other cultures they come into contact with.
- To question stereotypical attitudes towards other peoples, societies and cultures.
- Learning about thinking of optimistic solutions (from Unit 7 of the textbook)

**Grammar topics:**

- Ways of referring to the future
- Future continuous and future perfect
- Conditionals

**Duration:**

**1 lesson of 90 minutes**

Learning objectives	Procedures	Interaction	Time	Materials and teaching aids
<p>-To captivate student's attention</p> <p>-To identify and approach to the topic to be discussed throughout the class</p>	<p>-Ss will hear a song "Homeless at Christmas": <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiHwt7xNYbE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiHwt7xNYbE</a></p> <p>- After listening to the song, T shares a note about the song author and his initiative.</p> <p>"We wrote this song to hopefully raise money through music for the homeless people in this country.</p>	<p>Whole class</p>	<p>10'</p>	<p>- Whiteboard;</p> <p>- Projector;</p> <p>- Picturebook <i>Last Stop on Market Street</i></p>

	<p>Homelessness is at an all-time high in this country and there is little being done about changing that.</p> <p>Now there is nearly 4,000 children homeless in Ireland.</p> <p>Last week my son Max was born, and I can't help but think about the poor children that are sleeping on our streets.</p> <p>We want to do our part to help, even if it is small, we want to see change.</p> <p>We must help these people; you help them by giving whatever you can using the 'Give Now' button. The more people that know about COPE Galway, the greater their impact, so please also spread the word by sharing our page with your friends and family. Thank you in advance for your generosity, it means a lot!"</p>			
-To revise previous class content	-After this warm-up activity, T will take it from where the last class ended and ask ss to recap what has been said and how the theme was developed in the class discussion.	Whole class	5'	-Online grammar exercises -Projector -Pc
-To revise grammar content and clarify possible doubts	-T makes a quick revision of the different types of future and asks ss if they have any doubts with the help of the attached worksheet.		10' 20'	

	<p>-All kind of futures</p> <p>5 examples of sentences to see the difference between futures.</p>		<p>45'</p> <p>First part of class is over</p>	
<p>-To deepen students' previous reflection about the picturebook</p>	<p><b>Reading and listening activity:</b></p> <p>-T explains that ss will continue to work with the picturebook <i>Last stop on Market Street</i>.</p> <p>- T asks ss to repeat what might be the narrative main themes they remember from the previous class.</p> <p>-T reads the picturebook aloud to the class and Ss will be seated in a u formation for a better listening.</p>		<p>15'</p>	<p>-Picturebook <i>Last Stop on Market Street</i></p>
<p>-To promote critical thinking</p> <p>-To structure their ideas and communicate them</p>	<p><b>Post-reading activity:</b></p> <p>- After the reading, T explains that ss will have the chance to take their time looking at the picturebook illustrations and reading the words.</p> <p>- The class is divided in 3 big groups. In their groups, ss are given the picturebook to observe it.</p>	<p>Group work</p>	<p>20'</p>	<p>-Picturebook <i>Last Stop on Market Street</i></p>

	<p>-After analyzing the relationship between the illustrations and the text, ss must think on how the images develop the narrative and possibly changed their understanding of the words.</p> <p>-Each group will select a double-page spread (two facing pages) and share Their thoughts on this development within their groups. (ss could also make their own drawings to interpret the picturebook if they want to)</p> <p>-The groups ideas will be discussed in a class setting and the T will guide the discussion providing specific vocabulary to describe the illustrations. (T will project some sentences and words to help ss elaborate their thoughts)</p>			
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<p>-To reinforce students' knowledge of the themes dealt in class</p>	<p><b>Writing Activity:</b>          -ss will work in pairs and write a paragraph describing a project where they could take action and trying to make some changes for homeless people to include them more in the society. (300 words max)          -T gives examples of projects (from famous people as well)</p>	<p>Group work</p>	<p>30'</p>	<p>-Projector          -PC</p>
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## **Appendix E – *The Red Tree* lesson plan – part 1**

**Syllabus fitting:** *AE 10 ano. Os Jovens na Era Global: Os jovens de hoje e do futuro.*

### **General aims:**

#### **Listening skills (from AE):**

- Understand a fluid discourse and follow lines of argumentation within the thematic areas presented;
- Integrating their experience and mobilizing knowledge acquired in other subjects.

#### **Speaking skills (from AE):**

- Interact, asking for clarification, reformulation and/or repetition and use alternative forms of expression and comprehension;
- Resorting to rewording to make discourse more comprehensible;
- Interact with progressive efficiency, participating in discussions progressively; -- taking part in discussions within the thematic areas;
- Discussing feelings and the ups and downs of life
- Learning about thinking of optimistic solutions (from Unit 7 of the textbook)

#### **Dialogic objectives:**

- Ss will start to practice expanding on each other's ideas

**Duration:**

**1 lesson of 90 minutes**

Learning objectives	Procedures	Interaction	Time	Materials and teaching aids
-To trigger students' attention	-T asks students if they usually listen to songs in English and tries to understand which singers students listen to the most.  - After gathering this information, T informs ss they will watch Billie Eilish "Everything I wanted" videoclip.	Whole class	5'	- Whiteboard. - Projector and Computer. - Notebooks - Pencil / pen
-To learn how to discuss and express their opinions in a group setting	-T divides ss in groups of four.  -T keeps the lyrics projected on the board, while ss read and think about it and discuss their ideas and try to reach understand its meaning and reflect if they could relate to the song and if they feel comfortable to share their personal experience within their groups first, and with the whole class, later.	Group work	10'	

<p>-To learn and practice how to discuss in a dialogic way</p>	<p><b>Main activity</b></p> <p>-After this warm-up activity, T will present to the class the picturebook “<i>The red tree</i>”. She shows the cover of the book and ask ss what they notice about it.</p> <p>-Ss are still divided into groups of four and T projects the following questions for ss to answer in their groups. T also explains that there is no wrong or right answer to the questions since the focus is on their own interpretation and their ability to express it.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you think this picturebook is about?</li> <li>2. Which kind of feelings this image provokes in you?</li> <li>3. Can you guess the main themes by reading the title and looking at the cover picture?</li> </ol>	<p>Whole class</p>	<p>10’</p>	<p>-Picturebook <i>The Red Tree</i></p>
<p>-To learn how to delve into different types of interpretation</p>	<p>-T projects a few instructions to listen to the picturebook (inspired by “The Gift of Creativity” ELT Conference, 2019)</p>	<p>Whole class</p>	<p>5’</p>	<p>- Picturebook <i>The Red Tree</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Close your eyes and listen!</li> <li>-Imagine pictures and images.</li> <li>-Think about how you feel</li> </ul> <p>-T recommends ss to focus first on the text of the picturebook while they have their eyes closed, to see if they find what might be the narrative main themes, while she reads it aloud to them.</p> <p>(5 mins)</p>			
-To use creativity and students' imagination to describe their ideas	<p><b>Post-reading activity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-After the reading, T asks ss which words could you use to describe:</li> <li>-your mental images?</li> <li>-how you felt or feel?</li> <li>-ss will share their thoughts within their groups</li> </ul>	Group work	10'	-Picturebook <i>The Red Tree</i>
- To analyse and interpret the picturebook possible interpretations using	<p><b>Group writing activity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Each group is randomly given 3 words and 1 quote about</li> </ul>	Group work	25'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Projector</li> <li>-PC</li> <li>-Worksheets</li> </ul>

<p>students' critical thinking skills</p> <p>-To improve students' writing skills</p> <p>-To learn how to collaborate with peers and to negotiate ideas</p>	<p>hope and supporting others (different per each group) and they must construct a small text as a group. T prepares the quotes in paper sheets and will ask each group spokesman to pick one folded sheet from a bag.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope." — Martin Luther King, Jr.</li> <li>2) "They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world: someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for." — Tom Bodett.</li> <li>3) "Listen to the mustn'ts, child. Listen to the don'ts. Listen to the shouldn'ts, the impossibles, the won'ts. Listen to the never haves, then listen close to me... Anything can happen, child. Anything can be." — Shel Silverstein.</li> <li>4) "You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once but don't ever</li> </ol>			
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	<p>underestimate the importance you can have, because history has shown us that courage can be contagious, and hope can take on a life of its own.”</p> <p>— Michelle Obama</p> <p>5) “But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars.” — Martin Luther King, Jr.</p> <p>-After assigning each group a quote from a famous person from history, T will randomly give each group 3 words in paper sheets as well. With these prompts, ss will construct a small text as a group. (300 words max)</p>			
<p>-To recap the classes key ideas and learning highlights</p>	<p><b>Lesson conclusion:</b></p> <p>-T will summarize ss main arguments and help them to draw a conclusion and explain that the next lesson ss will continue to work the picturebook.</p>	<p>Whole class</p>	<p>5’</p>	

## Appendix F – *The Red Tree* lesson plan – part 2

**Syllabus fitting:** *AE 10 ano. Os Jovens na Era Global: Os jovens de hoje e do futuro.*

### General aims:

- Discussing feelings and the ups and downs of life
- Learning about thinking of optimistic solutions (from Unit 7 of the textbook)
- Ss will start to practice expanding on each other's ideas

### Duration:

**1 lesson of 90 minutes**

Learning objectives	Procedures	Interaction	Time	Materials and teaching aids
-To trigger students' attention	-T shows a video about the picturebook and asks ss to see if they notice some extra details that they have not notice from the picturebook in the previous class and to take notes about these differences: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAsEq6EG8jE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAsEq6EG8jE</a>	Whole class	10'	- Whiteboard. - Projector and Computer. -Notebooks - Pencil / pen

<p>-To promote critical thinking</p> <p>- To structure their ideas and communicate</p>	<p><b>Post-watching activity</b></p> <p>-After watching the film, ss can share their thoughts/notes with the whole class trying to listen and comment on each other's ideas.</p> <p>-T also reminds that there are no wrong or right answers, just their own interpretation and their ability to express it.</p>	<p>Whole class</p>	<p>10'</p>	<p>-Students' notes</p>
<p>- To interact with peers, asking for clarification, reformulation and/or repetition and use alternative forms of expression and comprehension.</p>	<p><b>Main activity</b></p> <p>-After this warm-up activity, T explains to the class that they will continue to work on the picturebook "<i>The red tree</i>".</p> <p>-T divides ss in groups of four.</p> <p>-Ss are still divided into groups of four and T read the picturebook again.</p> <p>T also asks ss to take a few notes while they are listening to register extra details or different perspectives from the picturebook video.</p>	<p>Group work</p>	<p>20'</p>	<p>-Picturebook <i>The Red Tree</i></p>

<p>-To read and understand different types of text, within the thematic areas presented, using the visual information available.</p> <p>-To reword and negotiate meaning to make it more comprehensible.</p> <p>- To plan and prepare a writing activity according to the type and function of the text and its recipient, within the thematic areas presented, integrating their experience and</p>	<p><b>Reading activity</b></p> <p>-Each group will have a different worksheet with different questions to answer within their groups.</p> <p><b>Post-reading activity</b></p> <p>-After reading the picturebook, ss can share their thoughts/notes within their groups trying to listen and comment on each other's ideas.</p> <p>-T provides a worksheet with the following questions to each group as a prompt for discussion. Each group will have different ones and will take notes of the answer to prepare them for the following class discussion.</p> <p><b>GROUP 1</b></p> <p>a) Was there anything you liked about this book?</p> <p>b) Was there anything you disliked about this book?</p> <p>c) Was there anything that puzzled you?</p>	<p>Group work</p>	<p>30'</p>	<p>-Workseets</p> <p>-Students'notes</p> <p>-Students'notes</p>
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<p>mobilizing knowledge acquired in other subjects.</p>	<p>d) Did you notice any patterns or connections?</p> <p>GROUP 2</p> <p>a) What caught your attention?</p> <p>b) Did anything bore / interest / surprise you?</p> <p>c) Was there anything you thought strange?</p> <p>d) Have you read any other stories like this? How is it different? How is it the same?</p> <p>GROUP 3</p> <p>a) Were you surprised by anything your friends said?</p> <p>b) What would you tell your friends about the book?</p> <p>c) What is the most important thing about this book for you?</p> <p>d) How long do you think it took the story to happen?</p> <p>GROUP 4</p>			
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	<p>a) Whose story is it?</p> <p>b) Which character interested you most? / least?</p> <p>c) Where did the story happen?</p> <p>d) When did it happen?</p>			
<p>-To understand a fluid discourse and follow lines of argumentation within the thematic areas presented.</p> <p>-To integrate their experience and mobilizing knowledge acquired in other subjects.</p> <p>-Ss will start to practice expanding on each other's ideas</p>	<p><b>Whole-class dialogue</b></p> <p>-T asks ss open questions such as:</p> <p>- Whom do you think the author had in mind when he wrote this book?</p> <p>- Is there any image that "talks to you" the most? Why?</p> <p>- What do you think the red tree symbolizes?</p> <p>- Do you have any "red trees" in your life? Who or what are they?</p> <p>-To answer this general questions ss can use their answer they wrote from the previous activity.</p> <p>During this activity, T reminds ss that:</p>	Whole class	20'	

	<p>a) all opinions count</p> <p>b) we must carefully listen to each other</p> <p>c) we try to expand on what a colleague has said avoiding repeating. We may use phrases such as: I would like to add...., In addition to what João said..., I agree with Maria that .... etc.</p> <p>-T also reminds that there are no wrong or right answers, just their own interpretation and their ability to express it.</p>	Whole class		
-To summarize the lesson content and to clarify possible doubts.	<p><b>Lesson conclusion:</b></p> <p>-T will summarise ss main arguments and help them to draw a conclusion on what they think of the picturebook.</p>	Whole class	5'	-Students' notes

## **Appendix G – *The President of the Jungle* lesson plan**

**Syllabus fitting:** Unit 4. Os Jovens na Era Global: Os jovens de hoje e do futuro.

### **General aims:**

- To define Democracy and Social Issues.
- To describe present and past important moments of Democracy and political movements.
- To motivate students to act.
- To recognize hidden meaning in Picturebooks.
- To develop students' critical thinking regarding the interconnected relationship of different rights.
- To plan and design creative projects in groups.

### **Duration:**

**1 lesson of 90 minutes**

Learning objectives	Procedures	Interaction	Time	Materials and teaching aids
<p>To briefly define the central theme of the lesson.</p> <p>To recognize useful and core vocabulary for the lesson.</p>	<p><b><u>Warm up (pre-reading task)</u></b></p> <p>-T selects some words from the book glossary and projects them on the board and asks the ss to match the definitions in preparation for listening to the picturebook being read aloud.</p> <p><b>Words:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ballot box</li> <li>- Rally</li> <li>- Democracy</li> <li>- Campaign</li> <li>- Debate</li> </ul> <p><b>Definitions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A box where the votes are collected. It can also be an electronic voting machine.</li> <li>- A public gathering for candidates to drum up</li> </ul>	Whole class	5'	<p>-Teacher's Computer</p> <p>-Projector</p>

	<p>support for their ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The form of government in which the majority chooses its leaders through a vote.</li> <li>- The activities the candidate organizes to get elected.</li> <li>- A discussion among candidates where they present their ideas.</li> </ul>			
To know and define the election process in their home country.	-T goes through the election process in Portugal with ss by asking them questions. (if needed)	Whole class	5'	-Ss' tech devices if they need to research
To pick up specific information from an oral text.	<b><u>Reading task</u></b> -T reads the picturebook <i>The president of the Jungle</i> with the class.	Whole class	10'/ 15'	-3 copies of the picturebook <i>The President of the Jungle</i>
To interpret meaning from an oral text.	-Ss will take turns and read the picturebook trying to give their own interpretation to the characters profiles.			
To personally relate to a concept.	<b><u>Post reading tasks:</u></b>  -T explains that now Ss will do a group activity. They will	Group work.	about 15'	-3 copies of the picturebook <i>The President of the Jungle</i> that Ss will share.

<p>To pick up specific information from an oral text.</p>	<p>answer some questions to analyze the picturebook and compare their opinions.</p>			<p>-Ss' Tech devices if they need to research.</p>
<p>To interpret meaning from an oral text.</p>	<p>-T divides Ss into small groups of 2 or 3.</p>			
<p>To select information based on opinion.</p>	<p>-In groups, ss write their ideas, that later they will compare with those in the picturebook. Still in groups they will try to answer the following questions:</p>			
<p>To discuss opinions based on concepts learnt in class.</p>	<p>a) Just how 'real' are the election rules in the picturebook? b) Could you identify some animals' behavior that reminds you of any election campaign that you have already witnessed?</p>			
<p>To speculate about the picturebook hidden meaning.</p>	<p>- T questions to guide the class discussion after the book reading.</p>	<p>whole-class discussion</p>		
	<p>Questions:</p>			

<p>To follow and participate in a discussion about the topic.</p>	<p>a) What has happened to the river? We are told that Lion has rerouted the water for his private pool, and we see the lion on a large boat overlooking other animals enjoying his pool. What could this represent?</p>			
<p>To express ideas and opinions with precision</p>	<p>b) Why do you think Lion rerouted the river to flow into his front yard?</p>			
<p>To notice and analyse different verbal and non-verbal ways to communicate meaning through picturebook text and images.</p>	<p>c) The narrative suggests that Lion has gone too far...  "Maybe he should not be the King of the Jungle."  Comments from the different animals expand on this:  "It's ridiculous!", "Lion only thinks of himself"... Sloth asks them all, "What if we had a new leader?" What do you think of the animals' demonstration and comments?</p>			
<p>To outline and speculate about</p>	<p>d) What do you think about the crocodile, the sloth, the owl, the monkey, and the snake characters? What do you think about their behavior? Could they symbolize any real attitudes that we have seen in elections before?</p>			

	<p>e) Could you compare the rules for the election from the picturebook to the ones in your country? Can you find any differences or similarities?</p> <p>f) The campaign posters and the animals' statements, one after the other. Each is quite different, and these are worth pausing over and discussing. Who are the vice-presidents (VP)? Are they surprising supporters? The lioness as the Lion's VP, or a mouse as the snake's VP? How do they describe themselves?</p> <p>g) Snake tells us, "I've crawled through burrows and nests getting to know you." What might that suggest? Could you comment on other animals' statements?</p> <p>h) What is each animal promising? Monkey promises not to tell lies... Sloth wants everyone to work together. How do these desires reflect the animal and their possibly</p>		<p>10'/15'</p>	
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	<p>stereotypical characteristics?</p> <p>i) The different activities associated with campaigning are described in the words and the pictures and suit each of the animal characters. The Lion goes on TV, the sloth discusses issues... Have you ever noticed these different types of political propaganda in real life?</p> <p>j) In Opening 16, the illustrations show us how many votes each animal got, and Lion has a huge cross over his name. Why? Does it remind you of a risk that can happen during elections? Do you know a couple of examples? They could refer even outside Portugal.</p> <p>k) What do you think about Sloth's speech? Does it represent what you would like to hear from an ideal president?</p> <p>a) The last spread reminds us that not everyone likes Sloth</p>	Group		
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<p>To learn how to negotiate meaning.</p> <p>To feel more confident about teamwork and cooperation.</p>	<p>or agrees with the election results, but that's okay, as there will be another election next year and things might change. Do you find this ending realistic? Yes? No? Why?</p> <p>-ss share and discuss their answers.</p> <p>-analysing the persuasion strategies of the animal candidates (one animal per group) before the role play activity.</p> <p><b><u>Role-play preparation.</u></b></p> <p>-After the class discussion, t organizes a role-play activity where Ss need to vote for a group of representatives for their class and each group must prepare their persuasive speech.</p> <p>-T distributes a coloured A4 poster for each group to draw their political manifesto, write their mottos and their speeches.</p>	<p>activity</p>	<p>25'</p>	<p>- coloured A4 posters</p> <p>-Ss' Tech devices if they need to research.</p>
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	<p>-ss can prepare their own posters with their own political objectives to present to the class.</p> <p>-First t will collect the group names of the candidate's "party" and will write their names on the board.</p> <p>-Ss can be creative, they will choose a name and draw their own poster.</p> <p>-Ss will have some time to prepare their speech and decide which kind of issues they would like to consider in their campaign. Each party will have a spokesman or leader that will present the speech to the whole class.</p>			
<p>To practice the skill of using persuasive arguments.</p>	<p><b><u>Role play</u></b></p> <p>-Each group will have 3 minutes max to present their political agenda to the class.</p>	<p>Whole class</p>	<p>10'</p>	<p>- coloured A4 posters with Ss drawings and speeches.</p>

<p>To provide opportunities for critical observation of peers.</p>	<p>-After the preparation time, ss presents their persuasive speech to the class with their political agenda and 3 main social issues that they would like to solve as a fictional political party.</p> <p>-The group leader will do the speech.</p> <p>-When all the groups presented their political agendas, ss will vote for the best party.</p>			
<p>To recall and share the main points discussed in class.</p>	<p><b>Summary:</b> Ss make suggestions about and write the summary of the lesson.</p>	<p>Whole class</p>	<p>10'</p>	

## **Appendix H – The debate lesson plan**

Class debate: Should we lower the voting age?

**Portuguese syllabus fitting:** 4. Os Jovens na Era Global: Os jovens de hoje e do futuro.

### **Main aims:**

- To develop students' awareness of democracy and civil rights.
- To develop students' openness to social otherness, as well as competences and values of democratic culture such as: equality, respect, civic-mindedness, empathy, co-operation skills and self-efficacy.
- To develop students' critical thinking regarding the interconnected relationship of different rights.
- To plan and design creative projects in groups.
- To learn how to research in groups.
- To learn how to construct valid arguments.
- To listen and counterargue to colleagues' arguments appropriately.

### **Duration**

**1 class of 90 minutes**

**SESSION 2: Debate: Should We Lower the Voting Age?**

Learning objectives	Procedures	Interaction	Time	Materials and teaching aids
<p>To identify the different realities from different countries</p> <p>To be open to otherness and to the experiences of different social groups</p> <p>To develop empathy</p>	<p><b>Brainstorming (lead-in)</b></p> <p>-T asks ss if they have ever thought about the topic of lowering the voting age to 16.</p> <p>-Ss share their opinions if they already have one.</p> <p>-t presents the issue to students by showing the video below.</p> <p>-Before doing that, t explains that ss will watch a video about two teenagers sharing their personal experience with voting in their home countries.</p> <p>-t asks ss to take note on the two different experiences the two teenagers share and think about which one they would feel more comfortable with.</p>	<p>Whole class</p>	<p>10'</p>	<p>- Teacher's Computer</p> <p>- wi-fi</p> <p>- projector</p>

<p>regarding other cultures</p> <p>To share personal opinions and experiences</p> <p>To develop speaking skills</p> <p>To structure personal opinions</p>	<p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBIZFfznOg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBIZFfznOg</a></p> <p>- Depending on the Ss' answers, and if the class is equally distributed, t forms groups based on actual position. If not, then t will divide them in two halves.</p>			
<p>To understand the issues and to challenge any misconceptions.</p>	<p><b><u>Group activity: debate preparation.</u></b></p> <p>- After listening to the Ss' opinions, t explains Ss that they will have a debate about this topic. T explains that Ss will be working in groups to research and create their own arguments for the debate.</p>	<p>Groups activity (1<sup>st</sup> step)</p>	<p>15'</p>	<p>- Computer/Smartphone/iPad/tablet</p> <p>-Projector</p> <p>-Wi-Fi</p>

To collaborate with their peers	-T also explains that the class will be divided in half. One half will be pro lowering age and the other will be against.			- Notes from previous activity
To promote critical thinking	- After the explanation of the group activity and after clarifying any doubts, t divides the class in half. Afterwards, t will divide ss into groups of 3, 4 ss max.			-A3 Posters
To receive and give feedback in class.	-T decides one group leader for each group.  -T provides one big poster to each group and Post-it or small papers to write on them.			-Coloured Post-its
To carry out brief research about the topics discussed in class.	-Each group will write a few arguments they can think of without doing any research.  -After writing one question each, ss will write their arguments on post it and stick them on the poster.			
To summarize				

and relay researched information				
<p>To carry out brief research about the topics discussed in class.</p> <p>To summarize and relay researched information</p>	<p>-T projects a worksheet on the board that is meant to guide Ss to formulate their arguments. (The worksheet is attached below after the list of references)</p> <p>-T uploads the worksheet on Teams as well where all the Ss can have access to it.</p> <p>-Discuss as a group about what came out during the class discussion and try to answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which ones do students think are true?</li> <li>2. Which ones might not be true? Why or why not?</li> </ol> <p>-T explains that Ss will be provided with a few links where to find more information to build their arguments with the T's guidance.</p> <p>The students can use their technological devices to their research (phones,</p>	Group activity	10'	<p>Computer/Smartphone/iPad/tablet</p> <p>-notebook</p> <p>-Worksheet</p>

	tablets, pcs).			
To read for gist.	-T shares few articles about pros and cons of lowering the voting age to 16 in the US (on Teams) for the ss to read within their groups.	Group activity	20'	-
To identify and infer different viewpoints and perspectives.	- Small-group work that should be focused on constructing 3 arguments to defend the group's position.	(2 <sup>nd</sup> step: research)		Computer/Smartphone/ iPad/tablet
To read for specific information.	- <b>Neutral articles for cultural notes:</b> <a href="https://www.procon.org/headlines/lowering-the-voting-age-top-3-pros-and-cons/">https://www.procon.org/headlines/lowering-the-voting-age-top-3-pros-and-cons/</a>			-notebook
To deduce meaning from context.	<a href="https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/election/civics-in-action/voting--should-the-voting-age-be-lowered.html">https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/election/civics-in-action/voting--should-the-voting-age-be-lowered.html</a>			-notes taken during class and from personal research
To develop civic-	-youngest politicians in the world: <a href="https://www.businessinsider.com/youngest-politicians-around-world-2019-3">https://www.businessinsider.com/youngest-politicians-around-world-2019-3</a>			

<p>mindedness and self-efficacy</p> <p>To promote critical thinking</p> <p>To personally relate to a concept</p> <p>To acquire vocabulary</p> <p>To identify specific information and meaning</p>	<p><b>Articles in favour of lowering the voting age:</b></p> <p>1. <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/07/learning/what-students-are-saying-about-lowering-the-voting-age.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/07/learning/what-students-are-saying-about-lowering-the-voting-age.html</a></p> <p>2. <a href="https://fairvote.org/archives/why_should_we_lower_the_voting_age_to_16/">https://fairvote.org/archives/why_should_we_lower_the_voting_age_to_16/</a></p> <p>3. <a href="https://fairvote.org/archives/why_should_we_lower_the_voting_age_to_16/">https://fairvote.org/archives/why_should_we_lower_the_voting_age_to_16/</a></p> <p>4. <a href="https://www.idea.int/news/lowering-voting-age-should-young-people-head-polls">https://www.idea.int/news/lowering-voting-age-should-young-people-head-polls</a></p> <p>5. <a href="https://vote16usa.org/reasons-for-lowing-voting-age-16/">https://vote16usa.org/reasons-for-lowing-voting-age-16/</a></p> <p>6. <a href="https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/17461979221097072">https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/17461979221097072</a></p> <p>7. <a href="https://www.youthrights.org/issues/voting-age/top-ten-reasons-to-lower-the-voting-age/">https://www.youthrights.org/issues/voting-age/top-ten-reasons-to-lower-the-voting-age/</a></p> <p><b>Articles against lowering the voting age:</b></p> <p>1. <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/26/learning/should-the-voting-age-be-lowered-to-16.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/26/learning/should-the-voting-age-be-lowered-to-16.html</a></p> <p>2. <a href="https://tsrmatters.com/blog/the-voting-age-should-stay-at-18-says-students/">https://tsrmatters.com/blog/the-voting-age-should-stay-at-18-says-students/</a></p> <p>3. <a href="https://spunout.ie/voices/opinion/disagree-lowering-the-voting-age-16/">https://spunout.ie/voices/opinion/disagree-lowering-the-voting-age-16/</a></p>			
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	<p>4. <a href="https://nchschant.com/20941/showcase/why-the-voting-age-should-not-change-to-16/">https://nchschant.com/20941/showcase/why-the-voting-age-should-not-change-to-16/</a></p> <p>5. <a href="https://www.oxfordstudent.com/2019/11/11/a-case-against-lowering-the-voting-age/">https://www.oxfordstudent.com/2019/11/11/a-case-against-lowering-the-voting-age/</a></p>			
<p>To follow and participate in a discussion about the topic.</p> <p>To express informed ideas and opinions.</p> <p>To practice argumentation and expands on peers' ideas.</p> <p>To have a</p>	<p>-After the preparation, Ss are ready to start the debate.</p> <p>-T reminds Ss of the general rule for the class debate and writes them on the whiteboard with Ss' help:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wait for your turn before speaking.</li> <li>2. Respect your colleagues' opinions.</li> <li>3. Try to answer every colleague's opinion and counterargue.</li> <li>4. The following sentences could help you formulate your arguments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our position is .....</li> <li>• We believe that because .....</li> <li>• We base this opinion on the following evidence.....</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>-Each group reads aloud their arguments - then one group at a time</p>	Whole class	30'	<p>-Whiteboard</p> <p>-Groups' worksheets</p>

<p>better understanding of the dialogic teaching.</p>	<p>counterargues against them.</p>			
<p>To summarize concepts and ideas.</p>	<p>-One or two students conclude the debate</p>	<p>Whole class</p>	<p>5'</p>	<p>-Ss notes and worksheets</p>

## **Appendix I - Transcription of Class 10A students' Group 1 work**

### ***The Red Tree***

THE QUOTE: "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope."

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

This 5-students group's answer was:

"The picturebook tells the story of a little girl, who feels that every day is always the same. For her, waking up every morning knowing that probably nothing new will surprise her, is a never-ending nightmare. Time seems to pass more and more slowly, and she just stares (as if she can't move) at other, happier lives..."

## Appendix L – *The President of the Jungle* lesson transcripts

### Class 10A

*10<sup>th</sup> April, 2024 - Glossary exercise*

T: How do the elections in Portugal work?

10A/S06: When you are 18 year old, you vote for a party and the party with the majority of votes wins.

- see what ss know about what they know
- ss read aloud the book by turn taking
  
- T divides the class in groups of 3 ss and they must answer at least 4 questions each  
(look for the worksheet)
- ss analyze the persuasion strategies of the animal candidates (one animal per group) before the role play

(Students start to read their answer to the class)

a) What has happened to the river? We are told that Lion has rerouted the water for his private pool, and we see the lion on a large boat overlooking other animals enjoying his pool. What could this represent? (Question that students had to answer from Appendix E).

10A/S13: the river was turned to a swimming pool by the king lion and his allies; it represents the selfishness of the lion by putting his needs first. Joao: the lion rerouted the water for his private pool because he felt like it and he did not count for the needs of the other animals, and this could represent a leader that doesn't care for the needs of his people.

T: okay, very good.

10A/S10: and corruption.

c) The narrative suggests that Lion has gone too far ... 'Maybe he should not be the King of the Jungle'. Comments from the different animals expand on this: 'It's ridiculous!', 'Lion only thinks of himself' ... Sloth asks them all, 'What if we had a new leader?' What do you think of the animal's demonstration and comments? (question from Appendix E)

10A/S11: The sloth by interfering and asking about the elections demonstrate an act of activism and a wish for change.

j) In Opening 16, the illustrations show us how many votes each animal got, and Lion has a huge cross over his name. Why? Does it remind you of a risk that can happen during elections? Do you know a couple of examples? They could refer even outside Portugal. (question from Appendix E)

Maria: The lion has a huge cross over his name because he was disqualified since he was giving away peanuts for the voters and it's considered bribing.

-T: did you agree or disagree with all the answers? Did you have different ones? As you mention bribing, remember the book was set in Brazil, what happened in Brazil in 2020?

-T gives context with the help of the students where the picturebook was written (Brazil in 2020)

10A/S24: the Amazon fire!

T: as well, and what about elections?

10A/S21: Lula?

T: not Lula, before that?

10A/S06: Bolsonaro?

T: yes, Bolsonaro was elected! Great, so, do not forget the picturebook context.

10A/S1: As the lion was the king, I related that to revolution against the monarchy to a democracy where they could choose, ehm...how to say...more...trustworthy?

T: yes, trustworthy.

10A/S19: a more trustworthy leader to take care of them all.

T: good, okay. Anyone else?

10A/S24: g) Snake tells us 'I've crawled through burrows and nests getting to know you', what might that suggest? Could you comment on other animals' statements?

By snake saying this, she is really trying to get to know the people that is going to lead and trying to be a good leader without taking advantage of her position. So, she is trying to understand everyone and respect everyone.

T: Is that something that you already heard in political propaganda? "I grew up where you grew up..."

10A/S07: in the jungle the elections take place every spring, while in Portugal every four years...

10A/S07: with the lion speech he tries to convince the others to...

T: yes, what does it remind you of?

10A/S07: dictatorship?

T: yes, or what else? Maybe monarchy? Because he is entitled to be there as his great grandfather.

S: campaign, posters ...the lioness, as lion's VP present her (inaudible)

10A/S24: Sloth's speech was a speech that wanted to invite people to get to know the sloth...what she wants for the moment is really to help people... today with patience and work I want to make the jungle a better place for all the animals. I think this something that I would like to hear as a leader need to take care of the people that need and he leads and also hear so..

T: do you think this is why sloth won?

10A/S24: yeah, I think so.

T: do you think sloth was a good example of democracy in the story?

10A/S24: yes.

10A/S11: she wants to be a good leader and to be realistic. She also says that anything happens overnight, that is takes time.

T: very good.

00:54

T: Do you think Sloth is a good example of Democracy? Yes? Why?

(Teacher explains the role-playing activity)

10A/S19: Can we choose another animal that is not in the book?

T: Yes, class, listen up! Carolina just gave me a really good idea; you can choose another animal and be creative

T: voters, listen

(Minute 1:16 to 1:30 students presented their speeches to the class and vote for the best one)

10A/S11: hello everyone, we are here due to the misery that has taken over our beautiful jungle. Our recent leader, (fake cough) the lion has turned the river into his pool and happy animals into exploited creatures. Today, yes you heard me, today everything will change. We don't want the kind of slow change where nothing seems to happen, we don't want all those fake promises. We want a venomous change. First, we will start to reroute the river and end what seems to be the endless misery of the exploited workers. We will set peace from. I may leave on the ground, but I am aware of everything and every details and I will not let this suffering endure. Vote for snake for a venomous change!

10A/S24: we are the group ARARA PARTY and we are running for president of the jungle. This year we want to make a difference to help the animals that feel endangered to predators, pollution and evasive species.

10A/S06: not only these animals are that in danger, but we want to help everyone to feel safe and to be a part of our community. We also want to people feel heard. We want to make a difference not only in our likings, but in everyone likings because everyone matters. And as our slogan says: BE PART OF THE FUTURE!

10A/S10: we are presenting four reasons to vote for Monkey. We will represent our country's interests as the river was a big problem with the lion and we will make it public and to help every animal. We will fix the bananas economy which is a problem a bit more for the monkeys and not so much for the other animals. We will stop racism and discrimination, because we have seen that some animals are treated worse than others and it is not acceptable. I am not corrupted (laughter) and we are going to do everything we have promised, and we are going to be the best president.

10A/S09: our party is HONEY and it stands for hope, organization, negotiation, engagement and youth. Our party leader is Winnie the pooh a very famous character in our society.

S: we want to assure that every single animal can leave without worrying about {unclear}: inaudible speech.

## **Class 10 B**

*11<sup>th</sup> April, 2024 - Glossary exercise*

T: the picturebook was released between 2018/2019 in it was written originally in Portuguese from these authors (indicating the names). What can you recall that happened in Brazil during those years?

10B/S30: elections? Bolsonaro?

T: Yes! Good! Bolsonaro won the elections.

(00:06 to 00:16 students are reading the picturebook aloud)

T: What do you think happen in this picturebook? Does anyone have an idea? Who do you think won the elections? Who were the candidates?

{off-task}: answer at the same time the different candidates

(Students continue to read the picturebook)

T: what do you think happen in this book? Could you find any similarities with the election here in Portugal? What happened?

10B/S04: All the candidates have united with different problems.

T: 10B/S22 what differences could you find?

10B/S22: they are competing to be president

T: good, and it would be the end of the...

10B/S22: MONARCHY

T: very good, so could that maybe be about other countries other than Brazil? As we have a few monarchies in Europe.

T: 10B/S01 please, tell me something that you enjoyed, and you didn't enjoy

10B/S01: {unclear}

10B/S17: I found the Sloth interesting.

T: why?

10B/S17: because in general the sloth is considered lazy.

T: what about in the story? Do you think he is lazy in the story?

Nobody answered

(Teacher explains the next activity and divides the students in groups and translates to Portuguese as well).

10B/S29: If I become president, I will listen to everyone's problems. I will give attention to all of you. I promise I will do my very best to make everyone feel included in our community. I will make you feel like you are not just a member of our community, BUT YOU ARE THE COMMUNITY. I will end the corruption that was brought by our past corrupted leaders. I will make everything fair. If I won the elections, I would protect the

rights of baby animals and pregnant female animals. I will protect the weak ones too. If you vote for Panda, you will have an equal and safer jungle.

(Teacher gives the advice of resuming the 3 most important points of the speech at the end of it for the classmate to understand better).

10B/S17: some of the objectives that we have, we want to give more attention to animals' rights and each one of them should be equal and with the same right. We also want to protect the animal's habitat that are being destroyed and create shelters, give them food and everything they need. We also want to make free vet appointments, so animals can stop being extinct and we could stop having population problems. Please vote for us, we are the change! (Eagle)

10A/S13: hello everyone! Today we are going to present our party's ideas. We will guarantee food from the highest trees for those who can't get to them. We will protect the smaller animals who can't defend themselves from the hunters. Put zebra crossing so... eehm I need to get my glasses... the more unprotected animals don't get smashed in the middle of the jungle, and with these ideas we will promote you a higher and better future. (giraffe)

10B/S16: my fellow inhabitants of the jungle, today I come before you, not just as a tiger, but as a candidate for the throne of the jungle. For no long the title of the king has been held from those who don't truly represent the spirit of our wilderness. As a king, I will protect our home from threats, preserve the balance of our ecosystem and lead with fairness and integrity. I will commit to fostering unity and respect among all creatures in the jungle. And I promise to prioritize the protection of our jungle habitats. So if you want a better jungle vote for tiger.

T: very good speech! Just one little thing, did you say as a king? But we are running for president!

[...]

Okay it's fine; it was a very good speech.

10B/S02: hello everyone, our party's name is eagle. We created a slogan: leading with courage and serving with heart.

T: Wow, convincing!

We will invest in an efficient health system. Prioritize education as a tool for social and economic development. Reduce child creation and employment, combat climate change and providing assistance wherever needed.

T: okay very good, how are you going to do it? 10B/S19/16/M/A2, project your voice.

10B/S19 (eagle): as a president I will help children who don't have food and I will also create jobs for poor people. More opportunities for people and finally equal rights for both genders. I am an eagle, I can see our problems from above and I know what you need for a new and better future.

T: very good speech.

10B/S08: walk for me if you want in the jungle safe. If I was elected, I would put a curfew at 10 pm so you could have a good night of sleep. I would also create a rule to have two meetings per month, so we could discuss ideas on how we could improve the jungle. I will guarantee food for everyone and make sure you are healthy.

10B/S26: hello we are the turtle, if we were elected, we would promote equal rights. We would make the city more green because nowadays the cities are really dirty and we need to make it more green. We would also protect beaches because that is where we live and we would also create more shelters for turtles that don't have a home. We will also improve the education because we think is very important.

T: very good, but what about the other animals of the jungle?

[...]

10B/S12 (Marekeet): as your representative, I will provide transparency and accountability by actions. You deserve to know how decisions are made and how it will impact your community. I will hold regular meetings to give updates and to hear what concerns you as a community. The environment is crucial for us, for our health and wellbeing. I will advocate for sustainable practices: support clean energies, preserve natural resources for future generations. Like we said before, your voice matters. You will actively engage to make sure everyone respects our voices.

T: great! Now it's time to vote! I am going to tell you the rules: You can't vote for your group, obviously and you don't have to vote for what your group is voting, ok? You can make your own decisions.

{off-task}: the voting part was confusing, students started to lose focus and talk among themselves. The lunch break was coming and as the lesson was about to finish, they were getting tired. The teacher had to repeat the instructions several times.

T: don't vote twice, please or you will confuse me. This actually looks like real elections, were everyone cheats.

(Hippo 2 GROUP won the elections)

## **Appendix M – Notes from the reflective teacher diary**

(original spelling is kept)

*Field's notes, 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023*

Today, for the first time, I took over during a speaking activity with the students. It was a speaking activity from the course book and the topic was technology, which the students were obviously very interested in. Although they seemed really engaged, I did not manage to have a class discussion. They were not listening to each other at all and when I asked if they agreed or disagreed with each other, no one replied. Class 10A seems to be a great class in terms of preparation, but I could see that they are probably not used to having class discussions and sharing their opinions... Something I found surprising was that when I asked them to share their experiences at the beginning, no one wanted to, but when the first one started and the rest saw that there was actually space to share and be listened to, they all wanted to. This is something that can definitely be worked on...

*5<sup>th</sup> of February, 2024*

Today's class was disappointing. I was so excited to finally start working with picturebooks that maybe my expectations were too high. The students were confused and did not seem to understand the format of the lesson. Most of them had never seen a picturebook before today and I could see some prejudice in their eyes, thinking that they were too old to read a book with pictures. The lesson started off quite well as the students responded positively to the Billie Eilish song. I suspect they did not find the picturebook themes appealing enough.

*7<sup>th</sup> of February, 2024*

... About the first one with the first class I have implemented, the students had a lot to say about the Billie Eilish song, the discussion took half of the class. For the other half I have presented the picturebook, read it to them with their eyes closed,

commented the cover picture, etc. We didn't have time for the writing activity. In general I think the students responded well and seemed interested. Considering the amount of students with learning difficulties (ADHD, Autism and dyslexia) in Class, the group work is a bit more difficult for them. In general I have noticed that both classes struggle with group work and I think is because they are not used to do it.

Today's class went much better. It was a shame I could not record the class. Students' contributions discussing the picturebook were interesting. They showed more interest and a deeper understanding of the relationship between the images and the text. *The Last Stop on Market Street* (de la Peña, 2015) was not probably the best choice for 10th graders and a few students were not that interested. Today I asked them to join the same groups they had more time to think about the picturebook main themes and two groups made a connection between one of the images of the picturebook and their class. The groups were meant to have an attentive, closer look to the picturebook images and text and then share their reflections on the theme based on their interpretations.

*25th of February, 2024*

During the last week, I have implemented the two lesson plans about The Red Tree. Unfortunately, I could not record anything, but I was quite satisfied with the outcome. Regarding the second lesson plan about the picturebook The Red Tree, I had the feeling it went even better with Class A. The ss already knew the topic and they really liked the video, they said it helped them to understand better the picturebook. This is a really good class with good students and good English level, there are just a few ss with difficulties and the coop. teacher believes that in these activities they stay behind because they are not able to follow (especially during group work). The coop. teacher asked me to reduce the discussion time and the group work for the other class, so I did. They did not respond that well to the group work and class discussion, there are many students who do not feel comfortable to share their opinions in English and they are probably not used to this kind of activity. I think that in general the activities went well. I can see that is something new for them, but I would love to continue working picturebook with both classes. I would reduce the groups to 3 people only. I would also

change a few activities for Class 10B who has many ss with learning difficulties accordingly, but I am not sure how...

## **Appendix N – Groups’ analysis on *The Red Tree* (Tan, 2001)**

### **Group 1 questions:**

- a) Was there anything you liked about this book?
- b) Was there anything you disliked about this book?
- c) Was there anything that puzzled you?
- d) Did you notice any patterns or connections?

### **Group 1 answers** (composed by 1 girl and 4 boys of Class B)

(each student answered a question)

“S1 liked how relatable it was (the book) and was puzzled about the picture of the book.”

“S2 liked the message about life and death and wasn’t puzzled about anything.”

“S3 liked the ending and the story itself and wasn’t puzzled about anything.”

“S4 liked the way the pictures were made and wasn’t puzzled about anything.”

“S5 liked the message of hope from the book and was puzzled why the red tree was the symbol of good things.”

### **Group 2 questions:**

- a) What caught your attention?
- b) Did anything bore/interest/surprise you?
- c) Was there anything you thought strange?
- d) Have you read any other stories like this? How is it different? How is it the same?

### **Group 2 answers** (composed of 2 girls and 3 boys of Class A)

"In this book what caught our attention was the red tree. Throughout the pages, neutral and dark colors were used except for the tree, capturing our interest with its vivid

and bright colors. The book didn't bore us, as it has an impactful message from beginning to end. It tells us that there is always hope. The red leaf's appearance makes a lie of the false notion that terrible fates are inevitable. The message of hope is given a voice and its music is fully sounded in the final panel of the red tree, flowering in all its glory. The red tree is a work of vast beauty and quiet power. We thought strange the appearance of a fish in the middle of the story.

"We never read any stories like this one. This picturebook mentions topics like depression, isolation, loneliness and even hope...."

### **Group 3 questions**

- a) Were you surprised by anything your friends said?
- b) What would you tell your friends about the book?
- c) What is the most important thing about this book for you?
- d) How long do you think it took the story to happen?

### **Group 3 answers** (composed of four students of Class A, 2 girls, and 2 boys)

"...If we were encountered with a situation where we had to tell our friends about this book, we figured that we would most likely recommend it, but it would require more than one read, because at first we felt a bit "weirded out", but finally the third time we read it and discussed about it we eventually got the real meaning of the story.."

### **Group 4 questions**

- a) Whose story, is it?
- b) Which character interested you most? / Least?
- c) Where did the story happen?
- d) When did it happen?

### **Group 4 answers** (composed of 3 girls and 2 boys of Class B)

"Sometimes you can feel hopeless and there is nothing to help you improve your

life and make you happier but sometimes it can be in front of your eyes.”

“a) It is everyone’s story. Because everyone can feel like the girl on the book.”

“c) In the mind of the girl.”

## Appendix O – Debate lesson transcript

### Class 10 A

15/04/2024 - Debate: should we lower the voting age?

{Unclear}: inaudible speech

T: Do you agree with 10A/S11/16/F/B2?

10A/S13: I don't agree with her, but, (laughing) sorry, we could do like eh, I mean teenagers over 16 could vote, but like a poll where their vote wouldn't count but we could understand which party won among teenagers.

T: ok, and why not?

10A/S13: I think because, as 10A/S11 said, at our age we just vote for what our parents vote or what our loved ones say.

T: I see. But what if you could have the chance? The vote is private and nobody will ever know what you vote for. And what if you could prepare yourself and decide what you need?

10A/S13: even if I had the chance to vote already, I think is not a mission for me yet. I feel I am just starting to understand the world. We, as teenagers we still have no idea how to work, how companies work. We are still children; we don't have the idea of the actual living.

T: ok, I see your point. But there are a few things that might concern you already, like education. In two years' time you will go to university, and also the health system.

10A/S24: I agree with 10A/S13, I think the majority of people our age are not ready to vote yet. Some people are, but most of us no. These are things that adults have to deal

with and not because we are not capable, but we are still in development and we are still discovering things about ourselves, so...

10A/S04: I also think that it does not relate us because we still use our parents' money.

T: there are 16 y/o that work, maybe not you.

10A/S04: but this is an exception.

T: I was working when I was 16, I was babysitting, tutoring.

CP: I was working also when I was 16.

10A/S04: but I think the changes would not affect me yet. T: okay, fair.

10A/S11: I was thinking about the working situation and is weird that you can be employed when you are 16, but you can vote just when you are 18.

T: very good, I am going to show you other examples in a bit. But know let's just raise our hands. Who would be in favor of lowering the voting age to 16 in Portugal?

(One girl raised her hand).

Teacher shows one video. You have one girl from Dubai and one boy from Malta.

Teacher explains that will divide the class in half. One half in favor and one against and explains how important the informed opinions are and gives instructions. Teacher uploads material on Teams for students to read. Teacher explains the material provided.

[...]

10A/S14: we think that the majority of people younger than 18 are not interested

in politics. So there will be many irresponsible vote and many of them kidding.

10A/S13: young people are interested and always have something new to say, for example in 2019 in the UK thousands of students skipped school to take action on climate change. Teenagers are also affected by the law that adults vote for, for example the Parliament was debating about the military service that is something that affect us and that we, young people have no say about it.

T: thank, you. Very good arguments.

10A/S04: according to "*Opinião Pública*" 54% of young adults don't vote because they don't want to. And 25% of *Chega* so imagine what 60 years old could vote.

T: are this statics from last month elections?

10A/S11: about the abstinence of the voters from 18 to 30 years of age or the fact that they tend to vote for more radical parties, we believe that lowering the voting age could engage young people more in the elections and prevent the abstinence, creating a lifelong habit for them. This solution was implemented in Austria and it was proven to work.

T: does anybody would like to counterargue?

10A/S08: I would like to argue that, although they are many people interested in politics, there are some who lack maturity, life experience like working in job 9 to 5, buying food and things like that. So we think that 18 is the right age to vote.

T: okay, but you should have added some data to back up your argument.

10A/S06: we all know that in some countries 16 y/o have already guaranteed some rights and possibilities such as driving, working, paying taxes. So guaranteeing that they can vote at the age of 16 is just giving them more rights and preparing themselves to

their adult life. According to the national conference of state... in the USA this measure to consider them as adults is very good for them.

10A/S24: I understand your point but 16 y/o. are still teenagers and teenagers are supposed to find themselves and the majority of 16 y/o are not interested in politics because they are not educated enough, or they have a lack of interest. The data from "*Fundação Francisco Santos*" say that the majority of young people do not feel represented by the politicians. "50% of young people between 14 and 18 are not interested in politics." This is not always a good thing, because first people need to be into politics and then...when you are 16 you are too young.

10A/S12: teenagers are impacted by political choices especially because of school, job, and nature. They should have a say in what happen to their future. Letting them vote, give them a chance to speak up about what they care about and make sure their opinions are being valued. To prove that Sophia Whitney, a survivor of school shooting in Florida say: "If 16 years old students are old enough to effected by laws and they realize that there is a problem, they should have the power to help and chance it".

Many students want to speak now. Teacher does not who to choose.

10A/S11: about the article that 10A/S24/17/F/B2 read and about youth being represented, not only voting age. Not lowering the voting age could also add up to not feel represented in the society, so I think this is a bit contradicting...

10A/S09: for 10A/S06. In Portugal minors should not work and not contribute to the Portuguese state.

10A/S02: we think that voting from the age of 16 is important because young people have a solid understanding of issues they are learning at school, for example the environment led by Greta Thunberg. Allowing them to vote at 16 empower them.

T: very good, he brought an example.

10A/S04: the participation in the society of younger is not something very

important because actually 95% of 16 y/o live with their parents, and they don't pay taxes so I don't know how is possible to represent the society.

10A/S13: we know that the US is a country that allows the free use of weapons that leads to mass shootings that happen every day. So, if we already know that not even adults have the responsibility to carry a gun, would a teenager have the responsibility to vote?

10A/S24: teenagers don't have the responsibility to vote. Even though they work, like teacher said. *Doutor Finanças and Escolaridade Obrigatória in Portugal*.

10A/S19: if adults don't have the responsibility to carry a gun is because they are not educated to do so. Responsibility comes with knowledge, education and influence from other people. So, if that can happen with an adult, a teenager is easy to educate because his mind is developing. So, if we want to lower the voting age, we should create a new education system where they can start studying the topics at 10 years of age.

(Many students want to reply, but the lesson is over. So they ask the teacher if they can continue the following class).

## **Class 10 B**

*15/04/2024*

(Teacher starts asking what students think about lowering the voting age at 16).

10B/S17: at 16 we still don't know what is happening

10B/S12: usually younger people do not know a lot about politics and don't follow the newspaper.

10B/S02: many teenagers don't know what is happening in the world.

T: okay, thank you. Do you maybe think there could be issues that teenagers could

be worried about?

10B/S29: maybe the education system.

T: yes, good. Now think about social issues that you could really care about. Nobody seems to be in favor of lowering the voting age in Portugal.

[...]

10B/S10: we believe that we shouldn't let people younger than 16 vote, one of the reasons is, like the scientist Mathew bacon says that our brain isn't develop yet to make decisions in politics. So the 16 y/o brain isn't developed to vote wisely.

T: okay, very good argument. We are going to this group now, to counter argue this argument. You are all in favor.

10B/S03: we believe that 16 y/o should be more responsible and mature and the fact that we could be allowed to vote, could represent our country and we could feel the responsibility to do right.

10B/S23: I think young people are more manipulatable in their ideas, because they tend to believe in some things that are not true, especially from the extreme's parties, as they create speeches that seem perfect. So, young people vote for them as they don't have enough experience...according to the "*Observador*" Newspaper says that in Portugal young people prefer to vote on extreme parties because the other ones don't do what they promise, so 60% of young people would vote on *Chega*, 24.5 in CDS and 34.1 would vote in PSD.

10A/S13: young people are expected to be following the law but no say in making it, why do they have to follow everything that and adult does, but not change this?

T: great! This is a provocative question; do we have somebody that can reply to

that?

10B/S24: according to the student room 21% have no interest in politics. Only 21% think the voting age should be 18.

T: does anyone have a counterargument for that?

10B/S21: if 16 y/o would have the chance to vote, they would make research about it and become more interested. It became into a habit, and it can be to a long voting habit turnout. A person that votes in the first elections is more likely to start voting consistently. People that are 16 have more time to establish this habit. For example in Malta, where people could vote when they are 16, is the third country where there is less abstinence.

T: okay, don't forget to quote your sources. Yes, this is also what we saw in the video, the young boy from Malta.

10B/S02: {unclear}: inaudible speech.

(Some arguments were repeated, and students started to stop listening to each other. Or start to share opinions instead of data).

T: can we please listen to each other?

10B/S17: a lot of young people have adults' responsibility we have a...from *Colombia Economia* 74% of people that are 16 and 17 y/o work as they are also in school. Even though in Portugal you don't pay taxes yet, when you are 16. You can still be a good voice to talk about important topics.

[...]

10B/S04: "the Big times of Malta" young people are interested in culture.

T: you cited the Big times of Malta”, very good! Can somebody reply? I mentioned that you all needed to have at least three arguments.

(At the end students needed a lot of teacher’s guidance to continue to argument).

1:15

Nice: if we would study politics as a subject in school, there would be less abstinence, like it happened in Malta. They have 2.500 more electors.

T: ah! Since they lowered the age of voting, good!

1:20

10B/S11: {unclear}: inaudible speech.

T: I think is what 10B/S12 said.

10B/S27: is important to empower young people to speak up and stand for what they believe. Most 16 y/o today are more politically active then before, since they are directly affected by the decisions made by the Government. Especially when it comes to topics like education and environmental laws.

T: The debate can finish if you don’t have any more arguments. In my opinion the in favor won because they had many more arguments, whether the against groups finished theirs almost straight away.