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Research project

"How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?"

Relatório de estágio

Mestrado em "Ensino de Inglês no primeiro Ciclo do Ensino Básico"

Versão corrigida e melhorada após defesa pública

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Relatório de estágio apresentado para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Mestre em Ensino de Inglês de 1º Ciclo do Ensino Básico, na Faculdade Nova de Lisboa e sob supervisão científica da Professora Doutora Sandie Mourão e do Professor Doutor Carlos Ceia.

Dedication

To my husband, my daughter and my son, who supported and inspired me during the implementation of this project and to my family and closest friends who encouraged me to keep going, even in the hardest moments.

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I thank the students who participated in this study, showing engagement and commitment in the activities I asked them to perform, with whom I learnt so much.

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Abstract

Keywords: young learners, English as a foreign language, storytelling, teacher-as-mediator

As part of my master's degree practicum in teaching English in primary school, I undertook a small-scale action-research around the use of stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning. This study was implemented from September to December 2019, with a 4th-grade class in a primary school in Sintra, Portugal. The project consisted of implementing a storytelling methodology in which the core of each learning sequence was an adapted story, with the aim of providing real, meaningful, engaging and enjoyable language exposure and opportunities for learning. This study addressed the main question: "How do I use stories in English primary education as a vehicle for learning?" I attempted to determine: how to select and adapt stories that could respond to learners' needs and support their learning; how to successfully plan an entire sequence of learning around a story without using the coursebook; and which storytelling skills I should develop in order to successfully tell a story.

My results highlighted the importance of the teacher's role as storyteller to support students' learning through stories, prompting their participation during storytelling events, role plays and related activities, motivating them towards literacy and language learning, but also as a mediator, raising their awareness regarding their own learning process.

Furthermore, I believe, the results have shown that it is possible to implement a story-based methodology, using stories as a vehicle for English learning, improving my learners' skills and learner autonomy. Moreover, the findings suggest that learners were able to achieve the predicted goals and learning through stories, through the introduction of consistent and carefully planned sequences of learning based around stories, as shown by their performance in class and the results in the termly test. Finally, it was shown that the activities related to the story are fundamental to provide repetitive and supportive opportunities for language learning.

Resumo

Palavras-chave: *young learners*, Inglês como língua estrangeira, *storytelling*, professor como mediador

Como parte do meu mestrado em Ensino de Inglês de 1º ciclo, foi conduzido um pequeno estudo de pesquisa-ação e projeto de sala de aula, centrado no uso de histórias no contexto do ensino de Inglês de 1º ciclo como veículo de aprendizagem. O estudo foi introduzido em setembro de 2019 e foi desenvolvido ao longo do 1º período, numa turma de 4º ano, numa escola do 1º ciclo em Sintra, Portugal. Este projeto consistiu na implementação de uma metodologia baseada no conto de histórias, na qual o núcleo central de cada sequência de aprendizagem era uma história adaptada, com o intuito de proporcionar exposição significativa, motivante e aprazível à linguagem e oportunidades de aprendizagem. Este estudo aborda a questão nuclear: "Como posso usar histórias no ensino de Inglês de 1º ciclo como veículo para a aprendizagem". De forma a obter algumas respostas a esta questão, os objetivos traçados consistiam em: determinar como selecionar e adaptar histórias que respondessem às necessidades dos aprendentes, apoiando a sua aprendizagem, ajustando-se ao currículo, como planear com sucesso uma sequência de aprendizagem em torno de uma história, sem recorrer ao manual adotado e também quais as capacidades mais relevantes como *storyteller* para tornar a minha performance bem-sucedida focando a aprendizagem sustentada da língua Inglesa.

Este estudo evidenciou a importância do papel do professor como *storyteller*, na aprendizagem da Língua Inglesa baseada nesta metodologia, estimulando a sua participação durante os momentos de *storytelling*, dramatizações das mesmas e atividades relacionadas, mas também propiciando oportunidades para a consciencialização acerca da sua aprendizagem, através das suas intervenções nas discussões de turma, incentivando a partilha de ideias e pensamentos com a turma, mas também motivando-os para a literacia e aprendizagem da língua.

Penso que os resultados mostram que é possível implementar uma metodologia baseada em histórias, usando histórias como veículo para a aprendizagem da Língua Inglesa, o aperfeiçoamento das suas competências e a autonomia dos aprendentes. Os resultados sugerem ainda, que os aprendentes conseguiram atingir os objetivos previstos,

aprendendo através de histórias, através da introdução de sequências de aprendizagem cuidadosa e consistentemente planeadas em torno de histórias, como demonstrado pelo seu desempenho nas aulas e nos resultados dos testes. Por fim, penso que foi demonstrado que as atividades relacionadas com as histórias, são fundamentais para proporcionar oportunidades de aprendizagem que permitam a consolidação dos conteúdos abordados.

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Introduction

Background of this study

The approach to a second language learning in primary education must be motivating, engaging and easily understandable. The focus should be on communication, providing the learners with plenty of opportunities to recognize, practice and reproduce the target language, through activities based on listening and speaking skills. Stories in particular provide meaningful and engaging exposure to real language, as well as being supportive of children's learning they contribute to developing their linguistic, social, personal and emotional skills.

My history with stories

As long as I can remember, I have loved reading and telling stories, especially children's stories. I used to make up bedtime stories for my younger sister when she struggled to fall asleep, improvising on the ideas she gave me for characters and a plot. Later, I created an animated short story, a fairy tale, for my wedding invitation, and more recently, I have written and made animation videos in story form for my children's birthday party invitations.

As a teacher of English in primary school, I have frequently included stories in my lessons. I used to read stories aloud, adapting the vocabulary and structures as I was reading, every time I thought that the language was not appropriate to my pupils' language level. Furthermore, I have told stories to my pupils, such as the traditional story "*The Great Big Enormous Turnip"* or based on the picturebook *"The Very Hungry Caterpillar"* (Carle, 1969), using props – usually laminated images stuck on the board, but I did not make the best of these stories, using the story as one disconnected piece in a long-term plan around a specific topic. I have even written a few short stories around the language I wanted to teach, after being unable to find a story that was suitable for some of my lessons. Only now do I understand why those stories were not as good as they could have been. I focused only on language, forgetting about the importance of the visuals to support meaning or engaging my audience, or I tried to write them based on stories that had complex narratives, with no repetition and not paying enough attention to the vocabulary and structures present in the story.

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For many years I ignored the true potential of stories inside the English classroom. It never crossed my mind to use a story to plan an entire learning sequence, structuring the activities and pupils' learning around it. I used stories as stories only, as a single activity with no purpose, context or connection across the learning sequence.

Aims of the study

What I intend to do in this study is to use oral storytelling, and adapt stories to cover the contents established in '*Metas Curriculares de Inglês no 1º ciclo do Ensino Básico*' (Bravo, Cravo & Duarte, 2015), which are not present in the coursebook that was used in the school I was teaching in. I also want to understand how to be a better storyteller, providing the best possible experience for my pupils, engaging them in the plot, motivating them to learn English and fostering a positive language learning experience. My intention is to select and adapt stories, to convey language learning goals, to design learning sequences that provide meaningful and supportive opportunities to learn English, and develop learners' language, social and behavioural skills.

Chapter I: Literature Review

I.1 Introduction

Language learning has changed over time and has evolved considerably since Garvie (1990) pointed out, thirty years ago, that there had been a switch of emphasis from the old conception of language learning, seen as the mastery of a set of structures to an open-minded vision of language as essentially a tool to communicate. The results of this paradigm shift are evident now, inside our classrooms.

Along with this idea comes the necessity to plan well-structured and adapted sequences of learning that fit the syllabus requirements and also students' needs, interests and limitations/possibilities. Restrictions or benefits in the physical space where the lessons are going to take place, resources and materials available to the teacher and their own methodologies, weaknesses and strengths need to be borne in mind to provide the best possible learning experience to the learners (Halliwell, 1992).

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The teacher's role is much more than providing learners with a set of linguistic rules, words or structures to reproduce and know by heart. A teacher should get to know their learners, using available resources, their own experience and learners' abilities, to plan, adapt, analyse, rethink and get back to the plan in order to provide the best learning experience for their learners, enabling each learner to fully make the best of their learning abilities and making the best use of all their potential of learning.

Exposure to authentic language is fundamental. As Garvie (1990, p. 4), stated, "the authentic text is essential, either spoken or written", and stories are a very versatile tool to introduce authentic language in the primary English classroom. As will be shown later in this report, stories may be read or told, presenting both benefits and disadvantages in a primary English class. The adaptability and flexibility that telling a story brings to a learning context is remarkable and is very supportive of learning, but also of teaching (Garvie, 1990).

This review will address the use of adapted stories and related activities in a primary English teaching context, highlighting the benefits of including storytelling in a learning sequence.

I.2 Using stories in primary English education

"Stories often hold a strange and magical quality that can interest and engage learners in a way that few other materials and methods have."

(Knagg in Ellis and Brewster 2014, p. 2)

There are several reasons to include stories in primary English education, regarding not only language learning, but also regarding behaviour, attitudes, social interaction, and personal development, opening horizons and supporting the construction of their world. A story may establish a connection between the topics which need to be covered, providing a tool that can be used in a versatile way, that can adapt to the syllabus, students' needs and abilities and their learning improvement (Garvie, 1990).

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Considering language learning, stories offer a natural, meaningful and enjoyable setting for language exposure. They provide it in the form of language chunks, which are easier to memorize and reproduce, as well as exposing pupils to different sounds and intonation, which help children make linguistic connections and provide opportunities for children to become familiar with the English language (Bland, 2019; Ellis and Brewster, 2014; Garvie, 1990; Mourão, 2015; Read, 2014; Wright, 2019). As such, stories, when appropriate to the language level and to the required objectives, can be motivating and support comprehension and learning (Ghosn, 2013).

Wright (2009) suggests that stories provide children with opportunities to be exposed to the target language without necessarily being asked to produce it. But they are able to store language for future use; this way the language will not be new for them, giving them confidence later to have a go and join in. Stories also engage children because, usually, they love them. It results in them not feeling excluded by the foreign language, in the sense that they are able to convey meaning and can participate according to their abilities, improving their skills and autonomy.

I.3 Story selection

A story that does not fit students' language level may be more harmful than supportive, but also the content covered in the story must be adequate to the topic and target language that are the objectives of the syllabus. Read (2007, p. 114) highlights the importance of choosing a story that is suitable for the pupils, making sure "(…) that the content is relevant, interesting, appealing and memorable and, if the story is illustrated, that the visuals are clear and attractive and will support children's understanding". Furthermore, the materials and activities that support learning provided by the story selected must be carefully structured and applied in the classroom.

The whole learning sequence must flow naturally to provide meaningful, interesting and appropriate opportunities for learning.

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According to Ghosn (2002), there are four main criteria for selecting a story in a language learning context:

1) Theme – this should be universal so that every child can identify with it;

2) Storyline – this should be clear and simple with a satisfactory ending;

3) Language – this should be entertaining with predictable repetition that reinforces memorization (…).

4) Visuals – (if used) these must bear the meaning that the story tries to convey, supporting language clearly and meaningfully.

I.4 Story adaptation

Garvie (1990) states that the plot of an adapted story must be motivating, stimulating and enjoyable. The story must provide comprehensible input to the learners, allowing them to anticipate and make predictions. However, when adapting a story, there is the risk of simplifying or changing too much and losing part of its meaning or magic. On the other hand, if the children cannot follow the plot and understand the story, that magic is lost anyway (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). In this sense, the adaptation should be very well planned and structured, so that the main ideas and the rich vocabulary are not lost, as well as the interest that the story arouses in children.

Ellis & Brewster (2014) present a list of guidelines for adapting a story; the ones I consider most important for my project are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Guidelines to adapt a story (Adapted from Ellis & Brewster, 2014, p. 17)

Guidelines	Adapt
Check unfamiliar or hard content, words or sentences	If necessary, adapt the vocabulary
Check for idioms	If necessary, make it clearer
Check clarity	If necessary, provide examples
Check tenses	If necessary, simplify
Check the use of structures	If necessary, simplify
Check word order	If confusing, change order to a common one
Check the sentence length and complexity	If confusing, remove sentences or simplify

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The authenticity of the language present in the story should be preserved, otherwise its understanding may be compromised. If the language meaning cannot be achieved by the listeners through the context, the use of supportive visuals, gestures or even translation, then adaptations should be made, but only those necessary to make the plot understandable (Wright, 2009). A story can be adapted to convey the goals established by the teacher or the syllabus by adding some vocabulary to the plot, for example if a story contains the prepositions 'in' and 'on', the teacher may include 'under', 'behind', 'in front of' etc. to include the vocabulary that should be covered according to the syllabus (Garvie, 1990).

I.5 Activities around a story

Stories afford amazing potential for a primary English context but creating a learning sequence around a story multiplies the richness of this potential. Activities based around a story, as well as the materials used, can support understanding, fostering learning and helping to memorize some of the language present in the story.

Gatbonton & Segalowitz (2005) state that story-based activities that recreate real-life situations, such as drama, role plays, and reflections may be easier to remember in a real-life context than the drills present in many coursebooks. These story-based activities help foster learning, developing language skills and learner autonomy.

The activities in a primary English classroom should be easily understandable so the children know how to respond to them and achievable but stimulating – they should be slightly above the children's language level, in order to progress in learning, but not too difficult so that the children are able to achieve the goals (Phillips, 1993). Oral-based and written activities must be wisely and moderately introduced and always carefully scaffolded, because the children are still learning their own languages. Phillips (ibid) claims that total physical response activities, songs, games, repetitive stories and simple repetitive speaking activities, should be present in the curriculum, regarding young learners' language learning. Repetition is crucial in supporting learning and memorization, not only around stories and speaking activities, but in all kinds of

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activities. This repetition helps children to better understand what they are expected to do and supports autonomy and self-confidence. On the other hand, doing exactly the same thing over and over again may be demotivating and tedious. A half-way solution, including repeating some activities with slight changes, so the children still understand the activity but maintain engaged and motivated is a possible solution. It is important to bear in mind that the activities must be focused on the learners; for that reason, they must be adapted to each group, providing extra support or slight adaptations for some students if necessary.

Halliwell (1992) also argues for variety in English lessons in primary school. However, she highlights the importance of keeping the lesson simple and clear regarding the language used. A teacher should not use many different topics in the same lesson, but rather maintain the same topic and vary the proposed activities. Halliwell points out that the activities can and should be reused in different situations and topics as it is helpful to the learners and to the teachers. It makes the most of teacher's time and work, and provides learners with clearer and understandable activities, in the sense that they already know how it works so they will be able to respond efficiently to what is being asked of them.

Reflections and discussions related to the stories during, pre- and post-storytelling, are supportive of students' metacognitive awareness, helping them to understand not only the plot, but also the way they learn. This awareness provides students with opportunities to improve their autonomy and their learning methods (Ellis & Ibrahim, 2016). Reflections about stories may be extremely useful, allowing the learners to share their thoughts and ideas about the story, reflecting on their and other learners' perspectives (Ghosn, 2013). Reinforcing the idea stated before, stories can raise some important questions about citizenship and tolerance.

I.6 Storytelling and storytellers

According to Ellis and Brewster (2014, p. 25), in order to tell a story with confidence and to provide a good experience for the listeners, the following preparations are essential:
- to be familiar with the story, so that it comes out naturally and expressively;
- to think about how to present the story and what to call the listeners' attention to;

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- to check the meaning of unknown words, and select what you will adapt and check any details you are not sure about;
- to listen to the story elsewhere (e.g. online) to boost your confidence, checking the pronunciation, sentence stress, intonation patterns, rhythm and storytelling techniques;
- to decide where to pause and plan what to say about illustrations.

Children build meaning through "(…) visuals, mime, gesture, voice and characterization, and children also develop learning strategies and thinking skills, such as predicting, hypothesizing, guessing and inferring meaning" (Read, 2007 p. 14). The visuals/materials used to tell a story are as important as the plot. They must be clear, engaging and memorable, contributing to an understanding of the story, to support learning and memorize the language. On the other hand, the storyteller's skills are crucial in engaging the audience, conveying meaning and supporting learning as well. Body posture, mime, gestures, characterization, good use of voice, confidence and fluency of the storyteller help to provide a meaningful, engaging and supportive learning experience for the children.

I.7 Telling vs reading stories

Reading a story aloud is easier for the storyteller, in the sense that they do not have to master the plot or prepare visuals or materials to tell the story. However, telling a story may be more flexible and adaptable to the audience, to the context and to the established aims: "Oral storytelling is flexible and can and should be moulded to the particular audience" (Bland, 2019, p. 186). Telling a story provides a completely different experience for the listener, in the sense that it is possible to better adapt the event to the context and to the listeners, responding to their expectations, needs and abilities.

Wright (2009) lists the positive and negative points regarding storytelling and reading a story aloud (see

Figure 2). Some of the major benefits of telling a story are the level of adaptation it allows the teacher to make, regarding the audience's needs and expectations, and the language to be covered that can be selected and adapted to the plan and during the storytelling

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moment, responding to learners' reactions, doubts, or other factors that may influence the success of such an activity.

Figure 2 – Telling vs reading aloud: strengths and weaknesses (based on Wright, 2009, p. 14, 15)

	Reading aloud	**Telling**
Strengths	• No need to learn the story by heart; • No worries about making mistakes in English; • The children always hear exactly the same story; • Develops emergent reading skills in younger children; • The children can borrow the book afterwards for book browsing; • Pictures in the book can help understanding of the narrative.	• The storyteller gives something very personal to the listener; • It is a powerful experience for the listener; • It is easier to understand a story which is told rather than read; • The storyteller can adapt their performance to the audience; • The storyteller can make a better use of their body and gestures to convey meaning; • The language can be carefully selected or adapted; • The children participate more often; • The storyteller's role is richer; they can adapt and share.
Weaknesses	• The storyteller needs to read clearly and with pauses; • It is easy to get distracted in reading the book and forget about the listener.	• The storyteller must know the story very well; • The storyteller might make mistakes in English; • The storyteller may need to create visuals or use props to tell the story.

The flexibility of the visuals/materials can also be very useful when telling a story, in the sense that it opens up new possibilities to the storyteller, who may use their imagination and many different resources, body language and facial expressions, among many other adaptions, to improve the clarity and comprehension of the message. Furthermore, student participation may occur more often, supporting their learning but also helping them to feel more confident and motivated, as they may feel part of the storytelling moment. On the other hand, the storyteller must know the story plot well enough in order to tell it instead of reading it, which is not the case in the first telling of the story, but during the repetition of the story, the storyteller will improve their performance. A risk the storyteller takes is making mistakes in their English, and for that reason extra attention should be given during the adaptation process, as well as when memorizing the plot, thus decreasing the possibility of making mistakes that may jeopardize the students' learning of correct English language forms.

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Wright (2005) also claims that a storyteller does not need to remember the story word by word as that way it would seem artificial; instead, the storyteller should focus on learning the gist of the story and bringing it to life. However, repetition in a story is relevant as regards the learning process, and for that reason, in my opinion, key language should be repetitive and told exactly the same way whenever possible, providing the students with plenty of opportunities to encounter the language, supporting acquisition.

Ellis and Brewster (2014, p. 25) suggest that "the challenge of any storyteller is to maintain the listener's interest and attention". In this sense, the storyteller must engage the learners, providing them with supportive and meaningful opportunities to learn and motivate them, not only fostering their will to learn, but also helping them to love stories (Ellis, 2016). In order to set the right mood, Wright (2009) proposes that the teacher brings the learners closer, puts on some music, writes a special sentence on the board, uses an object, or do something else that may mark storytelling time to "put [the learners] into the right frame of mind" (p. 19).

I.8 Conclusions

In a primary English classroom, it is extremely important to provide meaningful, motivating activities so that the learners may improve their learning and language skills in a relaxed and natural way. Comprehensible, meaningful, contextualized and interesting input is very important in this context, so children need to first listen to later produce the language to make it their own. Stories provide motivating, meaningful, real-life language in an engaging and supportive way, so that learners may fall in love with the language and improve their linguistic and social skills, as well as their attitudes towards English and others.

The success of a storytelling event is dependent on the selection of the story, the storyteller's performance and their ability to set a proper scenario and select materials, resources and activities. But it also depends on their ability as a storyteller to bring the story alive and make it magical.

In order to provide meaningful and learning-supportive experiences, stories should be adapted, considering the target topics in the syllabus, the inclusion of language previously taught in class, and contain plenty of repetition (vocabulary and structures – chunks of language) in order to help the children memorize language and successfully reproduce it. The adaptation of stories allows the teacher not only to fit the language to the needs of

the leaners and the established curriculum/syllabus goals, but also to prepare materials to accompany the telling of the story and to support the children's language and development through the related activities.

For the purpose of better understanding how to include stories in my teaching, I will try to answer some questions regarding the use of stories in primary English education. Taking "How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?" as the main question, I will also try to answer the following questions:

"How do I select and adapt a story for use in the YL classroom?"

"How can I best devise a sequence of learning activities around a story?"

"What storytelling skills do I need to develop to do this successfully?"

In the next section, the methodology used in the implementation of this action research project will be described.

Chapter II: Action Research

Action research, according to Burns (2010, p. 13), is classroom-based research, in which the teacher explores and investigates their own teaching context. The teacher selects an area that raises some questions that he/she feels could be improved by questioning it and trying to draw some conclusions to develop new ideas and procedures. In order to develop such a research project, the teacher must be systematic, self-reflective and critical about their practice.

Taking the importance and potential of using stories in English learning in primary education into consideration and considering my perceived limitations in this area, I decided to focus on the use of stories as a learning tool, to support and improve my students' learning.

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II.1 Context

In this section the context will be addressed, referring to the students' socio-economic background, the parents' perspectives regarding their children's learning and the classroom materials and resources.

II.1.1 The students

The participants were a group of 26 children (15 boys and 11 girls) in a grade 4 class. They were aged between 8 and 10 years old and attended a public school belonging to a school cluster in the Sintra, in an area with a low socio-economic level. The children had English twice a week for one hour in the afternoon, and most of them had started learning English in the first grade. There were three students with special educational needs in the class.

Many of the students showed a lack of interest towards school and could be described at the beginning of the school year as noisy, distracted and conflictive. The majority of the children were noted for the difficulties they encountered regarding learning in all areas of their education, not only in English.

At the initial stage of my research project, it was important to get to know my students, as I had not taught them in the first semester of my practicum. According to the results from a questionnaire I sent out to parents (Appendices I and II), just over half of the parents read occasionally to their children and only 4% read daily. According to these results, the children were not exposed to storytelling very often at home, reinforcing the importance of providing them with opportunities to encounter stories in the classroom, motivating them towards literacy.

I was especially interested in understanding the children's motivation towards English and their awareness and perspectives regarding the use of stories as a learning tool in the English classes. I used an initial questionnaire (Appendix III) and the results showed that the students were motivated to learn English, with 70% of the participants claiming that they liked learning it. When asked about what they considered important when listening to a story, the children chose 'to enjoy storytelling' (91%) and 'to learn new words/sentences' (87%). Surprisingly, the children considered that understanding the

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main ideas in a story (79%) was very important. These results may show that the children recognize that they still can get a general idea about the plot and understand a story even if they do not know some words in it.

The questionnaire enabled me to conclude that the majority of the children showed growing interest and motivation to learn English and to participate in the different types of activities I was planning to include. The full results from this questionnaire can be found in Appendix IV.

II.1.3 The classroom and English lessons

English lessons took place in the children's classroom, a prefabricated classroom with very limited space, which made circulation difficult. This constraint hindered the normal functioning of classes, making it impossible to undertake some activities due to lack of space. Communication skills development was prioritized through the systematic introduction of listening and speaking activities, starting as whole class activities and moving on to pair work, to provide plenty of opportunities to listen and produce the target language and supporting learners' autonomy and confidence (see Halliwell, 1992).

The adopted coursebook, *New Treetops 4* (Howell & Kester-Dogson, 2014) did not cover some topics from the *Metas Curriculares de Inglês para o 1º ciclo* (Bravo, et al., 2015). Therefore, materials and activities around my selected stories were planned to fill this lacuna. These were either produced by me or adapted from other sources e.g. flashcards, mini-cards, props, songs or online videos.

II.2 Methodology

In this section, the methodology used to put this project into action will be addressed. I will present and clarify the different data collection tools used throughout the process.

Figure 3 shows the stages that made up my research project, which is based on Burns' action research (AR) cycle, as well as the tools used to collect data.

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Figure 3 – Action research project stages (adapted from Burns, 2010, p. 8)

Stage	When	Tools and procedures
1. Planning stage	September	• Identification of the problem • Asking for legal consent • Selecting/adapting stories • Planning learning sequences and preparing materials
2. Action / Observation stage three cycles (pilot story, story 1 and story 2)	October to December	**Implementation of:** • Questionnaires – parents and learners • Discussions – learners • Self-assessment worksheets – learners • Completing observation grids – teacher • Filming storytelling moments – teacher • Writing a teaching journal – teacher
3. Reflection stage	January	• Analyses of the collected data and reflection on the results • Conclusions of the action research project

II.2.1 Asking for consent

For the purpose of implementing my AR project I had to fulfil some legal requirements, such as asking for consent to undertake my research. The letters of consent were addressed to the school cluster headmaster (see Appendix V), the school coordinator (see Appendix VI) and the class teacher (see Appendix VII), as well as to the children' parents and carers (see Appendix VIII) and the children in the class who participated in the study (see Appendix IX).

The content and format of the students' consent letters followed the guidelines given in Mourão (2021), using simple and clear language in Portuguese to support the children's understanding. In all cases, anonymity was assured, and children were told they could decide not to take part at any time.

II.2.3 From theory to practice – putting the plan into action

Based on my research, I planned my action research project in three cycles (see Figure *4*), each cycle based around a different story. The first cycle was a pilot story and some related activities that had the purpose of providing me with some experience around the use of an adapted story as the centre of a learning sequence. The experience fed into

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supporting the planning of the second and third cycles of intervention, and it also helped me create an observation grid (see Appendix X).

Figure 4 – The three cycles of intervention

	Story	Source	Plot	Metas /contents/ objectives
Cycles of intervention	**First cycle** **Story 1 (pilot story)** *My inside weather*	Online story Author: Jen Thorpe Illustrator: Lara Berge	The story is about a girl who struggles to understand her feelings. She doesn't comprehend why sometimes, her inside weather is different from the outside weather and even from what she wants or thinks she should feel. This story relates weather conditions to personal feelings, exploring emotions, promoting self-awareness of one's states of mind, showing that everyone has inside weather and it's normal to feel many different emotions and encouraging people to deal with those feelings. The language is a little too complex for this age range and the concepts are unclear to the leaners such as, "my inside weather", which relates to one's own feelings. Linguistically it needs to be greatly simplified, as well as carefully introduced and exploited before telling the story. However, it represents a versatile tool to work on personal end emotional self-awareness, conflict resolution and citizenship.	Feelings Weather conditions Non-linguistic objectives Personal self-awareness Citizenship
	Second cycle **Story 2***:* *Stuck*	Picturebook Author: Oliver Jeffers Illustrator: Oliver Jeffers	This story has an absurd and magical plot and a very surprising end. It describes the chain of actions of a boy named Floyd, who desperately tries to free his brand-new kite which got accidentally stuck in a tree. Floyd keeps throwing objects into the tree, hoping to knock it loose, instead of asking for help or using some of the objects with the function for which they were created, but they all get stuck too. At the end of the story, Floyd finally recovers his kite and happily plays with it again, leaving all the objects, animals and people he threw into the tree, stuck there. The plot is simple, very funny and engaging. However, the language is not always repetitive enough or easily recognizable for the learners, making its acquisition and reproduction harder. Some language should be introduced before the storytelling. And if adapted the language should be simpler and more repetitive, in order to support language learning and its production.	Adapted to cover the topics: Places at school School objects Non-linguistic objectives Ability to make predictions Foster sense of critical thinking and logic Foster sense of citizenship

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			and responsibility
Third cycle **Story 3:** *Bark, George*	Picturebook Author: Jules Feiffer Illustrator: Jules Feiffer	*Bark, George* tells the story of a puppy who's not able to bark and his mother, who tries to help him. Instead of barking, George keeps reproducing sounds of different animals. The vet removes different animals from inside George, until he finally barks. At the end of the story, as George is walking among people, George's mother asks him to bark again, and he says "Hello", implying he has swallowed a person. The plot is simple, funny and repetitive although it contains some vocabulary which is not easily recognizable by the children that should be carefully mimed such as "reached deep inside of George", or "pulled out a …".	Adapted to cover the topics: Farm animals Non-linguistic objectives Ability to make predictions Foster sense of critical thinking and logic

II.2.3.1 First cycle – Pilot story "My inside weather"

In order to try out the different approaches I had planned for my story-based activities, as well as prepare my observation grids, I introduced a pilot story, which was adapted from *My Inside Weather* by Jen Thorpe, Lara Berge and Emma Beckett, a free downloadable online story. This story was selected as the language seemed simple and familiar to the children. The topic of feelings, addressed in this story, could engage the students and help them to understand and better manage their states of mind. Another reason to choose this story was the clear relation between the concepts and images, and the possibility of adapting the story and preparing materials that could support understanding and learning. Since it was a pilot story, no self- assessment or questionnaires were completed.

II.2.4 Selection and adaptation of two stories (second and third cycles)

Taking into consideration the findings regarding the first story used as pilot, I selected two stories to use in the second and third cycles, *Stuck* by Oliver Jeffers and *Bark, George* by Jules Feiffer. They both had a funny, engaging and absurd plot with a comical ending. For an excerpt of the original text and the full adapted texts, see Appendix XI for *Stuck* and Appendix XII for *Bark, George*.

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The stories were adapted to fit the language covered in the first term of English lessons, using simple and relevant chunks of language, plenty of repetition, and intuitive visuals as props to support meaning. I then planned the activities to support and foster language learning. For images of the materials I created for the story *Stuck,* see Appendices XIII, and for *Bark, George* see Appendix XIV.

Both stories were told three times over a period of two weeks and related activities were incorporated into the learning sequence. By the end of each cycle, the students participated in role plays in small groups, in order to consolidate learning and make it meaningful.

II.2.5 Data collection tools

To help me understand and measure the results provided by the implementation of my project, I used a number of data collection tools, as shown in Figure 5. The table is organized in chronological order of events and divided into three stages: introduction of the project, the three cycles and conclusion of the research project.

Figure 5 – Data collection tools and procedures

Data collection tools	When	Aims:
Introducing the project		
Questionnaires about family context – parents (see Appendix I)	Project introduction	Gather data about pupils' family and social background to set a context
Questionnaire about the English lessons (see Appendix III)	Project introduction	Gather data about pupils' needs, preferences and attitudes regarding English learning to set a context
Cycles (pilot story, story 1 and story 2)		
*Pre-story questionnaire 1 (see Appendix XV and XVI)	Before the first storytelling event	Gather data about pupils' first thoughts, predictions and their attitudes regarding the story – to prepare the introduction of the story and compare to post-story opinions and attitudes
Observation grid (Appendix X)	During the learning sequences	Gather data about learners' improvement
Pre-story discussion	Before the first storytelling event	Gather data about pupils' first thoughts, predictions and their attitudes regarding the story – observation
*Post-storytelling questionnaire (see Appendix XVII and XVIII)	End of each learning sequence	Gather data about pupils' thoughts, their attitudes and likes/dislikes regarding the story – analysis and comparison to pre-storytelling questionnaire

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Post-storytelling reflection/discussion	End of each learning sequence	Gather data about pupils' thoughts, their attitudes and likes regarding the story – observation
Teaching/learning journal	Every lesson	Gather data about pupils' thoughts, their attitudes and likes regarding the story
Video recording	Storytelling and retelling events	Gather data about storytelling events and my performance as a storyteller
Termly Test	End of the first term	Evaluate the validity of using stories as a vehicle for learning
Action research conclusion		
Final questionnaire about stories and storytelling (see Appendix XIX)	At the end of the action research project	Gather data about pupils' thoughts, their attitudes and likes/dislikes regarding the stories – comparison with their initial thoughts and analysis of their points of view at the end of the project.

*Except in the first cycle (pilot story)

II.2.6 Questionnaires

II.2.6.1 Pre-study questionnaires

When introducing the project, the parents were asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix I) to gather information about the students' family background and the parents' opinions about English lessons. The students were also asked to answer a questionnaire (Appendix III) regarding their likes/dislikes, their opinions and expectations regarding the English lessons and English learning. These data helped me understand the context, my students, their needs and expectations and to plan the activities in the different sequences of learning.

II.2.6.2 Storytelling questionnaires

Regarding the pre- and post-storytelling questionnaires (Appendices XV, XVI, XVII and XVIII), data was analysed quantitively. The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire before the first storytelling event of each story and one after each learning sequence, providing information about the students' ideas related to the stories. The information was analysed to draw some conclusions about the differences in students' ideas and feelings regarding each story, before and after they heard it. Some of these data were transformed into charts to help the comparison and interpretation of the results.

The questionnaires had closed-ended questions, aiming to provide specific answers that I believed to be relevant for my study and that could easily be compared to find patterns.

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Some open-ended questions were included as well, aiming to achieve some genuine and meaningful answers. However, some students found this difficult and as a result, that data was often contradictory to their attitudes and their oral contributions during reflections and discussions.

II.2.6.3 Final questionnaires

At the end of my action research project, I distributed a final questionnaire (Appendix XIX), about the three different stories. These questionnaires were analysed to draw some conclusions about pupil's development and improvement, as well as regarding their opinions about the English classes and their thoughts about the use of stories in the English lessons, as well as the storytelling events and the storyteller's performance.

II.2.7 Pre- and post-story discussions

A discussion with the students based on prediction questions was introduced before the first storytelling event and after the pre-storytelling event questionnaire in each cycle, providing some visual clues about the story. The students were asked some questions, such as, "What do you think this story will be about?", "Do you think you'll like the story or not?", "Do you think you'll understand this story?", "Do you think this story will help you learn English or not?", among others.

At the end of each learning sequence and after the post-storytelling questionnaire, a student reflection was introduced in order to stimulate students' metacognitive awareness, helping them to understand what had changed in their perspectives, what they thought they had learned and to collect some evidence about their path, concerning the use of stories in the classroom as a learning tool. Some of the students' reflections and contributions to the classroom discussion were noted in my learning/teaching journal, which provided important and relevant information about the pupil's opinions, attitudes and their improvement during the first term. This evidence was important for both students and teacher from a learning-to-learn perspective, supporting students' understanding of their own learning process and guiding the teacher's planning and performance.

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With the introduction of regular questionnaires and discussion activities, the participants were encouraged to reflect on how they learned English through stories, as well as on prioritizing the different elements present in a story, taking into consideration the outcomes a storytelling event brings to their learning process.

These discussions provided extremely relevant data for the research project, in the sense that the students loved to share their opinions and participate actively and they made important contributions to the questions addressed in this action research project.

II.2.8 Teaching journal and observation grid

In my teaching journal I kept information I gathered during classroom observations. I noted down some of the students' contributions to reflections/discussions, their attitudes and skill enhancement, with all the information I considered relevant written in the form of notes for later use.

In order to guide me in my classroom observations and to keep data organized and accessible, I used an observation grid (Appendix X). This data collection tool was the result of my observations during the first cycle of my research project, using the pilot story *My Inside Weather.*

II.2.9 Video recordings

In order to help me to analyse my storytelling skills, as well as my improvement as a storyteller, I video recorded myself during the different storytelling events. I viewed these recordings after each storytelling event and revised my performance in subsequent lessons. The films also provide relevant data to draw some conclusions on my ability as a teacher-storyteller.

II.2.10 Assessment

In order to help students understand their learning process and identify their weaknesses and strengths, but also to help me in identifying difficulties to adapt my planning,

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formative assessment was implemented, through discussions, worksheets and self-assessment.

However, the validity of the children's performance needed to be formally assessed to fulfil the requirements of the school cluster and Ministério da Educação. For that reason, summative assessment was introduced at the end of the first term to formally evaluate students' performance and their language learning development. The test (Appendix XX) was designed by the school cluster English teachers for all grade 4 classes in that school, considering the aims predicted in the 'Metas Curriculares' (Bravo, et al., 2015), with some changes regarding the differences between the contents covered in the different classes.

In the next section, I will present the results achieved with the implementation of this study during the first term of 2019 (September to December).

II.3 Results

In this section I will present the results of my action research project, which focused on how to use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning.

The present section will be structured around my research questions. The main question was "How do I use stories in Primary English education as a vehicle for learning?" Stories

can be told to provide a real context for language, complementing the activities around a specific topic. However, this approach is far too vague and does not explore the full potential that a story may bring to a primary English classroom. Keeping that in mind and pursuing the objective of using stories as tools, as a structuring element that would support the whole learning sequence, three other questions were included in the present action research project, aiming to provide some guidance and support to help me implement this methodology.

1. "How do I select and adapt a story for use in the primary English classroom?"
2. "How can I best devise a sequence of learning activities around a story?"
3. "What storytelling skills do I need to develop to do this successfully?"

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The data collection tools described in the methodology section will be addressed, presenting the findings regarding each question.

II.3.1 How do I select and adapt a story for use in a primary English classroom?

"Care needs to be taken to select storybooks that are accessible, useful and relevant for children learning English"

Ellis and Brewster (2014, p 14)

Considering that the main core of each learning sequence was a story, it was crucial for it to support language acquisition through the use of consistent and repetitive language in order to provide learners with plenty of opportunities to encounter, recognize and internalize the language. An excerpt of the adaptation is provided in

Figure 6.

Figure 6 – Example of changes in language of the original story Stuck

Excerpt of the original story *Stuck* (Jeffers, 2011)	Adapted version of *Stuck* which I told in class
"It all began when Floyd got his kite stuck in a tree. He tried pulling and swinging but it wouldn't come unstuck. The trouble really began when he threw his favourite shoe to knock the kite loose… … and that got stuck too! He threw up his other shoe to knock down his favourite shoe and, unbelievably, that got stuck as well. In order to knock down his other shoe, Floyd fetched Mitch. Cats get stuck in trees all the time, but this was getting ridiculous." (…)	"This is Floyd. This is Floyd's kite. It all began when Floyd got his new kite stuck in a tree. He tried to pull it and swing it, but it was stuck. What should he do? [get suggestions from children] He went to the classroom and got his English book. Floyd threw his English book into the tree to knock down the kite. But it got stuck too! So, he went to the gym and found a ball. Floyd threw the ball into tree to knock down his English book and his new kite. But it got stuck too! So, he went to the canteen and found a pan of soup. Floyd threw the pan of soup into the tree to knock down the ball, his English book and his new kite. But it got stuck too!"

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With this in mind, I adapted the stories, changing/adding some vocabulary and structures that were present in the syllabus, maximizing the input opportunities for learners (see Appendices XI and XII).

II.3.1.1 Learning from my pilot story

The pilot story *My Inside Weather* in the first cycle of my intervention was crucial in planning the second and third cycles. Initially, I thought that this story would be successful regarding English language learning, but by the end of the first learning sequence, I realized that the target language had not been simple, relevant or repetitive enough to support the children's learning. Furthermore, the concepts were not as clear or accessible as they should have been to support students' understanding. In addition, the connection between words and visuals were not as intuitive as it should be or as I thought it was, to convey meaning for this group. However, it was revealed as a very useful tool for working on feelings and citizenship, allowing me to address interpersonal relationships, empathy with others' feelings and managing them, and respect for others, who are different and feel differently from myself.

Considering the post-storytelling discussion, which happened at the end of this first learning sequence, some students said they had difficulties understanding the story because the language was hard. Many of them did not understand what 'outside weather' was, until I pointed to the real window in the classroom. Some of them also struggled to understand the concept behind the speech balloons presenting the inside weather conditions (representing feelings and states of mind).

For those reasons and in order to make the next two stories more successful for language learning and for better outcomes regarding motivation and learning, I intentionally adapted these. I tried to include language that would be relevant, repetitive and familiar to the children, making understanding easier and making it possible for them to use the target language in different situations. The chosen stories contained also simpler concepts that were intuitive and explicit through the visuals, helping the listener to connect the concept with the visual. Abstract concepts are hard to identify and understand for this age range, so these were avoided with preference given to using clear and accessible concepts, that could engage students, be understandable and support their learning. However,

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learners with a higher level of language must not be forgotten, and for that reason opportunities to challenge their skills should be provided, motivating them to improve their abilities and skills.

I also noted that a story plot should be clear, meaningful and funny, and even contain a certain amount of absurdity, making the story more appealing and engaging. A very important factor is the use of materials and resources to tell the story, which must be intuitive and engaging, clearly conveying meaning and easily manoeuvrable so that, as the storyteller, I can tell the story with fluid and natural movements.

II.3.1.2 Learning from *Stuck* and *Bark, George*

What I learned during the piloting phase was taken into consideration and applied to the second and third cycle of intervention, making the second and third stories more engaging, supportive of learning and more generally appreciated by the students.

In order to make understanding easier, for learners to be exposed to the exact same target language more often, multiplying the opportunities to recognize, memorize and later production, the adapted language was simpler and far more repetitive.

For those reasons, when adapting the second story *Stuck*, I used simpler language, replacing sentences such as "He tried pulling and swinging but it wouldn't come unstuck" in the original, for "He tried to pull it and swing it, but it was stuck.", simplifying the language.

The author uses different expressions to convey the same action in the original story, for example, "he threw up"; "fetched"; "flung"; "hurled", in the adapted version, I kept only one form, "he threw (…) into the tree".

Even though listeners do not need to recognize or even understand every single word in a story to perceive the plot, a large part of the language present in a story should have been introduced previously in class. This literary piece of work is very rich and linguistically interesting, however, for children who are starting to learn a second

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language and considering this group of learners, it may be a little too demanding. For that reason, the adapted language was simpler and far more repetitive. Furthermore, the language in the original text was adapted to fit the vocabulary and structures present in the syllabus. Examples of that are: "He went to the 'classroom' and got his 'English book' (…) Floyd threw his English book into the tree to knock down the kite". This example shows how I included both the place in the school and the school object, which were targeted in the learning sequence.

In order to encourage learner participation, some questions were introduced into the adapted text. Examples of this are "What should he do?", "Where did he go next?", "Can you guess what happens next?", "Guess what Floyd did", "What do you think he's going to do?", "What did Floyd forget about?". The learners showed interest and enthusiasm in participating in the storytelling events and responding to these prompts.

The connections between the visuals and the concepts were clearer than in the pilot story; images of a tree, the objects Floyd threw up to the tree and Floyd himself were presented during the storytelling event, so the visuals, the concepts and the language were all conveying the same clear message. I tried to keep the plot funny, and the inclusion of absurdity of the original plot was essential in holding children's attention and motivating them during the storytelling events.

During the telling of the adapted story, *Stuck*, the students were engaged, very enthusiastic and participative. They were amazed at how Floyd, the main character, could be so strong that he was able to pick up 'a whale' or 'a school building' and throw it up to the tree. The absurdity present during the whole story was, in my opinion, key to its success; the children loved the funny and unthinkable situations which occurred in this story. They asked many questions such as:

"Como é que um menino tem força para segurar uma escola/camião dos bombeiros (…)?" [How does a boy have the strength to hold a school building/fire engine (…)?] (Various students).

"Como é que isso é possível??" [How is that even possible?] (about throwing a whale into the tree) (Various students).

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"Agora vai ter de subir à árvore!" [Now he will need to climb the tree] (Cat 47)[*].

"Porque é que ele não puxa o fio?" [Why doesn't he pull the (kite) string?] (Dragon 10)[*]

"Ele vai subir à escada para tirar as coisas da árvore" [He will climb the ladder to take all the stuff in the tree"] (Nakajima 219)[*].

"He traw ap (sic) the tree" [He will throw (the saw) it up into the tree] (Tartaruga 29)[*].

(Teaching journal, 26 November 2019)

These interventions show that the students were engaged and participative, but also that they were understanding the story. They felt disturbed regarding some events in the story and they could not tolerate them, so they were constantly complaining and protesting about Floyd's behaviour and his not very smart ideas. Some of them repeated quite few times that the boy was not very smart, as shown in the following excerpts:

"Ele é um bocado burro" (sic.) [He is a bit dumb."] (Nakajima 219 and Tocherima 92)[*].

"Epá ele não é muito inteligente, pois não?!" (sic) [Hey, he's not very bright, is he?] (Waint 20)[*].

(Teaching journal, 26 November 2019)

Regarding the adapted story *Bark, George*, the students showed greater ease in understanding the plot and in reproducing the target language. I think the success of this third story can be explained by the language being simpler in comparison to the other two stories, but I also feel, it was because of the intuitive connection between language too, concepts and visuals, due to the props I used. These conveyed meaning very clearly and I also feel that my own techniques and skills as a storyteller had improved over the three months.

When I asked the children if they thought they would understand the story *Bark, George*, all but three students said "Yes". This may show that the students' self-confidence had improved upon the completion of the second cycle, but also that they needed to know the

* Student code names

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procedures and to understand how to perform the activities to be able to respond to what they were asked to do and improve their skills.

Some answers to the question: "Do you think you will understand the story?" were interesting, such as, "Eu não preciso de saber todas as palavras" [I don't need to understand every single word] from Gatinha roxa[*], "As imagens vão ajudar-nos a perceber a história." [The images will help us to understand the story] from student Dragon 10[*], or "A professora vai contar a história muito bem e devagar" [The teacher will tell the story really well and slowly] from student Unicórnio Azul[*]. These comments were incredibly important, because they made me realize that the students were already starting to understand how they learn, what is relevant or supportive of their learning and that they were improving their performance and their learning in English.

II.3.2 How can I best devise a sequence of learning activities around a story?

Based on my readings and on the findings with the pilot story, I was able to start planning a sequence of learning structured around a story. I had to consider the syllabus, the stories to adapt (that should fit the contents) and my classroom context (students' needs, physical space, available equipment) and the experience regarding the pilot story.

II.3.2.1 Following the syllabus

One of the challenges I faced when implementing this project, along with the need to plan a sequence of learning around a story which had specific vocabulary to convey a message, was to accomplish the goals established in the syllabus, which were accomplished in every single sequence of learning.

II.3.2.2 Activity selection and sequencing

During the implementation of the first cycle of this research project and based on my reading and understanding of the teaching/learning process, I introduced different kinds of activities in order to better understand how to plan a sequence of learning around a story. It came to my attention, considering the difficulties felt by a part of my learners, that it was essential for the activities to be simple in content, clear regarding

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[*] Student code names

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understanding, similar, repetitive and supportive of students' learning, so that they would feel confident and able to participate autonomously later on. The situation described in this next entry of my teaching journal was essential for me to understand the importance of the activities but also regarding the sequence of that activities:

"Student Adidas 1324[*] has shown difficulties regarding an activity [based on Halliwell, 1992], some lessons ago. The activity involved taking note of the sequence given by the teacher (flashcards numbered on the board). He could not perform the activity autonomously, and even with my support, he lost interest after that. I introduced a similar activity regarding a different topic, and student Adidas 1324[*] was able to perform the activity by himself, and he answered correctly. He was so happy and proud of himself, that he put a big effort into the following activities." (Teaching journal, 2 October 2020)

The contents and language I covered in the story-based learning sequences were not covered in the coursebook. For this reason, I planned the majority of the activities and created most of the resources and materials. I ensured I followed the '*Metas Curriculars*'

(Bravo, et al., 2015) as I worked through the two learning sequences in the second and third cycles of intervention (see long-term planning – Appendices XXI and XXII).

The activities I included were mostly based on Halliwell's five-word lesson (1992, p. 28), starting with supportive listening activities, moving on to whole-class repetition, then speaking as a whole class and later during pair work. Only once children had been given lots of opportunities to listen to and use the target language meaningful in speaking activities did I introduce reading/writing activities. This supports their language acquisition, but also their autonomy as language learners. I used similar activities but introduced slight changes, using different target language, so as soon as the students understood how the activities worked and what was expected of them, their confidence and autonomy visibly improved, contributing to their confidence and ability to perform the suggested activities. The next entry in my teaching journal points out that students' attitudes in class changed and the majority of them were participative, resulting in an improvement in their performance and their learning (see also examples of sequences of learning – Appendices XIII and XIV)

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[*] Student code names

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"The students are now, generally showing commitment and put a big effort into their performance. Most of them feel confident enough to participate actively in the activities, especially in flashcard activities, storytelling events, pair work/games and discussions"

(Teaching journal, 19 November 2019).

I felt that flashcard activities were very supportive of language learning, helping the children to improve their performance and memorization of vocabulary items, as well as certain structures, at their own pace. In the beginning, some of them struggled to understand how these activities worked and they did not feel confident enough to participate. However, with the systematic introduction of similar activities, the children started to understand what they were being asked to do and their confidence increased, as did their ability to successful perform these activities.

The mini-card activities were introduced as a bridge to a more student-centred activities, providing the students with more opportunities to practise and use the language. These activities were crucial to improving their language skills, confidence and autonomy. Each student was able to listen and produce the target language much more often than when

participating in whole-class activities. They were more confident to have a go as they were less exposed and were engaged in enjoying the activities, which were seen as games rather than formal language learning activities.

The results presented show that it was possible to integrate stories into my English lessons as the basis of sequences of learning, providing supportive, meaningful and authentic encounters with the target language and opportunities for learning. Assessment played an important role in my research project, considering the necessity of evaluating the validity of using stories as a vehicle for learning. By the end of my intervention, the learners achieved surprisingly good results in the end-of-term tests (see Figure 7), regarding their learning improvement, suggesting that a story-based methodology is effective if adapted to each specific context, and does not have a negative effect on the children's learning; on the contrary, it may represent an added value inside an English primary classroom.

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Figure 7 – Termly test marks
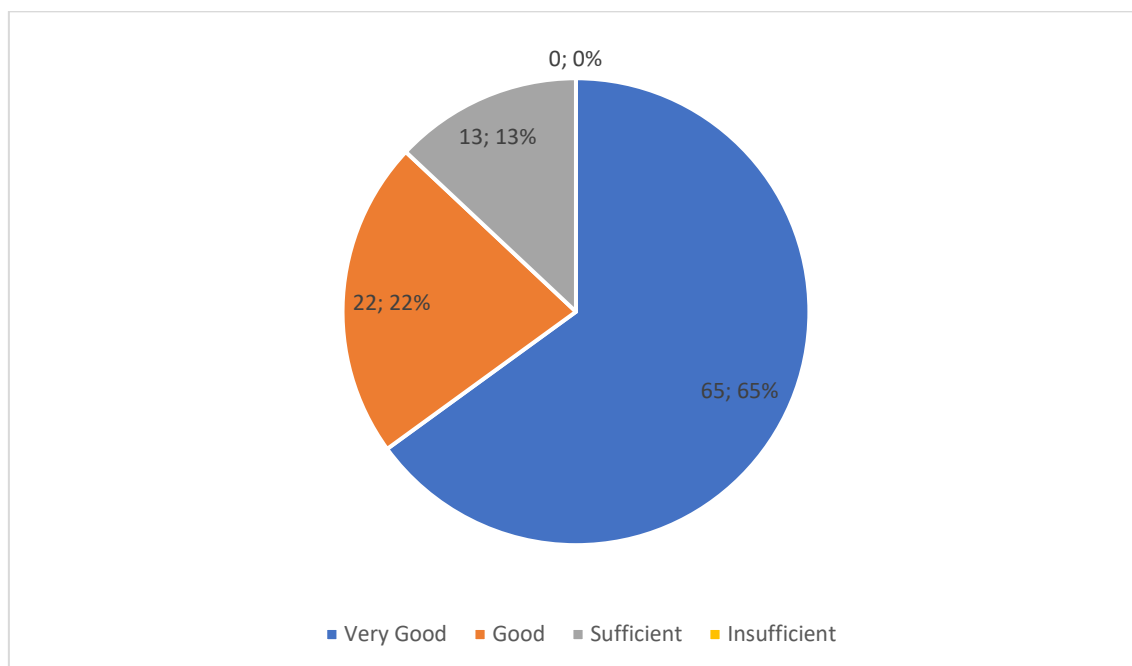
II.3.2.3 Story language and role plays

The language used in the three stories that are part of this project was adapted to fit the syllabus. However, the stories had to work as a plot and not only as a set of vocabulary items and structures to meet the syllabus goals. For that reason, the language was carefully adapted, trying to respect the main concepts of the original story and at the same time bringing it together with the requirements of the syllabus.

The students' level of English language and their specific needs were a concern as well and the result was clear and repetitive language, frequently including easily recognizable and memorable chunks of language that could support and help them improve their learning. At the end of each sequence of learning, a role play activity was introduced. The role plays in the second and third cycles of my action research were successful. I think this was due to the fact that the language used in those two stories was more meaningful, more relevant and much more repetitive, the concepts were clearer and the connection between these, the vocabulary and visuals/materials was more intuitive and understandable. My performance as a storyteller was also more supportive as I prompted students' participation in the storytelling events more often. In my opinion, these factors contributed to students' success when retelling the stories via role plays. As such, in

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cycles 2 and 3 the majority of the students were able to successfully perform the role plays autonomously.

Considering the final questionnaire regarding the three stories introduced during this research project, the students' answers support these findings (see Figure 8). The story which apparently better enabled the learning of English was *Bark, George*. The visuals and materials were engaging and clearly and easily conveyed meaning, supporting students' understanding and learning. The third story was also more present in the children's minds, as they had just completed it. Nevertheless, their performance during storytelling events and related activities in the third cycle was far more successful than in the previous cycles, which further supports the children's opinions that the story *Bark, George* was more successful and supportive than the other two stories.

Figure 8 -– Answers to Q3: Did the story help you learn English?
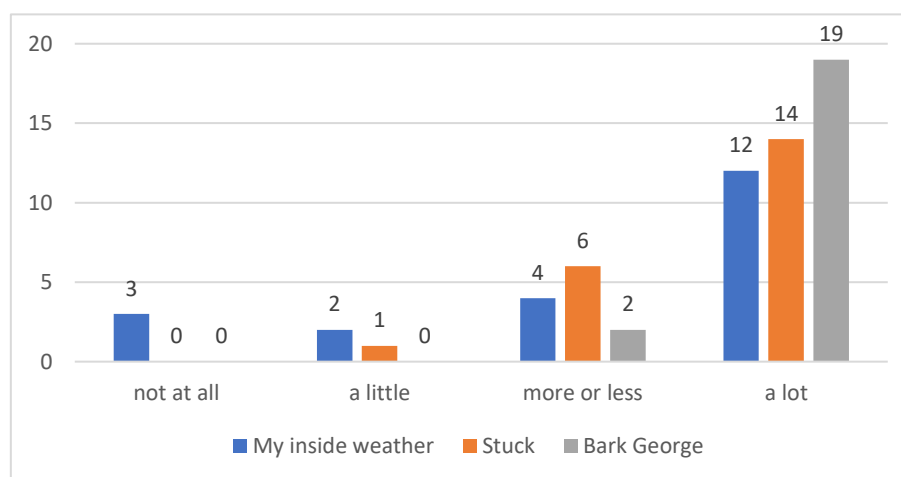
II.3.3 Learning from discussions and questionnaires

A whole class discussion was introduced before the first storytelling event and another at the end of each learning sequence, sharing and gathering information about the students' thoughts and ideas about each story. Questionnaires were also introduced before the first storytelling event (pre-storytelling) and at the end of each learning sequence (post-storytelling).

From the beginning I believed that the questionnaires, which required short written responses in Portuguese, would provide me with valuable data about students' points of view regarding the stories and their learning. Contrary to my expectations, the discussions

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were much more meaningful and successful for the students, in the sense that they could express themselves more easily and freely, providing me with much more reliable data than through the questionnaires, in which they showed a lack of interest, understanding and effort. During the post-storytelling discussions, the students were very enthusiastic and participative; everyone was waiting to give their contribution to the discussion. It was time-consuming but really meaningful and enriching. However, the questionnaires still provided me with some important information about their attitudes and performance regarding the use of stories as a learning tool in the English classroom.

Considering the discussion of the second story, *Stuck*, the students gave their contribution, mostly repeating the ideas shown during the actual storytelling event.

"Como é possível um rapaz ter tanta força?" [How is it possible that a boy can be so strong?] Unicornia Rosa[*]

"Porque é que não pediu ajuda?" [Why didn't he ask for some help?] Pantera Negra[*]

"Como é que a mãe não desconfiou?" [How come his mother didn't suspect?] Tartaruga 29[*]

"Porque é que ele não serrou a árvore?" [Why did he not saw down the tree?] Nakajima 219[*]

When asked if the story had helped them to learn English, the majority answered 'Yes'. Some of them justified this, saying that they already knew some words, essentially the vocabulary of places in school, which helped them to understand the story and that they have learnt some new words as well. They all said they loved the story when I asked them for a thumbs up or down, except for one student.

The pre-storytelling discussion, regarding the third cycle of intervention, based on the adapted story *Bark, George*, was more successful than in the previous cycles. The students already knew how it worked and had a better understanding of what they were asked to do. Most of them thought they could predict that the story was about a dog, who had a problem concerning his ability to bark. Some of the students predicted that the dog might not be able to stop barking and some of them claimed it might not be able to bark at all. There were a few students who gave different answers as shown in the pre-

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[*] Student code names

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storytelling questionnaire, but the majority were able to grasp the main idea present in the story.

In the final questionnaire, students indicated their preferences for the three adapted stories told during my intervention. The children elected *Bark, George* as their favourite story and *"My Inside Weather"* as the least favourite. As I have suggested, the story *Bark, George* was the simplest regarding the plot, language, concepts and visuals and supported students' learning more clearly, helping them to clearly understand the story and the language and making oral production easier for them. It is important to state that *Bark, George* was the last story to be told, and for that reason children would remember it better than the other two. Even so, in my opinion, and taking their performance in class as evidence, this was the story which worked best with this group of learners. Some of the reasons that support the success of this story were the visuals/materials that were easily recognizable, conveying meaning intuitively, and were engaging and enjoyable for the children.

In order to successfully select and adapt a story to use in a primary English context, it is very important to come up with an engaging one, containing a funny plot and some absurdity, keeping the children motivated.

The repetition in words and structures is also essential, providing the children with as many opportunities to understand, recognize and memorize the language as possible, as well as building on their confidence that will support their autonomy. For instance, the structure: "Floyd threw (…) into the tree to knock down the kite. But it got stuck too!*"* is repeated several times throughout the story *Stuck*, providing learners with plenty of opportunities to encounter the language, supporting their learning. The same happens in the story *Bark, George,* in which the structures *"*George went: "(…)" "No, George", said George's mother. "(…) go (…). Dogs go woof woof. Now Bark, George, bark!" appear repeatedly along the story plot.

The majority of the language should be meaningful and recognizable to the children, so that they may understand and memorize it easily, but also responding to the requirements present in the syllabus and in '*Metas Curriculares'* (Bravo, et al., 2015). For that reason, the second story, *Stuck*, was adapted to fit the topics: places at school and school objects,

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which were part of the Metas and would fit nicely into the structure of this story. On the other hand, the third story *Bark, George,* already contained some target language from the Metas, (farm animals) and there was plenty of repetition through the use of chunks of language. The adaptation was less intrusive, focusing on making some structures more recognizable, accessible and meaningful for learners, such as 'George's mother was so happy that she kissed the vet' instead of 'George's mother was so thrilled that she kissed the vet' or cutting out 'The vet put on his longest latex glove' as it does not add much to the plot and risks confusing the learners or losing the impact of more relevant language. In my opinion, emphasizing key language such as 'Bark, George, bark' that replaced the original structure *'Bark, George'* helped in the dramatization of the storytelling as well as prompt learners' participation.

It should not be forgotten that it is important not to lose the richness, message and magic of the story, and for that reason I tried to keep the essential of each story, changing only what was strictly necessary to support learners' learning. The ease children demonstrated in understanding and memorizing the language in the third story, shows that a simple plot with repetitive language is much more effective for their learning and their autonomy regarding the use of the language present in the story. The props and materials used must also be intuitive, support meaning and provide the same message as the language present in the story, synchronizing as Ellis & Brewster (2014) suggest. The activities should be simple, intuitive and similar in order to support learners' understanding and their autonomous production.

II.3.3 What storytelling skills do I need to become a successful teacher-storyteller?

A storyteller's skills are very important in providing the right experience for the listener. During the implementation of my research project, I developed some strategies to overcome my initial difficulties and to adapt my methodologies to learners' needs.

II.3.3.1 The ten commandments for successful teacher-storytellers

I have tried to synthetize my discoveries, so that they can be helpful for teachers who share my passion for stories, but who have never had the opportunity to put a research plan into action. The strategies I have used can be organized into ten 'commandments',

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grouped into three skills categories, as shown in Figure 9, which in my opinion may guide a meaningful and successful story-based approach to planning.

According to my findings, to be a successful teacher-storyteller and in order to provide a meaningful, enjoyable and learning supportive to the audience, it is crucial to follow these commandments.

Figure 9 – Ten commandments for successful storytellers

Skill sets	The ten storytelling commandments
Skill set 1: Sharing	• You should love stories • You should feel confident and enjoy the experience • You should bring something of yourself to the story
Skill set 2: Convey meaning/message	• You should memorize key language in the story • You should bring the story to life • You should be expressive • You should make the best use of your voice and use intonation wisely
Skill set 3: Focus on the audience	• You should keep the audience motivated and engaged, involving them in the storytelling event • You should use the best visuals/props to fit the story • You should plan related activities to support learning

Set of commandments 1: Sharing

Commandment 1: You should love stories

"For the telling of stories to young children the teacher must be prepared to become totally involved, loving the story she is telling and passing on this enthusiasm along with the message the story is expressing" Garvie (1990, p 86).

Everyone can tell a story! But will it always be the same experience for the audience? Of course not. It will be always something new and unique and small details can and will make the difference. The performance will be more genuine the more truth the storyteller shares, and so will their performance. If your passion for stories is real, it will be easier to convince the audience that stories are magical and can and will transport them to a magical dimension. As I love stories, I think it was easy to show them and share my

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passion. In my opinion, my passion for stories allows me to live the story as if it was real, and hopefully provide a storytelling event which is more than simply hearing someone reading a story like any other kind of text.

Commandment 2: You should feel confident and enjoy the experience

The flow of the story in a storytelling event is very important in holding audience's attention and interest but also regarding their comprehension of the plot. To achieve that you should feel confident and relaxed.

Considering the first story *"My Inside Weather",* I felt anxious and unconfident during the storytelling events. For this reason, the flow of storytelling was not good, I could not be as expressive as I would have liked and there were pauses, which I think jeopardized

the children's understanding. My first storytelling event was far from what I would have wished. My cooperating teacher made some considerations about my first storytelling event, such as "You did not even seem yourself today" and "The pauses did not support the children's understanding of the story".

However, every storytelling event helped to increase my confidence, making me aware of my limitations, such as difficulty in memorizing the story plot, my strengths and weaknesses, and my students' expectations and needs. The video recordings of the storytelling events were very important in this process, because they allowed me to re-visit my storytelling moments and become an outsider in my own lessons. I discovered many important elements to consider when planning my second and third cycles, such as the fact that the pauses during storytelling events should be planned and structured in order to increase the success of such an activity, from the look of the audience.

Commandment 3: You should bring something of yourself to the story

"Whatever kind of personality you have, you must give yourself totally to your story and to your listeners if you want to get back a strong quality of listening and appreciation from them" Wright (2008, p. 22).

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In my opinion to 'share your soul' is very important for a successful storyteller. Honesty and truth are very sensitive to the viewer and as more heartfelt the performance is, the better it will seem in the eyes of the audience. I've tried to be faithful to myself during the storytelling events, sharing a bit of myself with my audience. My performance was exactly how I felt the story when I read it.

A story is an art object, and like any other is subject to the interpretation of whoever is reading/hearing it. In this case, the author tried to carry out a message, the storyteller interpreted the message with their own eyes and each one of the elements in the audience will make their own interpretation, almost as if each individual is creating their own version of the same story.

Set of commandments 2: Convey meaning/message

Commandment 4: You should memorize key language in the story

"It is difficult to remember a written story word by word, (…) and, in any case, it seems rather artificial when it is done like this. (…) Concentrate on learning the gist of the story rather than every detail of it" Wright (2009, p. 16).

In order to keep a good flow which supports the message and avoid unplanned pauses, that may confuse the audience, hinder learning or simply lose their engagement, interest and attention, a storyteller should know the story plot well enough to tell it more than once, providing the same main structures and vocabulary. It may be hard to remember the story word by word; however, repetition is essential in this context, as will be addressed later. For that reason and in my opinion, it is crucial to provide the same key vocabulary and structures, so that learners may encounter them repeatedly, enhancing the opportunities for recognizing and internalizing the language.

During the first cycle, I had to read the story from my notes because I did not know the story plot by heart, and I wanted to say exactly the same words every time I would tell the story. I learned in the subsequent stories that it is important to be able to master the story, in the sense that I should not read it, as I risked losing the audience or experiencing difficulty in conveying the messages present in the story or providing a supportive experience of learning.

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Commandment 5: You should bring the story to life

"Much of it has to do with the degree of confidence and the ability to lose oneself in the role being played" Garvie, (1990, p. 86).

My expressiveness, the dramatizations I made and my use of voice, trying to bring the story to life, helped to engage the audience, making the experience more authentic and real. The students reacted to my expressiveness in different ways, but most of them showed enthusiasm regarding my unexpected dramatizations, which in my opinion

helped to engage and motivate the students. It was almost as if the person who I am in real life didn't exist anymore, to allow the story characters to emerge.

Commandment 6: You should be expressive

"Use gestures, mime and facial expressions to help convey the meaning of feelings and actions" Ellis & Brewster (2014, p. 26).

The use of gestures, body language and facial expressivity is really important to convey meaning and support comprehension, regarding a story in a second language, especially in a primary school class. Several authors make this claim (e.g. Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Garvie, 1990; Wright, 2009, among others), but I experienced a real need to use these strategies, trying to make each storytelling event more beneficial for children's learning. I felt that the more experience I had the better the students were corresponding to the storytelling events, showing more commitment and engagement and participating more often and accurately.

Commandment 7: You should make the best use of your voice and use intonation wisely

"Adopt a different voice for the narrator and for each of the characters. Make these voices very different: high/low, soft/harsh" Wright (2009, p. 22).

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In a storytelling event, the voice carries part of the message and helps to convey meaning through intonation, what can be very supportive of learning. The use of voice by the storyteller can also engage and hold the listener's attention and make the experience more enjoyable and real to the audience.

I tried to make different voices representing the different characters in each story, trying to make it more authentic. I used intonation to express meaning and provide a more realistic experience to my audience, stressing drama, funny moments and absurdity to make it more interesting and engaging.

Set of commandments 3: Focus on the audience

Commandment 8: You should keep the audience motivated and engaged, involving them in the storytelling event

Referring to the teacher's "sense of audience": "Can she respond to their needs and moods; can she hold them by the turn of her head or the rolling of her eyes? Is she pacing her narration in such a way that the children are hanging on every word and waiting with eager anticipation for the dénouement? These are some of the skills of good story tellers, the best of which virtually make themselves disappear so that the story might take precedence" Garvie (1990, p. 87).

Involving the audience in the storytelling event, helps to hold their attention, motivate them and check their understanding, allowing the storyteller to respond to the audience's needs. Furthermore, as pointed out by Garvie (1990), when telling a story, the 'sense of audience' is crucial to provide them with an experience that should be enjoyable and supportive of learning. The author highlights the importance of holding the audience's attention, keeping them interested and excited about the anticipation of what is coming next. Garvie compares a storyteller to an actress, in the sense that a good storyteller should act the story and be part of it.

The students corresponded gradually better as my experience grew, reacting and participating more in each storytelling event. I constantly prompted their interventions, making pauses at crucial moments, such as the main and repetitive structures that I wanted them to understand and learn, so they would produce the target language, asking them to

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predict what was about to happen. This made them attentive, interested and mentally engaged and helped me dramatize some parts of the story, providing them with some exciting moments, always making them part of the storytelling event, to motivate, engage them, keep their attention and interest, but also reinforcing learning whenever possible.

Commandment 9: You should use the best visuals / props to fit the story

"When listening to a story in a foreign language, children rely heavily on their eyes and ears to help them understand. The use of visuals and other support for listening is consequently very important to the child's comprehension and enjoyment of the story. (…) often referred to as story props" Ellis and Brewster (2014, p. 24).

The connection between the different elements in a story (visuals, text and gestures), must be coherent and concise, supporting the same concept, helping the listener understand the main ideas of the story plot, and allowing for different styles of learning (e.g. visual, kinaesthetic, linguistic). The experience of the first cycle was very important for the next two cycles, in which I was much more attentive to the learners' understanding process, making storytelling events more supportive of children's understanding. By using much clearer props that intuitively represented the same message as the text, appealing more and responding better to these students' needs and interests, I could capture their attention and provide them with a richer experience that could benefit their learning.

The materials used to tell a story are very important to convey meaning and engage the audience. They should be easily manoeuvrable, enabling the storyteller to move and act freely, so the performance may be fluid and authentic. When telling the first story, *"My Inside Weather",* I struggled to use the materials and also maintain a good flow because I had many visuals and some of them were too big and hard to manoeuvre. This experience made me rethink the props to support the next storytelling events, making them more efficient, intuitive and supportive of meaning, making my task easier and providing a better experience to the audience and fostering learning.

Commandment 10: You should plan related activities to support learning

"Follow-up activities should provide opportunities to extend and consolidate language or topics introduced through a story." Ellis and Brewster (2014, p. 24)

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For acquisition to take place, the learner often needs to access the language several times. Beyond the importance of retelling the story more than once in order to reinforce and support understanding and acquisition, planning related activities will enable the students to recognize the language, helping them to memorize and internalize it. The activities related to the story enable the teacher to create rich and complete learning sequences, which may contribute to effective and scaffolded learning through meaningful and engaging activities. The activities may complement each other, completing a unit focussing in different skills, answering several needs (of different students), covering different kinds of learning (e.g. visual, kinaesthetic, linguistic), making learning more effective for all learners.

The role play activity proved to be very supportive of learning, allowing the students to retell the story, trying to remember and produce the language present in the story autonomously (in some cases children needed some extra support and scaffolding), and have an enjoyable time while learning.

Chapter III – Discussion and Conclusion

III.1 Summary of research and reflection on findings

The research project presented in this report had the aim of understanding how to successfully implement a methodology based around stories that could work as a vehicle for English learning.

The results show not only that it is possible to bring stories to a primary English classroom, but also that they can be used to provide engaging, supporting and enjoyable opportunities for learning English. Stories may be introduced as the basis of sequences of learning, fitting the curriculum but also responding to learners' needs, expectations and interests, motivating them to learn English, overcome their difficulties and improve their autonomy.

Through the implementation of learning-to-learn-based activities, I observed that learners were progressively able to understand what is most important, relevant and meaningful for their learning process, especially regarding the stories approached in the classroom.

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Reflections/discussions were crucial in this process; during these, learners were incited to think about their learning, the use of stories in the classroom and to share their thoughts.

During this research, I realized that it is not just the stories or the taught content that enables learners to effectively learn; my contribution as their teacher was important to achieving success. The teacher's role as a mediator represents a key factor in the whole process of learning, prompting learners' participation, inciting them to reflect and question their own learning methods and helping them to prioritize and value what helps

them learn and draw their own path. Considering storytelling, the teacher has a relevant role too; the outcome of such an activity relies on the storyteller's performance as well.

I discovered that in order to make a story successful and support effective learning, not only is the story in itself relevant, but considering learning, there are some crucial elements to consider as well. These include the target language to be exploited, related activities that should support the target language learning, the teacher's role as storyteller and mediator and the materials/props and resources used to tell the story, to name some of the most relevant.

For all those reasons, I strongly believe that adapted stories can represent an amazingly valuable tool in an English classroom in primary education, as long as special care is given to their selection, adaptation and planning, taking into consideration the learners, the context in which the lessons will occur and the teacher's storytelling abilities/skills. All this combined can contribute to learners' improved learning.

III.1.1 What I have learned about using stories in primary language education

I think my results have shown clearly that relevant, clear, repetitive and familiar language was essential for achieving success in this group of learners, covering meaning and supporting students' acquisition of the target language. The visuals used to tell a story are as important as the story text, as they must be appealing and clearly convey meaning.

To successfully adapt a story, it is of utmost importance to select a story that fits the purpose, considering the age range and learners' language level. Stories with relevant

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language and chunks of language, a repetitive structure and a symmetrical relationship between the meaning and the visuals to be presented work better than complex plots or concepts and support the internalization and memorization of the target language.

The results show that the implementation of stories as a tool inside the English classroom can be really useful, meaningful and supportive of learning. There are plenty of opportunities to incorporate stories into the planning of learning sequences, exploiting diverse related and meaningful activities and motivating and encouraging leaners to learn English through stories. In the future, I intend to include stories as part of my practice more regularly, as I believe that it can bring important gains to learners' engagement and learning process, but also to motivate them to learn the language and to encourage them to acquire or maintain reading habits, providing them with meaning and support for their learning.

This study helped me to understand how to make better use of stories in a primary language learning context. I now have a clearer understanding of how to tell a story and realize it is not enough to choose any story. The use of stories as a tool inside a young learner classroom is very versatile and adaptable to specific contexts. The materials, techniques and related activities may be part of planning, according not only to needs, expectations or abilities of the learners but also the teacher.

My AR project provided me with the opportunity to plan a sequence of learning around a story and to make storytelling more successful and supportive of learning, but also to prepare learning materials and resources that may support the use of stories in a primary school language learning context, successfully fulfilling the contents established in the *Metas Curriculares* (Bravo, et al., 2015). I learnt much more I could ever imagine I would over a period of three months and that will change my teaching from now on.

III. 3 Relevance of this study in other primary school contexts and further research

Young learners need repetition, clarity and engagement to make the best use of their abilities and skills in order to improve their learning. Stories can easily provide it all, if managed and planned to focus the learner. I hope that my example here motivates other teachers to use stories as a tool to cover the syllabus inside a young learner classroom.

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I think my AR has shown that the use of stories in an English primary context represent a versatile and flexible tool, when adapted and planned to focus on the learners and their needs. Moreover, stories bring meaning and language in a real context to the classroom, in an enjoyable and meaningful way like no other tool, as children love stories.

I hope that the tips on how to accomplish the goals inside the classroom through the use of stories and how to plan sequences of learning based in stories, covering the syllabus and responding to the demands faced by a teacher of English in primary education, will be useful to other teachers.

Also, the set of ten commandments will hopefully contribute to providing a meaningful and supportive tool for other teachers who wish to use storytelling to benefit their own students, adapting it to their specific context. They were categorized into three skill sets, in order to simplify understanding and further use.

The first skills set relies on the sharing process and may help the storyteller to focus on their posture and ability to share themselves with the audience and to put something of their self in each storytelling event. Regarding the second skills set, which relates to the communication of meaning and message, hopefully it will help the storyteller to put their performance into perspective, trying to improve their ability to express themselves and convey meaning through their performance. The third skills set tries to demonstrate the importance of establishing a connection with the audience and help them to take the best of the potential in each story and each sequence of learning.

However, the results I obtained are related to my group of learners, and it is not possible to extrapolate those for different contexts. For that reason, the methodology and activities presented in this study should be adapted to each particular group of learners according to the specificities of their context.

As a complement to my study, a project focusing on student self-awareness regarding their learning through stories could support the findings of this study. A key factor for success in any learning process is the learner's awareness of their own learning, how it works, what can be done differently to improve their skills. For that reason, this study

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would benefit from extra metacognitive awareness activities that could improve the outcomes of using stories as the centre of language learning.

In addition, I believe that further exploring role plays could bring important outcomes, since they support students' learning through stories and help them improve their communicative skills as well.

To conclude, I have confirmed for myself that a story-based methodology can bring added value to an English class in primary school, if planned for the specific context in which it will be introduced, responding to the different and particular requirements and specificities involved.

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Appendices

Appendix I

Questionário ao Encarregado de educação

Nome do educando:_____

Nome do encarregado de educação:_____

Na sequência do estudo que conduzirei no âmbito do Mestrado em ensino de Inglês de 1º ciclo, que estou a frequentar, e após a nossa conversa sobre o assunto, solicito a sua colaboração para preencher o questionário que se segue, acerca da experiência do seu educando com histórias.

Relembro que a instituição, todos os seus funcionários, os encarregados de educação e as crianças serão mantidas em anonimato e que em nenhuma circunstância as suas identidades serão reveladas.

1. Qual(is) a(s) língua(s) falada(s) regularmente em casa? Assinale com um x e no caso de responder outras especifique quais.

☐ Português ☐ Inglês ☐ Crioulo ☐ Ucraniano ☐ Outra(s)   Qual(is)?_____

2. Alguém conta histórias infantis ao seu educando em casa? Com que regularidade? Assinale com um x.					
Contam-lhe histórias infantis…	Nunca	ocasionalmente	1/2 vezes por mês	1/2 vezes por semana	diariamente
Pai					
Mãe					
Irmãos					
Avós					
Outros					

3. O que gosta o seu educando de fazer? Assinale com um X.					
O meu educando gosta …	Nunca	ocasionalmente	1/2 vezes por mês	1/2 vezes por semana	diariamente
…que lhe contem histórias					
…que lhe leiam histórias					
…de fazer pequenas peças de teatro					
…de fazer trabalhos manuais					
…de fazer exercícios escritos / fichas					
…de ver vídeos / filmes					

4. O que considera importante para a aprendizagem de Inglês do seu educando? Assinale com um x.				
Em Inglês	Nada	Pouco	Mais ou Menos	Muito
Ouvir				
Falar				
Ler				
Escrever				
Ouvir histórias				
Ver vídeos				
Cantar				
Dramatizações				
Desenhar /pintar				
Exercícios no livro / fichas				
Jogar jogos				

Grata pela atenção e tempo dispensados.

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

Joana Simões Neves

Appendix II – Parents questionnaire -results

Figure A. 1 – Languages spoken at home
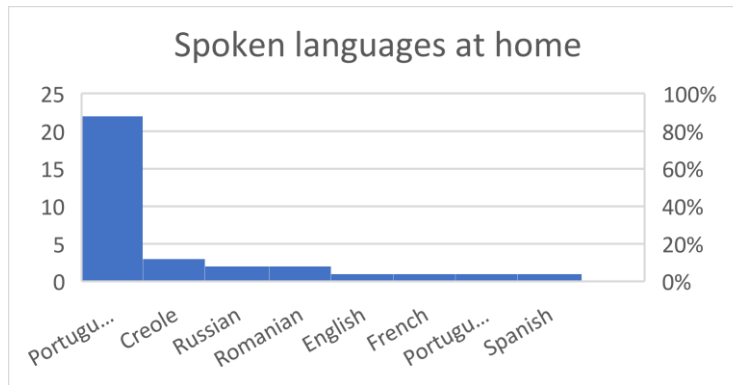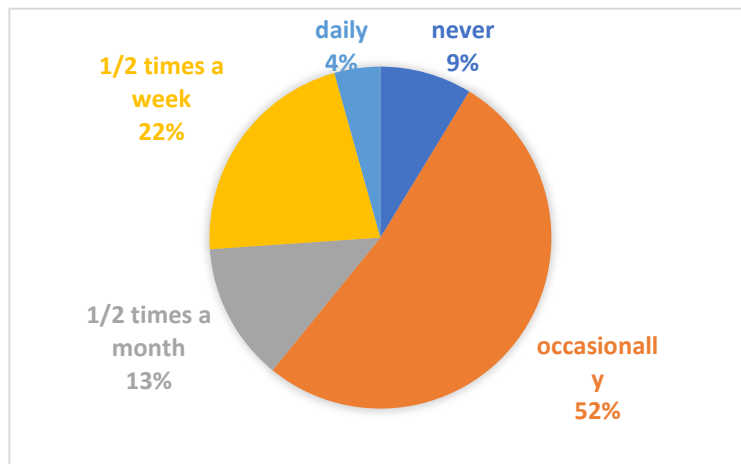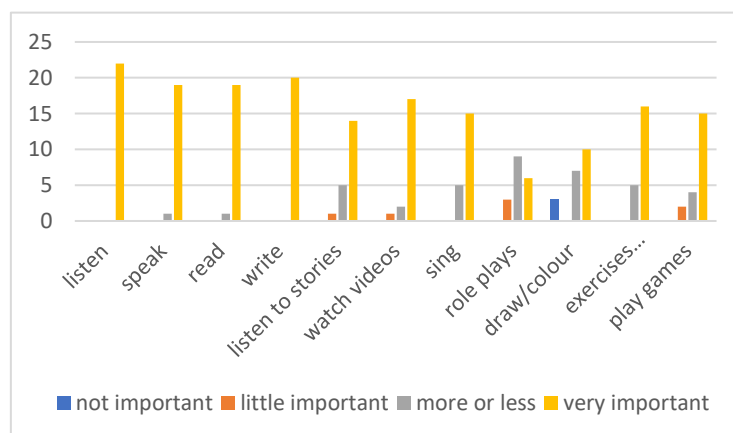

Figure A. 2 – Does anyone tell children's stories to your child at home?

Never:1/23   Occasionally: 12/23   ½ month: 3/23   ½ week: 5/23   Daily:1/23

Figure A. 3 – What do you consider important to your child's learning?

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

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Appendix III   **Questionário ao Aluno**

Nome de código:_____

Como te foi explicado, vou fazer um estudo sobre histórias e sobre a forma como estas podem ajudar-te a aprender Inglês. Para isso vou estudar a tua opinião, os trabalhos por ti realizados e a forma como aprendes Inglês através das histórias. Estas perguntas vão ajudar-me a perceber as tuas ideias sobre este assunto.

Relembro que podes escolher não participar no estudo a qualquer momento e que não vou dizer o teu nome a ninguém, se escolheres participar.

1. Gostas de aprender Inglês? Assinala com um X.

☐ Nada   ☐ Pouco   ☐ Mais ou menos   ☐ Muito

2. O que achas que te ajuda a aprender Inglês? Assinala com um X.				
	Nada	Pouco	Mais ou menos	Muito
… cantar.				
… representar/fazer teatro.				
… ouvir histórias.				
… ver filmes / vídeos.				
… fazer jogos.				
… fazer fichas de exercícios / exercícios do manual.				
… fazer atividades no exterior.				
… ouvir falar Inglês.				
… falar em Inglês.				
… ler em Inglês.				
… escrever em Inglês.				

3. O que achas importante quando ouves uma história em Inglês? Assinala com um x.				
	Nada	Pouco	Mais ou menos	Muito
Perceber todas as palavras da história.				
Perceber as ideias gerais da história.				
Conseguir contar a história depois de a ouvir.				
Aprender palavras / frases em Inglês.				
Divertir-me a ouvir a história?				

4. Como gostas mais que te contêm uma História? Assinale com um x.				
	Nada	Pouco	Mais ou Menos	Muito
Com o livro.				
Com fantoches / marionetas.				
Através de representação / teatro.				
Com cartões ilustrados / imagens.				
Com vídeo.				
De olhos abertos.				
De olhos fechados.				

5. Lembras-te de alguma história que te tenham contado nas aulas de Inglês. Se responderes sim diz qual.

☐ Não   ☐ Não sei   ☐ Sim   Qual?_____

6. Tens uma história preferida? Se sim qual?

☐ Não   ☐ Sim   Qual ?

_____

Obrigada pelo tempo que dedicaste a este questionário!   **Joana Simões Neves**

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Appendix IV – Results from the initial questionnaire to the students

Questions	not at all	a little	+/-	a lot	N/V
Q1: Do you like to learn English?	4%	9%	17%	70%	
Q2: What do you think helps you learn English?					
sing	0%	4%	39%	57%	
role plays	0%	17%	43%	39%	
listen to stories	0%	0%	17%	83%	
watch movies/videos	0%	4%	26%	70%	
play games	0%	4%	9%	87%	
worksheets/exercises-pupil's book	4%	4%	22%	70%	
outside activities	4%	26%	65%	4%	4%
listen	4%	4%	17%	74%	
speak	0%	17%	74%	4%	4%
read	4%	9%	22%	65%	
write	9%	0%	17%	74%	
Q3: What do you consider important when listening to a story in English?					
to understand every single word	9%	13%	17%	70%	
to understand the main ideas	4%	4%	13%	79%	
be able to retell the story	9%	9%	26%	57%	
to learn new vocabulary/sentences	4%	0%	9%	87%	
to enjoy storytelling	4%	0%	4%	91%	
Q4: How do you like be told a story?					
with a book	9%	9%	47%	35%	
with puppets	13%	0%	13%	74%	
acting/dramatics	4%	4%	13%	78%	
with illustrated cards	0%	9%	22%	65%	4%
with video	4%	0%	9%	87%	

	No	I don't know	Yes		N/V
Q5: Do you remember any story that you have been told in English classes?	17%	65%	17%		
Q6: Have you got a favourite story?	35%	N/A	65%		

Key: N/A – not applicable; N/V – not valid

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

Joana Simões Neves

Appendix V – Pedido de autorização à Direção do Agrupamento de escolas

Pedido de autorização à Direção do Agrupamento de escolas

Exmo Sr. Diretor X,

O meu nome é Joana Lagoa Duque Simões Neves e no âmbito do estágio (Prática de Ensino supervisionada II) do segundo ano do Mestrado em ensino de Inglês no 1º ciclo, que estou a frequentar na Faculdade de ciências socias e humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, estarei no 1º período letivo do corrente ano com a turma X do 4º ano, na escola X.

Para efeitos de pesquisa/investigação com vista ao desenvolvimento do relatório final, torna-se fulcral que possa desenvolver um estudo centrado no tópico: "English learning in primary education in Portugal – stories as a vehicle for learning" ("A aprendizagem de Inglês na educação no 1º ciclo do ensino básico em Portugal – histórias como veículo para a aprendizagem")

As aulas serão desenvolvidas com base em histórias infantis adaptadas de forma a cumprir as metas curriculares previstas pelo ministério da educação para o Inglês no 1º ciclo, sendo que a utilização do manual funcionará como um complemento e consolidação de conteúdos programáticos abordados.

A recolha de dados para o referido estudo irá ser concretizada através de questionários acerca dos hábitos de leitura, preferências, opiniões e reações às histórias (em Inglês) abordadas em contexto de sala de aula e atividades relacionadas com as mesmas, bem como através da autoavaliação e reflexão acerca das histórias, atividades e o seu entendimento e desempenho nos diferentes momentos.

Os resultados obtidos serão incluídos no relatório final e possivelmente em artigos académicos e conferências. No entanto a identidade e quaisquer outros dados relativos aos alunos não serão publicados nem divulgados em circunstância alguma.

A Escola, funcionários e alunos permanecerão no anonimato durante todo o processo. O mesmo não acontecerá com os trabalhos realizados pelos alunos que poderão ser fotografados e incluídos no estudo que irei realizar, sendo que nunca será em circunstância alguma revelada a identidade do autor.

Após a recolha dos consentimentos dos alunos e respetivos encarregados de educação, da autorização da direção do Agrupamento, da Coordenadora da escola X e da professora titular de turma, irei pôr em prática o supramencionado estudo, sendo que em qualquer momento qualquer aluno poderá escolher não participar no estudo.

Venho por este meio, solicitar a sua autorização para poder pôr em prática o referido estudo com os alunos da turma indicada, se possível até 30 de setembro de 2019

Para qualquer esclarecimento poderá contactar-me através do email: ...@gmail.com

Joana Simões Neves   Professora Doutora Sandie Mourão
                                                                          FCSH -Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Eu, Diretor do agrupamento de escolas X declaro que fui informado acerca do estudo intitulado "English Learning in primary education in Portugal – stories as a vehicle for learning". ("A aprendizagem de Inglês na educação no 1º ciclo do ensino básico em Portugal – histórias como veículo para a aprendizagem") e dos seus objetivos e metodologias e autorizo os alunos da turma X do 4ºano da Escola X, a participar no referido estudo.

Data:_____

Assinatura: _____

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

Joana Simões Neves

Appendix VI – Pedido de autorização à coordenação da escola

Pedido de autorização à coordenação da escola X

Exma. Coordenadora X,

O meu nome é Joana Lagoa Duque Simões Neves e no âmbito do estágio (Prática de Ensino supervisionada II) do segundo ano do Mestrado em ensino de Inglês no 1º ciclo, que estou a frequentar na Faculdade de ciências socias e humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, e estarei durante o 1º período letivo do corrente ano (de Setembro a Dezembro) a estagiar na turma X do 4º ano, na escola X, se assim me for permitido.

Para efeitos de pesquisa/investigação com vista ao desenvolvimento do relatório final, terei de desenvolver um estudo centrado no tópico: "English learning in primary education in Portugal – stories as a vehicle for learning" ("A aprendizagem de Inglês na educação no 1º ciclo do ensino básico em Portugal – histórias como veículo para a aprendizagem")

As aulas de inglês serão desenvolvidas com base em histórias adaptadas de forma a cumprir as metas curriculares previstas pelo ministério da educação para o Inglês no 1º ciclo, sendo que a utilização do manual de inglês funcionará como um complemento e elemento de consolidação de conteúdos programáticos abordados.

A recolha de dados para o referido estudo irá ser concretizada através de:

- questionários aos alunos e encarregados de educação
- fichas de autoavaliação dos alunos
- trabalhos realizados pelos alunos (poderão ser fotografados, sendo que nunca será revelada a identidade do autor)
- Observações e notas de campo
- recolha de imagens através de filmagens apenas de mim - para análise de metodologias e técnicas como contador de histórias

As filmagens não serão partilhadas, e em nenhuma circunstância imagens de crianças, ou de qualquer elemento que possa identificar alunos, colaboradores ou a escola, serão tornados públicos.

Os resultados obtidos serão incluídos no meu relatório final e possivelmente em artigos académicos e conferências.

A Escola, funcionários e alunos permanecerão sempre no anonimato durante todo o processo e qualquer criança pode escolher não participar, ou em qualquer momento optar por não participar no estudo.

Serão solicitados consentimentos ao diretor do agrupamento de escolas, aos encarregados de educação e aos alunos para que possam participar no estudo.

Venho por este meio, solicitar a sua autorização, se possível até 16 de setembro de 2019, para poder pôr em prática o referido estudo.

Para qualquer esclarecimento poderá contactar-me através do email: ...@gmail.com

Professora Doutora Sandie Mourão

Orientadora do Relatório Final

Joana Simões Neves   FCSH -Universidade Nova de Lisboa

_____   _____

_____

Eu, _____,

Coordenadora da Escola X, declaro que fui informada acerca do estudo intitulado "English Learning in primary education in Portugal – stories as a vehicle for learning". ("A aprendizagem de Inglês na educação no 1º ciclo do ensino básico em Portugal – histórias como veículo para a aprendizagem"), dos seus objetivos e metodologias e autorizo os alunos da turma X do 4ºano da X, a participar no referido estudo.

Data: _____

Assinatura: _____

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

Joana Simões Neves

Appendix VII – Pedido de autorização à Professora titular de turma

Pedido de autorização à Professora titular da turma X do 4ºano da escola X – Agrupamento de escolas X

Exma. professora titular da turma X do 4º ano da escola X, (nome da professora)

O meu nome é Joana Lagoa Duque Simões Neves e no âmbito do estágio (Prática de Ensino supervisionada II) do segundo ano do Mestrado em ensino de Inglês no 1º ciclo, que estou a frequentar na Faculdade de ciências socias e humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, e irei ao longo do 1º período letivo do corrente ano (de Setembro a Dezembro) estagiar na turma X do 4º ano, na escola X.

Para efeitos de pesquisa/investigação com vista ao desenvolvimento do relatório final, terei de desenvolver um estudo centrado no tópico: "English learning in primary education in Portugal – stories as a vehicle for learning" ("A aprendizagem de Inglês na educação no 1º ciclo do ensino básico em Portugal – histórias como veículo para a aprendizagem")

As aulas de inglês serão desenvolvidas com base em histórias adaptadas de forma a cumprir as metas curriculares previstas pelo ministério da educação para o Inglês no 1º ciclo, sendo que a utilização do manual de inglês funcionará como um complemento e elemento de consolidação de conteúdos programáticos abordados.

A recolha de dados para o referido estudo irá ser concretizada através de:

- questionários aos alunos e encarregados de educação
- fichas de autoavaliação dos alunos
- trabalhos realizados pelos alunos (poderão ser fotografados, sendo que nunca será revelada a identidade do autor)
- observações e notas de campo
- recolha de imagens através de filmagens apenas de mim - para análise de metodologias e técnicas como contador de histórias

As filmagens não serão partilhadas, e em nenhuma circunstância imagens de crianças, ou de qualquer elemento que possa identificar alunos, colaboradores ou a escola, serão tornados públicos.

Os resultados obtidos serão incluídos no meu relatório final e possivelmente em artigos académicos e conferências.

A Escola, funcionários e alunos permanecerão sempre no anonimato durante todo o processo e qualquer criança pode escolher não participar, ou em qualquer momento optar por não participar no estudo.

Serão solicitados consentimentos ao diretor do agrupamento de escolas D. Maria, aos encarregados de educação e aos alunos para que possam participar no estudo.

Venho por este meio, solicitar a sua autorização, se possível até 16 de setembro de 2019, para poder pôr em prática o referido estudo.

Para qualquer esclarecimento poderá contactar-me através do email: ---@gmail.com

Professora Doutora

Sandie Mourão

Orientadora do

Relatório Final

Joana Simões Neves   FCSH -Universidade Nova de Lisboa

_____   _____

_____

Eu, _____,

Professora titular da turma X do 4º ano da Escola X, declaro que fui informada acerca do estudo intitulado "English Learning in primary education in Portugal – stories as a vehicle for learning". ("A aprendizagem de Inglês na educação no 1º ciclo do ensino básico em Portugal – histórias como veículo para a aprendizagem"), dos seus objetivos e metodologias e autorizo os alunos da turma X do 4ºano da Escola X, a participar no referido estudo.

Data:_____

Assinatura:_____

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

Joana Simões Neves

Appendix VIII – Pedido de autorização aos encarregados de educação"

Pedido de autorização aos encarregados de educação

Caro encarregado de educação,

O meu nome é Joana Lagoa Duque Simões Neves e estando a frequentar um mestrado em ensino de Inglês no 1º ciclo na faculdade de ciências sociais e humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, torna-se imperativo realizar um estágio. Irei realizar a segunda fase do mesmo, que decorrerá entre setembro e dezembro do corrente ano, na turma do seu educando.

Tendo em vista o relatório final do referido mestrado, irei conduzir um estudo que se relaciona com histórias e se intitula: "A aprendizagem de Inglês na educação no 1º ciclo do ensino básico em Portugal – histórias como veículo para a aprendizagem".

A recolha de dados para o estudo mencionado, irá ser concretizada através de:

- questionários aos alunos e encarregados de educação
- fichas de autoavaliação dos alunos
- trabalhos realizados pelo seu educando
- observação de aulas e notas de campo
- recolha de imagens através de filmagens apenas de mim - para análise de metodologias e técnicas como contador de histórias

As filmagens não serão partilhadas, e em nenhuma circunstância imagens de crianças, ou de qualquer elemento que possa identificar alunos, colaboradores ou a escola, serão tornados públicos. Qualquer criança pode escolher não participar ou em qualquer momento deixar de participar no estudo supramencionado.

Os resultados obtidos através do estudo serão incluídos no relatório final e possivelmente em artigos académicos e conferências.

A Escola, funcionários e alunos permanecerão no anonimato durante todo o processo.

Venho por este meio, solicitar a sua autorização para que o seu educando possa participar no referido estudo. Agradeço a entrega do destacável identificado e assinado se possível até 20 de setembro de 2019.

Joana Simões Neves   Professora Doutora Sandie Mourão

_____   (orientadora de estágio)

                                                    FCSH - Universidade Nova de Lisboa

                                                    _____

Eu _____, encarregado de educação de_____, declaro que fui informado (a) acerca das metodologias e objetivos do estudo : "A aprendizagem de Inglês na educação no 1º ciclo do ensino básico em Portugal – histórias como veículo para a aprendizagem".

☐ **Autorizo** o meu educando a participar nas atividades relacionadas com o referido estudo.

☐ **Não autorizo** o meu educando a participar nas atividades relacionadas com o referido estudo.

Data:_____

Assinatura:_____

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

Joana Simões Neves

Appendix IX – Autorização do aluno para participar no estudo

Autorização do aluno para participar no estudo da Joana : "English learning in primary education in Portugal – stories as a vehicle for learning" ("A aprendizagem de Inglês na educação no 1º ciclo do ensino básico em Portugal – histórias como veículo para a aprendizagem")

Assinala com um X.

A Joana explicou que:	Não Percebi	Percebi
… está a fazer um estudo para se tornar professora de Inglês do 1º ciclo		
… vou responder a questionários e irei fazer reflexões sobre a minha aprendizagem		
… os meus trabalhos serão incluídos no estudo		
… nem sempre vamos usar o manual de Inglês		
… que vamos fazer muitas atividades usando diferentes materiais		
… que vai estudar as minhas opiniões		
… vai partilhar o estudo com outros professores e pessoas ligadas ao ensino		
… o meu nome e o nome da escola não vão aparecer no estudo dela		
… posso deixar de participar no estudo a qualquer momento		
… os meus Pais têm conhecimento do estudo		
… se tiver dúvidas posso sempre perguntar		

☐ Não aceito participar no estudo da Joana

☐ Aceito participar no estudo da Joana

Nome: _____

Data: _____ Assinatura: _____

Eu, _____,
aluno (a) do_____, da escola X – Agrupamento X aceitei participar no projeto da Joana, intitulado: "English learning in primary education in Portugal – stories as a vehicle for learning" ("A aprendizagem de Inglês na educação no 1º ciclo do ensino básico em Portugal – histórias como veículo para a aprendizagem").

Como a Joana não vai usar o meu nome verdadeiro eu escolho um nome secreto.

_____

(Escolhe dois nomes: pode ser um super-herói, animal ou personagem e uma cor, número ou letra. Por exemplo: dog 10

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

Joana Simões Neves

Appendix X – Learners' assessment regarding storytelling events

Pupil	Pre-storytelling			During- storytelling			Post-storytelling		
	Attitudes and feelings regarding the story	Shares their perspectives and predictions about the story	Participates in the activities	Participates in the storytelling	Enjoys storytelling	Is able to answer the question provided at the beginning of the story	Uses story language in the activities	Role play - performance / involvement	Reflects about the storytelling outcomes (identifies difficulties and support to learning)
N									
1.									
2.									
3.									
4.									
5.									
6.									
7.									
8.									
9.									
10.									
11.									
12.									
13.									
14.									
15.									
16.									
17									
18.									
19.									
20.									
21.									
22.									
23.									
24.									
25.									
26.									

Figure A. 4 – Observation grid

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

Joana Simões Neves

Figure A. 5 – Assessment descriptors

	Pre-storytelling			During- storytelling			Post-storytelling		
	Attitudes /feelings regarding the story	**Shares their perspectives and predictions about the story**	**Participates in the activities**	**Participates in the storytelling**	**Enjoys storytelling**	**Can answer the question provided at the beginning of the story**	**Uses story language in the activities**	**Role play - performance /involvement**	**Reflects about the storytelling outcomes** **Identifies difficulties and support to learning**
evidence	Expresses their attitudes and feelings regarding the story questionnaire and reflection with their words, body posture and facial expression	Can reflect and express their expectations and points of view regarding the story questionnaire and reflection	Engagement with performance	Interest attention understands (providing language) Understands Tries hard even with difficulties Indifferent	Engaged Interventions even if in Portuguese Smiles Body language Pays attention	What did Floyd forget about? Showing understanding	Can use language from the story in related activities	Uses the story language to tell a different story Enjoys the act. (smiles…) Understands the language (when telling the story)	Expresses and compares their new perspectives and feelings regarding the story (post story reflection and questionnaire) to the predictions expressed at the beginning (pre-storytelling)
observation	Confused Positive Indifferent Negative	Unsatisfactory Satisfactory Good Very good Excellent	Autonomously If asked to Avoids participating Refuses to participate	Unsatisfactory Satisfactory Good Very good Excellent P- Portuguese E- English	Indifferent (doesn't show interest at all) Doesn't enjoy Enjoys it a bit (engaged) Enjoys it (excited) Enjoys it a lot (very excited)	Unsatisfactory Satisfactory Good Very good Excellent	Unsatisfactory Satisfactory Good Very good Excellent	Unsatisfactory Satisfactory Good Very good Excellent	Confused Positive Indifferent Negative

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

Joana Simões Neves

Appendix XI –

Stuck by Oliver Jeffers (2011)

It all began when Floyd got his kite stuck in a tree.

He tried pulling and swinging but it wouldn't come unstuck.

The trouble really began when he threw his favourite shoe to knock the kite loose…

… and that got stuck too!

He threw up his other shoe to knock down his favourite shoe and, unbelievably, that got stuck as well.

In order to knock down his other shoe, Floyd fetched Mitch.

Cats get stuck in trees all the time but this was getting ridiculous.

Excerpt from the original text [openings 1, 2 and 3]

Adapted version used in my lessons

This is Floyd. This is Floyd's kite.
It all began when Floyd got his new kite stuck in a tree.
He tried to pull it and swing it, but it was stuck.

What should he do? [get suggestions from children]
He went to the classroom and got his English book. Floyd threw his English book into the tree to knock down the kite. But it got stuck too!
So, he went to the gym and found a ball. Floyd threw the ball into tree to knock down his English book and his new kite. But it got stuck too!
So, he went to the canteen and found a pan of soup. Floyd threw the pan of soup into the tree to knock down the ball, his English book and his new kite. But it got stuck too!

Where did he go next?
He went to the computer room and found a computer. Floyd threw the computer into the tree to knock down the pan of soup, the ball, his English book and his new kite. Can you guess what happen next? Yes, you guessed!! It got stuck too!
Where did he go next?
He went to the library and found a chair. Floyd threw the chair into the tree to knock down the computer, the pan of soup, the ball, his English book and his new kite. But it got stuck too!
Where did he go next?
He went to the playground and found a slide. Floyd threw the slide into the tree to knock down the chair, the computer, the pan of soup, the ball, his English book and his new kite. But it got stuck too!

Then Floyd tried…
the school bus outside in the street;
the school across the street;
a cow from a farm in the neighbourhood;
a very large whale, from the sea nearby, all to knock down the slide, the chair, the computer, the pan of soup, the ball, his English book and his new kite;
And they all got stuck!!!

Nee, naw, nee, naw, nee naw, nee naw… A fire engine was passing, and the firemen stopped to help.
Guess what Floyd did!
Floyd threw the fire engine into the tree to knock down the whale, the school across the street, the school bus, the slide, the chair, the computer, the pan of soup, the ball, his English book and his new kite;
And… it got stuck! The firemen were very surprised!
Then Floyd had an idea and went to find a saw. [What do you think he's going to do?]
Floyd threw the saw into the tree. And that was it! There was no more room left in the tree and the kite came … unstuck. It fell to the ground.
Floyd was so happy. He flew the kite high in the sky for the rest of the day. That night Floyd fell asleep, exhausted.
But before he went to sleep, he thought 'What did I forget to do today?'

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

Joana Simões Neves

Appendix XII

Bark, George by Jules Feiffer (1999)

"Bark again, George." George went: "Moo."
The vet put on his longest latex glove…
Then he reached deep, deep, deep, deep, deep, deep, deep, deep, deep, deep down inside of George…
And pulled out a cow.
"Bark again, George."
George went: "arf".
George's mother was so thrilled that she kissed the vet…

Excerpt from the original text [Openings 10, 11, 12]

Adapted version used in my lessons

George's mother said: "Bark, George, bark"
George went: "meow"
"No, George", said George's mother. "Cats go meow. Dogs go woof woof. Now bark, George, bark"
George went: "Quack-quack"
"No, George", said George's mother. "ducks go Quack. Dogs go woof woof. Now bark, George, bark!"
[repeat with pig, cow, rabbit, hamster]

George's mother took George to vet.
"I'll soon get to the bottom of this", said the vet. "Please, bark, George."
George went: "meow"
The vet reached deep down inside of George... And pulled out a cat. "Now Bark, George, bark"
George went: "Quack quack"
The vet reached deep deep down inside of George... And pulled out a duck
[repeat with pig, cow, rabbit, hamster]
Then he reached deep deep deep deep deep deep down inside of George and he pulled out a **cow**. "Now bark, George, bark"
George went: "Woof woof"

George's mother was so happy that she kissed the vet. And the cat. And the duck. And the pig. And the cow. And the rabbit. And the hamster. On the way home, she wanted to show George off to everyone. So, she said: "Bark, George, bark".
And George went: "Hello".
What happened? Why did George say "Hello"?

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Appendix XIII – Props used to tell the story *Stuck* and for role plays

Figure A. 6 – Props used to tell the story *(teacher)*

Figure A. 7 – Props used in role plays (students)

The children were provided with all the props used to tell the story by the teacher plus a few new ones.

This way, children were able to choose the props that fitted the language they felt comfortable with, according to their abilities and level of confidence, the ones they already knew (reproducing the language they already had listen to repeatedly), or some new vocabulary (that they could adapt to the previously learnt and internalized structures), if they felt more confident in their abilities and autonomy.

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Appendix XIV – Props used to tell the story *Bark, George* and for role plays

Materials to tell the story *Bark, George* (a) and to use in role plays (b)

Figure A. 8 (a) – props to tell the story "Bark, George" (teacher)

The teacher used felt silhouettes (characters) to tell the story, which were hidden in a container behind George, the main character

Figure A. 9 (b) – Props to role plays (Children)

The children were provided with masks representing the characters in the story to perform their role plays.

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_____

Appendix XV – Questionnaire – pre-storytelling *Stuck*

Questionnaire - pre-storytelling

Nome de código:_____
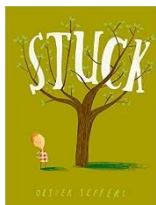
Adapted story from the original: 'Stuck' by Oliver Jeffers

1. Achas que vais perceber a história? Porquê?

2. Achas que vais gostar da história? Porquê?

3. Sobre o que achas que será a história? Porquê??

4. Achas que esta história te vai ajudar a aprender Inglês? Porquê?

5. Desenha aquilo em que pensas quando ouves a palavra 'presos'.

Hope you enjoy the story!!   Joana Simões Neves

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Appendix XVI – Questionnaire – pre-storytelling *Bark, George*

Questionnaire - pre-storytelling

Nome de código:_____

Adapted story from the original: 'Bark, George' by Jules Feiffer

1. Achas que vais perceber a história? Justifica a tua resposta.

2. Achas que vais gostar da história? Justifica a tua resposta.

3. Sobre o que achas que será a história? Justifica a tua resposta.

4. Achas que esta história te vai ajudar a aprender Inglês? Justifica a tua resposta.

5. O George (personagem principal) tem um problema. Faz um desenho que ilustre aquele que achas que será o problema do George na história.

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Appendix XVII – Questionnaire – post-storytelling *Stuck*

Questionnaire - post-storytelling

Nome de código:_____

Adapted story from the original: 'Stuck' by Oliver Jeffers

1. Percebeste a história?

Sim ☐   **Não** ☐   **Mais ou menos** ☐

1.1 O que te ajudou a perceber a história?

_____
_____
_____

1.2 O que dificultou a compreenssão da história?

_____
_____
_____

2. Gostaste da história?

Sim ☐   **Não** ☐   **Mais ou menos** ☐

2.1 Justifica a tua resposta.

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. O que mais te surpreendeu na história? Justifica a tua resposta.

_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Achas que esta história te ajudou a aprender Inglês? Justifica a tua resposta.

_____
_____
_____
_____

5. A história foi...				
	Nada	pouco	Mais ou menos	Muito
Interessante				
Fácil de perceber				
Divertida				
Aborrecida				
(...)				
5.1 Escreve um comentário sobre a história e sobre a forma como a professora Joana contou a história.				

_____
_____
_____

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

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Appendix XVIII – Questionnaire – post-storytelling

Questionnaire - post-storytelling

Nome de código:_____

Adapted story from the original: 'Bark, George' by Jules Feiffer

1. Percebeste a história?

Sim ☐   **Não** ☐   **Mais ou menos** ☐

1.2 O que te ajudou a perceber a história?

_____
_____
_____
_____

1.3 O que dificultou a compreenssão da história?

_____
_____
_____

2. Gostaste da história?

Sim ☐   **Não** ☐   **Mais ou menos** ☐

2.1 Justifica a tua resposta.

_____
_____
_____

3. O que mais te surpreendeu na história? Justifica a tua resposta.

_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Achas que esta história te ajudou a aprender Inglês? Justifica a tua resposta.

_____
_____
_____
_____

5. A história foi...				
	Nada	pouco	Mais ou menos	Muito
Interessante				
Fácil de perceber				
Divertida				
Aborrecida				
(...)				

5.1 Escreve um comentário sobre a história e sobre a forma como a professora Joana contou a história.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Joana Simões Neves

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

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Appendix XIX   **Questionário final – 'Histórias contadas nas aulas de Inglês'**

Nome de código:_____

1. Gostaste das histórias? Assinala com um X.			Nada	Pouco	Mais ou menos	Muito
'My inside weather'						
	'Stuck'						
		'Bark, George'				

2. Percebeste as histórias? Assinala com um X.			Nada	Pouco	Mais ou menos	Muito
'My inside weather'						
	'Stuck'						
		'Bark, George'				

3. As histórias ajudaram-te a aprender Inglês? Assinala com um X.			Nada	Pouco	Mais ou menos	Muito
'My inside weather'						
	'Stuck'						
		'Bark, George'				

4. O que achas mais importante para perceberes uma história contada em Inglês? Numera de 1 (mais importante) a 10 (menos importante).	
Gostar da história	
O texto	
A entoação / pronúncia	
As imagens/materiais usados para contar a história	
Os gestos/expressões faciais de quem conta a história	
Os debates (reflections)	
As dramatizações (role plays)	
As atividades relacionadas com as histórias	
O contributo dos colegas	
Outra: _____	

5.   O que mais gostas numa história contada em Inglês? Justifica a tua resposta.
_____
_____

6.   Quando te contam uma história em Inglês, o que achas que te ajuda mais a aprender (Inglês)? Justifica a tua resposta.
_____
_____

7.   O que achas que a Joana poderia ter feito para melhorar a forma como conta histórias em Inglês? Justifica a tua resposta.
_____
_____

Obrigada pelo esforço e dedicação!

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Appendix XX – Termly test

2019/2020

Name:

_____

Mark:

_____

School:

_____

Date: _____ **Class:**_____ **Teacher:**_____

/4

1. Listen and number.

/5

2. Listen and match.

/5

| confused | tired | confident | happy | scared |

2. Listen and ☑ or ☒.

/10

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2019/2020

3. Listen and choose: true ☑ or false ☒. /12

4. Listen and circle. /16

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Name:

_____

School:

_____

Date: _____ **Class:**_____

/4

2019/2020

Mark:

_____

Teacher:_____

5. Read and colour.

/12

1. Two purple berries.

2. Six green apples.

3. Brown wood.

4. Three orange leaves.

5. Two white mushrooms.

6. Four yellow nuts.
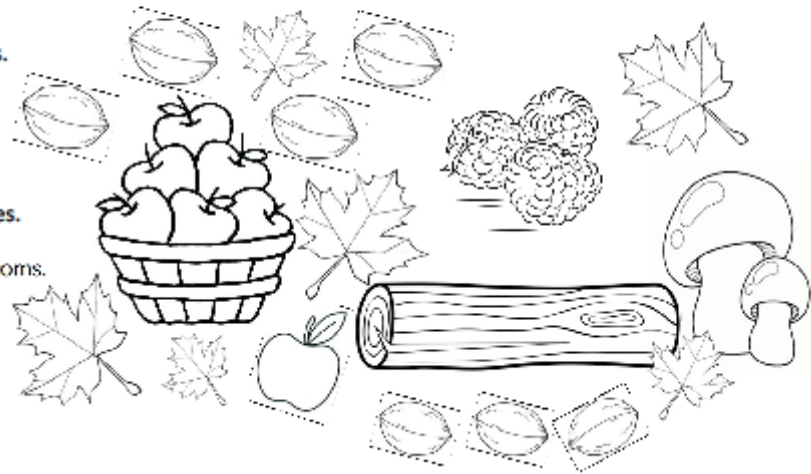
6. Order the letters and write.

/12

January	February	March	April	May	June	July
August	September	October		November	December	

1. HRMCA

_____

2. BEEECDRM

_____

3. YAAUJRN

_____

4. CTERBOO

_____

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2019/2020

7. Choose, order and write. /10

o listen   o speak   o read   o write   o draw
o play   o act   o sing

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
e r w	w e a c	t a w	e i a	e i a
a i t	y t	c r d	d r e	p k s
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

8. Look and write. /18

o classroom   o gym   o canteen
o playground   o computer room   o library

1. Where is Bud?

He is in the _____.

3. Where is _____?

He _____

2. Where is Holly?

She is _____

_____.

4. _____?

_____

_____.

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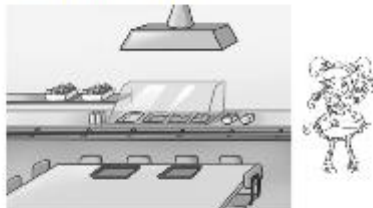
Appendix XXI – Long-term planning – 2nd Cycle

Unit of work: "Stuck" adapted story

	Look what I can do!
Learning objectives	- I can identify different places at school - I can identify some objects from different parts of the school - I can say different places at school - I can say some objects that belong to different parts of the school - I can ask and answer about someone's location (places at school: 'where are you? / I'm in /at the…') - I can understand a story in English - I can participate in the storytelling - I can retell the story - I can create and tell my own story (based on the one I heard) - I can identify and discuss similarities and differences between my school and different schools around the world (intercultural- sometimes the pupils talk in Portuguese and the teacher provides them with the English version of what they say or helps them to say it in English) - I can build a poster (pair work assembled in a whole class project) about the classroom or route to school that surprised me the most on the videos I watched in class (intercultural final activity)
Vocabulary	**New vocabulary:** Places at school: Classroom, library, canteen, computer room, gym and playground Actions: threw up, pull, swing, stuck Objects: pan of soup, saw, kite, fire engine, firemen, slide **Revised vocabulary:** Actions: Match, talk, understand Feelings: Feel, happy, sad, angry, tired, scared (introduction to the topic: places at school and intercultural activities, especially reflections)
Structures	**New Structures**: Where are you? I'm in/at the… Where did he go next? He went to the… and found a… He threw it into the tree to knock down the… It got stuck too.
Activities	**Pre-story** - Introduction to the topic (flashcard activities) - Mini-cards games and board game (pairs work) <u>Reflection</u>: about their first thoughts regarding the title of the story and the main character - Intercultural activity: similarities and differences between their school and the way they go to school and different realities around the world (videos, reflections maps and role play) **During storytelling:** - the pupils are asked a few times to predict what's happening next - the pupils are prompted to provide some vocabulary and structures helping the teacher to tell the story (especially when retelling the story) **Post-story** - The pupils order the objects that Floyd threw up to the tree and match to the places at school (mini-cards) <u>Reflection</u>: - The teacher asks what has changed regarding their first thoughts about the story (pre-storytelling) - The teacher asks their opinions about the story and Floyd's attitudes

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	- The teacher asks what they think the firemen felt when Floyd threw them up to the tree and left them there when they just wanted to help
Final activity	• Our 'stuck' version - The pupils retell the story in pairs (their own version using different vocabulary and props)
Books/stories	"Stuck" by Oliver Jeffers (adapted)
Songs/rhymes	"Places at my school – where are you?" Adapted song from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZjpI6fgYSY
Intercultural	- Discussing what is important in a school to help pupils to learn (materials, school places, objects, people…) - Watching a video : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=at2gAjtsgtk&list=PL76Sxv_7m1elBWrFjvEgLrExZFgfz9LVX&index=12 - Discussion about the video – pupils' ideas and feelings regarding the images – similarities and differences between their school and some of the schools shown in the video - The pupils identify some different locations (present on the video) on a world map - The pupils do a little role play (go outside, take their shoes off, try to write on their notebooks on the floor…) trying to live some of those children (in the video) "experiences" - Brief discussion about the experience and about the difficulties they felt - Watching a video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9K1t8b9t3s&list=PL76Sxv_7m1elBWrFjvEgLrExZFgfz9LVX&index=8 - Pupils' ideas and feelings regarding the images – similarities and differences between the way they go to school (learnt in the previous year) and children from different places around the world - Drawing what most surprised them (in pairs) to build a poster (whole class)
Curricular links	**Citizen education** - How do you feel about the video? What do you think the children on the video feel? Why are some children not wearing shoes, seated on the floor…? Talking about different social, religious and perspectives of the world… to help the pupils understand that the differences between them and the children in the videos can be related not only to financial difficulties or underdevelopment but also with religion, habits and different perspectives of the world and life in general.

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Appendix XXII – Long term planning – 3rd cycle

Unit of work: "Bark, George" adapted story

	Look what I can do!
Learning objectives	• I can identify different farm animals • I can say different farm animals • I can ask and answer about farm animals (is it a…/ Yes, it is/No, it isn't.) • I can identify some farm animal sounds • I can understand a story in English • I can participate in the storytelling • I can retell the story • I can create and tell my own story (based on the one I heard)
Vocabulary	**New vocabulary:** Farm animals: Cow, sheep, goat, horse, duck, hen, roster, donkey, rabbit, pig Story: bark, vet, **Revised vocabulary:** Dogs, mother, hello
Structures	**New Structures**: Bark, George Reached deep down inside of… Pulled out a…

Activities	**Pre-story**
	• Introduction to the topic (flashcard activities)
	• Mini-cards games (pairs work)
	    Reflection:
	about their first thoughts regarding the title of the story and the main character
	
	During storytelling:
	    - the pupils are asked a few times to predict what's happening next
	    - the pupils are prompted to provide some vocabulary and structures helping the teacher to tell the story (especially when retelling the story)
	
	Post-story
	- The pupils order the farm animals in the story (mini-cards)
	    Reflection:
	- The teacher asks what has changed regarding their first thoughts about the story (pre-storytelling)
	- The teacher asks their opinions about the story and George's behaviour
	- The teacher asks the pupils why George was making animals' sounds instead of barking (like any other dog would do)

Final activity	• Our 'Bark, George' version - The pupils retell the story in groups (their own version using different vocabulary and props) • Students cut out and colour George to retell the story to their families and friends, using their mini-cards about the farm animals
Books/stories	"Bark, George" by Jules Feiffer (adapted)
Songs/rhymes	"Old Macdonald"
Intercultural	- 'Portuguese' animal sounds and 'English' animal sounds comparison
Curricular links	**Citizen education** - Reflection: What would you do if you saw a person or an animal acting strange? - Would you help or not? Why or why not?

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

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Appendix XXIII – Example of activities in a learning sequence

		Activities (examples)
Introducing the topic (vocabulary)	**Flashcards activities – listening** • Activities that aim to provide listening opportunities around the target language	**Activity 1** • Flashcards stuck and numbered on the board • Teacher says the words (randomly) and the pupils say the numbers [variant: flashcards turned over; pupils memorize the sequence and answer by memory (target language)] **Activity 2** • Teacher says a word and shows the flashcards one at a time • Pupils say *true* if the word matches the image and *false* if not
	Flashcards activities – oral repetition • Activities that aim to provide repetition opportunities	**Activity 1** • Teacher says a word and shows the flashcards one at a time • Pupils repeat the word if correct and keep silent if not **Activity 2** • Flashcards numbered and turned face down on the board • Teacher says the numbers randomly • Pupils say the target words **Activity 2.1** • Pupils play the same game in pairs using mini-cards • One pupil orders the mini-cards and says the numbers randomly • The other pupil says the target words
Word recognition	**Word-cards activities** • Activities that aim to introduce and support students' recognition of the written word and associate it with its image	**Activity 1** • Flashcards and word cards stuck on the board • Pupils match each image to the correct word **Activity 2 – Pair work activity** • Memory game with mini-cards and mini-word-cards (in pairs) • Pupils match images to the correct words
Word writing	**Writing activities (word level)** • Activities that aim to support students' writing the target language	**Activity 1** • Teacher sticks a word card on the board • Pupils asked to try to memorize the written word • Teacher turns the word card over • Pupils write the word in their notebooks and tell the first, last letter and number of letters • Teacher turns the word card face up • Pupils correct the word **Activity 2** • Teacher sticks a flashcard on the board and draws dashes to symbolize letters bellow the image • Pupils write the word in their notebooks (variant 1: teacher provides a few letters to support pupils' writing; variant 2: teacher does not show any image to support recognition)
Structures	**Listening/speaking activities (sentence level)** • Activities that aim to set and provide opportunities to use English meaningfully during interaction with peers	**Activity 1** • Teacher draws a doll's house representing a school, on the board and sticks a figure (example a stick man, a boy or a girl) in one division (example: classroom) asking: Where are you? • Pupils answer: I'm in the classroom. (variant: pair work activity - the pupils do the same activity in pairs using mini-cards organized to represent the school and one stick man) **Activity 2** • Pupils play a board game or other pairs game (see Appendix XIII) to practise the structures (listening and speaking) for example each square has a place at school and the pupils ask: "Where are you?" and answer "I'm in the canteen", in order to move their counter.
	Reading/writing activities (sentence level) • Activities that aim to support pupils' reading/writing	**Activity 1** • Teacher sticks word cards on the board building a sentence and provides a few seconds so that the pupils try to memorize it. • The words are stuck on the board randomly and the pupils must put them in order to build the correct sentence Activity 1.1 – pair work activity The pupils do the same activity in pairs using their own set of word cards or ordering the words in their notebooks (word cards numbered on the board) **Activity 2** • Teacher writes a sentence on the board with no spaces between words. • Pupils write the sentence correctly in their notebooks or worksheet (see Appendices XVII and XX)
Final Activities	**Final activities to close the learning sequence** • Activities that aim to foster learning and to raise students' metacognitive awareness	**Activity 1 - Self assessment** • Each student fills in a self-assessment sheet (see Appendices XIX and XXI) **Activity 2** • The students work in a classroom project in small groups (examples: a poster, show and tell activity, role play) (see Appendix XXIII b) **Activity 3** • Each student work in a small project that allows him/her to autonomously use the language (example props to retell the story to their families and friends) – see Appendix XXV

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Appendix XXIV – Props to tell the story *My inside weather*

Figure A. 10 – Props used to tell the story: "My inside weather"

(a window made out of card, fabric and acetate, some drawings with different weather conditions to stick inside the window, some speech balloons with different weather conditions and a few silhouettes.)

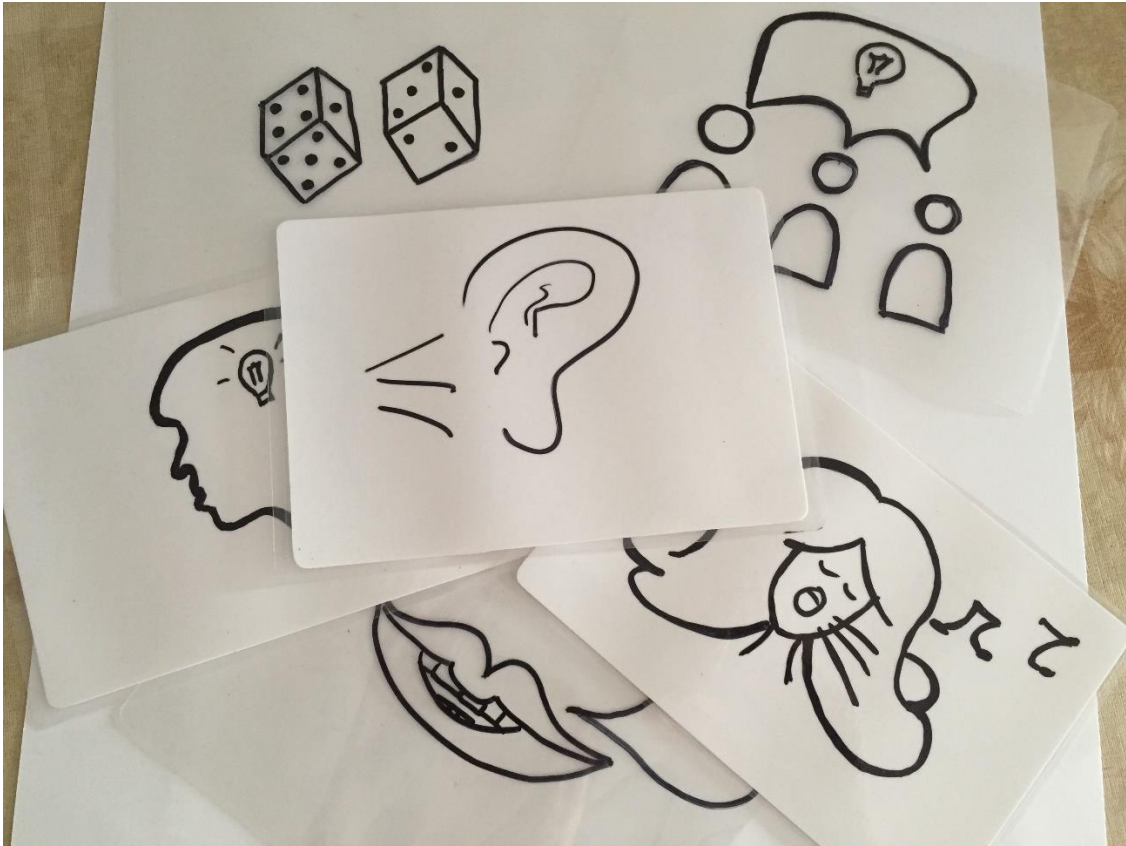*Figure A. 11 – Post-storytelling activity: Relating the "inside weather" to feelings*

The props used to tell the story were related to drawings about emotions as a result of a brainstorming about feelings, based on the story '*My Inside Weather'*.

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Appendix XXV - Summary and reflection cards

Figure A. 12 - Summary/reflection cards

These cards were used to show the children the activities that would be performed in each lesson (summary) and to help them reflect about the activities done by the end of the lesson (reflection).

Drawings made on laminated pieces of paper, that allowed adaptation in loco according to each lesson's specificities if needed. The drawings were made to be very simple and intuitive to the learners.

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Appendix XXVI – Materials used to perform activities regarding the feelings

Figure A. 13 – Pair game about feelings

Each learner should randomly move the pointer and complete the sentence according to the feeling each situation would trigger.

For each answer the learner should collect one mini-card about feelings

Figure A. 14 – My inside weather chart

Activity performed at the beginning and ending of each lesson and that consisted of evaluating their state of mind/feelings and briefly reflecting about it.

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Appendix XXVII – Song "Places at my school"

Song adapted from "Seasons of the year song" (which the students loved when approaching the seasons of the year) in:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZjpI6fgYSY&list=PL76Sxv_7m1envCpTJRYxiFH6P0ylCak0g&index=13

"Places at my school" song

Where are you? wow Places at my school.
Where are you? wow Places at my school.

I'm in the classroom where I learn and I sing
I'm in the classroom where I write and I draw
I'm in the classroom where I learn and I sing
I'm in the classroom where I write and I draw

Where are you? wow Places at my school.
Where are you? wow Places at my school.

I'm in the library where I read some books
I'm in the library where I listen to some stories
I'm in the library where I read some books
I'm in the library where I listen to some stories

Where are you? wow Places at my school.
Where are you? wow Places at my school.

I'm in the gym where I run and I jump
I'm in the gym where I do gymnastics
I'm in the gym where I run and I jump
I'm in the gym where I do gymnastics

Where are you? wow Places at my school.
Where are you? wow Places at my school.

I'm at the playground where I play with my friends
I'm in the playground where I speak and I act.
I'm at the playground where I play with my friends
I'm in the playground where I speak and I act.

Where are you? wow Places at my school.
Where are you? wow Places at my school.

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

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Appendix XXVIII – Worksheet about places at school

Name:

Class:

Date:

English worksheet

Places at school

1. **Order the letters and write the places at school.**

lpgonudayr

_____

lsromocas

_____

mgy

_____

rlirbay

_____

rmoo putocerm

_____

tecnane

_____

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Name:

Class:

Date:

English worksheet

Places at school

2. **complete the sentences.**

a. Where are you?

I'm in the_____.

d. Where_____ ?

I'm at the_____.

b. Where are you?

I'm in the_____.

e. _____?

I'm in _____.

c. Where are _____?

I'm in _____.

F. _____?

_____.

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Appendix XXIX – Places at school - pairs game

Played using mini-cards to collect for each correct answer and a die for each pair of learners

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Appendix XXX – Self-assessment - places at school

Name:
Class:

Self assessment /Auto-avaliação
Places at school

I can...
Eu consigo...

... I like English..
... eu gosto de inglês.

... recognize the school activities in English.

... reconhecer as atividades escolares em inglês.

... say the school activities in English.

...dizer as atividades escolares em inglês.

... read the school activities in English.

...ler as atividades escolares em inglês.

SCHOOL

... I like my school.

... write the school activities in English.

... escrever as atividades escolares em inglês.

... ask and answer about what I can or can't do

...perguntar e responder sobre o que consigo ou não

... perform the pair /group activities speaking in English.

...ler as atividades escolares em inglês.

nada   Pouco   Mais ou menos   Muito bem

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Appendix XXXI – Worksheet about school activities

English worksheet

Name:

Class:

Date:

School activities

Look at the table, write the correct school activity and circle the correct answer.

Listen	Speak	Read	Write	Sing	Draw	Act	Play
✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓

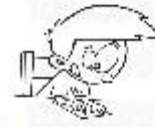1. Can you _draw_ ?

   Yes, I can.

   No, I can't.

2. Can you _____ ?

   Yes, I can.

   No, I can't.

3. Can you _____ ?

   Yes, I can.

   No, I can't.

4. Can _____ ?

   Yes, I can.

   No, I can't.

5. Can _____ ?

   Yes, I can.

   No, I can't.

6. Can _____ ?

   Yes, I can.

   No, I can'

7. _____ ?

   Yes, I can.

   No, I can't.

8. _____ ?

   Yes, I can.

   No, I can't.

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

Joana Simões Neves

Appendix XXXII – Self-assessment – school activities

Name:
Class:

Self assessment /Auto-avaliação
School activities

I can...

Eu consigo...

...recognize the school activities.

...reconhecer as atividades escolares.

...say the school activities in English.

...dizer as atividades escolares em Inglês.

...read the school activities in English.

...ler as atividades escolares em Inglês.

...write the school activities in English.

...escrever as atividades escolares em Inglês.

... ask and answer about what I can or can't do.

...perguntar e responder sobre o que consigo e não consigo fazer.

I loved...

I didn't like...

How do I use stories in primary English education as a vehicle for learning?

Joana Simões Neves

Appendix XXXIII – Puppet to retell the story *Bark, George*

Figure A. 15 – Puppet for the children to cut, colour and retell the story to their families, using their mini-cards hidden in a small envelope at the back of the dog, which they take one by one out of George's mouth as a follow up activity.