



Controversial Issues as a catalyst for voluntary oral production

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Abstract

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This aimed to observe the impact of controversial issues in the voluntary oral production of highschool students. My research involved creating classes centered around contextually relevant controversial issues in order to observe if they had any positive impact in the voluntary oral production of students. Their voluntary oral production was tallied and compared in order to observe relevant fluctuations, with the intent of drawing conclusions towards the main research question of this report: Can controversial issues be a catalyst for voluntary oral production.

Chapter 1-Introduction

This paper consists of a report on the teaching practicum carried out during the school year of 2021-2022 at “Escola Secundária Romeu Correia”, in the “Almada” region of Portugal. The class this report relates to is class A of the 11th grade from the “Ciências e Tecnologias” branch and is comprised of nineteen students.

The theme explored in this report focuses on how controversial topics might be able to positively impact spontaneous oral production. classroom setting. The theme arose from classroom observations carried out both by the cooperating teacher and me writing this report. It was observed that 11A very rarely participated orally out of their own volition, not just in the English class but every subject, which seemed to result in a lack of voluntary oral production. This appeared to be the case for the majority of students, regardless of their individual levels of proficiency on the subject. Given that this lack of participation was a concern for the cooperating teacher as well as the rest of the teaching body engaged with 11A, it seemed to be an interesting aspect to look into further from a research standpoint, especially due to the importance that oral production has in the EFL context. It is one of four essential components present in the 11th grade curriculum, which makes the lack of production a significant problem. Thus, the focus of the action research part of the practicum became the issue of lack of voluntary oral production, and how to tackle it in a classroom environment.

An obvious direction would be to focus on motivating voluntary oral production to mitigate the previously mentioned reluctance and absence of participation. Yet, motivation as a whole is a broad subject area, and so it needed to be narrowed down. . Thus, the research focus had to be narrowed down to the observable; more specifically to extrinsic sources of motivation. Extrinsic motivation can be described as external sources influencing the motivation towards a specific action (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Grades may be excluded from

these sources of motivation due to participation being an evaluation criterion and the students being aware of it, and still not participating voluntarily, so other influences needed to be found. Initially, hobbies were contemplated as possible topics for discussion in the classroom, as in, if students talked about their personal hobbies, they may be more inclined to participate. Yet, the inherent difficulties in analyzing hobbies and how these may influence production, as well as their difficult implementation in the 11th grade curriculum led to the topic being dismissed. The topic needed to be both inherently appealing to the students and be supported by the 11th grade curriculum.

Among the many topics of the 11th grade curriculum, one seemed to stand out as pertinent and potentially applicable: Module 4 “O mundo a nossa volta”. From a thematic standpoint this module focuses on developing critical thinking, citizenship education and ecological awareness. In the last decades these competences have had their importance greatly increased due to many social and political events. These have shifted the paradigm towards the preparation of democratically capable and ethically-minded adults. In no other place is this more apparent than in Europe, where hate crimes, human rights violations and extremist ideologies are on the rise (Council of Europe, 2017). Thus, the students would have to engage with materials that tackle real life situations and themes that may carry significant weight. The inherent importance of these issues as well as some of the polarizing opinions they may create could prove to be a good catalyst for spontaneous oral production. Therefore, the research question of the action research section of this practicum was formulated: Can controversial issues serve as a catalyst for voluntary oral production?

The Council of Europe’s training pack for teachers, “Teaching Controversial Issues” defines its main topic as: “Issues which arouse strong feelings and divide opinion in communities and society”. The pack mentions how these issues may vary between communities, ethnicities and countries, as well as the age group of the students, in order to

maximize participation. This would be measured by direct observation and counting the number of participations, ignoring the quality of production and focusing on the act of voluntary participation itself. Focus groups were picked as a data collection method in order to facilitate the tallying of participation. It was also considered that Students were grouped based on their oral production abilities. Thus, it would be theoretically possible to observe the impact controversial issues would have in the spontaneous oral production of different students with different levels of English proficiency and compare it with a non affected tally, and eventually draw conclusions from the data obtained, thus hypothetically answering the main research question of this report, “Can controversial issues serve as catalyst for voluntary oral production?”.

Chapter II- Theoretical Framework

In the last century the English language has grown into one of the main communication tools of the modern era. Its use has spread to every facet of society, and thus the learning of the English language has gained a considerable amount of importance. This could be mostly attributed to the expansion of English-based media and the internet. In the last fifty years English has become an essential tool in most fields of study when trying to communicate in the absence of a common language (Tukhvatulina, 2022; Iman, 2017). Thus, the ability to effectively communicate in English became a rather important tool, and as such, the study of the learning process became quite a dynamic scientific field. Every facet of the learning and teaching of EFL had the possibility of becoming a research focus. For this practicum oral production will be the main topic to be explored within EFL, more specifically if a topic, controversial issues in this case, can be a catalyst for oral production on ESL students.

In this chapter of the report, I will present the theoretical guidelines that led the action research component of the work, as well as how these interacted with the research context where it took place, and what adaptations were made to facilitate the process of action research. Firstly the concept of oral production will be looked at and related to the research context, specifically on how the broad theoretical concepts of oral production relate to the case presented here. As stated in the previous chapter, 11° A showed a significant degree of reluctance to participate orally voluntarily, regardless of their proficiency level in the language. A possible area of intervention to develop voluntary oral production seemed to be motivation, and how it could affect the intention to participate orally. Intrinsic

motivational pulls could in theory provide pertinent results. The second topic of importance that will be discussed in this chapter will be how classroom activity topics may serve as intrinsic motivational factors towards oral production. Controversial issues as a topic seemed to align with the 11th grade curriculum as well as being inherently reactive, given that they are described as “Issues which arouse strong feelings and divide opinion in communities and society” (Council of Europe, 2017). These feelings could hypothetically be pertinent motivational pulls towards voluntary oral production, this aligns with the ideas proposed by Sudha, (2018) and Aubrey et al. (2020) where they mention that many second language students have difficulties speaking in a classroom setting and that it is crucial that the teacher motivate and engage students with thought provoking topics. Controversial issues may have that effect. An aspect that is inherent to controversial issues and that may also have a pertinent motivational value is critical thinking and how its development when tackling these topics may prompt voluntary oral production (Tukhvatulina, 2022) . Especially if the issues tackled are directly related to the students’ everyday lives and socio-political context.

2.1- Oral production and teaching context

Oral production is one of the key skills that needs to be developed when learning a foreign language, however, EFL students tend to have limited opportunities to practice oral communication outside the classroom context (Torres & Rodrigues, 2017). Therefore the classroom environment plays a key role in the development of oral production. Factors inherent to this context may have a significant influence on the development of a student's competences, be it positive or negative, this practicum aims to have a positive influence on the classroom context in order to help students develop their voluntary oral production skills.

The class observed in this practicum displayed reluctance to speak voluntarily and this seemed to be the case independently of the students' levels of proficiency. Upon inquiring with their homeroom teacher, who was also the cooperating teacher in this practicum, it was observed that this behavior was prevalent in every subject. This led me to the conclusion that the origin of this reluctance to participate voluntarily may be connected with internal factors. These factors could be many (past experiences, low confidence in their English abilities or social pressures from classmates among others), but for the purpose of this study it seemed that increasing motivation to participate through intrinsic motivational pulls could provide positive results. Thus, I needed to look for a pull that could theoretically have an effect on the majority of students, in order to increase the chances of producing observable positive results. Through observation during this practicum, it appeared that 11th A were always diligent and interested in the various topics presented within their English curriculum which led me to consider that a topic could serve as an internal motivational pull, if it could provoke enough interest in the students. At the time of the action research, half of this practicum the students were about to start Unit 4 of the Portuguese 11th grade English curriculum, "Um mundo de muitas culturas" which could serve as a guide for what topics to use, especially if I leaned into their more provocative or controversial aspects and contextualized them in the students own environment, this, in theory could increase the chances of observing positive results. Therefore, controversial issues, guided by the 11th grade curriculum, became the main focus of the action research of this practicum.

2.2 - Motivation Theories

As previously stated, motivation is of particular importance to this practicum; more specifically the drive a student feels towards being engaged and producing orally, how it may impact this process and what can be done to increase it. The concept of motivation can usually be described as the underlying drive for the initiation, continuation and termination of

human behavior. One of the theories that is believed to have a theoretical influence is the Self Determination Theory. First proposed by Ryan and Deci in the nineteen seventies, this theory focuses on the motivation behind human action despite external factors. Its focus is directly on self-motivated and self-determined behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2017). According to Self Determination Theory (SDT), motivation cannot be perceived as a general concept, and must instead be observed on a moment-by-moment basis. Thus, an individual can be guided by either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. The former is described by Domenico and Ryan (2017) as an individual's tendencies to be interested or curious, to seek out challenges and to develop skills and knowledge even without apparent operationally separate rewards. Over the last forty years, research guided by self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017), has found that intrinsic motivation can play a significant role in enhanced learning, performance and creativity, as well as optimal development and psychological wellness. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation can be described as an external drive that influences a course of action. Monetary rewards, academic results and praise are some of the possible examples for extrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1994). These two facets are not mutually exclusive; individuals can be motivated by both variables at the same time, each producing different effects on the individual. In fact, forms of positive external reinforcement may help develop intrinsic motivation in individuals.

In the case of 11A extrinsic factors such as praise or better grades may not have an impact in the development of voluntary oral production. The students were informed early on in the school year by the cooperating teacher that their voluntary oral participation would have a positive impact on their marks, regardless of the quality of the production. It was also observed that even with praise 11A would not engage easily. Likewise, the students' subjective intrinsic pulls were also ineffective in the development of the competence in question. The action part of this practicum aimed to develop these latter pulls by appealing to

their connection with contextual issues of a controversial nature, to encourage generalized involvement in the hopes that it would increase voluntary oral production. In addition, concepts of self, identity and other individual variables seem to play a significant role in the motivation of teenagers in a EFL learning context according to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009). It stands to reason that a careful selection of controversial topics that are contextually relevant to the students both on a personal and social level, could in theory motivate them to produce orally voluntarily.

2.3- Teaching methodologies

The two main teaching methodologies that influenced the practical aspect of this action research report were Task Based Learning (TBL) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The theoretical background of the activity construction during this practicum period was heavily influenced by the teaching habits of the cooperating teacher as well as the aforementioned methodologies.

Firstly, Communicative Language Teaching or CLT was the general approach used by the cooperating teacher and by me, focused on interaction as the ends and the means of the study of the language. CLT positions the ability to communicate as its priority, with the teacher assuming the role of facilitator and guide to students while they navigate the learning of the language. Authentic texts, topics outside of the traditional language norm and social interactions with peers are hallmarks of this approach (Nunan, 1989). The class that was the subject of this practicum was accustomed to this approach, since the cooperating teacher's methodology loosely aligned with it. Students were encouraged to actively engage with tasks and communicate in English. Yet this approach is not devoid of criticism. Swan (1985) notes that CLT is not cohesive as an approach, due to the different perspectives held by linguists

and teachers, which represent both the theoretical and practical aspects of this approach. Swan (1985) elaborates these observations by mentioning that these different points of view contrast with the bold claims and what he considers obtuse language in some of the approach's guidelines, which in turn complicates application by teachers. Regarding its practical implementations, Ridge (1992) criticizes what they perceive as the lack of a standardized idea of communicative competences, leaving its practical implications up to teachers: this in turn may have an effect on the transmission of certain important competences such as grammar. Regarding recent research into CLT, it's possible to observe an interest in utilizing structure as an aid to that approach as was observed by Villalobos (2015) where the researcher advises a more structured approach. Specifically, the authors suggest the creation of a welcoming environment, the annotation of common errors and the application of strategies that take the classroom context in consideration. This appears to align with Harmer (2014) suggestions regarding classroom flexibility, where lesson plans should be cohesive enough to maintain structured learning, but adaptable to student-imposed variables. Following the example of the cooperating teacher, the action part of this practicum would be required to keep the same CLT aligned methodologies as well as the flexibility advised by the literature. This, allied with controversial issues, could intensify intrinsic motivational pulls and their effects, by attempting to minimize English performance fears and allowing students to engage with issues of a controversial nature relevant to their context.

Another teaching methodology responsible for guiding the action part of this practicum was Task based language learning. TBL is described by Sekhan (2003) as a subcategory of CLT that focuses the learning process on the use of authentic language focused tasks in order to develop language specific skills. Prabhu (1987) defines a task as an activity designed for learners to reach a specific learning goal, through the use of their reasoning; the teacher's role in this activity is focused on controlling or adjusting the task

whenever necessary. These tasks ought to be meaning focused with a communicative purpose and as previously mentioned, use authentic nonlanguage learning materials, so that the students may develop skills in interlanguage development (Foster and Skehan, 1999). Regarding criticisms towards this approach, they seem to focus on its difficult implementation for similar reasons as CLT, and that teachers may alter their activities because of said difficulties, effectively turning them into more teacher centered affairs (Plews and Zhao, 2010). Through observation of the cooperating teacher's methodology, it seemed like their lessons somewhat aligned with Sekhan's description of TBL by Prabhu (1987). Their task goals were clear and defined the classroom interaction, an example I followed when implementing the action part of this practicum, due to how well it seemed to adapt to a classroom setting that aimed to increase voluntary oral production.

2.4 Controversial issues in the classroom

As previously stated, controversial issues can be a tool to increase students' engagement and critical thinking (Tukhvatulina, 2022; Sudha, 2018). The studies that theoretically influenced the issue of controversial issues in this practicum were Alzeer (2016), Sudha (2018) and Tukhvatulina (2022). These articles somewhat share a line of thought that controversial issues may have a positive influence on students' engagement with language learning.

The first study that I would like to discuss is Alzeer (2016) study regarding the use of controversial issues as a topic of discussion in order to develop willingness to speak in female Saudi University students. This study was conducted on nine first year students of the geography major at King Saud University, who were classified as B1 according to the Cambridge English scale. The study consisted of three lessons following TBL and CLT

methodologies where students engaged with genuine materials related to controversial topics relevant to Saudi women, chief among them, driving as a woman. Data was then collected through a questionnaire, an interview with the teacher about the process and the researcher's own field notes. Alzeer (2016) mentions that in her study most of the materials regarding controversial issues appeared to have the desired effect, yet that they evoked volatile feelings among the students and that pre-task activities may be required to minimize their effects. In the case of this report Alzeer's use of genuine materials and issues regarding contextually relevant controversial issues is very similar to the methodologies I used. Yet the limitations that Alzeer observed, namely the volatile nature of the topics in the Saudi context and the lack of variety of materials, may not be as strongly felt in my report. The Portuguese context is radically different from the Saudi one, and female college students are a very different demographic to 11th graders of both genders. However, the main thoroughline of Alzeer's study remains relevant for mine, controversial issues appear to have a positive effect on students' willingness to communicate.

Sudha's (2028) study had a similar intent, but with a focus on the general outcome of the use of controversial issues in an EFL classroom. Her study consisted of 67 Bangladeshi students of a General English course of pre-intermediate level at BRAC university. This group was part of a pre-university course. Research was conducted through the introduction of a controversial issue (E-Stalking) in the English lessons over two sessions, with data being collected through questionnaires given to the students after each lesson, and direct observation by the researcher. Sudha concluded that Bangladeshi students reacted positively to the use of a controversial issue in the EFL lesson, even suggesting new topics to be discussed in future lessons. The lack of these topics in Bangladeshi curriculums prior may be behind the reaction, according to Sudha. However the positive results on a context that is somewhat similar with the one discussed in my report, closer age gap and gender parity, may

indicate that my results may exhibit somewhat similar patterns. Yet, the different socio-cultural context may play a key role in the outcome of my study, regardless of the similarities exhibited.

Tukhvatulina (2022), similarly introduced controversial issues in a classroom context to observe if it had a positive effect on the engagement of EFL students. Namely a small English speaking course for all levels at a private university in Lithuania. The class had nine students, six female and three male, with an age range between 27-67. In total five classes were recorded, along with observation sessions, informal discussions and interviews were recorded and videotaped. Data collection included two observation sessions before the three classes with controversial issues as topics, followed by interviews with the teacher and the students. Students were also encouraged to fill out a questionnaire and have informal discussion with the teacher about the controversial topic of the lesson after it had taken place. Data collection was concluded with interviews that took place after the three controversial themed lessons. The main topic chosen for these lessons was immigration in the Lithuanian context. Through these methods Tukhvatulina found that students found lessons about controversial topics engaging, especially because they found it practical to speak about these issues to practice their oral production. She also found that these participations were voluntary, which seemed quite relevant to my report. The Lithuanian context is the most similar of the one discussed so far in this chapter, especially given the issue of immigration to European countries. Yet, Tukhvatulina study focused on adults on a private university course, which would have an undeniable impact on the results, which may not reflect itself on a group of adolescents in a high school context like the one on this report.

These three reports appear to support the hypothesis that controversial issues may have a positive impact on engagement, regardless of the fundamental differences between

them, and this one. However the context of this report, and its emphasis on oral production may reveal that context might play a key role in the impact of controversial issues

III- Methodology

The research question that guided this action research report was: “Can controversial issues increase voluntary oral production?”. In this chapter I will be presenting the methods that guided the research process as well as the lessons where these were used.

A problem was observed, namely a lack of voluntary oral production, which led me to look for possible solutions through research. Controversial issues seemed to be a possible solution. Oxfam (2006) describes controversial issues as topics that may have a political and social influence on students' feelings, emotions and beliefs. Perhaps these emotions and feelings could be used as a catalyst to produce orally in a voluntary manner. Thus I set out to make use of controversial topics in a series of lessons where students' voluntary oral production would be tallied, in order to understand if their presence would produce the desired result.

The lessons I taught during this practicum were based on a mix between two approaches: communicative language teaching and task-based learning. Every lesson made use of some authentic material in video, audio or text form, followed by classroom discussion, in which voluntary oral participation would be observed.

In the following paragraphs I will illustrate how my practice as a foreign language teacher was conducted, in the light of the Teaching Controversial Issues training pack by the Council of Europe, as well as the Portuguese curriculum for the 11th grade. For privacy reasons the names of the participants were replaced with colors, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation of the Portuguese Government.

As the main goal of the research part of this practicum was the impact of controversial issues on voluntary oral production, the cooperating teacher suggested that I should teach Module 4 “O mundo à nossa volta” from the 11th grade curriculum. This particular module would

provide a thematically appropriate jumping board to tackle controversial issues in a manner that felt congruent with the curriculum. Thus, the activities were thematically based on aspects such as immigration, gender inequality and social rights, but with a greater emphasis on tackling controversial aspects of each of the topics, with special care to directly contextualize these issues within Portugal and the community inhabited by the students. In practical terms, these activities expected students to reflect on the issues presented, in pairs or individually, culminating in a class-wide discussion where their voluntary oral production would be tallied. To facilitate the tally process, focus groups were selected as a main research tool of the action research section of the practicum, along with non-structured contextual observation of the classroom on a lesson-by-lesson basis. At the midway point of the second semester I started teaching Unit 4 of the 11th grade curriculum “Um mundo de muitas culturas” which provided a segway into the action research part of this practicum. To facilitate observation, students were grouped based on their oral production marks, obtained through classroom observation and the evaluation by cooperating teacher, in four groups of three each. This was done when? This would allow me to ascertain the possible impact of controversial issues on voluntary oral production on a diverse array of students with different levels of oral competence. Data was collected in a two-step fashion with an initial tally, where students’ voluntary oral production was counted in a non-controversial issue centered class, which was then followed by the same procedure but with controversial issues in play; this allowed me to compare students’ oral engagement when presented with a controversial versus non-controversial topic.

2.1- Action research approach

Action research is considered by Burns (2009) as a particularly powerful tool for professional development, especially for teachers, given how positive it can be towards change in the individual using it. Burns (2009, p.289) describes action research as the “combination and

interaction of two modes of activity - *action* and *research*” with the intent of prompting improvement or change. In the context of this report the action part of this approach was focused on classroom activities with the theme of controversial issues, while research was the constant observation and analysis of any changes brought on by the activities (Burns 2009). Thus, after each class I would reflect on the outcome of classroom activities and change my approach accordingly, with the intent of obtaining favorable results regarding voluntary oral production. Each lesson plan was focused around theoretically informed action to produce positive results on students. These results were registered through a simple tally system, in which the impact of controversial issues could be observed.

2.2- Engagement

Engagement in the context of this action research report refers to students participating orally voluntarily, specifically when I asked a question to the class or a topic was mentioned and the student decided to participate without being directly asked to do so. Thus whenever students would participate in the previously mentioned manner I would count it as a voluntary oral production and tally it, as well as observe it critically, regardless of the quality of the input.

2.3-Lesson Structure

Lessons used during this practicum were built around a mixed approach of CLT and TBL. I made use of authentic materials with clear learning objectives, directing the students whenever necessary (Prabhu, 1987).

The structure of each of the six lessons presented in the next chapter of this report are as follows: a *lead in* activity in which I would ask some questions to the class in order to introduce the topic, or have them recall the last lesson’s themes while connecting them to the

current one's. This was one of the moments where I tended to tally students' voluntary oral participation more often. Then they would be followed by some task either in small groups or individually in which they would interact with the material provided and make use of their reasoning and comprehension skills to accomplish. This task would be usually followed by discussion in which the students would be welcomed to participate without individual prompting by the teacher. These moments were once again very conducive to obtain voluntary participation from the students. This would be followed by a second task, generally involving a different practical input from the students, once this was done another discussion tended to follow to conclude the lesson, and ascertain the viability of the objectives initially envisioned. Of course this framework would sometimes be altered based on how the lesson went, and how long some activities or discussions took. In the next chapter of this report, seven lessons will be presented, one without the theme of controversial issues and five with it, in all of them students were tallied for their voluntary oral production.

2.4- Tallies

In order to better observe the voluntary oral production of students, a system of tallies was created. Students would be divided into four groups based on their oral production skills (below average, average, above average, and excellent) so that the impact of controversial issues could be observed on students of different skill levels. Students' names were replaced by colours. Every time a student would produce orally, it would be noted down on a table and then added e.g.:

Average Oral Production			
Student	Pink	Beige	Black
Number of voluntary oral participations	3	3	2

Thus it would be possible to observe the amount of voluntary oral production each student engaged with. In order to understand the impact of controversial issues as a whole on voluntary oral production, it was necessary to tally their participation on a lesson with non controversial topics, so that results could be compared with follow up lessons that would include said topics. Thus the tallies made during the teaching part of this practicum consisted of one non affected tally and five controversial issues affected tallies.

Chapter 3-Practicum

The first half of this practicum took place in the first semester from September 2021 through mid-February 2022 and was entirely focused on observation in the classroom context while the cooperating teacher taught. This had the aim to not only provide practical examples of the competences I acquired in the previous year of the teaching masters, but also a dynamic medium through which to observe the classroom context and its idiosyncrasies. These observations were preceded by a preliminary meeting where both trainees were introduced to their classroom dynamic and the processes of the practicum, which included weekly meetings to discuss observations made and reflect upon them with the cooperating teacher. The second half of this practicum was focused on teaching, and it lasted from mid-February to late May. In this second half I taught twice a week in ninety-minute classes, which were supplemented by the observation of another trainee's classes and weekly meetings to discuss and improve performance as well as the classroom context. During this teaching period I gathered data through an action research approach in order to explore students' voluntary oral production, through the use of controversial issues as lesson topics.

3.1 Implementation of Action Research methodology

The research section of this practicum was guided by an Action Research approach as presented by Burns (2009), given its ability to provide immediate and adaptable results that can be reflected upon and put to use in a classroom context, as well as help the teacher develop as a researcher. Burns (2009, p. 289) describes action research as the “combination and interaction of two modes of activity –*action* and *research*” with the end goal of bringing improvement or positive change. These were compared with theoretical materials previously mentioned on this report as well as the perspectives of a fellow trainee and the cooperating

teacher, with the intent of improving lesson materials in order to catalyze voluntary oral production.

3.2 Presenting the classroom context

As previously stated, the class that was taught this practicum was the 11th A of the “Ciências e Tecnologias” branch, at “Escola Secundária Romeu Correia” in the Almada region. The class was composed of nineteen students (eleven girls and eight boys), their ages between sixteen and seventeen, with roughly the same ethnic background, being caucasian of southwestern European descent and Portuguese. According to the information received from the cooperating teacher, they were all from middle class backgrounds of average income from the school’s surrounding area. Regarding special education needs, 11th A appeared to have none. Their marks were above average overall, and so were their English skills, averaging around B1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference. Overall, 11th A was generally quiet during observation and respected classroom rules, yet they seemed reluctant to engage in any voluntary oral production.

In a preliminary meeting the cooperating teacher introduced both trainees to their respective class dynamic. 11 A’s lack of participation was a significant concern for the cooperating teacher, which was echoed by colleagues of other subjects, especially given the students’ general good behavior and above average marks. This initial hypothesis was later confirmed during the first semester, where the students appeared to lack initiative to participate, yet when asked specific questions a significant number of them would reply correctly or speak with adequate English expected of students in the 11th. The only students to break this pattern was Blue and an outlier, the former having very good oral production skills yet participating only when no one else did or to add something to someone else’s input, the latter was a student that actively participated whenever he had the chance, such

radical differences seemed to be related with the fact that he was not originally from 11th A's social group, having switched classes. This could hint at the possible effects of a social variable which will be discussed further along this report. Besides those two instances the whole of 11A seemed to align with the description provided by the cooperating teacher. As to the origins of this behavior, it was not possible for either me or my fellow trainee, or cooperating teacher to accurately pinpoint to a specific cause.

3.3 Lessons

The lessons I taught were conceived with the supervision of the cooperating teacher to ensure that they were of appropriate quality both theoretically and methodologically. Lessons followed a similar structure to that of the cooperating teacher, with an emphasis on open discussion, use of multimedia materials and constant evaluation of oral production and comprehension as well as written comprehension. This was achieved through the use of a grid with different parameters that would inform who had or had not been evaluated and how well they performed and in turn this would guide directed tasks so that all students would display their English abilities. Throughout the teaching period my classes consisted of analysis of contextually relevant pieces of authentic media, which varied widely, from excerpts of movies and texts, to online articles and firsthand testimonies, along with reflection and comprehension exercises and open oral discussions.

I started teaching around mid-February with the beginning of the second semester. The initial slice of the teaching period was dedicated to the end of the previous unit, which thematically did not align with controversial issues. Yet, I attempted to subtly introduce some topics associated with controversial issues e.g. fast fashion and other aspects of consumerism. This had mild effects, but upon observation and reflection, it seemed that referencing brands

and habits that they engaged with daily made the students slightly more willing to engage voluntarily. This would align with a view put forth by Banegas (2010) that genuine and contextually relevant materials can have a positive impact on student performance.

The lack of controversial issue centered classes during this phase of the practicum allowed me to establish a basis for what a regular class is for 11th A. Initially this was done through observation of student behavior and discussions with the cooperating teacher and fellow trainee, but eventually it had to measure through the lens of research methodology. Thus, groups were created, and the student's voluntary oral participation was tallied, at first without controversial issues and later with them. This provided both a non affected sample and an affected sample which allowed me to actively measure the effect controversial issues had on voluntary oral production and draw conclusions from the results in question. Thus it is important to present the lessons where the students were tallied, to better understand not only the effect of controversial issues as a whole but of each of the lessons and their themes and materials on the students voluntary oral production. It is important to note that voluntary oral productions were tallied in every lesson presented.

3.3.3 Descriptions of the lessons

Lesson 0- This lesson was the lesson I chose to tally the students' voluntary oral production on a topic not related to controversial issues, its main objective was to understand the concept of outsourcing and its negative impacts. In this lesson I introduced students to the previously mentioned concept through a lead in word cloud activity around the concept of outsourcing. I took this moment to tally voluntary oral production. Once the volunteering stopped I

proceeded to pick out specific students to provide a word for the activity with the intent of encouraging them to produce in English, aiding their replies and complementing them when warranted. Once this activity was over the main task of the lesson began. The class was divided into groups of five and each group would pick a major clothing or technology brand, they were then told to characterize the company through a series of questions proposed by the teacher. Once they were done each group would answer these questions orally and we discussed their findings. Any voluntary oral production observed was tallied accordingly. The groups were then told to look for advantages and disadvantages of outsourcing, their findings were discussed with the intent of achieving the main goal of the lesson. This lesson exemplifies the style of activity and methodology that 11th A was used to dealing with the cooperating teacher, which I tried to emulate. Activities with an emphasis on reflection and research, tied by open discussion.

Lesson 1- This was the first lesson with controversial issues I tallied, and it did not follow after lesson 0. The break in between the two was due to time constraints regarding extensive reading and presentations done by 11th A, which although aligned with the topic of controversial issues did not lend itself to regular classroom activities. The main objective of this lesson was to develop critical analytic skills in regards discrimination. Lesson 1 started with a warm up activity focused on the issue of discrimination. Questions were asked to the class regarding what discrimination was, why it happened and different types of discrimination. Voluntary oral productions were tallied accordingly during this activity. They were then told to pair up and do worksheet 1, present in the Appendix. In which they were presented with testimonies of discrimination of various types that they had to identify. Their answers were then corrected and discussed. The class was then finished with a group discussion about possible responses and solutions to discrimination, and by bringing it to the Portuguese context, which could induce the students to be more involved (Council of Europe,

2016). They were then told to research the Portuguese environment regarding discrimination in all its forms.

Lesson 2- The main objective of this lesson was for the students to develop awareness in regards to contextually unique discrimination experiences. This lesson started with the class showing their findings regarding discrimination in Portugal. I then instructed them to pair up with the same person as the previous lesson, they were then instructed to pick one of the cases presented on worksheet 1. Students were then told to write a paragraph in which they'd try to help the person in question. These were read to the class, and discussed. This discussion would eventually lead to a reflection on the origins of discriminatory behaviour. This lesson in particular was meant to have extra activities but due to time constraints these were dropped.

Lesson 3- The main objective behind this lesson was for students to be critically aware of the influence socio-political context can have on the development of prejudice and discriminatory actions. The lesson started with two students showing their presentations regarding topics aligned with the theme of discrimination. This was due to a policy that the cooperating teacher had, that if students wanted to make a small presentation on an issue that was relevant to the content of the lessons they could. Their presentations done, the class began with a discussion regarding these words: xenophobia, ethnocentrism, extremism and imperialism. Students were then told to pair up and research each of these topics and exemplify them, these were then shared with the class and discussed. The class ended with a series of questions directed at the class with the intent of relating these ideologies and concepts to people, and how one may display them.

Lesson 4- The objective of this lesson was for students to understand critically how individual values and beliefs can lead to discrimination. I did a short lead in discussion around the topic

of ideologies and how they affected individuals, with the intent of connecting the previous class with the topic of this one. The first task the students did consisted of watching Video 1 up to the 10:43 mark, and then answer the questions on worksheet 2. The video in question introduced an individual who due to his own fragility and isolation joined a hate group, and his journey to leave it. We then discussed their answers. Next we moved on to the topic of religious discrimination, specifically regarding Islam and Sikhism. We discussed how due to immigration a lot of students are having their first in person contact with the religion Islam, and because of that I wanted to discuss with them what they knew about it, and from where that knowledge came from. Then without introduction I showed them Image 1, the image is of a sikh individual. I asked them a series of questions with the intent of guiding them towards the idea that first impressions can lead to negative outcomes such as discrimination. We then moved on to the second task of the lesson where students were presented with Handout 1, a news excerpt regarding the religious discrimination of a sikh individual due the presence of facial hair. I asked them a series of questions meant elicit a reflection on the cultural origin of religious discrimination, namely the perception that facial hair is a sign of lack of hygiene or lack of personal grooming standard. The last task of this lesson involved a small discussion about the clashing of the concept of religious tolerance versus negative behaviour associated with religion. To exemplify this I presented the class with video 2, a newsreel where a gay couple had been denied service by a baker for the making of a wedding cake, where the latter stated religious reasons for his refusal. We then discussed the video and how discriminatory the baker's actions were.

Lesson 5-The objective for this lesson was to have them reflect critically on the outcomes of discriminatory action, in various different contexts. The lesson started with a discussion around a statement: “LGBTQ+ people are more likely to suffer from mental health issues.”, with the intent of leading them to the idea that discriminatory behaviour is likely to be one of

the causes of such issues. We then moved onto the first task of the lesson in which students watched video 3, where a first hand account of a hate crime motivated by homophobia was described. The video was paused at specific times to ask various questions pertaining to the victims' feelings, the reason for the attack and the long term effects this may have had on the lives of the victims. We then moved to the second task of this lesson. In order to methodologically connect the previous task with this one they were once again presented with a statement: "More than four in ten women report having personally suffered discrimination". This was followed by a series of questions leading them towards the many manifestations of gender discrimination towards women. They were then shown images 2 through 6, in order and asked what type of problem was being presented in each, and it's possible origins, once all images were shown I asked them about what they thought they could do as future adults to combat these issues. This was also my last lesson with the class, so a small discussion was held regarding 11th A experience with me as their teacher.

3.4 Results

The data gathered during the action research section of the practicum is present within Appendix 1. It is possible to observe both the number of participation tallied on noncontroversial issues themed lessons (non-affected) and controversial issues themed lessons. The first result that ought to be mentioned is how the non-affected tallies lend credence to the overall tendency towards reluctance to participate. Specifically, among students that are not part of the “Very Good Oral Production” group, with some groups having multiple students that did not participate voluntarily, even among those belonging to the “Good Oral Production” group, which makes the reluctance hypothesis more probable.

As controversial issues were introduced a slight shift was observed. The number of voluntary oral productions increased. Specifically, among the two middle groups, “Good Oral Production” and “Average Oral Production”, where a significant shift was observed, going from having one to multiple students with zero participation to having all members of the group with more than one. Some students saw a significant increase in spontaneous oral production, namely Pink. They went from only occasionally participating voluntarily, usually once or twice per lesson, to rivaling students from groups with better grades. Beige also displayed more voluntary participation with the introduction of controversial issues, sometimes even passing Pink. This increase was not felt as much with students from the “Good Oral Production” group, yet it could still be observed. Specifically, Brown’s participation fluctuated significantly, starting with a similar number of participations to the unaffected tally, but increasing with time. Their other group mates did not display such a significant change, yet it was still observed. On the other hand, the effect of controversial issues in students belonging to the groups “Very Good Oral Production” and “Below Average Oral Production” was not evident. The former vaguely maintained their number of voluntary participants both in the non-affected and variable affected tallies, while the latter registered

only a single participation in the very last lesson. This may suggest that controversial issues as a topic may not increase voluntary oral production of students who have very developed oral production skills, and those who lack them. Thus, it could be said that controversial issues may have a positive effect on voluntary oral production of students, but this impact may be limited to students who already have some oral production skills but may lack the engagement into the topic that could enable them to produce more effectively. Students that lack oral production skills or have developed production skills seemed to be unaffected. In regards to their marks, there seemed to be an increased in the quality of the oral production of the Average and Above Average groups, however I wasn't present when they received their second semester marks so I could ascertain and compare

3.5 Action and observation

During the tallying process I continued the semi structured observation exercises, as direct feedback of the classes taught. These observations were cross examined by the cooperating teacher and a fellow trainee and acted upon with the former's instruction, ie. she suggested that I slow my speech when posing questions, modulate my voice and improve my lesson plans according to the needs of the class . This aligned itself with the principles of action research presented by Burns (2009), which in turn guided the constant action and reflection processes necessary for the increase of students' voluntary oral production as well as their other skills in the English language.

In order to better understand the results discussed previously, it is necessary to present some of the key observations that not only informed the actions I took while teaching, but the conclusions drawn from the observations in question.

Initial observations revealed that the preliminary assessment made by the cooperating teacher regarding the student's reluctance to participate, seemed to be correct. Regardless of

the possible confirmation bias derived from this preliminary observation, it was evident that the students would very rarely participate voluntarily, regardless of topic or skills. Those that did were either the student that moved into 11th A mentioned before or Blue, both of these students having above average and very good oral production skills respectively. The reason for this reluctance was a constant topic of discussion during the weekly meetings with the cooperating teacher. During these meetings the reasons for this reluctance seemed to be narrowed down to two: social pressure and fear of failure and its consequences.

A classroom is a social unit, and as such it comes with its unique idiosyncrasies. In the case of 11 A, it seemed that some students had a passive pressurizing effect on other's wills to participate. This was observed whenever some students were absent, others would participate more. One student in particular, Blue, seemed to have this effect on the rest. Their absence would usually come with increased voluntary participation from other students, regardless of the topic. Whether they were intimidated by Blue's skills, his presence or expected him to participate instead of them, it was not clear, yet Blue did not actively try to influence their peer's behavior in any observable way. Another student that may have impacted the overall class's reluctance was the one that had moved from a different class. They would participate voluntarily in every class, more than all their peers, usually being the first to raise their hand to speak, which may have affected the will of others to engage voluntarily. Yet unlike Blue, whose voluntary participation was usually either correct or well produced, the new student in the class tended to not be as proficient in the language but would still actively engage. Their skills were close to the "Good Oral Production" group, but the number of participants was much higher. Another social factor worth mentioning was the suspected presence of small cliques within the classroom, composed of students that usually sat close to each other. This would not be a significant factor to warrant a detailed account, yet there seemed to be friction when electing the class representative between Blue and Green

and their respective groups, the origin of this dynamic eluded both the trainees and the cooperating teacher. 11th A seemed to be a sociable and not conflict-prone class, with most students seeming to get along and capable of working well together, even when paired with peers they were not close with. This aligns with Tukhvatulina (2022) observations that pair work may play a key role in the tackling of controversial issues in a classroom context, and facilitate speaking activities.

Fear of failure could be observed regularly, among every group. They all seemed reluctant in their participation regardless of their English proficiency with Blue being the only exception. They appeared to be afraid of not producing correctly or not providing a correct answer. According to observations made during the teaching period this fear may have stemmed from two sources, lack of trust in one's individual abilities, a fear of reprimands in response to failure. The first possible origin may be rooted in a general lack of self-confidence in their English abilities, which would prove unfounded, given that when asked directly to participate a significant amount of students would do so correctly and with oral production among the expected parameters for their level. Fear of reprimands seemed to be present even when asked directly. Students would be reluctant to give their answers, quickly asking colleagues or replying in a non-committal manner, which would be followed by relief whenever their answer was correct or praised in any manner. Their response to corrections seemed generally tense and attentive, which could be indicative of negative experiences when participating. This was confirmed later when the cooperating teacher informed the trainees that the student's parents had filed a complaint regarding another teacher's treatment of 11th A. According to the information discussed between the cooperating teacher and the trainees, the students were regularly berated and insulted whenever got answers wrong during any sort of participation, which seemed to have had a

permeating influence on this specific class. Measures were taken and the issues seemed to be solved, yet the behavioral pattern continued.

The previously mentioned variables seemed to play a significant role in 11th A's behavioral patterns. Thus, the cooperating teacher encouraged me to take measures towards attenuating negative feelings towards failure and boost student confidence in their own oral production skills. Compliments, requests for elaboration and softer responses to mistakes and wrong answers were all implemented as the trainee's classes went on, and this may have had an effect on the voluntary production of students.

Chapter-4 Discussion and Conclusion

The experience of this practicum was invaluable for me as a teacher in training. 11 A was a very unique challenge, as was the cooperating teacher's methodologies and work ethic. It forced me to not only put into practice the theoretical knowledge learned in the previous year, but also develop my own strategies to deal with the field and its many variables. This class's particular dynamic led to me wanting to focus on their reluctance and how to curb and minimize it, which led to the main research question of this practicum', "Can controversial issues serve as a catalyst for voluntary oral production?". Through the use of observation, tallies and action research methodologies, data was obtained that seemed to point towards an answer. It seemed like there was a noticeable increase of voluntary oral participation among students belonging to both the "Good Oral Production" and "Average Oral Production". This increase was noticed in the "Very Good Oral Production" group but to a lesser degree than the previously mentioned ones. The "Below Average Oral Production" group noted no changes besides one participation in the last day, which gives little relevance in terms of pattern observation. It can be said then that controversial issues may have a positive effect on students' voluntary oral production, especially on students with average and good oral production skills, with the eventual use of compliments and positive reinforcement. These were used sparingly in all classes and guided by the cooperating teacher, as an essential part of the development of my teaching abilities. They may have played a role in the voluntary oral production of students but to a minimal degree, for students tended to need them more when answering direct questions, where mistakes had more chances of manifesting.

4.1 Expectations

Regarding expectations in the research section of this practicum, I hazard to say that they were mostly met. There was an observable difference in the voluntary oral participation

of 11th A. Yet the extent of which is where I would have to admit that I expected it to impact students with very good oral productions more than it did. In comparison to the good and average group, the change in the very good oral production group was rather small. The reasons of which I can only theorize. To them the theme may not have as much of an impact as the other groups, and their increase may be due to the contextual relevance of the issues chosen, effectively rendering controversial issues as a regular topic with extra relevance for them. Regarding the group of students at the lower end of the oral production scale, the results were as expected, which can be attributed to their significant difficulties with the language and their lack of confidence in their skills. I may have influenced the results as my use of English in the classroom may not have been adequate. I spoke too quickly as if speaking with the same language ability, making it so that only those with better oral comprehension skills could understand what I said. This was eventually curbed with the aid of the cooperating teacher, and vocal projection training. Besides what was mentioned previously, the expectations regarding the research part of this practicum were mostly met.

4.2 Future research

The apparent increase in the voluntary oral production of students in 11th A seems to indicate the importance of controversial issues as a topic beyond its civic and humanistic value. They can catalyse oral production among students that would otherwise have little voluntary participation. It may be of value to use controversial issues with classes that have dynamics similar or radically different to 11th A, diversifying the sample and narrowing down the possible positive effects of controversial issues on students' voluntary oral production. Another possible methodological improvement would be an increase in the size of the focus groups, and the inclusion of teacher attitude towards the issue as a variable. This could help to provide a clearer picture regarding the student sample and the effect the teacher's stance on the matter may have on the voluntary oral production of students; Which is an area that Hess

and Posselt (2002) and Harwood and Hahn (1990) signal as being of particular importance given the teacher's role as guide and instructor. Controversial issues as lesson topics seem to be variable with scientific pertinence, warranting further and more complex research.

4.3 Challenges

During this practicum I must say I experienced two sets of difficulties that warrant a presence in this discussion and conclusion chapter of this report. Firstly, difficulties related to the actual practical itself. I must say that I struggled greatly with lesson planning, not the actual plan itself, but the production of it in a way that could be read and understood by the cooperating teacher. It took me quite a while to understand how to do it, and that may have delayed my action research work. It would have been productive to dedicate more time to the ability to effectively communicate my intent. Another aspect that I would have liked to have done differently was the inclusion of more data collection tools. The tallies seemed at the time the most straightforward way to observe voluntary oral production in students. Yet upon observing literature, methods like interviews with fellow teachers and students could have provided a worthwhile insight into their mindset while tackling controversial issues in the classroom. Another possible change I would have liked to make would be the use of preliminary activities, in order to prepare students for the topics presented during the classes. My inexperience with research tools in an action research context as well as a teacher proved to be a significant challenge during this practicum.

The second set of difficulties that I must mention came with the writing of this very report. I have a lot of difficulties consuming academic literature, regardless of the topic. The reasons for it may reside with my ADHD and/or dyslexia. Yet even when medication and focusing techniques were present, difficulties still persisted. Evidence of that is the lack of references in this very report. My previous experiences studying for my Psychology degree

also caused some confusion due to the different writing methodologies present in action research reports and other types scientific writing in that specific area. Another factor that I must mention is the long time it took to write this document, over two years to be precise. Its effects on the quality of the report are observable. I went long periods of time without working on the report, for a myriad of reasons, and that inevitably affected the quality of the writing and content of the text. The practicum was not as fresh on my mind and notes could only help so much. Yet, regardless of how difficult it has been, and how many mistakes I have made, the experience has provided me with a chance to reflect on my experiences of the practicum and the impact topics such as controversial issues can have as a pedagogical tool.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Tally Grid Template:

Lesson

Very Good Oral Production			
Student	Yellow	Red	Blue
Number of voluntary oral participations			

Good Oral Production			
Student	Green	Brown	Magenta
Number of voluntary oral participations			

Average Oral Production			
Student	Pink	Beige	Black
Number of voluntary oral participations			

Below Average Oral Production			
Student	Orange	Navy	White
Number of voluntary oral participations			

Non affected Tally

Lesson 0

Very Good Oral Production			
Student	Yellow	Red	Blue
Number of voluntary oral participations	2	1	3

Good Oral Production			
Student	Green	Brown	Magenta
Number of voluntary oral participations	1	0	1

Average Oral Production			
Student	Pink	Beige	Black
Number of voluntary oral participations	1	0	0

Below Average Oral Production			
Student	Orange	Navy	White
Number of voluntary oral participations	0	0	0

Tallies with controversial Issues

Lesson 1

Very Good Oral Production			
Student	Yellow	Red	Blue
Number of voluntary oral participations	3	2	4

Good Oral Production			
Student	Green	Brown	Magenta
Number of voluntary oral participations	2	2	2

Average Oral Production			
Student	Pink	Beige	Black
Number of voluntary oral participations	3	3	2

Below Average Oral Production			
Student	Orange	Navy	White
Number of voluntary oral participations	0	0	0

Lesson 2

Very Good Oral Production			
Student	Yellow	Red	Blue
Number of voluntary oral participations	3	2	0

Good Oral Production			
Student	Green	Brown	Magenta
Number of voluntary oral participations	2	1	3

Average Oral Production			
Student	Pink	Beige	Black
Number of voluntary oral participations	3	2	3

Below Average Oral Production			
Student	Orange	Navy	White
Number of voluntary oral participations	0	0	0

Lesson 3

Very Good Oral Production			
Student	Yellow	Red	Blue
Number of voluntary oral participations	2	3	3

Good Oral Production			
Student	Green	Brown	Magenta
Number of voluntary oral participations	2	1	3

Average Oral Production			
Student	Pink	Beige	Black
Number of voluntary oral participations	2	2	2

Below Average Oral Production			
Student	Orange	Navy	White
Number of voluntary oral participations	0	0	0

Lesson 4

Very Good Oral Production			
Student	Yellow	Red	Blue
Number of voluntary oral participations	2	1	4

Good Oral Production			
Student	Green	Brown	Magenta
Number of voluntary oral participations	3	4	2

Average Oral Production			
Student	Pink	Beige	Black
Number of voluntary oral participations	5	2	3

Below Average Oral Production			
Student	Orange	Navy	White
Number of voluntary oral participations	0	0	0

Lesson 5

Very Good Oral Production			
Student	Yellow	Red	Blue
Number of voluntary oral participations	3	0	4

Good Oral Production			
Student	Green	Brown	Magenta
Number of voluntary oral participations	4	0	3

Average Oral Production			
Student	Pink	Beige	Black
Number of voluntary oral participations	3	5	2

Below Average Oral Production			
Student	Orange	Navy	White
Number of voluntary oral participations	1	0	0

Lesson 0

Class: 11A1

Teacher trainee: João Pestana

Lesson Objective	Complementary Objectives	Social/Linguistic content	Learning Procedures	Time
To understand the concept of outsourcing	To be familiarized with the concept of outsourcing	Consumer Ethics: Outsourcing	Pick up the bits and pieces of information they got from the text last week and reintroduce the topic through questions “There was a topic last class that I said we would discuss today. Do you remember what it was?” “What does outsourcing mean?” “Can you associate any words with the concept?”	5-10 minutes

	To understand that outsourcing is all around them		I will divide them into 5 groups and ask them to each select a company they use that produces either clothing or technology. Then I will show them some questions that they'll have to answer with the help of their phones and the internet. Questions “Where is that brand from?” “Where are their products made?” “What is the minimum wage of the country/ies where their products are made?” “How many work hours are in a work week “Why do they choose to make their products there?” They will then present their answers as a group orally, and we'll discuss them.	20-25 minutes
	To learn of the positive and negative effects of outsourcing		I'll ask them to do some research and find the positive and negative aspects of outsourcing. I'll then ask each group for their findings. Then we'll discuss their findings.	10-15 minutes
	To reflect upon outsourcing		I'll ask them to write a 3-paragraph essay where they show their opinion on outsourcing as a group. This will be shared on a google docs and then discussed with the class.	30-35 minutes

	To understand why outsourcing is still practiced		I'll take into account their opinions and the evidence they found and ask the following questions: "If outsourcing has all these negative effects, and the benefits are hard to observe, why are companies still doing it?"	5 minutes
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Lesson 1

Class: 11A1

Teacher trainee: João Pestana

Lesson Objective	Complementary Objectives	Social/Linguistic content	Learning Procedures	Time
To develop critical analytic skills regarding the issue of discrimination		Discrimination	A student will write the number of the lesson, the date, and take attendance.	5-10 minutes
	To develop critical thinking skills on the topic of the pursuit for equal rights		We will read some of the texts they wrote in the previous lesson and discuss them.	10-15 minutes
	To be aware of discriminatory issues		“What is the main issue we’ve been discussing?” “What is treating someone negatively based on their perceived differences?” “Do you know the difference between prejudice and discrimination?” “Can you name any types of discrimination?”	5-10 minutes
	To recognize different types of discrimination		They will solve worksheet 1 in pairs and we’ll discuss their answers.	15-20 minutes

	To understand the origin of discrimination		We'll go over each of the situations presented in worksheet 1, and we'll identify the reason that originates the discriminatory actions presented.	15-20 minutes
	To be aware of ways to fight discrimination		I'll ask them questions such as: “What can people do when they are faced with discrimination?” “Do you know of any tools to fight it?” “What can bystanders do?” “Do you know of any discriminatory issues here in Portugal?”	5-10 minutes

Lesson 2

Class: 11A1

Teacher trainee: João Pestana

Lesson Objective	Complementary Objectives	Social/Linguistic content	Learning Procedures	Time
To develop critical awareness regarding contextually unique discrimination experiences		Discrimination	A student will write the number of the lesson, the date, and take attendance. I'll then ask them about the topic they were meant to research at home and relate it with the day's topic.	10-15 minutes

	To be aware of ways to deal with discrimination situations		I'll divide them into groups and assign them to 1-2 situations presented in the previous week's worksheet. Subsequently, I'll ask them to write a small paragraph as a group where they will have to try and help the person in question. They'll have to research the following: - How to react - How to prevent it - Whom to ask for help (Organizations) They'll then read their paragraphs to their colleagues and we'll discuss them	15-20 minutes
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Lesson 3

Class: 11A1

Teacher trainee: João Pestana

Lesson Objective	Complementary Objectives	Social/Linguistic content	Learning Procedures	Time
To be critically aware of the influence social political context can have in the development of prejudice and discriminatory actions		Discrimination and associated concepts	A student will write the number of the lesson, the date, and take attendance.	5-10 minutes
			Diogo's presentation	10-15 minutes
			Alice's presentation	15-20 minutes
	To be aware of how discrimination situations manifest themselves in real situations		The groups formed last class will present the situations they were asked to characterize last class and we'll comment on each of their presentations.	20-25 minutes

	To know the concepts of Xenophobia Ethnocentrism Extremism and Imperialism as well as their possible manifestations		I'll give them the following list of terms: Xenophobia Ethnocentrism Extremism Imperialism I'll tell them to pair up and to define each term and exemplify it. They'll then share their work and we'll discuss it.	5-10 minutes
	To be aware that these concepts can impact individuals		I'll ask them the following questions: "What sort of society do these concepts create?" "Why do individuals adhere to ideologies or concepts like this?" "Is it possible to change? If so, how?"	5-10 minutes

Lesson 4

Class: 11A1

Teacher trainee: João Pestana

Lesson Objective	Complementary Objectives	Social/Linguistic content	Learning Procedures	Time
To critically understand individual values and beliefs and how that can lead to discrimination		Religious discrimination and its origins	A student will write the number of the lesson, the date, and take attendance. I'll ask them about the question I left them with last class.	5-10 minutes
	To understand the connection between individual fragility and the adherence to hate groups		We'll watch Video 1 up to 10:43 and they'll answer the questions presented in Worksheet 1. We'll correct and discuss their answers.	20-25 minutes
	To understand religious discrimination and its possible origin		I'll ask them the following questions: "What is the first thing that comes to mind when we talk about Islam?" "Where do those ideas come from?"	5-10 minutes
	To be aware how a person's first impression of another individual may affect how they perceive them		I'll show them image 1 and ask them the following questions: "What can you tell me about this individual?"	5-10 minutes

			“What religion is he from?” “What do you know about it?”	
	To understand how religious discrimination can manifest itself		They’ll read handout 1 out loud and I’ll ask them to answer the following questions in pairs: “What happened to Mr. Sethi?” “Why is it religious discrimination?” “Why is having no facial hair seen as “part of five-star standards”?” “Where did this idea come from?”	15-20 minutes
	To be aware that total religious freedom can lead to discrimination		I’ll ask them the following questions: “What religious beliefs can be dangerous?” “How can we deal with said beliefs?” I’ll show them video 2. I’ll then ask them the following questions. “Why was the couple refused a cake?” “How can this be problematic?”	10-15 minutes

Lesson 5

Class: 11A1

Teacher trainee: João Pestana

Lesson Objective	Complementary Objectives	Social/Linguistic content	Learning Procedures	Time
To be critically aware of the manifestations of discrimination based on gender, sexuality and religion		Discrimination based on sexuality and gender	A student will write the number of the lesson, the date, and take attendance.	5-10 minutes
	To understand how religious discrimination can manifest itself		We'll sum up the handout they were told to read at home and I'll ask them to answer the following questions in pairs: "What happened to Mr. Sethi?" "Why is it religious discrimination?" "Why is having no facial hair seen as "part of five-star standards"?" "Where did this idea come from?"	10-15 minutes
	To understand how discrimination deeply affects every facet of someone who's LGBTQIA+		I'll ask them to comment on the following statement: "LGBTQAI+ are more likely to suffer from mental health issues."	10-15 minutes

	To be critically aware of what anti-LGBTQIA+ prejudice can lead to		We'll watch video 1, I'll pause it at specific times and ask them the following questions: “What leads people to act like this?” “How do you think the couple felt?” “What impact did it have on the couple?” “Why is it hard for the couple to forgive their aggressors?”	10-15 minutes
	To be aware of how the gender health gap can affect women nowadays		I'll show them the following statement: “More than four in ten women report having personally suffered discrimination.” I'll ask them the following question: “Why is half of the human population discriminated against?” “What examples of gender discrimination do you know?” I'll show them images 1 through 5 and ask them the following questions: “What gender discrimination issue is the headline/image referring to?” “What does it consist of?” “Why do you think it happens?” Along questions specific to each of the topics. Once all the images have been analysed, I'll ask them this:	20-25 minutes

			“What can you do to fight these issues as future adults?”	
			I’ll ask students about their experiences with me as a teacher.	10 minutes

Appendix C- Materials

Worksheet 1

AGRUPAMENTO DE ESCOLAS ROMEU CORREIA ESCOLA SECUNDÁRIA + 3º C. E. B. DE ROMEU CORREIA	Ano Letivo: 2021-2022	 REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA EDUCAÇÃO
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Identify the type of discrimination presented in the following examples, and justify your answers.

1- Michelle Oaks is thankful she beat cancer. But her medicine left her almost deaf and short for her age. Classmates at her New Hampshire high school bullied her for these things and even said she faked her illness.	
2-Abby Brammer was happy that a restaurant in her New York township was going to hire her to work after school. However, the manager changed his mind when he met her in person and saw that she was wearing a hijab.	
3- When Rochelle Hamilton began high school in Northern California, students and adults bullied her for being a lesbian. They said mean things to her. They also would not let her in the girls' locker room. Rochelle's mother met with school officials for months, but nothing changed.	
4- Vladimir Popovich has been living in the Uk for the past 5 years. Recently he applied for a job as a radio host, but was rejected during the interview. The interviewer stated that hiring a Russian citizen in the current climate would reflect badly on the station.	

5- Whenever George Taylor is stopped by the police, he fears for his life. He knows that as an African American, any encounter with law enforcement could spell disaster.	
6-Michele Diaz was in line for a CEO position at the firm she worked at. However, she ended up not getting it. When she asked why, management said that promoting a man would be better for that position.	
7- Robert May was nervous about meeting his girlfriend's parents. They were wealthy landowners from South Africa. His nerves were justified, when they mocked his occupation as a barman and the income he received from it. He was later told that someone that makes as much as he does could never provide a future for their daughter.	
8- Jessica Sherman lost her job of 20 years when the textile factory she worked at closed last year. She hasn't been able to find a new job, despite applying to many positions. The reason for the multiple rejections seems to always be the same: her age. "They say that being over fifty is too old".	
9- After months of failed interviews Jonathan Harris had finally gotten a job. He knew it wasn't easy for ex-convicts to find employment, but he had done it. Yet, a month later he was let go. His regional manager had found out that an ex-convict had been hired, and had his contract terminated. He said they couldn't have a criminal serving people meals.	

Worksheet 2

**AGRUPAMENTO DE ESCOLAS ROMEU
CORREIA
ESCOLA SECUNDÁRIA + 3º C. E. B. DE
ROMEU CORREIA**

**Ano Letivo:
2021-2022**



Read the following questions carefully and answer them as you watch the video.

1-Why is it important for ex-extremists to remove their tattoos?

2-What was Romey Muns looking for when he started “hanging with the wrong crowd”?

3-Why did he become a Skinhead?

4-What were the tattoos meant to transmit to non-white people?

5-How did prison affect Romey?

6-Why did he decide to leave the gang?

7- What are the safe havens presented in the video?

8- Why are these safe havens important?

9- What happened when Romey tried to leave the gang?

Videos-

Video 1-  Former Neo-Nazi on Covering up His Racist Tattoos: Erasing the Hate

Video 2-  Tennessee wedding cake shop refuses to serve gay couple, citing "spiritual co..."

Video 3- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiLa3yB4PLk>

Images-



Image 1

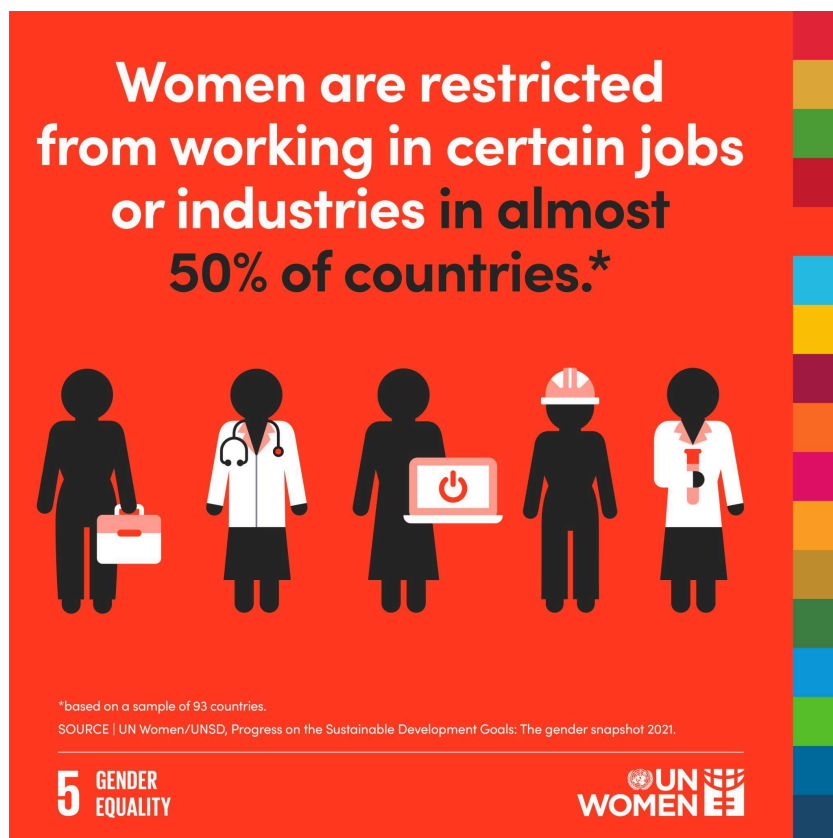


Image 2

Killed by abortion laws: five women whose stories we must never forget



Image 3

'Women have been woefully neglected': does medical science have a gender problem?

Women's symptoms are ignored and their health problems are under-researched. What's going wrong?



Image 4

Taliban enforces order for Afghan women TV anchors to cover faces

Most female presenters were seen with their faces covered while on air on Sunday.



TV anchor Khatereh Ahmadi wears a face covering as she presents the news on TOLO NEWS, in Kabul [Ebrahim Noroozi/AP Photo]

Image 5

Workplace gender discrimination remains rife, survey finds

Young women in England and Wales enduring harassment, job insecurity and low pay compared with male peers

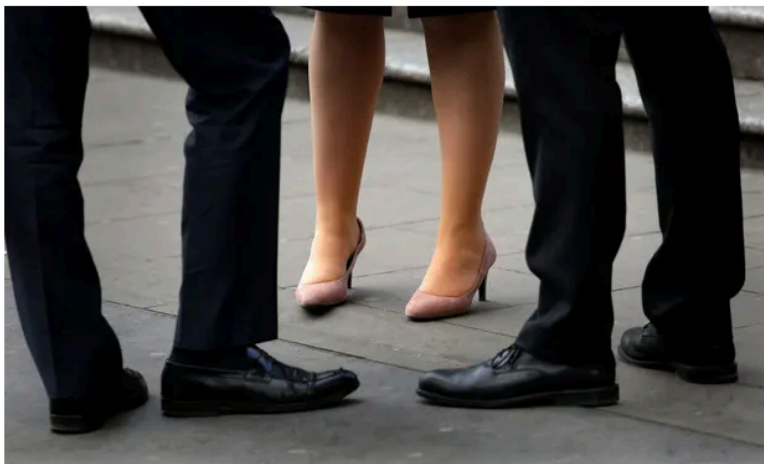


Image 6