Raising cultural and diversity awareness in the Primary English classroom

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS: (inter)cultural awareness, diversity, primary school context, English language teaching

The present research project focuses on investigating how students' cultural and diversity awareness can be raised while teaching a foreign language to young learners. Nowadays, key notions such as difference and diversity are being replaced by others of a more homogenizing, standardizing kind, typical of the globalised era in which we live. Simultaneously, and as a consequence of this tendency, the topic of intercultural awareness has been insufficiently developed, especially in the foreign language classroom in the primary school context in Portugal. As an example of this, primary course books resort more and more to symbols or icons in an unsuccessful attempt to show diversity, instead of presenting young learners with a deeper, more varied – in a word, more realistic – view of differences between people and cultures. It is my view, then, that the foreign language primary classroom is the ideal setting for this: that is, to learn about diversity while learning a new language, to acquaint children, who are naturally drawn to what is different, with various concepts of difference and otherness, and ultimately to raise better, more tolerant and inclusive human beings. To do so, I chose a small series of diversity related-topics which were dealt with in class, not in the traditional method, but with the aid of new materials produced by myself, specially aimed at simultaneously promoting the diversity awareness of young learners, and improving their language skills. The result was a more understanding, more open, and also more knowledgeable group of young learners – proof that, under the right circumstances, and with the correct motivation, the foreign language classroom is indeed an optimal place to change the current negative tendency of not thoroughly developing the teaching of diversity, difference and empathy in classrooms.

PROMOVER CONSCIENCIALIZAÇÃO CULTURAL E DE DIVERSIDADE NA SALA DE AULA DO 1º CICLO DO ENSINO BÁSICO

RESUMO

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: consciencialização (inter)cultural, diversidade, primeiro ciclo do ensino básico, ensino de língua inglesa.

O presente projeto de investigação tem como objetivo indagar como a consciencialização das noções de culturalidade e diversidade pode ser promovida em simultâneo com a lecionação de uma língua estrangeira a jovens alunos. Atualmente, noções-chave tais como diferença e diversidade vêem-se gradualmente substituídas por outras de uma índole mais homogeneizante, ou estandardizante, típicas da era da globalização em que vivemos. Ao mesmo tempo, e como consequência desta tendência, o tópico da consciêncialização da interculturalidade tem sido insuficientemente desenvolvido, especialmente no contexto da sala de aula de língua estrangeira do primeiro ciclo do ensino básico em Portugal. Como exemplo disto mesmo, os manuais escolares do primeiro ciclo recorrem cada vez mais a símbolos ou ícones, numa infrutífera tentativa de patentear diversidade, em vez de oferecerem aos jovens alunos uma mais profunda, mais variada – numa palavra, mais positiva e verdadeira – visão das diferenças entre pessoas e culturas. É minha opinião, pois, que o ensino de língua estrangeira no primeiro ciclo do ensino básico é o ambiente ideal para isto mesmo: isto é, para aprender sobre diversidade ao mesmo tempo que se adquire uma nova língua, para familiarizar as crianças, que têm uma natural propensão para o que é diferente, com vários conceitos de diferença e alteridade, e ulteriormente para educar seres humanos mais tolerantes e recetivos à inclusão. Para tal, escolhi uma sequência de tópicos afins à diversidade que foram tratados na sala de aula, não mediante o método tradicional, mas com o auxílio de novos materiais por mim própria produzidos, e concebidos especialmente para promover a consciencialização de diversidade por parte dos alunos e aperfeiçoar as suas capacidades linguísticas. O resultado foi um grupo de estudantes mais compreensivo, mais aberto e também mais conhecedor do tópico em questão – prova de que, sob as circunstâncias certas, e com a motivação correcta, a sala de aula de língua estrangeira é com efeito um local apropriado para procurar alterar a atual tendência de não se desenvolver com rigor a lecionação da diversidade, da diferença e da empatia.

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Introduction

Being a foreign language teacher cannot only be defined by the act of teaching a language and its grammar. A foreign language teacher is also a social and cultural manager in his/her classroom and this becomes even more relevant if we bear in mind the primary classroom context.

As an English teacher in the primary school context, I believe that it is my duty to teach students not only to learn a foreign language but also to make them aware that when they learn a language, they are also learning its culture. It is important that they understand that by learning a foreign language they will become aware not only of linguistic differences but also of differences between their own culture and the one they are learning about. That is the reason why young learners should be encouraged to think critically from the very beginning and they should have access to knowledge in a way which promotes reflection and awareness.

Furthermore, and bearing in mind the need to promote cultural awareness and enable learners to be more inclusive, it is important to expand this idea to other areas in order to promote equality and respect. Young learners should be aware of different individuals and/or groups that are discriminated against due to their disabilities, sexual orientation, gender and age. In order to promote equality, learners should be aware that these differences exist and that many people are discriminated because of them. Behaviour issues such as discrimination, bullying and/or victimization should be considered as reproachable, and replaced by values of equality and fairness.

Chapter 1 – The background to this study

The idea to develop this research arose for two reasons. Firstly, because during my years teaching I came to notice that concepts such as diversity and tolerance are being substituted by others of a broader and more generally accepted nature – such as peer pressure, social clichés or trends – or are altogether absent from the mind-frames of children – children who, in my view, should be less narrow-minded and more tolerant of difference. Children have to be taught to respect diversity, thus becoming more open-minded adults, and taking this into consideration, the learning of a foreign language such as English can play an important role in teaching them the most basic rules of citizenship.

The topic of promoting cultural awareness has been thoroughly developed in the third cycle and secondary classroom, but it has not yet been sufficiently developed in the

primary context in Portugal. Even though the *Metas Curriculares* [Portuguese national curriculum] (Cravo, Bravo & Duarte, 2014) already contemplate an intercultural domain in the foreign language classroom, which is an indicator of the importance of promoting intercultural awareness among young learners, and which the Council of Europe encourages from a very young age, the problem is that some themes are not as effectively developed as they should be for children of this age. A possible explanation for the lack of studies in this area may be that before English became compulsory in the Portuguese primary school context in the school year 2015/2016, it was only taught as an extra-curricular activity, and was therefore not seen as something as attractive and important as it is now.

Hence, in order to prove that it is possible to teach a foreign language while educating young learners to become more tolerant, I decided to do this research on the importance of promoting cultural and diversity awareness.

Chapter 2 – Literature review

1. Introduction to literature review

Taking advantage of students' young ages to introduce and teach a foreign language is very relevant. The same may be said of the idea of promoting cultural awareness and instilling notions of diversity. The younger children are, the easier it is to teach them about human values and rights while at the same time acquiring a new language. To do so, it is important to focus on how to approach these topics and use adequate materials that aid students' understanding.

2. Interculturalism in the foreign language primary classroom

If it is believed that learning a foreign language at a young age can be beneficial, then one should consider the advantages of using a foreign language such as English to promote intercultural and diversity awareness within this age group. Byram and Doyé (1999) support this view, and consider the primary school context as ideal to cultivate a mentality of openness and curiosity and develop positive attitudes towards the people who live in countries where the target language is spoken, because "children [of this age] have not yet been socialized fully into the assumptions of their own cultural environment, and do not yet perceive the cultural as natural" (p. 145). Doyé (1999) in particular goes even further, and not only considers the primary school context to be ideal to promote

intercultural and diversity awareness, but highlights the importance the foreign language classroom has in this process. Not only is the foreign language teacher in an ideal position, but the "very nature of language and the impossibility of teaching language independently of the culture which it represents provide a very good basis for intercultural education" (p. 17).

The same idea is pointed out by Byram (1991), according to whom "Language is not simply a reflector of an objective cultural reality. It is an integral part of that reality through which other parts are shaped and interpreted …; in acquiring language, children acquire culture" (p. 18), as well as by Driscoll and Simpson (2015), who suggest that "language awareness can develop linguistic and cultural sensitivity which allows learners to perceive language as a product of and part of culture" (p.173). It is therefore very important to take advantage of the young learners' tender age to develop their intercultural competence and to assure that they are encouraged to understand that when they learn a foreign language and its grammar, they are simultaneously learning about culture, because this is part of every language. Learners' awareness should be raised not only to the fact that there are linguistic differences between their L1 and the foreign language they are learning, but also to the fact that different beliefs and ideas exist in both cultures, and both languages – their own and the other. Byram mentions five savoirs - *savoir être* (attitudes), *savoirs* (knowledge), *savoir comprendre* (skills of interpreting), *savoir apprendre/faire* (skills of discovery and interaction) and *savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness) – which precisely aim at helping learners use their skills to understand and become aware not only of their own culture but of a culture which is new and different to them (Byram & Doyé, 1999).

In short, young learners should be prepared to understand and accept people from other cultures, who apart from having different values, beliefs and perspectives, are just like them. That is, bearing in mind that language and culture go hand in hand, students should learn to interact with others and become accustomed with their differences in order to avoid a one-sided, simplistic reaction when it comes to "reading" the other. As Volkmann (2015) states, "Such enhancement of foreign language or communication skills is always intercultural learning per se unless teaching-learning scenarios are favoured where the foreign language is taught as if it were completely unaffected by any culture-specific dimension" (p. 51).

3. Promoting diversity awareness

In order to explain the importance of language teaching, Byram (2008) focuses not only on the importance of learning a foreign language, but also on how language learning in combination with education for citizenship may have a deeper and more positive impact on a "globalized world". According to Byram, the aim of foreign language teaching (FLT) is not only to combine utility and educational values but also to encourage learners to be more active members of the international globalized world they live in. This "engagement in action" may be the core of what Byram defines as "a move 'from' FLT within education 'to' FLT that brings a specific additional contribution to education for (democratic) citizenship (p. 229).

The challenge of globalization, as Kramsch (2014) suggests, is more and more visible nowadays, especially in classrooms where a rich and diversified multilingual and multicultural background is present. This however becomes even more visible if we consider the different social backgrounds, upbringings and/or values students have, which lead to different outlooks and different ways of behaving in a classroom. If we apply this idea to what happens outside the classroom – from a more global point of view, that is, society itself – these differences become even more visible, and have therefore to be approached carefully in order to be duly understood.

Teaching a foreign language while promoting cultural and diversity awareness is not an easy task; but it is not impossible, as is argued by McLeod (2014) who believes that the teacher has to be able to identify "the learning potential of an issue and to 'seize the teachable moment'." (p. 1228). Hence, it is essential, as well as socially and culturally relevant, to introduce issues which are usually absent from the classroom, such as gender roles, religious beliefs, social, political and historical matters; in short, issues which raise awareness to differences and injustice. According to the *United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989)[1] it is of great importance to prepare the child "for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin". Raising awareness of young learners to these issues is crucial because it is an effective means to avoid discriminatory attitudes towards others and to create broader-minded individuals. This same idea is reinforced by Halstead and Taylor (2000),

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[1] Education for peace, human rights and citizenship under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) […] (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin. (Article 29)

who state that the role of the school/teacher is two-fold: to reinforce and further some values children have already started to develop and to help children to reflect on them and encourage them to apply their own developing values.

4. The use of different resources and different techniques to promote cultural and diversity awareness

As teachers we may resort to varied tools; one of our main resources is the course book. But, as Troncoso (2010) points out, most classroom materials focus on grammatical and language functions, and when it comes to culture, they tend to "promote hegemony and the standardization of languages and cultures" (p. 91). In other words, school materials ignore the fact that learning a foreign language and culture goes beyond the idea of being represented by symbols or icons, as we may see in generalizations such as Big Ben/England, Cristiano Ronaldo/Portugal and Tacos/Mexico. In short, the materials traditionally used in the classroom prove to be very mechanical and end up stereotyping and otherizing different cultures. These materials ignore the most important issues of teaching language and culture, which is promoting thinking and growing awareness.

According to Lee (as cited in Troncoso, 2010), when addressing a certain theme, teachers and students should go beyond the superficial meanings of dances, clothes, food or even icons which are associated to a certain culture. The focus should be more on what "those expressions of culture mean" and on understanding "the values, the power relationships that shape the culture" (p. 90). That is, to avoid the aforementioned stereotyping and otherizing, we should engage our students, make them think and become aware not only of their own culture but also of other cultures, and especially of what associates and dissociates such cultures: the invisible similarities and dissimilarities the acknowledgment of which is a factor of unique cultural enrichment. By being aware of the latter, students will be able to respect what is different instead of criticising it.

According to Byram and Masuhara (2013) some course books have improved visibly and furthered the development of intercultural competences in foreign language teaching, but there is still an "urgent need for interdisciplinary exploration of optimal syllabus, methodology and materials for intercultural education" (p. 156). While some efforts are being made to improve, some authors still encourage teachers "to develop principled materials for intercultural language education" (p. 153). Troncoso (2010) for example emphasizes the importance of the language teacher to adapt language teaching

materials to intercultural language education and mentions the great advantages of using DVDs, literature, magazines, cartoons and CDs. This same idea is shared by Ciornei and Dina (2015) who argue that the use of authentic materials in opposition to the prefabricated pattern of the course books, may be applied to helping young learners improve not only their communicative but also their cultural skills because students hear and read about authentic situations. Using authentic texts in the classroom has real advantages and according to Ciornei and Dina (2015) they are very helpful to provide learners with real-life examples (words and expressions) of how language is used by the native speakers inasmuch as "real-life materials are more informal, socially-centred and widely used" (p. 277).

Regarding the course book, it is important to emphasize that it should always be taken into account and used as much as possible – especially if there is suitable intercultural or diversity content available. However, whenever there is need to approach a certain topic differently, the teacher should not hesitate to produce his/her own materials to promote intercultural and diversity awareness more effectively. This involves not just using different materials, but also different approaches to teach young learners a foreign language. Having this in mind, it is important to take into consideration the different approaches presented by Stakanova and Tolstikhina (2014), which not only help increase students' interest in learning a foreign language but also help them foster respect and tolerance for different lifestyles. The main idea resides in using different resources (stories, songs, films, games etc.) and exploring students' multiple intelligences by promoting for example individual work, work in groups and in pairs. As Stakanova and Tolstikhina (2014) state, teachers should be aware of the psychological characteristics of primary schoolchildren and organize the educational process according to their age group. Learners should always be motivated to explore, to develop and to improve by *doing*. By using different approaches, students will be stimulated and motivated to learn and improve their linguistic skills as well as form a universal consciousness by becoming attached to other cultures or becoming aware of different human conditions.

To conclude, the main purpose of teaching a foreign language should not to be to focus exclusively on language itself, but also to use language to promote cultural and diversity awareness. The best way to do it is, especially with this age-group, to focus on using child-friendly materials that involve students in an engaging way and make them become aware of themselves and others while simultaneously acquiring a new language.

Chapter 3 – Action Research

1. Context

The class selected for this action research was composed of twenty-six students – fourteen girls and twelve boys aged between nine and ten. All children were native Portuguese speakers and attended the fourth year of their Primary Education at the Externato de S. José, a private catholic school in Lisbon founded by the religious order of the Dominican Nuns of Santa Catarina de Sena. This school's traditions, identity and values are based on the beliefs of Teresa de Saldanha – the founder of the religious order in question – and aim to provide students with a solid academic and religious education. Externato de S. José is a modern school and its excellent facilities provide a pleasant learning environment. All classrooms are equipped with an interactive board and a computer with internet connection. Students have individual tables and lockers.

All students in this class started their first grade in September 2013 and the teaching of the English language has been part of the core curriculum since year one. Sixteen of these students attended kindergarten classes for three years at the Externato. Once a week, they were given 45 minutes of activities in English, consisting mainly of games, songs and stories. Although students' oral fluency is still limited, it is noticeable that they understand basic structures and produce chunks of language used in everyday classroom speech.

From year 1 to 4 – primary school – the English lessons are 60 minutes in length and are taught twice a week. The programme and materials adopted by the school do not strictly follow the Portuguese national curriculum, but were adjusted in order to do so. The course book *Backpack Gold 3* (Herrera & Pinkley, 2009), for example, does not follow the Portuguese national curriculum but it respects the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2011), develops all of the four skills at level A1 and allows students to explore and learn about the world within the personal, social and educational domains.

2. Methodology

It is important to mention beforehand that, prior to the research and bearing in mind that students were directly involved in the process of data collection, consent letters were written to the school (Appendix A), to students' parents or legal caregivers (Appendix B) and to students themselves (Appendix C) asking for their permission to be

part of my research project. As in all informed consent letters – as suggested by Burns (2010) – information about the research project was given as well as the assurance that absolute confidentiality and anonymity regarding the children involved would be kept. All letters informed the reader that the children's participation was voluntary and that they could decide at any time if they no longer wished to be involved. The consent to carry out the research was granted not only by the school, but by all the parents and all the students.

2.1 Research questions

In order to promote cultural and diversity awareness, the research questions which presided over my investigation were the following. Firstly, is it possible to raise diversity and cultural awareness while teaching a foreign language and secondly, will students become aware of the differences and become more motivated and engaged to learn? Hence, the first goal was to introduce an cultural/diversity related topic in each unit and to try to establish a connection with what students had to learn (vocabulary, structure and grammar). To do this, I not only had to structure my lessons accordingly to promote cultural and diversity awareness, but had to choose the ideal materials and research tools in order to achieve both. The second goal was to consider to what extend students reacted positively to this, that is, how far this actually enabled and optimized their learning experience, which I did through different data collection tools.

2.2 Materials

For my action research I used *Backpack Gold 3*, which was the course book for the fourth grade English class. This course book presented grammar in meaningful contexts, and provided a variety of ways to introduce new vocabulary (through the use of texts, songs, chants, games, role-plays). However, when it came to promoting values (citizenship) or intercultural contents, and though it focused and developed some important issues such as establishing social-emotional intelligence connections (other-awareness and problem-solving) – in my opinion, the book did not do this as well as expected. That is why, whenever there was need to develop a certain topic and the course book did not approach it as it should, that is, in a more engaging and meaningful way while establishing connections with real-life examples and other realities, I produced my own materials to compensate for that flaw. It is important to highlight, however, that by doing so I did not intend solely to scrutinize and/or criticize the cultural or diversity contents of this particular course book. On the contrary, as I said, the goal was to choose

the best tools, the best instruments to carry out the important task of promoting cultural and diversity awareness while students learnt English as a foreign language.

For a better understanding of how the materials were used, it is important to mention that students worked on six different themes related to cultural and/or diversity awareness. The following sections 2.2.1 to 2.2.6 report on how the themes were covered and how the different materials (PowerPoint Presentations, worksheets, songs, authentic texts, short films/videos and games) were used. It is important to mention that the short films/videos were only used as a reinforcement of the topics dealt with in class.

2.2.1 Theme 1 – Greetings around the world

In order to introduce the topic "Greetings", students revised how people greet each other in English according to the different parts of the day. This was an excellent opportunity not only to verify students' understanding of the topic as such (Appendix D – Worksheet 1), but also to make them perceive something as simple as greetings as an example of cultural diversity.

To further their understanding, a table (Appendix E) with examples of greetings from different cultures was presented. Here students acknowledged how differently the day is divided in different parts of the world and which greetings are usually used. This was also an opportunity to show how differently in manner people greet each other (Appendix F – PowerPoint Presentation 1). To further reinforce the idea, I introduced a song entitled *Hello to all the children of the world* (Fun English, 2014) (Appendix G).

For the first home assignment (Appendix H) students were asked to do some research and find different "Greetings around the world". By doing so, students were expected to become aware of the different greetings other cultures have and to have the opportunity to share their findings with the rest of the class.

2.2.2 Theme 2 – Daily routines around the world

After studying the general topic "Daily routines" students worked on the daily routines of children from other countries. The aim was to make students become aware of the differences between their own routines and those of foreign children. The topic is of natural interest to children, but to make the activity particularly interesting students carried out two group activities.

In the first activity, students had to produce a poster (Appendix I). Project work is always a good opportunity to encourage students to use their creativity by working in

pairs and/or in groups. Here each group had to read about the routines of a child from a different country and rewrite the text. The countries that were chosen for this activity were Afghanistan, Bolivia, Canada, Finland, Guatemala, Mozambique, Myanmar, Thailand and New Zealand. Using different countries instead of the usual Great Britain or the USA was a good opportunity to give students a different perspective as well as a better insight on different routines around the world. By doing this project, students were not only expected to express their cultural and diversity awareness but also to develop their linguistic skills in English. Through project work, students' awareness was raised to a certain topic, and it also furthered and developed awareness amongst other students because the final class poster was displayed in common areas of the school.

In the second activity, students carried out a Scavenger Hunt, which is an information gap activity where students need to complete the missing information by interacting with other groups (Appendix J).

2.2.3 Theme 3 – Halloween, Pão por Deus and Dia de los Muertos

As in the previous topics, I decided to develop the topic of Halloween from an intercultural point of view, instead of making game-type activities as is usually the case. Hence, I prepared a PowerPoint presentation (Appendix K) with a short video entitled *Bet you didn't know: Halloween* (History, 2013), focused primarily on the origins of Halloween and, with the help of students, underscored how differently it is celebrated nowadays.

Having talked about the origins and the so-called traditional celebrations of Halloween, we moved to the lesser-known Portuguese tradition Pão por Deus. Just as before, students were informed about the origins of Pão por Deus and learned how this tradition is still celebrated in some parts of Portugal. As a third and last topic, the Mexican tradition Dia de los Muertos was introduced. Students learned how important this tradition is in Mexico, and what Mexicans do to keep it alive. Showing pictures and presenting a short animated film entitled *Dia De Los Muertos* (The CGBros, 2013) succeeded in reinforcing students' understanding of the topic. Later on, an activity was promoted in class, which consisted in the making of a booklet (Appendix L). This served the main purpose of familiarizing students with three very different yet related celebrations as well as understanding the cultural differences and similarities between them.

2.2.4 Theme 4 – Helping Hands

Having studied in class the topic "Helping Hands", which focused on jobs, occupations and job-related activities, I decided to further develop this topic, namely, within the domain of developing citizenship awareness.

Here I focused on the importance of doing voluntary work and showed a PowerPoint Presentation (Appendix M) with a short video on the topic entitled *Happiness is helping others* (Ibrahim, 2014). Students not only were told about the existence of different kinds of volunteers and got involved in saying what each of these volunteers does, but they discovered new kinds of helpers which were completely unknown to them.

Students were then asked to do a home assignment and talk about their future dream jobs and how others could benefit from them (Appendix N).

2.2.5 Theme 5 – Pen pals and Christmas project

Unit 3 of the course book *Backpack Gold 3* developed the topic Pen pals. The aim was for students to acknowledge the difference between living in the city and living in the country and learn the importance of corresponding with friends who live in different places.

In order to work this topic from a diversity-awareness point of view, I decided to promote a Christmas project. To do so, I used a PowerPoint presentation (Appendix O) and explained to students the importance of having a pen pal and writing letters. Since it was almost Christmas time, students learnt about sending letters to Santa Claus and were informed that some people write Christmas cards to family and friends.

In the spirit of Christmas and helping others – which is especially important at the time of the year – students were informed of their own Christmas project: to make and write Christmas cards to sick children at the Great Ormond Street Hospital of London (GOSH) (Appendix P). I had previously contacted the Hospital and explained the main purpose of this project. The Hospital did not oppose the idea and welcomed it as a good initiative (Attachment Q). The same could be said of the students, who welcomed the project and carried it out enthusiastically.

2.2.6 Theme 6 – Christmas around the world

After the Christmas project, students had a lesson on how Christmas is celebrated around the world. Here, the main aim was to talk about what people traditionally eat, how they decorate their houses and what they do on Christmas Eve.

First and foremost, students described how Christmas is celebrated in Portugal and what traditions they have with their families. Then, in contrast, students learned how Christmas is celebrated in the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia. By showing some examples of what people eat and what they usually do (PowerPoint Presentation – Appendix R), students acknowledged that Christmas is celebrated differently around the world.

2.3 Data collection tools

In order to carry out my research I followed the important steps of action research (plan, act, observe and reflect) and collected data to understand how students reacted to new topics and the different resources at hand, how they see diversity and difference, and what can be done to improve student's learning skills while using a foreign language. The data gathering tools consisted of questionnaires, quizzes and reflections registered in a teaching journal. It is important to mention that the results of classwork (project) and home assignments were also used to gather evidence.

2.3.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaires (Appendices S, T, U, V and W) had either open or closed questions, and focused mainly on collecting information on what students already knew about a certain topic and what they had acquired as new from developing it in class. All questions were easy to understand and were formulated in English and Portuguese. The layout was child-friendly and the use of pictures proved appealing to children. The questionnaires were distributed individually and had two specific purposes: on the one hand, to help students reflect and express their feelings and views on the topic they learnt and, on the other hand, to collect information on how students reacted to the topic, both of which are very important indicators of what students know and how they react to what is new and unfamiliar to them.

The results of the questionnaires are presented quantitatively in form of graphs and results are expressed either in number of students or in percentages. For the open questions, response categories were developed in order to ease the analysis and are presented in graphs (number of students/percentages).

2.3.2 Quiz

The quiz (Appendix X), which is similar to a small test, consisted of simple questions (true/false answers), and served the purpose of revealing what students learnt about "Greetings around the world" dealt with in class. The quiz was carried out individually at the end of the unit and results are presented in a graph and analysed according to the number of students or percentage of the respondents.

2.3.3 Teaching journal

Keeping a journal and writing down what was observed in class, that is, recording information about how students worked and what they said, the questions they asked or what they enjoyed, helped me understand how students reacted to a certain topic. These results are presented as extracts.

All the aforementioned tools resulted in their own, specific kind of data. By analyzing the results – both qualitatively and quantitatively – and reflecting on students' answers, I was able to realize how children saw and coped with diversity and difference.

3. Results
3.1 Research questions

Having determined the general topic area of research, my research questions were formulated as follows:

1. Is it possible to raise diversity and cultural awareness while teaching a foreign language?
2. Will students become aware of the difference and become more motivated and engaged to learn?

3.1.1 Theme 1 – Greetings around the world

Working on the topic greetings and especially introducing young learners to the various greetings people use around the world, proved to be a very effective way of instilling diversity and intercultural notions. Students received it well, as greetings are something shared by all, and yet showed admiration that there could be such different and original salutations around the world, so much so, that when given a home assignment, which consisted of searching for further greetings (Appendix H – Homework) and presenting them in class, presentations were done with great enthusiasm and students were eager to share their findings with others.

Palpable proof of this may be found in my teaching journal, where I wrote: "Some students told me at the end of the class that they downloaded the song and that they really liked it. Some students said that their favourite expression was the Japanese greeting: Konnichiwa. The mainstream teacher informed that some parents commented positively on the home assignment and enjoyed helping their children doing the homework." (Teaching journal, September 26, 2016)

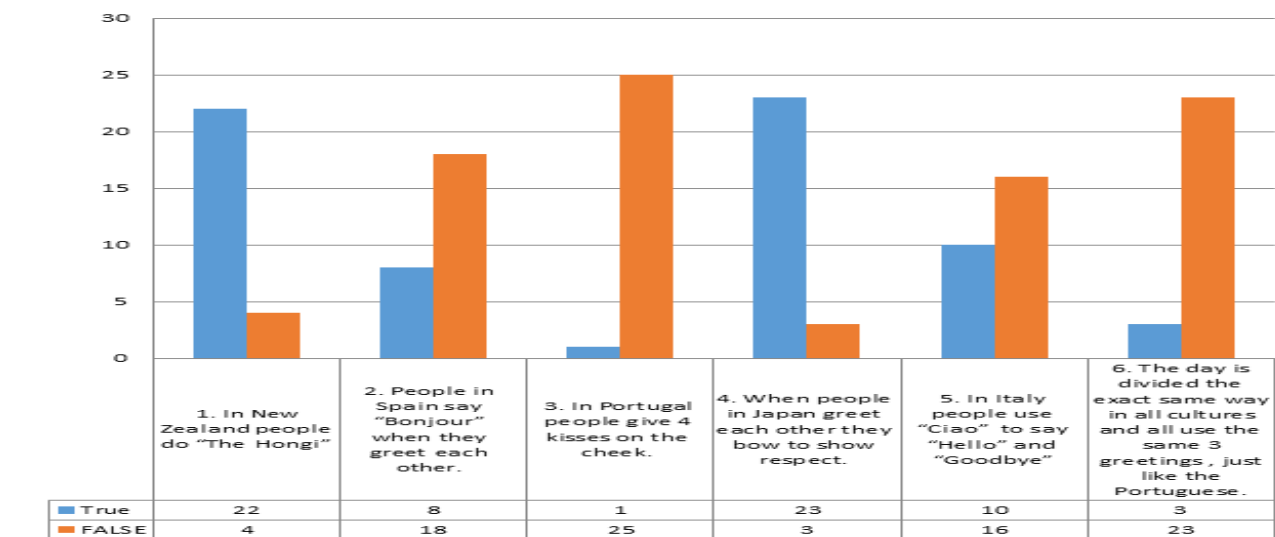A quiz was distributed on this topic (Appendix X) and results are shown below.

	1. In New Zealand people do "The Hongi"	2. People in Spain say "Bonjour" when they greet each other.	3. In Portugal people give 4 kisses on the cheek.	4. When people in Japan greet each other they bow to show respect.	5. In Italy people use "Ciao" to say "Hello" and "Goodbye"	6. The day is divided the exact same way in all cultures and all use the same 3 greetings, just like the Portuguese.
True	22	8	1	23	10	3
FALSE	4	18	25	3	16	23

Figure 1: Results of the Quiz "Greetings around the world" expressed as numbers of students.

As is shown in Figure 1, the majority of students revealed they had acquired knowledge about greetings other than their own, and hence had a positive contact with basic notions of diversity. This is especially visible in questions 1, 3, 4 and 6, where the vast majority of the students answered the questions correctly, which reveals that they understood the existence of different greetings and now knew that the day is divided differently from culture to culture. The answers given to questions 2 and 5 revealed that some students were unable to relate the greeting with the country, which can be explained by the simple fact that students of such tender age, and such limited memory, may still have difficulties in relating a specific greeting with its respective country.

All in all, the main purpose of this activity was achieved, as students became aware that diverse greetings means different ways of seeing the time, as well as different ways of life, as expressions of cultures different from their own.

3.1.2. Theme 2 – Daily routines around the world

Having focused on daily routines around the world students were asked to answer a questionnaire (Appendix S). Here the questions focused mainly on understanding if students had become more aware of the different routines and different ways of life of children around the world: children who just like them, are students and go to school. The results of the questionnaire may be seen below (Figure 2).
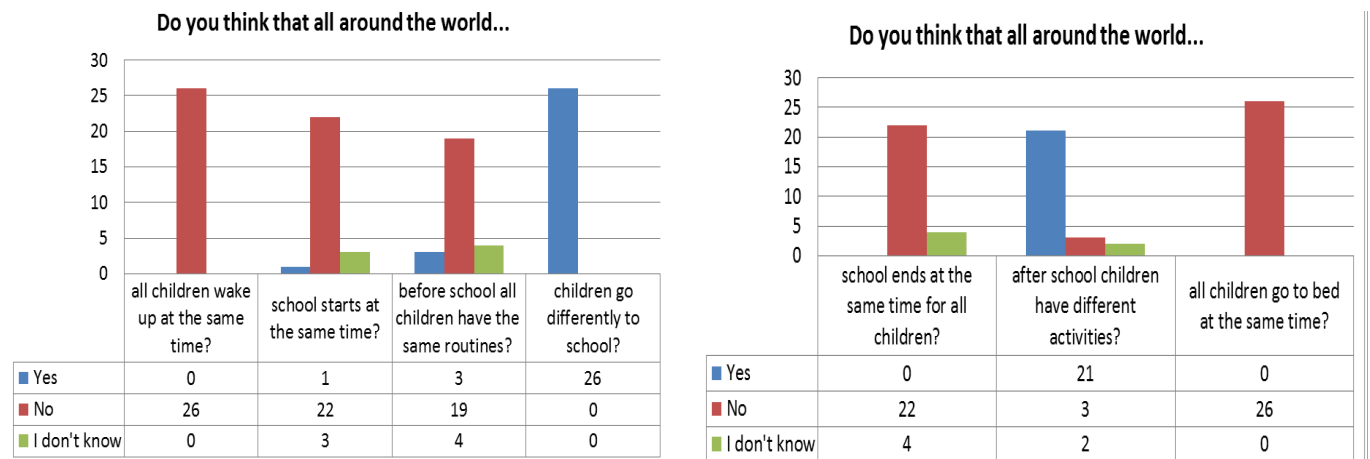
Do you think that all around the world...	all children wake up at the same time?	school starts at the same time?	before school all children have the same routines?	children go differently to school?
Yes	0	1	3	26
No	26	22	19	0
I don't know	0	3	4	0

Do you think that all around the world...	school ends at the same time for all children?	after school children have different activities?	all children go to bed at the same time?
Yes	0	21	0
No	22	3	26
I don't know	4	2	0

Figure 2: Results of the Questionnaire "Daily routines around the world" expressed as numbers of students.

The study shows that all twenty-six students (100%) had become aware that children wake up and go to bed at different times and that they go to school in different ways. And even though, when focusing on routines done "before/after" school, not all students produced the same answers – perhaps due to the greater specificity of the questions at hand –, the majority acknowledged the general notion that children around the world do not have the same routines – which, as was said, was the main purpose of the activity. Curiosity was so palpable, and the topic had such a positive impact on students, that some of them even asked me if the texts were authentic and if some of the routines were real. Having been assured that all texts were authentic, all students reacted with surprise and contentment and definitively acknowledged that difference is everywhere in life, even in something as natural as daily routines. Students related this to personal experiences and one student even shared the following: "I have a cousin who lives abroad and he usually starts school at the time I usually wake up. At the beginning I thought this was odd and maybe not true, but now I understand that routines are different from child to child and that they differ even more between countries" (Teaching journal, October 26,

2016). In short, most students enjoyed learning about the routines of children from other countries (Figure 3) and all liked doing the Scavenger Hunt in the class (Figure 4).
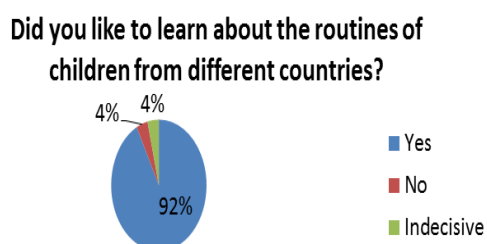
Did you like to learn about the routines of children from different countries?

4% 4%

92%

- Yes
- No
- Indecisive

Figure 3: Percentage of students who enjoyed learning about the different routines in class.

Did you like the Scavenger Hunt in the classroom?

0%

100%

- Yes
- No
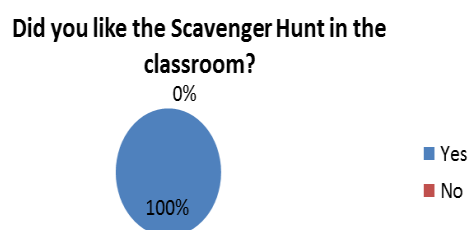
Figure 4: Percentage of students who enjoyed doing a Scavenger hunt.

In conclusion, the results obtained through the use of the research tools show that the making of the poster, as well as the Scavenger Hunt were not only exciting but also a very useful learning experience. Both activities proved very effective because even though they were also intended to develop students' reading, writing and speaking skills, through it, students not only improved those skills but at the same time acquired a different insight on the routines from children of different cultures. This, I believe, allowed them to relate the topics of "Greetings" and "Daily Routines", and to consolidate notions of diversity and possible intercultural exchange.

3.1.3 Theme 3 – Halloween, Pão por Deus and Dia de los Muertos

The purpose of this topic was to take a step even further from what students had already acquired as far as basic diversity and otherness notions are concerned; in this case, by moving away from the different actions people do every day – "Greetings" and "Daily Routines" – and opening their minds to more specific, yet more meaningful occasions, and the different shapes diversity may acquire in them, such as celebrations (3.1.3, 3.1.5 and 3.1.6).

In order to verify this, a questionnaire (Appendix T) was carried out regarding what students had learned about the topic of celebrations and what they enjoyed most in it. Results are shown below.
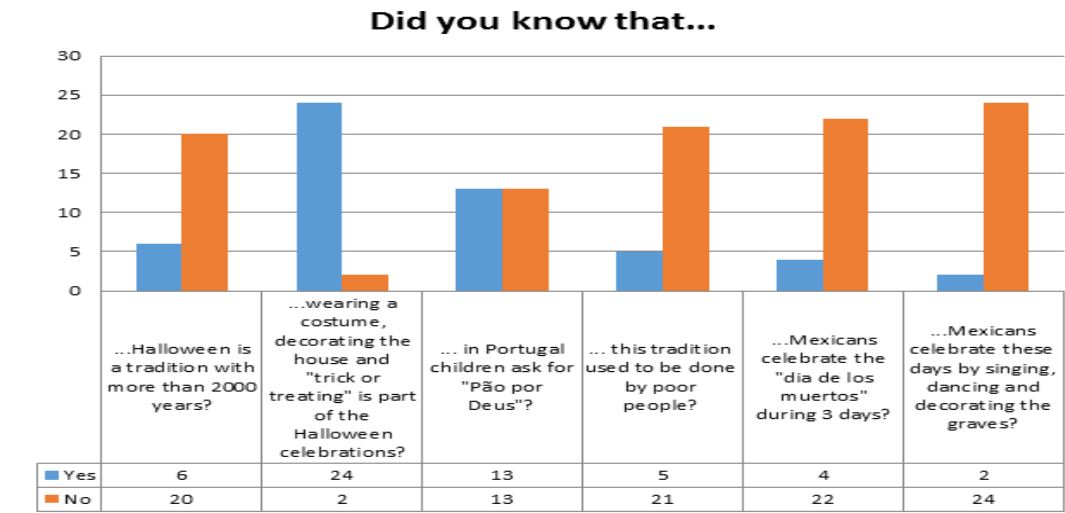
Did you know that...

	...Halloween is a tradition with more than 2000 years?	...wearing a costume, decorating the house and "trick or treating" is part of the Halloween celebrations?	... in Portugal children ask for "Pão por Deus"?	... this tradition used to be done by poor people?	...Mexicans celebrate the "dia de los muertos" during 3 days?	...Mexicans celebrate these days by singing, dancing and decorating the graves?
Yes	6	24	13	5	4	2
No	20	2	13	21	22	24

Figure 5: Questionnaire on the three celebrations: Halloween, Pão por Deus and Dia de los Muertos expressed as numbers of students.

As can be seen in Figure 5, there were different reactions to different cultural expressions, as well as to their origins; results which were to be expected given the circumstances. For instance, most students were already acquainted with the tradition of celebrating Halloween. However, they were unaware that Halloween is an ancient tradition. As to the Portuguese Pão por Deus it was surprising to find that 50% of the class – that is, thirteen students – knew about the tradition, but the majority, that is, 81% (twenty-one students), knew nothing about its origin. Finally, as to the Mexican tradition, 92% of the respondents (twenty-four students) revealed that they were completely unaware of this particular celebration.

As to their personal experience related to such celebrations, unsurprisingly, the majority of students answered positively when asked if they had already celebrated any of the celebrations in question (Figure 6). According to Figure 7, which complements Figure 6, the survey shows that Halloween was the celebration most students have celebrated. Only one student (4%) revealed having celebrated Pão por Deus, while two students (8%) answered having celebrated both Halloween and Pão por Deus. The Mexican tradition was not celebrated by any of the respondents – results which again were to be expected.
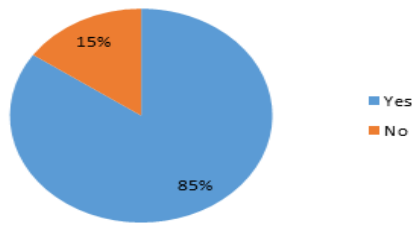
Figure 6 – Percentage of respondents who have celebrated any of the three celebrations discussed in class (Halloween, Pão por Deus and Dia de los muertos).
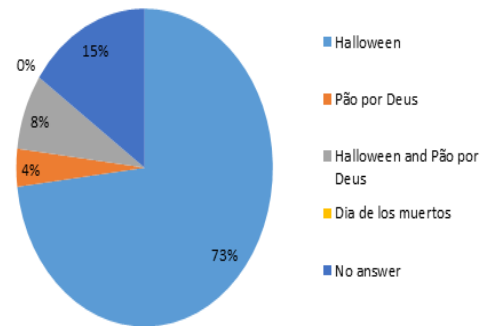

Figure 7 – Percentage of respondents mentioning the tradition they have already celebrated.

As to children's preference for the celebrations, different results were found, and these are very relevant from an intercultural perspective. Hence, when asked about the celebration they enjoyed the most, it is interesting to observe (Figure 8) that Halloween and Dia de los Muertos were the ones students liked the most, whereas the Portuguese tradition proved to be less appealing. A possible reason for this may, of course, be that fact that children are over-influenced by other cultures, especially the American tradition, with which they have contact through films and series and which is celebrated with great enthusiasm even by adults. But the fact that these were selected as the most interesting also shows that children have a natural attraction to what is new and different, in other words, a propensity towards embracing and even adopting different customs and cultures in general, which in my opinion may be seen as proof of this activity's overall success.
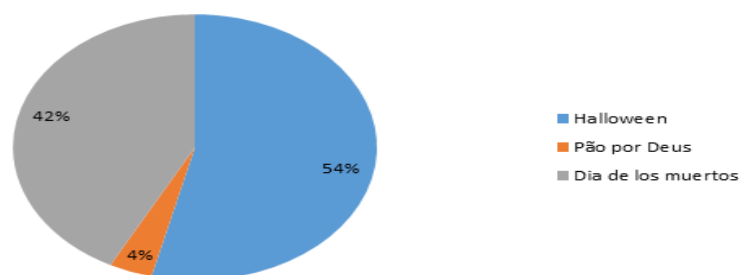
Figure 8: Percentage of respondents revealing their preference.

3.1.4 Theme 4 – Helping Hands

As mentioned previously, the theme "Helping Hands" served the important purpose of furthering young learner's awareness of social issues, in this case, by exposing them to the reality of such issues and teaching them how by one's actions, or by one's job, they may be diminished. The theme was received with great sympathy by students, who started by merely acknowledging the importance of helping others and voluntary work, but ended up motivated to be volunteers themselves one day: "Students were very attentive during the presentation and revealed great interest for this topic. This was visible in the questions they asked in order to know more about each voluntary work. Some students shared that they also would like to become volunteers" (Teaching journal, November 16, 2016)"

In order to question students on this topic, a questionnaire (Appendix U) was presented to them and the results may be seen below. Naturally, the first part of the questionnaire implied a general assessment of student's own sense of solidarity and empathy towards different voluntary activities. As can be seen from Figure 9, the study revealed that students do have a sense of solidarity, that they acknowledge the importance of helping others and – most importantly – seem to perceive and enjoy doing so.

	Volunteering is an important activity	Animals can't help people be happy	I like to help others in need
Yes	23	1	26
No	0	24	0
Maybe	3	1	0

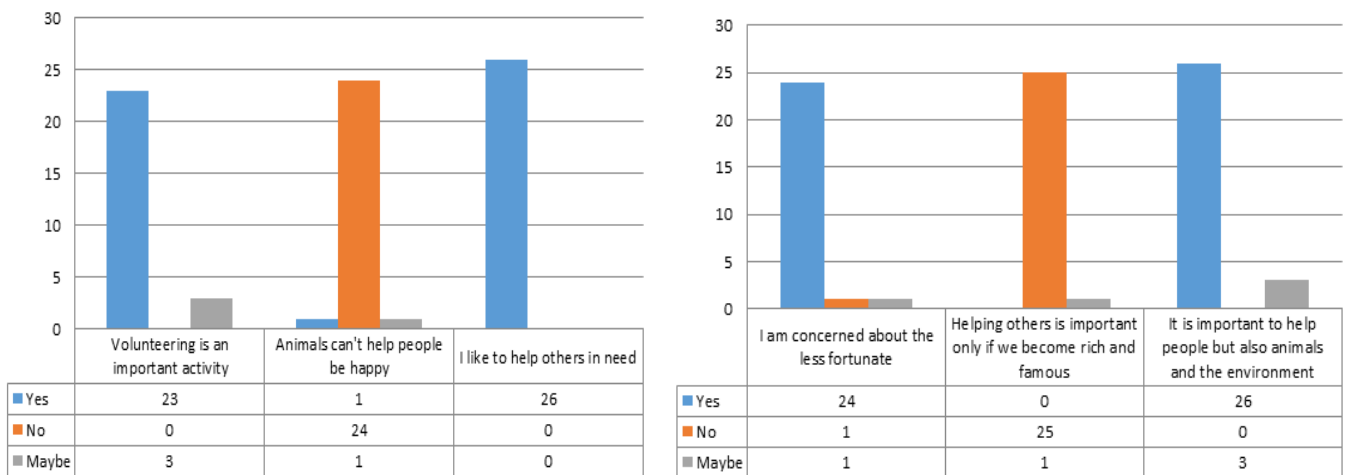|	I am concerned about the less fortunate	Helping others is important only if we become rich and famous	It is important to help people but also animals and the environment
Yes	24	0	26
No	1	25	0
Maybe	1	1	3

Figure 9: Number of respondents expressing opinion on the importance of helping others and doing voluntary work.

The next step was to encourage students to say if they had already helped anyone in particular, to report personal acts of kindness, or voluntary actions, and to identify them as such – in order to create a stronger bond between students and the topic at hand. By looking at Figure 10, we are able to see that most students had already helped others, which shows that students either were, or became more aware of their actions and

acknowledged them as being beneficial to others. One single student was unsure whether his/her actions had had a positive impact on others.

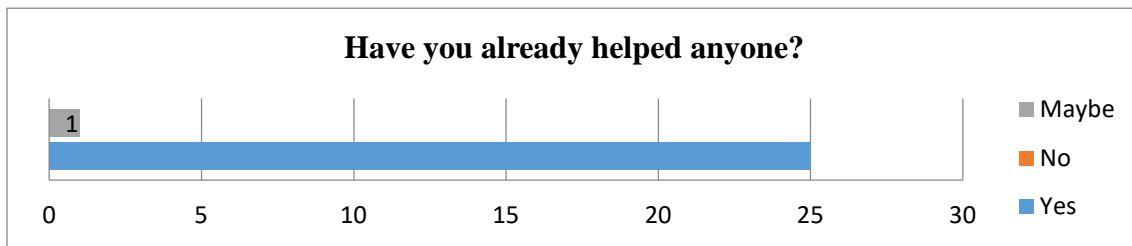**Have you already helped anyone?**

Figure 10: Number of respondents showing that they had already helped someone.

When asked to specify the kind of help students had given, the majority – nine students (34 %) – revealed they had helped family and friends, as can be seen from Figure 11. Donating money and helping strangers in need was expressed by eight (31%) and six students (23%) respectively. Surprisingly, only one student had done voluntary work and only one mentioned having helped animals. In short, the survey shows what students associate to the idea of helping others. Acknowledging and revealing the kind of help they themselves had given others, even if in a small scale, made them grow aware that such seemingly insignificant gestures are a small expression of greater deeds, which is what true helpers (volunteers) do.

What did you do?
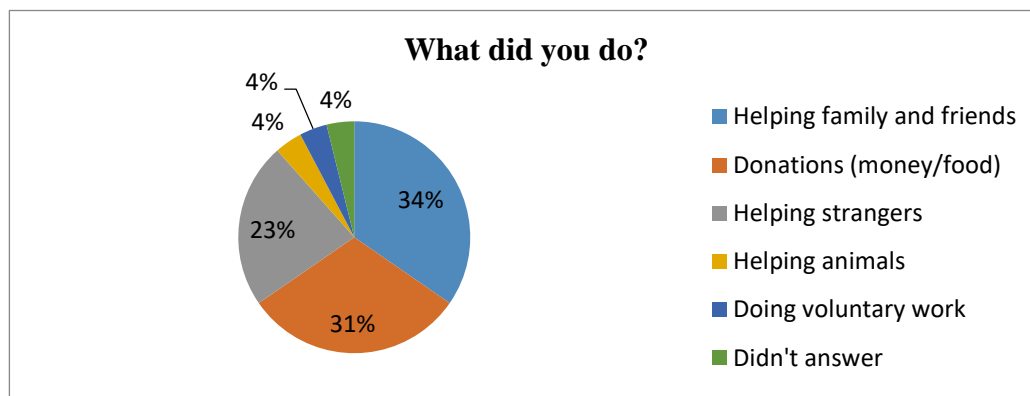
Figure 11: Percentage of respondents revealing the kind of help they gave.

The following stage of the questionnaire focused on the importance of being a volunteer and, in accordance, students were asked if they would like to be volunteers one day. As can be seen from Figure 12, only one student (4%) showed no interest in becoming a volunteer, while seven students (27%) were unsure. The majority – that is, eighteen students (69%) – showed interest in becoming a volunteer, a clear indicator that

they acknowledged the importance of helping others and already were demonstrating interest in becoming a "Helping Hand".
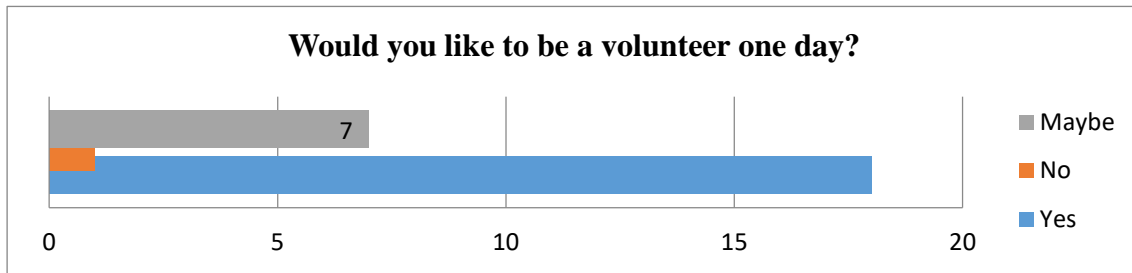

Figure 12: Number of respondents revealing opinion on becoming a volunteer.

Finally, when asked to specify what kind of voluntary work students would like to do in the future, eight students (31%) answered aiding people, while five students (19%) preferred helping animals. Four students (15%) idealized ending poverty, while causes like helping the environment, working at the food bank and fighting for liberty got one vote each. 23 % of the respondents (six students) were unable to name a cause they would support, perhaps because they had not yet thought about it. These results can be seen in Figure 13 and show that what was done in class ended up influencing students in a very positive way. Not only did students demonstrate they understood the importance of doing voluntary work, but they revealed interest in becoming part of it, and defined their particular areas of interest.
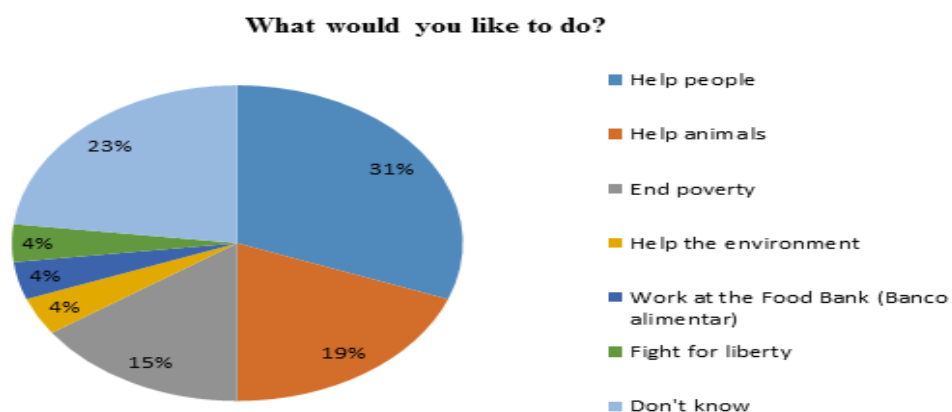
Figure 13 – Percentage of respondents revealing what they would like to do as volunteers.

The last part of the questionnaire focused on the use of animals as helpers. Here, it is interesting to observe that even though most students (65%) were aware that animals were such good helpers, seven students (27%) did not know about this fact and two (8%) were not sure, as can be seen in Figure 14.

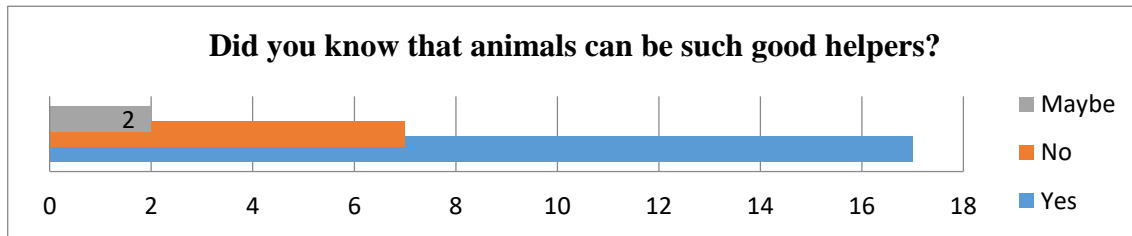**Did you know that animals can be such good helpers?**

Figure 14: Number of respondents revealing awareness of using animals to help others in need.

This particular question shows that even though some students did not know about the therapeutic effects animal have, the majority of the students are now aware of the benefits of using animals as helpers. One student shared: "I now understand why animals are such good helpers. Did you know that I was given a dog to calm me?" (Teaching journal, November 21, 2016). Becoming aware of this was a result of what students learnt in class. This is a good indicator that it is possible to promote students' awareness of such important topics and that they acknowledge them better when they are able to relate to them.

In addition to the questionnaire, students were also given a home assignment on future job intentions. This revealed to be an equally good way to raise students' awareness of the importance of helping others. From the comments I heard and registered the following stood out: "I had never thought that my dream job could affect others. Now I understand that I can become someone and make others happy. It makes sense." (Teaching journal, November 16, 2016).

3.1.5 Theme 5 - Pen pals and Christmas project

The two final themes of my research were Christmas-related. The aim here was for students to take one final step in their growing awareness of diversity, and move on from wishing to do kind gestures (as in 3.1.4) to actually doing them. This was done by means of the Christmas cards sent to the Great Ormond Street Hospital of London (GOSH).

As a confirmation of this, after working in pairs and making the Christmas cards, students were asked to answer a short questionnaire with one open and one closed question (Appendix V) to express their views on their own gesture, that is, to say if they had appreciated doing the project and explain why. Figure 15 below shows clear results. All students enjoyed doing the Christmas cards and sending them to GOSH.

Did you like making Christmas cards to children at the Great Ormont Street Hospital?
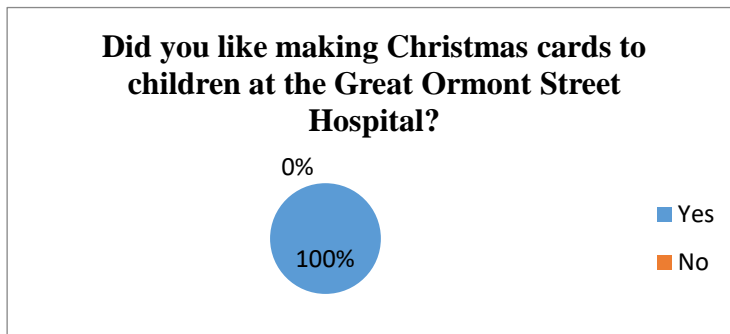
0%

100%

- Yes
- No

Figure 15: Percentage of respondents who enjoyed doing the Christmas project.

More importantly, however, when asked to mention the main reasons why they enjoyed doing this project (Figure 16), 45% of the students revealed they felt good about helping others. The second and third most common answers were that the activity was amusing (23%) and a good idea (15%). This, I believe, allows for a relevant conclusion: that, after having learned about the importance of helping others (Unit 4) and acknowledging the advantages of having a pen pal (Unit 5), students understood that this Christmas project had a much deeper meaning. Students acknowledged that making the Christmas cards and sending them to sick children at a hospital would bring comfort and joy to these children, and this, in turn, also caused a sense of happiness in my students for doing good to others – a feeling of empathy which, in my opinion, proved to be one of the strongest possible ways to instil a notion of otherness in students: "I am so excited and I love this idea because I feel good about making someone happy. Especially, someone who is sick." (Teaching journal, December 12, 2016). By being a "Helping Hand" – even through the simple act of making a Christmas card – students felt different and this was something they experienced in class, while learning English.
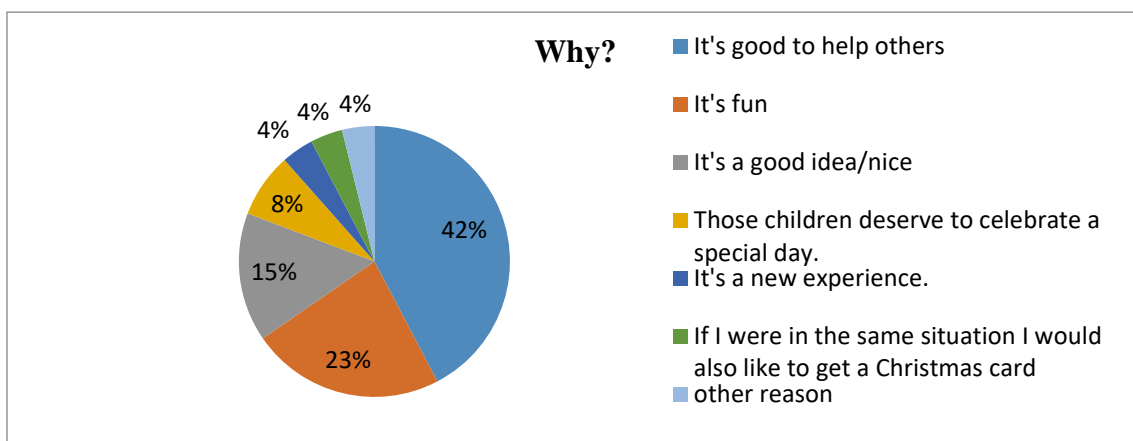
Why?

4% 4% 4%

42%

23%

15%

8%

- It's good to help others
- It's fun
- It's a good idea/nice
- Those children deserve to celebrate a special day.
- It's a new experience.
- If I were in the same situation I would also like to get a Christmas card
- other reason

Figure 16: Reasons why students enjoyed making the Christmas cards for the sick children at GOSH. Results expressed in percentages.

3.1.6 Theme 6 – Christmas around the world.

Providing students with an intercultural insight on how this time of the year is celebrated proved especially important – especially, because Christmas is one of the most diversely celebrated celebrations in the world.

A questionnaire (Appendix W) was distributed on this topic and results are shown below. By looking at Figure 17 it is possible to verify that some topics mentioned during the presentation were completely new to some students, that half of the class did not know that there are other special celebrations besides Christmas Eve and that not all cultures celebrate Christmas. When talking about food and in particular naming some traditions, it was interesting to observe that there was not a big difference between the numbers of students who knew about these facts and those who did not. In fact, this was the activity where students revealed to have the least background knowledge and where they revealed greater discrepancies. By working on a topic like this in class, students learned about these facts and became more tolerant to what is different from them. This once again proves that it is possible to talk about Christmas from a different point of view and raise students' awareness to themselves and others. By doing so, students revealed interest and felt motivated to learn about what is unfamiliar to them.

Christmas around the world
Did you know...

	... that Christmas is celebrated differently around the world?	... that people eat differently on Christmas Eve?	... there are other special celebrations beside Christmas Eve?	... that the modern Christmas tree is originally from Germany?	... that not all religions celebrate Christmas?
Yes	11	18	13	9	13
No	15	8	13	17	13
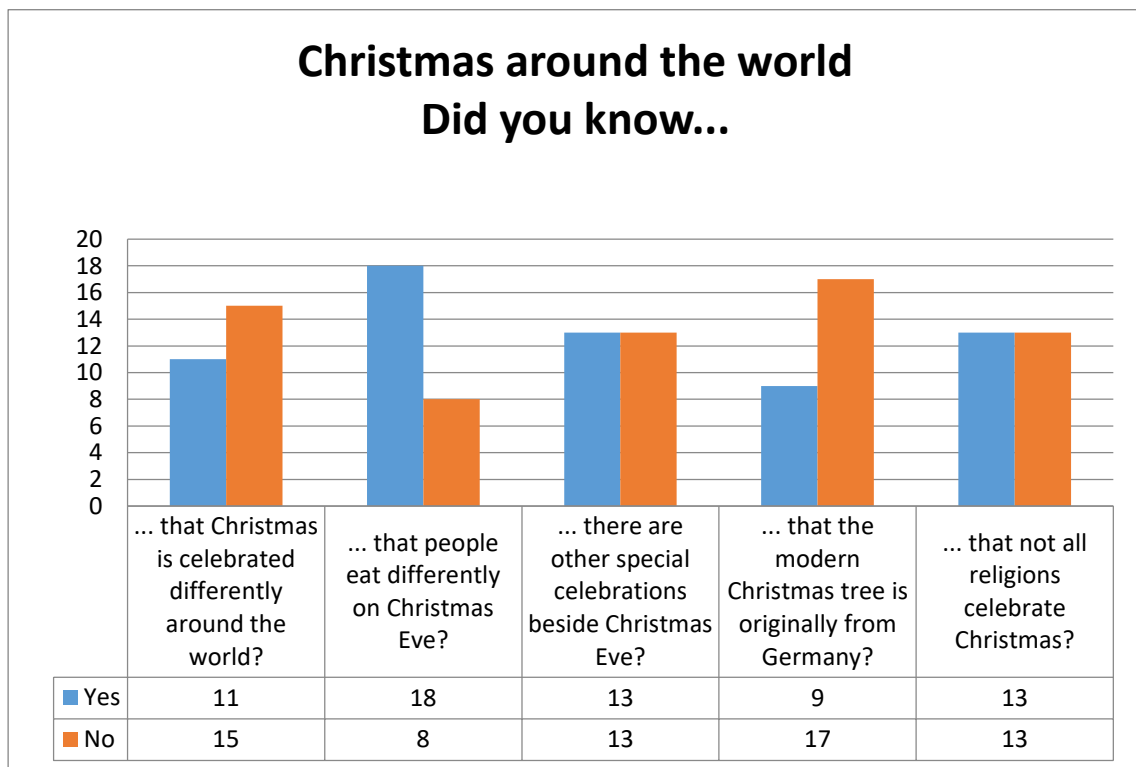
Figure 17: Questionnaire on Christmas around the world expressed as numbers of students.

4. Discussion

4.1 Introduction to the discussion

As said before, my two research questions were: 1) Is it possible to raise diversity and cultural awareness while teaching a foreign language; and 2) Will students become aware of the differences and become more motivated and engaged to learn? In order to answer them (as shown in 3.1.1-3.1.6), I attempted to develop lessons which would promote cultural and diversity awareness while learning a foreign language and gathered data to verify if this would indeed prove feasible and relevant to both teachers and students.

4.2 Discussion

While working on the topic "Greetings around the world" (Theme 1), it is noticeable from analysing the questionnaires and looking at my reflections, that students understood the importance of learning about the different greetings used by other cultures. Students were interested and engaged to further their knowledge, which was not only visible in class – students asked for the table (Appendix 9) and downloaded the song – but also through the feedback that came from parents.

After analysing the quiz, however, a deeper consequence of this research topic arises; namely, that by learning about something as simple as greetings, and the differences between them and other cultures, students not only perceived greetings as part of different mentalities and ways of living – their own and others' – but understood them as only one of the many small aspects that vary between cultures, and even within cultures, which made them begin to discern the greater scale of the topic of diversity; which, in my opinion, is a perfect example of what Byram intends with his *savoir apprendre*. And even though results indicate that some expressions were not always correctly related to a certain country/culture, thus showing that students may at first struggle with basic concepts of difference, it is important to state that this is perfectly natural. The main objective was for students to understand that there are different greetings used for the different parts of the day and that people greet each other differently – and that in this aspect, as in others (3.1.2-3.1.6), people from diverse cultures are different from them, but they also differ from others. This was, in my opinion, successfully achieved.

The second theme worked in class – "Daily routines around the world" – enabled students to talk about their own routines and understand and describe daily routines others

have. Developing this topic within an intercultural perspective, as it was carried out in class, turned out to be very effective, and the best way possible to present the topic. Students became aware not only of the existing differences between one another but also of the different routines children of their age have around the world – and thus, perceived that they themselves are unwitting participants in the game of diversity, inasmuch as their tiniest everyday action differs from someone else's tiniest everyday action, and this from culture to culture (in short, a fine example of what Lee (quoted in Troncoso, 2010) suggests, according to whom children should go beyond the superficial meanings of icons and find deeper layers of meaning in the contents presented to them). This idea was reinforced with findings which indicate that students acknowledged the different habits and routines, and especially enjoyed it while doing the Scavenger Hunt in the classroom.

Theme 3 was developed from an intercultural point of view and revealed to be very meaningful. Students were able to look at Halloween from a point of view different from how it is usually approached in class – more informative and not as playful – and learnt that there are similar traditions celebrated around the same time of the year, such as Pão por Deus, in Portugal, and Dia de los Muertos, in Mexico.

The findings show two layers of analysis. On a more superficial level, we are shown that most students did not know about the Portuguese tradition Pão por Deus, nor about the Dia de los Muertos, and that the majority had already celebrated Halloween, but did so without knowing its original meaning. This is in itself relevant, not only because it demonstrates the influence mainstream culture exerts on children, but also that this influence can be so powerful that it silences other expressions of diversity. Some students, while demonstrating that they understood this harmful tendency, and that they wanted to avoid it, shared their intention of henceforth celebrating both traditions, Halloween and Pão por Deus, because they understood why these traditions exist and why people make an effort to keep them alive. On a deeper level, however, the findings show something even more interesting. Namely, that even though they had just become acquainted with both the Portuguese and the Mexican traditions, they immediately showed more interest for the foreign tradition than for their own. This, of course, did not mean that they neglected their own tradition. Quite on the contrary, students ended up learning something unknown, and hence precious, about their own culture, and this by comparing it with one foreign to them (which may be clearly related with Byram's *savoir être* (attitudes), namely in what concerns experiencing more about one's own values, beliefs, behaviours through other cultures). This shows, on the one hand, that it is not only possible to

promote students' enjoyment of difference, but, on the other hand, that young learners tend to naturally adhere to what is different more promptly, and in a more engaging way, than to what is their own – which shows a natural tendency in children to adopt, what is different.

Theme 4 – "Helping hands" – again furthered the topic of diversity awareness. It revealed that most students have a very positive attitude towards helping others in need and proved that they recognize the importance of doing voluntary work. Learning about the important effect human and animal helpers have in peoples' lives made students become aware of their own roles and reflect how their actions and even future job intentions may have an impact on others. Diversity, students learned, is not just something that exists as such, rather it can be acted upon, moulded and accentuated, and this even by human beings as young as primary classroom students.

The idea of interacting and/or effectively helping people in need was further developed in theme 5. Besides acknowledging the importance of writing letters to others, students became aware that writing a letter to a person in need may have the same positive effect as being a volunteer and helping others. That is why the Christmas project – writing Christmas cards to sick children at a Hospital in London – was perceived as the embodiment of Theme 4, and therefore so well received and enjoyed by students. The findings of the study (questionnaire) reinforced this idea inasmuch as the majority expressed that doing the Christmas project was so interesting because it felt good to help others – even if the final result of this act of kindness was not seen. Yet, it is important to mention that after having sent the cards to the hospital, students asked for news: "A group of students asked if the cards had already been sent to the hospital. Some students asked if I had liked the cards and if the children would like them too." (Teaching journal, December 14, 2016). This proves that students are not indifferent to the suffering of others, and that they were genuinely interested to know if their cards had had the intended effect, and brought some joy to the sick children at the Great Ormond Street Hospital of London.

The last theme studied in class, "Christmas around the world", allowed students to have a different perspective on how Christmas is celebrated around the world. By first seeing how Christmas is celebrated in Portugal, students became aware that not all Portuguese families have the same traditions. The collected data also showed that many students did not know that Christmas is celebrated differently around the world and that there are other traditions and special celebrations besides Christmas Eve. The biggest

impact however, was when some students realized that some cultures do not celebrate Christmas and instead celebrate Hannukkah and Kwanzaa. These findings are especially visible after analysing the questionnaire, where half of the respondents showed interest to further their knowledge on this matter. This is evidence that cultural awareness can be raised while a foreign language is taught and students become more motivated and engaged to learn.

4.3 Conclusion

After analysing the collected data and having in mind how students reacted to each topic developed in class, I am aware that students enjoyed the activities and were more interested and engaged in learning due to this choice of topics. This, of course, not only revealed to be ideal to develop students' cultural and social awareness, but, without their noticing, language skills were also improved. Of special importance, and without a doubt a key to success, was the use of authentic materials and their presentation in a child-friendly but also very engaging way (as suggested by Troncoso, 2010 and Ciornei & Dina, 2015). Elaborating the lessons from scratch and looking for adequate material was the most challenging part of the whole process, but it was also undeniably the most rewarding, and the most profitable in terms of the students' development. Seeing how students of this age group reacted to what is different and seeing how they react to it after the analysis of these themes made me realize that teaching a language using this approach may be more effective than teaching grammar and structure per se, and is surely more rewarding in personal terms both for the teacher and students. In short, the results of the study are very positive and show that students of this age group are naturally receptive to accepting diversity and learn in a more engaging way when they can relate to the topic in discussion. Making students become aware of themselves and others and teaching them to accept and respect what is different while at the same time learning a foreign language is the perfect combination to have a future generation that knows how to communicate with others and respects their beliefs.

I strongly believe that this kind of approach is more beneficial for both teachers and students. As a teacher I realized that it is undeniably harder and more time consuming to prepare our own material, but in the end, this is undoubtedly more interesting, engaging and motivating. Not only do students respond better and are more interested to learn English, but they also realize that there are differences between their own reality and others and hopefully learn to become better human beings.

Carrying out this action research made me realize that it is not an easy task to raise diversity and intercultural awareness in the classroom and especially with young learners but it becomes a constant joy if we do it with passion and in an engaging way as I attempted to do.

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Appendix A

Consent letter to the school

Exmª Diretora Pedagógica e/ou Direção Geral,

      O meu nome é Mónica Martins Colaço, e é com muito gosto que estou a estagiar durante o 1º período deste ano letivo no Externato S. José.

      Estou a fazer um Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 1º Ciclo do Ensino Básico, na Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, o que implica que faça - durante o estágio - um pequeno projeto de investigação. Este projeto será incluído no meu relatório final e intitula-se: *Raising cultural and diversity awareness in the Primary English classroom [Promover uma consciência de culturalidade e diversidade na sala de aula de Inglês do 1º CEB]*.

      Aprender uma língua estrangeira em idade precoce é benéfico para as crianças, não só porque lhes permite aprender uma língua nova, mas porque lhes dá a conhecer toda uma nova cultura, ou culturas, diferentes das deles. É esta, aliás, a idade ideal, e a sala de aula do 1ª Ciclo o ambiente ideal, para promover estes tópicos, pois quando os jovens aprendentes aprendem uma língua, podem ao mesmo tempo ser estimulados a tornarem-se mais abertos e tolerantes em relação àquilo que é habitualmente considerado "diferente". Os objectivos são pois claros: por um lado, usar a língua inglesa, e a aprendizagem da mesma, como veículo de conhecimento de novas culturas, novos vocabulários, novos mundos – e também de outras condições (discriminação com respeito a deficiências, género ou idade); numa palavra, diferenças com os quais as crianças têm pouco contacto, e que devem aprender a conhecer. Por outro lado, justamente por intermédio da língua inglesa, pretendo dar a conhecer numa nova luz às crianças o que lhes é novo, ou diferente, mostrando-o como bom e benéfico, assim promovendo nelas um maior sentido de igualdade, inclusão e justiça. Pois, no fundo, os jovens aprendentes devem estar preparados para compreender e aceitar pessoas de outras culturas, as quais, com a excepção de diferentes valores, crenças, perspectivas e línguas, são em tudo iguais a eles.

      Por conseguinte, venho por este meio solicitar a vossa autorização para poder desenvolver o meu projeto entre setembro e dezembro de 2016 – período oficial do meu estágio -, e incluir os dados recolhidos como material de estudo para o meu relatório final. Os dados recolhidos basear-se-ão em questionários, fichas de trabalho e trabalhos de projeto realizados pelos alunos, mas sempre com o intuito de garantir o anonimato de cada um. É importante de salientar, também, que a temática do meu projeto será trabalhada pontualmente – uma vez por unidade –, assim garantindo que não haverá alteração ao currículo estabelecido e que o programa de inglês para o 4º ano será respeitado.

      Para além da autorização feita à Direção do Externato S. José, serão enviadas cartas de consentimento aos Encarregados de Educação, a fim de informá-los do meu projeto e pedir a participação dos seus educandos nos meus estudos. Nas cartas de consentimento é dado a conhecer o foco do meu projeto, e dada a garantia de que as crianças permanecerão anónimas em qualquer circunstância e que nunca serão tiradas fotografias nem obtidas imagens quer da instituição quer das crianças.

      Os Encarregados de Educação, bem como os seus educandos, foram informados de que a qualquer momento o seu educando pode escolher não participar, e que as informações obtidas serão referidas no meu relatório final de mestrado e eventualmente em artigos académicos e conferências.

      Desde já agradecendo a vossa compreensão, subscrevo-me atenciosamente

    Mónica Martins Colaço

Lisboa, 26 de setembro de 2016   Professora Doutora Carolyn E. Leslie
Mónica Martins Colaço   Orientadora de Estágio
_____   FCSH, Universidade Nova Lisboa

                                      _____

Consent letter to parents/legal caregivers

Caros Pais e Encarregados de Educação,

O meu nome é Mónica Martins Colaço, e é com muito gosto que irei estagiar com o seu educando durante o 1º período deste ano letivo.

Estou a fazer um Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 1º Ciclo, na Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas na Universidade Nova de Lisboa. O mestrado implica que durante o estágio faça um pequeno projeto de investigação, que será incluído no meu relatório final. O meu trabalho intitula-se: *Raising cultural and diversity awareness in the Primary English classroom [Promover uma consciência de culturalidade e diversidade na sala de aula de Inglês do 1º CEB]*.

Por conseguinte, venho por este meio solicitar a vossa autorização para poder incluir o seu educando neste projeto que vai decorrer entre setembro e dezembro de 2016, durante o meu estágio.

Depois de pedida autorização ao seu educando para a/o incluir no meu estudo, a recolha de dados será efectuada mediante o uso de questionários, realização de fichas de trabalho e trabalhos de projecto feitos em pares ou em grupos. A instituição, todos os seus funcionários e as crianças permanecerão anónimas em qualquer circunstância. Nunca serão tiradas fotografias nem obtidas imagens, nem da instituição nem das crianças.

Informo que a qualquer momento o seu educando pode escolher não participar nas atividades, e que as informações obtidas serão referidas no meu relatório final de mestrado e eventualmente em artigos académicos e conferências.

Se tiver questões a colocar, agradeço que me contactem pessoalmente através da professora titular da turma.

Ficarei muito grata se der autorização para que o seu educando possa participar no meu estudo. Solicito que esta autorização seja assinada e entregue tão brevemente quanto possível.

Subscrevo-me atenciosamente
Mónica Martins Colaço
Lisboa, 26 de setembro de 2016   Professora Doutora Carolyn E. Leslie
Mónica Martins Colaço   Orientadora de Estágio
                                    FCSH, Universidade Nova Lisboa

_____

--------✂--

Eu, _____ Encarregado de Educação de _____declaro que fui informado(a) dos objectivos do projeto intitulado *Raising cultural and diversity awareness in the Primary English classroom [Promover uma consciência de culturalidade e diversidade na sala de aula de Inglês do 1º CEB],* e autorizo o meu educando a participar no estudo.

Data: _____
Assinatura:_____

Appendix C

Consent letters to students

Olá,

Como já todos sabem, sou a Mónica e sou uma estudante - tal como vocês!
Apesar de ser professora de Inglês há já alguns anos, decidi fazer um Mestrado
para tornar-me uma professora ainda melhor. É por isso que estou convosco
durante o 1º período, e estou muito feliz por isso.
Durante os meses que irei estar com a vossa turma, terei oportunidade de vos
dar aulas e desenvolver o tema para o meu projeto final da faculdade.
Como já vos expliquei na primeira aula, irei fazer o meu projeto sobre algo de
que gosto muito, ou seja, conhecer culturas diferentes das nossas e
desenvolver um maior sentido de inclusão em cada um de nós... e tudo isto
enquanto aprendemos Inglês.
Felizmente, vim parar ao sítio certo, e é por isso que vos venho convidar:

Querem fazer esta viagem comigo?
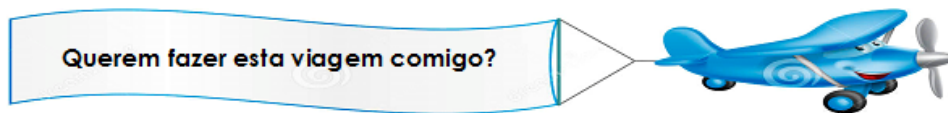
Para esta viagem, e para conhecer o que é diferente, não teremos de sair da
sala de aula nem levar grande bagagem. O que precisarão para esta viagem
é apenas uma mente aberta, usar alguma imaginação e, claro, ter muita
vontade de aprender inglês.
Da minha parte, prometo tornar as aulas o mais interessantes possível e não
revelar os vossos nomes nem usar imagens vossas no meu projeto final. Apenas
os vossos trabalhos serão importantes para mim. Daí esperar que participem
em algumas atividades – questionários, fichas de trabalho e organização de
projetos de trabalho (em pares ou em grupo).
Os vossos pais já foram avisados do meu projeto e já lhes foi pedida
autorização bem como ao Externato. Estarei sempre disponível para
esclarecer qualquer tipo de dúvidas sobre o meu projeto, e caso assim o
desejem, poderão desistir a qualquer momento de participar no meu estudo.
Que dizem? Interessados? Conto com a vossa participação.

Hugs and kisses

Mónica Colaço

Eu, _____

☐ Aceito participar no projeto

☐ Não aceito participar no projeto.

Data: _____   Assinatura: _____

Worksheet 1 – Greetings

English Worksheet

Name:_____   Date:___/ ___/ __

1. Look at the pictures. Fill each box with the correct greeting.
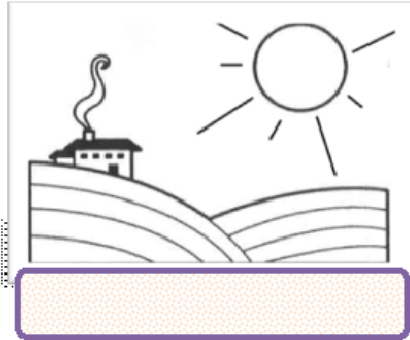
Word Bank

- Good Evening
- Goodbye
- Good Morning
- Hi
- Good Night
- Hello
- Bye
- Good Afternoon
- Bye-bye
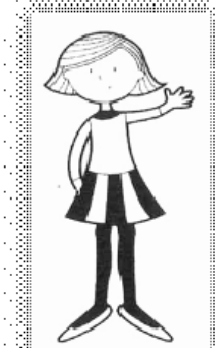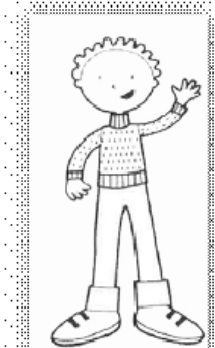
Appendix E

A table with greetings for the different parts of the day

	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
E	Good morning					Good afternoon					Good evening				Good night		
P	Bom dia					Boa tarde						Boa noite					
D	Guten Morgen				Guten Tag						Guten Abend				Gute Nacht		
I	Buon giorno								Buona sera						Buona notte		
F	Bonjour										Bonsoir				Bonne nuit		
Sp	Buenos días						Buenas tardes					Buenas noches					
H	Jó reggelt			Jó napot							Jó estét				Jó éjszakát		
Jap	Ohayo			Konnichiwa							Konbanwa				Oyasumi		
PL	Dzien dobry										Dobry wieczór				Dobranoc		
CZ	Dobré jitro				Dobrý den						Dobrý vecer				Dobrou noc		

Adapted from Doyé, P. (1999). *The Intercultural Dimension: Foreign Language Education in the Primary School*. Berlin: Cornelsen Verlag.

Appendix F

PowerPoint Presentation number 1 – Greetings around the world

Slide 1

Slide 2
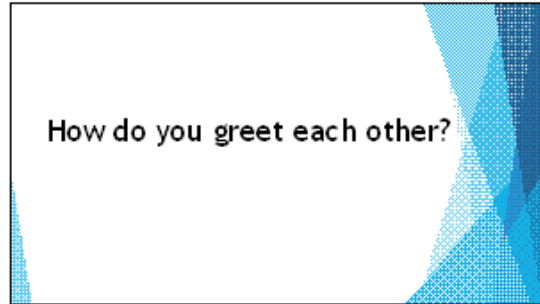
Slide 3

Slide 4

Slide 5
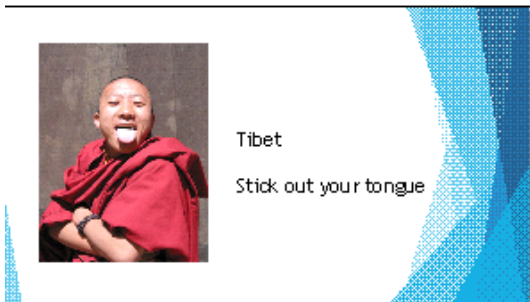
Slide 6
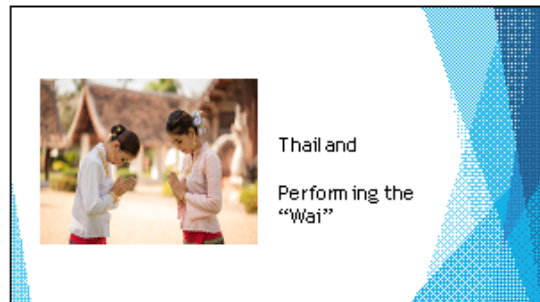
Slide 7

Slide 8
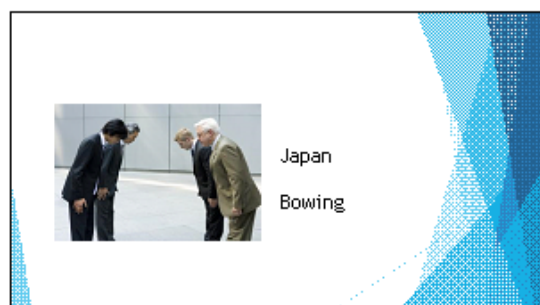
Appendix G

Lyrics of the song "Hello to all the children of the world"

Name: _____ NO.:_____ Class: _____

HELLO TO ALL THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

Hello, Bonjour, Buenos dias
G'day, Guten Tag, Konichiwa
Ciao, Shalom, Dobrey dyen
Hello to all the children of the world

We live in different places
From all around the world
We speak in many different ways
Though some things might be different
We're children just the same
And we all like to sing and play

Hello, Bonjour, Buenos dias
G'day, Guten Tag, Konichiwa
Ciao, Shalom, Dobrey dyen
Hello to all the children of the world

There are children in the deserts
And children in the towns
And children who live down by the sea
If we could meet each other
To run and sing and play
Then what good friends we all could be

Hello, Bonjour, Buenos dias
G'day, Guten Tag, Konichiwa
Ciao, Shalom, Dobrey dyen
Hello to all the children of the world

Appendix H

Students' home assignment about "Greetings around the world"

People in _____ greet _____   People in _____ greet _____

People in Hawaii greet Aloha.

Aloha

País: Zambia

Como: Eles fazem fixe e juntam os dedos polgares !!

Mongolia

Hawaii - ALOHA

India - NEMASTÉ
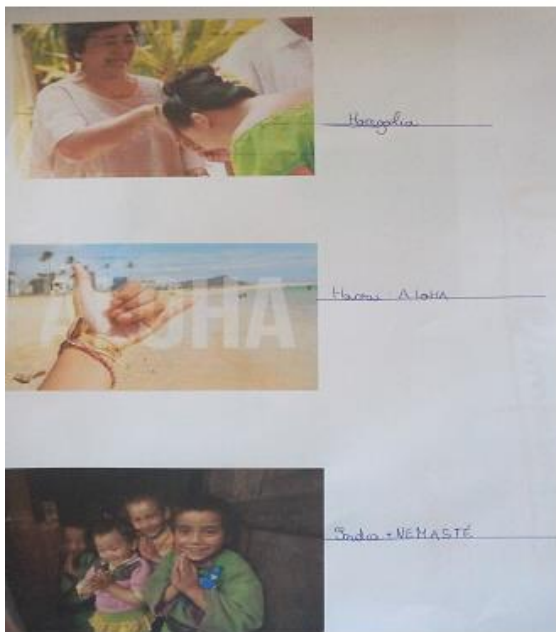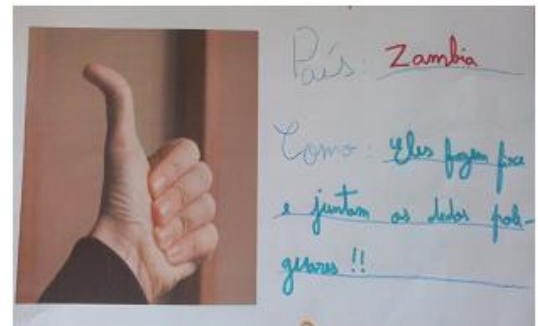
O típico comprimento de avo, na gronelandia deve pressionar parte do nariz e do lábio superior do rosto de alguém, seguindo ainda uma respiração, que podia ser interpretada como uma cheirada, a saudação, chamada de kunik, começou com os inuits, ou esquimós, da gronelandia.

Poster on "Daily routines around the world"
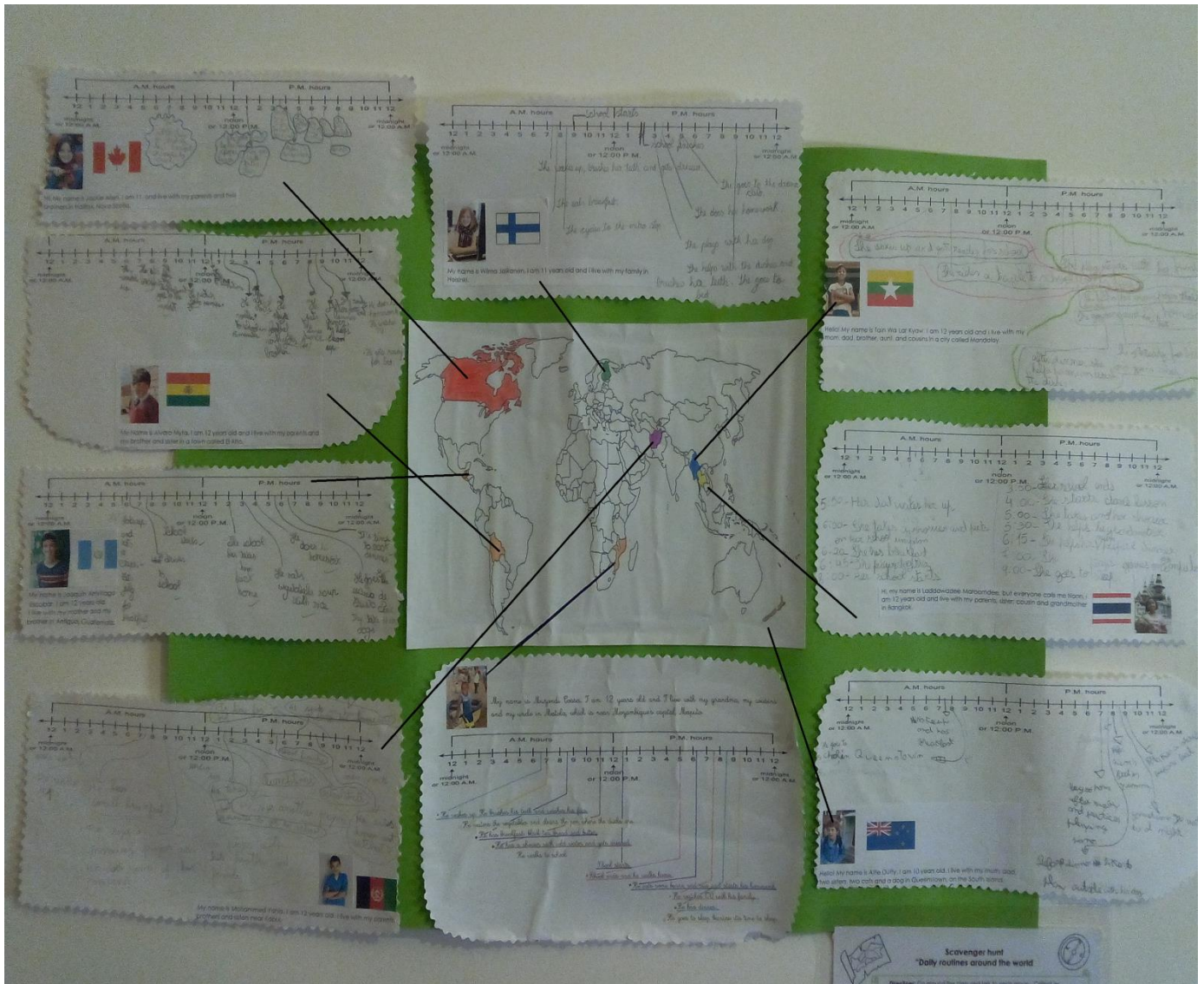
Scavenger Hunt on "Daily routines around the world"

Directions: Go around the class and talk to each group. Collect as much information as possible to complete the table. Write the name of the child/children.

Good luck exploring!!

Find out who…

	Name(s) of the child/children
… gets up before 7a.m.	
… rides a bicycle to school	
… feeds animals/pets before school	
… says a prayer in the morning	
… starts classes/school before 9 a.m.	
… has lunch at home	
… starts school after lunch (in the afternoon)	
… practices sports after school	
… does his/her homework after school	
… goes to bed/to sleep before 9:30 p.m.	

Appendix K

PowerPoint Presentation number 2 – Halloween

Booklet on Halloween and Pão por Deus

It's Halloween!

"Trick or Treat"

"Pão por Deus"

Appendix M

PowerPoint Presentation number 3 – Helping Hands
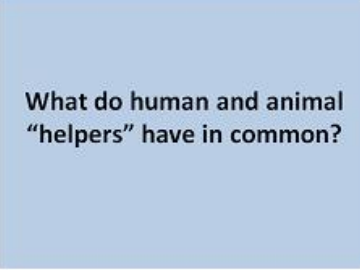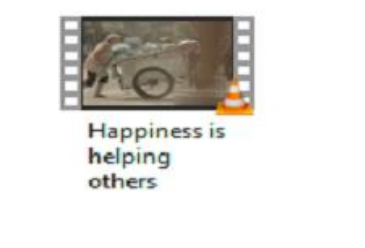
Appendix N

Home assignment – When I grow up I want to be…

Appendix O

PowerPoint Presentation number 4 – Pen Pals and Christmas project

Appendix P

Christmas project

Appendix Q

E-mail exchange

From: monica colaco [mailto:monica_colaco@yahoo.com]
Sent: 21 November 2016 23:05
To: FOITeam
Subject: Request for sending letters to patients

Dear Sir or Madam,
My name is Mónica Colaço and I am currently doing a Masters at the New University of Lisbon, Portugal, in Teaching EFL in the primary school. Given that my thesis deals with Promoting Intercultural and diversity awareness while teaching a foreign language, I have developed akin topics with my students in order to make them become aware of different cultures, but also of different human conditions or situations, such as disabilities or illnesses.
 Hence, and bearing in mind that Christmas is fast approaching, I thought it would be interesting to ask my students to write some letters in (basic) English, and send them to children that may find some comfort in their words – in this particular case, children staying at your hospital; an initiative which was already welcomed by my school, and which only awaits your approval in order to be fulfilled.
 In a word, I, as well as my young students (9/10 years old) would very much appreciate it if you would give us permission to write Christmas letters and postcards to children in your hospital.
 Looking forward to hearing from you,
 Yours sincerely,
Mónica Colaço

From: Community Events <Community.Events@GOSH.ORG>
Sent: 11/22/16 at 1:13 PM
To: 'monica_colaco@yahoo.com'

Dear Monica,
 Thanks for your email – my colleague has passed this onto our team in Community Fundraising. It's great to hear that you are interested in using letter writing as a tool for your EFL teaching – unfortunately, we cannot pass letters on to individual children but you are more than welcome to use this as an exercise and send the letters to our charity address, which can be found in my email signature.
 If you are interested in leaving a Christmas message, we have an online stocking appeal, which allows people to leave messages for the hospital with their name next to a virtual stocking: http://stockingappeal.gosh.org/ A selection of them will be displayed in the hospital for patients and staff to read.
 I hope you find this information useful – do let me know if I can be of further help.
All the best,

Jonathan Tebble
Fundraising Assistant|Community Fundraising
Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity
40 Bernard Street, London WC1N 1LE
T: 020 3841 3210

Appendix R

PowerPoint Presentation number 5 – Christmas around the world

Appendix S

Questionnaire on the topic "Daily routines around the world".

	Yes	No	I don't know
Do you think that all around the world... **Achas que em toda a parte do mundo...**			
All children wake up at the same time? Todas as crianças acordam à mesma hora?			
School starts at the same time? A escola começa à mesma hora?			
Before school all children have the exact same routines? Antes da escola todas as crianças têm as mesmas rotinas?			
Children go differently to school (ex: by car/bus/bicycle, on foot… etc.)? As crianças vão de forma diferente para a escola? (ex: de carro/autocarro/ bicicleta, a pé...etc.)?			
School ends at the same time for all children? A escola acaba à mesma hora para todas as crianças?			
After school children have different activities like dancing, practicing sports, watching TV…etc? Depois da escola as crianças têm atividades diferentes, como dançar, praticar desporto, ver TV...etc?			
All children go to bed at the same time? Todas as crianças vão para a cama à mesma hora?			

Did you like to learn about the routines of children from different countries?
Gostaste de aprender sobre as rotinas de crianças de diferentes países?

Did you like the Scavenger hunt in the classroom?
Gostaste da Scavenger hunt (=caça ao tesouro)na sala de aula?

Questionnaire on Halloween

Did you know...
Sabias que...

Yes   No

... that Halloween is a tradition with more than 2000 years?
...o Halloween é uma tradição com mais de 2000 anos?

... wearing a costume, decorating the house and
"trick or treating" is part of the Halloween celebrations?
...mascarar-se, decorar a casa e fazer "trick or treat" fazem parte
das celebrações do Halloween?

... in Portugal children ask for "Pão por Deus"?
... em Portugal as crianças pedem o "Pão por Deus"?

... that this tradition used to be done by poor people?
...que esta tradição era feita por pessoas pobres?

... that Mexicans celebrate the "dia de los muertos"
during 3 days?
... que os Mexicanos celebram o "dia de los muertos"
durante 3 dias?

... that Mexicans celebrate these days by singing, dancing
and decorating the graves?
...que os mexicanos celebram estes dias a cantar, dançar
e a decorar as campas?

Which celebration did you like the most?
De que celebração gostaste mais?

☐ Halloween   ☐ Pão por Deus   ☐ Dia de los muertos

Have you ever celebrated any of these celebrations?
Já alguma vez festejaste alguma destas celebrações?

Which?
Qual?   _____

Did you like to learn about this topic?
Gostaste de aprender coisas sobre este assunto?

Questionnaire on Helping Hands

Questionnaire on "Helping Hands"

What is your opinion on...
Qual é a tua opinião sobre...

	YES 😊	NO ☹️	MAYBE 😐
I am concerned about the less fortunate. Preocupo-me com os menos afortunados.			
Helping others is important only if we become rich and famous. Ajudar os outros é importante apenas se ficarmos ricos e famosos.			
I feel it is important to help people but also animals and the environment. Sinto que é importante ajudar pessoas, mas também animais e o meio ambiente.			
Volunteering is an important activity. Fazer voluntariado é uma atividade importante.			
Animals can't help people be happy. Os animais não conseguem ajudar as pessoas a serem felizes. I like to help others in need. Gosto de ajudar os que precisam.			

Have you already helped anyone?
Já alguma vez ajudaste alguém?   YES 😊 NO ☹️ MAYBE 😐

If yes, what did you do? _____
Se sim, o que fizeste?

Would you like to be a volunteer one day?
Gostarias de ser voluntário?   YES 😊 NO ☹️ MAYBE 😐

If yes, what would you like to do? _____
Se sim, o que gostarias de fazer?

Did you know that animals can be such good helpers?   YES 😊 NO ☹️ MAYBE 😐
Já sabias que os animais podem ser tão bons ajudantes?

What kind of animal helpers did you like most?
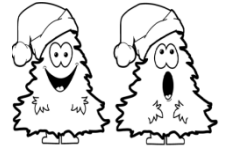Que tipo de ajudante gostaste mais?

Appendix V

Questionnaire "Project work"

Did you like making Christmas cards to children at the GOSHospital?
Gostaste de fazer os cartões de natal para as crianças o Hospital GOSH?

Why?
Porquê?

_____

_____

_____

Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Questionnaire on Christmas around the world

Did you know...
Sabias que...

Yes   No

… that Christmas is celebrated differently around the world?
… que o Natal é celebrado de forma diferente em todo o mundo?

... that people eat differently on Christmas Eve?
… que as pessoas comem comida diferente na véspera de natal?

... there are other special celebrations beside Christmas Eve
(ex: Germany – St. Nikolaus day)?
… existem outras celebrações especiais para além da noite de natal
(ex: Alemanha – Dia de S. Nicolau)?

... that the modern Christmas tree is originally from Germany?
…a árvore de natal moderna é originalmente da Alemanha?

... that not all religions celebrate Christmas?
... que nem todas as religiões festejam o Natal?

Appendix X

Quiz on Greetings around the world

Read the questions and write "True" or "False"

Questions	True or False?
1. In New Zealand people do "The Hongi"	
2. People in Spain say "Bonjour" when they greet each other.	
3. In Portugal people give 4 kisses on the cheek.	
4. When people in Japan greet each other they bow to show respect.	
5. In Italy people use "Ciao" to say "Hello" and "Goodbye"	
6. The day is divided the exact same way in all cultures and all use the same 3 greetings ("bom dia", "boa tarde" and "boa noite"), just like the Portuguese.	

Did you like to learn about greetings around the world?
(Gostaste de aprender como se cumprimenta à volta do mundo?)

 Yes   No

 What did you like?
De que gostaste mais?

_____

_____

 What didn´t you like?
De que gostaste menos?

_____

_____