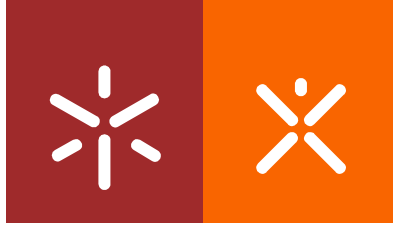


Universidade do Minho
Instituto de Educação

Fatima Pereira Dias

**The Potential of Music in Engaging Students
to Learn English**



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The Potential of Music in Engaging Students to Learn English

Supervised Pedagogical Traineeship Report
Master in Teaching English in Primary Education

Supervised by
Doutora Flávia Vieira

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DECLARAÇÃO

Nome: Fatima Pereira Dias

Endereço eletrónico: fatimadias6@gmail.com

Telefone: (+351) 963188928

Número do Cartão de Cidadão: 11839122

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The Potential of Music in Engaging Students to Learn English

Fatima Pereira Dias

Master in Teaching English in Primary Education

University of Minho

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Abstract

The aims of the present teaching report, integrated in the Master of Teaching English in Primary Education, are to describe, interpret and evaluate the Intervention Project “*The potential of music in engaging students to Learn English*”.

This project was developed with fourth-graders in a primary school. Exploring and investigating the potential of music in the classroom as a way to engage and motivate students in learning English as a second language was the main intent of the project. Its objectives were: identifying students’ attitudes towards English language learning in general and specifically their sentiment towards music, promoting students’ engagement using activities related to music, helping students develop their "learning to learn" ability, and evaluating gains and limitations of using music in the classroom.

In the first stage of the project there was a period of field observation, where I was able to collect data using direct classroom observation and guided observation with the help of an observation grid. I tried to make a profile of the class in order to perceive their engagement in the English class and their attitude towards English learning and music, which was essential to start incorporating music activities in class. I used music for various purposes: to initiate and end lessons, to learn vocabulary/new lexis, to compose a verse for a song and with TPR. These different music activities were part of three didactic sequences, and after each sequence students could evaluate not only what they felt towards the music activities but also what they had learnt in that sequence. This enabled students to develop self-evaluation abilities and provided information for analysing my action.

Based on the project results, I came to the conclusion that music is a very powerful tool, enabling students to learn English in a stress-free and playful way. So, music has the potential of engaging and motivating students.

Key words: music, engagement, English learning, young learners

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Development can only take place when children are actively involved, when they are actively involved with a high, non-stop degree of concentration, when they are interested, when they give themselves completely, when they use all their mental abilities to invent and make new things, and when this gives them a high degree of satisfaction and pleasure.

(Ferre Laevers)

Introduction

*Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind,
flight to the imagination and life to everything.*

(Plato)

In this teaching report, integrated in the Master Degree in Teaching English in Primary Education at the University of Minho, my Intervention Project, entitled *The potential of music in engaging students to learn English*, was developed in a primary school in the district of Braga with a class of fourth-graders. It enabled me to put into practice my hypothesis that music engages students in learning English and to reflect on being a teacher and my teaching methods. My ultimate goal was not only coming to certain conclusions, but to grow as a professional as well. I have been teaching English to youngsters and children for 10 years, therefore the practicum was not my first contact with teaching English to young learners. However, it was an opportunity to reflect further on and improve my action as a language teacher.

Reflecting on my teaching means I need to look deeper at what I do in my classroom as a teacher. I believe many of us do it in an informal way, while driving home, thinking back on what we felt, saw and accomplished. Or we talk to a friend reporting on what went well or not in our lesson that day. Isn't it enough? Well, I came to one conclusion so far (hopefully there will be more): having to write my inner thoughts, seeing them on the screen, I have a greater understanding of what I really did. It seems that I look at it from an outside-in perspective.

When we are engaged in teaching a lesson, we have limited capacities in identifying or analysing what is really going on. As we are so focused on our task, following an order of steps, trying to breeze from one step to another, our observation ability is quite limited. We are not only focusing on our students' performance and reactions, but we are embroiled in so many different feelings ourselves (satisfaction, delight, confusion, distress and even some frustration) all at the same time. These feelings are definitely valuable, but not enough to lead to conclusions on teaching performance and consequently students' learning achievements.

For this reason, collecting classroom data and writing my thoughts and feelings after a lesson was essential, not only to have positive or negative feedback of what happened in the classroom, what activities captured their attention more, but most of all to help me improve my teaching, looking back and thinking about what I would have done differently.

Another important aspect developed in this study is the importance of giving students not only the possibility to learn in a calm, fun and friendly environment, using music as a tool, but also to try to capture the attention of as many students as possible with the chosen activities. Here, Gardner's (2011) intelligences were one of the references I used. Different students, different personalities, different learning styles, therefore different activities that cater for all their needs. As a teacher I need to be aware of my students and then adapt my teaching to them. Students are the main characters and I only guide them to a happy ending.

How students learn is therefore very important for a teacher to plan the lessons according to students. But students need to reflect as well on how they learn better. The self-evaluation sheets used at the end of each lesson sequence and the informal conversations we had on how they learn better were ways to help them to develop more self-regulated learning.

The project highlights the importance of music in learning English. One of my primary objectives when choosing this topic for was to show that music can promote students' engagement in learning English. One activity that caters for all my learners is using music in the classroom. It can be used in many different ways, we only need to know what we want the music for: to start and end the lesson, to relax, to learn grammar and vocabulary, to memorise better, just for fun, etc. Music enables us teachers to create a positive and creative atmosphere. Gestures and mimic are of great importance here. Children need to move, in an organized way, and singing a song using their bodies to interpret or give meaning to words or sentence structures is the best way to learn whatever language they want to learn. The rhythm of a song invites you right away to move your body, to clap your hands or stomp your feet. It is natural! With music, there is a varied possibility of activities that can integrate all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and cater for different types of learning styles (audio, kinaesthetic, musical intelligence, visual...) at some point of the lesson.

My main goal as a teacher is first of all creating a rapport with my students. Implementing music in my classes is a way to make sure my students learn in an enjoyable and natural way. Music is part of every children's lives, and bringing it into the classroom will definitely engage them in learning more effectively. I have always used music in my classroom, and from my experience there is no better strategy to motivate and engage students in learning. It brings fun, excitement and creativity into the classroom and the possibilities of using music as a tool are infinite. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, "Imaginative and artistic uses of language are important both educationally and in their own right. Aesthetic activities may be productive, receptive, interactive or mediating and may be oral or written. They include such activities as: singing (nursery rhymes, folk songs, pop songs, etc.)" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 56).

As for the structure of this teaching report, there are three chapters. In the first chapter, the Theoretical Framework, the potential of music in teaching and learning in a playful way and how to use music to engage students in learning a foreign language are explored. Chapter two focuses on the Intervention Context and gives some information on the students and the school where the action-research project was developed. The last chapter describes the Intervention Stage. It starts with my teaching philosophy and then presents the project phases, from the observation phase to the action phase, where three lesson sequences were developed, and finally the reflection phase, where an overall evaluation of the project is done. The report ends with a final conclusion, where gains and limitations of the project are presented.

Chapter 1

Theoretical framework

1.1 The potential of music in teaching and learning in a playful way

Music is the universal language of mankind.

(Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

Everybody “speaks music”. Following the idea of music being the universal language present in all cultures around the world we can see what music does: it entertains, it communicates stories of the past, present and future, it inspires to be creative, it unites people and it educates. It is something rooted to society, showing their unique characteristics. So, music transmits cultural aspects when using songs from around the world. We can use songs, with different rhythms and sounds from completely different places. This will help our students to be aware of cultural differences and to be tolerant, as today they share their seats with many students from different countries. Why not play a *Samba*, if you have students from Brazil, using some recycled cans and made up drums to accompany the music? Or use African music with children from their native cultures, showing them what great musical heritage, they have at their homes?

We all know that music is an essential part of the human being, right from when they are babies (or even in their mother’s womb?). Music is a natural part of children’s lives, right from the beginning and it gives them all many possible positive feelings. You can talk to your baby to calm him/her down or to capture his/her attention. Investigation shows that when a mother sings to her baby, instead of talking to it, the baby is more focused on the mother, it calms down.

Music is like a language, sounds are used, there is a message. The difference is that “usually” the message in a conversation, when communicating, is more direct and concrete while music is mostly emotional (Mora, 1999, p.147). It makes us feel all kinds of feelings. We feel and then we express it. Of course, every human feels differently and therefore expresses himself in many ways. The importance here is that there is always an involvement when we are faced with music.

When we choose a song, a chant a rhyme for our students, we are promoting their happiness and well-being, and they automatically feel relaxed and motivated to learn, as they are learning without being aware they are learning. This idea is related to one of Stephen Krashen’s hypothesis (1982, p. 31)

For optimal learning to occur the affective filter must be weak. A weak filter means that a positive attitude toward learning is present. Because of the casual learning environment used when singing, songs are one method for achieving a weak affective filter and promoting language learning

Music is a very important tool in the classroom. In my project I have used it with young learners, but music is useful for every age and classroom. Using music in the classroom when teaching English can develop many different skills:

Cognitive skills: singing a song, recalling the lyrics of it or singing it over and over again makes children memorise new lexis and language structures better. So, music reinforces memory.

Communicative skills: singing a song helps children first listen to the intonation patterns, speech sounds of the language and then they imitate it in a natural way, without being aware of having mastered complex aspects of a language. Using these new acquisitions later in concrete dialogues or situations in the classroom helps them communicate in a relaxed way, without being afraid of making mistakes.

Motor skills: Children need to move, in an organized way, and singing a song using their bodies to interpret or give meaning to words or sentence structures is the best way to learn whatever language they want to learn. The rhythm of a song invites you right away to move your body, to clap your hands or stomp your feet, therefore the coordination between singing and moving is highly developed.

Social skills: When we sing in a class, we automatically create social interactions. We clap together, turn around, look at each other and laugh and smile at each other, we help each other Gfeller K. E. (1983) also agrees that music activities are flexible teaching tools that provide enjoyable opportunities for socialization.

So, with music children can learn to be focused, increase their span of attention, develop their motor skills when music is used with gestures and movement, develop verbal communication, learn new lexis and sentence structures that can later be used in creating other dialogues with same structure, and they develop a better social behaviour. They work as a group but sing as one. There must be respect and patience between them. Mutual help is necessary to achieve the final goal of singing together in harmony.

Therefore, music creates the perfect stress-free environment to learn in an enjoyable way, where learning comes naturally and not imposed, emotions are positive and everyone feels part of it, working together.

Music can also be seen as contagious mechanism. Have you ever been to a party where the music that was playing wasn't really your style, but all of a sudden, your body started to move to the rhythm? Yes, we can't forget the social aspect here. The importance of the crowd surrounding us has an

important role in our mood. But now imagine it with children. We have got the “crowd”, hopefully in a good and fun mood. Now you just need to add the right song and the party can get started!

Some of your students may be surprised, it may be the first time or they are not used to sing songs and dance in front of others. But we know the power of crowd persuasion. The more extroverted lead the shyer ones to get into the flow in a natural way. It’s like a game, where at first you don’t know the rules and you feel out of place, but then you want to play the game too, and you are carried away. This is how music works with children. Some jump right into it, others need more time. I could see this in students’ self-evaluation. Some students did not have very positive feelings towards music, but after experiencing it, their answers turned out to be more positive. So why don’t we use more music in our classroom when there are so many advantages and gains?

There are so many songs that can be found online, on YouTube for example, and almost every textbook has a CD with songs on it. I understand that some teachers may not feel very comfortable with singing, they think they don’t have a good voice or they feel they don’t have rhythm. But new technologies are a good support, and teachers may also ask students to choose a song and let them prepare their presentation in small groups. Here the teacher is only their guide and perhaps after seeing students dealing with music so naturally, s/he feels more confident to join in.

1.2 Engaging students with music in learning a foreign language

When I think of engagement I think of students being involved in my lessons, motivated and interested. But is there one definition of engagement, clarified for all teachers?

The concept of “student engagement” is presented in the Glossary of Education Reform (2018), an online resource:

In education, student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education. Generally speaking, the concept of “student engagement” is predicated on the belief that learning improves when students are inquisitive, interested, or inspired, and that learning tends to suffer when students are bored, dispassionate, disaffected, or otherwise “disengaged.” Stronger student engagement or improved student engagement are common instructional objectives expressed by educators.

Engagement can also be defined as students’ willingness to participate in learning activities with positive emotion (Chapman, 2003; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). According to Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris (2004, p. 59-109), there are three dimensions of engagement: behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement:

Behavioural engagement draws on the idea of participation; it includes involvement in academic and social or extracurricular activities and is considered crucial for achieving positive academic outcomes and preventing dropping out. Emotional [or affective] engagement encompasses positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school and is presumed to create ties to an institution and influence willingness to do the work. Finally, cognitive engagement draws on the idea of investment; it incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills.

In my opinion, emotional engagement is the most important one as students learn best when being in a friendly and positive environment. According to the Motivational Systems Theory by Ford (1992), caring behaviour, an important aspect of relational behaviour, provides a strong motivational foundation for cognitive and behavioural engagement in school contexts. This means that when students feel that they are in a caring and friendly environment, they are motivated to engage cognitively and behaviourally.

The first step to engage students is then to create a positive environment, a sense of belonging and a friendly relationship, and this means developing a rapport with students. Learning then comes more naturally, as when students are engaged they learn better and more. According to the English Language Program Guide in Primary Schools (*Orientações Programáticas para o Ensino do Inglês no 1º Ciclo do Ensino Básico*), it is important to foster a positive relationship with learning English (*“fomentar uma relação positiva com a aprendizagem da língua”*) (Bento et al., 2005, p. 11).

There are of course many methods to help students be engaged in the classroom, and music is definitely a valuable resource as most children enjoy singing or listening to music it seems only natural that by using music their interest in learning a language in a fun way should be increased.

When selecting music activities to use with young learners in the classroom, it is important to be aware of the children’s developmental level and individual characteristics (Bredecamp & Cople, 1997). Songs need to have simple vocabulary/sentence structures and repetition is a must. Most textbooks offer a song, a chant or a rhyme in every unit. They are usually short and include vocabulary or structures to be learnt and practised. Some songs use familiar tunes to make it more appealing to students. They invite students to dance and move along besides singing along.

Music is a tool that can be used in many different ways, we only need to know what we want the music for: to start and end the lesson as a routine activity, to help students feel relaxed and calm, to help them pay attention, to teach grammar and vocabulary, to help them memorise better, to teach language rhythm, to help them pronounce correctly and simply just for fun. You can even use music just as background music, just to enhance the classroom atmosphere, or to make students just listen and draw what they feel. Brewer states that background music stimulates internal processing and creativity, and encourages personal reflection (Brewer, 1995) And all this is done in an authentic way.

Music enables us teachers to create a positive and creative atmosphere. Gestures and mimic are of great importance here.

All kind of activities can be used when exploring music as it can develop all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). When I think of the “perfect” lesson, I think of all my students being motivated and involved. Could they all be involved and motivated, if I only did listening and speaking activities in my lessons or just reading and writing tasks? The answer is, no way. If I really do want to make my classes interesting and challenge all my learners, with all their different learning needs, I really must incorporate activities related to all four skills in my lessons. It doesn’t mean all four skills get the same attention every time. Sometimes the listening and speaking skills will be more developed in one lesson and the reading and writing skills will be more focused at another point. It means all skills will be present at some point of my lesson.

Learning and practicing a language should as natural and authentic as possible. A language has all the four skills incorporated in our daily lives, we receive information by listening or reading it and we respond to it by speaking and writing. So, it is only natural to develop the four skills together as a unit and not separate them, enabling my students to come closer to real life situations. Students will need to develop all these skills, in order to learn English in a meaningful, authentic, natural and communicative way. Of course, there are skills at primary level that need to be developed more than others, namely the listening and speaking skills. As we know, the main purpose of learning a language is to communicate. According to the English Language Program Guide in Primary Schools (*Orientações Programáticas para o Ensino do Inglês no 1º Ciclo do Ensino Básico*), we should use the language as a vehicle of understanding the world around us and as a vehicle of communication (“*fazer apreciar a língua enquanto veículo de interpretação e comunicação do/com o mundo que nos rodeia*”) (Bento et al. 2005, p. 11).

The exposure to all four domains follow a certain natural sequence. First students listen to the language, they get familiar with the sounds and rhythm of it (sometimes combined with reading word/sentence cards). Listening is followed by speaking, where students have the chance to experiment with the language. At this point it is then natural to read and finally write what they have learnt. According to the Primary School Curriculum Goals, *Metas Curriculares de Inglês. Ensino Básico: 1.º Ciclo* (Cravo, Bravo & Duarte, 2014, p. 3): “É uma aprendizagem que se consolida de forma gradual, partindo da compreensão oral e da repetição, para as situações simples de interação e de expressão em articulação com a leitura e a escrita.”

So, for different kind of learners I need to offer them the opportunity to do activities as varied as possible and integrating the four skills enables me to do so. Some prefer and learn better by listening and speaking, others do better when having the chance to read it and write the information down.

Integrating all skills in one lesson motivates, interests and engages students. With music, this all is possible to achieve. Perhaps I will focus more on the listening and speaking skills when using music, but that doesn't mean that the reading and writing activities are not present at all. According to the Primary School Curriculum Goals (*Metas Curriculares*), third and fourth grades should be able understand sounds, intonation and rhythms of the English language, identify rhymes, chants and songs, words and expressions and then they should be able to produce them by using repetition and pronunciation activities. Through music all this is possible.

An important contribution to understanding how learners learn and how teachers can vary approaches so as to respond to different learning styles is the theory of Multiple Intelligences by Howard Gardner, which emphasizes the importance of using various methods in order to teach children in an effective way.

According to Gardner, the different intelligences rarely act independently. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses when using these intelligences. We are all smart, just in different ways.

Musical intelligence is one of Gardner's types of intelligences. Gardner explained that "music may be a privileged organizer of cognitive processes, especially among young learners" (Gardner, 1997, p. 9). Children are particularly receptive to sound and rhythm, with musical intelligence appearing early on in their intellectual development (Davies, 2000). They learn best through songs, rhythms and other musical expressions.

But there are other intelligences catered for with music. When singing a song, students will develop their *linguistic intelligence* as they are developing always some parts of language skills. There is always the listening skill, when listening to a song, the speaking skill, when singing the song, sometimes the reading skill when confronted with the lyrics, and when creating verses or lyrics, the writing skill is developed. Using songs with visual aids like pictures, flashcards, posters, realia and videos helps our students that have their *visual/spatial intelligence* more developed, they learn more visually. They enjoy learning from visual aids. Movement is also very important for small children, therefore movements and miming when singing a song, giving extra meaning to lexis or sentence structures, or just dancing movements, will help our *bodily-kinaesthetic intelligences*. Children will develop their motor skills and coordination in association with learning the language, which is a basic element of the method of Total Physical Response. When singing as a group, we also cater for the *interpersonal intelligences*. Gardner (2011, p. 253) claimed that the interpersonal intelligence consists of "the ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals and, in particular, among their moods, temperaments, motivations, and intentions". Music joins people and helps make group dynamics easier. When we sing a song in our lessons, there is this group connection and interaction.

As for the *intrapersonal intelligence*, some music activities will definitely cater for children's emotional development and creativity, and background music can help them reflect and relax. Music may even cater for *mathematical/logical* students, as there is always a certain logical sequence in music, repetitions and a certain rhythm, a number of beats and patterns. We can even satisfy our *naturalist students* by singing our songs outside, joining nature to the pleasure of singing.

We know that our classes are always heterogeneous. We know that everyone is unique in its form of learning. Therefore, first we need to find out what our students' needs are and use different approaches in our lessons to satisfy these needs. We need to find tasks, a wide repertoire of activities/resources that suit as many different learning types as possible to get all students fully involved. Our main goal is to adapt our classes to our students, aiming a satisfaction for everyone involved. Music is one of the tools that can engage many students with different learning styles. What is important is providing for every student in at some time of your lessons. Make them feel that they are all special in their ways and that there is no one better than the other. They just learn differently!

Chapter 2

Intervention context

The project took place in two different primary schools, due to a change of my cooperating teachers. The first cooperating teacher ceased her contract at the end of the school year, therefore I was relocated to complete the second semester of the practicum. In the first context, a primary school located in an urban area, I attended and observed classes in the school year 2016/2017 (second semester), and I designed the project to be implemented in the following year (first semester). The school has 8 classrooms, 6 classrooms for the primary school students and 2 for the kindergarten students, and an exterior playground. There were 164 students at this school. The School Cluster where this school belongs is marked as an Educational Territory of Priority Intervention (*Território Educativo de Intervenção Prioritária – TEIP*) since 2009, due to existing social and economic problems in the school community and therefore the need of strategies to solve these problems. It also holds an Autonomy Contract, giving schools some kind of decision power. The second primary school where I completed the practicum is also in an urban area, although it belongs to a different School Cluster. This school has 9 classrooms, a staffroom and a reception, a kitchen, a canteen, a multipurpose hall, and a library.

The project was initiated in the first school through observation, focused on a third-grade class. The children's English Level was A1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001). The class had 21 students, but only 20 attended the English class; one of the children had special educational needs and did not attend the English lessons. There were 13 boys and 7 girls attending the English lessons, between the age of 7 and 9, three students being of another nationality: two students were from the Ukraine and one is from Togo, and therefore their first language was not Portuguese, their level in Portuguese being B2 and B1 according the CEFR. There were also 2 students with a previous retention in primary school. One student had special and personalized assistance, such as personalized pedagogical approaches (*Apoio pedagógico personalizado*), individual curriculum adjustments (*Adequações Curriculares Individuais*), and adjustments in evaluation (*Adequações Processo de Avaliação*).

According to conversations with the main teacher (*professora titular*) and the cooperating teacher, the class was heterogeneous. As for their educational achievements in English, there were 6 students with some difficulties in obtaining a positive evaluation, 4 students had a good evaluation and the other 10 students had a very good evaluation. There were no negative marks in English. This evaluation was similar for Maths and Portuguese Language. Regarding their behaviour in the English

class, the students were interested and they liked to participate. Some were more concentrated and engaged than others, some were more distracted and talkative than others as well.

In the second school, during the first semester of 2017/18, I had the chance to teach English to a class of fourth graders and implement the project. The children's English Level was also A1 according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). The class had 26 students, 15 boys and 11 girls attending the English lessons, between the age of 9 and 10. It was heterogeneous and diversified. With regard to English, students' evaluation was quite positive, with 12 students obtaining an excellent, 11 students a good evaluation and only two with a satisfactory one. One student coming from Brazil joined the class in that year. As for their behaviour in the English class, students were involved and they liked to take part in all classroom activities.

Although the project was designed for one class and implemented in another class, I believe that the project proposal was suitable for both classes, as it just outlined the global approach to be developed with a focus on the exploration of music. In the first stage of the project I collected information about the students through observation and an initial questionnaire. This information was crucial to get to know them better and will be presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Intervention stages

3.1 My teaching philosophy and the action research project

“Teaching isn’t what I do, it’s who I am”

(Anonymous)

In my portfolio I presented a personal collage (see Figure 1) where I describe teaching as *going on a journey with a suitcase full of joy*, which somehow sums up the spirit of my project.

When we choose a job, it is important not only to choose that specific job just because you’re good at something, but we need to choose it with our heart as well. Teaching is my passion.

You must love it to enjoy it completely. Teaching is not only to enable students to learn what you think they need to learn, but furthermore, it is to create a personal connection with them.

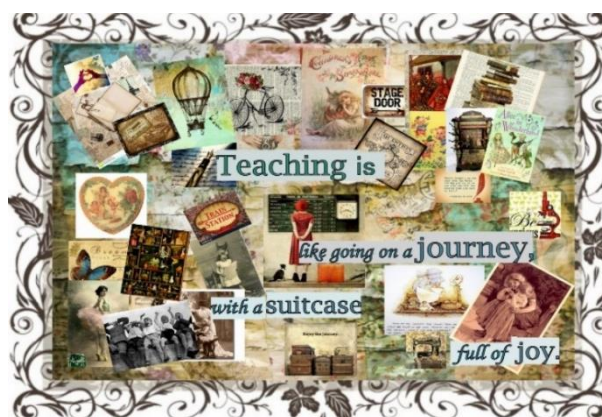


Figure 1. My representation of teaching

For me, it is very important to bond with my students, especially with my little ones at the primary school. Building a caring relationship with students and the school community is the first step to success.

There is a lot of touching, kissing, joking around and laughing out loud. Being in a classroom should be fun at this age. They must have fun learning. They must feel completely loose, relaxed and motivated. It is my job to make them feel this way, by giving them opportunities to learn without being aware that they are learning. It should be natural. Students don’t come to class empty handed, they already bring skills and characteristics that we only need to identify and then nourish them. This means, that when children play and sing in a natural way, the best activities for them should be based on what they do unconsciously, like singing a song, playing games, role-playing, etc. Movement is very important as well for small children, so the lesson can’t be taught with them sitting at their table all the time. They need to stand up and do some movement activities, like miming games or dancing and singing. My lessons must be colourful, because that’s the way I feel about a good lesson in primary school.

The way I teach depends a lot on my personality, of course. I like to have fun, singing and dancing, joking and enjoying myself. Teaching in primary classes means being a bit of an entertainer. So, I

take my personality into the classroom. It's Fatima. Before being a teacher, I am Fatima. I like quiet moments as well, Zen moments I call them, where students need to be calm and in silence. It doesn't mean there is always Party! What I want to say, is that our personality influences a lot our behaviour as a teacher, our ideologies and beliefs influence the way we teach. We must therefore be passionate about working with children. It demands a lot of energy from us and we must be flexible and adaptable. Our students should come first, that means we want them to come and leave with a smile. Every student should feel special and with a feeling of accomplishment, because I know for sure that each one has a speciality, some are good singers, good dancers, good painters, good writers, good listeners, good speakers, funny, etc. This way the fun factor in learning English in primary school is the most important one from my point of view

When studying for my master, I realized not only how little I knew about how children develop their thinking at different rates, but I also realized I was teaching without reflecting. When planning my lessons, I didn't think consciously about different learning styles, what activities/resources would help my students develop or expand their cognitive skills or if my activities/resources were developing children's understanding of the concepts I wanted to introduce. I usually did different activities in every lesson, of course, I tried to make learners understand new concepts, I knew one student likes this activity and another student doesn't, but I had never taken the time to ask myself important questions. Why this activity? What for? Will everyone understand/participate? So, during the practicum I planned my lessons more carefully, not only asking myself what I would do, but do justice to all the other pertinent questions I forgot to ask myself before.

Now I have some guidelines to help me being a better teacher and enable my students to be more successful in their learning. I know more about different learning styles and how to use a wider repertoire of activities/ resources in each lesson suited to as many different learning types as possible (VAT – visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners) to get all learners fully involved in my classes. I know now that with the right training and the right practice their thinking and learning skills can be improved.

As teachers, we want all our students to learn effectively, and knowing how they learn best helps us to prepare our lessons better, incorporating a variety of activities and so satisfying all our students' needs. So, at some point of the lesson, all my students will be catered for. The integrated skills lesson offers diversified activities for all types of learners. Having a variety of activities will not only give every student the opportunity to understand and learn better, but they all will be more motivated and enjoy the English classes.

One strategy I have always found useful to engage students in learning is using music in the classroom. As I stated before, music can be used in many different ways and for different purposes, it caters for different learning styles, and it enables the creation of a positive and creative atmosphere. This is why I decided to explore music in my action research project, seeking to better understand its educational potential with young learners. Table 1 was developed to plan my action research project, presenting objectives, strategies and data collection instruments. The most important data collection instruments were an initial questionnaire (presented below in section 3.3) and 3 self-evaluation questionnaires (see Appendices 1, 2 and 3).

Objectives	Action Research Strategies	Data to collect
<p>1. Making a profile of the class in order to perceive students' engagement and attitudes towards English learning and music</p> <p>2. Promoting students' engagement using activities with music</p> <p>3. Developing students' self-evaluation ability</p> <p>4. Evaluating gains and limitations of using music in class</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation Grid (Engagement) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obj. 1,2 • Initial Questionnaire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obj. 1 • Reflective entries in portfolio <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obj. 1,2,3 and 4 • Activities using music as a form of promoting student's engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obj. 2 • Informal conversation with students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obj. 1,2,3 and 4 • Self-evaluation questionnaire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obj. 3 and 4 	<p>Information on students' engagement in class, their preferences and interests when learning English, and their predisposition to use music as a learning tool</p> <p>Students' engagement and performance when using music in class</p> <p>Students' perceptions of project activities</p> <p>Gains and limitations of the project (students and teacher)</p>

Table 1. Project objectives and strategies

During the project I conducted some form of inquiry before, while and after giving classes to specific students in a specific school. This aimed to increase the quality of learning and teaching practices. According to Burns (1999), the major focus of action research is on concrete and practical issues of immediate concern to particular social groups or communities. It is conducted in naturally occurring settings, primarily using methods common to qualitative research such as observing and recording events and behaviours. In the following sections I describe the stages of the project: the observation phase, the implementation phase/action phase and the final phase/reflection phase, which involved an overall analysis of practice and the writing of this

So, I decided to be more flexible and took some general notes into my notebook, following the specific criteria on my grid. In general, I could see that students participated in an organized way, raising their hands when teacher asked a question or responding directly to a question, which happened mostly. Almost everyone was focused on the task at hand. Only some were having a little playtime or conversation with their peers for some seconds, which is completely natural at that age. The atmosphere was positive and relaxing, students being completely at ease. The grid was a great support to help me know what to focus on, but I would need more time to use it more effectively (knowing students' names at least).

When we are teaching, we are so focused on what we are doing, following the steps of a lesson, that this kind of outside observation is impossible. It was really interesting to realise what you can see/observe when you are not the teacher. This observation experience was especially important to make me reflect on what student engagement means and become more prepared to implement my project with a focus on enhancing learner engagement through the use of music.

3.3. Stage two – Action Phase

This stage is where the action begins. I wanted to use music for engaging students in learning English. Before I started with my lessons I needed to make a profile of the class in order to learn about their attitudes towards English learning in general and music in particular. This was my first step before implementing whatsoever. An initial questionnaire was handed out, divided in two parts. Part one is dedicated to what they think about English in general and the second part of the questionnaire focuses on music (Figure 3).

I tried to make the questions as simple as possible, as I have noticed through my teaching years, students sometimes have difficulties in answering questions not because they don't know the answer, but because they don't understand the question itself. With younger students we need even more to be careful with our words, simplify them as possible (this doesn't mean they won't learn more "sophisticated" vocabulary) when our main goal is communicating. Sometimes we think the words we use are clear in meaning and understanding, but young children have difficulties when these words are not part of their daily vocabulary. They may have heard it but that doesn't mean they really know their meaning.

There is a very important aspect, from my point of view, that whatever is handed out to students, be it a worksheet, a questionnaire or something else, it has to be first explored with students before asking them to do what is need to be done. This doesn't mean the information is only read aloud, no,

it can go a little further, asking students to think what is asked from them or what they should do. This not only helps them to be more autonomous but it also helps them to learn to analyse something on their own, coming to conclusions and sharing them out loud with others.



English and I

1. Gostas de aprender Inglês?

Sim

Mais ou menos

Não

2. Quando começaste a aprender Inglês?

no pré-escolar

no 1º ano

no 2º ano

no 3º ano

3. Aprender Inglês é ...

fácil Quase sempre Às vezes Nunca

divertido Quase sempre Às vezes Nunca

4. Nas aulas de Inglês gostas de...



ouvir/ ler histórias

ouvir/cantar músicas



jogar jogos



fazer trabalhos manuais





1. Gostas de música?

Sim

Mais ou menos

Não

2. Gostas de ouvir e cantar músicas em Inglês?

Sim

Mais ou menos

Não

3. Ouvir e cantar músicas na aula de Inglês pode ajudar-te a ...



conhecer novas palavras/frases

memorizar melhor as palavras/frases

pronunciar melhor as palavras/frases

aprender de uma forma divertida

estar relaxado(a) na aula

gostar mais de Inglês



4. Gostarias de ouvir e cantar músicas em Inglês nas nossas aulas?

Sim

Não sei

Não



Figure 3. Initial Questionnaire

As for the results I was a bit surprised. When creating this questionnaire, of course I had some expectations. Defending music as being one of the major tools to be used in the classroom, I was sure the results would show it without a doubt. There was no 100 percent, as I initially thought, but it came near to what I expected.

According to the results, every one of the 24 students enjoyed learning English, all of them having learnt English as a subject either from kindergarten (11 students) or as first and second graders (13 students). As for learning English being easy, 16 students agreed; 20 students thought it was fun learning English, so I can see that from the 8 students who thought English as not being easy all the time, 4 of them saw nonetheless English as being fun. This means that even when something is not perceived as easy by children, it still can give us some satisfaction.

The last question on part one of the questionnaire was about language learning activities they liked best. Here they could choose more than one answer. As can be seen in Chart 1, listening to music/singing, playing games and craft work was what they liked best in the English lessons. I was surprised that only 3 students chose reading and listening to stories as what they liked best in their English lessons.

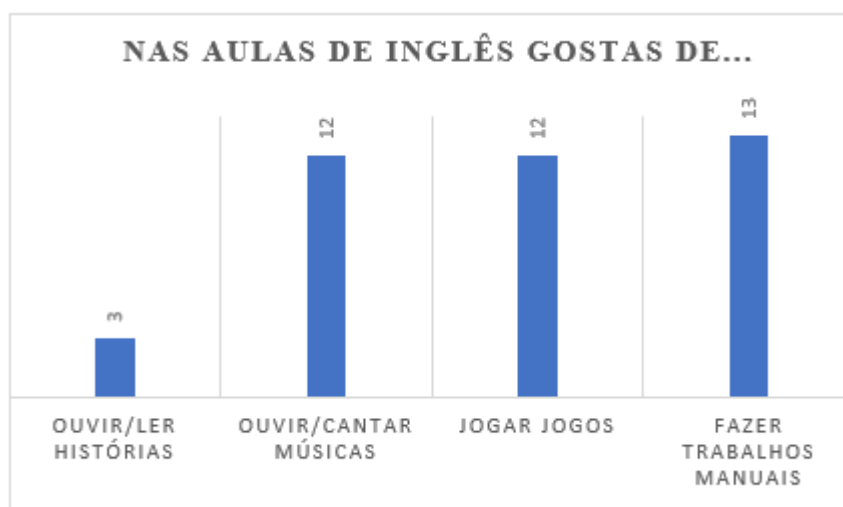


Chart 1. Learners' preferences in language learning

In order to better interpret students' preference, I would have to investigate how and when these activities were used in the classroom. I can only say that from all four activities, the three could be considered being more "active, being students more involved "physically" in the activities.

As for the second part of my questionnaire, more related to music/music activities, the first question, whether they liked music or not: 19 students answered 'yes' and 5 'more or less'. As this questionnaire was anonymous I couldn't ask why they didn't really like music very much. The

question was closed, so maybe next time I need to reformulate my questionnaire, giving them the chance to explain their answers a bit more, so there is more inside information for me. With these results, I asked myself how is music used in the classroom: Are students on their seats when they sing, do they use gestures/miming, dancing movements? How often do they sing in English? The next question was really important for me to understand the potential value students saw in listening and singing in class. The results are shown in Chart 2.

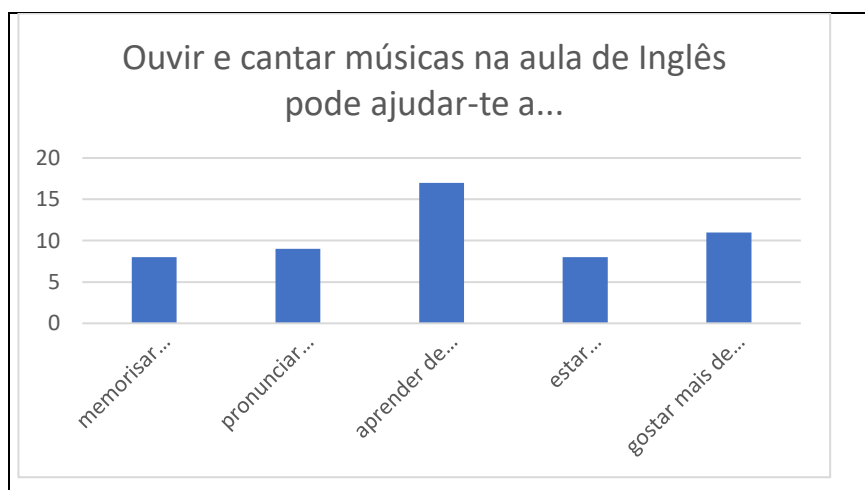


Chart 2. Students' perceptions of the learning value of music

Students could again choose several answers. I was happy to see that 17 students thought that learning with music was learning in a playful way, and 11 students thought that music could make them enjoy English more. Memorising lexis and sentence structures, pronunciation and feeling more relaxed were also chosen by at least 8 students. This only shows that students are aware that music is something enjoyable and fun and they also know how useful it can be to learn English as a subject. Regarding the last question, if they would like to listen to music and sing in the English lessons, only 4 students were not sure about it and one students answered 'no'.

My goal with the project was to show them all that music could really be fun for everyone and could help them all learn in a playful way. To achieve my goal and try to engage my students through music activities, I needed to plan my didactic sequences with extra care. First, I needed to decide what topic to work on. Here it is important to say that the class had already started their lessons when I came to teach them. So, I had to follow the topics in their books, as there was already work in progress.

The three didactic sequences consisted of three lessons each, each one focusing on a specific topic and therefore with a suitable title: Christmas Time, I Love Fruit and Home Sweet Home.

In the first lesson of all sequences I introduced the topic in many different ways to help students guess the topic and activate a mental image of it based on their previous knowledge: using a puzzle (a reindeer), touching and smelling realia, in this case fruit, using a big cardboard with a door on it (a house).

The second lesson of each sequence was to practise and develop what they had learnt in the first lesson. Here the activities ranged from singing a song to practising new lexis/vocabulary, doing some exercises on a worksheet, creating a verse for a song, and singing a song using Total Physical Response.

As for the last lesson, following a task-based approach, there was always a final task that summarized the topic of this unit: a final group game (Who wants to be a millionaire) using the real thing with a PowerPoint, building a fortune teller, and drawing the lyrics of a song (The spider's in the box). The students were also asked to self-evaluate learning with a self-evaluation questionnaire (see Appendix 3).

Along with this sequence structure, every lesson started with the same "Hello" song and ended with the same "Goodbye" song, letting students know it was English time, creating a routine in our lesson. The *Hello Chant* was created by me:

Hello Song

Take one step forward (*teacher and students sing it together and then they take a step forward*)

Poom, Poom (*all imitating the sounds of the steps, while stepping forward*)

Count: one, two, three (*teacher and students sing it together*)

One, Two Three (*all showing one finger at a time when counting to three*)

Wave your hand, wave your hand (*all waving hands*)

Say hello to me (*teacher and students sing it together*)

Hello!!! (*loud shout*)

The *Goodbye song* follows the same structure, but instead of taking one step forward, they take one step back, and at the end they say goodbye.

I also started to introduce picture/quote cards in every lesson to let students know what we were going to do that lesson. It is kind of a summary, but with picture cards. I had a picture card for different activities I could be doing that lesson:

- If there were games in that lesson – "Game Time" picture card
- If there was a story: "Story Time" picture card

- If there was role-play/dramatization - “Show Time” picture card
- If there was music – “Let’s sing” picture card
- If there was pair/groupwork – “Team work” picture card
- If there was craft work – “Be creative” picture card.

Each picture card had also a small quote related to the topic of the card. This is not only a way to let students look forward to what they are going to do, but it also gives the whole class time to reflect on important everyday subjects and themes. I was really impressed with some of their opinions and ideas when it came to the quotes. Figure 4 presents an example.



Figure 4. Picture card to introduce lesson activity

When teaching new vocabulary or language chunks, visual aids, such as flashcards/pictures are very important. I use them in almost every lesson. Student not only hear/read the new word, they visualise it at the same time. I usually create my own flashcards, using some ideas from the Internet or creating them by myself (see example in Figure 5). They must be appealing to students, sometimes even funny. It is a way to capture their attention to the pictures and they memorise the new lexis better as it is connected to something emotional.



Figure 5. Flash and Word cards (example)

And then we add gestures, a movement to it all and it is complete. Visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. There is no better way to memorise new lexis as students are offered different aids to their different needs.: “Acquisition of automatic language skills depends on rich, meaningful, repeated exposure to comprehensible input without awareness” (Bolitho et al., 2003, p. 253).

As for my lesson plan structures, used in all lesson sequences, I chose the following steps:

Greeting Stage – This is the stage where a routine activity was performed, where students started speaking in English again (since last lesson, there was probably no other contact to the English language). So, singing the *Hello chant* helped students getting back to English, knowing now it’s time for English. It also helped them to settle down and start the lesson. It was also time for a little chat, maintaining therefore a rapport with my students. Here the speaking skill was developed informally. The time spent here was about 2-5 minutes.

Warm up stage – This stage was meant to introduce the topic of the lesson, set the context of the lesson, activating in students’ minds a mental image of the topic itself with their already existing knowledge. This was done in many different ways as described before. At this stage I also started to do a small summary of the lesson through picture cards right after the greeting stage. Each picture card represents an activity. There is also a small quote on each picture card to reflect on. Here listening and speaking skills were developed. The time spent at this stage can vary, but I think as it is just a warm up, it should be not too long, going from 5-10 minutes.

Presentation – Introducing new target language and activating already known lexis were the main objectives in this stage, sometimes using music. At this point, gestures were also introduced to give extra meaning. Listening skills were practised first as students listened to the presentation of new target language by the teacher, learning how the new lexis is correctly pronounced; then speaking skills were developed with students repeating model presentations and practising pronunciation. The reading skill was introduced when students were faced with word or sentence cards. The time spent at this stage can vary from 10-15 minutes. It shouldn’t be too long as it will diminish students’ retaining information.

Practice Stage – Students practised new target language, first with restricted activities and then less restricted activities. By restricted activity I mean that students can practise the new target language with a whole class activity or in small groups. The less restricted activities are to be done by pairs or individually, so students can concentrate more on their own learning. Here several skills

were developed. The writing skill is also a possibility. Students will at this stage, still need some guidelines to produce something in writing.

Closure stage – At this stage students should be able to show what they have accomplished, giving them a feeling of success. The previous activities could be presented to the class or a game is another good idea.

Reflection Stage – Here an informal chat with the students about what they have learnt, how they have accomplished all the tasks and talking about their feelings towards the activities should be possible every lesson. I had sometimes the opportunity to do it during the lesson, when it came up on certain situations. I know, that due to lack of time, sometimes this isn't possible, but starting next lesson with a flashback is also a possibility.

Goodbye Stage – Again, a routine activity was developed, where we sang all together a chant to say goodbye. Students knew the lesson was over.

An important objective of the project was developing my students' ability in "learning to learn". Robert Fisher (2005), a leading expert in developing children's thinking skills, says that thinking is not a natural function like sleeping, walking and talking. Thinking, he stresses, needs to be developed. Therefore, we must start early to teach our children/students to think, helping them apply their thinking skills in the classroom. This will lead to better self-awareness, self-confidence and consequently better learning. When our students are aware of what they can or can't do, they can learn to overcome their personal problems. Teaching them to think enables them to learn better in their personal own way. They gain confidence and they learn that everybody learns differently and this doesn't mean that the way they learn is better than others. Simply differently. So, noticing patterns and drawing conclusions gives students a better understanding not only of learning but of themselves as well. Knowing what we can do, what we can accomplish with certain strategies makes us more confident and independent. As a teacher, I need to develop activities that are not only meaningful and challenging but help learners develop strategies like information-processing thinking, problem-solving, decision making, critical and creative thinking and reflections. According to Chickering and Ehrmann (1996, p. 3-6):

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write reflectively about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

So, to enable my students to “learn to learn”, I used self-evaluation instruments and had informal chats to develop their thinking strategies by asking questions or making requests, like “How did you do it? What will you do next? How did you feel? Why was it easy/difficult?” etc. Therefore, after each didactic sequence they answered some questions on a questionnaire (see Appendices 1, 2 and 3), some related to their behaviour when on task, others related to music activities (these questions were always the same in every questionnaire), and the last part of the questionnaire (in line with learning contents in each sequence) was dedicated to showing what they had learnt, so real evidence was presented as they had to write down some examples.

At first, I wasn’t so sure to add the part of them writing language examples on the questionnaire, as I focused my lessons particularly on developing listening and speaking skills. Of course, there are always activities that are linked to reading and writing, but I have noticed that the writing part is the most difficult one to develop, if you don’t have enough time to deepen it. Even in their mother language, students have difficulties in writing and then they have to write in a different language, with different letters. It is kind of complicated. You need more than three lessons on a topic to develop their writing more, to make their writing more reliable.

In the following sections I present the three lesson sequences. The corresponding plans are in Appendices 4, 5 and 6.

3.3.1 Lesson sequence 1 - *Christmas Time*

In the first lesson sequence related to the Christmas Festivity, I wanted my students to learn new vocabulary and sentence structures related to that topic and then use that new lexis and practice it in a Christmas song.

In the first lesson, as for the communicative competences, I wanted them to learn and memorise vocabulary (*Santa, Christmas tree, elves, presents, snowman, angel, sleigh, candle, stocking, star and reindeer*) and review/expand language chunks (*There is/There are + number + noun*). Regarding the learning competences, students developed their memorising skill and used miming to give meaning to lexis and therefore understand/retain/memorise it better.

After the greeting stage, where we sang our Hello song, we solved a jigsaw puzzle on the board (a reindeer), introducing the topic of the lesson sequence 1- *Christmas Time*, activating in their minds a mental image of the topic with their already existing knowledge of topic, and arising expectations. Here the speaking skill was developed.

In the next step, the presentation phase, the new target language was introduced and already known lexis was activated, preparing students for the song in the next lesson. Flashcard related to Christmas were stuck one by one on the board and students had to repeat the word, mime it and then match the word card to the corresponding picture. Listening and speaking skills were developed at this stage.

To practice the new target language items and develop their memorizing and speaking skills, we played the game *Guess what's missing*, where students had to close their eyes, while the flashcards/word cards on the board were turned over and students had to guess what was missing/hidden. This was done as a whole class activity, where students feel still more confident as a group. The second practice activity was chosen to develop their writing and speaking skills, where they had to do a worksheet, counting and writing, using the language chunks *There is/There + number + noun*. It was an individual work, where students could show what they could do by themselves.

Due to lack of time, as we spent more time drilling and miming the new target language at the beginning of the lesson, as we were having fun, there was no time for the consolidation game, the *Whispering Game*, and for the informal chat where students could express themselves saying what they liked best, how and what they had learnt better. This lesson ended, as usual, with the Goodbye song.

Lesson two was the lesson where students would sing a Christmas song, contextualising lexis from the previous lesson, putting language items into a meaningful/real context, using gestures to give meaning to lexis and so understand/retain/memorise it better.

Again, the lesson started with the Hello song, an important routine to let them know it's English Time. Before continuing with the lesson plan, we had some fun giving the classroom and ourselves a little Christmas spirit with candles, Christmas lights and some antlers on our heads.

To introduce the Christmas song - *Christmas Time is here again* - I had had in mind playing four different international Christmas songs, but to save time I decided on my way to school to sing the chorus part of four different songs: one was the Christmas song in English, the other the German *Oh, Tannenbaum*, the South American *Feliz Navidad* and the Portuguese one *A todos um bom Natal*. This was not only an activity to introduce the song, but rather to make them aware of Christmas celebrated around the world with different languages, using different sounds and rhythms. This exercise didn't work as I had expected. My singing went reasonably well, with a little addition of drama. Now the guessing part, where students had to tell me which song they thought we would sing in our English lesson, surprised me. They had some difficulties in "guessing" the song. Now, what went wrong? Was my assumption about children at that age being capable of differentiating/identifying different languages, wrong? Maybe. I haven't had time to look deeper into it. Something I need to do. The

guessing the song activity made me sweat, but with a little improvising and guidance, we finally agreed on the English song.

So, it was time for putting into practice the target language and the gestures from the previous lesson into action, by singing the song. I told them I was going to sing and mime first but they could join me anytime. When singing or playing a song to students the first time, some teachers defend that first it is better for the class just to listen and observe, getting familiar with the music and the lyrics, and only then invite them to the singing along. From my experience there are always students that want to sing along, mime right away stand up, so I usually explain to them that everyone learns differently: some like to observe the teacher's performance, others prefer listening carefully and others want to stand up right away and sing and do what the teacher does. So, I had some of each of different learning types. While I sang, I saw some sitting still and observing, some listening and singing along, and just went along, standing up and imitating me. As can be seen in the lyrics below, there were not only the gestures they had learnt the previous lesson related to the target language but some new movements as well.

Christmas time is here again

Christmas time is here again (*with one hand, moving in the air imitating the crossing of the Christmas star*)

And Santa's on his way (*imitating Santa carrying a bag on his shoulder*)

The elves (*hands over head imitating an elves hat and lowering down, as for being small*)

And all the helpers (*open arms pointing to the class*)

Put the presents (*imitating putting present*)

on the sleigh (*imitating holding the reins of a sleigh going fast*)

Rudolph's getting ready (*finger-combing hair giving it style and twisting your nose with one hand*)

He's counting all the deer (*index finger pointing and counting*)

Merry Christmas everyone (*open arms for welcoming*)

And a happy New Year (*imitating striking flares, with hands in the air*)

(*repeat all*)

The second time we sang, everyone was standing up and singing and miming. The third time is the time when students can feel and show how much they have accomplished, being able to sing in a foreign language only after a short period of time. In my opinion, repeating a song more than three times is counterproductive as they get bored and distracted and the impact of the song will be gone. Repeating the song at the end of the lesson or at the beginning of the next lesson is always a possibility, to refresh their memory and create a fade out or fade in. When teaching songs, it is important to sing them once in a while, not just when they are being taught, or they were just part of a random lesson, lost in time. So, from time to time, or when students feel like it, we sing all our

songs learnt so far. It's a way to practise them and give students the chance to interiorize them better. This will also lead to a feel of success, when knowing several songs in English.

The next step, where students had to organize 5 story cards in the correct order according to the song, was to make them aware of a storyline in a song and therefore contextualize the practised lexis.

The final task of the lesson was an arts and crafts activity, where students wrote a Christmas card, guided with a structure on the board and colouring it as well at the end. This activity was not only to develop their writing skill, but most of all to allow students to have fun creating something personal, and show them the real meaning of Christmas, being able to give this card to someone as a gift, a gesture of love.

The main objective of the last lesson of this sequence was to summarise and review what they had learnt so far, by playing the game *Who wants to be a millionaire* as a final task. Listening, speaking and reading skills were expanded, as well as cooperative working in pairs and learning to respect each other's opinion. A final task after a thematic unit is very important in my opinion, not only to summarise learning, but also to give students a feeling of success.

When finishing a sequence, students had to fill in a self-evaluation form (see Appendix 1) to show how they had worked, what they had liked when using music as a tool in their lessons and what they had learnt. As you can see in Table 2, I have chosen some of the statements to analyse (questions 6, 7 and 8), which were especially important to evaluate the impact of my project. The results were quite satisfactory as 21 students liked the music activities and the gestures helped them memorise the lyrics better; as for the importance of music in their learning process, 23 students, so almost everyone, thought that listening to music and singing helped them get to know new words /sentences, learn in a playful way and feel more relaxed/happy in the classroom; 20 of them also indicate that music helped them memorise words/ sentences better.

	Sim	Nem sempre	Não
Gostei das actividades com música.	21	2	1
Os gestos usados ajudaram-me a compreender e memorizar as letras das músicas	21	3	

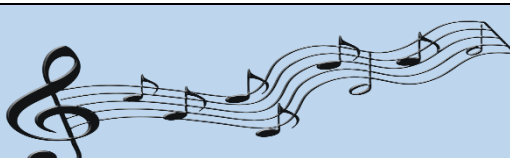
Ouvir e cantar musica ajudou-me a ...	23	conhecer novas palavras/frases.	
	20	memorizar melhor as palavras/frases.	
	19	pronunciar melhor as palavras/frases.	
	23	aprender de uma forma divertida.	
	23	estar relaxado(a)/contente na aula.	
	21	gostar mais de Inglês.	

Table 2. Students' perceptions of the use of music: Sequence 1

Table 3 presents the results for question 9 in the self-evaluation questionnaire, related to contents explored in the sequence. Students had to write two examples to give evidence of their learning. They also had the possibility to write “I can say it” instead of writing down examples.




Consigo...	Muito bem	Bem	Não muito bem
			
→ dizer e escrever os números de 1-20	17	7	
→ dizer e escrever as cores	17	6	1
→ usar <i>There is/There are...</i>	13	10	1
→ dizer e escrever lugares na cidade	15	8	1
→ dizer e escrever palavras ligadas ao Natal	20	4	

Table 3. Students’ perceptions of language learning: Sequence 1

When analysing students’ responses, I felt a bit frustrated that some words, that should have been by then familiar in writing, like numbers and colours, were misspelled. Maybe this proves my idea that writing is something that needs to be practised more, needing more time (even though I defend the importance at this age to develop the listening and speaking skills). This could be a good topic to be developed and explored in another project!

As for the first and second statements – “I can say and write the numbers from 1 to 20” and “I can say and write the colours”, almost all students felt confident, ticking ‘very well’ (17 students) and ‘well’ (7 and 6 students), and only one student felt s/he couldn’t say or write the colours so well. S/he tried writing it nonetheless – *grim*, that from my understanding is definitely the colour green.

Regarding the sentence structures *There is.../There are*, 23 students out of 24 felt confident again, 13 feeling completely confident and 10 feeling good about it. Only one student thought she/he couldn’t do it so well, and there was no evidence at all in the writing space of the table. Looking at their examples, I believe students were too humble here when choosing only the ‘well’ smiley instead of the ‘very well’ one, as their written examples were really great. What does this mean? Is it a personality trait, being humble and not wanting to gloat, or is it something more? Are children at this age capable of being critical with themselves, analysing what they can do or what they can’t? I think it is something they can learn, when using these questionnaires more often, as a continuous self-assessment. I know that teachers are using self-assessment questionnaires more often in their classroom, but I also believe that this aspect needs further exploration. I explained what they had to do, of course, but maybe it would be necessary to discuss with them what it is feeling you can do something really good, good or more or less.

The next statement, “I can say and write parts of a town”, came again positive with 23 happy smileys and only one with a sad one. These positive results were maybe due to the fact that we had used a song in a previous lesson to practise the numbers and the structures *there is/there are* connected with parts of the town. The tune is kind of a marching tune soldiers use on the training camp and the lyrics, created by me, are the following, sang while the whole class is marching around:

The Marching Song

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (*teacher*)

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (*students*)

There are playgrounds up in heaven (*teacher - joining hands as a prayer and looking up*)

There are playgrounds up in heaven (*teacher - joining hands as a prayer and looking up*)

8, 9, 10, 11, 12 (*teacher*)

8, 9, 10, 11, 12 (*students*)

Oh my God, there is an elf! (*teacher - surprising face and open hands in the air*)

Oh my God, there is an elf! (*teacher - surprising face and open hands in the air*)

13, 14, 15, 16 (*teacher*)

13, 14, 15, 16 (*students*)

There is a mouse in the school canteen (*teacher – scary face and one foot in the air*)

There is a mouse in the school canteen (*students – scary face and one foot in the air*)

17, 18, 19 and 20 (*teacher*)

17, 18, 19 and 20 (*students*)

There’s a Gruffalo in the library! (*teacher – imitating a monster with hands and face mimic*)

There’s a Gruffalo in the library! (*teacher – imitating a monster with hands and face mimic*)

All together: *GRRRRRRRAAAAAA!*

As for the last statement in question 9, all students assured that they could say and write words connected to Christmas, 20 students knowing the new lexis very well, as could be seen in the table registers. It wasn’t a surprise as this was the last topic we dealt in the didactic sequence, and the new lexis was practised through the Christmas song we sang with gestures.

Learning evidence is clearly shown in their questionnaires and students felt confident when answering the questions in a positive way. This shows that the activities used in the classroom were successful.

3.3.2 Lesson sequence 2 - *I love fruit!*

In the second lesson sequence, where the topic Food, in this case Fruit, was explored, I wanted my students not only to learn new lexis and language chunks, but also to try something different. I wanted them to write the lyrics for a song in groups, following a model given by me (see the sequence plan in Appendix 5).

When planning my didactic sequences, I had in mind using a wide variety of activities, not only to cater for all the different intelligences at some point in the lesson, but also to make each lesson something special and different from the previous ones. This way, every lesson had, besides the routine activities at the beginning and end, something new to be explored by the students.

As for the first lesson, the topic Fruit was introduced through realia, real fruit. One fruit I couldn't find in the supermarket was the guava, so I brought an apple instead with a sticker saying "I am a guava". This was a fun moment, where we discussed the mental problem of the apple! These fun moments are not just important to create a relaxing and enjoyable atmosphere, they also help students memorise things better, as there is a "story" behind it. They can go back to that moment and remember what it was and how it was pronounced. This was one of the lessons where I didn't finish the lesson plan, because I decided we were having not only fun, but they were really learning the new fruits, as for each fruit we discussed its name (Why pineapple? The pine part, ok, but the apple part?) or we pronounced the fruit in an exaggerated way, and in this case we decided the avocado was a really elegant and fashion fruit, so when pronouncing the word *avocado*, we did it in a sophisticated way, with one hand in the air and all real ladies and gentlemen. They could also comment on their favourite fruit, or the ones they didn't like. This is a way to help them retain information better and develop their memorising skill, by memorising through miming, sound, classroom story events and of course through contextualization, thus making students have a great time learning while learning without being aware of the process itself.

This *fruit talk* was relevant for the upcoming activity: listening to the story *Handa's surprise*, a story set in Africa, full of exotic fruits and some wild animals (the ones learnt in a playful way in previous activities, such as *Guess what's in the basket* and *Kim's game*).

The food presentation/ practice and storytelling were a starting point to prepare students for the next two lessons: one dedicated to the composition of a verse and the other where students would use crafts to make a Fortune Teller and summarise the new language.

The second lesson was dedicated to compose a verse, creating the lyrics for a song. The song tune was chosen by the students. I gave them the possibility to choose between the tunes of "Frère Jacques"

and the traditional Portuguese song *Ó Laurindinha*. They chose the last one, as most of them knew the song in Portuguese by heart, sang by their grandparents and parents when they were little.

The lesson started as usual with the greeting song and with the picture cards, letting them know what to expect from the lesson as well as creating some curiosity. To recall the previous lesson, students played a matching game on the board, trying to recall what animal ate what fruit and therefore practise again the new language. This game also helped me to flow into the next activity, picking the monkey and the banana, saying that the monkey likes bananas and asking them if they liked bananas as well, choosing then other fruits and repeat the same question, leading them to use *I like/I don't like*.

Moving then to the next step, aiding them create a verse for the song, I built a guideline of the song on the board with their cooperation, with the use of word and picture cards. On one side of the board was the Yummy Smiley Part of the song, and on the other part of the board was the Yuck Smiley Part (see below). The exhibition on the board was the same as the one they had to use when creating their verses, replacing the name of the fruits.

Do you like bananas?

Do you like bananas (*picture card*)?

Oh yes, I do

(*2 last verses repeated*)

I like bananas, yum, yum, yum.

What about you?

(*2 last verses repeated*)

Do you like pineapples (*picture card*)?

Oh no, I don't.

(*2 last verses repeated*)

I don't like pineapples, yuck, yuck, yuck.

What about you?

(*2 last verses repeated*)

Developing cooperative learning was another aim, letting students work in small groups when creating a new verse (“I like...”/“I don't like...”) and writing down the song lyrics, as in the example presented in Figure 6. The group work started off a little complicated, as they are not used to work in small groups, nagging all the time about their peers and some of them even wanting to do it on their own. Eventually, they managed to work together and the results were very positive.

The song verses were then presented the following way: as there is a question part and an answer part in the song, the class was divided into the ones that sang the questions and the ones that sang the answers back, having to stand up when it was their time to perform. As there were some similar verse writings, these groups automatically sang together, defending their fruit, as being yummy or yucky.


In the following lesson, the song was repeated after the greeting stage, and this time we decided together what yummy and yucky fruit we would sing and divided the class into a challenging singing contest: boys vs. girls, of course. The standing up when singing (hands on their hips) and sitting down when listening (miming a bit of a defiance face) gave this type of song not only some dynamics but also some meaning, as there was a dialogue going on between the two groups, one asking questions and other answering them, using the target language in a real, meaningful context and in a playful way.

Let's write some lyrics!

Create your own **2 verses** following the model on the board!

Give the song a **title!**

Title: mango


 **Yum!**

Do you like mangoes

oh yes, I do

I like mangoes Yum, Yum, yum

What about you?

 **Yuck!**

Do you like avocados

oh no, I don't

I don't like avocados Yuck, yuck, yuck!

What about you?

by afonso B. Fabio

afonso G. Luís

Figure 6. Students' example of the lyrics for a song

The last lesson was dedicated to crafts. Students had the possibility to write the questions or actions on a fortune teller template and decorate it to their liking. Using crafts in the classroom is always a good idea as students like to make something on their own, take it home and show what they have accomplished at school.

As for the results of the self-evaluation questionnaire (see Appendix 2), they were again very positive. As Table 4 shows, all students liked the activities with music, and almost all of them enjoy English better when using music and believe music helps them learn better and in a playful way.

	Sim	Nem sempre	Não
Gostei das actividades com música.	24		


	Ouvir e cantar musica ajudou-me a ...	22	conhecer novas palavras/frases.	
		21	memorizar melhor as palavras/frases.	
		22	pronunciar melhor as palavras/frases.	
		21	aprender de uma forma divertida.	
		20	estar relaxado(a)/contente na aula.	
		23	gostar mais de Inglês.	

Table 4. Students' perceptions of the use of music: Sequence 2

As for their awareness of learning, Table 5 shows that students felt quite confident, using only the 'very well' and 'well' smiley faces regarding they knowledge of how to say and write some fruits and use the sentence structures *Do you like...? Yes, I do. I like.../No, I don't. I don't like.*




Consigo...	Muito bem	Bem	Não muito bem
			
→ dizer e escrever algumas frutas	15	9	
→ dizer e escrever alguns animais	13	6	2
→ usar <i>Do you like...? Yes, I do. No, I don't. I like... I don't like</i>	12	12	

Table 5. Students' perceptions of language learning: Sequence 2

3.3.3 Lesson sequence 3 - *Home Sweet Home*

The third didactic sequence had Total Physical Response (TPR) as the main teaching approach, when using it with music. TPR was developed by James Asher the 1960s, an American professor of

psychology, who defended the theory that memory is enhanced through associations with physical movements. TPR is always linked to physical actions which are designed to reinforce comprehension. When a teacher asks students to stand up, using a gesture with his/her hand upwards, or to sit down, moving his/her hand downwards, students' understanding is enhanced and there is no need for translation. After decoding the different gestures connected to certain speech patterns, students will learn reproduce the new language more naturally. On the other hand, as students make gestures connected with language items or language use, they tend to memorise language better. The use of songs is particularly useful here, and although students used gestures every time we sang in class, this time miming was more explored.

The first lesson was dedicated to learning and memorising lexis related to the topic House. After working with a house cardboard on the board (flexible windows, where rooms of the house were hidden behind, plus a garage and garden attached), using miming again to help them memorise lexis better and make the activity more appealing, students did a worksheet, practising their writing skills with the new language items.

In the second lesson, after exploring vocabulary with the help of a bedroom poster and some furniture flashcards, students did some exercises in their textbook. I decided to use their book, instead of a new worksheet, as the activities were attractive and interesting to practise language in a playful way, with some vocabulary needed for the song to be explored in the following lesson.

After two lessons of working with students in a ludic way, teaching them language items related to the house, they were ready put into practice what they had learnt, using the *Spider's in the box* song, from the textbook *English Adventure 1*, published by Longman. This is a song where students can use gestures to exemplify words or sentence structures, and also move all their bodies according to the lyrics:

The spider's in the box

The spider is in the box (*miming a spider climbing up your arm and then miming a square in the air*)
And the box is on the chair (*miming square again and sitting down on the chair and standing up again*)
The chair is on the table (*sitting down and standing up again, then pounding the table with both hands*)
And the table is over there (*pointing to one table in the classroom*)
The table is on the carpet (*repeating pounding and using both hands face down as smoothing a carpet*)
And the carpet is on the floor (*both hands imitating smoothing carpet, then walking on the spot*)
Let's sing this song once more (*walking on the spot and lifting index finger to show once more*)
Carpet, table, chair and spider (*repeating all the movements explained previously*) –three times
And the spider is in the box (*repeating all the movements done previously*)

To present the song to students, first I sang it using all the gestures and movements to be used, with some pictures on the board illustrating the position of the different elements in the song. Only then I played the CD, as this song has a quite accelerated pace. At this time of the presentation, I explained that they could just watch me doing it or follow my movements right way. Right from the beginning students were excited to participate, as I told them that this song would be a challenge to them. The song was physically demanding as many different movements were made while singing it. Concentration was also needed. I played the song several times and by the end we were all out of breath (well, maybe just me).

Afterwards, it was the time to be creative. Each student was invited to draw the cover of a possible CD for this song. As the examples in Figure 7 show, we have got talented students, from Picassos to Rembrandts!



Figure 7. Students' drawing examples of the lyrics *The spider's in the box*

As for the results of self-evaluation questionnaire (see Appendix 3), presented in Table 6, students felt again quite positive about music, all of them enjoyed the music activities, and the gestures helped them memorise the new target language better.

	Sim	Nem sempre	Não
Gostei das actividades com música.	24		
Os gestos/movimentos usados ajudaram-me a compreender e memorizar as letras das músicas	24		


	Ouvir e cantar musica ajudou-me a ...	23	conhecer novas palavras/frases.
		20	memorizar melhor as palavras/frases.
		22	pronunciar melhor as palavras/frases.
		22	aprender de uma forma divertida.
		20	estar relaxado(a)/contente na aula.
		22	gostar mais de Inglês.

Table 6. Students' perceptions of the use of music: Sequence 3

As for students' perceptions of language learning, almost everyone felt confident with what they had learnt in this lesson sequence, as can be seen in Table 7.




Consigno...	Muito bem	Bem	Não muito bem
			
→ dizer e escrever as divisões da casa	12	10	2
→ dizer e escrever objetos/móveis do quarto	10	11	3
→ usar <i>There is/There are...com objetos/móveis do quarto</i>	12	10	2
→ usar as preposições <i>in e on</i>	14	8	2

Table 7. Students' perceptions of language learning: Sequence 3

3.4 Stage three – Overall evaluation of the project

I planned all my lessons having in mind a clear and logical structure, that I always followed. However, sometimes some activities had to be postponed for the following lesson or I had to readjust them due to external factors or due to aspects that just came along and made me adapt that specific lesson step. But as Robertson C. says about planning on the British Council site *Teaching English*, “don't let the plan dominate – be flexible in your planning so that when the opportunities arise you can go with the flow”. We all have a lesson plan when we teach, but we also need to be flexible,

because there are situations in the classroom, magic surprising moments, that need to be cherished and explored.

As for the students' self-evaluation questionnaire results, it is possible to see a significant evolution in their answers to the first part of the questionnaire which was common to all sequences and focused on their attitudes and behaviours in class. Table 8 presents these results. Generally speaking, all the items are related to students' interest and motivation, and therefore to their engagement and active participation. The total occurrence of their replies in the 3 points of the scale shows that more and more students replied 'yes' from sequence 1 to sequences 2 and 3. One of the reasons for this positive development may be that students got more confident in me as their new teacher, feeling more at ease, knowing my rules and behaviour in the classroom. Another reason could be that they got used to the type of activities and routines I used with them and felt more confident to participate, knowing that there would always be some positive feedback. Still another reason is the fact that they enjoyed using music in class and realised the educational value of music in language learning, and therefore were more engaged. Learning in a playful way may have helped them to enjoy the English lessons more, participating more, being more on task and therefore showing that they were engaged, motivated and interested in the activities.

	Sequência 1			Sequência 2			Sequência 3		
	S	NS	N	S	NS	N	S	NS	N
Respondi às perguntas da professora.	17	6	1	18	6	0	20	4	0
Particpei com interesse nas actividades.	19	4	1	21	3	0	22	2	0
Particpei de forma organizada (levantei o dedo, respondi quando pedido).	14	9	1	15	8	1	19	5	0
Estive atento(a) quando a professora ou os colegas falavam.	20	3	1	20	4	0	21	3	0
Estive atento(a) quando fazia as actividades pedidas.	22	1	1	21	3	0	22	2	0
<i>Total de ocorrências</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>0</i>

S: Sim / NS: Nem Sempre/ N: Não

Table 8. Students' perceptions of their attitudes and behaviours in class: Sequences 1, 2 and 3

As for the students' perceptions of using music activities in class, they were always very positive. When comparing the results in the three sequences (see Table 9) we can see that 21 students enjoyed those activities and the miming/gestures in the first sequence and all of them (24) gave a positive answer in the other two sequences. These results seem to validate the approach I used.

	Sequência 1			Sequência 2			Sequência 3		
	S	NS	N	S	NS	N	S	NS	N
Gostei das atividades com música.	21	2	1	24	0	0	24	0	0
Os gestos usados ajudaram-me a compreender e memorizar as letras das músicas	21	3	0	0	0	0	24	0	0
<i>Total de ocorrências</i>	42	5	1	24	0	0	48	0	0

S: Sim / NS: Nem Sempre/ N: Não

Table 9. Students' perceptions of the use of music: Sequences 1, 2 and 3

Table 10 compares the results regarding the learning value of music as perceived by students in the three sequences, indicating the number of students who replied 'yes' in each item. Results show that, overall, students realised the role of music for learning, memorising and pronouncing new language, and also for learning in a more enjoyable and motivating way.

<i>Ouvir e cantar música ajudou-me a ...</i>	Sequência 1	Sequência 2	Sequência 3
conhecer novas palavras/frases.	23	22	23
memorizar melhor as palavras/frases.	20	21	20
pronunciar melhor as palavras/frases.	19	22	22
aprender de uma forma divertida.	23	21	22
estar relaxado(a)/contente na aula.	23	20	20
gostar mais de Inglês.	21	23	22

Table 10. Students' perceptions of language learning: Sequences 1, 2 and 3

It pleased me to see that students felt this way, as it is something I defend. They enjoyed the music lessons and they came to the conclusion that learning English with music activities is not only more motivating and fun, but also more productive.

Final conclusion

Teaching is a never-ending process. When we finish our teaching degree it is only the beginning. The hard work, the challenges, the uncertainties and all the complex emotions will accompany you from there on. It challenges us to invest and commit fully.

This project was another step in my teacher's path to grow and learn and become a better teacher. Along the way of this action research project, I was able to integrate some of the competences and knowledge I had acquired along my career, but all the investigation and reflection processes made me rethink my teaching methodologies, expand and remake my beliefs and share all my experiences with people I have learnt so much with.

Reflecting on your doing is hard. Everything that seemed fine at the beginning, suddenly needed some calibration. It's like driving my car. It seems fine, it takes me wherever I want it to take me. There are some strange noises sometimes, some wobbles along the way and it really needs a deep cleaning. I can just continue putting some gas, the only thing it really needs to drive me, or I can stop, look at it with a critical eye and decide that to make my car run better I really need to look deeper into it so I can make it run better.

This metaphor is just to show how I felt during the training process and when writing this report. I planned, I performed and then I reflected. And here it comes. When reflecting on all the planning and acting process I came across other ideas, other ways I could have done things and sometimes I had to readjust things. This made me feel that just putting some gas and drive on is easier, definitely, but I learnt so much not only on teaching itself, but also about my identity as a teacher. Stopping, reflecting and analysing is hard work (no mechanical help), but in the end it is rewarding and enriching.

When I had to choose the main topic for this action research project, I had several ideas. Storytelling and using crafts in the classroom were on the list, but music was always my thing! I have been teaching English in primary schools for some time, and I have noticed that with music the whole class was involved. Well, of course some sang and mimed more outgoing than others, but it was the time in my lesson where we only had one voice. Like the Musketeers, "all for one and one for all". So, I decided I wanted to show that music is one of the most powerful tools to engage students in learning a foreign language, in this case English.

Every teacher knows, hopefully, that using playful activities with young learners is a valuable strategy. And ludic activities are not only singing songs, listening and reading stories, playing games, but a good elaborated worksheet can also be ludic to some of our students. Ludic activities are activities that motivate students to learn in a fun way, without being aware they are learning vocabulary, grammar or complicated things when said out loud (like adverbs, prepositions, etc.).

Using music in the classroom is just one of many ways to teach children English in a playful way. I can't claim that music is the best of all the ludic activities to be used in the classroom, but I can say that it can engage students in an active and autonomous way, and I could see that in my project. So, I defend that music should be part of every teacher's strategies, along with all other activities that seduce students to learn in a playful way. This also means that we teachers must share this playful feeling with them. If I am not into it, feeling

motivated and enjoying what I am doing, it is difficult to make my students feel motivated and engaged as well. The teacher's role is very important. I have fun, they have fun, and this leads to learning with fun.

I should have had more classes and more data to come to deeper conclusions, but the project results were very positive as regards my students' engagement through the use of music. I will certainly continue using music as an essential strategy in my teaching, along with other playful activities, and I now feel much better able to reflect on its impact upon students' engagement in learning.

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Self-Determination Theory: <http://www.psych.rochester.edu/SDT/>

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Self-evaluation Questionnaire - Sequence 1



English and I



A **minha** auto-avaliação

Pensa nas nossas aulas e responde às perguntas de acordo com o que pensas e sentes.

→ Indica as tuas respostas com uma cruz (X) em Sim, Nem sempre ou Não.

		Sim	Nem sempre	Não
1.	Respondi às perguntas da professora.			
2.	Particpei com interesse nas atividades			
3.	Particpei de forma organizada (levantei o dedo, respondi quando pedido)			
4.	Estive atento(a) quando a professora ou os colegas falavam			
5.	Estive atento(a) quando fazia as atividades pedidas			
6.	Gostei das actividades com música.			
7.	Os gestos usados ajudaram-me a compreender e memorizar as letras das músicas			

→ Indica uma ou mais respostas com uma cruz (X).

	8.	Ouvir e cantar musica ajudou-me a ...	conhecer novas palavras/frases.
			memorizar melhor as palavras/frases.
			pronunciar melhor as palavras/frases.
			aprender de uma forma divertida.
			estar relaxado(a)/contente na aula.
			gostar mais de Inglês.

→ Indica as tuas respostas com uma cruz (X) em Muito bem, Bem ou Não muito bem e dá exemplos do que já sabes.

9.		Muito bem	Bem	Não muito bem	Escreve 2 exemplos
★	Consigo...				
★	→ dizer e escrever os números de 1-20				
★	→ dizer e escrever as cores				
★	→ usar <i>There is/There are...</i>				
★	→ dizer e escrever lugares na cidade				
★	→ dizer e escrever palavras ligadas ao Natal				

Teacher *Fátima Dias*





English and I

A **minha** auto-avaliação



Pensa nas nossas aulas e responde às perguntas de acordo com o que pensas e sentes.

→ Indica as tuas respostas com uma cruz (X) em Sim, Nem sempre ou Não.

		Sim	Nem sempre	Não
1.	Respondi às perguntas da professora.			
2.	Participei com interesse nas atividades			
3.	Participei de forma organizada (levantei o dedo, respondi quando pedido)			
4.	Estive atento(a) quando a professora ou os colegas falavam			
5.	Estive atento(a) quando fazia as atividades pedidas			
6.	Gostei das actividades com música.			

→ Indica uma ou mais respostas com uma cruz (X).

	7.	Ouvir e cantar musica ajudou-me a ...	conhecer novas palavras/frases.
			memorizar melhor as palavras/frases.
			pronunciar melhor as palavras/frases.
			aprender de uma forma divertida.
			estar relaxado(a)/contente na aula.
			gostar mais de Inglês.

→ Indica as tuas respostas com uma cruz (X) em Muito bem, Bem ou Não muito bem e dá exemplos do que já sabes.

8.		Muito bem	Bem	Não muito bem	Escreve 2 exemplos
★	Consigo...				
★	→ dizer e escrever algumas frutas				
★	→ dizer e escrever alguns animais				
★	→ usar <i>Do you like...? Yes, I do. No, I don't. I like... I don't like</i>				



Teacher *Fátima Dias*



English and I



A **minha** auto-avaliação

Pensa nas nossas aulas e responde às perguntas de acordo com o que pensas e sentes.

→ Indica as tuas respostas com uma cruz (X) em Sim, Nem sempre ou Não.

		Sim	Nem sempre	Não
1.	Respondi às perguntas da professora.			
2.	Particpei com interesse nas atividades			
3.	Particpei de forma organizada (levantei o dedo, respondi quando pedido)			
4.	Estive atento(a) quando a professora ou os colegas falavam			
5.	Estive atento(a) quando fazia as atividades pedidas			
6.	Gostei das actividades com música.			
7.	Os gestos/movimentos usados ajudaram-me a compreender e memorizar as letras das músicas			

→ Indica uma ou mais respostas com uma cruz (X).

	8.	Ouvir e cantar musica ajudou-me a ...	conhecer novas palavras/frases.
			memorizar melhor as palavras/frases.
			pronunciar melhor as palavras/frases.
			aprender de uma forma divertida.
			estar relaxado(a)/contente na aula.
			gostar mais de Inglês.

→ Indica as tuas respostas com uma cruz (X) em Muito bem, Bem ou Não muito bem e dá exemplos do que já sabes.

9.		Muito bem	Bem	Não muito bem	Escreve 2 exemplos
★	Consigo...				
★	→ dizer e escrever as divisões da casa				
★	→ dizer e escrever objetos/móveis do quarto				
★	→ usar There is/There are... com objetos/móveis do quarto				
★	→ usar as preposições in e on				



Teacher *Fatima Dias*

Appendix 4 - Lesson plan - Sequence 1

DIDACTIC SEQUENCE 1						
School	EB1 Nogueira	Teacher	Fatima Dias	Class	4 th grade	
Unit (if applicable)		Lesson/s Date/s	Lesson 2: 4/12/2017			
Theme/Title	Christmas Time					
Project objectives (if applicable)	Students will sing a Christmas song using the vocabulary and gestures they have learnt the previous lesson					
Contents	Grammatical	Lexical	Cultural	Other		
		Christmas vocabulary	Some cultural references	Promote the real meaning of Christmas - love Add Christmas spirit to the lesson		
Competences (knowledge, abilities, attitudes, values)	Communicative Competences (CC)		Learning Competences (LC)			
	CC1: Singing a song, contextualising lexis from previous lesson, putting language items into a meaningful/real context CC2: Expressing feelings and opinions CC3: Understanding a “storyline” in a song CC4: Creating a Christmas message from a model		LC1: Activating a mental image of previous knowledge LC2: Developing memorising skill LC3: Using miming to give meaning to lexis and therefore understand/retain/memorise it better LC4: Reflecting on learning			
Evaluation (if applicable)	Small informal chat at the end of the lesson					
Sequence development (Steps/ CC & LC/ Materials/ Time)	Steps		CC	LC	Materials	Time
	1. <u>Greetings:</u> Hello Song Procedure Teacher and students stand up and sing the <i>Hello</i> chant with gestures. Teacher invites students to put on their Christmas head decoration (Santa hats, Reindeer antlers, etc.) to get into Christmas spirit mode. Stage Aim This is the stage (a routine activity), where students start speaking in English again (since last lesson, there was probably no other contact to the English language). So, singing the <i>Hello chant</i> helps students getting back to English mode, using the language again, knowing now it’s time for English. Skill developed <i>Speaking</i>		2	1		3 min
2. <u>Warm up:</u> Listening to different Christmas songs Procedure Teacher sticks a flashcard on the board, where several Christmas characters are singing, to elicit from the students what they are going to do today – sing a song.		1 2	1		10 min	

	<p>Teacher tells students that they are going to listen to 4 songs and they have to guess which one they are going to sing that day; small conversation of not only the difference of music (sound/rhythm) and language in a song sung around the world, but as well as the importance of knowing that Christmas is celebrated everywhere.</p> <p>Stage Aim To introduce the song “Christmas time is here again”; to make students be aware that Christmas songs are sung all around the world/Christmas is celebrated everywhere; to be aware of the English language in general, when confronted with other languages; arising expectations.</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Listening</i> <i>Speaking</i></p>			Board Mp3/mobile phone	
	<p>3. Presentation: Sing & Mime</p> <p>Procedure Teacher tells students that she is going to sing the first time and that they can join in by doing the gestures. Teacher plays the song at least two more times (till teacher feels that students are at ease and feeling that they can do it “almost” alone), asking students now to sing along while doing the gestures as well.</p> <p>Stage Aim The target language, Christmas vocabulary, is now being integrated/activated in a song, a real context; singing all together gives all students the possibility not only to shine and feel success, as for the shy ones this is an opportunity to feel integrated without being exposed.</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Listening & Speaking</i></p>	1 2	1 2 3	Mp3/mobile phone	10min
	<p>4. Practice 1: Organising song with story cards</p> <p>Procedure Teacher sticks randomly 5 story cards on the board and asks students to put them in the correct order, according to the song. Teacher checks their answers by playing the song again, pausing at the corresponding “story line” of the song.</p> <p>Stage Aim Students will be aware of a storyline in a song; they will recognise parts of the song with already practiced lexis/gestures and therefore contextualizing it</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Listening & Speaking</i></p>	1 3	1 2 3 4	Flashcards Board	10 min
	<p>5. Presentation: Christmas Card Writing</p> <p>Procedure Teacher asks students what will happen next in the “story” of the song, eliciting that present will be delivered to the children around the world.</p>	1 2 4		Card Template Board Mp3	15 min

	<p>Teacher tells students that she has already received her first present and takes out from the last story card a Christmas card, that was hidden behind.</p> <p>Teacher reads the message on the card to the students and tells them that they will also have the possibility do give a Christmas card as a present to someone.</p> <p>Teacher asks students to help her write the message on the board, following the structure of a postcard with a beginning, middle, ending part (To/From: Dear _____, Message; Love ____).</p> <p>Teacher tells students that they can choose between 4 different cards (snowman, Santa, angel and reindeer) to write the _Christmas message and give it as a present to someone they love, but before they start colouring they need to write the message first.</p> <p>Students choose their favourite card and write and colour it. They can use felt pens and share materials with peers.</p> <p>While working on their cards, Christmas music will be played in the background</p> <p>Teacher asks them to hand them in after finishing colouring (there will be a surprise next lesson: teacher will put a ribbon on it and display them on a Christmas tree)</p> <p>Stage Aim Students will review/expand the structure of writing a card; having fun “creating” a present for someone else, giving meaning to the real Christmas spirit – a simple gesture of love</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Writing & Speaking</i></p>				
	<p>6. Consolidation: <i>Singing Christmas song</i></p> <p>Procedure If there is time, teacher and students sing the Christmas song again, this time displaying students in the classroom in a different way</p> <p>Stage Aim Students end the lesson with a feeling of achievement</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Listening & Speaking</i></p>	1		Mp3	5 min
	<p>7. Self-evaluation</p> <p>Procedure Students will reflect on the lesson, saying what they liked best/what they have learnt. Here the L1 will also be used, so they can express themselves better.</p> <p>Stage Aim Students reflect on their learning</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Listening & Speaking</i></p>	2	4		5 min

Appendix 5 - Lesson plan - Sequence 2

DIDACTIC SEQUENCE 2						
School	EB1 Nogueira	Teacher	Fatima Dias	Class	4 th grade	
Unit (if applicable)		Lesson/s Date/s	Lesson 5: 12/01/2018			
Theme/Title	I love fruit!					
Project objectives (if applicable)	Students will create their own verses of a song, guided by teacher's templates.					
Contents	Grammatical	Lexical	Cultural	Other		
	Sentence structures: Do you like...? Yes, I do. / No, I don't., I like.../ I don't like...	Vocabulary: Fruits and Animals				
Competences (knowledge, abilities, attitudes, values)	Communicative Competences (CC)			Learning Competences (LC)		
	CC1: Singing a song, contextualising lexis, putting language items into a meaningful/real context CC2: Showing preferences, opinions, feelings CC3: Reviewing/expanding language chunks (<i>Do you like...? Yes, I do. I like.../ No, I don't. I don't like...</i>) CC4: Reading information (Word cards and sentence word cards) CC5: Developing social skills of interaction, working in small groups CC6: Creating/composing verses for a song, following a model			LC1: Activating a mental image of the topic based on previous knowledge LC2: Developing cooperative learning LC3: Reflecting on learning		
Evaluation (if applicable)	Small informal chat at the end of the lesson					
Sequence development (Steps/ CC & LC/ Materials/ Time)	Steps		CC	LC	Materials	Time
	8. Greetings: Hello Song Procedure Teacher and students stand up and sing the <i>Hello</i> chant with gestures. Stage Aim This is the stage (a routine activity), where students start speaking in English again (since last lesson, there was probably no other contact to the English language). So, singing the <i>Hello chant</i> helps students getting back to English mode, using the language again, knowing now it's time for English. Skill developed <i>Speaking</i>			1		5 min

	<p>9. Warm up: What are we doing today?</p> <p>Procedure Teacher affixes on the board a sign saying “In our lesson today we will...” and starts to list underneath one by one the activities and picture cards they will be doing that lesson: game time, team work and let’s sing. Every picture card has a small quote that will shortly discussed with students, to show them the importance of playing, working in a group and singing</p> <p>Stage Aim Arising expectations and letting students know what to expect from the lesson, without eliminating the surprise factor. Small reflection time on important aspects as being a child (as well as adults).</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Listening & Speaking</i></p>	2	1	Picture Cards Board	5 min
<p>10. Presentation 1 & Practice: Let’s match!</p> <p>Procedure Teacher asks students if they remember the story from last lesson and challenges them to remember the correct order of the sequences in the story, which animal took which fruit.</p> <p>Together they do the matching game on the board, following the right order of the story and repeating the sentence structure “The ...(animal) took the ...(fruit), till all animal and fruit flashcards are organized correctly.</p> <p>Stage Aim Review vocabulary and learning a new sentence structure at the same time.</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Listening & Speaking</i></p>	1 4	1	Board Picture/Word Cards	10 min	
<p>11. Presentation 2: I like bananas!</p> <p>Procedure Teacher points to the monkey and says “The monkey likes bananas.” And asks random students the question “Do you like bananas? Eliciting the answer “Yes, I do. I like bananas” or “No, I don’t. I don’t like bananas”</p> <p>Teacher affixes on the board a I like Smiley and a I don’t like Smiley and with the help of the students sticks in the appropriate place sentence word cards (I like smiley - Do you like ...? Yes, I do. I like.../I don’t like Smiley – Do you like...? No, I don’t. I don’t like...) using <i>bananas</i> as an example. Teacher refers to the difference of <i>banana</i>, singular and <i>bananas</i>, plural.</p> <p>At the end there are two separate columns, one positive and another one negative.</p> <p>Teacher sings the two verses first (using bananas) and then asks students to join in.</p> <p>The sentence word card “What about you?” is added (twice) on the board, to complete the lyrics of the upcoming song.</p> <p>Stage Aim Learning new sentence structures.</p>	1 2 3 4		Yummy/Yuck Smiley Sentence word cards Board	5 min	

	<p>Skill developed Listening & Speaking</p>				
	<p>Practice 2: Let's compose!</p> <p>Procedure Teacher tells students that today they are going to write verses for the song. Teacher makes groups of four students and asks them to choose an animal from the story to name their group (monkey, ostrich, zebra, elephant, giraffe, antelope, parrot, goat) handing them then the chosen animal flashcard.</p> <p>Teacher explains that they will get a worksheet (showing them at the same time), where they have to write two verses (a yummy and a yuck verse), following the sentence structure on the board. They can choose a fruit to complete the sentences.</p> <p>Stage Aim Practicing learnt vocabulary and new sentence structures by composing verses for a song they have chosen the previous lesson (They had to choose between "Ó Laurindinha" and "Frère Jacques" tune. They chose "Ó Laurindinha")</p> <p>Working in small groups, sharing and creating as a unit.</p> <p>Skill developed Listening & Speaking & Reading & Writing</p>	1 2 3 4 5 6	2	Worksheet	5 min
	<p>12. Consolidation: Let's sing!</p> <p>Procedure Teacher tells students that now they are going to sing their verses as being part of a new song, created by them. Each group sings its part following right away by the other groups as being one song.</p> <p>Stage Aim Showing what they have accomplished and learnt.</p> <p>Skill developed Listening & Speaking & Reading</p>	1 3 4 5	2		20 min
	<p>13. Self-evaluation</p> <p>Procedure Students will reflect on the lesson, saying what they liked best/what they have learnt. Here the L1 will also be used, so they can express themselves better.</p> <p>Stage Aim Students reflect on their learning</p> <p>Skill developed Listening & Speaking</p>	2	3		5 min
	<p>14. Goodbye Song</p> <p>Procedure Teacher and students stand up and sing the Goodbye chant with gestures.</p> <p>Skill developed Speaking</p>		1		5 min

Appendix 6 - Lesson plan - Sequence 3

DIDACTIC SEQUENCE 3					
School	EB1 Nogueira	Teacher	Fatima Dias	Class	4 th grade
Unit (if applicable)		Lesson/s Date/s	Lesson 9: 26/01/2018		
Theme/Title	Home sweet home!				
Project objectives (if applicable)	Singing a song using movement and miming (TPR) Students will fill in a questionnaire to develop their self-evaluation ability				
Contents	Grammatical	Lexical	Cultural	Other	
	Prepositions of place: in, on and under	Vocabulary: objects/furniture			
Competences (knowledge, abilities, attitudes, values)	Communicative Competences (CC)			Learning Competences (LC)	
	CC1: Learning prepositions of place : <i>in, on and under</i> CC2: Showing preferences, opinions, feelings CC3: Singing a song, contextualising lexis, putting language items into a meaningful/real context CC4: Reviewing/expanding vocabulary (objects/furniture) and language chunks (Where's the...? <i>The...is in the...</i>) CC5: Being creative, drawing the "lyrics" of a song			LC1: Activating a mental image of the topic based on previous knowledge LC2: Using miming/physical movements (TPR) to give meaning to lexis and therefore understand/retain/memorise it better LC3: Transferring knowledge by singing a song LC4: Reflecting on learning	
Evaluation (if applicable)	Answering some questions on a questionnaire				
Sequence development (Steps/ CC & LC/ Materials/ Time)	Steps	CC	LC	Materials	Time
	15. Greetings: Hello Song Procedure Teacher and students stand up and sing the <i>Hello</i> chant with gestures (and if they want they sing other songs as well) Stage Aim This is the stage (a routine activity), where students start speaking in English again (since last lesson, there was probably no other contact to the English language). So, singing the <i>Hello chant</i> helps students getting back to English mode, using the language again, knowing now it's time for English. Skill developed <i>Speaking</i>		1		3 min
16. Warm up: What are we doing today? Procedure Teacher affixes on the board a sign saying "In our lesson today we will..." and starts to list underneath one by one the activities and picture cards they will be doing				Picture Cards Board	5 min

	<p>that lesson: game time, let's sing and being creative. Every picture card has a small quote that will shortly discussed with students, to show them the importance of playing, singing and being creative.</p> <p>Stage Aim Arising expectations and letting students know what to expect from the lesson, without eliminating the surprise factor. Small reflection time on important aspects as being a child (as well as adults) and consequently developing critical thinking.</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Listening & Speaking</i></p>	2	1 4		
	<p>17. Presentation and practice 1: <i>Where's the spider?</i></p> <p>Procedure Teacher sticks some flashcards on the board (spider, box, chair, table, carpet), vocabulary related to the song "The spider's in the box" that will be sung afterwards and elicits repetition of vocabulary.</p> <p>Teacher starts by drawing a floor on the board and sticks the carpet flashcard on it, saying "The carpet is on the floor". Students repeat.</p> <p>This procedure will be repeated till the "lyrics" of the song are represented on the board and repeated by students (<i>The spider's in the box, the box is on the chair, the chair's on the carpet, etc.</i>).</p> <p>Teacher adds some more furniture templates and asks students to say where the spider is (prepositions <i>in and on</i>) guiding them to the <i>preposition under</i>.</p> <p>Teacher asks students to close their eyes and hides the spider (in or under). Students guess where the spider is.</p> <p>Stage Aim Introducing new target language and activating already known lexis; interactive chorus drilling of new or activated lexis. Miming as well to help them memorizing/retaining new lexis better, as well as to prepare them for the upcoming song.</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Listening & Speaking</i></p>	1 4	1 2	<p>Picture Flashcards</p> <p>Furniture 3d templates</p> <p>Board</p>	15 min
	<p>18. Practice 3: Let's sing!</p> <p>Procedure Teacher tells students that now they are going to sing "The spider's in the box" song.</p> <p>Teacher explains that for this song they will need to do some special movements (sitting down, standing up, hands on the table) and some miming as well. Teacher shows them the movements and miming for the song, singing a Capella.</p> <p>Then she plays the song and invites students to join in</p>	1 3 4	1 2 3	Mp3	10 min

	<p>with movement and miming.</p> <p>They sing the song several times.</p> <p>Stage Aim The target language, objects/furniture and prepositions of place, are now being integrated/activated in a song, a real context; singing all together gives all students the possibility not only to shine and feel success, as for the shy ones this is an opportunity to feel integrated without being exposed, reducing therefore student inhibition. TPR is also a way to link speech and action and so improve language and vocabulary learning.</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Listening & Speaking</i></p>				
	<p>19. Consolidation: Let's be creative!</p> <p>Procedure Teacher asks students if they liked the song and tells them that now is time to be creative</p> <p>A worksheet will be handed out, where they have to draw the lyrics of the song, remembering it</p> <p>The best drawing (students will vote for it) will be the cover of the music Cd they will record next lesson.</p> <p>Stage Aim Time to be creative and let students express themselves through Art. Activating their memorizing skills, remembering the lyrics of the song and therefore, contextualizing lexis and sentence structures. Developing their motor skills and learning how to make choices/decisions.</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Speaking</i></p>	2 5	1	Worksheet	15 min
	<p>20. Self-evaluation</p> <p>Procedure Students will answer some questions on a questionnaire to develop their self-evaluation ability and if there is time a small chat about their Christmas wishes.</p> <p>Stage Aim Students reflect on their learning; this questionnaire will help evaluate gains and limitations of using music in the classroom</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Listening & Reading & Writing</i></p>	2	1 4	Questionnaire	10 min
	<p>21. Goodbye Song</p> <p>Procedure Teacher and students stand up and sing the Goodbye chant with gestures.</p> <p>Skill developed <i>Speaking</i></p>		1		2 min

