CLIL THROUGH STORYTELLING:

A Reflective Study with Primary School Pupils

SÓNIA FILIPA RAMOS VAZ

Provas destinadas à obtenção do grau de Mestre em Ensino de Inglês no 1º Ciclo

outubro de 2023

Versão Final

ISEC LISBOA | INSTITUTO SUPERIOR DE EDUCAÇÃO E CIÊNCIAS

Escola de Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano

Provas para a obtenção do grau de Mestre em Ensino de Inglês no 1º Ciclo

CLIL THROUGH STORYTELLING

A Reflective Study with Primary School Pupils

Autora: Sónia Filipa Ramos Vaz

Orientador: Mestre Sarah Narciso

Coorientador: Professor Doutor José Reis Jorge

outubro de 2023

“There are as many right ways to tell stories as there are stories to tell.”

(Collins & Cooper, 1997, p. 63)

Agradecimentos

E como este trabalho conta tanto da minha história, não poderia deixar de agradecer, a todos, os que ao longo da minha vida contribuíram direta ou indiretamente para que esta história fosse contada.

Aos meus pais, por me incutirem o gosto pelo estudo e pelo trabalho, por acreditarem em mim e me permitirem, sempre, ser quem sou. Particularmente à minha mãe, por me ter incentivado o gosto pela leitura. E ao meu pai, cujo sonho era saber falar inglês, e que tudo fez para que eu aprendesse.

À minha irmã. A minha primeira professora. Que me ensinou a ler antes de eu ir para a escola e palavras difíceis como desmoronar, e que, sem saber, me inspirou a ser professora com esta paixão por ensinar.

Aos meus primos, Sara e Marco, por terem sido os meus primeiros alunos nas tardes em que eu destruía as suas brincadeiras preferidas para brincarmos às escolas.

À minha tia Bi, cuja falta sinto todos os dias, que me levou à minha primeira exposição sobre dinossauros, de onde nasceu a minha paixão pela paleontologia.

Ao meu marido, que nem sempre entende as minhas convicções, mas que acaba sempre por aceitar.

Às minhas sobrinhas, Maria e Madalena, pelo seu amor incondicional. Pelas amigas que são. À Madalena pela sua visão prática, por descomplicar, pelo tanto que me ensina. À Maria, por todas as vezes – e são tantas – em que invertemos os papéis e é ela quem toma conta de mim. Pelas horas infindáveis a rever este trabalho, a dar sugestões, a fazer com que acontecesse.

Aos meus filhos, Duarte e Sofia, por me inspirarem com as histórias antes de adormecer, por (quase) nunca se queixarem do tempo que o meu trabalho lhes rouba, por saberem que sou feliz a trabalhar e que isso me torna, também, numa mãe melhor. Por me inspirarem sempre, todos os dias, cada um à sua maneira, a ser a melhor versão de mim mesma, o melhor exemplo para eles.

Aos meus colegas de curso, Frederico Alves e Raquel Costa Marques, por todas as reflexões, trabalhos de grupo e confissões ao longo da frequência do mestrado. Convosco foi tudo tão mais fácil.

Ao professor Paul Figueiredo e à minha mentora, Neide Ribeiro, por acreditarem neste projeto, nas minhas ideias e me darem o feedback que serviu de base a esta reflexão.

Aos professores Sarah Narciso e José Reis Jorge por todo o apoio e sugestões. Sem eles, não teria sido possível.

À minha escola (a minha casa), os Salesianos do Estoril, que confia no meu trabalho, nas minhas ideias e no meu profissionalismo desde o primeiro dia. A escola a quem me entrego, de alma e coração, todos os dias.

Muito, muito obrigada!

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FL	Foreign Language
IWB	Interactive White Board
L1	First Language
SEN	Special Educational Needs
TPR	Total Physical Response

Resumo

O presente estudo, assente numa reflexão crítica, num contexto de prática supervisionada, foi conduzido num ambiente do primeiro ciclo, com alunos do terceiro ano nas suas aulas de inglês enquanto língua estrangeira. O ponto de partida para a investigação foi o efeito na motivação, criatividade e capacidade de utilizar a língua estrangeira na sala de aula, mediante a utilização da metodologia *Content and Language Integrated Learning*, aplicada ao ensino das ciências, através da narração de histórias. Esta, foi facilitada pela perspetiva emergentista no desenvolvimento da literacia, pelo uso de diferenciação pedagógica de acordo com os níveis académicos dos participantes e pela criação de oportunidades de trabalho de grupo. Os resultados apresentados foram alcançados através de planeamento, observação de aulas e recolha de *feedback* dos mentores com o objetivo de melhorar o planeamento futuro e de contribuir para a autorreflexão. No decurso do estudo os participantes tornaram-se mais proficientes no uso da língua estrangeira para comunicarem e mais motivados para as aprendizagens. Adicionalmente, os alunos com menor performance académica demonstraram maior abertura a situações desafiantes e, logo, mais criatividade. Participantes com necessidades educativas especiais vivenciaram mais oportunidades de pertença no grupo, o que contribuiu para a sua autorregulação.

Palavras-Chave

Content and Language Integrated Learning, *English as a Foreign Language*, Ensino das ciências, narração de histórias, reflexão

Abstract

The present study consisted of a critical reflection based on a set of observed lessons which was conducted in a Primary School setting with third grade students in their English as a Foreign Language classes. It investigated the effect of teaching Content and Language Integrated Learning (science) through storytelling in students' motivation, creativity and ability to use English in the classroom which were facilitated by both the emergentist perspective in the development of literacy, pedagogical differentiation concerning the students' levels of academic achievement and providing groupwork opportunities. The presented outcomes were achieved through planning, class observation, using feedback from mentors to improve future planning and self-reflection. Throughout the study participants became more proficient in using English to communicate and more motivated towards learning. In addition, lower ability students were found to be more prone to engage in challenging situations and therefore more creative. Also, SEN students had more chances to find a place within their peers which helped improving their self-regulation.

Keywords

Content and Language Integrated Learning, English as a Foreign Language, reflection, science teaching, storytelling

1. Introduction

This project is probably the project of my life. It encloses a turning point in my teaching career and even though I am aware that maybe this will not be for life (what is?) or that tomorrow I may find another topic I feel more motivated to learn about, it makes the obvious link which liaises my science degree with my experience of teaching English as a foreign language.

When I first started teaching, I thought that my geology degree was of no use, I even thought that it could have been a waste of time. However, throughout this Master's course I have learnt that my past experiences are what define me as a professional and therefore, I found out that I no longer want to dissociate the teacher I am to the science student I was. I have actually learnt to accept and enjoy this peculiar path, not very common to many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, but the one that makes me unique.

Then, and because the child I was and the mother I am cannot be dissociated from the professional I also am, my absolute love for stories came along. The stories I told my children at bedtime. The stories in which involvement, science and English converged – the starting point of this journey.

Thus, in this reflective study which I have conducted with my Year 3 students, I have had the opportunity to find my professional self, to put all the pieces together – science, English and stories - and to write this reflection as the outcome of that personal and professional discovery journey. This gave me the opportunity to do something I am extremely passionate about and learning as much as I could about my teaching and my students.

I certainly do not know whether Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is the way, but it certainly *was* and still *is* very dear to me. It might not also be the perfect methodology, as none is, nevertheless it opens our ways to challenge and motivation by keeping students on track as they have broader opportunities to build up their

knowledge to face a world in which they will have to communicate in English and use it for a variety of purposes.

In order to complete this reflective study, I decided to integrate the lessons, further described in section 5, in my teaching practice programme so as to guarantee critical reflection from both my school mentor and my course professor. The fact that most lessons have been observed and then replanned according to their suggestions has truly enriched findings in areas there were not aimed at before. Also, in the lessons I taught, I have only focused in science as it is the content which is closer to my heart and the one I know the most about, but I leave the door open to further research in this area and to other CLIL possibilities, in which lessons can be taught by a content teacher instead of a language teacher.

The study starts with a theoretical framework in What is CLIL (section 2), the Importance of Storytelling (section 3) and how they link according to my perspective (section 4). These sections aim to provide all the necessary background information and to show how the three areas converge into a study of this nature.

Finally, in section 5 there is a detailed explanation of how the project was born and some ideas left behind or new decisions made. The values and limitations - that I describe as "dilemmas" according to Calderhead (1993) – of a study predominantly based on reflection are also reviewed here. In addition, this section is divided into two parts – two stories: "The East and the West" and "Mary Anning". These parts are subdivided in lessons and in each lesson major outcomes are presented. These outcomes are the ones which informed the conclusions collected and appear as a result of my teaching observation practice.

I hope it is as enjoyable to read as it was to write.

2. What is CLIL?

CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning, i.e., learning a foreign language through content and/or content through a foreign language. According to Gjendemsjø (2013) "in the CLIL approach the focus is on learning through and with a foreign or additional language, as opposed to simply learning in a foreign language" (Gjendemsjø, 2013, p. 17). They both are closely intertwined and develop together, towards one common goal: purposeful learning.

CLIL therefore represents a pedagogical approach in which not only language blends with content, but also one in which innovation meets tradition, motivation mingles with creativity and teaching becomes involving.

Although it can be seen as "a chameleon which means different things to different contexts" (Arnold, 2010, p. 227), due to its adaptive and open philosophy, it is more likely to become implemented by 'chameleon' teachers who enjoy challenge and have no fear of responding to new demands of the profession without running the risk of accommodating to the easy way of doing things they already know work well. Furthermore, CLIL allows teachers to create and innovate in a continuous motivating practice that takes their students to new places and topics in a never-ending adventure through meaningful learning. With CLIL, everything is possible, all ideas are acceptable, and everyone is catered for and according to Coyle, Hood & Marsh, (2010, p. 1) it can be described as "a dual-focused educational approach in which an **additional language** is used for the learning and teaching of both content *and* language." Nevertheless, the authors also acknowledge the fact that, in CLIL, neither language or subject learning overcome each other. It is exactly the perfect "amalgam of both" that makes CLIL so unique – it caters for the fusion and convergence of previously fragmented areas, such as Science and English and this is exactly "where CLIL breaks new ground" (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010, p. 4).

In addition, Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols (2008, p. 11) advocate that "CLIL is a tool for the teaching and learning of content and language" whose essence is integration. The authors consider that "this integration has a dual focus" (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 11):

1) Language learning is included in content classes (e.g., maths, history, geography, computer programming, science, civics, etc.). (…)
2) Content from subjects is used in language-learning classes. The language teacher, working together with teachers of other subjects, incorporates into his or her classes. Students learn the language and discourse patterns they need to understand and use the content.

All reflections and conclusions included in this thesis are representative of the second CLIL focus described by Mehisto et al (2008) above. In this particular case, CLIL was developed in regular primary EFL (English as a Foreign Language) lessons which included content from their primary science syllabus (which in the Portuguese curriculum is a subject called 'Estudo do Meio'). Hence, the lessons I created for this project followed this visionary methodology which considers that "CLIL is not a new form of language education. It is not a new form of subject education. It is an innovative fusion of both" (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010, p. 1).

This way, learning becomes more meaningful, long-lasting and complete. It represents a whole instead of the sum of many parts. It embraces the future and yet, it stays open and aware. Through its "content-driven" (Coyle et al, 2010, p. 1) approach, CLIL enriches those EFL classes in which content is depleted and language learning is favoured. This becomes possible by extending "the experience of learning a language" (Coyle et al, 2010, p. 1) *i.e.* by giving learners the opportunity of learning things other than vocabulary and grammar at the same time they are actually learning vocabulary and grammar.

The importance of learning and practising both grammar and vocabulary is not being questioned or diminished here, in fact, they are seen as pivotal for language learning and progression which is something CLIL projects do truly care about. However, it is far too common to hear students complaining about the fact that they are learning about the same topics over and over again throughout their English lessons at Primary (and Secondary and Language) schools. Why not stretch them? Are they not able to learn things other than animals, clothes, colours and food? After all these years teaching at this level, the answer to these questions is way too clear. Children are actually able to

learn about whatever we want to feed them with. Is it definitely not about how much you are teaching, it is about how you teach.

Teaching concepts like grammar and vocabulary is also a matter of discussion in the CLIL community as students are expected to become capable of using the "vehicular language to learn content other than grammatical form" (Coyle et al, 2010, p. 33). Whenever the focus is exclusively on the language, instead of using the language to learn the content, whatever learning is happening cannot be considered CLIL (Coyle et al, 2010, p. 33).

This idea is also supported by (Mehisto et al 2008, p. 11) who believe that pupil's learning can be excelled if they're learning the language to actually use it with a purpose, such as completing a task or learning a subject area of their interest. The language they need and the language they will use in a context they will remember because "in CLIL, content goals are supported by language goals" (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 11). CLIL is fruitful. Teachers have to plant the seed and watch the CLIL tree as it grows. The tree will have branches and leaves and fruit. Some leaves will fall, some fruit will be stolen or eaten by birds. Nevertheless, both teachers and learners will be fed by its juicy fruit. And that fruit will be used to plant more seeds that will feed more brains as, "CLIL is a just-in-time approach as opposed to a just-in-case approach" (Mehisto et al 2008, p. 21) in which students are not learning a language because it might be important to their future career – Year 3 students are not aware of such importance. They are learning it to use it immediately, to complete a task, to prepare a project, to talk about what they are learning and means something to them (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 11).

This immediate use can work as a highly motivational boost, once students perceive the aim of language learning: they are learning it because they need to use it and that fulfils them with a purpose, an intention for learning. On the other hand, they are learning content as well. But not in the same way they would learn it in their regular topic lessons: content is being delivered through a well-planned and futurist methodology. Young people of the twenty-first century are learning things they are interested about in an interesting way. They are not being lectured, they are involved in the learning process and it is clear for them that they are at the very the centre of that choice which was developed, thought and put into practice for them, their needs and interests. For that,

many students may find that, they are more motivated towards learning content in a CLIL environment that they would be in their regular subject classes. This might be due to "the hands-on and participatory nature of the CLIL classroom" (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 21), which can be perceived as more fun, challenging and engaging to a broader range of learning styles (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 21).

Whenever I tell my non-teacher friends or teachers with different areas of interest about the topic of this thesis, I find myself explaining to them, in simple words, what CLIL is. Many do show true enthusiasm and agree that this form of teaching and learning really is the one that makes sense for them. Thinking back to their experiences as students, most of these adults even consider that their school lives were not as full due to the dull and non-practical nature of their EFL lessons. They feel that CLIL could have made a difference in their life as learners and in their relationship with English and very likely to have helped improve their language proficiency.

On the other hand, some people have also asked: What about those students who already struggle to learn content and/or language even when these are taught separately? Will CLIL be suitable for pupils who find themselves in this situation? If they cannot master content lessons in their first language (L1) how will they learn it through their foreign language (FL)?

All these questions seem valid and need special focus and careful attention. But, yes, CLIL has thought about these students, too. To start with, "the language input needs to be simple enough and presented in a reader-friendly manner so as to facilitate comprehension" (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 22), also bearing in mind that to engage students and capture their attention, content needs to drive students' curiosity and facilitate their cognition (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 22), so that they feel the need to go further, to expand knowledge.

Yet, at the planning stage one must think more carefully about these learners and how to group them or who to group them with. Differentiation seems crucial and only logic at this stage and it surely is the best way to accommodate everyone and their talents into the CLIL project which will help building up on their self-esteem and confidence with enormous gains for all.

Moreover, according to Mehisto et al (2008, p. 20) “some people are even convinced that CLIL students will fall behind their peers academically.” However, it has been proven that “in fact, CLIL students perform as well as or even outperform non-CLIL students in terms of learning content. Far from interfering with content acquisition, CLIL can actually facilitate it” (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 20).

This happens to be true because due to the nature of CLIL lessons, “CLIL students develop metalinguistic awareness. This means that they are better able to compare languages and be more precise in their word choice and in passing content of their message” (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 20).

They do not get confused; they become clearer about language and make better use of it in their everyday lives. They do not learn things just to write them down on a test, they make choices, plan projects and see the immediate gains of CLIL because, “playing with words requires constant decisions. Decisions require thought and thought causes a dangerous thing – learning” (Sedgwick, 1999, p. 124 *as cited in* Ramnanan, 2013, p. 15).

The kind of learning that frees students from misconceptions about school and languages. Learning that broadens their horizons and experiences and therefore enables them “to draw out meaning from context. They become more skilled at using languages in general” (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 20). They become more adapted, more versatile, more prepared for this era of change and globalization in which nothing else is certain, or definite or forever. They become aware that the world is inhabited by millions of eyes and none of them see it the same way. Thus, this ability of “shifting perspectives is helpful in stimulating creative and critical thinking” (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 25) and crucial to their lives as learners and citizens of the world.

It is not new to anyone that “today’s ever-changing society requires young people to be flexible and creative, solve problems, make decisions, think critically and communicate ideas effectively” (Stewart, 2014, p. 4). The CLIL approach not only validates this idea, it deeply supports it and encourages CLIL teachers to consider it in their planning, due to the fact that, “in Europe today, there is a desire to improve language-learning opportunities for all young people in order to increase European cohesion and competitiveness” (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 10). The better prepared, the more successful

our students will be to survive to “the reality of life in a mixed global society” (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 10).

Schools are made of people and people (teachers, students, parents) have different experiences, cultures and backgrounds. It is only natural that this ‘melting pot’ has “an impact on how we teach and what we teach – and this concerns language education, as much as any other form of subject learning” (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 10).

Hence, “in an integrated world, integrated learning is increasingly viewed as a modern form of educational delivery designed to even better equip the learner with knowledge and skills suitable for the global age” (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 10). This statement represents one of the biggest challenges for schools nowadays, as teachers recognise that learners’ needs have changed, but they do not know how to accompany these new era youngsters, who are the sons and daughters of a generation that quickly had to adapt in order to survive. These teachers do have immense valid questions, however, “much like life, the answers to these questions are neither finite nor clear” (Daggett & Sconzo, 2015, p. 1).

Thus, “CLIL developed as an innovative form of education in response to the demands and expectations of the modern age” (Coyle et al, 2010, p. 5). I have grown up hearing that “Mudam-se os tempos, mudam-se as vontades”, which is a Portuguese popular saying that states that when the times change so does our will. This happens to be as true for life as it is for education, so if “we’re facing a new challenge” (Daggett & Sconzo, 2015, p. 1) we “must forge a new path forward” (Daggett & Sconzo, 2015, p. 1). We must go with the flow instead of stopping our own personal growth. CLIL clearly is this path which “is not merely a convenient response to the challenges posed by rapid globalization; rather, it is a solution which is timely, which is in harmony with broader social perspectives, and which has proved effective” (Coyle et al, 2010, p. 5). In other words, our pupils must be able to make seemingly unrelated connections in order to uncover hidden relationships so as to navigate life in the twenty-first century. They require analytical abilities that enable them to look at a topic from several perspectives. They must realise that creative thinking is not limited to the purportedly creative domains of art and design, but may be applied to anything. They must be able to work cooperatively with people who possess a variety of skill sets in order to obtain data,

combine ideas, and generate new ones. Above all, they require perseverance and fortitude in order to navigate challenging circumstances (Daggett & Sconzo, 2015, p. 1).

Moreover, “good CLIL practice is realized through methods which provide a more holistic educational experience for the learner than may otherwise be commonly achievable” (Coyle et al, 2010, p. 1). This refers to the profound respect that CLIL has for its learners, their feelings, abilities and nature. By providing these students with the same or even greater amount of information than more traditional methodologies, in a pressure-free learning environment in which their opinions and interests matter, CLIL pupils can learn at their own pace and are able to support each other because the teacher is just one of the people in the classroom. This entire practice therefore caters both for the individual and social needs of the learners and enables them to understand that “independent work is also part of the learning process, but co-operation takes us even further” (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 26).

Such an approach, which considers the student as a whole, may be difficult to implement in a regular class, with your regular students, you may think. It is not. On the contrary, “many of the features are not just specific to CLIL, they are part of basic best practice in education” (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 25). In other words, even though CLIL requires a different approach and some modification, it can readily be included into the guidelines set forth by the national or regional curriculum. Furthermore, CLIL and conventional best practices in education are inextricably linked. Rather from being a subtractive strategy, CLIL is a valued-added method that aims to improve the learning environment (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 27).

CLIL ‘chameleon’ teachers must therefore amalgamate the best teaching practices at their availability and integrate them into their planning so that students’ outcomes are of the highest standard possible. However, “it is precisely the integration of many of these features into the average lesson, and all of these features into one’s teaching repertoire, which presents a challenge to teachers” (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 25).

Indeed, challenge is the key to open the door of change and it is absolutely necessary because “we’re creating a new paradigm of instruction and learning” (Daggett & Sconzo,

2015, p. 5) in which “young people actively co-construct their understanding and learning” (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 26).

Yet, such innovative ways are sometimes scary and so “we must acknowledge and respect people’s fears, and then rationally, but passionately, explain why such change is needed” (Daggett & Sconzo, 2015, p. 5).

3. The Importance of Storytelling in the Light of the Emergentist Perspective

According to Krashen & Bland (2014), there is plentiful research confirming that we go through three stages on the path to complete development of literacy, nevertheless in the lessons I have planned for this reflective study, I am going to focus more extensively in stage one which relates to hearing stories.

I love stories. I have loved them all my life. As a child. As a teenager. As an adult. As a teacher. As a mum.

Thinking back through time, I remember how stories would help me in my first steps as an EFL teacher. And on my first steps as a mum. We can do so much with a story that I cannot just get enough of them. We build relationships, we get to understand each other, we can feel, we can cry, we can share and relate, we can teach and resonate. I love stories. I really do.

At a primary level, I find that stories are the perfect starting point for any project or topic you want to teach. You might not want to use the story with the students right from the beginning, but you prepare the students’ understanding of the story from the beginning, so when you actually want to use it, they are ready for it. I love these stages where you can explore the story without using the actual story so much, I could spend my teaching life doing so. Besides, and because I cannot dissociate the teacher I am from the mother I also am, I would like to share with you, not only how to use stories in the classroom but also how to transfer some routines we might have at home with our kids into our relationship with our students. These routines allow the development of literacy and improve the classroom environment enhancing high quality learning – because

memories are connected to emotional experiences and stories connect people as well as memories - in a thoughtful planned context.

Therefore, I seek to recognise and consider links between the different contexts in which language develops and communication occurs, including the home and primary schools' classrooms.

For that, I consider the emergentist perspective (Shiel, Cregan, McGough & Archer, 2012), a view in which the adult is the mediator of knowledge through real care. And caring about literacy and how students evolve by involving them appears to be the ultimate teacher's role.

There are many reasons why we should prioritise the teaching of oral language to children, especially through stories and throughout this chapter I will make an attempt to share these reasons with you, for I believe that speaking is a basic children's need from which we can take advantage of to benefit their learning.

In addition to this, besides being intimately related to hearing stories, the development of oral, is also commonly associated with reading and writing outcomes, especially in academic contexts. Therefore, I suggest that the language we want our students to learn from the stories we tell them can be seen by them. It should be seen as many times as needed so as to become familiar and ready to use. And what do our students see all day? Our classroom walls. So, let's fill our classrooms in with language.

Although I tend to prioritise technology-free environments in which people actually need to be with each other and oral language functions as the primary mediator of social interaction, this project will make use of technology, such as the Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) to provide a visual aid to pre-teach vocabulary and storytelling, as well as a means to clarify tasks, outcomes and provide feedback.

In a world full of tablets, iPads and smart phones where parents get home too late and too exhausted to speak to each other and to their children, oral language finds it hard to find its way. It seems much easier to turn on the TV at dinner time than to ask our children about their day. In such a world, time is too fast, actually time does not exist and neither does storytelling at bed time. Indeed, it is obvious for me that it is not about the time one spends with our children. It is all about its quality.

As a mum I have always privileged my ‘magic’ half an hour with my son and daughter before bedtime. No matter how hard the day was, how tired I am or the amount of work I still have to do. That half an hour before bedtime is our golden time and we always play a game, build a Lego city or invent a contest like ‘MasterChef’ or ‘The Voice’. At this stage, no one is allowed to use or touch any electronic devices, except if it is a means of listening to music.

After that moment of play time, comes storytelling and again, everyone in the family has an active role in it. My eldest can actually read, nevertheless even my youngest participates by looking at images in a book and telling us her own version of the story. It is delightful to witness how she grows as her stories become more meaningful and intricate. Whenever there is a minute or my children feel like it, they rehearse and act-out these stories as well. After that, they go to bed and I sing them a lullaby to sleep.

According to Shiel et al (2012) this routine corroborates with the emergentist view of language development in which both child and adult play key roles in the language acquisition process.

Even though this is our role as a parent, as a teacher we cannot rely on the fact that every family has a bedtime ritual for whatever reasons there might be, from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to children whose development may be inhibited by social/environmental circumstances or even those whose development may be compromised by any particular biological and/or environmental conditions (Shiel et al, 2012).

Simultaneously, differences in language performance between socio-economically disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children is something we should also be aware of as the former tend to experience greater difficulty with discourse related tasks which might be associated with the language input and model children receive at home (Shiel et al, 2012).

Therefore, perhaps our first role is to involve and then to teach in order to evolve.

Bearing this in mind, in the character of a teacher, I must try to make the bridge between home and school and I feel responsible for integrating my students in a world that is not virtual but a real one in which they are able to debate and respect ideas, to ask each other ‘What do you think?’, to develop critical thinking and creativity, to talk to each other. After all, it is nothing but the lack of communication that is responsible for much

harm in this world of ours, and working towards a peaceful planet is a shared responsibility.

Involving is therefore inseparable from teaching in the process of developing oral language, social skills, creativity, CLIL. Yes, we can teach without storytelling, but it would not be the same. Storytelling can be the start of a project, a means to teach and make things meaningful, or an engaging way to give closure to a certain unit or topic. Used creatively, it opens up opportunities, develops creativity and is suitable for a range of preferred learning styles, catering for all.

Yet it is not easy to get a minute of our children's (our own or our students) attention - we are not as colourful, powerful or special as a superhero or as beautiful, pink and perfect as a Barbie doll. Why should they even bother looking at us? My answer to this question is quite simple: because we do care. When one cares and one believes, one achieves.

Having no much more than this 'half an hour' entirely devoted to my children I truly do think that this time is fundamental for their development as social individuals who act, interact and communicate in an environment where people actually talk to, listen to and look at each other. And this is the belief that I carry on to my students in an attempt to somehow make a difference in their lives, throughout this and many other projects I have developed, planned and taught.

Indeed, this appears to be the idea of the adult's role in the emergentist perspective where it is "rooted in the desire to facilitate the child's communicative intent and to develop the child's communicative competence" (Shiel et al, 2012, p. 16) and it seems to be of exquisite importance with children in socio-economic disadvantage who strongly benefit from an enabling teaching style (Shiel et al, 2012).

This style is adopted by a teacher who cares and carefully plans his/ her lessons so that students develop their listener-speaker skills between not only the teacher and child/ children but also amongst their peers. In this open, thoughtful environment where creativity and children's contributions are valued, dialogue is built through the turn-taking contributions of the participants (Shiel et al, 2012).

In the same way, this enabling teaching style accompanies the belief behind the 'Comprehension Hypothesis', i.e., the idea that we acquire language and make progress in the development of literacy when messages make sense and are highly interesting or

compelling to us (Krashen & Bland, 2014). In the authors' view language is absorbed incidentally and mostly acquired through reading and therefore we should give our children and students as many reading opportunities as possible once "omnivorous reading in childhood and adolescence correlates positively with ultimate adult success" (Simonton, 1988, p. 11 *as cited in* Krashen & Bland, 2014, p. 5).

As Darwin proposed in his 'natural selection' theory on the evolution of species, it is not the stronger ones who survive but those who learn to adapt. For that reason, we must enable our students to make the most of the reading opportunities they have in class in order to prepare them to live in this society that requires so many intellectual survival skills and to prevent them from becoming 'extinct'. The more they read, the better they adapt, greater chances to experiment triumph.

"Sharing stories is central to humankind" (Bland, 2015, p. 183), they are pivotal to straighten relationships and, in fact, stories take us back to our best childhood memories. For me, stories are happy places, and therefore the perfect starting point to teach children anything – CLIL included.

4. CLIL, Storytelling & I – My Views, My Life, My Teaching

I believe in CLIL because I believe in real life experiences and their importance towards purposeful, meaningful learning. I am passionate about science because it fulfils my basic need of knowledge. I love teaching because I love children and I know that through them I can try and do my bit to make the world a better place. I love teaching English because it broadens horizons. Learning languages and cultures enables us to become better people. Enables us to connect to each other. I love storytelling because I love books and I love reading. Because I have learnt so much while reading and because I believe your experiences as a reader change your life as a person. I love reading stories to children because I am a teacher and a mother and stories help us connecting and understanding each other better. Stories help your imagination grow. Stories are a way of inventing new stories. Stories glue people together and in this particular case, stories glue all the many people I am and the people I love the most.

I first thought it had all started with science and maybe it did. The truth is that my major interests are so intricate I can no longer distinguish. So, I will start with science. With the way science became my way of calming down and relaxing after a long work day. Science as a way of transmitting knowledge, strengthen relationships and avoiding nightmares. That's how it started for me and that's why I want to explore this topic further in my future professional and academic life. Because of my son and his nightmares. 'Mummy tell me one of our fantastic stories.' And I did. And the pain went away. This is how I got the idea for this project. Because of my son. I invented stories for him, and when I realised I was calming him down by teaching him the water cycle, the difference between different types of rock, dinosaurs, the solar system, the rotation of the Earth. This was when I thought: 'I can do this in English with my students!' and later 'This is definitely what I want to do!'

Here I am. I am teaching my students CLIL through storytelling because I believe that English, stories, science and affection can all blend together in such a way that learning becomes purposeful, fun and curious, stimulating students to build the very foundations that will define them as the adult citizen, parent or teacher they will eventually become.

Therefore, I aim to provide richer lessons for my students. Lessons in which they learn about their world using English as a means of communication. Maybe it seems quite challenging, but if done in a logical sequence, just like any other EFL lesson, soon students would not even think about the language and it becomes only natural for them to use English while talking and learning about a certain topic. I also believe that language is acquired in a smoother, more natural way that actually makes sense to students, because they are not only given the content but also a context as "academic language skills cannot be acquired in a context without content. Language and content are thus closely linked together and neither can develop without the other" (Gjendemsjø, 2013, p. 18-19).

Moreover, I am the living proof that learning a foreign language because you are interested in content, actually works. It was through my passion for science, way before I even knew CLIL existed that I have learnt my second language. I was exposed to English at school, all my life as a learner but I learnt the language while using it for academic purposes both back in Montana while digging for dinosaurs and later, at Cardiff

University, where I completed my Erasmus programme in Geology. I learnt English while I was studying science immersed in those contexts and it is exactly immersion that allows the promotion of "language development by immersing or 'bathing' learners in extensive target language input and using the target language for instruction" (Gjendemsjø, 2013, p. 15). Thus, what I have been through was not CLIL for there was no language teaching, only acquisition. I was older and therefore I could deal with that and it did work for me. Still, I needed to find out whether it would work with my eight-year-olds. I needed to experience it from a teacher's view and try to understand if it would be possible to find a difference in my learners' quality of learning, their motivation towards language learning and their ability to use the language in such a way that it is meaningful to them as opposed to just being spoon-fed with it and parroting it afterwards as in a CLIL approach, content is prioritized over form. It is doubtful that memorization of vocabulary or facts in any subject or language pattern parroting will help them in the long run. People typically need to connect newly acquired information with their preexisting knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in order to gain new knowledge and skills (Mehisto, et al, 2008, p. 30). That was my intention. I did learn so much more.

5. How Did I Implement Teaching English Through Science at School?

I knew what I wanted. I had conceived the project and I was "pregnant" with its revolutionary ideas. But no project is born until you give it a try. I was unsure, I was scared and yet I had to breathe deeply and give birth. Once born, the project would develop and find its way. Or so I trusted. And I tried.

When I started conceiving this project, I thought about using my own stories, the ones I had made up while putting my son to sleep. That would have been an immense and very rewarding journey. I just did not have the time for it as I needed to write them down, to carefully plan what I wanted to extract from them both in terms of the language and content. I had to plant the seed, see the tree grow, then the leaves, the flowers and fruit. Only after that labour could I drink the juice or offer it to my students. Time was not by my side. I also had to find someone to help me with the necessary visuals which I could not.

One day, while talking to my Supervisor, Professor Sarah Narciso, she advised me to use some stories that were already ready to use. I searched the net and I found a book that seemed to be of good use: "Science Through Stories – Teaching Primary Science with Storytelling", by Smith and Pottle (see Fig. I).

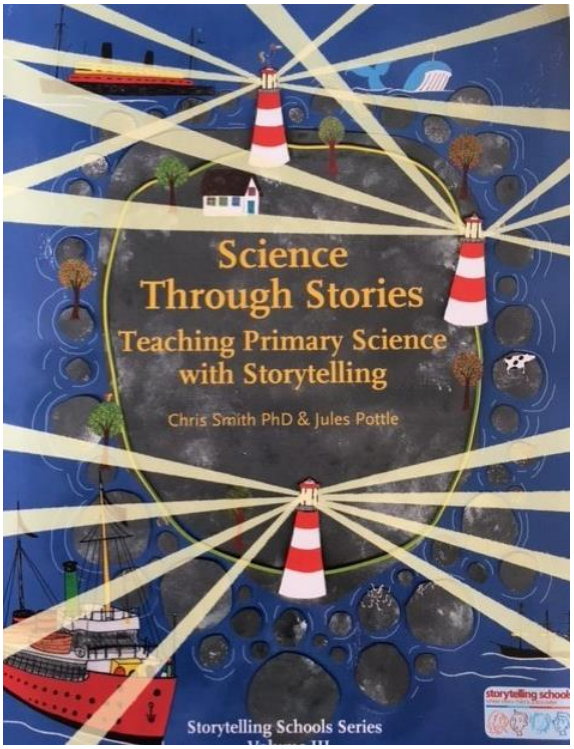


Fig. I – Cover of "Science Through Stories – Teaching Primary Science with Storytelling",

by Smith and Pottle.

I immediately bought the book, but when I received it, I must confess I was slightly disappointed. The stories were good, but they had no visuals. It was one of those moments in which we question everything. Was it really worth it? Was it just a silly dream? No, I was sure it was not. But I did not know what to do either. Then, as I always do in moments like this, when I feel lost, I thought of Homer Hickam's words to me back in Montana: 'I'm not a dreamer, I'm a doer'. His words never stopped echoing for me the moment I heard them, and once again, the time was to do, not to give up. And I did. I did all the visual aids myself.

Yet, there were other questions I needed to answer before I started putting my ideas into practice. The first one being the group with whom I wanted to try it with. That was an easy one. My groups are quite difficult this year and chose the one which offers the

least behaviour problems. It turned out being a good decision because their class project is “Desafia-te a Aprender Criativamente!” (Challenge Yourself to Learn Creatively) and therefore I had a good reason to explain them (and parents, teachers and the school itself) why we were about to do something like this.

The other question, is the one which is the most famous excuse for teachers who do not want to be involved in challenges like this (and I must confess that at the time I was not thrilled myself): “When? When will I do it? I don’t have the time. I have to prepare my students for the test. I have a syllabus to cover” said the little lazy devil in my head. “Stop thinking and start acting… A man’s got to do what a man’s got to do… maybe you can squeeze the syllabus content into two lessons a week and use the third one to implement your CLIL project” claimed the problem-solving angel that also lives in my head. Actually, this is justified because “CLIL should be viewed and practised as a complement to traditional language teaching. It creates a setting which requires teachers to adapt their traditional teaching practices. It is flexible and adaptable for various contexts” (Gjendemsjø, 2013, p. 18). And this will be done on Fridays, on the last period of the day, as the kids need something exciting that prevents them to keep thinking about the upcoming weekend. My decision had been made. A seed had been planted.

I soon went back to Mehisto’s second focus of CLIL, which states that, “content from subjects is used in language-learning classes. The language teacher, working together with teachers of other subjects, incorporates into his or her classes. Students learn the language and discourse patterns they need to understand and use the content” (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 11).

After telling the class teacher about my ideas, she shared the ‘Estudo do Meio’ syllabus with me and from that I chose the science topics to work through over the three terms. Thus, science and English were melted together in the magmatic chamber of three chain volcanoes – the three projects developed – which had a common ‘hot spot’: myself and my strong will to make them erupt. After thoughtful planning, the science and English magma had to make its way up the chimney (or the classroom) and gather information about students’ reactions, their gains and attitudes in order to continue or drawback. Some ideas had to be abandoned and found secondary chimneys. These were

fundamental for the enriching process of the magma (or project), though. However, the vast majority were expelled in the form of a hot, fluid lava during the lessons: the lava of knowledge. Hot because it has just been created and re-created in every single lesson and fluid due to its adapting shape and nature which makes it possible to easily incorporate more elements on its way down the slope. CLIL is a volcano. It melts, it amalgamates, it travels, it accepts. It finds its way. It erupts and changes one's landscape or the way one looks at the landscape forever. It certainly enriches the ground and enables more seeds to be planted and grown. It explodes as it innovates, but it also drinks from what was already there.

According to (Gjendemsjø, 2013, p. 25) "CLIL is an approach that acknowledges the importance of authenticity in terms of using language for a purpose." My purpose is to teach science in English through storytelling. It seems authentic and purposeful. But how can I actually do it? By going back to the basics which in EFL means language acquisition.

According to Mehisto et al (2008, p. 26)

> It is widely acknowledged that young children usually acquire their first (or second, or third) language effortlessly and rapidly. One overwhelming feature of CLIL is to partially replicate the conditions to which infants are exposed when learning their first language. CLIL sets out to expand the students' learning capacity by turning into the natural way the child learnt his or her first language. A young child's environment is full of resources that the child learns to use as tools. Children learn to use language, and use language to learn.

Thinking about the average twenty-first century child, her/his interests and how she/he acquires language I have chosen the three topics, related activities, language input, stories and videos that would be interesting, engaging and rich both in content and language. I have also thought about the outcomes: acrostic poems, projects, development of writing, speaking and social skills. Because CLIL amalgamates and its approach urges educators to adhere to accepted best practices in education and to

continue utilizing their preferred tactics. It does, however, necessitate knowledge of the key CLIL techniques, such as focusing on language, content, and learning skills in three different ways. It is therefore more likely that CLIL will necessitate a tweak than a significant shift in regular classroom instruction. The majority of CLIL-essential tactics are also excellent teaching practices. It can be challenging for teachers to balance the need to use both common sense educational best practices and teaching/learning procedures specific to CLIL (Mehisto et al 2008, p. 27).

Moreover, in order to make interpretations that could lead to the conclusions presented at the end of the study and because it was implemented during the observed teaching practice of the course, a great deal of critical reflection was involved. This reflection after each observed lesson influenced the way I planned, combining feedback with new planning and evidence with new goals.

According to Mezirow (1990), a large portion of what we learn entails developing fresh interpretations that help us build new meaning schemes or to further clarify, distinguish, and reinforce our long-standing frames of reference. Those fresh interpretations after each feedback session were central to my own learning process over the time I worked on this study. They enabled inference-making, problem-solving and creativity to arise. And then, surprising outcomes that I had never thought of before.

This idea is also supported by Shandomo (2010) who acknowledges the crucial importance of critical reflection for student-teachers. The author considers that particularly written reflections can be of great use as student-teachers can remember, recall, reconstruct, re-create, and represent what they learn from their supervised teaching practice by writing about their classroom teaching experiences. To this assumption, Shandomo (2010) also adds that the constructivist theory, which emphasizes the notion that students construct knowledge for themselves, is the foundation of this work and that “constructing meaning is learning”.

Nevertheless, according to Calderhead (1993) the concept of reflective teaching is typically not well defined or accepted, and programmes designed to promote reflective teaching have quite varied ideas about what constitutes reflective practice, what teachers should reflect on, and how to support the growth of reflection.

This variety of ideas and perceptions may cause “dilemmas” (Calderhead, 1993) in the studies where reflection is the major means of collecting data because goals are different in different reflective teaching programmes. In addition, teacher educators invariably find themselves in a situation where they must examine and assess their own programmes, creating structures, activities, and strategies to encourage reflection, as well as learning more about reflection and its evolution as a result of ongoing evaluation (Calderhead, 1993). According to the author, this occurs because there are differing opinions about what reflective teaching is and how it is facilitated in teacher education.

In Calderhead’s (1993) view of reflective teaching the most common dilemmas that might arise in a reflective study are:

1. Process vs Product *vs* Disposition
2. "Development" *vs* "Emancipation"
3. Conflict of Values
4. The Role of Gatekeeper *vs* Facilitator
5. Accountability *vs* Individual Differences
6. Preservice *vs* Inservice
7. The Programme vs The Teaching Context
8. Reflection as an Individual or Collective Pursuit?

In the particular case of this reflective study conducted with primary school pupils, some of these dilemmas may act as constrictors of the encountered conclusions. Therefore, I must acknowledge and reflect on the cons of their existence within my findings. These are dilemmas 1, 2, 4, 5 and 8.

In what dilemma 1 is concerned, the three domains appear to be inextricably linked, and therefore, some balance may be needed. For example, focusing my student-teacher attention on the ability to analyse and evaluate my lessons has encouraged a self-oriented learning style that could have made external sources of information and expertise about teaching less valuable (Calderhead, 1993). I was teaching a topic which is very dear to me and the assumption that my students would enjoy learning about it might have caused distortions in my planning, my teaching and also my ability to critically reflect.

Dilemma 2 was very present throughout this study as well. Even though, through critical reflection, I aimed to take charge of my own professional growth, which necessitated flexible and open-ended objectives after each observed lesson, I kept thinking whether one should balance the goals of fostering autonomy and professional responsibility with the goal of developing specific domains of knowledge, ability, and attitudes (Calderhead, 1993) once, at times, I felt the need of narrowing my objectives down.

Dilemma 3 was not applicable during the course of this study, however dilemma 4 is one which could have been present at times. This is because teacher educators usually play the role of gatekeeper, preventing access and guaranteeing high standards in the training of future educators (Calderhead, 1993). In addition, the fact that my school mentor throughout the course was also my colleague could have added some subjectivity to her feedback which could have resulted in a reflection that could have been less critical. I have never felt the gatekeeper, always the facilitator as I did take all the feedback very seriously and made an effort to remain open to ideas other than mine. Apart from that, I am strongly convinced that with different teacher educators this experience (and its results) could have been different and learning outcomes not so rich or even richer. Furthermore, it is also known that the role of assessor may also impede the role of facilitator (Calderhead, 1993) in teacher training programmes. This is due to the fact that student teachers know they are to be assessed by their tutors or supervising teachers, and so they may be much more reluctant to confide in them and discuss their concerns and difficulties openly (Calderhead, 1993). In the particular case of this reflective study this was not a constraint as I have always incorporated my educators' feedback while drawing and interpreting conclusions as well as while planning for the following set of lessons. I have also never felt constrained to share my ideas or to try things out with my students because I was being assessed.

Dilemma number 5 which refers to accountability versus individual differences is possible to have been acted as a constrictor to this study as well. This is because a certain amount of accountability to others is typically required for the work of the teacher educator (Calderhead, 1993). Teacher educators may need to explore and experiment with a range of approaches in order to support each student's professional growth. However, most teaching programmes do not fully grasp the processes involved in

becoming a reflective teacher (Calderhead, 1993). Not knowing whether this was the case with my teacher educators who observed my lessons and provided feedback in order to improve the teaching quality of following lessons, I must question whether the appraisal given was always one of a strong critical nature once it was fully dependant on my educators' own teaching experiences.

Finally, dilemma 8 leads us to questioning of whether reflective teaching in regard to schools or teacher groups could be a more relevant goal than considering it in relation to individual teachers (Calderhead, 1993). This study being one of an individual nature certainly lacks enormous contribution from other teachers for I believe that educational practice becomes more profitable whenever teachers learn from each other through observation and feedback and also planning together as the ultimate goal should be institutional as opposed to individual.

Despite the above constraints and dilemmas, I found it really pleasant to reflect upon arising issues lesson after lesson. Story after story. As you can witness throughout the rest of this section.

5.1. Story 1: The East and the West

"CLIL can offer learners of any age a natural situation for language development which builds on other forms of learning" (Coyle et al, 2010, p. 11). Therefore, in order to select the first story for my project I asked the 'Estudo do Meio' teacher about what they were doing in their science classes. She told me that they were learning about the solar system, but I wanted to go beyond planets' names and so, have decided to talk about the importance of the sun and rotation of the Earth. Language development would build on their previous knowledge and naturally grow. Creativity and imagination would also come across as the story is a mythological one, about how 'Sun God' twisted the Earth to make people happy. In the following sections I present my own reflections, the ones I wrote for my Course Supervisor, Professor Paul Figueiredo and for my School Mentor, Neide Ribeiro, on the three lessons I have developed this topic as they mirror my first thoughts and feelings on this. The first lesson was observed by my colleague Frederico Alves.

5.1.1. Lesson 1: The East and the West – Brainstorming

(Lesson observed by Frederico Alves)

"When learners are offered the possibility to use language in a natural manner, motivation and interest for language learning can increase" (Gjendemsjø, 2013, p. 25).

This was the belief in which I based this project, and the one I hope to still believe once it is over. This first lesson was just a try, like when you are about to learn how to drive but just sit on the car and look at all its things, that seem so complicated to operate together but once familiar with it, driving runs automatically. You do not even need to think about it. This was my first driving lesson, and so my main aim was not really to drive. I just wanted to sit on the car and feel amazed by it. In the classroom, I just wanted to find out what my students knew about the sun and to open their ways to the following lesson: the story.

In order to do so, I drew a spider diagram on the WB in which the central word was 'the sun' (see Fig. 3). I invited the students to share what they already knew about it and its importance for life on Earth. Then soon, way too soon indeed, I was driving. The children would not stop participating and putting their hands up. There was a huge amount of the students' first language (L1), of course, but I accepted it, repeated it in English and wrote it down. This was how much was shared in this first lesson:

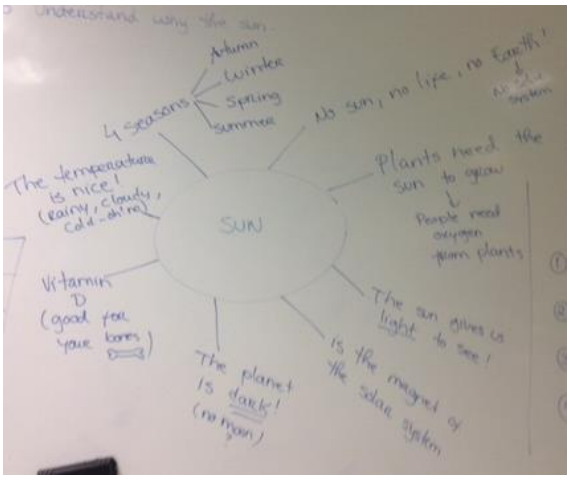


Fig. II – Spider diagram with students' brainstorming about the sun.

After this stage, I wanted the students to keep a written record of the language and I asked them to copy the information down to their worksheet (see Fig. III). Although, it

was a valid reason, this second part of the lesson turned out being too long and difficult, because most students did not know how to complete the spider diagram. I could have just given them a copy in the following lesson, but I was so thrilled and exhausted and confused I could not think about it. I had just started to learn how to drive and this class was my first car. We all have a long way to go.

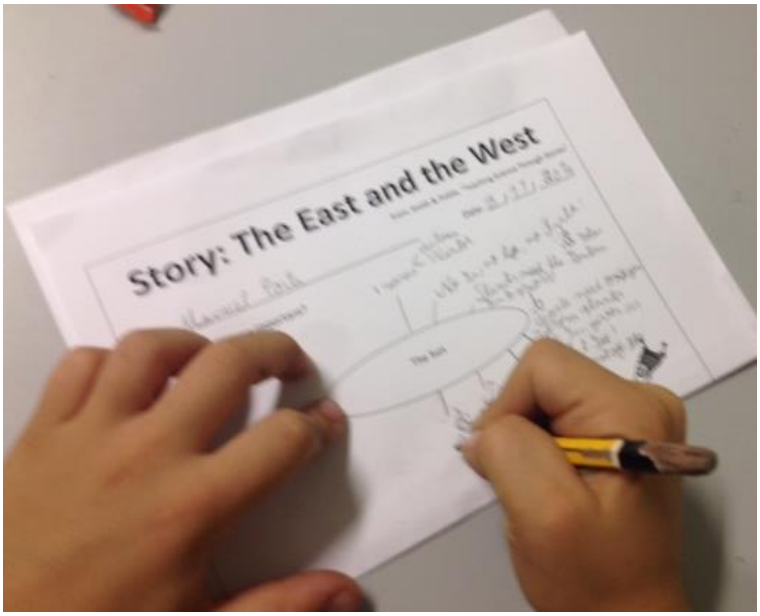


Fig. III – Students completing their own spider diagrams.

5.1.2. Lesson 2: The East and the West – The Story

(Lesson observed by Professor Paul Figueiredo and Neide Ribeiro)

This was the second lesson I planned for my CLIL project. I must confess I wasn't as at ease as I usually am, and this was not due to being observed by both, my mentor and course supervisor. It was because of the huge responsibility of developing such a project. A project that means so much emotionally as it does professionally. And totally out of my comfort EFL zone.

Of course, while conceiving the lesson plan, I considered my EFL experience (I cannot and will not step out of it) and I followed a sequence that I considered to be logical and that would enhance and maximise students' learning and engagement throughout. And

so, it did. After my students' late arrival from a Physical Education lesson, I tried my best to involve them in this adventure, on a Friday at the final period of the day. Given the hard conditions, I think it was successful due to two major things:

- The chosen sequence;
- Providing opportunities for a shared reading activity.

Firstly, as mentioned above, sequencing proved to become a major thing. We started by linking the story to the previous lesson in which we had discussed the importance of the sun (of course then I focussed on the aspects I knew would be related to the story), followed by a pre-teaching vocabulary stage (see Fig. 5) which was accompanied by a copy to provide students with a written record and only then, the story. Before the story, I could have given students a pre-task, but I forgot about it at the planning stage and now, looking backwards I wonder how that could have been helpful to carry out the plenary. Anyway, with such time constraints as the ones I experienced on that day, it did not matter or compromise the lesson's success after all.

Fig. IV – Slides used to pre-teach vocabulary.

Last, but not the least, how to carry out a shared reading. I had read stories to my students before, but I was not exactly sure (as I am not yet, I am still in the process of learning and experimenting with it) how to successfully do something like this. My professor's tutorial on the subject was exceptional. It is possible that Calderhead's dilemmas 4 and 5 were present at this tutorial, though. My professor acted as a facilitator (dilemma 4) definitely influencing my planning which, in turn, was also affected by dilemma 5, i.e., by his personal knowledge on the topic.

I had no images to start with and therefore I had to find some to suit the story and then to create a PPT presentation (see Fig. V). And then, I tried to follow Button & Johnson's advice (1997, p. 266), on the topic of shared reading, as much as I could as "shared reading is well supported by research and theory in the area of emergent literacy." The authors consider Holdaway's work (1979) who created large books to mimic the lap reading habits of young children and their caregivers, thus observing the advantages of the intensely engaged interactions between both, adult and child, and discovering that shared reading in classroom environments may foster the same kind of relationship. While reading on a lap, a youngster frequently follows along with the caregiver. According to the authors, Holdaway (1979) talked about coordinated actions during joint reading sessions. Children participate in reading aloud with their teacher as the text becomes more familiar to them. Holdaway (1979) emphasized how these cooperative efforts are important and youngsters engage in the activity based on their comprehension and self-assurance level. Since the texts are interesting and relevant, the kids choose to participate with excitement and zeal (Button et al., 1997, p. 266).

Fig. V – Slides used to tell story.

However, I made a mistake that I noticed on the spot, but as the students involved were quite strong, I did not consider it as a matter of worry: two students asked me to stay at their desks instead of sitting on the floor with the rest of the class. Although it did not affect the students' interaction, because as I said before, they

are very good and highly interested, I know that this is something I must be very careful with the following time I try shared reading. My Professor who, at feedback stage, acted as a facilitator once again pointed this out.

In conclusion, even though it went well and I could notice the students were participating and engaged, I did not feel thrilled after the lesson. I was too nervous, and lacking confidence. I did not have the support of a notebook or the relief of a previous tried lesson plan. But that's what I hope will bring the best of me to this project as I am aware that dilemmas 1 and 2 were present throughout these first lessons: I found it difficult to balance process, product and disposition within my need to become responsible for my own learning and professional development.

5.1.3. Lesson 3: The East and the West – Acrostic

(Lesson observed by Neide Ribeiro)

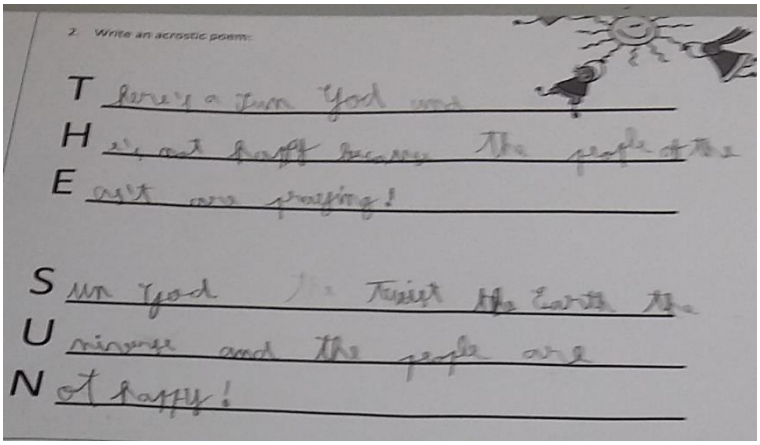
This was lesson number 3 on this topic and due to time constraints, – we were approaching test time and Christmas break - it was also the last one. I decided to start by doing some vocabulary recycling in order to make sure students were able to remember its meaning and how to use it in the context of the story. I also wanted them to remember the story and why the sun is so important for the existence of life on Earth.

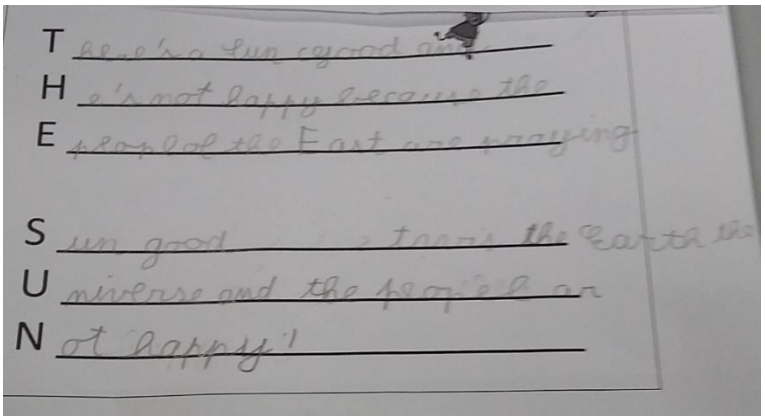
In order to do so and as one of the objectives of this whole project is to challenge students to learn by using their creativity in lessons which are as student-centred as possible, I thought about doing an acrostic with them. This is something they had never done in their Portuguese classes so they did not know what was intended and therefore I had to explain every step with a lot of detail. The acrostic was based on "THE SUN" and I did the first part "THE" with the whole class on the WB. "SUN" would later be completed by the children, in pairs. I found that dilemma 8 was a reality at this stage as involving the Portuguese class teacher could have made my life (and my students') much simpler. Planning together and collective goals work best for all and even though this project is an individual one, I always do depend on others.

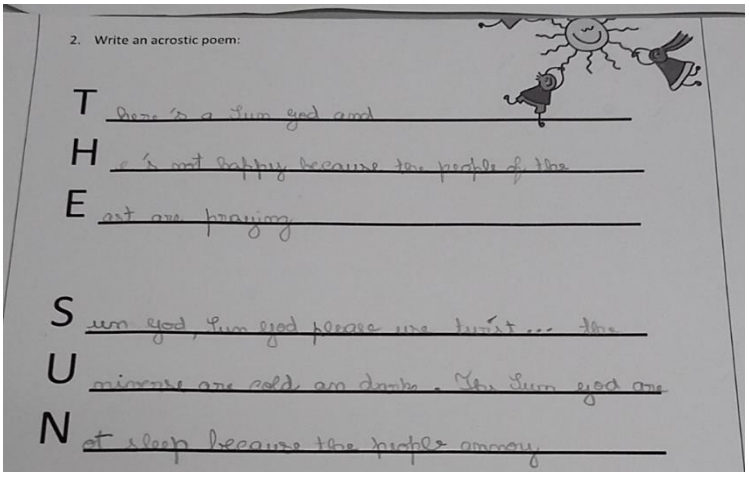
At this clarification stage I realised that those students who enjoy being challenged were quite thrilled, but those who are not as eager to leave their comfort zone were looking at me suspiciously as if they were saying 'What do you mean???'. These were precisely the ones that made me feel the activity was worth it. After all, this is what these children need: to be challenged, to use their imagination, to find out that they are able to do so much more than what they actually do. However, in order to achieve this, I had to challenge myself and to think beyond the box, and so, dilemma 2 came along: I found it difficult to balance my professional development and my emancipation as I was facing too many challenges and needed to narrow my objectives down at the same time as I wanted to do as much as possible. I had to run the risk, experiment with these kids and observe the outcomes. I was not sure whether it would be successful or an enormous failure, but I felt that I had the responsibility to try it and to be more creative myself, after all, I needed to find the adequate "techniques that stimulate curiosity and raise self-esteem and confidence" (Morris, 2006, p. 5) by knowing when to offer support and when the students' confidence was in jeopardy. I had to strike a balance between opportunities for self-direction and structured learning, as well as between managing groups and attending to individuals (Morris, 2006, p. 5).

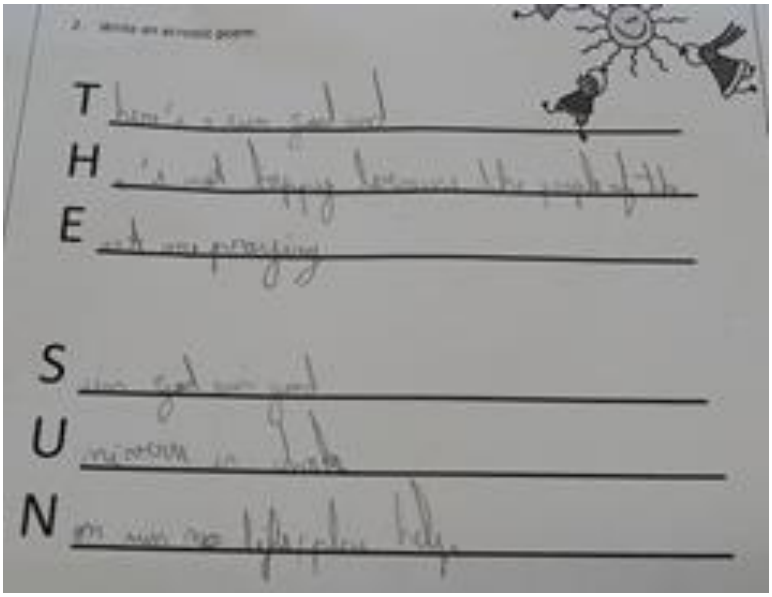
It might look like and it is difficult, but it is doable and highly rewarding even though the lesson was not perfect and I was not the perfect teacher who did all of the above. I have to train myself to do it and this project also encourages that. It is part of my professional development, at me challenging myself and learning from my students' reactions, work and feedback reinforcing the idea that, "Teaching for creativity is not an easy option, but it can be enjoyable and deeply fulfilling" (Morris, 2006, p. 5) as the process of coming up with ideas, developing them, and determining whether they were successful may take more time and preparation. It requires the courage to adapt and veer off course, to seize unanticipated learning opportunities, to live in uncertainty, and to take the chance of acknowledging that an idea didn't work out. Though they understand the value of experience-based learning, creative educators are never afraid to try new things. All of this calls for teachers to have greater, not less, expertise (Morris, 2006, p. 5).

Considering that this was the children's first exposure to such an activity and my first steps in this CLIL project, I think that the lesson was successful and outcomes, positive. However, I feel that three lessons were not enough on the topic and that I would have liked to expand it a bit more. This first project left me with the feeling that I t ended up being slightly incomplete: the time was scarce, I was not as confident or sure of what to do and I was feeling too much pressure to succeed, not because someone was actually pressuring me but because I felt responsible for its development and I wanted to see what the children's gains were. All these acted as constraints and at the end of these three lessons I did not feel as fantastic as I had planned to – yes, dilemma 1 was always getting back to me. But now, I know that this is because, creative educators require self-assurance as well as confidence in their fields. Our schools are home to many highly creative teachers as well as many that promote creative teaching and learning strategies. However, a lot of educational institutions and educators lack the access to the hands-on assistance and direction needed to develop these strategies. As a result, there are significant staff development issues. Reducing or eliminating the things that prevent teachers and students from being creative is crucial, and those that support it should take precedence. In terms of curriculum and instructional strategies, there are incredibly high levels of prescription in the field of education. De-skilling educators carries great risks, and some may be encouraged to conform and become passive (Morris, 2006, p. 5).




T
H
E
S
U
N
Sun good
universe and the
ot happy!


2. Write an acrostic poem:
T
H
E
S
U
N
ere's a Sun god and
e's not happy because the people of the
ast are praying
un god, Sun god please use turist ... the
niverse are cold an dumb. The Sun god are
ot sleep because the people annoy


T
H
E
S
U
N

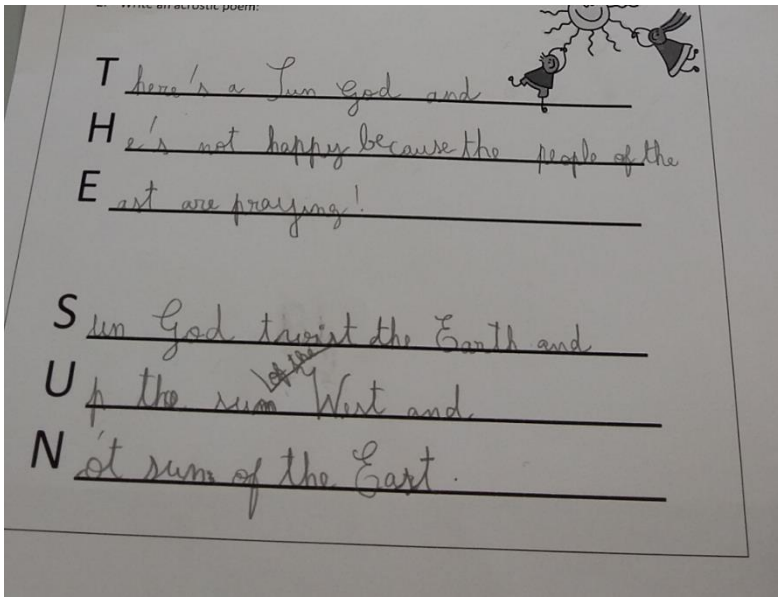


Fig. VI – Some example acrostics written by students.

Reflecting upon these lessons has been a key factor for both my personal and professional development while trying to become a more creative teacher who enhances her students' creativity. For the next topic, I will make sure to have the following ideas in mind, as according to Morris (2006, p. 6):

> Carolyn Edwards and Kay Springate in their article "The lion comes out of the stone: Helping young children achieve their creative potential" [Dimensions of Early Childhood] give the following suggestions on encouraging student creativity:
>
> • Give students extended, unhurried time to explore and do their best work. Don't interfere when students are productively engaged and motivated to complete tasks in which they are fully engaged.
>
> • Create an inviting and exciting classroom environment. Provide students with space to leave unfinished work for later completion and quiet space for contemplation.
>
> • Provide an abundant supply of interesting and useful materials and resources.

• Create a classroom climate where students feel mistakes are acceptable and risk taking is encouraged. Appropriate noise, mess and autonomy are accepted.

5.2. Story 2: The Fossil Woman

5.2.1. Part 1: "How Are Fossils Formed?"

This was the first lesson of my second project in this CLIL adventure. This topic was chosen in accordance to the children's 'Estudo do Meio' syllabus in which lessons they were learning about rocks. So, I looked up my reference book (Teaching Primary Science Through Stories) and I found the story 'The Fossil Woman' about famous female palaeontologist, Mary Anning. It could not have been more perfect. Fossils were my real passion when I was a Geology student and due to my experience in Montana, my area of expertise as well. I still find it amazing how much we can learn about the Earth's history by studying them and I definitely wanted to share both my enthusiasm and knowledge with my students.

However, as opposed to what I had done in the previous project, I did not intend to start this topic with the story. I wanted to explore this theme more profoundly, I wanted to give my students a more complete and diversified experience. I deserved it and so did they.

Therefore, I decided to divide this project into two smaller ones, in which the first is devoted to the study of fossils and how they are formed and the second, to the story 'The Fossil Woman'. Even though I think this decision was fundamental for a balanced development of the project, dilemma 1 could have acted as a constrictor due to my personal and emotional involvement with the topic.

5.2.1.1. Lesson 1: How Are Fossils Formed? – Vocabulary & Video

(Lesson observed by Neide Ribeiro)

In order to get started, I chose to use a regular EFL procedure in which I started by assessing the students' knowledge on the topic by drawing and completing a spider diagram (see Fig. VII) on the WB which was followed by pre-teaching difficult and important vocabulary (see Fig. VIII) for students to work with the topic further on and to maximise their understanding of the video, then I set a pre-watching the video task (see Fig. IX) by posing them a question that would be answered during video presentation (see Fig. X) and then a multiple-choice worksheet.

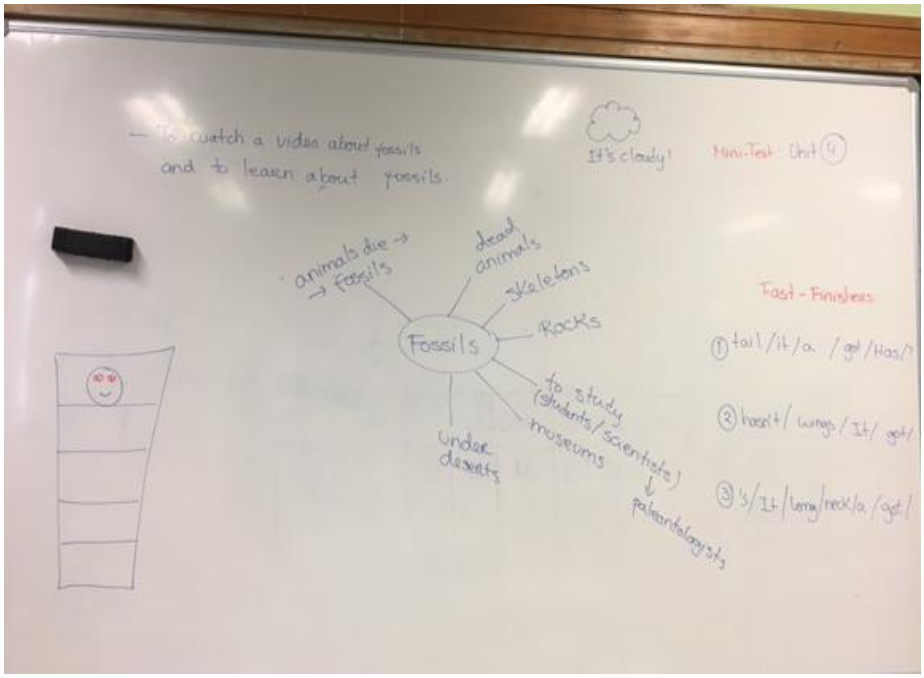
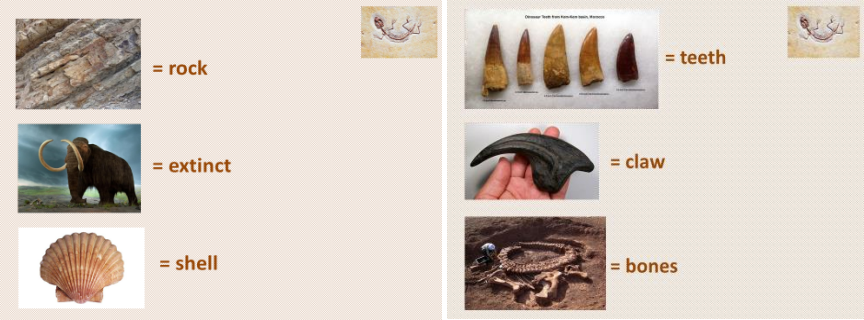


Fig. VII – Spider diagram with students' brainstorming about fossils.



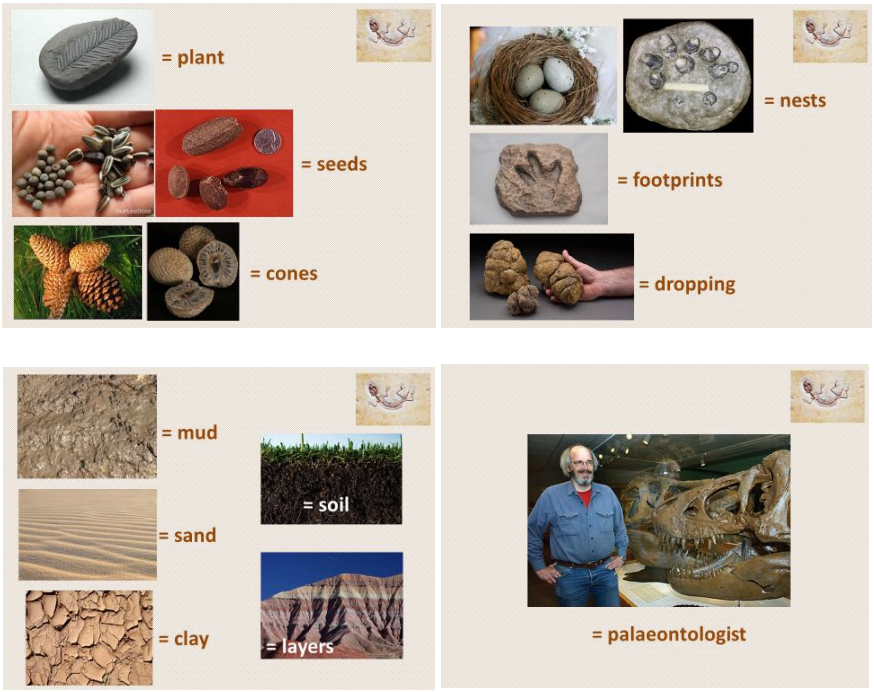


Fig. VIII – Slides used to pre-teach vocabulary.

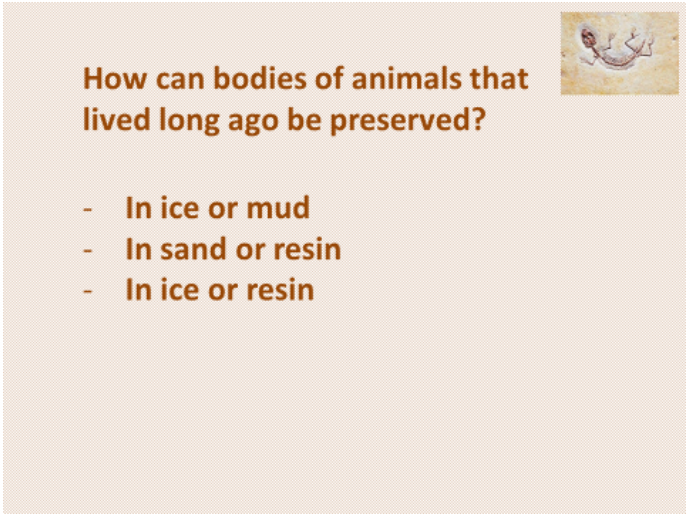


Fig. IX – Slide used for prediction task.

Fig. X – Slide with link to video.

But this project took place in a real classroom with real eight-year-olds and I had to "teach the learners, not the plan" (Scrivener, 2005, p. 109) so we did not have the time to go through the final stage. Which was alright, I wanted this topic to be explored in a calmer and deeper way. I did not intend to rush the students. I wanted them to enjoy the lesson and that is why I tried to answer all their questions during pre-teaching vocabulary stage that turned out being way too long. But then, when pupils watched the video, they were ready for it and able to understand main ideas easily.

At the end of the lesson, there was a question on my mind, though. The lesson, besides being quite successful was definitely too teacher-centred because the students did not get the chance to complete the worksheet in pairs. Most students' talk had been done during clarification stage and that was mainly between myself and individual students, so that is something I must continue bearing in mind. For example, how to teach a vocabulary lesson in a more communicative, active, student-centred way? Were the students feeling the same even though they were showing enthusiasm and posing questions? Maybe they did not, because they are used to more traditional teaching methods, but I did and I want to give them everything I can in these lessons. Again, no rush. "You learn to teach by teaching. You learn to teach by doing it" (Scrivener, 2005, p. 104).

The same applies to my evolution in this process, the more I do it, the better my CLIL lessons will be and the more learning opportunities my students will be given.

5.2.1.2. Lesson 2: How Are Fossils Formed? – Video & Worksheet

(Observed by Professor Paul Figueiredo & Neide Ribeiro)

I love this project. The more I think and research about it, the more I want to do it. The more I put it into practice, the more ideas I have. The more I teach it, the more I am sure that this is my thing and that my students can only benefit from such an experience. I can see it in their enthusiasm every Friday when they ask "Is it project today?", I can see it while they are on task or when they tell me that they went the museum with their parents and saw fossils. Yes, then, I am sure. My students are gaining the best of both worlds, they are learning a foreign language and science, all of a sudden. Actually, they are learning both without being conscious of one or the other. They don't find it either strange or too difficult. They are enthusiastic, committed, attached to this project and that sort of feedback is making me work harder, think deeper, create better, insightful, meaningful lessons.

Today, they not only were recognising and remembering the language they were previously exposed to, as they were using it throughout the lesson during revision, task completion or feedback stage. I dare to say that the only disappointment today was that we did not have the time to start group work. But time is our main constraint and we have to learn how to live with it.

As I mentioned in the feedback session after this lesson, this is how I learnt English, while I was in Montana digging for dinosaurs or in Cardiff studying Geology at University. I learnt it through a topic I love, through immersion and experience, not in seven years of traditional teacher-centred lessons in high school. I learnt English through science long before I even knew CLIL existed, and for me, it therefore is the missing piece of this enormous adventure that my professional life has been. For me, CLIL is the way. The way I want to teach, the way I learnt, the way I want to show my students and prepare them to live in a society where they will have to master a foreign language for so many purposes other than doing a test or being assessed. Again, this passion for CLIL makes this project what it is. Still, I believe that goals like these should always be institutional and not personal, acknowledging the presence of dilemma 8 throughout.

According to Gjendemsjø (2013, p. 17) “In the CLIL approach the focus is on learning through and with a foreign or additional language, as opposed to simply learning in a foreign language.” And therefore, the future of humankind deserves far more than vocabulary lessons and memorising stuff for a test. If they clearly enjoy it and are given the right opportunities to actually use it, they will not forget it and the learning process will be rewarding, meaningful and long-lasting.

5.2.1.3. Lessons 3 (not observed) & 4 (observed by Neide Ribeiro):

How Are Fossils Formed? – Group Work

I designed this groupwork project for two lessons and even though I have only been observed in the second one, I think that it makes sense to reflect on these together instead of making them two separate unconnected things that they are not.

This project was developed by bearing in mind that it was the first time this class did groupwork. Therefore, I wanted to keep it simple, my main objective being a social one, rather than an outcome one. It actually acted as a preparation for the next project I want to put into practice (Mary Anning).

In order to do so, but regarding the topic and keeping CLIL in mind, I chose to invite the students to make a poster about ‘How Are Fossils formed?’. For this, I showed them a slide with six different frames which clarified the main six steps in fossil formation. Then, I gave each group a photocopy which contained the title and the six frames. In their groups, Ss only had to decorate the title and draw fossil formation stages inside the frames which were appropriately labelled.

After everyone was clear about the contents of the project, that from a productive skills point of view was not difficult at all, students were ready to start their groupwork journey. As I had predicted, major difficulties had to do with student interaction and pupils working cooperatively for the same common end, just like Baines, Blatchford & Webster (2015, p. 22) found in their project and in which “a number of teachers talked

about the problems they experienced with involving students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in group-work."

In this particular case, some autonomy and confidence issues also aroused. At the time, it was quite clear to me that these students had never been given the opportunity to work in a less guided environment and that this idea, at first, was actually a bit scary instead of motivating. I was confident that these feelings would diminish as pupils engaged and therefore, discouraged them.

Project completion ran smoothly with the vast majority of groups engaged and on task. There were two situations I would like to highlight, though. One was in the 'Yellow Group' where 'G' was acting out as the group leader which would be OK if he had done so in a proficient way. He did not. He was actually slightly rude and bossy and so I had to call him out of the classroom and to draw his attention to the situation. He calmed down and all issues were resolved.

The second, more worth of thought situation, occurred in the 'Blue Group'. One of the students in this group, 'J' is a native speaker of English but she is a Special Educational Needs (SEN) student as well. While working in pairs, her partners usually complain that she is not being cooperative and that she does all of the work on her own. The same happened in groupwork. I had always thought that this would be because of her personality or even because she wanted to stand out as a native speaker. However, according to Baines, et al (2015, p. 22) while describing a project involving similar children "these difficulties involved rejection of the individual by the group as well as disruption caused within the group by the individual."

Every time the group would call me to solve any problematic situation, I decided just to give some advice, but let them find a solution on their own. After all, it is not only 'J' who needs to learn from this. Her peers can benefit a lot from it, too:

> Non-SEN peers can also gain from such experiences, both at a level of social sensitivity and understanding and at a cognitive level. It is well established that when more able children help less able children to learn,

> the more able also benefit since the explanations and thinking required of them help firm up their knowledge.
>
> (Webb & Palincsar, 1996 *as cited in* Baines et al, 2015, p. 24)

It is true that "group-work can bring a perception of a greater distance between teacher and learner because the teacher is rarely present" (Baines et al, 2015, p. 24 -25), but it also true that we must help these children become more autonomous and less teacher-reliant. They must also be aware that, that is actually a good thing and I believe that if teachers "held firm and continued to support children to resolve their differences themselves, through reflection, then such squabbles would quickly ease and productive group interactions would quickly follow" (Baines et al, 2015, p. 25).

In conclusion, my main aim for these lessons proved to have a point as,

> The absence of the skills amongst pupils to stem emotionally charged confrontations was one of the most persistent difficulties reported by teachers and experienced by pupils. This can be unsettling for teachers and pupils, particularly pupils with SEN. Helping children to regulate their feelings and to manage conflicts by helping them to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to reflect on and change their own approaches to interaction can make a big difference.
>
> (Baines et al, 2015, p. 25)

And this is definitely something I must continue thinking about throughout this project.

Here are some pictures taken in class during project completion:

Fig. XI – Students completing their projects.

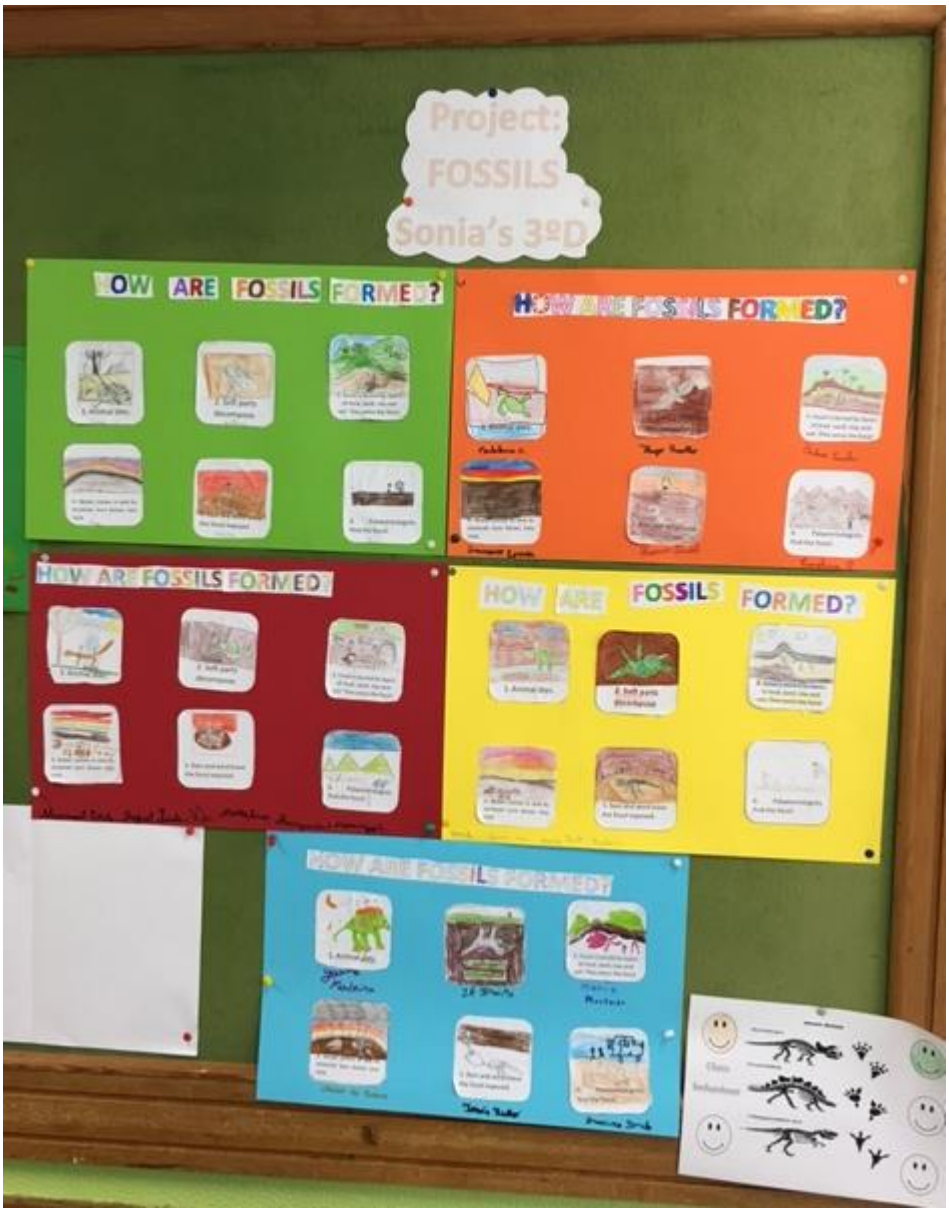


Fig. XII – Exhibition of projects in 3º D's classroom.

5.2.2. Part 2: Mary Anning

As I have mentioned above, I wanted this second story to be explored deeper, more meaningfully than the previous one. Less would now actually be more. Less stories, more depth, less activities, more time, less rush, more quality, less pressure, more learning.

Pupils had been exposed to what fossils were, how they are formed, their importance for us to understand the past. They could now cope with a story about a real

palaeontologist who had a difficult life: Mary Anning, the girl who 'sells sea shells' and put Lyme Regis on the map.

5.2.2.1. Lesson 1: "The Fossil Woman" – The Story

(Observed by Neide Ribeiro)

After spending four lessons learning about fossils and how these are formed, the time had come for my students to listen to the second story of this CLIL project: The Fossil Woman. This is a real story about the life of famous palaeontologist Mary Anning which includes quite a few tragic moments, but that ends well.

When I first read it, I was not in love with it. I even put it aside. But it kept calling me, as if it were saying,

> 'Tell me. I'm the story for you. Tell me.' To say no to a story like this doesn't do any good. It will haunt you until you tell it. This process is obviously highly intuitive. I used to be embarrassed by that, but I have grown to trust it. Share the stories that speak to you. Often, I share stories that make me laugh out loud. Sometimes, I find myself drawn to stories that contain thrilling sequences of suspense. Characters I can care about and identify with are important to me, and I believe all great stories have love in them. Powerful imagery may draw me to a story. I tend to be drawn to stories that make me feel something strongly, and to stories that make me feel something strongly, and to stories that affirm the dignity and mystery of the world we live in. I can't always put into words just why I feel connected to a particular story, but I share the ones I am compelled to tell, the ones that say, 'Tell me'.
>
> (Collins & Cooper, 1997, p. 40)

And now, after I have told it and lived it, I am even afraid I will not love another one as much as I do love this one.

In order to make sure that understanding of the story was maximised, I decided to spend some time pre-teaching potentially difficult vocabulary. This is because "CLIL straddles between these two (content and language) different but complementary aspects of learning" (Coyle et al, 2010, p. 3) and so "parallels between general learning theories and second language acquisition (SLA) theories have to be harmonized in practice of both content learning and language learning are to be successfully achieved" (Coyle et al, 2010, p. 3).

As usual, I did it using slides (see Fig. XIII) on the IWB, drills, repetition and whenever appropriate, Total Physical Response (TPR). Yes, this stage could have been a little less teacher-centred and I could have used pair work for prediction before pre-teaching vocabulary, but then we would have spent the whole lesson on vocabulary learning, and I wanted to do the story today, because I knew we did not have as many lessons till the end of the term to actually finish everything I had planned for. I also thought it would not hurt them to have a first more teacher-centred lesson, once the others would be completely student-led.

Fig. XIII - Slides used to pre-teach vocabulary.

After this, I invited students to brainstorm about who they thought Mary Anning was. Unfortunately, I did not take a picture of the spider diagram, but I clearly remember some of the students' ideas such as "she was the first female palaeontologist" or "she travelled in time to see the dinosaurs". As opposed to when we first did this about the sun, when learners spoke mostly using L1, at present, students who had the vocabulary because of the previous project and also the one which had just been pre-taught, spoke mostly in English.

Before moving on to storytelling, I also wanted students to think about this question:

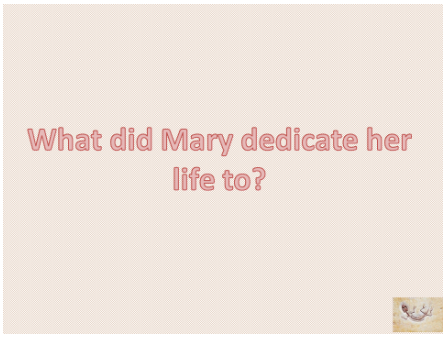
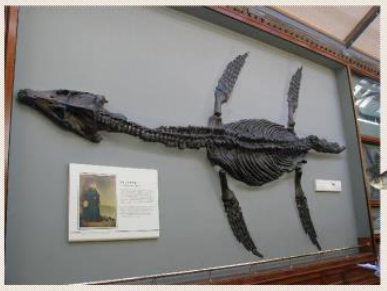


Fig. XIV - Slide used for prediction task.

From this stage, we moved on to storytelling. This time, I made sure everyone was sitting on the floor where they could see both me and the IWB. I told them the story by reading it from the book and also with visual aids that I created (see Fig. XV), to make it easier to follow and understand. During storytelling, although most students were really enthusiastic, I did notice, that some were a bit fidgety as well. In fact, it is Friday and this is their last lesson. Listening is a difficult skill, might as well, at this time of the day. Maybe I should have broken down the story into two. It is definitely something I might try next time, with story number 3. Again, I am still learning and I must remember that great storytellers are those who find their own voice and find the confidence to tell in their own way, unique in all the world (Collins & Cooper, 1997, p. 63). I must also bear in mind that, "the teachers who transform are those who help students discover their own voices and give them the confidence to speak for themselves" (Collins & Cooper, 1997, p. 63).

The Fossil Woman



Ichthyosaur

Lyme Regis

Mary

Everyday, the father would go off to work as a carpenter...

sawing

hammering

gluing and measuring

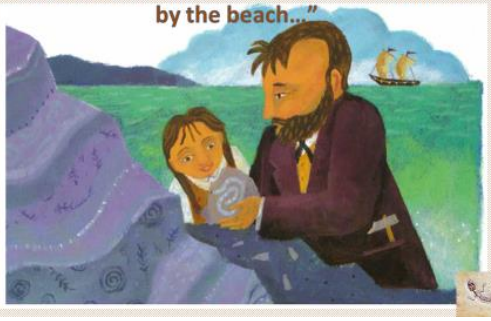
shelves

cabinets

a few pennies

"It's a miracle!"

"Mary grew up to be an energetic and curious girl whose favourite thing in the entire world was to go walking with her father on Sundays, collecting fossils by the beach..."



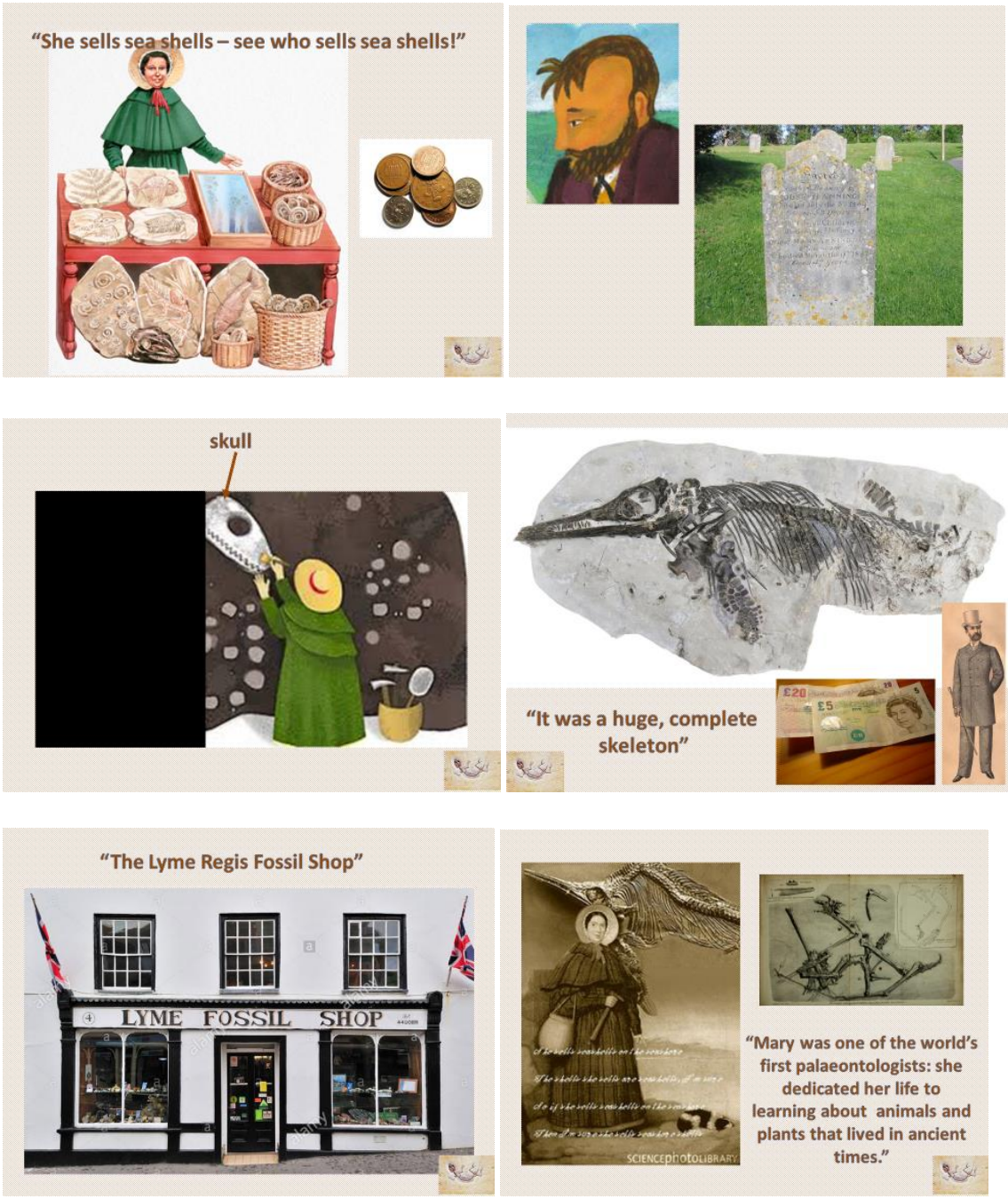


Fig. XV - Slides used as visual aids during storytelling.

At the end, everyone was able to answer the question previously posed and to compare and contrast Mary Anning's story to what pupils had predicted in brainstorming stage. I might not be able to promote a huge transformation both in my students or the school system, but I will be happy to witness some change. Transformation is a long process, it needs time, but if some change takes place in the mind of these young people our future is certain to be better.

5.2.2.2. Lesson 2: "The Fossil Woman" – Worksheet

(Observed by Neide Ribeiro)

The previous lesson was too teacher-centred and although I love Mary Anning's story and I believe that she is a great example for our kids to learn with, when I finished the lesson I did not feel that that goal had been totally fulfilled. Had the story been too hard? Had it been too long? Had it even interested my students? I had no idea. Dilemma 1 just keeps coming back to me.

However, today when I started the lesson by drawing a spider diagram in which 'Mary Anning' was the central word, I felt differently. Students could not only remember the story; they remembered it with quite a lot of detail indeed. Some wanted to know whether the story was real, and one student mentioned that it was. She had 'googled' it. Maybe I had not been that boring after all.

Later I quickly revised important vocabulary and then I wanted the lesson to be more interactive so that students could actually use the language, not just recognise it. In order to do that, I prepared a true or false worksheet for pupils to complete in pairs (see Fig. XVI).

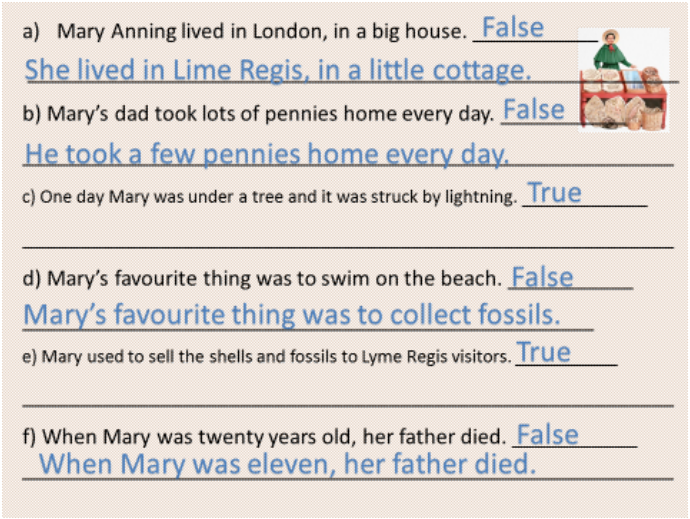


Fig. XVI – Slide used to provide feedback (worksheet).

As it is the kind of activity my pupils are used to doing, task completion ran smoothly and without major incidents. Students were actually talking about Mary Anning using

chunks from the story, and that was the goal behind this task: I wanted it to precede groupwork and to serve as a language foundation for students to refer to later.

> Moreover, as meaning-making is both a personal and a social process (community), new knowledge and skills develop through personal as well as co-operative reflection/analysis (cognition) and through a communicative process (communication). Long-term retention also usually requires that we experience the application of new knowledge and the use of related skills in a meaningful context. Finally, discussion and reflection, and the drawing of conclusions related to the experience associated with the application of new knowledge and skills, helps to cement learning.
>
> (Mehisto et al, 2008, p. 30)

By the time the lesson finished, I felt that it had gone well, main objectives had been achieved and solid learning had taken place.

5.2.2.3. Lessons 3, 4, 5 & 6: "The Fossil Woman"– Group Work

(only lessons 3 & 5 were observed by Neide Ribeiro)

Although, these were actually four lessons, the students were working on the same project throughout and I have decided to reflect on them as whole. Even though my school mentor has only observed the first and the third one, she played an active part in the planning stage – Calderhead's facilitator - of these and her feedback after the first lesson, really helped improving the later. As I had mentioned before, I wanted to explore this topic further and I had to think of a way to create a Group Work project that was meaningful, fun and related to the topic. I wanted my students to use the language they had learnt and to use their creativity to go beyond it, but most of all, to link it with previously learnt grammar or vocabulary in our regular EFL classes. After all this seems

to be the main aim of CLIL: to amalgamate, to make use of, to create, to immerse, to innovate.

> CLIL practices tend to encourage pupils to take part in developing their own skills and acquiring knowledge through activities where they can explore and investigate, and are able to make use of cognitive skills (reflect, process information, form opinions, reasoning, making comparisons and so on), for instance through 'problem solving'.
>
> (Gjendemsjø, 2013, p. 21)

Moreover, "today's ever-changing society requires young people to be flexible and creative, solve problems, make decisions, think critically and communicate ideas effectively" (Stewart, 2014, p. 4). And in this sense, 'How Are Fossils Formed?' had not been enough. It was only a rehearsal for students to learn how to work and behave in groups. They did not need to create much. Still, while completing that first project I noticed that there was quite a difference in students' ability. The groups working in the middle row were those which experienced major difficulties in terms of autonomy and self-confidence whereas both left and right row groups seemed much stronger. I thought I could differentiate by giving different rows different projects.

In order to achieve that, I separated the class into the 'orange' row (lower ability) and the 'blue' and 'green' rows (both high performance, although students in green row are slightly stronger). In each row, there would be two groups, for example, light blue and dark blue. I explained to the students what was about to happen and they did not even question why projects were different. I said I had prepared extra work, in case they did not want to hear the explanation of projects other than theirs, but everyone was curious and wanted to know about everything.

Orange groups would create a fossil shop. I wanted them to draw, decorate and label fossils. They were also asked to write a small description of the shop (see Fig. XVII).

Fig. XVII - Slides used to illustrate 'The Fossil Shop' projects.

Blue groups were asked to write an interview to Mary Anning and I suggested that they could draw the cover of a newspaper and a title (see Fig. XVIII), but one of the groups promptly asked whether the interview could be on TV. I said yes.

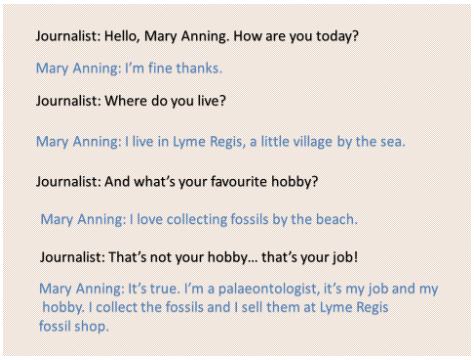


Fig. XVIII - Slides used to illustrate 'The Interview' projects.

Finally, green groups had to write about a day in the life of Mary Anning. They also had to draw the diary and a suitable title.

Fig. XIX - Slides used to illustrate 'The Diary' projects.

Groups started sharing ideas, but as the lesson went along, I noticed that some students were lost about the amount of work they had to produce. Others, for example, were drawing two fossil shops for one poster. They had to be constantly reminded that they were working for one single final poster, that everyone should be collaborating and what was expected from each poster. Surprisingly, the light blue group which had been rather complicated before (see reflection on 'How Are Fossils Formed?' Group Work lesson) was the one which was more on task, and therefore, the one with the most points.

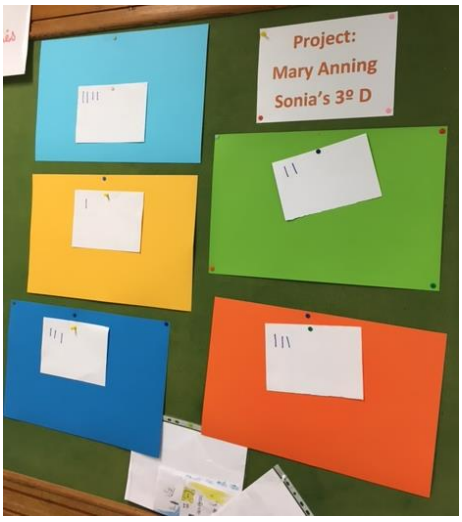


Fig. XX - Groups and their points.

Then my mentor suggested that next time a 'TO DO' list (see Fig. XXI) could be done for each project and left up on the WB for students to refer to throughout the lesson and avoid them being lost. It was a great idea and turned out being really helpful.

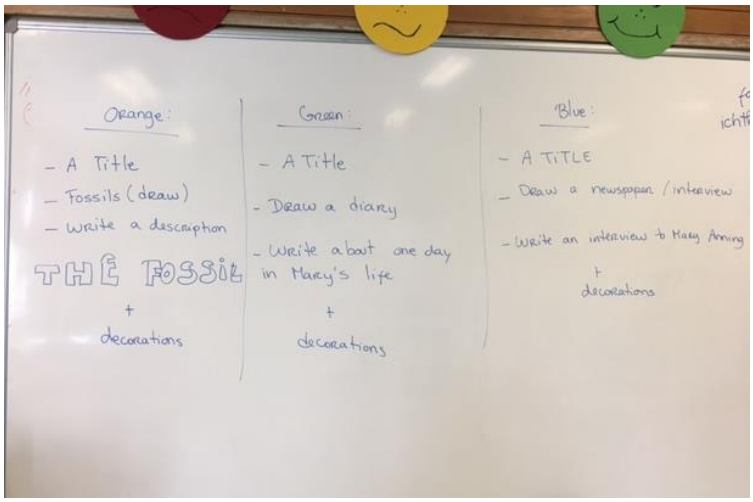


Fig. XXI - 'TO DO' list for each project.

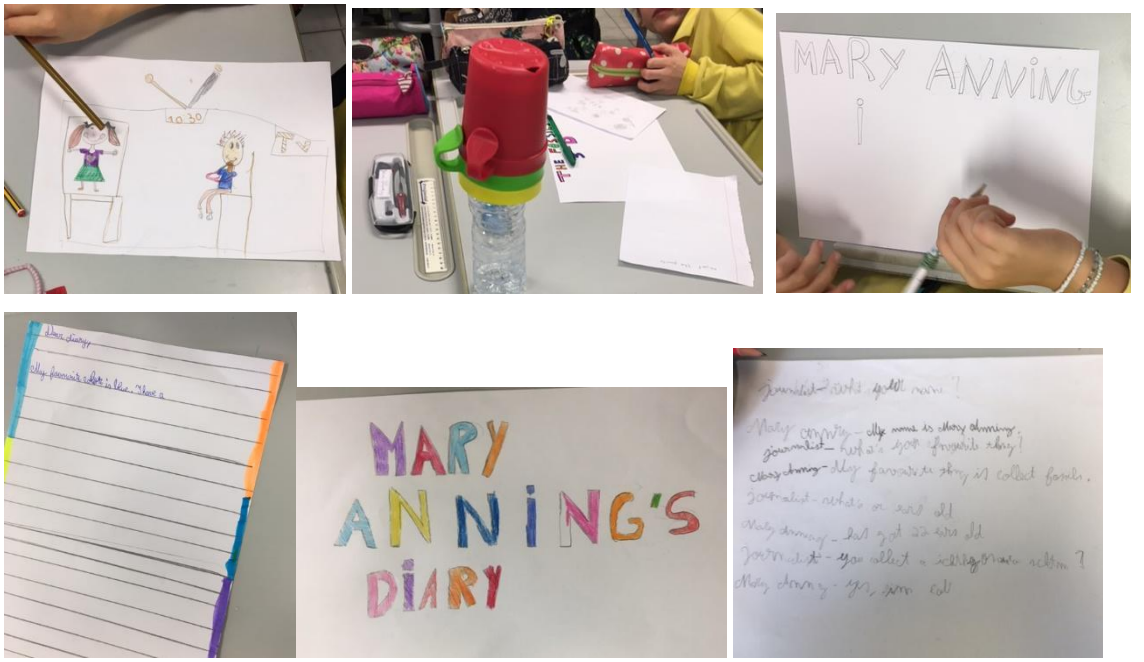


Fig. XXII - Students at work during project completion.

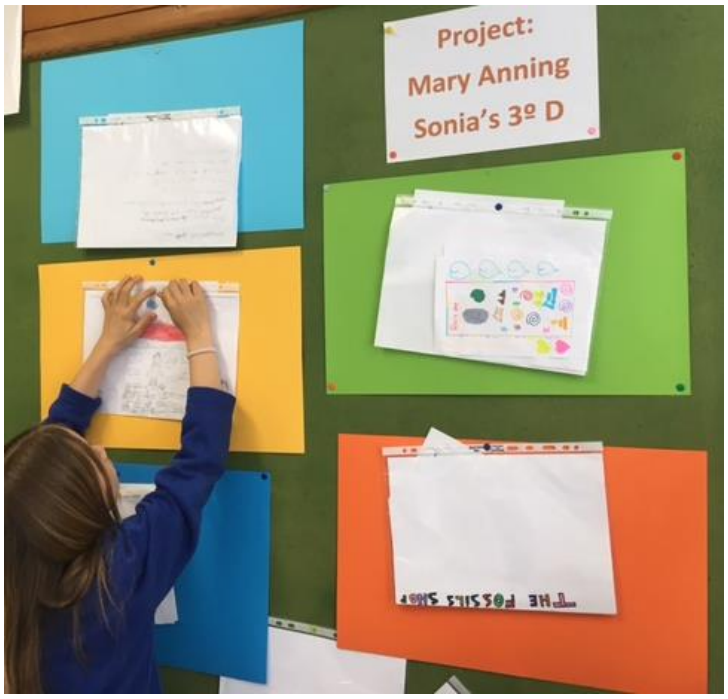


Fig. XXIII – Students tidying up their materials and keeping them in their plastic folders for the next lesson.

At the end of each lesson, groups would keep their materials at the back of the room, in a plastic folder that was placed on their coloured cardboard (see Fig. XXIII). This was not only a time saver, but also a way of keeping all the materials neat and separated. It was also the groups' responsibility for their own work and it worked really well.

Although I wanted this project to finish in a smoother way, time constraints are always against me and we only managed to complete the posters in the final lesson of term 2, so posters were not put up on the classroom walls.

As a matter of curiosity, the best projects turned out being the orange ones, i.e., the ones done by the lower-ability students. The blue groups were fine, but the green groups really struggled with their tasks. The stronger students were the least creative. This leads me to one question: are they really the stronger students or just the ones who have better results on their tests? These 'apparently' stronger students were too lost without the comfort of a teacher telling them exactly what to do and afraid to take chances. This will certainly be something to be aware of in the continuation of this project.

6. Conclusion

The major thrust of this thesis has been to examine the contribution of storytelling to CLIL teaching practices, using science as content and English as a medium of instruction, in a Primary School context and how this is related to some particular linguistic (EFL) practices used in the lessons conceived for this purpose.

For that, a series of lessons were taught, observed and reflected upon throughout this reflective study of a critical nature in order to find out whether the intersection of CLIL and storytelling – through the lens of the emergentist perspective - would make a difference in students' involvement in class, their motivation and use of Foreign Language - quantity as well as quality. However, so much more was gained and learned throughout.

The ideas of both Mehisto (2008) and Coyle (2010) have informed the structure and much of the analysis that constitutes the argument of this reflective study. My personal experiences as a former Geology student and latter as an EFL teacher influenced the choices of the stories and the sequencing of the classes. Feedback provided by both my mentor and professor allowed reflection after teaching and enhanced planning as the project evolved. Calderhead's dilemmas (1993) helped reflecting upon the subjective nature of the study and made it more critical. This, together with my own observations of students' attitudes, feedback and responses to class challenges informed the conclusions and posed questions for future research on the topic.

The study was originally conceived within the parameters of the Estudo do Meio syllabus for third grade, in Portugal, as a complement of their regular EFL classes. The development of a focus on the teaching practices in the lessons necessitated a more focused approach drawing on theories that addressed the meaning-making function of language within the chosen topics – rotation of the Earth and fossils – which also enabled the drawing of the research findings in a reflective way.

More particularly, it required a shift in the length of the approach of each topic. The first topic was exploited for a shorter number of lessons. It allowed students to become familiar with the use of CLIL together with storytelling. It also enabled my understanding

of how such a project could be planned and delivered and so it constituted an important kick off for the fossils project. It was through teacher's and students' observations that this connection was most usefully made.

In specific, it became evident that a longer, two-staged project clearly would result in greater motivation as well as increased FL production from learners. Whenever there is an introduction project prior to the main project, students seem to be more capable of dealing with content and expressing it in FL. The inclusion of groupwork into these projects was also vehicle to important findings in this reflection.

The notion of groupwork was new to the students in this context who are more familiar with transmissive, more traditional approaches and so, presenting the children to work like this, especially in FL, offered a double challenge. Careful planning which included pre-teaching vocabulary and watching a video followed by groupwork with very controlled practice has made it essential to a transitional start. Content first, story after became a critical assumption for the observed students' outcomes in order to understand the meanings made possible in and through the course of the second story (Mary Anning's fossils) exploration. Then, the use of a checking understanding activity helped consolidating content language. In addition, freer practice and differentiation were also included and their influence on students´ proficiency at a number of levels, considered.

For instance, differentiating projects according to the students' level of ability led to the understanding that lower ability students were more eager to try and fail than so-called high-performance students. Higher ability students were also found to be less prone to engage in challenge as they seemed to prefer more traditional activities, such as worksheets and notebook practice. In addition, their observed outcomes, during more autonomous tasks such as groupwork were not as creative.

Similarly, differentiated projects also allowed SEN students to become more visible and accepted within their peers as they had a chance to show their value in a situation that did not require traditional reading and writing as done in their regular subjects. It also enabled these students to regulate their emotions and listen to other students' opinions more actively.

Finally, students' motivation especially during on-hands activities but also while we could hear them running up the stairs for Friday class enthusiastic about their projects' completion.

From a teacher's point of view there were also some quite interesting findings: whenever the chosen stories are those which 'speak' to you, just like happened with Mary Anning's to me, the passion for teaching grows. A passionate teacher shares his/her passion with the students who grow in motivation.

In this particular case, this project not only enabled me to teach what I like the way I like, but it has also been crucial for my motivation, my own learning and professional development. Through it, I got to know my students better, I developed a closer, more meaningful relationship with them and I started to look at them as the individuals they are. Three years after its implementation, while substituting a colleague, I had the chance to teach some of these students again. To my surprise they all remembered our Friday lessons and how much they had learnt from this project and due to it, some of them still considered myself as being the best English teacher they had ever had. What they did not know is that a good teacher is made of such a variety of things, the most important being open to learn from mistakes. What I do know is that these comments corroborate the emergentist perspective of storytelling: involvement becomes evolvement.

Substantial changes in what we understand as schooling are necessary to bring about EFL teaching and content teaching by amalgamating them through CLIL. Areas such as mathematics, art or music have not been exploited in this research and I wonder whether a project like this can be expanded to areas other than science and taught by content teachers who are not English teachers. In addition, further research involving SEN students, CLIL and emotions could also become of great use in the classroom and become matter of future study as completion to these findings.

References:

Arnold, W. (2010). Where is CLIL taking us?. *Puls*, 33, 227-233.

Baines, E., Blatchford, P. & Webster, R. (2015). The challenges of implementing group work in primary school classrooms and including pupils with special educational needs. *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education,* 43(1), 15-29.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2015.961689

Bland, J. (2015). Oral storytelling in the primary English classroom. In J. Bland (Ed.), *Teaching English to Young Learners – Critical Issues in Language Teaching with 3 – 12 Year Olds* (pp. 183-198). Bloomsbury.

Button, K. & Johnson, M. (1997). The role of shared reading in developing effective early reading strategies. *Reading Horizons*, 37 (4).

Calderhead, J. (1993). Dilemmas in developing reflective teaching. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 20(1), 93–100.

Collins, R. & Cooper, P. (1997). *The power of story – Teaching through storytelling*. (2nd Ed.). Allyn & Bacon.

Coyle, D.; Hood, P. & Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL – Content and language integrated learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Daggett, W. & Sconzo, G. (2015). *Success beyond state tests - Preparing students for success in real life.* International Center for Leadership in Education.

Diezmas, E. (2012). CLIL and development of emotional competence. *Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies*, 45, 53-73.

Gjendemsjø, M. (2013). *A case study of a content and language integrated learning (CLIL) project in a 9th grade EFL class in Norway* [Master's Thesis]. University of Stavanger.

Halliwell, S. (1992). *Teaching English in the primary classroom*. Longman Handbooks for Language Teachers Series. Pearson Education.

Kirkland, L. D. & Patterson, J. (2005). Developing oral language in primary classrooms. *Early Childhood Education Journal,* 32 (6), 391-395.

Korosidou, E. & Griva E. (2016). It's the same world through different eyes: A content and language integrated learning project for young EFL learners. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal,* 18 (1), 116-132.

Krashen, S. & Brown, C. L. (2007). What is academic language proficiency?. *STETS - Singapore Tertiary English Teachers Society Language & Communication Review,* 6 (1).

Krashen, S. & Bland, J. (2014). Compelling comprehensible input, academic language and school libraries. *CLELE - Children's Literature in English Language Education Journal,* 2 (2).

Marsh, D. (2012). *Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) - A development trajectory* [PhD Thesis]. University of Córdoba.

Mehisto, P.; Marsh, D. & Frigols, M. J. (2008). *Uncovering CLIL – Content and language integrated learning in bilingual and multilingual education.* MacMillan Books for Teachers.

Mezirow, J. (1990). *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: A guide to transformative and emancipatory learning*. Jossey-Bass.

Morris, W. (2006). *Creativity - Its place in education*. Erps-Kwerps.

Morton, T. (2012). *Teachers' knowledge about language and classroom interaction in content and language integrated learning* [PhD Thesis]. Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

Ramnanan, A. (2013). *Introducing Shakespeare early: Why, when, and how to teach Shakespeare to elementary and middle school students* [Master's Thesis]. Faculty of The School of Continuing Studies & The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Georgetown University.

Ravi, C. (2016). Importance of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in an era of globalization. *International Journal of Science and Technology Management*, 5 (8), 251-255.

Scrivener, J. (2005). *Learning teaching* (A. Underhill, Ed.). MacMillan Books for Teachers.

Shandomo, H. (2010). The role of critical reflection in teacher education. *School-University Partnerships,* 4(1), 101-113.

Shiel, G.; Cregan, Á.; McGough, A. & Archer, P. (2012). *Oral language in early childhood and primary education (3-8 years).* National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Dublin.

Stewart, G. (2014). Promoting & managing effective collaborative group work. *i teach: quality learning & teaching induction & early professional development*. Belfast Education and Library Board.

Švecová, L. (2011). *CLIL in very young learners* [Diploma thesis]. Masaryk University.