

Promoting Critical Thinking through Multimodal Texts in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom

Deborah Karla da Silva Rosa

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Versão corrigida e melhorada após a sua defesa pública.

For my mother, Dalva.

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PROMOTING CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH MULTIMODAL TEXTS IN THE ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

DEBORAH KARLA DA SILVA ROSA

ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS: Critical Thinking; Multimodal Texts; EFL; Visual Literacy; Digital Literacy; 21st Century Skills.

Following an action research methodology, this study aims to explore the role of multimodal texts in the dissemination of critical thinking in the English as a Foreign Language classroom. Drawing on authors such as Haber (2020), Donaghy & Xerri (2017), Serafini (2013), Kess (2010), Sternberg (1986), and Dewey (1910), critical thinking and multimodal texts are defined as key concepts so to explore this study topic. The practical component of this study took place during the Supervised Teaching Practice in a Portuguese school, involving two groups: a 12th grade class and a mixed 7th-8th grade class composed of Special Educational Needs students. Throughout this action research, observation, reflection, planning, and practice were carried out. Data collection was based on instruments such as classroom observations, formative and summative assessments, questionnaires, student feedback, and others. The teaching activities were mainly based on the analysis and production of multimodal texts, as well as discussion and reflection exercises. The results indicate that the use of multimodal texts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language can and should be seen as a mechanism for developing students' critical thinking. Therefore, this study proposes the implementation of authentic multimodal texts to promote critical thinking, so students acquire key competencies to play active roles in our society as citizens.

PROMOÇÃO DO PENSAMENTO CRÍTICO ATRAVÉS DE TEXTOS MULTIMODAIS NA SALA DE AULA DE INGLÊS LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA

DEBORAH KARLA DA SILVA ROSA

RESUMO

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Textos Multimodais; Pensamento Crítico; Inglês Língua Estrangeira; Literacia Visual; Literacia Digital; Competências-chaves.

Através de uma metodologia de investigação-ação, o presente estudo pretende explorar o papel de textos multimodais na disseminação do pensamento crítico no ensino de Inglês como Língua Estrangeira. Com base em autores como Haber (2020), Donaghy & Xerri (2017), Serafini (2013), Kess (2010), Sternberg (1986) e Dewey (1910), são definidos conceitos chaves para a exploração deste tema, nomeadamente, pensamento crítico e textos multimodais. A componente experimental deste estudo foi desenvolvida durante a Prática de Ensino Supervisionada numa escola portuguesa, sob uma mancha compreendida por duas turmas: uma turma de 12.º ano e uma turma mista de 7.º e 8.º anos de alunos de Educação Especial. Durante o processo de investigação-ação, foram realizadas fases de observação, reflexão, planificação e prática. A recolha de dados baseou-se em instrumentos como observações de aulas, avaliações formativas e sumativas, questionários, feedback dos alunos, etc. As atividades didáticas foram essencialmente fundamentas em análise e produção de textos multimodais, assim como em exercícios de discussão e reflexão. Os resultados indicam que a utilização de textos multimodais no ensino de Inglês como Língua Estrangeira pode e deve ser vista como mecanismo para o desenvolvimento pensamento crítico dos alunos. Deste modo, este estudo propõe a implementação de textos multimodais autênticos que promovam o pensamento crítico com o intuito de transformar alunos em cidadãos provedores de competências essenciais para desempenhar papéis ativos na sociedade.

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Introduction

Education faces the complex challenge of preparing students to face the world outside the classroom's walls. Ensuring that all students develop the necessary values and skills to delve into the complexities of the 21st century (i.e., equipping learners with critical, creative, and civic competences) is not a simple task. It requires educational systems to adapt continually to new social and cultural demands.

In Portugal, the Portuguese Ministry of Education has been following up and implementing new documents of references since the approval of Decree-Law No. 55/2018, of 2018-07-06, which promotes a “new programme for basic and secondary education and establishes rules that will give schools more autonomy to make decisions that will help students achieve the skill set in the Student Profile for Compulsory Education” also known by its Portuguese acronym PASEO¹ (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, pp. 2928-2943). PASEO (2017) aims to ensure that Portuguese schools guarantee that every student completes the compulsory education guarded with “values and skills that empower them to make informed decisions on natural, social, and ethical matters, and to actively and responsibly engage in civic life” (p. 10). Complementing this framework, the *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (AE) (2018) is a fundamental piece of the educational system in Portugal. The AE highlights the development of transversal skills such as language proficiency, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving, which are central to preparing students for lifelong learning (DGE, 2018, pp. 1-2).

Parallel developments have also shaped the field of language education in Europe. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (2018) has also embraced a new perspective on language learning. Besides aiming at the four traditional skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing), the CEFR now focuses on four communicative language components: reception, production, interaction, and mediation. This adjustment recognizes that effective language use involves a collaborative construction of meaning through interaction and mediation (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 30; Baker & Ishikawa, 2021, p. 291).

The present study emerges within this educational landscape. This action research is a component of the Supervised Teaching Practice (STP) in the master's degree program Teaching English in the 3rd Cycle of Basic Education and Secondary Education at NOVA University of Lisbon. This research, written under the scientific supervision of Professor Dr. Rogério Puga, took

¹ *Perfil dos Alunos à Saída da Escolaridade Obrigatória* (PASEO).

place during my STP, throughout the school year 2023/2024, at *Escola Secundária D. João II*, in Setúbal, with the collaboration of the dedicated educator Maria José Pereira, my cooperating teacher.

This report is structured into 4 chapters, and it aims to delve into the role of multimodal texts in promoting critical thinking in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The first chapter establishes the theoretical framework, defining key concepts such as multimodal texts and critical thinking, and situating them within the context of the EFL classroom. It also highlights the importance of digital literacy and visual literacy, as well as differentiation as a strategy to meet diverse student learning profiles. The second chapter presents action research as the chosen methodology, outlining the tools and procedures for observation and data collection. The third chapter provides a detailed account of my STP, including the institutional context, classroom observations, and the design of tasks, lessons, assessments, etc., aimed at integrating multimodal texts to promote critical thinking. The fourth chapter analyzes the findings from the collected data and evaluates the effectiveness of the interventions.

This study is guided by three central research questions:

1. *Can multimodal texts promote critical thinking in the EFL classroom? If so, how?*
2. *How can online platforms, such as Padlet and Canva, promote critical thinking through the creation/interaction of multimodal texts in the EFL classroom?*
3. *Can multimodal texts be used as differentiation tools to promote critical thinking?*

Chapter 1: Theoretical Context

In today's rapidly evolving world, we are constantly surrounded by multimodal texts that shape our decisions and interactions. We live in a world made up of images, text, symbols, and codes. Every day, we make decisions based on this complex world of non-unilateral information. These combined forms of communication are everywhere—it could be a poster, a traffic sign, a political banner, our currency, etc. When a message is composed of different modes, the messenger aims for it to be transmitted quickly and easily. This combination of modes is intended to ensure that each mode fulfills its special and unique function (Kress, 2010). Nevertheless, we cannot assume that a text and an image are always simple to interpret. In schools, textbooks, PowerPoint presentations, students' notes, school ID cards, and even product packaging are composed of multimodal texts. It is not always clear how to interpret these combined symbols and modes. Sometimes, the message needs to be analyzed more deeply. Therefore, we place importance not only on digital and visual literacy but also on critical thinking.

1.1. Defining Multimodal Text

Our world is surrounded by modes employed “in representation and communication” such as “[i]mage, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack and 3D objects” (Kress, 2010, p. 79). And how we engage with the world is determined by our consistent use of specific modes. Kress (2010) defines mode as “a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for making meaning” (p. 79) and emphasizes that our interests influence our choices and our ways of perceiving the world. These modes are deeply embedded in cultural customs and shape our perception and interaction with reality, and it is “the individual's decision to make choices to use *these* modes rather than *those* in *this* environment for *these* reasons” (p. 76). Each mode serves a distinct purpose when combined. It ensures the message is effective.²

According to Stöckl (2004), “multimodal refers to communicative artefacts and processes which combine various sign systems (modes) and whose production and reception calls upon the communicators to semantically and formally interrelate all sign repertoires present” (p. 9). Stöckl gives special attention to media formats where “multiply semiotic potentials by integrating moving

² The author gives a traffic sign as an example—a combination of writing, image, and color: “[w]riting names and image shows, while colour frames and highlights; each to maximum effect and benefit” (p. 1). Without these distinct functions, the message can be “too complex” to decode, and merging in different modes can simplify it (Kress, 2010, p. 1).

images, language (spoken and written), sound and music” (pp. 9-10). Gaudin (2018) affirms that “[m]ultimodality can be broadly defined as any form of communication that employs more than one medium to convey meaning” (p. 23).

As The New London Group points out, “all meaning-making is multimodal. All written text is also visually designed” as “[t]exts are designed using the range of historically available choices among different modes of meaning” (p. 81).

1.1.2. Multimodal Texts in the EFL Classroom

In today’s visually oriented world, language classrooms are filled with images. As Donaghy & Xerri (2017) address, “it is difficult to imagine the language classroom without coursebook images, photographs, paintings, cartoons, picture books, comics, flashcards, wallcharts, YouTube videos, films, student-created artwork and media” (p. 1). It is crucial, however, to question whether these images are used merely as supplementary tools or as integral elements that enhance communicative competence in a foreign language.

In coursebooks, “images are still largely used as aids and for decoration” (p. 3). As a result, there is a “dominance of monomodal texts over the type of multimodal texts” (p. 3), even though the world we encounter outside the classroom is predominantly made of multimodal texts. Even though “images are still not being fully exploited as multimodal texts” (p. 4), Donaghy & Xerri believe that “there has been a clear trend towards using images to stimulate ideas and discussions” (p. 3). In recent years, more and more educators employ “videos for communicative and creative activities, encouraging students to interpret and analyze visual content” (p. 4). Videos are no longer used only for “comprehension tasks like multiple-choice and gap-fills” (p. 3) or “treated as enhanced listening exercises with visual aids to support non-verbal cues” (p. 3). That is exactly why we need to reinforce a “pedagogy of multiliteracies where students would learn to ‘read’ (analyse and interpret) and ‘write’ (create) multimodal texts” (Donaghy & Xerri, 2017, p. 5).

Serafini (2013) emphasizes the importance of teaching students to comprehend visual images and multimodal sets alongside traditional reading and writing skills. The author points out that children are exposed to a growing amount of visual imagery today and educators must assist them in understanding how these images influence their decisions, identities, and experiences (pp. 3-4). And, since multimodal texts are prevalent in educational settings, particularly in textbooks and internet resources created for learning purposes, it is crucial to understand how contemporary

multimodal texts are constructed (Danielsson & Selander, 2021). Serafini (2013) points out that many classrooms lack instruction in strategies for interpreting visual images and design elements, “[m]ost literacy programs and instructional frameworks concentrate on reading and writing language” (p. 4). Ultimately, traditional reading and writing skills alone will not be sufficient to meet the literacy demands of students nowadays, “our instructional approaches [as teachers and educators] should focus more and more on the strategies used to make sense of visual images and the multimodal ensembles in which they are encountered” (p. 4). Sansone (2015) affirms that “treating the visual language of typestyle, color, and picture choice simply as decoration is like focusing on the neatness of the handwriting in a student essay: It negates the value of visual language as a means of understanding content” (Sansone, 2015, pp. 3-4).

1.1.3. Assessing Multimodal Text in the EFL Classroom

It is essential that teachers focus on student-created multimodal texts and generate “assessment criteria that do justice to such texts” (Danielsson & Selander, 2021, p. 9). Bearne (2009) advocates that “[a]ny consideration of multimodality and assessment needs to be seen in the context of a changing world of communications” (p. 31). The author highlights that the assessment of multimodality should “include performance, three-dimensional constructions, music, moving image, collages of different kinds of texts accompanied by spoken explanations or sound recordings and to allow for visual and tactile elements; colour; pattern; texture, line and tone; shape, form, use of space, and perspective; expression and gestures, and probably more” (p. 31); in order to value students’ “production of multimodal texts, particularly the area of formative assessment” (p. 31).

1.2. Defining Critical Thinking

Dewey (1910) defines ‘thought’ as “[e]verything that comes to mind, that ‘goes through our heads’” (p. 1) and ‘thinking’ as “everything that, as we say, is ‘in our heads’ or that ‘goes through our minds’” (p. 2). As these terms are broadly defined, the author uses the term ‘reflective thought’ to describe an “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends” (p. 6). In juxtaposition, “uncritical thinking” is seen as “the minimum of reflection” (p. 13).

Sternberg (1986) defines critical thinking as “the mental processes strategies and representations people use to solve problems, make decisions, and learn new concepts” (p. 3). According to Fisher (2011), the concept of critical thinking is often seen as both evaluative and creative, hence the term ‘critico-creative thinking’. This designation arises from the need to view critical thinking positively, as it involves not only being critical but also being imaginative in the exploration of alternative viewpoints and possibilities. While ‘critico-creative’ thinking did not gain widespread acceptance, ‘critical thinking’ became the more commonly used term (p. 14). Fisher (2011) explains that “critical thinking is a kind of evaluative thinking—which involves both criticism and creative thinking—and which is particularly concerned with the quality of reasoning or argument which is presented in support of a belief or a course of action” (p. 14).

1.2.1. Critical Thinking in the EFL Classroom

Dewey’s (1910) thoughts on education highlight how it may change people and help them develop independent and logical thinking. The author views education as a process of developing habits that protect “against societal irrationalities” such as prejudice and assumption (p. 26). Since instinctive tendencies can be changed into deliberate routines, education has the power to neutralize enduring biases and foster the capacity to discern between “tested beliefs from mere assertions, guesses, and opinions” (p. 27). By promoting critical thinking skills inside classroom walls, educators allow students to base their opinions on “open-minded preference for conclusions that are properly grounded” and as they learn to “inquiry and reasoning appropriate to the various problems that present themselves” (pp. 27-28). The author brings attention to the artificial division between classroom instruction and real-world experiences, as “[p]upils are taught to live in two separate worlds, one the world of out-of-school experience, the other the world of books and lessons” (p. 199). Education should develop students’ ability to move beyond memorizing facts to applying them in a way that makes sense (p. 52). Dewey argues that both “theoretical thinking” and practical application are essential for a comprehensive intellectual capacity and cautions against the dichotomy that divides them, as students who have “at command both types of thinking is of a higher order than [those who possess] only one” (p. 142). It is believed that a holistic approach can transform learning relevant to students’ daily lives. Dewey emphasizes that both analysis and synthesis are necessary for contextual comprehension, “as analysis is emphasis” and “causes the emphasized fact or property to stand out as significant” (p.114) while “synthesis is

placing” since it “gives what is selected its context, or its connection with what is signified” (p. 114). Accordingly, the teacher’s role is to facilitate learning by modifying the material to encourage critical thinking and relate it to the students’ real-world experiences rather than to be an authoritative source of information (p. 204-205). To transform “a subject-matter to the nurture of thought” (p. 204), Dewey points out that educators should reflect on the following questions:

“What preparation have my pupils for at tackling this subject?

What familiar experiences of theirs are available?

What have they already learned that will come to their assistance?

[...]

What pictures shall I show?

To what objects shall I call their attention?

What incidents shall I relate?

What comparisons shall I lead them to draw, what similarities to recognize?

What is the general principle toward which the whole discussion should point as its conclusion? [...] (p. 205)

It is highlighted in the PASEO (2017) that critical thinking involves observing, identifying, analyzing, and making sense of information, experiences, and ideas (p. 24). It requires students to think in-depth, using logic and implicit or explicit criteria. According to *PASEO*, students are expected to conceptualize, apply, test, and assess their ideas. They are also encouraged to develop their ideas and projects in context, demonstrating a willingness to take risks to foster creativity and innovation (p. 24). In this sense, developing critical thinking skills is crucial for students to effectively address complex issues in their everyday lives as global citizens. These skills enable individuals to analyze problems and make informed decisions. It can give them the confidence to collaboratively take critical action, reflect on their thinking processes, and continuously evaluate and refine their analytical abilities³ (Lopes & Silva, 2019, p. 9).

³ Nevertheless, Lopes & Silva (2019) identify numerous obstacles regarding the development of critical thinking, including fear of criticism, lack of motivation, and closed-mindedness. Addressing these challenges is essential for promoting genuine critical thinking abilities.

1.2.2. Assessing Critical Thinking in the EFL Classroom

Haber (2020) illustrates that the ‘Four Cs’ (i.e., Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, and Collaboration) are viewed as overlapping domains, emphasizing their interconnection rather than a hierarchical setting. This approach acknowledges the significance of traditional critical-thinking methods while advocating for additional steps in effective reasoning beyond mere criticism (pp. 10-13).

In the same sense, Sternberg (1986) emphasizes that the study of critical thinking is divided into three fields: education, philosophy, and psychology (p. 4). According to Sternberg, educational theories combine potential human capabilities found in philosophical theories with behaviors described in psychological theories. Nevertheless, there is uncertainty surrounding its assessment and application since “educational theories often do not have the clarity in epistemological status that is characteristic of the philosophical and psychological theories” (p. 7) and “are often not subject [...] to the logical [...] [and] the psychological tests” to maintain consistency and validity (p. 8).

It is particularly interesting to see how Sternberg uses Bloom’s taxonomy to illustrate a system of levels for “cognitive information processing” (p. 11). Despite differences in structure and terminology, they all emphasize “learning, comprehension, deductive reasoning; and inductive reasoning skills” (p. 11). This suggests that there is a shared core of critical thinking skills essential to any comprehensive model.

1.3. Digital Literacy in the EFL Classroom

As a response to the traditional psychological view of literacy as the cognitive ability of reading and writing, the New Literacy Studies emerged in the 1980s. The New Literacy Studies advocated that “literacy should be studied in an integrated way in its full range of contexts and practices, not just cognitive, but social, cultural, historical, and institutional, as well” (Gee, 2015, pp. 35-36). And, by “studying literacy in a new way” (Gee, 2015, p. 44), the New Literacy Studies opened space for the emergence of “The New Literacy Studies” that began to focus on the study of “new types of literacy beyond print literacy, especially digital literacies and literacy practices embedded in popular culture” (Gee, 2015, p. 44).

Gilster (1997) defines digital literacy as “the ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers” and considers

“the internet [to be] the fastest growing medium in history” (p. 1). Given such predominance, there is an emphasis on the set of skills and knowledge necessary to effectively navigate and utilize the vast amount of information available on the internet (pp. 2-3).

Digital literacy requires the ability to critically evaluate and synthesize information from sources. Similarly to language, technologies also deliberate meaning through social and cultural contexts. In other words, using technologies and digital tools involves “ways of acting, interacting, valuing, believing, and knowing” (Gee, 2015, p. 44). In today’s society, students must be able to interpret, manage, share, and create meaning in the digital world. By incorporating technology into English Learning Teaching, educators can help students develop these skills and become more digitally literate (Pegrum, Hockly & Dudeney, 2013). Digital literacy fosters awareness and recognition of the world. Being digitally literate enables students to understand their surroundings and reflect on their lives and perspectives. Multimodal texts, collaborative web platforms, and digital literacy provide a space for both personal engagement and critical reflection. It inspires students to think about their place in society, and their role as responsible citizens (Stevens, 2003, pp. 184-188). It is essential that educators implement technology in their classrooms and be active agents in the dissemination of digital literacy.

1.4. Visual Literacy in the EFL Classroom

According to the National Conference on Visual Literacy, “Visual Literacy refers to a group of vision-competencies a human being can develop by seeing and, at the same time, integrating other sensory experiences [...] [which are] fundamental to normal human learning” (Fransecky & Debes, 1972, p. 9). A visually literate student can interpret, appreciate and communicate through “visible actions, objects, and symbols—natural or man-made—that they encounter in their environment” (p. 9). They can read and write visual language and statements, as well as “translate from the visual language to the verbal and vice versa” (p. 9). Therefore, students can foster “a critical sensibility toward visual communication” as they become acquainted with these visual communication tools (p. 9).

When engaging in visual literacy activities, students often feel a unique empowerment and expressive capability that words alone have not provided, a “suddenly sense a new power—a new language facility—that they haven’t felt with words alone” (p. 9). According to Fransecky and Debes (1972), the most valuable visual resources come from the students themselves; “[b]ecause

of their personal nature, student-made bulletin boards, displays, collages, filmstrips, or slide-tape presentations have far more learning impact than commercially produced materials can provide” (p. 13). It provides a deeper educational influence in their lives. As visual literacy is built on interrelated skills and students should be able to “read”, “plan”, and “create visuals for intentional communication” as well as “combine visuals and verbals for intentional communication” (p. 14).

1.5. Differentiation in the EFL Classroom

Many authors discuss the importance of selecting appropriate materials for EFL learners. Whether based on their age, interests, language proficiency, or cultural backgrounds (Lima, 2010, p. 110-112; Nunan, 2004; VarDell et al., 2010, pp. 734-735). Educators must consider aspects such as content accessibility, language accessibility, visual accessibility, and genre diversity (VarDell et al., 2010, p. 735).

Tomlinson (2001) believes that “a differentiated classroom provides different avenues to acquiring content, to processing or making sense of ideas, and to developing products so that each student can learn effectively” (p.1). It should adapt teaching methods and levels of preparation according to students’ interests and realities to ensure equity and excellence in Education (pp. 1-3).

Tomlinson highlights three essential pedagogical elements of the differentiated approach: “content” (what students learn), “process” (how students learn), and “product” (how students demonstrate what they have learned) (p. 45). When addressing these elements, it is crucial to take into account students learning profiles. Tomlinson defines learning profiles as “ways in which we learn best as individuals,” and identifies four factors that can influence learning styles: “student’s learning style, intelligence preference, gender, and culture” (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 60).

Cohen (1997) notes that “more and more classrooms around the world contain racially, ethnically, and linguistically heterogeneous groups of students [...] [and some] students may not be proficient in the language of instruction or may exhibit significant cultural differences from the majority group” (Cohen, 1997, pp. 4-5).

Similarly, gender can influence how individuals adapt within groups and environments, analyze and interpret the world, and develop critical thinking and creativity. Lee (1996) examines how male and female students engage actively in classes. One of her findings highlights the

predominance of boys in verbal participation in a specific class, noting that “to speak in this classroom is a stressful and less rewarding experience for girls” (Lee, 1996, pp. 29, 98).

Gardner’s (1993) multiple intelligences theory centers on “the ability to solve problems or fashion products that are of consequence in a particular cultural setting or community”. Gardner proposes a “pluralist view of [the] mind, recognizing many different and discrete facets of cognition, acknowledging that people have different cognitive strengths and contrasting cognitive styles”, based on seven types of intelligences: “musical, bodily-kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal” (Gardner, 1993, pp. 6, 15, 17-24). Likewise, Lambert and McCombs (1998) highlight the existence of various psychological factors that can influence learning, grouping them as follows: “cognitive and metacognitive; motivational and affective; developmental and social; and individual differences” (Lambert & McCombs, 1998, p. 16).

However, while it is clear that many characteristics and conditions are associated with each individual, it is not always possible to ensure that students learn in a way that best suits their particularities and predispositions. Factors such as environment, group, cognitive style, and multiple intelligences can be seen as obstacles (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 61). Nevertheless, helping students discover their own preferences allows them to reflect on their learning paths (Tomlinson, 2001, pp. 63-64).

Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter is divided into 3 sections: Action Research, Observation Tools, and Data Collection Tools. It aims to present the methodological approach adopted to address the research questions of this study.

2.1. Action Research

Drawing from observations of my cooperating teacher's classes during the initial phase of my STP (Millrood, 2003; Malu, 2015), I have adopted an approach centered on developing critical thinking skills through multimodal texts. The methodology for this report involves Action Research (AR). AR in English as a Foreign Language Teaching (EFLT) is a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to investigate and explore within teaching contexts (Burns, 2009b). Emerging in the late 1980s, AR promotes teachers as creative problem solvers (Burns, 2009b). The process follows a cyclical pattern of planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and further planning to improve future actions⁴. The methods are mainly qualitative and interpretive, and the outcomes can hold positive changes and improvements, promoting a deeper understanding of one's social situation. According to Amado & Cardoso (2014), AR strategies have shown efficacy in tackling educational challenges, especially regarding teacher training and the inclusion of marginalized groups (p. 197). Moreover, discussions about AR serve as a platform for broader reflections such as *“o lugar e a importância da investigação social para a melhoria das formas de vida de pessoas, grupos e comunidades, as relações entre ciência social, política e ética, as relações entre a teoria e a prática, as relações entre investigação universitária e a sociedade”* (p. 197).

2.2. Observation Tools

Concerning the observation phase of my action research, I used two different tools: the Observation Web, described as “a technique used to reflect on the activities which are used in a lesson” (Millrood, 2003, p. 38); and the Seating Chart as an “observation record” to collect data from interactions between teachers and students and their roles (Malu, 2015, p. 18). It was quite a unique experience to be back in a classroom as an observer. At first, I did not know how to behave.

⁴ While conducting an AR, “há produção do saber, através da reflexão sobre a ação, proporcionando, assim, um aumento do conhecimento do ou dos pesquisadores e das pessoas consideradas na situação e contexto investigado” (Amado & Cardoso, 2014, p. 188)

I was neither a teacher nor a student. I was something in between. And these tools assisted me in figuring out my place within the classroom. In the first week of school, my cooperating teacher introduced me to her students as a teacher trainee. During the observation phase, I would sit in two different places: in front of the teacher's desk, or in the last row right at the corner. Switching places gave me the ability to observe discrete perspectives and substantiate my data collection. My cooperating teacher proved to be an "eclectic" teacher, while also demonstrating an "innovative" facet (Millrood, 2003, p. 38). In her thought-provoking and informative classes, she always ensured that students would develop a large range of skills. She showed great concern about developing students' linguistic and cognitive skills. The dynamic would jump from teacher-centered to student-centered (p. 38-40). Every single class was somewhat different from the previous one. Her methods would change according to the content, activities, and interaction patterns. Students felt comfortable participating in her classes. Nevertheless, participation seemed to be a problem for some students. Using the Seating Chart as an observation tool helped me understand students' participation and how they interacted with each other. I noticed a cyclical conversation pattern between the teacher and the students. Some students would always participate in the discussion, while others would never talk if not required to. I kept all my observations in my notebook as a way to keep records of these patterns. These observations helped me reflect, plan, and act on the areas concerning my study.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

As I was getting to know the students, I had to become familiar with the school documents of reference and the students' backgrounds. Google Drive was an amazing data storage tool. Since I did not initially know which classes I would be teaching, I created an online dossier on Google Drive for all my cooperating teacher classes. This dossier, which was created on a Google Sheets document with different folders, included all students' names. It was organized by their classes and/or courses. I also added a folder with their head teachers and their contact information. This dossier proved to be essential, as most of my cooperating teacher classes were composed of students from different classes and/or courses. Although this information was available on GIAE (the school's online platform), the accessibility of these folders facilitated my data collection and the continuous communication between my cooperating teacher and me. With these, I was also able to create different folders for documents with my ideas and potential activities.

Additionally, after deciding which classes I would be working with, I created Google Classroom platforms to share materials and information with my students. It allowed me to get in touch with the students and receive their assignments.

Throughout the school year, I conducted questionnaires to collect behavioral and attitudinal data (Dörnyei, 2010, p. 5). I created questionnaires on topics in my areas of study (i.e., multimodal texts, reading habits, critical thinking) as well as on student self-evaluation and school trips. Observing classes alone was not enough to understand the real needs and opinions of the students. These questionnaires provided valuable insight for planning and organizing the school year. Since these surveys were anonymous, students felt comfortable sharing their opinions. In a less formal manner, I would ask the students brief questions at the end of the class to understand how they felt about some topics or the lesson itself. I would keep these notes in my notebook, or students would publish these on Padlet. The feedback was always very helpful, which greatly allowed me to identify aspects that needed to be worked on.

In addition to the surveys, students were encouraged to interact with two online platforms: Mentimeter and Padlet. I used the Mentimeter platform to determine students' feelings before certain lessons. This platform helped confirm or test my expectations regarding students' prior knowledge. On Mentimeter, students were able to create word clouds or brief yes/no questionnaires. Padlet was another essential tool for content dissemination. It was used both when my cooperating teacher was teaching and when I was leading the lessons. This platform provided an overview that allowed students to see each other's work and publish their own. Additionally, students were asked to share their opinions using Padlet. Given the anonymity, students felt comfortable participating in these formats.

Finally, all students' class work and activities were taken into consideration as a form of data collection. Worksheets, oral presentations, tests, tasks, projects, etc., were also key in gathering information about the students. It was possible to collect and analyze data given the contents of these different sources.

Chapter 3: Supervised Teaching Practice

As I stated before, the STP took place throughout the school year 2023/2024, from September to June, at *Escola Secundária D. João II*, in Setúbal, with the collaboration of the dedicated educator Maria José Pereira, my cooperating teacher. This chapter provides a contextualized institutional background of the school and the classes involved, as well as the lessons, tasks, assessments, and projects that students engaged with throughout the study.

3.1. Institucional background: *Escola Secundária D. João II*

In February 1983, *Escola Secundária D. João II* opened its doors. Before being renamed and dedicated to King D. João II, it had two provisional names: *Escola Secundária N.º 1* and *Escola Secundária da Camarinha*. *Escola Secundária D. João II* is located in the civil parish of São Sebastião, which houses around 52,597 residents out of the total 123,519 inhabitants of Setúbal and spans an area of 19.64 km² (Projeto Cultural de Escola, 2021-2025). In 2012, the school underwent renovation. Its modernized facilities now accommodate around 1,400 students, enrolled in grades 7 through 12. The staff consists of 132 teachers and 31 non-teaching staff (Projeto Educativo da Escola, 2021-2025).

The school seemed deeply committed to inclusivity, recognizing and responding to the diverse needs and potential of its students. All groups seemed to work together to benefit students. Resources such as *Equipa Multidisciplinar de Apoio à Educação Inclusiva* (EMAEI); *Gabinete de Orientação Disciplinar* (GOD); *Gabinete de Intervenção Disciplinar* (GID); *Tutoria*; *Serviço de Psicologia e Orientação* (SPO) were accessible to help students overcome their difficulties, share their thoughts and struggles, or even help improve students' classroom behavior.

Regarding its infrastructure, it seems to be a well-built school with many rooms and resources. Most classrooms had a computer and a projector. The school library (*Biblioteca Escolar*) offers a wide range of books and magazines. Nevertheless, it lacks computers given the number of students enrolled.

The school also promoted interdisciplinarity, encouraging teachers and students to work together to integrate knowledge across the subjects. Besides, the *Escola Secundária D. João II* has been a member of the European School Network (ESN) since 2008. This international initiative involves 26 schools from 12 countries, such as Germany, Finland, and Spain (Projeto Educativo da Escola, 2021-2025). For all I could observe, I believe that the school was accomplishing its core

mission to prepare students to become active citizens, fully aware of their rights and responsibilities.

3.2. Context: Participants

During my STP, I was actively involved with four out of five of my cooperating teacher classes: two 12th grade classes (12A & 12B); one 7th-8th mixed-grade class, and one 10th-11th-mixed-grade class. From the beginning until the end of the school year (i.e., from September to June), I observed most of my cooperating teacher's lessons, helped plan and organize some lessons, as well as taught some of them. Initially, I knew I wanted to work with both 3rd Cycle and Secondary Education students. I wanted to see how implementing this thesis would work with different learning levels. In this sense, I had the opportunity to work closely with a 12th grade class⁵ and a 7th-8th mixed-grade class.

3.2.1. Students: 7th-8th Mixed Grade

The 7th-8th grade combined class consisted of 7 students (6 girls and 1 boy) from Special Educational Needs. 2 students from the 7th grade, 4 students from the 8th grade, and 1 student from the 9th.⁶

Class 7th-8th – Before and during the teaching phase

At first glance, these students did not appear to have any indicators suggesting they should be in a Special Educational Needs class. I do not say this insensitively, as if there should be some obvious sign. Rather, these students seemed like typical children, always very curious and active. They seemed to be happy kids. They would get along with each other. They were punctual and very talkative.⁷ It was only after the first few lessons that it became noticeable the learning challenges faced by these students. Given this reality, my cooperating teacher wanted me to jump right in and start working with the students as soon as possible. I found it very helpful to get to know the students and their learning profiles. So, I only had the opportunity to observe a few of their classes.

⁵ Referred to as 12A.

⁶ One of these students only enrolled in our class in the middle of the 2nd school term and lacked assiduity (9th grade), and another student stopped showing up to classes after the 1st school term (8th grade). I did not consider them for this study due to the lack of data.

⁷ In contrast with other of my cooperating teacher's Special Educational Needs class, a 10th-11th grade combined class of 6 students, whose students deal with preeminent visual and physical, and cognitive problems.

From what I gathered in those initial classes, these students had good overall behavior. Nevertheless, even a small disagreement could easily change their mood, and sometimes this disrupted the flow of the lesson. In most cases, these issues were quickly resolved with a brief conversation with me or the cooperating teacher. Regarding the students' learning abilities, some were able to follow the lessons well and were quite organized. On the other hand, some students showed little autonomy and seemed to be quite disorganized. For instance, some students' notebooks were impeccable, with neatly written content. In contrast, others had completely disordered notebooks, with illegible handwriting and disorganized information, even with support from the teachers. Most of the time, these students seemed to understand the information and instructions, yet they struggled to complete certain tasks. They often showed frustration at not being able to complete or develop specific activities. This frustration seemed to stem from their understanding of what was expected, but not being able to accomplish it.⁸

Throughout the lessons, it became clear that there were several areas in which these students needed support. It was necessary not only to emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence but also to teach concepts that should be known by 3rd Cycle students. Overall, only a closer observation and contact with these students would confirm that these students would feel alienated in a regular classroom. They were exactly where they needed to be. That is, in a classroom that met their needs and provided a safe space to grow.

3.2.2. Students: 12th Grade

Initially, the 12th grade class consisted of 24 students (18 girls and 6 boys) and later 26 students (19 girls and 7 boys). After the classes had begun, 2 students left, and 4 new ones enrolled after the 1st school term. This class was composed of students from different school courses: 1 Visual Arts class (10 students), 3 Languages & Humanities classes (13 students), and 1 Science & Technology class (3 students).

Part I: Class 12A – Before the teaching phase

As usually happens, small groups were already formed based on previous friendships. Only after the 2nd term did they become more familiar with their peers, so new friendships were formed.

⁸ Given the seriousness of their situations, the 8th grade students did not take the 8th Grade Standardized English Assessments (*Provas de Aferição de Inglês do 8.º Ano*).

Nevertheless, it seemed to be a difficult task for them to form new working groups outside their comfort zone. English classes were placed twice a week, a total of 2 lessons of 90 minutes. Their class behavior and punctuality were slightly different according to the day of the lesson. On Tuesdays, the English classes started at 8:25 AM and ended at 9:55 AM; and from 11:50 to 13:20 on Fridays. Most of the students tended to arrive late on Tuesdays and showed little interest in participating in class. When asked about this issue, some of them said that they did not live close to the school, others that they did have a bad night of sleep, or simply because they did not know much about the topic in question. On the other hand, they were punctual on Fridays and seemed to be more open to participating in class. Even though we had this problem with punctuality and participation, the students were always very friendly and seemed to be interested in learning and completing the tasks. I believe that the fundamental problem with this class was that they were all from different courses, and most of the students were introverted and self-conscious about their speaking skills. And I think they felt safe not sharing their thoughts out loud during classes. One time, my cooperating teacher asked them why they did not participate in her classes. One student, who would normally share their thoughts, said that their teachers did not allow them to participate often, so they were not used to being asked to be active in class. And they were still finding their voices to speak their minds and to be comfortable doing that. Given my study being about critical thinking, I did not want to beg for their participation. It was very important to me that they share their thoughts willingly. I knew I had to find ways for them to feel comfortable doing so. I have never had such an amazing English teacher as my cooperating teacher. Words cannot describe how wonderful and full of life her classes were. Every time I left her class, I knew I had learned something new. I had something to reflect on. It could be social, cultural, or even historical. My cooperating teacher had this light on her, and I believe the students were mesmerized. And that was exactly why I was afraid. I was restless with the idea of being surrounded by these students. If my cooperating teacher, being the amazing person that she is, had this participation issue, I would have to face the same issue. I knew my classes were not going to be that great. So, I always had in mind to find ways for them to participate and have an active role in our classes. I wanted to see how they would coexist within my lessons and how they would handle the materials and content that I would bring to them. I really wanted to hear their thoughts, experiences, and ideas, and how they would transform my lessons into something that could be useful for their lives.

Part II: Class 12A – During the teaching phase

The creativity within this group was evident, especially from students with a background in Visual Arts. Many of them were consistently coming up with innovative projects, demonstrating their passion for project-based work. Despite their creative potential, these students tended to be more introverted, with only a few students actively participating in class discussions. This quieter nature meant that while they worked well in smaller groups, offering help to one another, they were hesitant to voice their ideas in front of the whole class. Although some students struggled with English early on⁹, their determination was noticeable. This group, though varied in their approach to learning, worked hard to support one another and showed significant progress over time. While their levels of engagement differed, they each contributed in their own way to the overall dynamic of the class.

In contrast, students from Science and Technology approached their English studies with a different set of challenges. Coming from a background rooted in the sciences, they initially felt out of place when engaging with more abstract and cultural topics. I believe that they felt their knowledge background was distinct from their colleagues. Nevertheless, these students demonstrated an extraordinary ability to reflect on complex societal issues and actively contributed to classroom tasks. Their willingness to undertake controversial topics and share their perspectives added a rich layer to our classes. They were great at bringing up controversial topics and great examples of how the world can be outside the classroom. They were not afraid to speak their minds and show different aspects of our society. They showed great organizational skills, a consistent work ethic, and a proactive attitude toward learning, which made them a vital part of the group.

However, teaching the 12th grade was not without its challenges. Some students, particularly from Languages and Humanities, exhibited a noticeable lack of motivation and assiduity. These students were less likely to participate in discussions unless the topics were of personal interest to them. I struggled to connect with some of them as they did not engage with me unless they wanted to. Even when I introduced fresh materials, they tended to put in minimal effort for class activities. Nevertheless, there were students who actively participated in discussions and stood out as exceptional speakers. They were eager to share their cultural and political perspectives, which sparked engaging conversations, and they consistently defended their beliefs.

⁹ Particularly two students who had recently arrived in Portugal. After talking to my cooperating teacher and the students in question, I volunteered to provide them with additional classes.

I sensed that many students from Languages and Humanities felt represented by these vocal students, which may have contributed to their reluctance to participate in the class themselves. Despite their disinterest in our classroom activities, they demonstrated strong academic skills, particularly in writing, achieving good results on assignments and assessments.

3.4. Interacting and Creating Multimodal Texts: 7th-8th Mixed Grade

As previously described, I started teaching this class right away, alongside my cooperating teacher. Since it was such a small group with significant difficulties, I stayed with these students from the beginning until the end of the school year. Although I was always present, my cooperating teacher ensured the content for most of the lessons. I planned and taught 8 lessons of 90 minutes. These lessons, although aimed at fitting the study of this report, cannot be compared to the 12th grade lessons. As these students were part of the Special Educational Needs and most of their work was done inside the classroom.

3.4.1.: Tasks and Lessons 7th-8th Mixed Grade

In this section, I will briefly explain some of the tasks carried out with the 7th-8th grade class (Appendix A).

Lesson A

In this lesson, we explored the picture book *Here We Are - Notes for Living on Planet Earth*, by Oliver Jeffers. This multimodal text proved valuable in supporting the *Aprendizagens Essenciais*. To implement critical thinking, it was essential to help students understand the vocabulary used in the picture book. I printed excerpts for each student and read aloud slowly and clearly. After the reading, we identified key examples from the book, and the students shared how they felt during the reading.

To spark students' curiosity and practice predictions, I introduced the picture book cover and invited the students to predict its content. Students shared their ideas, which I wrote on the whiteboard. When I read the subtitle aloud, "Notes for Living on Planet Earth", students were prompted to think about pieces of advice they would give about living on Earth. I encouraged them to reflect on their own experiences. They gave examples such as being kind to each other, taking care of animals, protecting planet Earth, recycling, etc.

During the reading, students listened attentively and could identify characters (such as things and animals) and infer relationships. After the reading, students shared their interpretations of the picture book. They completed a worksheet together with my help. They did an amazing job of articulating their answers and writing the questions' answers. I had never seen these students so happy in completing exercises. They would raise their hands to answer or ask questions. It was a great pedagogical experience to see how engaged they were in this lesson.

As my cooperating teacher and I were teaching different vocabulary throughout the year, I also used the picture book to recall previous knowledge, such as the numbers. Overall, I believe that this lesson fostered critical thinking, empathy, and the ability to articulate personal reflections.

Task A and B

In these tasks, students were given a problem to solve. They had to create/explore a narrative by rearranging the scattered picture book pages. This task was repeated twice in different lessons since students enjoyed it so much the first time.

The picture books used were *Flotsam*, by David Wiesner, and *I Walk with Vanessa*, by Kerascoët. Here, the students were able to rearrange the pages that I had previously cut out to construct a coherent narrative. As I mentioned before, the students were learning the numbers throughout the school year, and this was an opportunity for them to practice using numbers, as well as to raise their awareness and encourage critical thinking.

The students were divided into two groups, and each group had the same number of pictures. Students carefully analyzed the images and how they could fit a narrative. There was a lot of back and forth, agreements, and disagreements about how it could work. There were no leaders in these groups; all contributed to the task equally. They had to agree upon the narrative segment. Of course, not all narratives were as accurate as the originals, but the students were able to figure this out after we read and analyzed the picture books.

I believe these students overcame so many obstacles and worries regarding how they saw themselves as students. Their initial lack of confidence, which once led to so many misunderstandings between them, was transformed into confidence, which brought them together. As my cooperating teacher noticed, they were confident in showing their knowledge in class and sharing it with their classmates. The initial judgment or fear was transformed into active participation in class.

3.5. Interacting and Creating Multimodal Texts: 12th Grade

In this section, I will describe 12th grade tasks, lessons, assessments, and projects that contributed to answering my research questions.

3.5.1. Tasks: 12th Grade

In this section, I will describe 2 tasks from different lessons: Task A was a one-time task, while Task B was a repetitive task.

Task A: Magazine Cover

When I started teaching classes, I already knew that students' final assignment was to create a magazine. So, our first lesson was related to Edifying Monthly Discussions, the first published magazine. I asked the students if they knew what the title would mean, and after a brief brainstorming through the platform Mentimeter, they guessed that it was a magazine. Following that, we talked about TIME Magazine. I showed them a video about the meaning of the magazine's red border. Here, in this very first class, the students were asked to start to think outside and "inside the box", as D. W. Pine would have said. We completed a Worksheet, the last activity of which was to create a TIME Magazine cover. At the time, we were being bombarded with political news about the Portuguese elections. Based on this TIME Magazine video, students were encouraged to portray something that could be on the cover of TIME Magazine. Some students created covers based on artists, others based on political content. One that really stuck with me was about a far-right-wing Portuguese political party, *CHEGA*. It was very surprising to see how quickly students were able to connect what was happening in the country they were living in with the rest of the world. I was also surprised by how effective their message was, using multimodal resources—image, text, and color. In this task, they not only used the information given by the video but were also able to be critical of their country's political state. I believe that this lesson had a lot of impact on students' lives.

Task B: Morning Pages

In our second lesson, I brought Kurt Vonnegut back to life. The last couple of years have shown to be difficult for everybody. We have active wars all around the world. Who would have thought that Russia would still be attacking Ukraine in 2024? Or that Palestine would suffer such

devastation at the hands of Israel? Not to mention the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Sudan, Yemen, Haiti, etc.

When I reencountered the letter “Make Your Soul Grow”, I immediately thought that I had to show it to my students. Who better to inspire these students in a time of war if not Billy Pilgrim’s creator himself? It is deeply comforting to recognize that, even though life can be challenging, it also holds immense beauty. As teenagers, students often find themselves dealing with complex emotions and internal battles. So, I wanted to introduce students to an author who not only seemed to appreciate life to the fullest but who is also one of the most insightful writers I know. I aimed to make this a personal experience, encouraging students to express themselves through their first Morning Page under the guidance of Vonnegut’s words. Using Julia Cameron’s idea from her book *The Artist’s Way*, the Morning Pages practice felt particularly meaningful. These morning classes, beginning at 8:00 AM, became a space for students to embrace their stream of consciousness, writing whatever came to mind. In this class, I guided them to follow their thoughts freely on paper, knowing no one else would read them. After completing this task, they could choose to keep or discard their page, understanding that the words belonged to them alone. By the end, some opted to preserve their thoughts, while others realized the act of writing was enough—their reflections were already part of them. And that is how our lesson ended. Some might wonder what the benefit was, but I was sure the students were ready to explore, to write, and eventually, to work toward creating a magazine together. They knew this was only the beginning.

Since this was the first time students encountered this writing exercise, it was the first and only time they had no specific topic and over 10 minutes to complete it. As for the future lessons, all topics matched the lesson content, as shown in this table:

Morning Page Topic	Lesson Input
No topic	Vonnegut’s quotes & letter to high school students.
Happiness	<i>We</i> , by Yevgeny Zamyatin.
Things We Take for Granted	<i>They Called Us Enemy</i> , by George Takei.
Belonging	“‘I’ve walked between two worlds’: What belonging means for Asian Americans”, by Elaine Teng.
Portugal & Setúbal	“New York, I Love You but You’re Bringing Me Down”, by LCD Soundsystem; & <i>America</i> , by Allen Ginsberg.

Table 1: Task – Morning Page Topics

I believe that the Morning Pages allowed students to explore their interests and develop their writing and thinking skills while fostering a sense of community. Most of them kept what they wrote for themselves, but there was always a space in class where they could share their work, as many students did on some occasions. Even though they did not receive feedback on their writing unless they asked for feedback, they certainly felt empowered to integrate this writing exercise into their lifestyle.

3.5.2. Lessons: 12th Grade

In this section, I will describe 3 lessons: Lesson A, Lesson B, and Lesson C. Each lesson took 2 sessions of 90 minutes.

Lesson A: *They Called Us Enemy*

This lesson (Appendix B) was built around Japanese American imprisonment camps. As an introduction, I began the lesson by showing a multimodal assembly: a phrase and an image. The phrase “Why I love a country that once betrayed me” could be interpreted as a question. Since it lacks a question mark. I edited the image so that the individuals’ faces were not visible. I asked the students to guess which country this assembly might be referring to. The most suggested countries were Russia, North Korea, Germany, and the United States of America. When I asked the students to explain why they suggested these countries and who those individuals might be, all of them provided solid arguments. Some even agreed with each other’s arguments. We established that this experience sustains a universal quality, given its applicability to numerous countries.

Nevertheless, we were about to emerge into a specific case. In fact, the assembly was referring to Japanese Americans in the United States of America. We were about to discuss George Takei’s experience as an American citizen of Japanese descent when facing the unprecedented situation following the Pearl Harbor attack. Before reading the graphic novel, *They Called Us Enemy*¹⁰, the students were presented with a TED Talk by George Takei, in which he describes various events from his life and his experience in Japanese imprisonment camps in the United States of America. The students were able to discuss Takei’s insights, followed by two reflective

¹⁰ After a brief questionnaire on comic books and graphic novel reading habits, I realized that half of the class was not familiar with it. So, I briefly presented the article “How to Read a Comic Book” by Alex Abad-Santos. In this article, the author explains the functions of comic book page elements and how one should read them. The students who were familiar with comics or manga were very helpful in sharing insights about this medium.

questions: 1. *Should governments prioritize national security over individual rights during times of war?* 2. *Is this a case of discrimination and prejudice, or national security and safety?* Some students were indignant about not knowing this side of history and were curious about how and why it happened, given that this historical moment is rarely mentioned when discussing the well-known Pearl Harbor attack.

Moving on to the graphic novel, I planned a simple pre-reading exercise where I asked students what they anticipated from the reading and what type of setting they thought they would find in the graphic novel. To do so, they analyzed the cover elements. I believe that watching Takei's TED Talk greatly helped them understand the graphic novel. The students demonstrated that they had acquired this knowledge while in class and were ready to analyze some excerpts from the graphic novel that I carefully selected. I had chosen passages that would allow a deeper understanding of the graphic novel's significance without requiring students to read it outside the classroom. Through this guided reading, students felt comfortable interpreting this multimodal literature.¹¹ Given the density of information in this lesson, students were not asked to share their thoughts immediately, but rather to focus on absorbing the information. This lesson was intended to help students feel guided in the learning process, rather than overwhelmed. So, in the following class, we could hold a critical thinking and multimodal text analysis session with active student participation. Students need to be given time in class to develop critical thinking. This class was essential for equipping students with all the tools needed to analyze the work and the graphic novel's story within its historical and cultural context. At the end of the class, students were left with a reflective question: *What does it mean to be a citizen?*

In continuity, in the following lesson, students were asked to write about their Morning Page on 'things we take for granted'. Just like any other Morning Page written in class, students expressed elements of their personal lives on their pages. Undoubtedly, being the smartest kids they are, they took into consideration the topics discussed in our previous lesson. If anything, they remembered George Takei. To reconnect with our previous lesson, I found it helpful to highlight the Japanese names given to the generations of Japanese Americans. It was also helpful in better understanding the pages that would follow with these references. After this brief introduction, students were asked to form groups and analyze and reflect on the selected pages and proposed

¹¹ In this lesson, I also presented the media representation of this event using the trailer of the film *Midway*, which depicts the Pearl Harbor attack and its impact on the American Armed Forces.

questions. Given the significance of these pages to the story, the questions were largely centered on documenting the injustice presented and encouraging empathy towards these communities who suffered daily in the camps. The students were asked to put themselves in those people's shoes and question this historical past that the media had tried to erase, thus employing critical thinking. When asked whether they thought there were any visual records of these imprisonment camps, all students responded 'no'. It was a shocking surprise to me. I was afraid that they had learned nothing about critical thinking yet. It was our 4th lesson of 90 minutes; I could not expect that much. However, when I asked why they thought this was the case, some brilliant answers came to the surface. Some students said that the American government must have ensured that any record of this situation must be erased. Others speculated that even if some documents of the event ever existed, they would be secretly kept or that the United States of America would have been wise enough not to have any proof. The consensus was that they had to research it first. I was relieved and proud of their arguments. It was a yes or no question, they were bold to have answered 'no'. They did not pretend to know something they did not. Later on, I displayed clips of the Vox documentary, "Why the US photographed its own WWII concentration camps". This documentary shows visual records documented by one of the most famous American photographers, Dorothea Lange. Based on this discovery, the students could discuss what this new information meant to them and how public perception could be influenced by these visual records. The students were genuinely curious about these records, as they did not think that such evidence could still exist in 2024.

As I was planning this class, I actively gathered as much information as I could to handle potential questions. I also wanted to present this information in a digestible way that would encourage students' critical thinking and active participation. Not only that, but to spark some curiosity and awareness about the things we do not know but can simply find out. In this spirit, I located Maisie Conrat and Richard Conrat's photography book, *Executive Order 9066 - The Internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans*, which contains images and essential texts for a visual and analytical understanding of what happened during this period. To avoid overwhelming the students with too many photographs and information, students were asked to complete a jigsaw activity in groups. Each student had a unique set of photocopied photographs and quotes to share their interpretations with the group. Considering the information presented in these two classes, the students showed they were more than capable of synthesizing this information, analyzing it

critically, and comparing it with similar events in the past or ongoing situations. Their lack of participation in the previous lessons was concerning, so I was more than happy that the students willingly shared their thoughts as I approached each group. As for our last exercise, I asked them a simple question: *What have you learned from today's lesson? Did you learn something new?* These 5-minute reflections were anonymously shared on the Padlet platform.

This lesson aimed to develop various skills: critical analysis, digital and visual literacy, writing, critical thinking, grammar, oral interaction, and reading. It was essential to engage with each group and ask students directly to share their thoughts and conclusions on this topic. It was very rewarding to see that students felt comfortable sharing what they were thinking and how they were able to connect this event to certain circumstances we are living through today. Moreover, I believe students realized that although certain things are not taught in school, we should not assume these events did not happen simply because they are not highlighted in the media or communicated to us daily. It enhances the importance of seeking out information that is relevant to developing our character and role as global citizens. For instance, returning to our initial activity of writing about ‘things we take for granted’, the final Worksheet question focuses on the value of promoting human rights, especially in democratic countries such as Portugal. While I would be interested in reviewing the contents of their Morning Pages, I believe the private act of self-expression and reflection was of greater importance.

Lesson B: *I've walked between two worlds*

To close this lesson unit, I used the article “‘I’ve walked between two worlds’: What belonging means for Asian Americans”, written by Elaine Teng. In this article, the author discusses discrimination in American society and its connection to the sense of belonging. Since this class took place on a day when more than half of the students were away on a field trip, we only analyzed the first part of the article and had a debate about the themes related to this analysis. Knowing that I would be working with a smaller group of students, I arranged the classroom tables so that students could sit side by side and face to face. This setup allowed for a more personal sharing experience, and the students spoke freely about various lived experiences as well as shared stories. The students felt comfortable sharing their perspectives, particularly about the generational differences between themselves and their parents or grandparents, noting how worldviews tend to change across generations. There was also criticism of how the grandparents’ generation, having

lived through wartime periods, often holds racist views toward non-Portuguese citizens. They pointed out that if a family holds racist beliefs, there is a tendency for these beliefs to be passed down to the children, and they emphasized the need for a conscious effort to prevent this cycle. The students also discussed how younger students do not learn racism at school; rather, schools promote an environment of acceptance and growth. Recognizing that some peers are less open to multicultural ideas, often influenced by their families' political beliefs. In contrast, some students argued that Portugal should have stricter border control. They suggested that, like the United Kingdom's points-based immigration system, Portugal should only accept skilled immigrants. This claim led the students to question the reality of Portuguese people being immigrants in other countries. They also debated whether borders should exist and what they represent. The discussion also touched on colonialism and its consequences. Since Portugal was one of the colonization pioneers, the question of ethicality and former colonies arose. The students remarked that colonies were instrumental in Portugal's recognition during the Age of Discovery. They speculated that if Portugal and other colonizing countries had not invaded and extracted resources from these regions, these former colonies could be in a better socio-economic position today. However, acknowledging that the past cannot be changed, they accepted that many people seek a better life elsewhere. They raised the point that most immigrants likely do not want to leave their home countries, but feel it is necessary. During this class, the students played an active role in the debate. They connected and compared the information from the article with the realities of the world, employing and developing critical thinking skills. They challenged arguments while also supporting their own points of view.

In the following class, students briefly summarized what was discussed in the previous class so their classmates could catch up. This allowed us to carry out follow-up tasks, where students were divided into groups to analyze multimodal texts related to the article. At this stage, the interviewees' stories, along with the definitions of the word belonging, were carefully attributed to each group. Each group had a different text to read and analyze. Based on the questions from Worksheet 2, each group briefly mentioned to the entire class what the text was about and what issues were stated in it. As for the last exercise, students were asked to write their own definitions of the word belonging. They could either publish their definition on the classroom Padlet or publish their answer to the following question: *How should one balance the desire for belonging with the need for authenticity? (i.e., fitting in vs being accepted for who you are).* Some

students decided to publish as a group, and others published their own writing. Throughout the task, the students were able to interpret and relate these stories to their own experiences. I believe that these lessons helped students expand their knowledge of American and Asian cultures, as well as their own culture. They could compare their experiences with their classmates. Some students shared that they had never thought of belonging in this way. I believe that this helped them become more aware of their identity and current social issues (Appendix C).

Lesson C: *Not Quite I Was Planning & PostSecret*

With just a few words, a sentence can hold its own meaning. If we pay close attention to how we compose a core group of words, the message does not require an extensive context to be conveyed. What is left unsaid in these sentences can be filled in by the reader's intrinsic knowledge. Nevertheless, it is not always enough to simply write straightforward sentences. Sometimes it is necessary to craft a complex sentence, one that contains codes to be deciphered by the reader. During this lesson (Appendix D), students engaged in a mental exercise of conveying a message using only 6 words. The use of the 'word memoir' was a key point, helping students understand that it was not just about writing a simple sentence that could be easily understood. Rather, it was about the significance of sharing an experience or event that could be understood and appreciated by others. A 'word memoir', often drawn on a collective memory, prompted students to reflect and consider the information needed to be conveyed to an outside reader. Students were asked to write at least 3 six-word memoirs based on examples retrieved from the book *Not Quite What I Was Planning: Six-Word Memoirs by Writers Famous and Obscure*, from SMITH Magazine. Before doing so, I analyzed some sentences along with the students. We took a closer look at examples that resonated with us and shared some of our thoughts. In this book, it is possible to see multimodal texts, such as collages, illustrations, and photographs, which in some cases make the message easier to understand. Additionally, this task was also inspired by the postcard project "PostSecret". Many of these postcards contained images, making the combination of text and image. It is a rich example of multimodal text. To push this idea further, the project created by this class aimed to combine impactful messages with images. At this stage, the students were nearing the final stages of creating their magazine and knew they could use this idea for one of its pages. The inspiration for using collages also came from a suggestion by Professor Dr. Ana Leão, who mentioned that English lessons should also be fun when she observed one of my classes. That is

exactly what I aimed to do here. I noticed the students were much more comfortable with this independent work. Of course, they were so comfortable that they had to be reminded to keep the conversation in English. Nonetheless, the students were highly engaged in completing the task. This mental challenge of conveying a message with so few words made them realize the importance of syntax and word choice. Many students showed me their sentences to confirm whether the context and content were correct and made sense. In some cases, the sentences were perfectly understood. In other cases, adjustments were needed, such as changing verb tenses and prepositions, or rearranging the sentence structure. Overall, despite it being seemingly simple, this was the lesson where the students felt most uncertain, as they needed more time to think. Even so, it was the lesson where they showed the most joy and creativity. This class was the culmination of my study, proving that multimodal texts can indeed promote critical thinking. Here, the students were not asked to write long texts, but rather compact sentences. They had the freedom to use images, drawings, and other collage materials. In the end, the students produced brilliant works that spoke for themselves. It demonstrated critical thinking and thoughtful choices regarding the materials used. It showed that a six-word memoir is not just a simple sentence; it is a carefully crafted expression of identity. This was not a traditional English lesson; I was not focused on teaching specific vocabulary or grammar. Yet through their internal exploration, the students managed to use specific vocabulary and grammar that suited their needs at that specific moment in time.

3.5.3. Assessments: 12th Grade

Part I: Written Test

The written test (Appendix E) was divided into 3 groups: I: Listening and Comprehension; II: Use of Language; and III: Reading and Comprehension combined with Written Production. For the 1st group, students watched the Vox documentary, “How Iran’s Repression Machine Works” (Dec 22, 2022), and completed multiple-choice questions and fill-in-the-gaps exercises. Regarding the second group, students answered grammar multiple-choice questions based on Marjane Satrapi and George Orwell’s biographies, retrieved from *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. They also wrote a six-word memoir. As for the last group, students had to write a detailed excerpt analysis from one of the following graphic novels: *Persepolis*, by Marjane Satrapi (pp. 26-29) or *1984: The Graphic Novel*, written by George Orwell and illustrated by Fido Nesti (pp. 7-10). Here, students were

asked to explore how these graphic novels' excerpts address themes such as freedom, democracy, citizenship, oppression, language/communication, society, etc. They were also asked to provide specific examples and quotes from the multimodal text to support their analysis and consider how the visual elements contribute to the storytelling. And lastly, to reflect on whether these graphic novels can be relevant in today's world.

Students' Test Scores	
Groups	Average (0–20)
I	15.4
II	15.0
III	15.2

Table 2: Students' Test Scores

As a way to accommodate some students, they were given an optional extra written assignment to improve their grades. They were asked to analyze one of the selected cartoons from The New Yorker magazine and explore the cartoon's visual elements, context, and underlying message. Only 2 students completed this assignment.

Part II: Oral Presentations

Oral presentations were another method of assessing students. These presentations were on topics of students' choosing and were scheduled according to their availability. This allowed students to select both the topic and the date of their presentations. These oral presentations could also be submitted in video format. Some students chose to present in person, while others opted to submit their work beforehand. Even though they were free to choose any topic, with guidance from both my cooperating teacher and me, as they did for the 1st and 2nd school terms, most students brought new and interesting topics. Most of them were related to the lessons' content, an example being a presentation called "Our Multicultural Experience", where 3 students recorded a 17-minute video talking about their experiences as children of immigrants or Portuguese emigrants. I believe these students drew inspiration from the works of George Takei and Elaine Teng as they talked about their intercultural encounters. They explore different topics such as discrimination, sense of

belonging, safety, etc. As I cannot show the video, I would like to share some quotes from the presentation they showed to the class (Appendix F).

Student A

“Thankfully I didn’t experience any kind of racism or xenophobic comments. The only thing people told me was to go back to my home country but that’s normal that’s the classic but yeah...”

Student B

“It’s a gift to be able to wake up every day and see the sunrise on my way to school here. I found my place here I found the peace and freedom I was looking for.”

Student C

“I believe that this cultural duality shaped who I am, and I feel that I carried the best of two worlds. I am not just Portuguese or [parent’s nationality] I am a blend of both cultures, and these reflect in my worldview, and my values, and who I am, and my way of being. This mix of cultures is a source of pride and gives me an inclusive perspective which I carry with me in all areas of my life.”

3.5.3. Project: 12th Grade

As for the final project (Appendix G), students were asked to create a magazine featuring multimodal texts. Students were given 2 classes of 90 minutes to work on their magazine contribution. These classes were held at the school library, and students worked in groups while my cooperating teacher and I assisted them when necessary. This project took place from the end of March to the end of May. As a way to ensure that students did not complete the assignment at the last minute, I created an inquiry for their magazine contribution progress. Here, it was possible to compile a list of suggestions for the magazine’s name: *Last Lines*; *Lost Pages*; *Lost Media*; *We Portfolio*, etc. When asked to briefly describe what they were working on for the magazine, most students only had a brief idea of what their contribution would be. (e.g.: *“I still don’t know for sure, but I maybe will do a page dedicated to tabletop [RPG], to try and show that creative world to people, but it might change, I don’t know”*) (Student 12A). Most students submitted their work by the established deadline, and we had time to discuss their work in our last class. This magazine

provided them with a platform to showcase their creativity and express themselves. This project served as a piece of evidence of their growth as critical thinkers and “multimodal text makers” (Bearne, 2009, p. 23).

3.6. Extracurricular Activities and School Participation

During my STP, I attended all English Department meetings. I oversaw most of the Interdisciplinary/End-of-Term Assessment meetings (*Conselhos de Turma*), as there were many 12th grade classes. I served as a member of the jury for the 8th Grade Standardized English Assessments (*Provas de Aferição de Inglês do 8.º Ano*).

As part of the Erasmus program, a group of Polish teachers was interested in becoming fellows with *Escola Secundária D. João II*. My cooperating teacher was responsible for hosting them, and we welcomed the Polish teachers and gave them a guided tour of the school. It was a great way to understand the differences in teaching practices between Portugal and Poland.

As part of the school activities, I took part in the interdisciplinary project “Kid’s Guernica - 50 Years of the April 25th Revolution”. Here, I helped students develop their ideas, provided materials, and corrected their writing submissions. These works were displayed in the school auditorium.

My cooperating teacher and I co-organized a school trip to Budapest, Hungary, and Vienna, Austria. This school trip involved 27 participants, 23 of whom were students from 11th and 12th grades. Solely my cooperating teacher and I organized the bureaucratic part of the trip, although some students were involved in the process of booking the flights and planning the daily activities. This trip lasted 9 days, and everything went as planned. A questionnaire was held for the students after the trip, and 8 out of 23 students answered.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Findings

This chapter presents an analysis of the research findings resulting from the classroom interventions, questionnaires, and reflective assessments conducted during my STP. As previously mentioned, this study aimed to explore three key research questions:

1. *Can multimodal texts promote critical thinking in the EFL classroom? If so, how?*
2. *How can online platforms, such as Padlet and Canva, promote critical thinking through the creation/interaction of multimodal texts in the EFL classroom?*
3. *Can multimodal texts be used as differentiation tools to promote critical thinking?*

4.1. Data Analysis

4.1.1. Questionnaire A: Reading Habits, Multimodal Texts, and Critical Thinking

Questionnaire A allowed me to generalize important insights regarding students' reading habits and challenges, and their views on the role of multimodal texts and critical thinking in school. Unlike other questionnaires I conducted, this one contains data from two distinct classes: Class 12A, the class I was teaching, as well as another class from my cooperating teacher and a fellow student-teacher, Class 12B. I decided to include Class 12B since I had been keeping up with this class by observing their lessons throughout the entire school year¹² and wanted to identify some similarities and differences within a larger group. The results can still be distinguished between the two groups. As I combined the results from both classes, a total of 37 participants were identified: 18 students from Class 12A and 19 students from Class 12B.¹³

Part I: Questionnaire A – Reading habits

Despite slight differences, both groups displayed moderate reading habits. When it comes to books, both classes showed a mix of frequencies. As seen in Figure 1, both groups showed reading books with moderate regularity.¹⁴ Magazine reading is much less frequent across both groups. Between 70% and 60% of both classes reported reading them rarely or not at all (Figure 2). Most students read multimodal texts regularly. Most students rated “sometimes” or above (70% in Class 12A and 60% in Class 12B). As seen in Figure 4, the engagement with other types of multimodal texts,

¹² To be clear, I have not taught any lessons to Class 12B.

¹³ Unfortunately, not every student completed the questionnaire.

¹⁴ Almost 40% in Class 12A rated it “rarely or “never” and over 20% rated it “often” or above. While in Class 12B, 40% rated it “rarely” or below, and 30% rated it “often” or above.

which include formats like comics, videos, and advertisements, is slightly higher than magazine reading.¹⁵

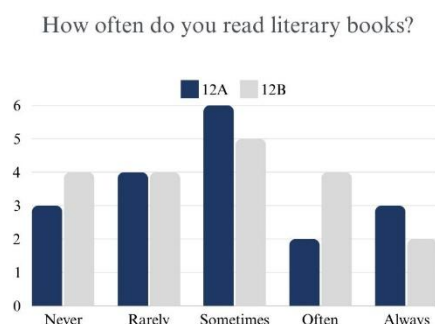


Figure 1

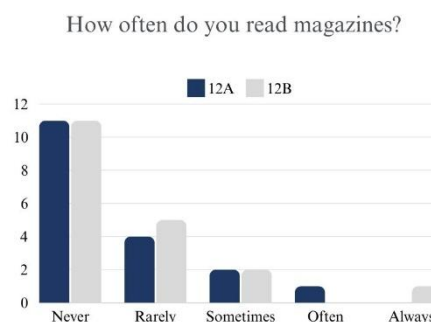


Figure 2

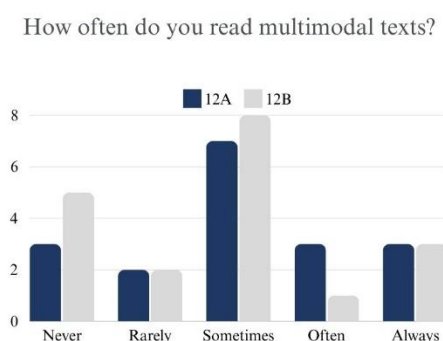


Figure 3

What types of multimodal texts do you consider most useful or interesting?

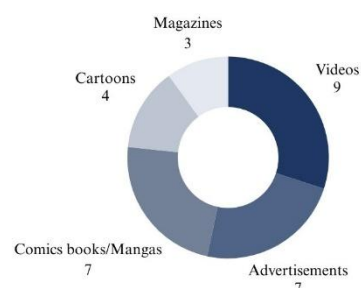


Figure 4

Part II: Questionnaire A – Multimodal Texts

There was a consensus among both groups that multimodal texts facilitate comprehension of complex concepts. Students recognized the educational value of diverse formats, particularly for explaining abstract ideas (Figure 5). In Class 12A, around 60% of students frequently engaged with multimodal content (rating “sometimes” or “often”), compared to 71% in Class 12B (Figure 6). While students from Class 12B felt that literary texts dominated their lessons, Class 12A

¹⁵ Both groups stated similar challenges when it comes to reading. The most common barriers include lack of time, difficulty concentrating, and the cost of books. Despite these challenges, all participants agree that reading is valuable in society.

believed there was greater use of multimodal texts in their classrooms, especially in Science and English lessons. In contrast with their Portuguese lessons, where literary texts were often used.

Do multimodal resources facilitate the understanding of complex concepts and topics?

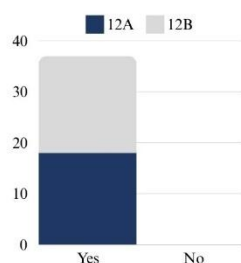


Figure 5

How often are multimodal texts used in your classes?

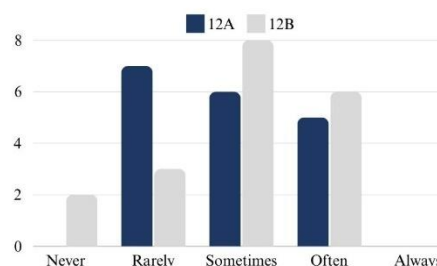


Figure 6

Part III: Questionnaire A – Critical Thinking

When it comes to critical thinking, most students agree that it can help them understand and interpret different contexts and information (Figure 7). Nevertheless, there were major differences (Figure 8). Both classes provided a wide variety of definitions (Appendix H and Appendix I). Most answers from students in Class 12A focused on the ability to form opinions, analyze, and evaluate different perspectives. About 80% of the students gave clear definitions of critical thinking, highlighting its role in analysis, self-reflection, and forming informed opinions. They also emphasized the importance of thinking for oneself and forming one's own opinions. Some responses also mentioned forming well-grounded opinions by considering different facts and viewpoints. Several students noted that critical thinking helps improve decision-making, understand different perspectives, and question societal norms.

On the other hand, while some students in Class 12B showed a clear understanding of critical thinking (about 60%), others struggled to explain it. Students who provided a definition mentioned analysis, reasoning, and forming opinions. They emphasized that critical thinking is necessary for forming unique opinions, avoiding ignorance, and engaging in debates. They also highlighted that it helps individuals think for themselves and resist manipulation. However, about 40% of the students were unable to define critical thinking effectively (e.g., “*I do not know*” or “*I do not understand*”).

When asked if critical thinking should be taught in schools (Figure 9), most students believe that critical thinking can and should be taught in school. Class 12A had a more balanced distribution of responses, with the majority (71%) selecting “sometimes” or “often”. Class 12B responded “sometimes” or “often” (73%). Both classes have an equal percentage of 1 or 2 students selecting “rarely” (10%), indicating a minority view in both classes that critical thinking may not be effectively taught in school. No respondents in either class selected a rating of “never”, indicating a consensus that critical thinking can be taught to some extent in school. While these students acknowledge the value of teaching critical thinking in schools, they could have concerns about its practical implementation. It indicates skepticism or uncertainty about whether critical thinking can be effectively taught in the current educational framework.

Does critical thinking contribute to your ability to understand and interpret information in different contexts?

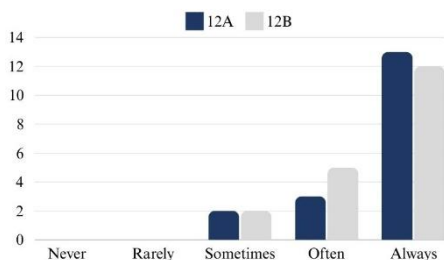


Figure 7

Students defining critical thinking

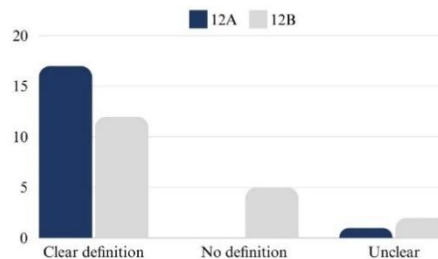


Figure 8

Can critical thinking be taught in schools?

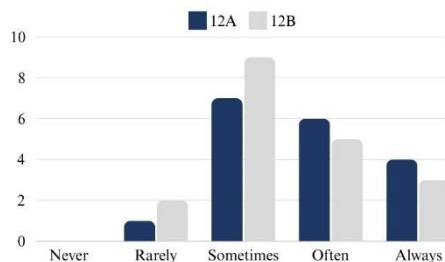


Figure 9

4.1.2. Questionnaire B: Students' Feedback

Part I: Questionnaires B – General Feedback

Questionnaire B was conducted among 21 students from Class 12A to evaluate their experience in the English classes (Appendix J). The students' responses focused on key aspects: content, materials, skills developed, and assessment methods.

Most students found the class content engaging, dynamic, and relevant. Several responses highlighted that the topics were well-selected, offering both educational value and broader current events and social issues.

Students reported that they had developed important skills throughout the lessons. The most frequently mentioned were: Oral Interaction, Written Production, and Creative and Critical Thinking. Many students felt they had improved their ability to communicate effectively in English. Activities such as the Morning Pages and the *Last Lines* Magazine were highlighted as helpful in enhancing writing and thinking skills. Multiple students noted a significant improvement in their critical thinking abilities, often linked to class discussions and the creative tasks assigned. Additionally, students felt that these classes provided a space for personal development, encouraging them to explore new ideas and perspectives. As an example, here is a student's feedback:

"The English classes were truly different and stood out from the rest. The content and discussions were incredibly engaging. The biggest difference I felt was being treated as capable and thoughtful individuals, unlike in other classes where we are often treated as just kids or mere students. I developed my critical thinking skills. I appreciated the assessments and felt they were not the main focus, in a good way, because I felt that the teachers were more concerned with us genuinely learning about various important topics and the world rather than just focusing on grades. I hope education evolves and that all classes can be like these, because I learned more here than in 12 years of school." (Student Class 12A)

The feedback on assessments was mixed but largely positive. Students appreciated the fair approach to evaluations, mentioning that they did not feel overwhelming pressure. However, one point raised was the rigidity in marking, where minor errors (like a single incorrect letter) led to deductions. Nonetheless, students felt that the emphasis was more on learning and less on grades, which created a supportive environment.

Many students appreciated the use of digital platforms like Google Classroom, Canva, Mentimeter, and Padlet. These tools made the classes more interactive and were seen as beneficial. The student feedback indicates that the English classes this year were highly effective in creating a dynamic, interactive, and thought-provoking learning environment.

Part II: Questionnaires B – Feedback on Developed Skills

When asked about the most difficult communication skills (Figure 10), most students pointed to Writing Production as the most challenging. Oral Production and Oral Interaction were also commonly mentioned as difficult. This points to a broader difficulty with expressing oneself clearly. Regarding the most important communication skills (Figure 11), Oral Interaction and Oral Comprehension emerged as the most crucial skills for most students. This reflects a focus on the importance of not just understanding spoken language but also engaging in conversations. Written competencies were considered less important.



Figure 10

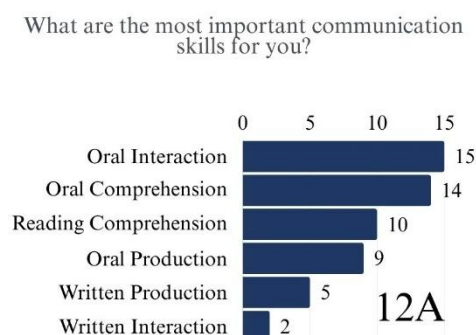


Figure 11



Figure 12

When reflecting on which communication skills they have most developed in their English classes (Figure 12), students highlighted Oral Comprehension and Writing Production as the most developed skills. This suggests that English lessons were particularly effective in helping students understand spoken English and improve their ability to express themselves in writing. Oral Production and Oral Interaction, which were previously seen as difficult, were also mentioned as skills developed in class, though less frequently.

Regarding the broader key competencies (PASEO), most students emphasized Critical Thinking and Creative Thinking, along with Information and Communication, as the most important (Figure 13). These competencies reflect an awareness of the need for problem-solving, independent thought, and the ability to analyze and express ideas clearly. Reasoning and Problem Solving along with Interpersonal Relationships were also frequently mentioned.

When asked about which key competencies they had most developed in our English classes (Figure 14), the responses were similar, with Critical Thinking and Creative Thinking emerging as the most developed competencies. This suggests that the English curriculum has effectively encouraged students to enhance these skills. Interpersonal skills were the second most mentioned, indicating that students have also focused on developing their ability to communicate and collaborate with others, which was a problem at the beginning of the school year. This improvement may be connected to group discussions, oral interaction, and learning how they improved their participation as a way to express themselves effectively in the classroom.

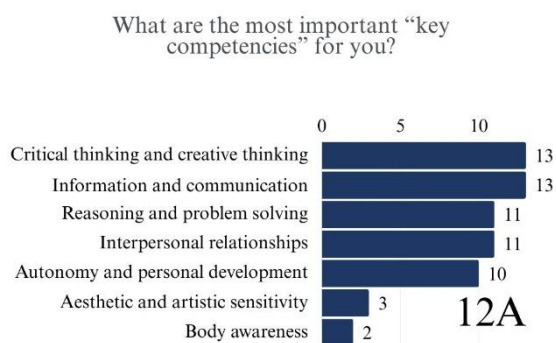


Figure 13

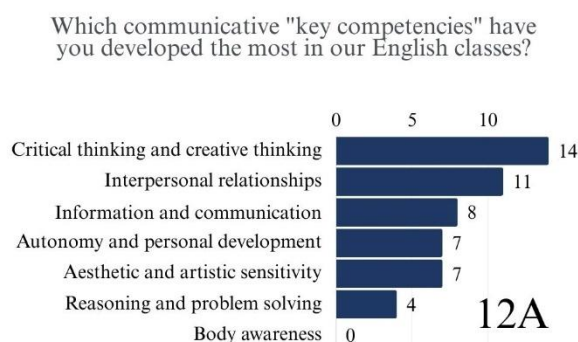


Figure 14

Most students (90%) believe they have developed Critical Thinking and Creative Thinking in their English lessons (Figure 15). Only 10% of students felt they had not developed critical thinking, which could be due to individual differences in learning styles or even as a reflection of their assiduity in class (Figure 16).

Do you think our English classes helped you develop critical thinking?

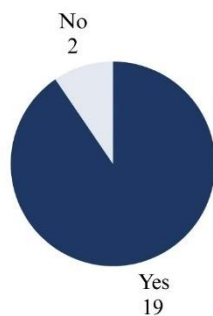


Figure 15

Do you think our English classes helped you develop creative thinking?

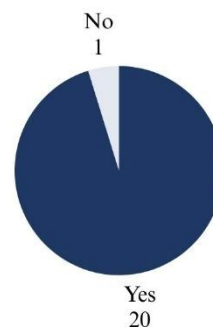


Figure 16

Part III: Questionnaires B – Feedback on Online Platforms

Google Classroom received a varied response from participants (Figure 17). While a significant portion (38%) found the platform “extremely useful”, there was a notable share of less enthusiastic feedback. Early 42% of the respondents rated it “slightly useful” or “somewhat useful”, indicating only moderate satisfaction.

Padlet emerged as a well-regarded tool (Figure 18), with most students expressing positive feedback: 42% rated it as extremely useful, and another 33% rated it “very useful”, indicating a strong level of satisfaction. Only a small fraction (23%) rated it “slightly useful” or “somewhat useful”, suggesting that Padlet’s collaborative and visual elements resonated well with the students.

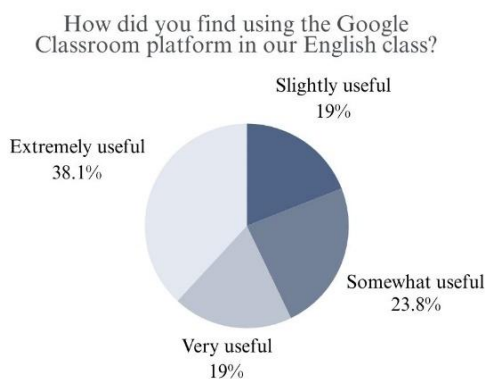


Figure 17

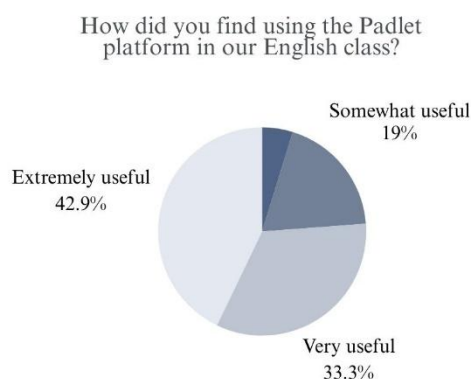


Figure 18

Mentimeter was also highly rated by the students, with 76% of them rating it “very useful” or “extremely useful” (Figure 19). The platform’s interactive features, such as real-time polls and quizzes, facilitated active learning and provided immediate feedback. Notably, there were no ratings below “somewhat useful”, indicating that all respondents found some level of value in using Mentimeter.

Among the platforms assessed, Canva received the highest ratings, with an impressive 66% of students marking it as “extremely useful” (Figure 20). The feedback was positive, and there were no ratings below “somewhat useful”. This suggests that Canva was particularly effective for the final project, likely due to its versatile design capabilities and ease of use. Students appreciated its ability to facilitate creative and visually appealing presentations, which are critical elements of their project-based tasks. Its intuitive interface and the extensive range of design tools seem to

have empowered students to express their ideas creatively and effectively, making the platform an excellent choice for assignments that require a visual component.

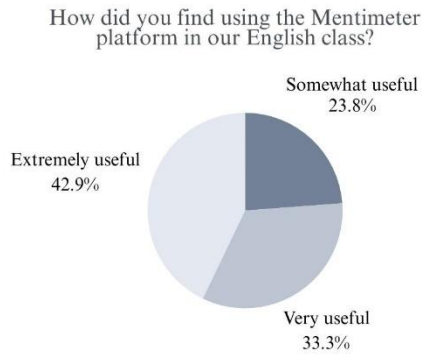


Figure 19

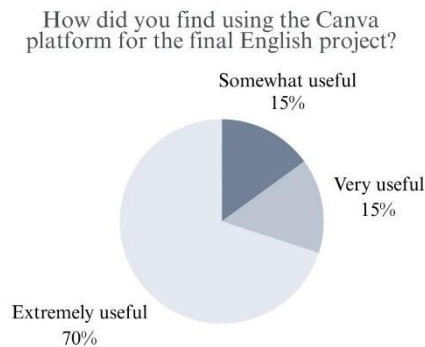


Figure 20

4.2. Answering Research Questions

4.2.1. Research Question 1: *Can multimodal texts promote critical thinking in the EFL classroom? If so, how?*

Critical thinking is not static; it is not acquired in an instant. It is built over time and is a constantly evolving skill. Just as it is a long process to learn a language, critical thinking requires time and space to develop. One of my biggest challenges was figuring out how to assess critical thinking. How could I know how these students thought before my lessons? How could I tell if their way of thinking had changed afterward? Besides the questionnaires and assessments, it was necessary to have closer and consistent monitoring of each student during our lessons to understand what was being developed. Competencies often need tangible proof, whether through a test, worksheet, exam, oral presentation, or written assignment. While these evaluations have their place, I witnessed significant progress in my students' learning throughout the school year.

Part I: Research Question 1 – Findings 7th-8th Grade

When asked to observe the cover illustration *Here We Are* by Oliver Jeffers, and predict what the book might be about, students had to analyze visual cues, such as the color palette, characters, and setting depicted on the cover. They needed to make inferences based on the limited information that was presented visually. By sharing their predictions, students practiced forming hypotheses

and supporting their ideas with evidence from the visual text. After reading the book aloud, the students reflected on whether their predictions matched the actual content. This encouraged them to re-evaluate their initial ideas and consider why their interpretations may have differed (i.e., a process that enhances self-reflection).

When students were given cut-out pages from the picture books *Flotsam* by David Wiesner and *I Walk with Vanessa* by Kerascoët, which are wordless narratives, they had to rearrange the pages to create a coherent storyline based on their previous knowledge. Without textual guidance, students had to rely on visual literacy skills, analyzing the sequence of events depicted in each image. This task required them to interpret characters' emotions, actions, and settings, and make logical connections. This task involved problem-solving, decision-making, and collaboration, as students negotiated the order of events based on their interpretations. By explaining their reasoning and comparing their narratives to the original work, I believe they deepened their analytical thinking and opened their minds to possible alternative interpretations that could also be applied to other contexts.

Part II: Research Question 1 – Findings 12th Grade

Firstly, by linking Takei's audiovisual narrative from his TED Talk with the visual storytelling of his graphic novel, *The Called Us Enemy*, along with Maisie Conrat and Richard Conrat's photography book, *Executive Order 9066 - The Internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans* and Vox's short documentary, "Why the US photographed its own WWII concentration camps", students engaged in a comparative analysis of different modes of conveying Japanese American historical experiences. Here, they were able to evaluate the effectiveness of visual storytelling in communicating the emotional weight of the events. For instance, scenes depicting the internment of Japanese Americans were discussed across the different modes. Students analyzed how these conveyed that event more powerfully than words alone could.

Secondly, when asked to design their own covers reflecting a current social or political issue based on TIME Magazine, students had to select a topic that resonated with current events, such as climate change, political protests, or social justice movements. They then decided how to visually represent their topic using imagery, color, and text. This required them to think critically about how to capture the viewer's attention and convey a message effectively within a single

image. As previously mentioned, some students chose to create covers highlighting political figures, using powerful images and provocative headlines to communicate their critique or support.

Lastly, when writing six-word memoirs based on the book *Not Quite What I Was Planning: Six-Word Memoirs by Writers Famous and Obscure*, from SMITH Magazine, students were encouraged to pair their memoirs with visual elements, either drawings or collages, to create a multimodal text that conveyed a concise but impactful message. This task challenged students to polish their thoughts into a minimal number of words, requiring precise word choice and an understanding of language nuances. The addition of visual elements pushed them to consider how imagery could complement and enhance the meaning of their text. This required them to engage in creative problem-solving and deep reflection, as they needed to convey complex thoughts succinctly while considering how both text and image contribute to the overall message.

Part III: Research Question 1 – Findings

Overall, to answer it briefly, the use of multimodal texts in the EFL classes demonstrated significant potential in enhancing critical thinking among students. As previously seen, multimodal texts were integrated into a wide range of classroom activities and encouraged students to think critically about the content and the message they want to communicate.

4.2.2. Research Question 2: *How can online platforms, such as Padlet and Canva, promote critical thinking through the creation/interaction of multimodal texts in the EFL classroom?*

The integration of online platforms like Padlet and Canva in the lessons provided additional opportunities for students to engage with multimodal texts and develop their critical thinking skills. These tools facilitated collaborative work and allowed students to express their ideas creatively and interactively.

In our classes, Padlet provided a space for students to express their thoughts freely. It allowed genuine reflection and critical analysis of the class content without the pressure of judgment. The anonymous nature of the platform seemed to foster more open and honest contributions.

On the other hand, Canva enabled students to experiment with its design tools, color, typography, and layouts. These tools turned out to be essential in creating coherent and impactful

multimodal texts. To make these design choices, students were required to think critically about how visual elements could enhance the message of their magazine page.

We can say that the use of social media in blended and online learning environments has the potential to increase student engagement and motivation. It can be used to foster collaboration and communication among students and between students and teachers. Nevertheless, Tour (2015) points out that many teachers have yet to learn how to implement technology in their classrooms due to their fragile relationship with technology. Some educators still have “a traditional view of technology as a tool to improve language skills rather than engage students in new literacies which can support language speakers in their authentic uses of technologies in target languages” (p. 124). Educators must consider the sociocultural contexts of visual and digital literacy and design instructions that are more effective and responsive to the needs of their students while addressing power and social inequality issues in the classroom. By recognizing how literacy practices are shaped by social and cultural factors, educators can work to create a more equitable and just society.

4.2.3. Research Question 3: *Can multimodal texts be used as differentiation tools to promote critical thinking?*

Employing differentiation alongside multimodal texts significantly contributed to developing critical thinking skills, addressing varied learner profiles, and improving engagement levels. The lessons were adapted to meet the needs of different age groups, skill levels, and learning preferences, particularly for students with Special Educational Needs in the 7th-8th grade classes. In this class, the inclusive nature of these activities promoted equal participation, reducing anxiety and boosting confidence among students who might have otherwise felt marginalized.

In the 12th grade, differentiation was evident in the flexibility of assignments and the use of student choice in projects. By allowing students to choose topics and formats that aligned with their interests and strengths, their learning became more engaging and personalized. This approach encourages students to take ownership of their learning, which is a critical component of developing critical thinking skills.

Overall, despite being a complex task, these practical examples and guidelines demonstrate that it is possible to accommodate different traits by adjusting certain realities. Even when there are general instructions for the entire class, students still benefit from opportunities to acquire the

necessary content and skills at their own pace, thanks to the great flexibility allowed in the classroom. Especially when using multimodal texts. Moreover, the responsibility for managing learning does not always rest solely on the teacher. Students are consistently encouraged to explore their own learning profiles, benefiting from their own choices and interests (Tomlinson, 2001, pp. 62, 71). Gardner acknowledges that “assessment of intelligences can play a crucial role in curriculum development” and believes that many talented students have been overlooked due to a one-dimensional teaching approach that fails to recognize the multiplicity of intelligences (Gardner, 1993, pp. 27, 33-34). Rather than following a standardized method of teaching and learning influenced by the teacher’s personal style, it is essential for teachers to be flexible and assist students in discovering and expanding the ways that best align with their learning styles. Consequently, it is crucial to foster an environment where students can explore their competencies beyond their comfort zones (Tomlinson, 2001, pp. 60, 63), enabling them to gain self-awareness and understanding through experiences that can have a lasting influence on their academic and personal growth (Lima, 2001, p. 110).

Final Remarks

All these examples indicate that the use of multimodal texts created rich opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking. The findings from the classroom activities suggest that the use of multimodal texts, supported by online platforms like Padlet and Canva, and differentiated instructional approaches, can significantly enhance critical thinking in EFL classrooms. The multimodal approach provided students with varied and engaging ways to interact with the content, while the online platforms facilitated collaborative and reflective learning. Differentiation ensured that all students, regardless of their background or skill level, had opportunities to participate actively and critically engage with the material. This multidimensional approach not only made the lessons more engaging but also helped develop students' critical thinking skills, preparing them for complex problem-solving tasks beyond the classroom.

Overall, my goal was to integrate multimodal texts seamlessly into the classroom, empowering students to think critically and communicate effectively. I hope to demonstrate that incorporating multimodal texts into teaching practices is a great way to foster critical thinking among students. For future research, I recommend exploring assessment frameworks to better evaluate critical thinking and multimodal texts projects.

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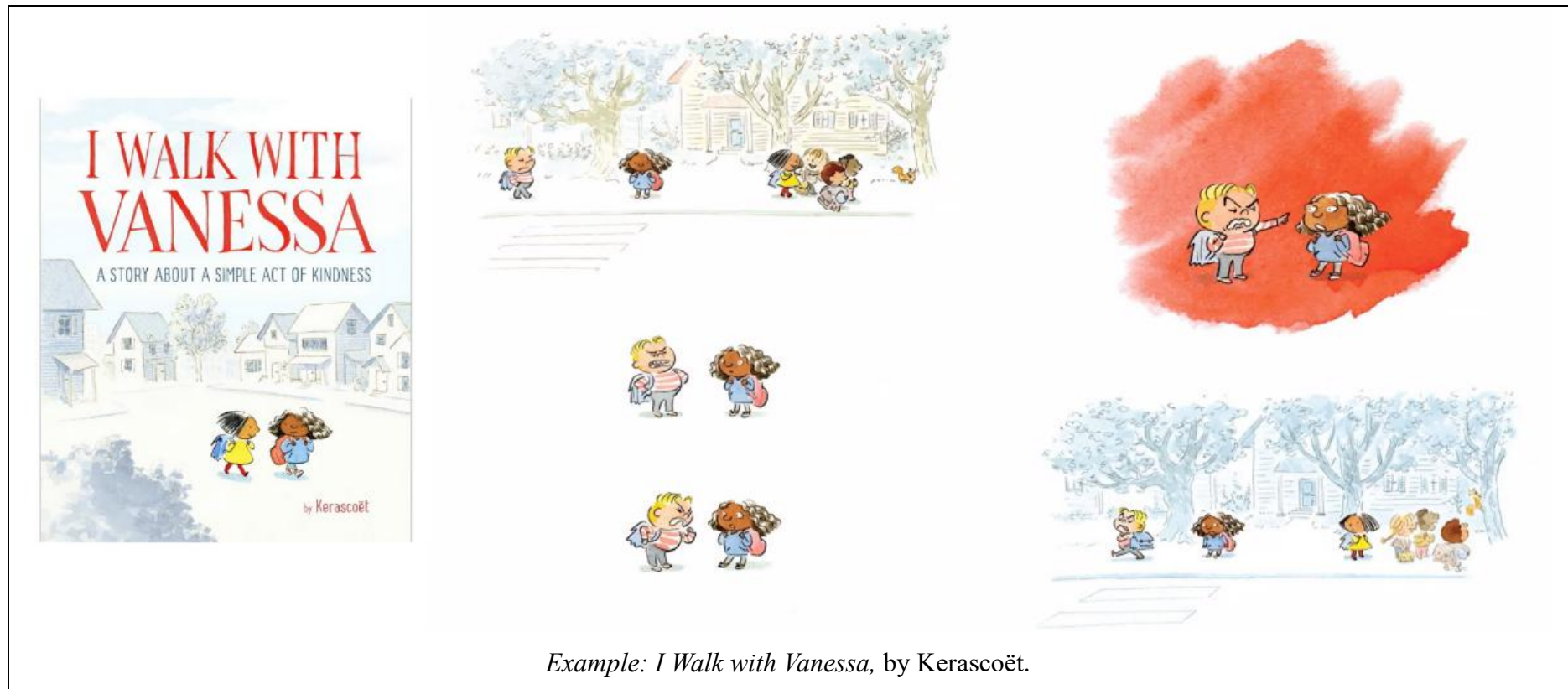
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Appendices

Appendix A: 7th-8th Grade Materials – Example



Appendix B: Lesson A: Plan and Materials – *They Called Us Enemy*

LESSON A: THEY CALLED US ENEMY

TRAINEE TEACHER: DEBORAH ROSA (A44699)

TEACHER TRAINER: MARIA JOSÉ PEREIRA

Class profile¹⁶:

- Grade 12;
- 26 students;
- CEFR English Level: B2.1/B2.2 (Direção-Geral da Educação, 2018).

Portuguese syllabus fitting:

- Cidadania e Multiculturalismo: A Declaração Universal dos Direitos do Homem; Conviver com a diversidade;
- Democracia na Era Global: Tendências nas sociedades democráticas; Democracia em mudança.

Resource:

- George Takei’s graphic novel, *THEY CALLED US ENEMY*;
- Vox’s short documentary, “Why the US photographed its own WWII concentration camps”;
- Maisie Conrat and Richard Conrat’s photography book, *Executive Order 9066 - The Internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans*.

Duration:

- 2 lessons of 45 minutes

¹⁶ The students are enrolled in Grade 12 of *Curso Científico-Humanístico de Artes Visuais*; *Curso Científico-Humanístico de Ciências e Tecnologias*; and *Curso Científico-Humanístico de Línguas e Humanidades*, at Escola Secundário D. João II.

LESSON PLAN A: THEY CALLED US ENEMY

Main aims:

This lesson plan was inspired by the notion of “pedagogies of discomfort” (Porto & Zembylas, 2020, pp. 356-370). It aims to challenge “dominant beliefs, social habits and normative practices that sustain stereotypes and social injustice” (p. 359) and to foster “empathy, solidarity and transformation” (p. 369). By understanding the nuances in Japanese American narratives of World War II, students can be inspired to fight current social issues. It can encourage students to advocate for social justice, address historical injustices, and promote equal rights for others.

In other words, the main aims of this lesson are:

- a) to foster an appreciation for literary works (i.e. graphic novels);
- b) to increase students’ knowledge of Japanese American culture, history and literature;
- c) to enhance students’ understanding of social issues, namely, civil rights, discrimination, and stereotypes;
- d) to enhance students’ intercultural awareness, sensibility, and empathy;
- e) to improve students’ 21st-century skills, namely, critical thinking; communication; collaboration and creativity;
- f) and, to encourage students’ discussions and participation by seeking and sharing information through interaction.

LESSON PLAN A: THEY CALLED US ENEMY

Learning objectives [By the end of the lesson, learners should be able to...]	Procedures	Interaction	Time	Materials and teaching aids
Recall learned content.	Step 1 The teacher welcomes students into the classroom and engages in short interactions with them while they settle down and organize their school supplies.	Teacher Whole class	3 minutes	
	Step 2: Warm-up (1) - The teacher asks a volunteer to give a summary of the previous lesson: - e.g.: We watched and discussed George Takei’s talk on TEDxKyoto, “Why I love a country that once betrayed me” and we read and analyzed some excerpts from Takei’s graphic novel, <i>THEY CALLED US ENEMY</i> (pp. 5-37).			
Convey personal messages in writing.	Step 3: Warm-up (2)	Individual work	5 minutes	Students’s notebooks

	- The teacher tells the students that they are going to write their “Morning Pages”¹⁷ about the following topic: - Things We Take for Granted.			
- Grasp meaning through cues. - Rely upon knowledge of the world.	Step 4: Pre-Reading - The teacher shows the following words: - Issei, Nisei and Sansei. - The teacher asks students what these words might mean. - The students brainstorm around the possible answers.	Teacher Whole class	30 minutes	Computer Projector Students’ smartphones Wi-Fi connection Students’s notebooks Copies
- Identify contexts, characters, and relationships. - Interpret visual elements. - Exchange and evaluate different pieces of information. - Read for specific information (skim reading).	Step 5: Reading - The teacher informs the students that they are going to read a few more excerpts from the graphic novel <i>THEY CALLED US ENEMY</i>, by George Takei; and complete a Worksheet. - The teacher organizes the group dynamic and hands out the selected materials. - The students read the excerpts and answer Worksheet 1. - The teacher observes students’ performance and contributions. - Teacher intervenes in the discussions if necessary. - The teacher asks some volunteers to share their answers.¹⁸	Pair work		

¹⁷ **Note:** This activity, “Morning Pages”, is always connected with the lesson’s content. Its final aim is to encourage students to develop their writing skills as a hobby. At the end of the school year, students will submit a piece of writing (i.e., multimodal text) to our class magazine.

¹⁸ Since “Worksheet 1” only contains reflective questions, the teacher will only go through it briefly.

				Worksheet 1
• Improve the ability to note-taking. • Listen to specific pieces of information.	Step 6: Pre-watching; watching activity • The teacher asks the students the following question: - Do you think there are visual records of the imprisonment camps? • The students answer the question on mentimeter.com: - https://www.menti.com/almwof7qyi2 • The teacher informs students that they are going to watch a video about Executive Order 9066. • The teacher advises students to take notes. • The teacher plays the video: - https://youtu.be/waOUNwZA4aQ?feature=shared (starts at 00:00 - stops at 01:32); (starts at 04:54 - stops at 09:22). • The students compare their initial answers with the information from the video. • The teacher provides or clarifies language input if necessary.	Individual work Pair work	10 minutes	Computer Wi-Fi connection Projector Students's notebooks

• Compare and evaluate different pieces of information. • Convey personal messages in spoken interactions. • Actively participate in collaborative project work. • Engage and maintain spoken interaction. • Paraphrase different pieces of information. • Identify the use of -ing form, to-infinitive, bare infinitive. • Correct grammatical sentences.	Step 7: Spoken interaction (Jigsaw activity – Part 1) • The teacher informs the students that they are going to analyze some pages from Conrat’s photography book, <i>Executive Order 9066 - The Internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans</i>. • The teacher explains that each student will receive different pages to work on. • The teacher reorganizes the group dynamic and hands out the selected materials. • The students read the selected excerpt from the book <i>Executive Order 9066 - The Internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans</i> and answer the questions from Worksheet 2. • Each student shares the main ideas from the page they received. • Teacher intervenes in the discussions if necessary.	Individual work Group work Whole class	30 minutes	Copies Worksheet 2 Students’s notebooks
• Work autonomously. • Reading for global understanding (reading for gist).	Step 8: Spoken interaction • Within the same groups, the teacher hands over the last excerpts from Takei’s graphic novel, <i>THEY CALLED US ENEMY</i>. • The teacher asks students to reflect on the things that we take for granted:			

Relate other people's experiences with their own experiences	e.g.: Democracy; Human rights; Education; Natural resources; etc.			
Give personal opinions.	Step 9: Post-task activity The teacher holds a debriefing session by asking students to write a short paragraph about what they have learned from this lesson on Padlet.	Whole class	10 minutes	Computer Projector
Consider and synthesize learned aspects.	Step 10: Summary The teacher writes the summary on a Google Docs sheet that is already published on the class' online platform.	Individual work Teacher	2 minutes	Students's smartphones Wi-Fi connection

LESSON A: THEY CALLED US ENEMY (POWERPOINT)

MORNING PAGES

There is no wrong way to do morning pages. These daily morning meanderings are not meant to be *art*. Or even *writing*. I stress that point to reassure the nonwriters working with this book. Writing is simply one of the tools. Pages are meant to be, simply, the act of moving the hand across the page and writing down *whatever* comes to mind. Nothing is too petty, too silly, too stupid, or too weird to be included.

The morning pages are not supposed to sound smart—although sometimes they might. Most times they won't, and nobody will ever know except you. Nobody is allowed to read your morning pages except you. And you shouldn't even read them yourself.

**The Artist's Way,
by Julia Cameron**

Slide 1

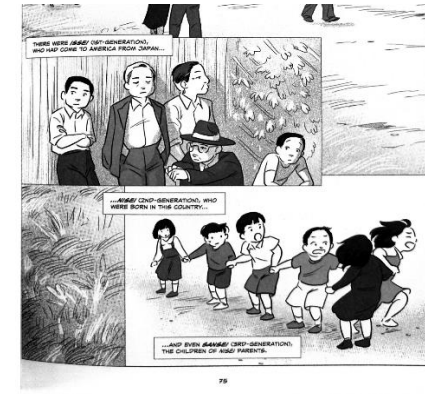


Slide 2

Issei;
Nisei;
Sansei.

Slide 3

Issei;
Nisei;
Sansei.

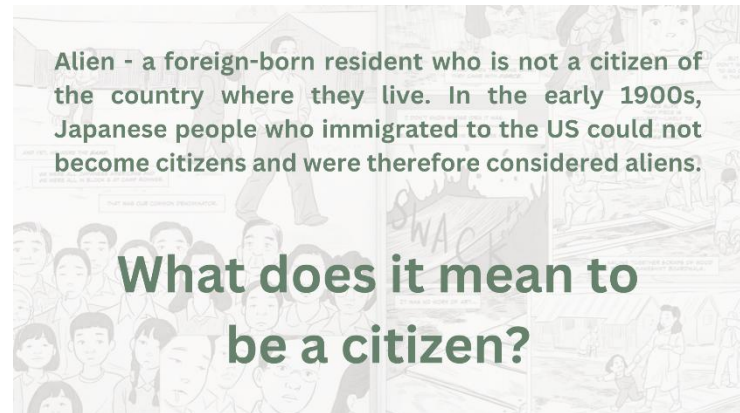


Slide 4

LESSON A: THEY CALLED US ENEMY (POWERPOINT)

WORKSHEET 1

Slide 5



Slide 6

Do you think there are
visual records of the
imprisonment camps?

Slide 7

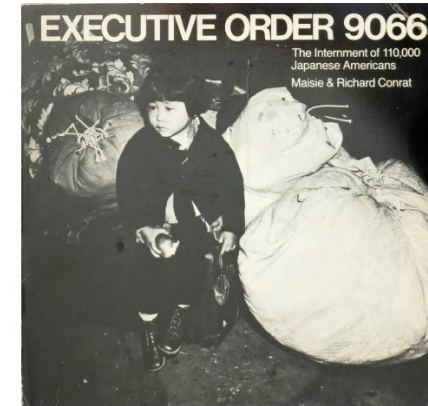
WORKSHEET 2

Slide 8

LESSON A: THEY CALLED US ENEMY (POWERPOINT)



Slide 9



Slide 10



Slide 11

Answer keys - Use of English

c.

1. The government wanted **b) to document** the removal process.
2. Lange captured the distress **b) being** experienced by the people.
3. The army was concerned Lange's photos would **a) show** them in a bad light.

Slide 12

LESSON A: THEY CALLED US ENEMY (POWERPOINT)

Answer keys - Use of English

D.

1. The sign on the wall instructed people of Japanese descent **to register** themselves and their families for evacuation.
2. The government created the War Relocation Authority **to handle** the removal.
3. Dorothea Lange was hired **to photograph** the Japanese American removal process.

Slide 13

LESSON 7 & 8: THEY CALLED US ENEMY

What have you learned from today's lesson? Did you learn something new?

I've learned that there are a lot of things that happened in history that we still don't know about and that aren't as known as they should be.

I learned that there are many things that the world hides from us, for example, I didn't know this, and...

I learned that knowing every part of an historical event can have different impacts in our society

today i learned to value my rights, to not take them for granted because nothing in life is granted, always keep

I further reinforced my belief that 'democratic countries = good guys' is an idiotic idea. Democracy is a

What have you learned from today's lesson?

Slide 14

SUMMARY

- Writing: Morning Pages - Things We Take for Granted.
- Reading and comprehension: *THEY CALLED US ENEMY*, by George Takei (pp. 75-76; 111, 114-116; 126; 155-157; 173; 176; 197).
- Watching: "Why the US photographed its own WWII concentration camps".
- Spoken interaction: *Executive Order 9066 - The Internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans*, by Maisie Conrat and Richard Conrat.
- Debriefing session: What did you learn from today's lesson?

Slide 15

LESSON A: *THEY CALLED US ENEMY*, BY GEORGE TAKEI
WORKSHEET 1

PAGES 75, 76 & 111

A. Comment on the following statement: "It makes no difference whether he is theoretically an American citizen, he is still a Japanese".

PAGES 114, 115 & 116

B. How might the Loyalty Questionnaire have affected Takei's parents' sense of identity and belonging?

C. Do you think loyalty can be measured through questionnaires and military service? Why or why not?

PAGES 126, 155, 156, 157

D. How might the news of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have influenced the Japanese community's perception of their own place within American society?

E. In what ways do you think the news of the bombings influenced daily life and conversations within the camps?

PAGE 173

F. Why is it important for history to represent the experiences and perspectives of all groups, including those who have been marginalized or oppressed?

LESSON A: *THEY CALLED US ENEMY*, BY GEORGE TAKEI
WORKSHEET 2

VOX'S DOCUMENTARY

- A. How do you think the perspective of a photographer like Dorothea Lange can influence the way historical events are remembered?
- B. How do you think the "impounded" images might have affected public perception if they had been widely circulated during World War II?

USE OF ENGLISH

C. Choose the correct form (-ing form, to-infinitive, bare infinitive):

1. The government wanted _____ the removal process.

a) documenting	b) to document	c) document
----------------	----------------	-------------

2. Lange captured the distress _____ experienced by the people.

a) to be	b) being	c) be
----------	----------	-------

3. The army was concerned Lange's photos would _____ them in a bad light.

a) show	b) to show	c) showing
---------	------------	------------

D. Fill in the blanks with the correct form (-ing form, to-infinitive, bare infinitive):

1. The sign on the wall instructed people of Japanese descent _____ (register) themselves and their families for evacuation.
2. The government created the War Relocation Authority _____ (handle) the removal.
3. Dorothea Lange was hired _____ (photograph) the Japanese American removal process.

PAGES 176 & 197 (REFLECTION)

- E. Why is it important to continue advocating for human rights, even in countries that have democratic systems in place?

LESSON: THEY CALLED US ENEMY (POLL RESULTS - MENTIMETER)



Poll Results – (Mentimeter)

LESSON A: THEY CALLED US ENEMY (EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066 - EXAMPLE)

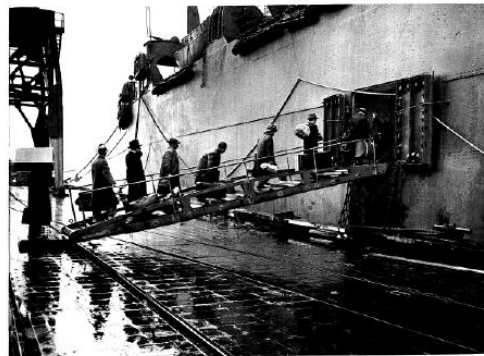
I am an American citizen . . .
I have never been outside of the
United States, and I don't know
Japan or what Japan stands for . . .
Put me down as disloyal if you
will, but I'm going where I won't
have to live on the wrong side of
the tracks just because my face
is yellow. I will find my future
in the Orient.

An evacuee, quoted in Carey McWilliams,
Prejudice.

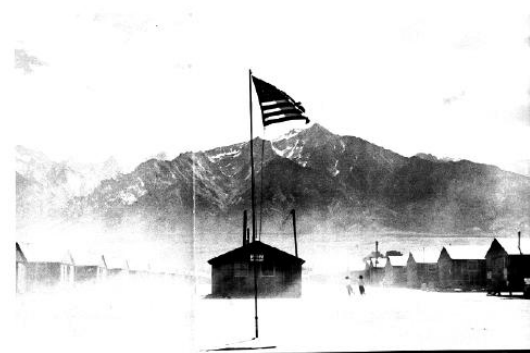
96



99



103



109

EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066 – Excerpt Example

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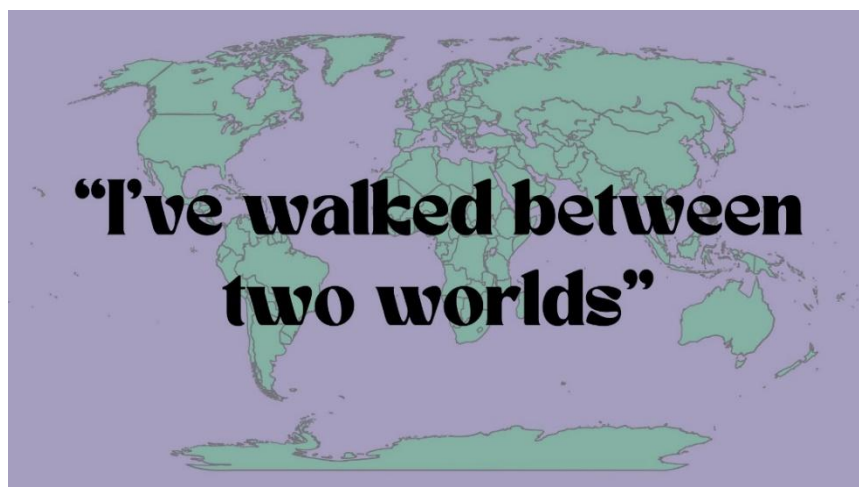
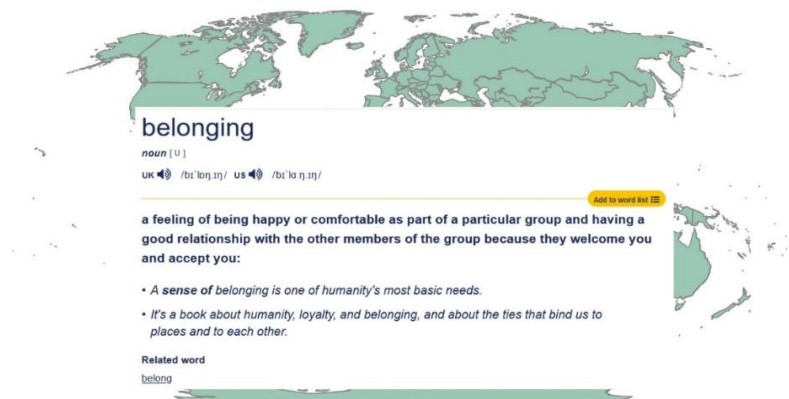
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LESSON B: “I’VE WALKED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS” (POWERPOINT)



LESSON B: “I’VE WALKED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS” (MATERIALS)

‘I’VE WALKED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS’:

WHAT BELONGING MEANS FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

Asian American families across generations reflect on the ways they hold on to their cultures while finding a place in America.

For most of my life, I hated my name. Before I was born, my parents, who had come to the United States from China a few years before, had chosen to call me Elaine, but my mom’s sole white friend at the time told her that it was an old-lady name. She suggested Alyssa instead.

My dad didn’t know how to spell that, so when the time came to register me, he sounded it out, figured “Alyssa” sounded like “eleven,” threw in a couple of S’s for good measure, and there I was, hours old and legally bound to this strange portmanteau, Elessa.

I still ended up going by Elaine, perhaps because my parents wanted me to use my Chinese name, Yilan. When I arrived in school, no one could say it and Yilan gradually became Elaine.

It didn’t matter much to my parents, who never use either of these English names for me. But it mattered to me. I hated Elessa, hated the question mark in the teacher’s voice on the first day of school, hated never finding it on a keychain or magnet, hated that it wasn’t “real.” I wasn’t even like the other kids who went by their Chinese or Korean names. My immigrant parents had done the most embarrassing thing possible as far as I was concerned: make something up. Elessa was proof of assimilation gone wrong, evidence that we didn’t belong.

I made everyone call me Elaine, I told this story like it was a big embarrassing joke, and when I turned 18, I changed my name legally. When I saw my name written on my college diploma, I hardly remembered there had ever been a different one. I was Elaine now, fully assimilated Chinese American, and no one could question where I’d come from.

Elessa, and how that name made me feel, has come back to me recently with the sharp rise in anti-Asian hate crimes across the U.S. during the COVID-19 pandemic. Though Asian Americans are now the country’s fastest-growing racial or ethnic group, watching videos of elderly people being attacked in broad daylight—worrying that my parents could be next—reminds me that even if we change our names, even if we see ourselves as Americans, others may not see us that way.

(...)

As a child, I came to understand that there are many ways to be American, just as there are many ways to be Asian. But as I listened to people share their stories at a time when our belonging is being challenged with violence, I realized I had had a very specific idea of how to be Asian American: It was to be Elaine—when, actually, Elessa is just fine.

WRITTEN BY: ELAINE TENG

WORKSHEET 1

'I'VE WALKED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS':

WHAT BELONGING MEANS FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

Asian American families across generations reflect on the ways they hold on to their cultures while finding a place in America.

A. Read and answer the following questions:

1. How do you feel about your name?
2. Do you think your name implies that you belong to a certain culture?
3. Have you ever considered changing your name? Why?
4. How did you feel while reading Elaine Tang's story? Do you relate to her story?

B. Discussion:

5. Have you ever heard about the anti-Asian crimes Elaine mentioned?
6. Do these kinds of acts happen in Portugal?
7. How would you react if you saw someone suffering from acts of discrimination?

WORKSHEET 2

'I'VE WALKED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS':

WHAT BELONGING MEANS FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

Asian American families across generations reflect on the ways they hold on to their cultures while finding a place in America.

B. In groups, read and answer the following questions:

1. What is the common theme in all these stories?
2. Which story stood out for you? Why?
3. Did the photos and the handwritten notes have any impact on your reading?
4. How would you describe the feeling of “belonging”?
5. Do you know what it is like to feel alienated?
6. How do you think immigrants who come to Portugal might feel?
7. Have you ever felt something similar (or about something else)?
8. Did you learn something new? Did these stories change your perspective?

C. Write your own definition of the words "belonging" (2 lines).

'I'VE WALKED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS':

WHAT BELONGING MEANS FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

RUTH MCMULLIN AND DAUGHTER ANH

Ruth McMullin and her daughter, Anh, pose in their home in Lilburn, Georgia. Ruth, whose Black father and Vietnamese mother fled Vietnam, grew up in small-town Alabama where she was one of the only biracial children. She says her daughter is growing up in a more diverse community that neither she nor her husband, who is Black, experienced. She tells Anh, who has albinism, not to let other people's perspectives define her. "Race is a construct. Race is made up," Ruth says. "She's a perfect example of, how can you say that Black looks like this, when she technically has more African ancestry than I do?"



My American dream is for my children to grow up in a country where stereotypes and assumptions about gender and ethnicity are removed. My American dream realizes that race is a social construct designed to isolate and marginalize.

My American dream is that my country will become a place people of all backgrounds can feel safe in and where you can be who you are without being a target.

'I'VE WALKED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS':

WHAT BELONGING MEANS FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

**RAMANARESH PATHAK AND
GRANDDAUGHTERS ISHANI, LEFT AND
KIRAN**

Ramanaresh Pathak, center, poses with his granddaughters Ishani, left, and Kiran, right, in their home in Atlanta, Georgia. Ramanaresh was born in India, lived in England for about 20 years, and moved to New Jersey in 1987 because he believed his kids would receive better educations in the U.S. When Neha asks whether he misses the places of his past, she says Ramanaresh tells her, “I don’t feel connected to any place except wherever [my grandchildren] are.”



I don't worry about
belonging anywhere - I
tell my children &
grandchildren to impart
our rich, hard-working,
family centered, cultural
values wherever we go.
We should never feel
out of place because
we must give more
than what we receive
wherever we are.

Ram

Belonging means
that something
is yours.
Belonging makes
me feel happy,
creative and loved.
Kiran

'I'VE WALKED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS':

WHAT BELONGING MEANS FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

SHAWN WEN AND DAUGHTER KYLIE

Taiwanese-American Shawn Wen, left, and his wife, who is Black, regularly teach their daughter Kylie, right, about Black and Asian history so she can understand her heritage and the potential pushback. "She's a girl, she's Black, and she's Asian, all at the same time," Shawn says. "Those are three big negatives in society. So we incorporate in our studies with her, 'This is who you are, you have to learn these cultures.'" "I belong here no matter what anyone else says," Kylie adds.



Belonging means, accepting
People no matter what they look like,
being in a community that cares and
accepts you for you. It also means
having a voice. In the end I have a
family that cares.

Kylie

Growing up my dad didn't give us an
American name; he wanted my brother
& I to forge our own paths. I'm
fortunate, in a way, to have
experienced a profound sense of
belonging & connection in my life:
I'm in an interracial relationship
(my wife is Black) & we have been
able to explore the differences &
similarities of our cultures in an
open & healthy way & pass that
knowledge & understanding onto our
child. Eventually, I did choose an
American name to integrate; that name
was Shawn, but after a lot of growing
up in my life, soul searching & meeting
a wife that wanted me to re-connect
to my own roots, I have found my
name & where I belong: my
Asian American name is

Shawn I-Hsiang Wen.

'I'VE WALKED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS':

WHAT BELONGING MEANS FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

DEBBIE IWASAKI AND DAUGHTER KATHRYN

Debbie Iwasaki poses with her daughter, Kathryn, at her home in Duluth, Georgia. Kathryn is Chinese on her mother's side and Japanese on her father's. Her paternal grandmother survived the atomic bomb in Hiroshima but lost three siblings, while her grandfather lived through an internment camp in Arkansas. Despite being a third generation American who grew up "with a very American lifestyle," Kathryn often felt judged by both the white and Asian communities. "It was very difficult to figure out where I belong and who I am because [there are] two sets of expectations."



As a third generation Asian, my Japanese and Chinese sides of the family spent decades defining their places in America that gave me opportunities with less limitations. However, there's still work that needs to be done.

I strive to continue the fight against stereotypes and expectations, so my future children can exist without restriction. You cannot define them or put them in a box. I want to be unassuming, so they possess the power to be anyone or anything they want to be.

Kathryn Iwasaki

'I'VE WALKED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS':

WHAT BELONGING MEANS FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

CHRISTINA SON AND DAUGHTER HANNAH

Hannah Son, right, tries to imagine what it was like for her mother, Christina, left, to leave Korea at 23 to start a new life in a country where she didn't speak the language and didn't know anyone. "I can't fathom that," she says. She sees a shift between her parents, who "kept their heads low and tried to stay out of the limelight" and her generation, who are "less afraid to speak out." "Being Asian American means that you're a mix between these two cultures that you're trying to understand," Hannah says. "The more you accept that you can be both, the more you realize you have a place here and that you deserve to feel safe and to be heard."



I think it's safe to say that every Asian-American has struggled with this question because sometimes it feels like we're still having to prove that we belong. There's no one right way to be Asian in this country, yet the reality is that we find ourselves trying to bend into one shape that doesn't fit all. As a daughter of immigrants, it's been a journey rooted in conformity, learning, unlearning, relearning, and reflection to embrace my identity. Being a second-generation Korean-American used to feel like a burden to me. Now, I claim the title proudly. We've always belonged. Our generation's legacy will be demanding a seat at the table and standing in solidarity against all forms of discrimination, racism, and microaggressions against all people. Please lead with love.

Hannah

'I'VE WALKED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS':

WHAT BELONGING MEANS FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

MILA KONOMOS AND DAUGHTER MAGENTA

Mila Konomos, left, works hard to give her daughter and son the upbringing she never had. Taken from her mother in Seoul and adopted by a white family at six months old, Mila grew up on American military bases and was bullied for being Asian. She reunited with her birth parents in Korea in 2009, which helped her “gain understanding of how my existence in this country is the result of imperialism and colonialism and white supremacy.” [She says:] “I’m raising biracial children, and even though I want them to have the space to develop their own identity, I know they’re going to be seen as Asian, and they’ll be treated as such.”



For me, belonging has meant recreating & reimagining what belonging means & looks like. As a Transracial, Transnational Adoptee, my identity & hence, my belonging was erased, taken from me. For a long time, I tried to become someone who would belong. But over time, I realized this was impossible.

We feel belonging when we feel loved, valued & understood. I don't need to find belonging. Rather we find the ones who love & understand us.

I do not need to become someone who belongs. Rather, the world needs to expand its idea of who belongs.

I belong because I have inherent value. We belong because we are all worthy of love & understanding.

I feel as if I belong to nothing except my emotions



Appendix D: Lesson C: Plan, Materials, and Examples – *Six-Word Memoirs & PostSecret*

LESSON C: SIX-WORD MEMOIRS & POSTSECRET

TRAINEE TEACHER: DEBORAH ROSA (A44699) / TEACHER TRAINER: MARIA JOSÉ PEREIRA

Class profile¹⁹:

- Grade 12.
- 26 students.
- CEFR English Level: B2.1/B2.2 (Direção-Geral da Educação, 2018).

Portuguese syllabus fitting:

- A Língua Inglesa no Mundo: Evolução da língua inglesa enquanto fenómeno social, político e cultural; Diversidade na língua inglesa.

Resources:

- José Saramago's interview, "The Art of Fiction No. 155".
- *Not Quite What I Was Planning: Six-Word Memoirs by Writers Famous and Obscure*, edited by Fershleiser & Smith.
- Frank Warren's mail art project, PostSecret.

Main aims:

- to foster an appreciation for literary works and multimodal texts;
- to enhance students' awareness of the use of language, namely, word formation;
- to improve students' 21st-century skills, namely, critical thinking; communication; collaboration and creativity;
- to encourage students' discussions and participation by seeking and sharing information through interaction.

Duration:

- 2 lessons of 45 minutes.

¹⁹ The students are enrolled in Grade 12 of *Curso Científico-Humanístico de Artes Visuais*; *Curso Científico-Humanístico de Ciências e Tecnologias*; and *Curso Científico-Humanístico de Línguas e Humanidades*, at Escola Secundário D. João II.

LESSON PLAN C: SIX-WORD MEMOIRS

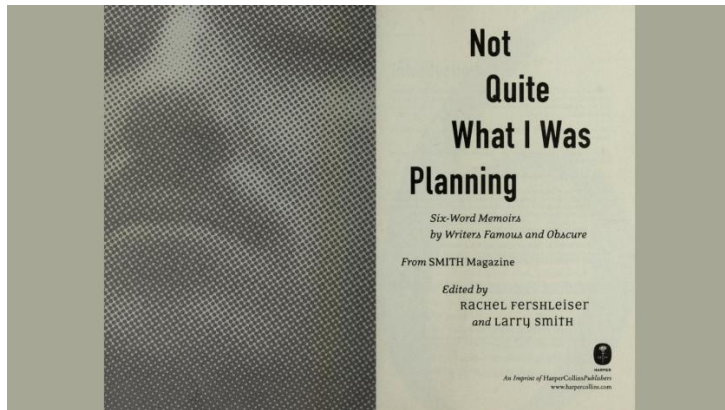
Learning objectives [By the end of the lesson, learners should be able to...]	Procedures	Interaction	Time	Materials and teaching aids
Recall and synthesize learnt content.	Step 1 The teacher welcomes students into the classroom.	Teacher Whole class	3 minutes	Computer Projector Students' smartphones Wi-Fi connection Students's notebooks
	Step 2: Warm-up The teacher asks a volunteer to give a summary of the previous lesson: e.g.: We read and analyzed Allen Ginsberg's poem, <i>America</i>. We recreated LCD Soundsystem's song, <i>New York, I Love You But You Are Bringing Me Down</i> by writing about Portugal & Setúbal on our Morning Pages. We also talked about the hate crimes that happened/are happening in Oporto.			
Rely upon knowledge of the world.	Step 3: Pre-reading & Reading	Teacher	25 minutes	Excerpts' copies

• Skim a text. • Identify important information. • Identify, apply, and consolidate the use of language: Word Formation.	• The teacher displays the following question on the platform Mentimeter.com: - How many Nobel Prizes has Portugal won? • The students answer the question and briefly discuss the Portuguese writer José Saramago. • The teacher informs the students they will read an excerpt of Saramago's interview from the Magazine <i>The Paris Review</i>, "The Art of Fiction No. 155". • The teacher organizes the group dynamic and hands out the selected material. • The students read the excerpt and complete Worksheet 1. • The teacher observes students' contributions and intervenes if necessary.	Whole class Group work		Worksheet 1 PPT
• Understand and follow instructions. • Active reading multimodal texts. • Relate aspects of the work to their own experience.	Step 4: Reading; Writing; Peer-correcting & Spoken Interaction • The teacher tells the students they will read selected excerpts from the book <i>Not Quite What I Was Planning: Six-Word Memoirs</i>, edited by Fershleiser and Smith. • The teacher goes through some six-word memoir examples with the students. • The teacher explains that each one of them will create at least 4 different six-word memoirs. • The teacher reorganizes the group dynamic and shares the selected materials. • The students write their six-word memoirs. • The students proofread their peers' writing.	Teacher Individual work within groups	30 minutes	Computer Projector PPT Students' smartphones

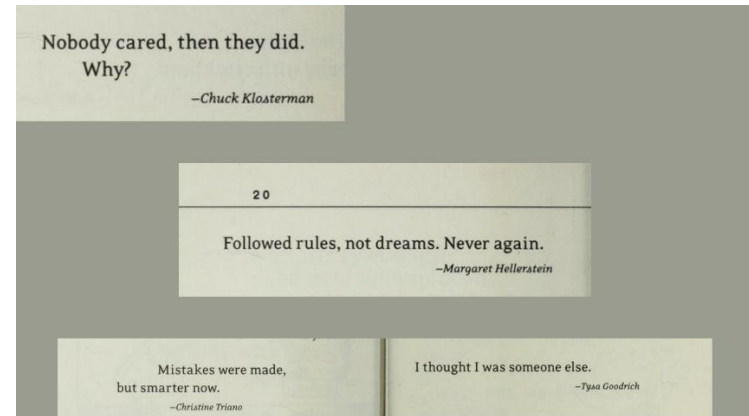
Convey personal messages with good expression in an appropriate tone and style.				Wi-Fi connection Selected excerpts
- Use learned material in new situations. - Practice autonomy. - Define personal goals. - Co-construct ideas and solutions.	Step 5: Concept mapping; Decision-making & Co-operating - The teacher presents Frank Warren's mail art project, PostSecret. - The teacher goes through some post examples with the students. - The teacher asks them to recreate this art project by using their six-word memoirs, and the collage materials they have brought to class²⁰. - The teacher hands out different colored papers and some collage materials. - The teacher observes students' performance and intervenes if necessary.	Teacher Individual work within groups	30 minutes	Collage materials
- Engage in conversation that requires negotiation. - Actively participate in collaborative project work.	Step 6: Summary - The teacher informs the students that they will finish and share their work in the next class. - The teacher shows the summary published on the class's online platform, Google Classroom. - The teacher tells the students to organize their materials and rearrange the classroom.	Teacher Whole class	2 minutes	Projector Collage materials PPT

²⁰ In the previous lesson, the students were asked to bring cutout magazines/newspapers; photographs; found objects (e.g., flowers, buttons, beads...); markers; etc.

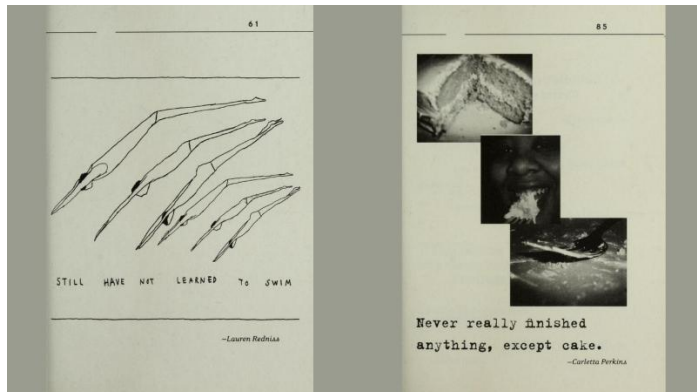
LESSON C: SIX-WORD MEMOIRS & POSTSECRET (POWERPOINT)



Slide 1



Slide 2



Slide 3

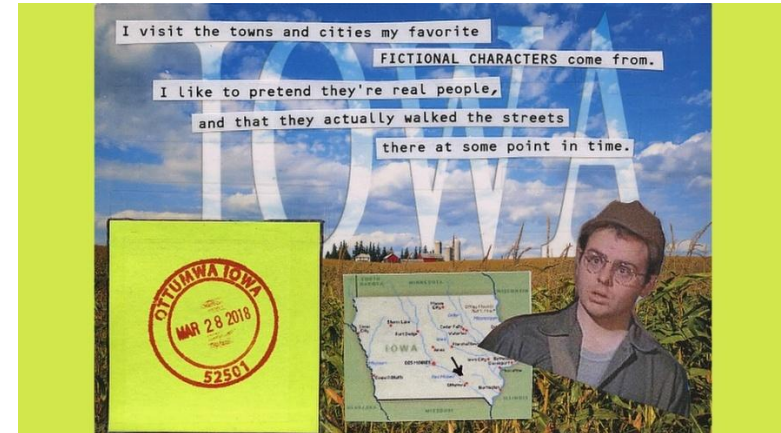
POST SECRET

Slide 4

LESSON C: SIX-WORD MEMOIRS & POSTSECRET (POWERPOINT)



Slide 5



Slide 6

Summary

- Reading & Use of Language: José Saramago's interview, *The Art of Fiction No. 155*;
- Reading & Spoken Interaction: *Not Quite What I Was Planning: Six-Word Memoirs* by Writers Famous and Obscure, from SMITH Magazine;
- Writing: Six-word memoirs.
- Recreating Frank Warren's mail art project, PostSecret.

Slide 4

Appendix D: Task – Six-Word Memoirs (Examples)

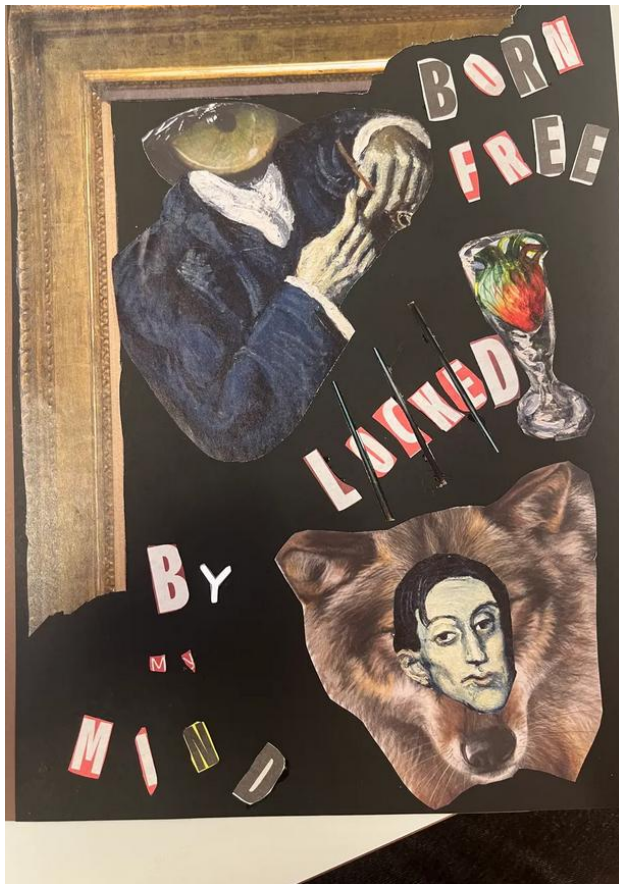


Figure A: Six-Word Memoirs - Example of Student's Work



Figure B: Six-Word Memoirs - Example of Student's Work

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Appendix E: Assessment – Written Test and Written Production Examples

GROUP I: LISTENING & WATCHING
--

A. Based on Vox's documentary, "How Iran's Repression Machine Works" (Dec 22, 2022), choose the correct answer: (8 x 20 = 160)

1. Mahsa Amini was detained by Iran's "Morality Police" for _____ wearing her hijab.
 - a) correctly
 - b) improperly
 - c) religiously
2. Mahsa Amini collapsed and fell into a coma after being _____.
 - a) fined by the Morality Police
 - b) transferred to a detention center
 - c) beaten in a van
3. Protesters responded to Mahsa Amini's death by _____.
 - a) cutting their hair
 - b) shutting down the Internet
 - c) posting on social media
4. The Morality Police primarily enforce _____.
 - a) traffic laws
 - b) the regime's strict dress code
 - c) environmental regulations
5. The main target of the Morality Police's enforcement efforts is:
 - a) Men's attire
 - b) Women's hijab
 - c) Public gatherings
6. Economic frustrations and political repression led to uprisings calling for _____.
 - a) secular monarchy
 - b) new Islamic rule
 - c) military dictatorship
7. In the 1970s, Iran's political system can be described as a:
 - a) Democracy
 - b) Monarchy
 - c) Republic

8. Despite political restrictions, Iranians under the Shah enjoyed:

- a) Freedom of speech
- b) Economic prosperity
- c) Social freedom

B. According to Vox's documentary, complete the following statement: (2 x 20 = 40)

As a result, Iran shut down the **9.** _____.
But hundreds of social media posts of people protesting her death have surfaced over the last three months, including videos of women defiantly cutting their hair, the **10.** _____ the regime wants hidden under the hijab.

GROUP III: READING & COMPREHENSION + WRITTEN PRODUCTION
--

F. Select the excerpt from ONE of the following graphic novels and write a detailed analysis of the chosen work:

- *Persepolis*, by Marjane Satrapi (pp. 26-29);
OR
- *1984: The Graphic Novel*, written by George Orwell & illustrated by Fido Nesti (pp. 7-10).

You must:

- Provide a title for your analysis;
- Explore how the graphic novel's excerpt addresses themes such as **Censorship, Citizenship, Culture, Freedom, Identity, Information, Oppression/Repression, Loyalty, Language, Society, etc;**
- Provide specific examples/quotes from the multimodal text to support your analysis;
- Consider whether the visual elements contribute to the storytelling;
- Reflect on whether or not the graphic novel can be relevant in today's world.

(1 x 200 = 200)

Appendix E: Written Production – Examples

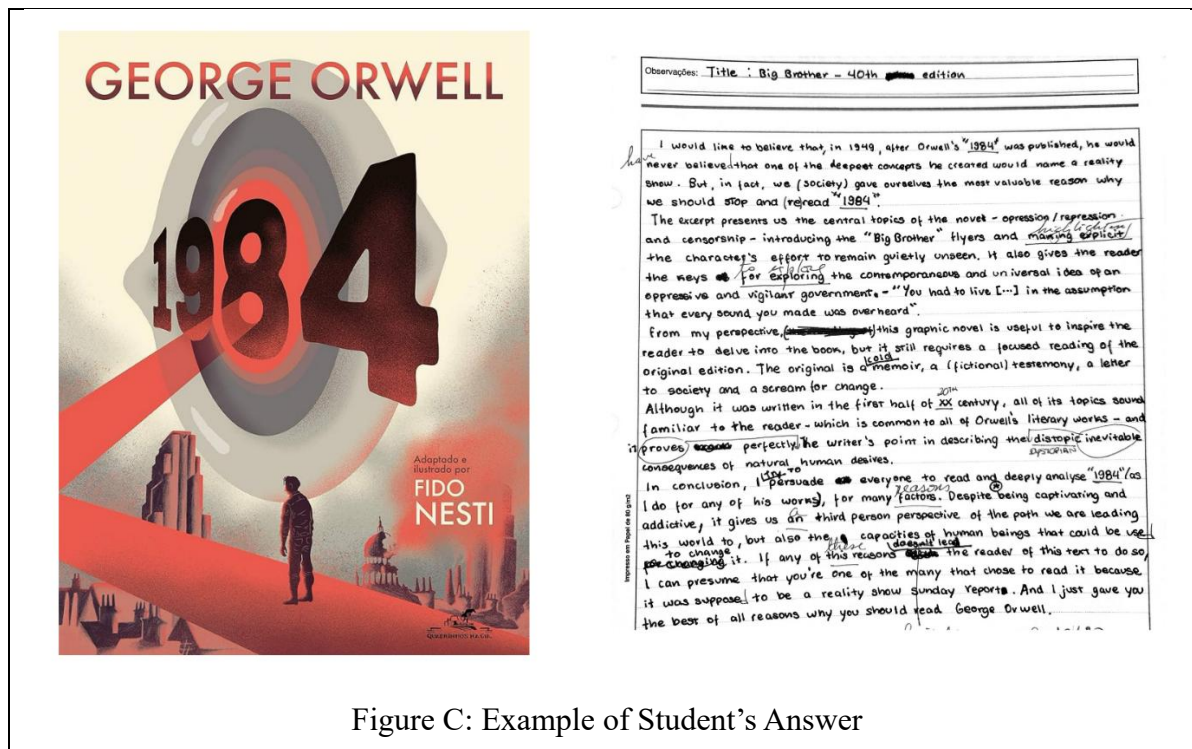


Figure C: Example of Student's Answer

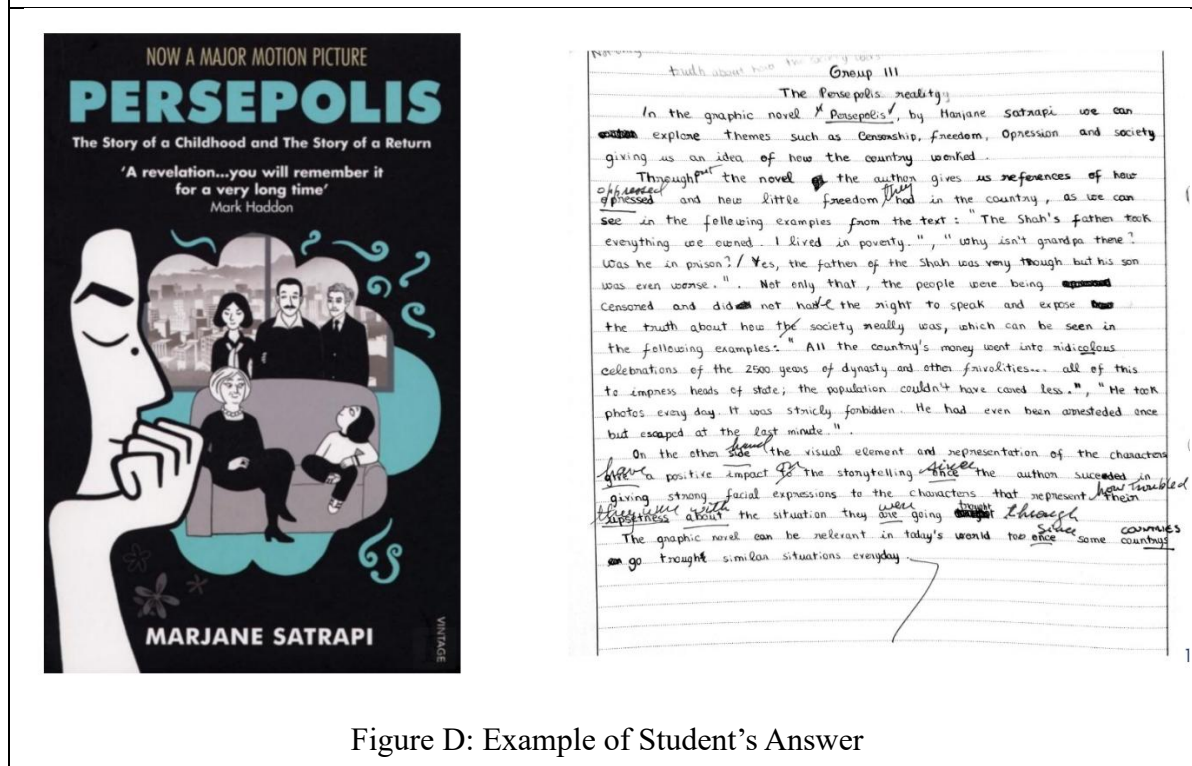


Figure D: Example of Student's Answer

Appendix F: Assignment – Oral Presentation (Example)

Transcript – Excerpts:

Oral Presentation Video – “Our Multicultural Experience”

Student A

“I remember my first day of school there like it was yesterday. I barely knew any English or as much as a Portuguese 7-year-old can know. I knew colors maybe a little bit of animals. And it was pretty rough. I remember my first friend, [friend’s name], and we would talk through almost hand gestures because well I didn’t know English and then I attended special classes [...] which helped me learn English.

[...]

Oh, and I would like to end this by saying that I personally didn’t... Thankfully I didn’t experience any kind of racism or xenophobic comments. The only thing people told me was to go back to my home country but that’s normal that’s the classic but yeah [...].”

Student B

“The city I lived in was always very dangerous so my parents wouldn’t let me leave the house alone or even with my friends which always made me sad because I couldn’t enjoy life and have the same experience as my friends. My luck was that I lived in a private condominium, so my parents let me stay in the condominium area but even that didn’t guarantee our safety. The condominium was in the middle of the city and avenue, so it was a very busy place where tragedies always happen such as rape, robbery, firing, shooting disappearances, and many others.

[...]

When I arrived in Portugal, I confess that it was very difficult to get used to it. Especially the school which was different from what I was used to. As difficult as it was, I liked this new world and was prepared to face any difficulty.

[...]

Of course, it’s not all flowers. We always have something to complain about, but this isn’t the right time.

[...]

I never thought that one day I would live in such a wonderful place.

[...]

It's a gift to be able to wake up every day and see the sunrise on my way to school here. I found my place here I found the peace and freedom I was looking for.

[...]

Finally, I would like to apologize for all [...] [my compatriots that] come to Portugal with bad intentions and end up harming those who come with the end of studying and having a safer life”.

Student C

“I was born in Portugal, but my parents are [parent's nationality].

[...]

Growing up with immigrant parents gave me a unique and reaching perspective.

I believe that this cultural duality shaped who I am, and I feel that I carried the best of two worlds. I am not just Portuguese or [parent's nationality] I am a blend of both cultures, and these reflect in my worldview, and my values, and who I am, and my way of being. This mix of cultures is a source of pride and gives me an inclusive perspective which I carry with me in all areas of my life. Being the child of immigrants has its own difficulties and challenges. One of the biggest challenges is the feeling of not belonging. Growing up in Portugal, I often felt different from my classmates even though I consider myself Portuguese.

[...]

This sometimes made me feel like I was between two worlds and without completely belonging to either.”

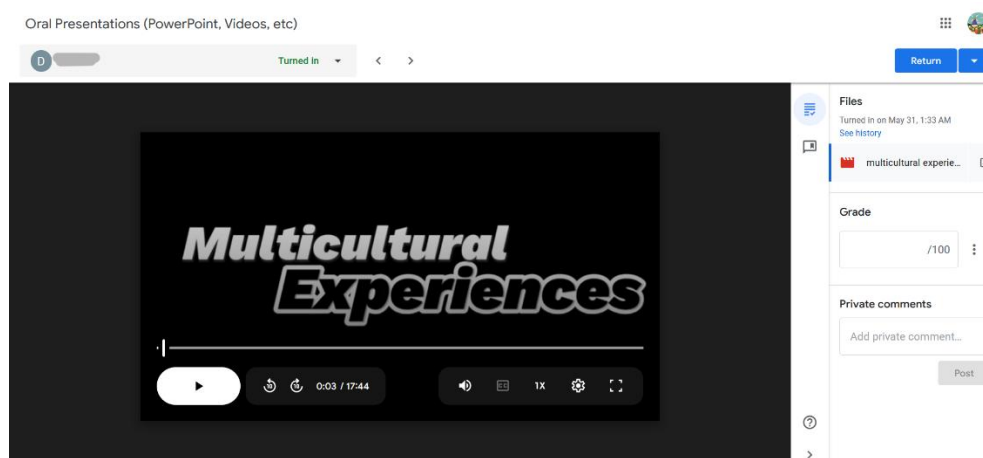


Figure E: Oral Presentation Video – “Our Multicultural Experience” (submitted through Google Classroom).

Appendix G: Assignment – *Last Line Magazine* (Examples)

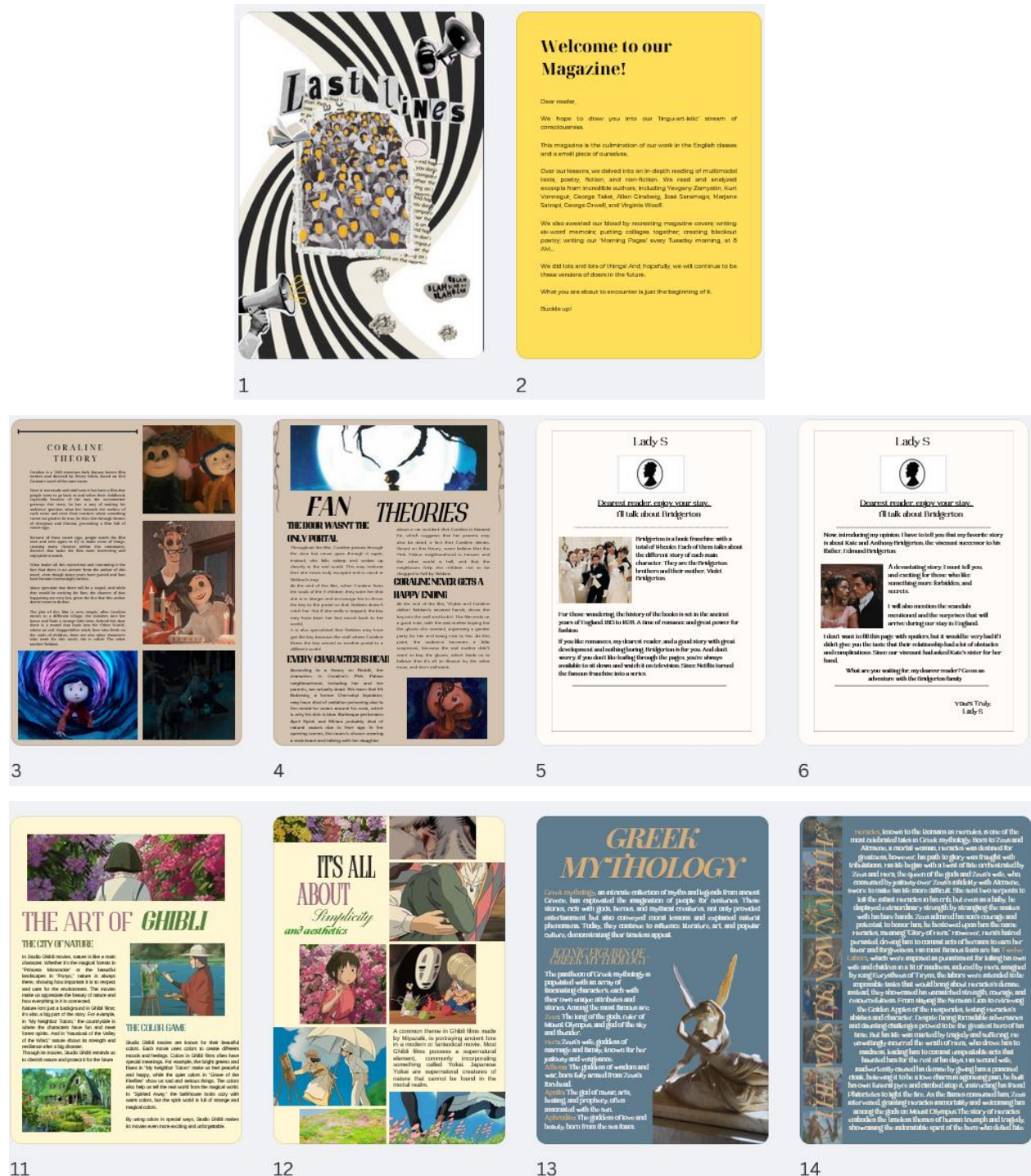


Figure F: *Last Line Magazine* - Example of Students' Work

Appendix H: Questionnaire A – Examples of Students' Answers (12A)

How would you define Critical Thinking? (12A)

Original	Translated
<i>“O pensamento crítico é o ato de olharmos para algo, desenvolvermos uma opinião e pensarmos sobre o assunto.”</i>	<i>“Critical thinking is the act of looking at something, developing an opinion, and reflecting on the subject.”</i>
<i>“É a capacidade de formar uma opinião própria em relação a algo com base em informações e experiências e construir argumentos com base nisso.”</i>	<i>“It is the ability to formulate our own opinion about something based on information and experiences and build arguments based on that.”</i>
<i>“Construção de formas de expressão da opinião informadas e conscientes em relação aos factos do mundo.”</i>	<i>“The construction of informed and conscious ways of expressing opinions in relation to the facts of the world.”</i>
<i>“Pensamento crítico é algo que todos nós devemos ter pois é com ele que ganhamos a capacidade desafiar de certa forma as ideias que a sociedade nos impõe.”</i>	<i>“Critical thinking is something we should all have, because it is through it that we gain the ability to challenge, in a way, the ideas that society imposes on us.”</i>

How important do you think critical thinking is? (12A)

Original	Translated
<i>“Ter pensamento crítico é muito importante pois é importante termos uma opinião própria e formada especialmente nos dias de hoje com todas as controvérsias sobre o que se passa no planeta. Ajuda-nos também a refletir sobre as coisas e fundamentar a nossa opinião real e o que realmente achamos das coisas.”</i>	<i>“Having critical thinking is very important because it is essential to have a personal and well-formed opinion, especially nowadays with all the controversies about what is happening on the planet. It also helps us reflect on things and ground our real opinions on what we truly think about them.”</i>
<i>“Na minha opinião, o pensamento crítico é muito importante pois faz-nos ter as nossas próprias opiniões e estar mais acordados acerca das coisas e do mundo.”</i>	<i>“In my opinion, critical thinking is very important because it helps us create our own opinions and become more aware of things and the world around us.”</i>
<i>“É muito importante, essencial para o desenvolvimento, permite “sair da caixa” de pensamento e olhar para um tópico a partir de outros ângulos.”</i>	<i>“It is very important, essential for development, as it allows us to “think outside the box” and view a topic from different perspectives.”</i>
<i>“Na minha opinião, o pensamento crítico é muito importante, porque querendo ou não vamos estar sempre a usa-lo para tudo, mesmo que não percebamos e é importante para nos fazer refletir sobre tudo ao nosso redor e sobre nós mesmos.”</i>	<i>“In my opinion, critical thinking is very important because, whether we realize it or not, we will always use it for everything, even if we do not fully understand, and it is crucial for making us reflect on everything around us and about ourselves.”</i>

Appendix I: Questionnaire A – Examples of Students’ Answers (12B)

How would you define Critical Thinking? (12B)

Original	Translated
<i>“O pensamento crítico é uma análise voluntária feita através de um julgamento interno com base no pensamento e na racionalização.”</i>	<i>“Critical thinking is a voluntary analysis made through an internal judgment based on thought and reasoning.”</i>
<i>“É nossa habilidade de saber questionar tudo o que nos rodeia.”</i>	<i>“It is our ability to question everything around us.”</i>
<i>“Não sei explicar.”</i>	<i>“I don't know how to explain.”</i>
<i>“Não sei.”</i>	<i>“I don't know.”</i>
<i>“É um pensamento que usamos para criar argumentos para refutar uma tese ou para provar que a tese é verdade.”</i>	<i>“It's a type of thinking we use to create arguments to refute a thesis or to prove that the thesis is true.”</i>
<i>“Pensamento critico é a capacidade de analisar informações de forma logica e objetiva.”</i>	<i>“Critical thinking is the ability to analyze information in a logical and objective way.”</i>

How important do you think critical thinking is? (12B)

Original	Translated
<i>“O pensamento crítico é essencial para a autoavaliação de certos cenários que nos podem ser apresentados como positivos ou negativos.”</i>	<i>“Critical thinking is essential for self-assessing certain situations that may be presented to us as either positive or negative.”</i>
<i>“O pensamento crítico é algo bastante importante para a sociedade pois desta maneira cada um consegue se diferenciar da sua maneira única.”</i>	<i>“Critical thinking is something very important for society, because this way each person can stand out in their own unique way.”</i>
<i>“Muito importante.”</i>	<i>“Very important.”</i>
<i>“É importante para podermos debater.”</i>	<i>“It's important so that we can debate.”</i>
<i>“Se não houver pensamento crítico todos vão ter a mesma opinião.”</i>	<i>“If there is no critical thinking, everyone will have the same opinion.”</i>
<i>“Algo muito necessário nos dias de hoje, é importante sabermos pensar por nós mesmos e saber questionar tudo ao nosso redor, o que ajuda a formar as nossas próprias opiniões e crenças.”</i>	<i>“Something very necessary nowadays is the ability to think for ourselves and to question everything around us, which helps us form our own opinions and beliefs.”</i>

Appendix J: Questionnaire B – Examples of Students’ General Feedback (12A)

Original	Translated
<i>“Achei imensamente útil e interessante o uso de várias plataformas ex. Canva, Metimeter para dinamizar as aulas. Acabei por desenvolver mais a minha escrita graças ao “morning pages” e consequentemente ajudou-me a começar o critical thinking logo de manhã.”</i>	<i>“I found the use of various platforms, like Canva and Metimeter, extremely useful and interesting for making the classes more dynamic. I ended up improving my writing thanks to the “morning pages” and, as a result, it helped me start thinking critically right from the morning.”</i>
<i>“Neste ano letivo, as aulas de inglês foram bastante interessantes graças ao trabalho da professora estagiária Deborah, as iniciativas que ela propunha nunca foram negadas pela turma, tornando as aulas assim super didáticas e um espaço onde pusemos a nossa criatividade a trabalhar lado a lado com as matérias da disciplina.”</i>	<i>“This school year, the English classes were quite interesting thanks to the work of the student teacher, Deborah. The initiatives she proposed were never turned down by the class, which made the lessons very didactic and created a space where we could work on our creativity alongside the course material.”</i>
<i>“Acho que estas aulas de inglês foram muito importantes e ajudaram o meu desenvolvimento mesmo a nível social. Acho que para além de intervirem connosco ao nível do nosso inglês, as professoras sempre procuraram introduzir e explorar questões sociais. Acho que esta foi uma disciplina muito interativa e interessante, ao longo do ano fizemos diversas atividades bonitas.”</i>	<i>“I think these English classes were very important and helped my development, even on a social level. I believe that, in addition to working with us on our English, the teachers always sought to introduce and explore social issues. I think this was a very interactive and interesting subject, and throughout the year we did many beautiful activities.”</i>
<i>“Foi tudo muito bom, os alunos alguns não participavam tanto impossibilitando conversas mais fluídas mas em geral a maioria das aulas foram super interessantes.”</i>	<i>“Everything was really good; some students didn’t participate as much, which made it difficult to have more fluid conversations, but overall, most of the classes were very interesting.”</i>
<i>“Foi uma experiência interessante, por assim dizer. Não esperava que o meu 12º ano teria aulas onde fosse encorajado a criatividade e pensamento artístico, e fui apanhado de surpresa. No entanto, ainda assim foi um final de ano ótimo, desde as leituras de textos até à criação da magazine.”</i>	<i>“It was an interesting experience, so to speak. I did not expect that my senior year would have classes where creativity and artistic thinking would be encouraged, and I was pleasantly surprised. Nevertheless, it was a great end to the year, from reading texts to creating the magazine.”</i>

Appendix J: Questionnaire B – Examples of Students’ General Feedback (12A) (cont.)

<i>“As aulas foram muito interativas e criativas pelos trabalhos manuais que realizámos e pelas apresentações orais este tipo de aulas ajuda muito para a nossa aprendizagem e deixa as aulas menos boring”</i>	<i>“The classes were very interactive and creative due to the hands-on projects we did and the oral presentations. This type of class really helps our learning and makes the lessons less boring.”</i>
<i>“Eu gostei muito das aulas de inglês, apesar da minha nota final não ter sido a que esperava. Acho que os materiais utilizados foram bons principalmente os formulários que fomos fazendo nas aulas e a utilização de websites. Acho que o incentivo que a Deborah proporcionou-nos em termos de oralidade vai nos ajudar muito no futuro, principalmente na universidade e no campo de trabalho. Por fim gostaria de agradecer à professora Misé e à estagiária Deborah por nos terem dado aula neste último ano, vou ter saudades vossas, beijinhos!”</i>	<i>“I really enjoyed the English classes, even though my final grade was not what I expected. I think the materials used were good, especially the forms we filled out in class and the use of websites. I believe the encouragement that Deborah gave us in terms of oral practice will help us a lot in the future, especially in university and in the workforce. Finally, I would like to thank teacher Misé and student teacher Deborah for teaching us this last year. I will miss you both, kisses!”</i>