

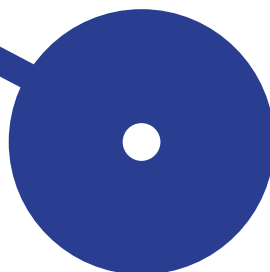
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ENSINO DE INGLÊS NO 1º CICLO DO ENSINO BÁSICO

The Effects of Project-based Learning Using Storytelling on Enhancing EFL Young Learners' 21st Century Skills

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Politécnico do Porto

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**The Effects of Project-based Learning Using Storytelling on Enhancing
EFL Young Learners' 21st Century Skills**

Relatório de Estágio

Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 1º Ciclo do Ensino Básico

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To my Leonardo Arel...

I hope those days when I was not fully present for you will be repaid with a great time together and better opportunities in your future.

I love you to the moon and beyond.

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ABSTRACT

This report of classroom action research is based on the application of Project-based learning (PBL) using storytelling and analyzing its effects on enhancing EFL young learners' 21st Century Skills. The report presents how the EFL education has been in Portugal and provides insights for teachers who would consider implementing PBL into young learner EFL classrooms using storytelling, with the aim of enhancing 21st Century Skills, among others. Therefore, the main focus is to conduct classroom action research to analyze the possibility of transforming traditional EFL teaching classrooms into an active learning environment through PBL. By undertaking an ethnographical methodological approach of both qualitative and quantitative nature and with action research outlines, the following triangulation of data collection tools were applied: lesson plans, discussions, self-assessment worksheets, questionnaires, one-on-one interviews, observation grids, and a teaching journal.

Results show that both PBL and storytelling can produce effective learning experiences and foster learners' 21st Century Skills. Therefore, it can be stated that implementing PBL using storytelling has saliently positive impacts on EFL young learners' 21st Century Skills, namely: collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, communication, problem-solving and ICT ¹skills.

Keywords: Project-based learning; storytelling; EFL young learners; 21st century skills.

¹ Information and Communications Technology

RESUMO

Este relatório de investigação-ação em sala de aula é baseado na aplicação da abordagem “Aprendizagem baseada em projetos” (“PBL” em inglês), usando a narração de histórias, e analisando os seus efeitos no desenvolvimento de competências do século XXI, relativamente a jovens alunos de ILE. Este trabalho aborda distintos temas, nomeadamente o estado do ensino de ILE em Portugal e também fornece ideias para professores que equacionem a implementação da abordagem PBL nas salas de aula de ILE para crianças, usando a narração de histórias com o objetivo de fomentar as competências acima referidas, entre outras. Portanto, o foco principal do nosso estudo é levar a cabo este projeto com contornos de investigação-ação, de forma a verificar a possibilidade de transformar as salas de aula de ensino de inglês tradicional num ambiente ativo de aprendizagem através do PBL.

Ao levarmos a cabo uma abordagem metodológica etnográfica de natureza qualitativa e quantitativa e com contornos de investigação-ação, utilizaremos as seguintes ferramentas de recolha de dados: planos da aula, discussões, *checklist* de auto-avaliação, questionários, entrevistas individuais, tabelas de observação, e um diário de bordo.

Os resultados demonstram que tanto “Aprendizagem baseada em projetos” (“PBL” em inglês) como a narração de histórias podem produzir experiências de aprendizagem efetiva e melhorar as competências do século XXI das crianças. Portanto, pode ser dito que a implementação de PBL usando narração tem impactos positivos nas competências do século XXI dos jovens alunos de ILE, nomeadamente: colaboração, pensamento crítico, criatividade, comunicação, resolução de problemas, e competências TIC², usando a narração de histórias.

Palavras-chave: Aprendizagem baseada em projetos; narração de histórias; jovens alunos de ILE; competências do século 21.

² Tecnologias de Informação e Comunicação

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CLIL Content and Language Integrated Learning

ELT English Language Teaching

EFL English as a Foreign Language

IBL Inquiry Based Learning

L1 First Language

L2 Second Language

PBL Project Based Learning

TBL Task Based Learning

TEFL Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TPR Total Physical Response

YL Young Learner

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most critical issues in teacher-centered EFL classrooms is the emphasis on language accuracy or competency in grammar rather than language proficiency which helps pupils have useful strategies to use the language for not only academic but social purposes. As Chen (2019, p.1) states, “rote-drilling and teacher-led instruction are still exercised in the EFL classrooms in several countries”. Although incorporating learner-centered approaches such as task-based approach in teaching English as a foreign language has gained popularity, the application of project-based learning approach, which shares some common characteristics with task-based learning (TBL), is still not very popular in Portugal.

PBL promotes learner-centeredness, active learning techniques, and encourages meaningful tasks which lead to problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision making (Chen, 2019). However, according to Cabral and Nobre (2015), the foreign language curriculum in Portugal, which is mostly defined by the national government, used to emphasize the conventional subject-matter content. Analyzing Cabral and Nobre (2015), we can highlight that instead of emphasizing meaningful real-life tasks and contents, grammar topics and/or lexical areas were valued in the EFL teaching curriculum. EFL teachers, nowadays, are encouraged to focus on pupils’ learning process, create a contextualized learning environment, plan their lessons with the aim of developing learners’ communicative competence. However, as it is highlighted by Cabral and Nobre (2015), most schoolteachers report that they would rather focus on the final product and mostly assign pupils homework because they believe doing those tasks in the classroom is time-consuming. Schoolteachers mainly follow *Metas de Aprendizagem* document (Cravo, et al., 2013, as cited in Cabral & Nobre, 2015) in terms of learning outcomes. The authors emphasize that the EFL curriculum values the learning outcomes instead of the pupils’ learning process, and the focus of the curriculum is on the language content, in other words on grammar points instead of focusing on the language tasks.

Moreover, the authors go on to say that teachers’ freedom in planning their lesson topics and tasks is limited, and they value final evaluation rather than student collaboration and negotiation of tasks to be taught. Nevertheless, another official document, *Aprendizagens Essenciais | Articulação com perfil dos alunos* (Ministério da Educação, 2018), which was released in 2018, seems to value student-centeredness more, as it highlights the importance and necessity of critical and creative thinking, personal development, and autonomy, and it promotes intercultural competence/communication as well.

Adopting a learner-centered approach would have a great impact on teaching English as a foreign language. As mentioned previously, the main goal of this report is to focus on the effects of one of these approaches during the internship practice we have undertaken within the master’s degree in Teaching English at Primary Education: the PBL approach, and the implementation of this approach in Portuguese EFL young learner classrooms.

It is believed that PBL is not something new and the origins of this approach date back to the mid-1800s, and it was first created by David Snedden to teach science in the United States (Beckett, 2002). The author also states that PBL was later developed by John Dewey's student and gained some popularity among educators in the early 1900s.

Previous research studies regarding PBL, and its effects have been carried out mostly with university and high school pupils. Considering Portuguese schools and English teaching, we have not found any research studies regarding this approach, unlike other innovative approaches. As there are not enough international studies conducted in the EFL young learner contexts, we decided that applying PBL into an EFL young learner classroom needed further research, and during our teaching practice, we had a chance to introduce PBL into a primary EFL classroom.

The present report is divided into two parts. Part I consists of four chapters. As the introductory chapter of the report, Chapter 1 provides theoretical information drawing on existing literature and research about PBL. The chapter deals with the characteristics of PBL, namely: definitions, basic features, implementation stages, benefits of PBL, and challenges for the teachers. Chapter 2 begins with examining the 21st Century Skills frameworks and research conducted by several authors. This chapter also addresses the improvement of these skills in the EFL classrooms. It then draws attention to the implementation of PBL aiming at developing 21st Century Skills. Chapter 3 focuses on ELT in Portugal by presenting and discussing some documents and reviews on the topic. The chapter also sets out to highlight the differences between PBL and simply doing a project. It continues with an example of a fantastic project carried out in the EFL young learner classrooms in Portugal (Pinto, et al., 2020). Moreover, this chapter compares and reveals the differences between TBL (Task Based Learning), IBL (Inquiry Based Learning) and PBL. Lastly, the chapter provides brief information about CLIL (Content and Language Based Learning) some of whose characteristics are intertwined with PBL. Chapter 4 explores the literature on storytelling and demonstrates its benefits. It then bridges the findings of storytelling and picture books to PBL.

Part II of this report is the empirical part of the study which applies the theoretical information outlined in Part I. This part consists of two chapters. Chapter 1 illustrates the nature of the study, the research methodology, its research questions, and its aims. The chapter then discusses the process and describes the procedures of gathering data. The details of the procedures which were used to analyze data are also explained. Chapter 2 presents the findings of the study. The findings are analyzed in two sections. The first section focuses on data collected from in-service EFL primary teachers and researchers on PBL and storytelling. In the second section, the action research is presented, findings gathered from the pupils' questionnaires and one-on-one interview are highlighted and reflected upon. The Conclusion of this report presents a summary of these findings by revisiting the research questions. Limitations of this study are then discussed and suggestions for the further research are proposed.

**PART I – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: CREATING POWERFUL
LEARNING EXPERIENCES THROUGH PBL AND STORYTELLING:
MASTERING THE 21ST CENTURY SKILLS**

CHAPTER 1 – MAKING LEARNING COME ALIVE: ALL ABOUT PBL

This chapter of the report deals with the basic characteristics of PBL. First, PBL is defined and its basic features along with its principles are covered. Next, implementation stages of PBL are introduced by focusing on each one of the steps. In addition, the benefits of PBL for the learners are presented by considering research studies and literature reviews. Finally, the chapter covers the challenges that might emerge while incorporating PBL into the classroom. On this point, a brief presentation of these challenges for the teachers are outlined taking into account some research studies.

1.1. DEFINITIONS OF PBL

It is not easy to provide a unique definition of PBL. In the literature focused on the theoretical description of PBL, various definitions have been proposed by numerous authors. Moss and Van Duzer (1998, p.2) define PBL as “an instructional approach that contextualizes learning by presenting learners with problems to solve or products to develop”. Their point of view is supported by Thomas (2000, p.1) as he considers PBL as

a model that organizes learning around projects”. Projects are described as complex tasks that are “based on decision making, or investigative activities; give students the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended periods of time; and culminate in realistic products or presentations (Thomas, 2000, p.1).

1.2. BASIC FEATURES OF PBL

Despite various definitions and approaches, some authors have provided key characteristics of PBL activities. It can be stated that educational researchers share different opinions about the main characteristics of PBL. For instance, Stoller (2002) reveals features of PBL as follows:

- PBL focuses on real-world subject-matter that makes pupils become interested;
- PBL is a learner-centered teaching method in which the teacher plays a major role in guiding the pupils and facilitating the process;
- Learners are given opportunities to build collaborative skills by sharing ideas and working with others in small groups. At the same time, pupils can work on their own and build independence;
- PBL activities are built upon the integration of real-tasks and give pupils an opportunity for authentic experience;
- Project work does not necessarily require a final product (e.g., an oral presentation, recorded talk journals, a poster, or a theatrical performance). Not only the product itself, but also the process of working toward the final of the project is valuable;

- PBL is motivating, engaging, and stimulating. The results of the project work are worthwhile, as PBL is effective in helping pupils improve their self-esteem as well as building skills, namely language skills, critical thinking, and collaboration, as mentioned previously.

Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) conceptualized PBL and identified seven essential elements of this approach: a) a need to know; b) a driving question; c) student voice and choice; d) 21st Century Skills; e) inquiry and innovation; f) feedback and revision; g) a publicly presented product.

The authors from The Buck Institute for Education, a non-profit organization that aims to provide an efficient and detail-oriented curriculum along with being committed to scientific development, created a new 'Gold PBL Model' (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Gold PBL Model



Note: cf. GPBL (2020). The model was adapted from the authors' recently published book.

The elements in the model had different names when it was first created. For instance, a 'challenging problem or question' was called a 'driving question'. Authenticity and reflection were the two elements that were added after the authors revised the model and incorporated a more comprehensive one. Soon thereafter their previous model, the eighth essential project design element of PBL, 'Significant Content' was also added into the framework. Yet, they replaced it once again and they called it 'Key Knowledge and Understanding' and instead of the '21st Century Skills', they used the term 'Success Skills'.

Taking the 'Gold PBL Model' (Figure 1) into account, each one of the elements is analyzed below (Larmer, 2020):

1. Key Knowledge, Understanding, and Success Skills: The term 'Key Knowledge and Understanding' is said to be the same as 'content'. The main goal of this element is to teach pupils content that is significant to them and derived from the standards. Additionally, success skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, self-management and presentations are taught with the content.

2. Challenging Problem or Question: The projects in the PBL approach must be based on a problem or question that challenges pupils. Although there are various ways of expressing the term, a 'driving question' is still the most suggested.
3. Student Voice and Choice: Pupils must be involved in the process and have a say in their projects to be able to solve the problem or answer the essential question. By giving them 'voice', we can ignite their passion and they can express their ideas and have the opportunity to speak in their own way. Giving them 'choice', we can encourage pupils to 'own' the project. Advanced pupils can even choose the topic or the driving question.
4. Sustained Inquiry: One can say that inquiry is not a superficial process. On the contrary, it requires an active, in-depth process that takes place over an extended period of time in which pupils question, search and find information to evaluate later on, and apply what has been encountered to solve the problem and/or create a product.
5. Public Product: Larmer (2020) gives importance to the demonstration of what has been learned. It is stated that the final product does not have to be just a presentation in front of an audience. It can also be displayed on a wall or shared online.
6. Authenticity: As the model was revised and developed, the new element 'authenticity' was also added. Authenticity can be incorporated in different ways: a) pupils can solve real-world problems that people face; b) it can involve authentic tasks such as using digital resources to produce a video; c) it can include the production of something new that can serve the community (e.g., building a garden, building a toy factory, etc.).
7. Reflection: Just like 'authenticity', 'reflection' was also considered hugely important and added to the new model. Pupils are expected to reflect on their own experiences. They must think about the content they are learning and the reasons for their learning.
8. Critique and Revision: Projects should include constructive feedback. During the project, pupils must be taught to give and receive feedback. The feedback must be constructive and be given with the aim of improving the process and the product.

Moreover, Harmer and Stokes (2014) on their article 'The benefits and challenges of project-based learning: A review of literature' state six key features of PBL after having analyzed sixty-nine educational research studies and articles. The characteristics of PBL highlighted by these authors, which are also emphasized by several authors, are mentioned below:

A) Learning by doing

It is stated that PBL can be considered an effective hands-on learning approach. Pupils can benefit from learning by doing instead of learning by listening to the teacher as passive learners. Creating a learner-centered environment, educators provide memorable learning opportunities. Philominraj et

al. (2020, P. 7661) highlight this idea by stating that “an individual learns through subjective experiences and personal involvement, which are more easily remembered than neglected.” Projects that the teachers implement must be cognitively engaging. When pupils' hands are on, their minds should not be 'off'. As Condliffe et al. (2017, p. 8) point out, PBL must arouse curiosity and cultivate pupils' "need to know". In her analysis of 'The application of project-based learning in the English classrooms', Kalabzová (2015) emphasizes that PBL must give pupils opportunities to fulfil their need to know and build understanding. One of the most important techniques that evokes pupils' interest and engages pupils in their project is to involve a 'driving question' to foster pupils' sense of belonging and give them a purpose to take on responsibilities and fulfil their project work (Larmer and Mergendoller, 2010). The genesis of a project according to Bell (2010) is having pupils engaged with an inquiry in which their interest is triggered, and they benefit from their natural desire to learn. As Korb (2012) suggests, human beings are naturally willing and curious to learn. Therefore, PBL can be considered an efficient approach to make pupils' learning more meaningful.

Thomas (2000) also emphasizes the importance of struggling while encountering the principles of the subject and solving the problem during the project work. However, pupils' 'need to know' is controversial. Although Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) had 'need to know' on their first 'Essential PBL Design Elements', and they believe the importance of creating a genuine need to learn, they replaced it by claiming that PBL is different from traditional methods and pupils do not learn for the sake of a test. PBL creates a real need and motivates pupils to learn. It is also emphasized that an engaging project can include other techniques such as a K-W-L Chart (Know, What to Learn, Learned) (Larmer, 2020).

B) Real-world challenges

According to Harmer and Stokes (2014), the PBL approach is authentic and brings real-world problems into the classroom. Incorporating real-world connections to the classroom deepens pupils' learning as they tackle real challenges that are meaningful to them (Condliffe et al., 2017; Larmer, 2020; Thomas, 2000). Throughout the projects, pupils try to find solutions to the question that is based on a real-life challenge. As Thomas (2000) states, projects must encourage pupils to investigate the problem constructively. In other words, when pupils do research, they must be able to transform and construct their knowledge. To be considered a PBL project, the project must provide new understandings and new skills, challenge pupils, and involve decision-making, problem-solving as well as discovery (Thomas, 2000). By creating a project taking these criteria into account, pupils take an active role in their learning through active exploration that will ultimately lead to fostering skills which are crucial to answer the question (Condliffe et al., 2017; Harmer & Stokes, 2014). This point of view is supported by Bell (2010, p. 39) since PBL is seen as a motivating approach that provides worthwhile skills "that will build a strong foundation for their future in our global economy".

C) Teachers as facilitators

The role of the teacher in a PBL-based classroom differs from a traditional learning environment. Exploring the PBL approach, Harmer and Stokes (2014, p. 5) define the role of the tutor as a "guide-on-the-side" rather than a "sage-on-a-stage". PBL is considered a 'student-driven' approach to some extent while teachers are facilitators who scaffold the learning process, organize the projects, support pupils to make the projects achievable together with assisting the inquiry process (Bell, 2010; Condliffe et al., 2017; Harmer & Stokes, 2014; Thomas, 2000). In other words, the teacher's role shifts from someone who transmits knowledge to someone who encourages the pupils to take an active role in their learning and monitors the process (Jezberová et al., 2011 as cited in Kalabzová, 2015). Thomas (2000) goes on to say that teachers can introduce different varieties of scaffolding, such as learning aids and training strategies to help pupils benefit from PBL.

D) Collaboration and teamwork

The PBL approach and its strategies can be considered fruitful in terms of enhancing collaboration among other 21st Century Skills. Training teamwork skills through communication and negotiation is one of the most important key features of PBL (Harmer & Stokes, 2014). PBL enables social learning in the classroom as pupils engage in projects. They collaborate and work in groups while brainstorming ideas as well as creating the final product (Bell, 2010). Pupils practice how to be more effective team members, deal with conflicts and respect each other. They also enhance their communication skills while presenting and generating ideas/suggestions, solving tasks and problems (Bell, 2010; Kalabzová, 2015).

E) A final product

Although PBL focuses not only on the product but also on the process, Harmer and Stokes (2014) emphasize the importance of the end-product of the project. Working collaboratively, pupils can strengthen their productivity and create a "quality product" (Harmer & Stokes, 2014, p. 6; Thomas, 2000). The final product can give teachers some ideas of pupils' motivation and interest, productivity level, efforts, and the improvement of skills throughout the project.

F) Interdisciplinarity

One of the main principles of PBL is being interdisciplinary (Coufalová, 2006, as cited in Kalabzová, 2015). In fact, "in PBL, students work in groups to solve challenging problems that are authentic, curriculum-based, and often interdisciplinary" (Solomon, 2003, p. 20, as cited in Holmes, 2012). In addition, Harmer and Stokes (2014) point out that having interdisciplinary projects fosters adaptability and holistic thinking. However, while PBL is interdisciplinary in nature, it can focus on only one subject-matter as well.

1.3. STAGES OF PBL IN ENGLISH CLASSES

According to Alan and Stoller (2005), to maximize benefits, it is essential to combine teacher guidance, feedback, student engagement, and challenging tasks. While incorporating project work into a language classroom, four stages are proposed by Stoller (2002; 2013).

Stage 1: Preparation Stage

a) Determination of the topic

At this step, the topic is chosen through discussion and negotiation among pupils and the instructor. While selecting the topic, as Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) state, the teacher should awaken pupils' minds and stimulate them by implementing an 'entry event' which makes pupils interested and engaged. Thus, the authors suggest a video, a short film, or an anecdote to initiate discussion and activate pupils' existing knowledge and personal background.

What is more, one of the most essential steps in the preparation stage is asking a 'driving question' as mentioned previously. According to Larmer and Mergendoller (2010), a 'driving question' is supposed to be open-ended which provokes pupils to think and reflect on their own ideas. As suggested by Thomas (2000), PBL projects can be built around pre-defined units or interdisciplinary topics, but it must focus on a question that drives pupils to find the central concepts of the subject and make use of their time while being occupied with an intellectual purpose.

b) Figuring out the educational goal

As Kalabzová (2015, p. 21) points out, after determining the topic and answering the crucial "driving question", pupils need to understand the aim of the project. As mentioned previously, asking questions might help them to work out the educational goal of the project as well. The learning aims should be clear, understandable, and attainable for each one of the pupils.

c) Choosing the final outcome

The purpose of this step is to determine the final product. The outcome varies according to pupils' interests, skills, background or even willingness. It can range from a written report, scrapbook, brochure, letter, oral presentation, bulletin board display, class, or wall newspaper, to a video/short film or a theatrical play. Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) claim that pupils' voice is one of the key elements of PBL. Allowing them to decide what they will create for the project can make them feel that their learning is meaningful. However, the instructor can limit the options so that choosing a product would not be overwhelming and confusing for the pupils. Furthermore, at this step, pupils negotiate who is going to watch the presentations (e.g., classmates, pupils from different classes, parents, etc.).

d) Creating the structure of the project work

After reaching a consensus on the starting and end points of the project, pupils and the instructor focus on project details. At this point, it is important to figure out the roles and responsibilities of

team members. Furthermore, pupils come to an agreement on the deadline of the project, then reflect on what information they are going to need and how they are going to gather this information (online, the library search, field trips, books, etc.).

e) Creating teams

Most researchers agree that teamwork is essential in the classroom and PBL incorporates collaboration. Oakley et al. (2004) state that, while forming teams, teachers should take different ability levels into account. They also point out the efficiency of instructor-formed teams. When pupils form teams, they have the tendency to exclude the weaker ones. Therefore, those pupils might feel left out, or they compose a group only with weak ones, and this may lead to some problems such as not fulfilling the tasks collaboratively. However, when the team is composed of pupils with diverse skills, weaker pupils can benefit from observing how strong pupils work, feel more motivated, and take them as an example.

f) Producing a framework for the language demands of information gathering

As Alan and Stoller (2005) state, at this step, the instructor provides a framework for the language, skills, and strategy demands for the information gathering. The framework includes stages and milestones of the project, such as the name of the pupils, project's title, its start, and end date, as well as the team members, goals, and outcomes.

Stage 2: Realization Stage

This stage consists of two cycles: a) Cycle 1: Soliciting information; b) Cycle 2: Processing information:

a) Cycle 1: Soliciting information

Considering pupils' levels, the instructor plans the activities for each information-gathering task to scaffold the process. For instance, if the pupils aim to solicit information through an interview, the teacher can prepare some activities so that pupils can form and ask questions and request feedback.

b) Cycle 2: Processing information

In this cycle, "the instructor prepares the students to compile and analyze data" (Alan & Stoller, 2005, p. 12). Stoller (2002) states that once pupils collect information from different sources, the instructor trains the pupils by planning training sessions in which they organize the materials, "compile, analyze and synthesize the information" (Alan & Stoller, 2005, p. 12). These training sessions can be variable depending on how the information is gathered (e.g., interviews, note-taking, etc.). The instructor prepares the tasks in a way that pupils can process the information on their own. After being assisted by the instructor, pupils are ready to work in groups, compile and analyze the collected information. They discuss to find out which information is relevant to the project.

Stage 3: Presentation Stage

Before pupils present the final product, the instructor prepares activities in order to improve pupils' language. For an oral presentation, the instructor mostly gives feedback on pronunciation, intonation and word choice. He/she helps with addressing an audience as well as making eye contact and so forth. Then, the pupils are ready to present the final product.

Stage 4: Evaluation Stage

As mentioned before, PBL does not only focus on the final product. Pupils are evaluated throughout the process, especially during the preparation stage when they have check-ins. As Patton (2012) points out, there are four different ways of assessing the final project, such as self-assessment, peer assessment, teacher assessment and outside expert/audience. In terms of self-assessment, pupils can reflect on the language they used throughout the project as well as the subject matter they acquired (Alan & Stoller, 2005). Peer assessment can be done by handing out evaluation sheets to understand to what extent each team member attended the meetings, made effort to fulfil his/her responsibilities, shared his/her ideas and collaborate. The teacher can use various methods to evaluate the final outcome. As Patton (2012) suggests, outside audience assessment can be done through a critique session which is a separate event.

1.4. BENEFITS OF PBL

PBL has been increasingly implemented in education. There are numerous research studies and reviews on the effectiveness and advantages of PBL when implemented in the classroom (Bell, 2010; Condliffe et al., 2017; Gultekin, 2005; Harmer & Stokes, 2014; Holmes, 2012; Iwamoto et al., 2016; Thomas 2000; Tsiplakides & Fragoulis, 2009). While the 21st Century Skills are explained in another section, some of the benefits of PBL are listed below:

- Learner autonomy

To start with, PBL fosters learner autonomy, which is one of the most important advantages as it leads to several other benefits such as motivation and engagement, meaningful learning, enhanced academic success, etc.

Learner autonomy has been a central concern in education for many years and a great deal has been said regarding the issue. Pichugova et al. (2016, p. 2) identified the most important aspects of autonomy scrutinizing different theories by several authors. One of the most important aspects of autonomous learning is giving pupils a choice. The second aspect that is indicated is to provide learners with the opportunity to set their own goals according to their needs. In other words, the teacher and pupils can discuss and negotiate the process such as problem identification. Moreover, the authors believe that providing support through the guidance of the teacher and materials is essential for learner autonomy. It is also revealed that abstaining from teacher-led instruction would lead to a secure environment in which pupils can feel responsible for their learning. One can say that

to create such an environment, teachers should be willing to turn on new responsibilities and provide a trustworthy atmosphere to make pupils feel secure and rely on this change. Pichugova et al. (2016, p.3) also state that "the more the learner sees him or herself as doing well, the more he or she wants to do even better". Therefore, we can highlight that self-esteem is correlated with learners' attitude and motivation. A learner with self-esteem would not be easily influenced by negative influences unlike a learner with low self-esteem.

Due to their emphasis on student-driven learning, PBL designs are seen to maximize pupils' confidence and autonomy. As learning a new language might be challenging for some, incorporating more student autonomy, choice, and voice would help those who are more insecure and others. Therefore, it is essential to provide opportunities to foster autonomous learning by incorporating pair work, group work, self-reflection, and self-assessment strategies. Stoller (2002) corroborated the aforementioned opinion by commenting on the positive impacts of PBL on pupils' self-esteem and autonomy, especially when they actively take part in the stages of PBL (while choosing a topic, determining the purpose of the project, and so on).

Considering PBL as one of the approaches which fosters learner autonomy, Yuliani and Lengkanawati (2017) carried out a study in Indonesian high school EFL classrooms to investigate how PBL can promote autonomous learning. Selecting pupils from different levels based on their prior academic achievement, the authors aimed to gather comprehensive information about the effectiveness of PBL on learner autonomy, through classroom observations by the teacher and the peer as well as face-to-face interviews after each stage of PBL. In their study, Yuliani and Lengkanawati (2017, p. 292) concluded that PBL promotes learner autonomy in terms of self-instruction, self-direction, self-access learning and individualized instruction in each one of the stages of PBL, namely: the "planning process, implementation process and the monitoring process".

- Motivation and engagement

As it is mentioned before, learner autonomy, which PBL provides as a benefit, has a significant correlation with some other advantages that PBL fosters and are valuable in a classroom setting. For instance, when pupils actively engage in the project and become more responsible, their learning becomes more meaningful.

Hence, a further reported benefit can be considered motivation and engagement. Motivation has been defined as "the inner power or energy that pushes one toward performing a certain action" (Ball, 2012, p. 4 as cited in Giri, 2016, p.492). As dealt with in Lam (2011, p. 142), PBL is considered effective in building motivation as learners are "wholly engaged in the learning task". Pupils' motivation is increased as they "build their projects to suit their own interests and abilities" while reaching a consensus on the topic for the upcoming project, determining the educational goal, and selecting the mode of the end-product (Dewi, 2016, p. 348). According to Kalabzová (2015), since pupils bring their ideas and points of view into the project, their intrinsic motivation increases. Ryan and Deci (2000) also state that intrinsic motivation is defined as the doing of an activity for its

inherent satisfaction, in other words for the sheer enjoyment of the activity. When someone is intrinsically motivated, he/she does the activity for its own sake, not because of feeling pressured or wanting to be rewarded. Therefore, as Korb (2012) emphasizes, when pupils are intrinsically motivated, they are more engaged in the learning process.

Considering PBL as a 21st century teaching approach, Giri (2016) conducted a research study in Nepalese private schools. One of the purposes of this study is to observe and analyze learners' motivation and engagement by incorporating PBL in the EFL context. The findings revealed that pupils' engagement was far better compared to their usual classroom setting and pupils were quite motivated to participate in the activities. Giri (2016) assumed that pupils were engaged in their learning due to having a collaborative environment, autonomy, and being involved in a wide variety of activities including digital ones.

In another study carried out with primary learners of EFL in Greece, Tsiplakides and Fragoulis (2009) concluded that pupils with a low performance developed intrinsic motivation and became more willing to participate in activities as they enjoyed the project. According to the qualitative data from the research study by Gultekin (2005), one of the most obvious findings was the enjoyment PBL provides. Gultekin (2005) emphasized that pupils felt joyful during the projects in comparison with conventional teaching methods and that their learning became more meaningful and permanent.

Castañeda (2014) studied English teaching through PBL, in a rural area, in Colombia. Having observed eighth-graders' lack of motivation due to several reasons, Castañeda (2014) decided to implement PBL into her English lessons to scrutinize the effects of PBL on motivation that is correlated with language learning achievements. By implementing the PBL approach, Castañeda (2014) divided pupils into groups and asked them to think about the problems they face in school. Throwing the food away, especially fruits, during lunchtime was the most mentioned problem by the pupils.

By developing such a constructive project called 'The World of the Fruits', Castañeda (2014) integrated real-life issues that would spark pupils' interest and curiosity. Pupils made presentations, prepared fruit salads, and learned the process of preparing salad using verbs such as cut, peel, chop, etc. The pupils were excited and wore their best clothes when it was finally time to share their final product with the other groups, especially with the younger pupils. Indeed, by collecting and analyzing data through artifacts, semi-structured and group interviews, Castañeda (2014) shared pupils' words in her article. It showed how much they were motivated when they expressed that the project felt like a movie, how relaxed they felt talking to the younger groups and how relieving it was when they made mistakes and it was ok. These findings also showed how motivation and autonomy are in correlation with each other once again. Moreover, the pupils mentioned how speaking was easier than usual as they remembered the activities done throughout the project. Considering the improvement of speaking skills in this project developed by Castañeda (2014), one should also emphasize that PBL helps pupils improve their language skills (Levine, 2004).

- Improved language skills

In PBL-based projects, activities are designed with the aim of creating real-world connections, and having learners engaged in real-world tasks (Bell, 2010). Learners take part in authentic activities in which they get meaningful communication opportunities and a variety of language skills integrated naturally, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Stoller, 2002). In their study with EFL young learners, Tsiplakides and Fragoulis (2009) established that pupils enhanced all four skills. They showed great improvement, especially in speaking and listening. There are several other research studies that analyze the effects of PBL on pupils' speaking ability (Astawa et al., 2017; Dewi, 2016; Poonpon, 2017). The aforementioned research studies were carried out with Indonesian English Department pupils, with junior high school pupils in an EFL context in Indonesia, with Thai university students/learners of English respectively. Based on the results of the research studies above, the significant effect of PBL on pupils' speaking ability was concluded. Some of the pupils were even surprised with their enhanced speaking ability as well as the results of their dialogue speaking tests. In addition to the speaking skill, Astawa et al. (2017) state the positive effects of PBL on English productive skills, not only speaking but also writing.

- Academic achievement

By analyzing research studies at all levels, Chua (2014, as cited in Harmer & Stokes, 2014), stated that project-based pupils enhanced their academic achievement compared to the non-PBL-pupils. According to Thomas (2000, p.9), the effectiveness of PBL can be assessed in different ways and one of them is "gains in student achievement". It also appears that Boaler (1997, as cited in Condliffe et al., 2017) compared two schools with similar characteristics and prior academic outcomes. While one of the schools followed a PBL approach in mathematics instructions, the other one used a more traditional approach. The results showed that pupils who assisted a PBL-based instruction outperformed those who had a traditional classroom environment. This claim is supported by Gultekin (2005) in his study regarding the effects of PBL on the learning outcomes of pupils in Social Studies courses in primary education. In the study carried out by Gultekin (2005), a new unit was developed "Our Beautiful Homeland Turkey" focusing on environmental disasters. Creating a student-centered classroom and getting the pupils to explore, Gultekin (2005) concluded that PBL had a great impact on pupils' academic success by analyzing the test scores of the study group and the control group.

- Wider skills

There is a consensus on the benefits of PBL on enhancing a wide set of skills (Harmer and Stokes, 2014). These skills that have been provided by PBL and other student-centered approaches are thought crucial to promote deeper learning for pupils', their future career and civic life (Condliffe et al., 2017). The ability to adapt to changes can be seen as one of the most important skills in today's world. Teachers need to bear in mind the ever-changing needs of pupils and need to have forward-

thinking. The importance of these skills and the effects of PBL on such skills will be analyzed in the following chapter.

1.5. PBL IN PRACTICE: CHALLENGES FOR THE TEACHERS

Though teachers and learners reported positive experiences regarding PBL, they also stated that PBL poses some challenges to the teachers (Condliffe et al., 2017). Researchers have reported that some teachers have struggled to take on a new role as facilitator as they are used to being in charge of the learning process (Thomas, 2000).

It has also been pointed out that teachers might not know when, how and how much scaffolding they must provide (Harmer and Stokes, 2014). This might lead teachers to challenges in classroom management. Thomas and Mergendoller (2000, p. 34) noted that "teachers in the learner-centered classrooms tend to have a broader set of management responsibilities than the teachers in more traditional classrooms." The authors go on to say that in a PBL-based classroom, teachers are concerned with pupils' management of time, tasks, and resources on their own.

Another challenge reported by Harmer and Stokes (2014) is the time and resources needed for the project. As Kalabzová (2015) points out, PBL can be demanding in terms of planning time, school materials as well as technical equipment. Though several researchers indicated that technology is important in PBL, others reported some challenges in this aspect. First, pupils might not have access to a sufficient number of technological tools or a computer room for inquiry-based PBL lessons. Providing these tools for each group can be challenging for the teacher. Furthermore, teachers might need a training to improve their computer skills (Condliffe et al., 2017).

Considering the time, one can say that projects take more time than teachers have anticipated. Some pupils might need more time to conduct research or create products (Thomas, 2000). Other challenges have also been reported in the literature, mainly: implementing appropriate assessment, curricular requirements which impede flexibility and successful implementation of PBL, student discipline and class sizes (Condliffe et al., 2017; Harmer and Stokes 2014; Thomas, 2000; Kalabzová, 2015). The obstacles we encountered and in-service teachers' challenges during the implementation of PBL are outlined in Part II of this report.

CHAPTER 2 – MASTERING SKILLS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Chapter 2 addresses the 21st Century Skills. It begins with a brief introduction to the 21st Century Skills and then examines a 21st Century Learning Framework (P-21, 2019, p. 2) along with research studies, i.e., OECD (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009). This is followed by focusing on these skills in the EFL classrooms. Considering that there is not a set of rules to incorporate such skills as collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, communication, social skills, research, ICT skills, etc., the subsequent section analyzes various studies and reviews on the possibilities and ways of fostering these skills. Moreover, the benefits of implementing these skills are also outlined. The chapter ends with illustrating the effects of PBL on the 21st Century Skills and how PBL may be incorporated with the aim of enhancing these skills.

2.1. INTRODUCTION TO 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

The 21st century learners are dynamic and more informed as they can access vast resources easily no matter where they are and whenever they want. Thus, in our dynamic world, educators should rethink the teaching and learning strategies as well as the competences they aim to improve in the classroom. In this regard, learners should be equipped with such skills to tackle the challenges of new era and hence, modern teaching approaches must be incorporated into language teaching classrooms. It is stated that language teaching, particularly ELT, has seen tremendous changes throughout the years and recently more and more importance has been given to the 21st Century Skills, even though some teachers still follow traditional methods³ and do not incorporate such skills as collaboration, creativity and innovation, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving and ICT skills (Giri, 2016).

There have been numerous studies and frameworks that include different 21st Century Skills in the literature. It is beyond the scope of this report to scrutinize a wide variety of frameworks and research studies; however, it is crucial to analyze some of them to comprehend which skills are vital for the pupils. Wagner (2010, as cited in Scott, 2015, p. 3) and the Change Leadership Group at Harvard University identified a set of 21st Century Skills that pupils need so that they would not struggle to keep pace with our rapidly changing world. These skills are the following: a) critical thinking and problem solving; b) collaboration and leadership; c) agility and adaptability; d) initiative and entrepreneurialism; e) effective oral and written communication; f) accessing and analyzing information; g) curiosity and imagination.

Though there are various frameworks such as Metiri Group, OCDE, and Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), the latter is the most detailed and widely accepted one (Erdem, 2019). The elements described in the P21 Framework (see Figure 2) are thought to be interconnected and pupils are

³ The methods that were introduced before the 19th century, mainly The Direct Method, The Audio-lingual Method, The Grammar-Translation Method, among others (Renau, 2016, based on Richards & Rogers, 1986).

expected to master these elements to succeed in work and life. Analyzing the definitions of these elements, one can conclude that pupils are to master the key subjects such as English, reading or language arts, mathematics, history, etc. along with interdisciplinary topics that include global awareness, civic literacy, health literacy, among others.

The focus of learning and innovation is on working creatively while collaborating and communicating with others. Moreover, thinking critically, reasoning effectively and solving problems are also emphasized. Another element in the rainbow framework is information, media, and technology skills that involves accessing, evaluating, using, and managing information, as well as creating media products and applying technology effectively. The last category is career skills. Pupils must be taught how to adapt to change, work effectively and be flexible when it comes to feedback, criticism, and different points of view. This category also consists of self-direction, cross-cultural skills as well as productivity. On this basis, to make sure that pupils are equipped with such skills, P21 provides a support system. Thus, standards and assessments, curriculum and instruction, professional development as well as pupils' learning outcomes should be aligned (P21, 2019, p. 1 - 9).

Figure 2

P21 Framework for 21st Century Learning



Note: Obtained from P-21 (2019, p. 2).

Research conducted by OECD on 'New Millennium Learners' stressed three dimensions for education in the 21st century (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009): a) information dimension that consists of research and problem-solving skills underlining the importance of defining, selecting, processing, organizing, analyzing information and transforming it to create new knowledge in digital environments; b) communication dimension that deals with effective communication and collaboration; c) ethics and social impact dimension that tackles social responsibilities and impacts of citizens in society. All three dimensions advocate the use of ICT.

2.2. 21ST CENTURY SKILLS IN THE EFL CLASSROOMS

A significant body of literature has emerged on the importance of the 21st Century Skills and how to introduce these skills and competencies into foreign language classrooms. In a globalized world,

learning a new language, including non-English languages, is a vital skill and pupils must be encouraged to improve both their language skills and global awareness (P21, 2019, p. 3). The focus in this section is on incorporating the 21st Century Skills into EFL classrooms.

Several authors have investigated the 21st Century Skills in EFL classrooms. Though it goes without saying that education must be transformed to allow new learning approaches to cope with the challenges pupils will face in work and life, there is not a set of rules educators might follow to train pupils for the 21st century. Nevertheless, as Scott (2015, p. 2) suggests "there are a number of effective, research-based curriculum models capable of guiding 21st Century learning", unlike textbook based teacher-centered approaches which have been found ineffective to reassure pupils' 21st Century Skills (Giri, 2016). Although EFL teaching has witnessed several traditional learning methods and approaches throughout the years, since the 20th century, there has been a significant change in implementing learner-centered methods such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-based Learning (TBL), Inquiry-based Learning, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Project-based Learning (PBL). Each one of these methods used in EFL classrooms includes some principles to enhance pupils' 21st Century Skills. Thus, teachers should resort to such innovative methods and approaches to ensure that pupils gain such skills to help them in life. In his article, Fandiño (2013) questions the ways to incorporate 21st Century Skills into the EFL classroom and indicates that Multiliteracy and Multimodal Communicative Competence would be effective to infuse the learning with diverse 21st Century Skills. For instance, pupils can be provided with the opportunity to improve their language skills, such as reading and writing together with their critical thinking skills, by focusing on social and cultural contexts and critically analyzing the relationship between texts. In addition, multimodality can be introduced as digital storytelling, social networks, online activities, etc.

Hughes (2014) emphasizes the importance of critical thinking in the language classrooms by explaining its reasons. According to the author, by rote learning pupils only acquire basic knowledge. However, implementing critical thinking would engage pupils in authentic communication. Moreover, Hughes (2014, p. 6) argues that pupils' learning can be more memorable if they "make use of all parts of the brain". By reading a text, pupils gather the information at the back of the brain. On the contrary, critical thinking is crucial to trigger whole-brain learning. This happens when pupils read the text, gather information, use that new information, reflect upon it, and evaluate it. Hughes (2014) goes on to say that pupils need this skill in today's increasingly interconnected world in which universities and the business world are loaded with responsibilities that look for critical thinking to have a more productive working environment and better serve their clients. In addition, Scott (2015) endorses that critical thinking draws on other 21st Century Skills, as pupils can also enhance their communication skills and information literacy. This point of view is also advocated by Halvorsen (2018), as he states that critical thinking can be effectively used in language classrooms, and all four language skills can be fostered as critical thinking techniques include researching a topic, brainstorming, discussing that topic in a group or with peers, and writing about their findings.

Creativity (and innovation) is the second essential skill of the 4Cs and is considered of utmost importance in the 21st century (Gardner, 2008; P21, 2019). Gardner (2008) uses the term *the creating mind* in his article 'The Five Minds for the Future' and emphasizes the importance of taking risks along with being eager to try out chances. As mentioned by Scott (2015, p. 5), successful individuals in our interconnected world are the ones who "pose unfamiliar questions and put forth new ideas and solutions". In the language classrooms, taking into consideration that pupils' abilities differ from each other, strategies should be implemented well to work on pupils' creativity, and teachers should be as flexible as possible while being attentive to pupils' skills (Halvorsen, 2018). For instance, while some pupils are visual learners, some others tend to be more kinesthetic learners. Hence, the activities that aim to enhance pupils' creativity should be in accordance with pupils' abilities and involve each one of them in their learning process. In fact, encouraging group work and assigning roles to each group member can be one of the strategies to consider. Pupils can also work creatively with each other, brainstorm ideas and create new ways of thinking as well as creating a product.

Communication and collaboration are the last two Cs. Communication plays a fundamental role in the development of lifelong learning abilities, social and cross-cultural skills along with civic literacy. Young learners must have the opportunity to enhance these skills to communicate and interact effectively. In other words, they must know when to listen, understand their responsibilities in the community, how to work in diverse teams, and exchange ideas in such environments (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009; Scott, 2015). Thus, one of the main purposes of English teachers should be how to help pupils thrive in tomorrow's workforce and life. As Halvorsen (2018) points out, teachers should focus on both language skills and self-esteem to encourage pupils to clearly communicate and collaborate either orally or in writing in the language using information technology. In addition, Scott (2015) describes strong communication skills as expressing ideas clearly as well as motivating others by communicating persuasively. According to Scott (2015, p. 5), in the 21st century, pupils can have this opportunity when they "work collaboratively on authentic project-based assignments". It is also stated that while working with their peers, pupils will learn together and develop new skills while helping each other throughout the process. Such enhanced skills can prepare learners for global competitiveness in today's highly demanding world.

Moreover, given the changes in modes of communication in recent years, it goes without saying that the implementation of ICT skills should be highly regarded in 21st century EFL classrooms. It is stated that learners of this generation are "growing up digital" (Metiri Group, 2002, p. 5). In today's world, it is imperative that learners know how to communicate using technology. However, Halvorsen (2018, p. 2) highlights a common misconception regarding ICT literacy when he mentions that educators believe that learners can foster these skills by themselves as they are considered "digital natives". Nevertheless, the familiarization of the new generation with digital technology, being good at creating social media accounts, or playing online games does not necessarily mean that learners

can access, manage, and evaluate information effectively (Halvorsen, 2018; Metiri Group, 2002; Scott, 2015).

In fact, pupils should be taught to tackle analyzing the information they have reached, creating productive and effective digital resources as well. Consequently, educators must ensure that they are lifelong learners, and value ICT skills to provide their learners with these skills which are crucial to the success of pupils. In order to make the communication interactive and effective, pupils can also make use of different communication modes such as face-to-face, online group interactions, emails, and so on.

Moreover, infusing an EFL classroom with authentic tasks and problem-solving activities should also be considered essential as today's youth tend to face various challenges. As Scott (2015) emphasizes, successful problem-solving skills require teamwork, strong communication skills, critical thinking, and ICT skills as pupils need to find a solution to the problem they are exposed to while expressing their thoughts and respecting others. In this case, pupils would also need to do research, gather information, analyze, and evaluate it collaboratively. Consequently, educators must provide real-world challenges which can be complex but help effectively in the preparation of learners to be able to tackle such issues (Scott, 2015).

Additionally, in her article, Scott (2015) highlights the importance of cognitive competencies, namely: a) social and cross-cultural skills; b) personal responsibility and self-regulation; c) sense-making skills, and d) metacognitive skills. The author also emphasizes that knowing how to live together by valuing diversity, developing civic and digital literacy, learning to be lifelong learners, being a team member, and thinking of oneself as a global citizen are important for the pupils. Considering that pupils develop as citizens, educators should ensure that they improve their intercultural competence as well. Scott (2015, p. 8) emphasizes that all learners must acquire this competence to "communicate with each other across cultural barriers." As it is believed, mutual understanding is one of the key concepts to be able to interact effectively across cultures. Considering the importance of intercultural competence, we can also say that it draws on other skills as learners also learn how to be effective team members, enhance their communication skills, and think outside the box.

2.3. PBL AND THE 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

PBL is considered effective in developing pupils' 21st Century Skills by several authors (Bell, 2010; Halvorsen, 2018; Holmes, 2012; Tsiplakides & Fragoulis, 2009; Yimwilai, 2020). Tsiplakides and Fragoulis (2009) also propose that these skills are important as they are life-long and used in real-life settings. This point of view is supported by Yimwilai (2020). The author states that pupils need to acquire 21st Century Skills and should be given the opportunity to apply their content knowledge to real-life settings. In other words, the education provided must help learners develop knowledge and skills, which help them thrive in the fast-changing world. Yimwilai (2020) points out that many

scholars share the same idea, and she highlights that “project-based learning (PBL) can be a good alternative for instructors” (Yimwilai, 2020, p. 216).

During the document analysis research which we conducted, we also came across three articles that mainly focus on the 21st Century Skills or 21st Century Skills in the EFL classrooms. In these articles, the authors also gave examples regarding the implementation of PBL as a 21st century approach and its effects on these skills (Fandiño, 2013; Halvorsen, 2018; Scott, 2015). It is stated that transforming the education system cannot be done radically. Nevertheless, learner-centered pedagogy such as inquiry-based learning, and PBL can be applied to lead pupils to acquire 21st Century Skills and competencies (Scott, 2015). This opinion is acknowledged by Fandiño (2013) since PBL is seen as an alternative for infusing these skills into the EFL classrooms. The main reason for this point of view is that PBL helps pupils deal with real-world questions, analyze them, look for solutions, select and evaluate their findings and create designs.

Additionally, according to Fandiño (2013), pupils are encouraged to work autonomously while the teacher acts as a facilitator, which makes the approach valid for 21st century classrooms. In his paper regarding the 4Cs, Halvorsen (2018) reveals an example from a Mexican EFL classroom. Having been asked to incorporate 21st Century Skills into the classroom by the school principal, the English teacher, who witnessed that the pupils love to work on projects, decided to implement PBL focusing on the 4Cs as she had heard about them before. Putting the 4Cs in action, the teacher explained the main idea of these skills. Later on, pupils worked on the issue of graffiti. Herewith implementing PBL allows pupils to build or improve their four skills: collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication as well as ICT skills as they also created videos. Bell (2010) also emphasizes that PBL promotes a set of 21st Century Skills, in particular, social skills such as collaboration, communication, and negotiation.

Collaboration is one of the most frequently mentioned 21st century skill and it lies in the heart of PBL since the project work is mostly realized in groups. As Bell (2010) states, while working on the project work, pupils look for new ideas or try to come up with a solution or a plan. During this process, they can brainstorm their ideas and learn how to be open to different points of view. This teamwork process can be even more stimulating than working alone.

In addition, as Giri (2016) states, when pupils work in teams, they have the chance to improve both communication and collaborative skills at the same time. Throughout the project, pupils express their thoughts and reflect on each other's ideas. At the end of the project work, they are asked to evaluate both their learning and social interaction. Hence, they can reflect on their communication skill. They can reveal if they have been listened to during the teamwork and if they have listened to their colleagues' ideas and respected them.

Additionally, pupils develop social skills while collaborating with colleagues from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Pupils also learn how to be personally responsible for their learning and improve their ability to self-govern, which is also considered an essential competence in the 21st

century (Scott, 2015). Supe and Kaupuzs (2015) studied the effects of PBL in the acquisition of EFL in a Lithuanian secondary context. Some of the findings revealed that pupils showed good communicative and cooperative skills, and they worked with technology while practicing their problem-solving skills.

Another reported 21st century skill that PBL offers is critical thinking. As stated by Bell (2010, p. 42), “students learn through collaboration and employ critical thinking skills as they engage in projects”. Tsiplakides and Fragoulis (2009) point out the importance of critical thinking as it is a ‘life-long’ and ‘transferable’ skill to settings outside the school environment. During the project work, when pupils gather and analyze information, their critical thinking is also strengthened (Yimwilai, 2020).

In addition, critical thinking and problem-solving skills seem to be correlated. This is further stressed by Dewi (2016, p. 348) when it is stated that “by participating in both independent work and collaboration, learners improve their problem-solving skills thereby developing their critical thinking skills”. Tsiplakides and Fragoulis’s (2009, p. 114) outlook on this correlation seems the same as Dewi’s (2016) since they feature that PBL activities “are designed to develop students’ thinking and problem-solving skills.” During the projects, pupils understand the problem, design a plan with strategies to solve it, think about the strategies before implementing them and ultimately carry out their plan of action (Moursund, 1999).

Another reported 21st century skill is creativity. The importance of PBL and creativity has been emphasized by Irembere (2019). According to Yimwilai (2020), PBL helps pupils enhance their creativity and creative thinking. It is because pupils are given more responsibility in the process of project development, and teachers facilitate the progress of reaching the end-product, which is the set goal. As suggested by Irembere (2019), teachers should be creative, teach creatively and provide opportunities to encourage pupils' creativity as well.

PBL also supports the development of research and ICT skills. Once pupils select a topic and set the goals, they start gathering information through research. It can be conducted using several sources of information. Dewi (2016, p. 348) states that “by locating the resources themselves, their (learners’) research skills develop and improve”. The information for the research can also be obtained using the internet. This is quite essential as ICT literacy is one of the 21st Century Skills. Nevertheless, Bell (2010) points out that teachers must be careful with the safety of the sources. Therefore, teachers should ensure that they scaffold the research and provide guidance so that pupils can explore safely and effectively.

In order to gain more ICT skills, Moursund (1999) points out the importance of technology-assisted PBL lessons. Being engaged in an ICT-assisted project, pupils can learn from each other and enhance their research skills as well. Thomas (2000) emphasizes the significance of using technology in PBL lessons and states that it makes the environment more authentic to pupils. Pupils can use various technological tools innovatively including Web 2.0 and 3.0, create podcasts, videos, digital posters, etc. (Bell, 2010). Drawing upon the importance of web-based technology and how it can facilitate

the process of PBL, Chen (2019) studied the effects of WebQuests as an inquiry design while incorporating PBL into an EFL classroom. Throughout the project, pupils had the opportunity to collaborate, brainstorm, negotiate and create a final product which was an oral presentation of their trip to Scotland. The main purpose of the action report was to analyze how pupils can take control of their learning while being engaged in a WebQuest to solve a real-world task. Chen (2019) emphasizes the convenience of WebQuests and advises teachers to benefit from its effectiveness.

CHAPTER 3 – ELT AND PBL: AN OVERVIEW OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN PORTUGUESE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

This chapter provides brief information about the differences between *doing a project* and the PBL approach. It also discusses ELT in Portugal and some of the approaches implemented in this context. TBL, which has gained more recognition over the last decade in Portugal EFL classrooms, is analyzed and compared to PBL. Second, IBL, which is frequently confused with PBL, is briefly described. The final section of this chapter attempts to develop an understanding of CLIL since it has been increasingly incorporated into EFL young learner classrooms as a new approach in Portugal. Apart from this, it is important to point out the influence of CLIL in our *Water Project*.

3.1. DOING A PROJECT OR INCORPORATING PBL?

Doing a project is not something new in classrooms in Portugal. By observing EFL young learner classrooms, we can state that pupils are expected to create some products, i.e., posters and drawings throughout the school year. Nevertheless, doing a project differs from PBL in various aspects. Analyzing the ideas of experts from The Buck Institute for Education along with other authors, we can state that PBL is different by its characteristics and stages (Harmer and Stokes, 2014; Larmer and Mergendoller, 2010; Stoller, 2002; 2013). PBL is mostly driven by pupils' inquiry and encourages autonomous learning since the role of the teacher shifts from content-deliverer to facilitator (Harmer & Stokes, 2014). However, when pupils simply do a project, they mostly follow the directions of the teacher. Undertaking PBL involves teamwork both with the classmates and the teacher as a guide. On the other hand, while simply doing a project, pupils can work alone or do their project at home. We can go on to say that PBL focuses not only on the product but on the process, unlike project work (Bell, 2010; Harmer & Stokes, 2014; Thomas, 2000). PBL also aims to enhance pupils' 21st Century Skills and is considered quite effective (Bell, 2010; Halvorsen, 2018; Holmes, 2012; Tsiplakides & Fragoulis, 2009; Yimwilai, 2020). It must be pointed out that teachers can implement the characteristics of PBL or work on improving pupils' 21st Century Skills while simply doing project work as well.

Looking at the project work method and picture books from a different perspective, we can focus on a project carried out by Pinto et al. (2020) with EFL young learners in a private school in the Oporto area. The focus of the project was on the refugee topic which allowed pupils to gain opportunities to engage in a real-world issue. As stated by Pinto et al. (2020), fostering pupils' critical thinking skills is of utmost importance in the 21st century. Four intern teachers from different European countries aimed at implementing a cross-curricular project after having realized that Portuguese children in their school were not aware of the refugee crisis in Syria. Hence, pupils were encouraged to work collaboratively to create a picture book, called *Luko's Journey*, addressing this issue. Focusing on

improving pupils' plurilingual and intercultural competence, the teachers encouraged pupils to create a picture book in which Luko, a sad camel, leaves his country where animals do not feel safe. Throughout his journey to Europe, defined as 'far, far away', Luko meets several animals from different countries. In each country, an animal greets Luko and tells him that he is not alone there. Animals do this using their mother tongue. Then, they go on a journey together. During the project, three stages were taken into account to implement a successful collaborative project: a) pupils are expected to explore and discuss the presented topic, b) pupils are involved in direct research, process and analyze information, c) the teacher acts as a facilitator to critically review the information pupils gathered.

On day 1, pupils' background knowledge was activated through a mind map by which pupils would express what they knew about the countries, such as the Netherlands, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Pupils then were asked to locate the countries on the map, and this proved how interdisciplinary the project was. After having been divided into groups, pupils would explore the countries on a WebQuest and complete a worksheet with the information they obtained. In the end, pupils created the flag for each country. On day 2, pupils were encouraged to solve math problems by making calculations to reach the country of destination. Pupils worked collaboratively and improved their autonomy. Pupils then created a symbol from those countries, i.e., Dutch tulips, the French Eiffel Tower. Pupils not only did work creatively but they also worked autonomously in the group. In the following lesson, pupils worked with their tutors to learn the numbers and greetings in their own language. For instance, while one group worked on greetings in Slovakian the other group worked in Dutch. In the next step, each group learned the Happy Birthday song in their group's chosen language. Arts was present once again together with Music. On the last day, pupils finished their posters and presented them. Pupils then were ready to be engaged in creating their picture book and storytelling. By exploring the picture book, pupils were given the opportunity to broaden their horizons. They expanded their humanistic-based knowledge on the refugee issue while meeting other languages. Pupils were also given the opportunity to think critically once again and guess the end of the story.

The main reason why we wanted to explore this outstanding project, apart from the fact that it would teach all of us a lesson, was that it focused on combining picture books and the project work. Our projects which we undertook in our teaching practice used storytelling as a path to PBL. Nevertheless, in this project, the picture book was the project itself. Hence, it proves that either way, picture books can be fantastic tools to implement PBL or the project work method. Furthermore, it is imperative to highlight that although not all project work follows every single stage of PBL, they can surely have traces from this approach. Although the main aim in *Luko's Journey* was not to build a project around PBL, it included the characteristics of this approach (Harmer & Stokes, 2014; Larmer and Mergendoller, 2010). As mentioned previously, pupils learned by doing in an environment where the teachers were not only knowledge transmitters. The project was student-driven, and the process was scaffolded by the teachers (Bell, 2020; Condliffe et al., 2017; Thomas, 2000; Stoller, 2002). Moreover, teachers brought a real-world problem into the classroom which provided new skills,

knowledge, challenges as well as discovery (Harmer & Stokes, 2014). Since the project tackled a real-life issue, it led to an authentic task that PBL encourages (Larmer, 2020). Furthermore, other elements of PBL were also involved in the project (Larmer, 2020). The project promoted a set of 21st Century Skills that lies in the heart of PBL. (Bell, 2010). Pupils were given the opportunity to think critically, communicate and build social skills during teamwork (Bell, 2010; Harmer & Stokes, 2014; Stoller, 2002). Such success skills as critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and self-management were taught with the content. Though the project did not include a driving question, it implemented a challenging problem in a different way. Pupils were expected to think about the issue critically and develop empathy by welcoming the refugees. Furthermore, ICT skills which PBL supports was included in one of the vital steps of the project (Bell, 2010). Pupils did research on a WebQuest, gathered, analyzed, and applied the information to create a final product. Hence, they must have also developed their research skills. The final product, the picture book *Luko's Journey*, was a public product which is one of the elements of PBL: if possible, to make it public. In addition to these principles of PBL, there have been different points of view regarding pupils' voice and choice in this approach (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010; Thomas, 2000). While in some projects pupils can even choose the topic or driving question, the projects can also be built around a pre-defined topic. It is stated that it is vital to allow pupils to have a say in the project. In *Luko's Journey*, pupils did not choose the topic, each group was assigned a country, and they all were expected to make a poster. Therefore, they did not choose their final product. (Stoller, 2002). Nevertheless, pupils had a choice for a symbol to build from the WebQuest. Pupils were also involved in an inquiry to obtain information, analyze it, and create a product (Larmer, 2020). Moreover, *Luko's Journey* project included one of the main principles of PBL since it is believed that PBL is interdisciplinary in nature (Harmer & Stokes, 2014). The project developed cross-curricular links by bridging ELT with Geography, Arts and Music, and Maths.

Taking all of the project elements mentioned above into account, we can state that the project work method can be fruitful to create a learner-centered environment in which pupils' 21st Century Skills, among others, can be fostered effectively. As mentioned before, PBL has certain characteristics and stages to be applied in a project. Nonetheless, *Luko's Journey* project proves that even if a project is not built around PBL, it can be designed to enhance 21st Century Skills and give pupils autonomy. We can conclude that other project work can include some steps from the PBL approach in order to conceive an efficient project with valuable outcomes.

3.2. ELT IN THE PORTUGUESE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) has evolved over the years due to various reasons. While some decades ago, it was of utmost importance to focus on grammatical structures and/or pronunciation to clearly communicate, such approaches also received criticism from some educators. Although the methods such as The Grammar-Translation Method, The Direct Method, The Audiolingual Method, among others, are still favored by some of the teachers, it is also believed

that TEFL needs an urgent shift to incorporate student-centered approaches which value pupils' 21st Century Skills.

With the aim of gaining an understanding of ELT in Portugal, MA practicum reports, Ph.D. theses from the repository of the University of Algarve, the University of Porto, and the University of Lisbon, as well as the critical report by Cabral and Nobre (2015) were analyzed.

In Portugal, English was offered as an extra-curricular subject in state primary schools in 2005. Therefore, after the announcement of the Portuguese Ministry of Education, educators were provided a guideline⁴ which suggested topics such as colours, family, animals, school objects as well as methodologies, namely: Total Physical Response (TPR) and TBL (Ellison, 2014). It goes without saying that both methods have their advantages and disadvantages. Cabral and Nobre (2015) concluded that implementing a communicative approach using TBL as a method was effective in promoting an interactive learning environment and improving pupils' communicative competence. Nevertheless, Ellison (2014) goes on to say that pupils were not provided with natural input during the English lessons and their exposure to the language was limited since pupils would learn through repetition, drilling, flashcards, realia, and songs. Although such techniques were liked by the pupils, and they can be quite engaging and effective to some extent, during these lessons, learning and teaching were not based on learning by doing, thinking, or authentic experience. Cabral and Nobre (2015) state that although focusing on grammar structures and improving pupils' communicative competence along with language accuracy and fluency should not be ignored in the EFL classrooms, EFL teachers shall consider the importance of intercultural awareness, collaborative learning, and student-centered lessons. Moreover, pupils must be given the opportunity for meaningful learning. Teaching them a few words and moving on to the next topic is not a natural process of learning a language.

Furthermore, English became a core subject as part of the national curriculum in the 2015-2016 school year in the 3rd year and in the 2016-2017 school year in the 4th year. (Ferreira, 2018). *Metas Curriculares de Inglês*⁵ (Cravo et al., 2015) as an official document in the Portuguese education system gives us insights about learning outcomes and contents which are followed by the teachers to meet pupils' learning goals (Cabral & Nobre, 2015; Catarino, 2017). Although learning outcomes are considered vital in *Metas Curriculares de Inglês*, a supplementary document called *Orientações Programáticas*⁶ emphasizes the importance of involving pupils in their learning process, creating a positive learning environment as well as having interdisciplinary classroom activities (Catarino, 2017). However, as stated by Ellison (2014, p. 87), "cognition and thinking skills" are excluded as one of the learning goals in the national programs. Although TBL is considered effective and welcomed

⁴ Orientações Programáticas Ensino de Inglês - 1º e 2º ano and 3º e 4º ano: <https://www.dge.mec.pt/orientacoes-programaticas>

⁵ Curricular Goals for English

⁶ Program Guidelines

by many teachers, this methodological approach is seen as a traditional Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) (Ellison, 2014).

3.3. TASK-BASED LEARNING VS. PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

It is clear that TBL is researched and implemented in the Portuguese EFL young learner classrooms for some time, and it can be confused with PBL. According to Nunan (1989, as cited in Nassa, 2018, p. 17), a task is a "piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form". TBL was first implemented in language teaching by N. Prabhu in southern India. It is believed that TBL is an effective approach as it helps to ensure that pupils focus on the task which they are doing, instead of on a language they are using (Prabhu, 1987, as cited in Buyukkarci, 2009).

As Buyukkarci (2009, p. 315) states, the focus of TBL is not on the subject matter content, it is on "a whole set of real-world tasks". While implementing TBL in a learning environment, there are several principles that we should consider. Although the principles have been defined differently by several researchers, one can say that they broadly agree on common principles. By analyzing some articles (Akbulut, 2014; Buyukkarci, 2009; Nassa, 2018), one can conclude that whereas PBL and TBL share common characteristics, they are believed to differ from each other in certain points. Considering teacher and learner roles, both PBL and TBL are learner-centered approaches. Nevertheless, PBL is considered more ambitious in terms of learner-centeredness (Bilsborough, n.d.). Especially during the first stage of PBL, it can be established that pupils have a more active role as they are given an opportunity to select the purpose of the project, determine the educational goal and choose the final product. In other words, reaching a consensus on the starting and end points of the project shows that the teacher does not have a dominant role. On the other hand, while implementing TBL, the teacher gets the role of selecting, adjusting, and creating tasks (Buyukkarci, 2009). It is suggested that TBL offers "security and control for the teacher" (Willis, 1998, as cited in Akbulut, 2014, p. 32).

In both approaches, the teacher has an effective role in preparing pupils for the task or the project by scaffolding the process. In a TBL integrated lesson, the teacher prepares some training activities which might include a topic introduction, scaffolding pupils' vocabulary learning process to help with the task completion along with attention-focusing activities (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, as cited in Buyukkarci, 2009). In the PBL approach, the instructor plan activities for each information-gathering task to guide the learners. Moreover, when the information is gathered, pupils are guided by the teacher to process this information. The role of the learner also shares common features. Taking an active role consequently leads to motivation and engagement (Buyukkarci, 2009). Additionally, learners become more creative and take risks in both TBL and PBL to complete the tasks and projects (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, as cited in Akbulut, 2014). As Bilsborough (n.d.) points out, one of the most important shared characteristics of PBL and TBL is the fact that both approaches allow learners to use the language as an instrument rather than focusing on grammar points. Therefore, the

learning process becomes more authentic. However, TBL is also considered "quasi-authentic" (Cabral & Nobre, 2015, p. 2195).

Moreover, while TBL focuses on one main task, PBL requires learners to take part in numerous tasks to complete a project. In TBL integrated lessons, the teacher instructs the pupils, he/she might use visual aids or PowerPoint presentations to enhance the target language vocabulary, learners are provided with some worksheets, they use the vocabulary related to the topic to make sentences, and in the end, their learning outcomes are assessed. Nonetheless, using the PBL approach, the teacher encourages pupils to brainstorm and think critically. They are also given a chance to rehearse their presentations. What is more, after being assisted by the instructor, pupils normally produce a final product, although it is not always mandatory in PBL. As mentioned before, the outcome can range from brochures, posters, oral presentations, theatrical performances to class cookbooks, class newspapers, etc. After presenting the project, pupils can reflect on their learning process and the value of their project (Kalabzová 2015). Furthermore, as Buyukkarci (2019) emphasizes, the main aim of TBL is to enhance not only communication skills and it mostly focuses on purpose and meaning but also linguistics. However, the goals are not to focus only on grammar rules and phonology. According to Buyukkarci (2019, p. 315), these goals entail "preserving the centrality of functions like greeting, expressing opinions as well". Unlike TBL, PBL provides opportunities for the natural integration of all four skills, reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Stoller, 2002, as cited in Lam, 2011).

3.4. INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING VS. PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

IBL approach is one of the newest approaches that have been integrated into the EFL classrooms though it is still not very commonly implemented in Portuguese primary schools. Considering IBL and PBL can be confused as they both focus on research, in this section both approaches are described briefly.

"Inquiry is defined as a quest for truth, information, or knowledge... seeking information by questioning" (Exline, 2004, as cited in Ismail & Elias, 2006, p. 13). Furthermore, as Ghaemi and Mirsaeed (2017, p. 93) point out, IBL promotes active learning by involving pupils in the learning process and encouraging them "to learn through engagement in a real problem". The role of the teacher is quite different from those who implement traditional approaches. Just like PBL, IBL also requires the teacher to be a facilitator.

According to Ghaemi and Mirsaeed (2017), the teacher poses a problem or a question and then provides pupils with clues so that they can do some research. Ghaemi and Mirsaeed (2017, p. 93) state that "the problem is one that pupils are likely to face as future professionals". Furthermore, Ismail and Elias (2006) emphasize the aforementioned idea by highlighting the importance of knowing how to acquire, generate and transmit knowledge, which helps pupils to become life-long

learners. The authors go on to say that in today's world, rote learning, which the traditional education system quite values, is not enough to help pupils thrive outside of the classroom.

Taking all these into account, one can say that learners must be provided with the opportunity to expand their skills. Learning through inquiry, pupils can expand their skills as they learn how to solve problems and improve their critical and creative thinking skills. According to Ismail and Elias (2006, p. 14), "student inquirers" can build their own knowledge through experience and real-life situations as well as exploring new concepts through research. Ismail and Elias (2006) promote six phases of IBL: a) planning phase, at which pupils figure out the general questions, find the necessary information and materials and determine how to present it; b) retrieving phase, at which learners focus on what is relevant; c) processing phase, which focuses on getting the right information; d) creating phase, at which pupils organize the information; e) sharing phase, at which pupils present their new understandings; f) evaluation phase, at which pupils brainstorm and reflect on their learning outcomes.

IBL is considered to encourage cooperation and collaboration as pupils can work in pairs or small groups, especially at creating and evaluation phases (Ismail & Elias, 2006), which is quite similar to PBL. According to a study carried out with EFL learners to analyze the effects of IBL on critical thinking, Ghaemi and Mirsaed (2017) established that implementing IBL had a positive impact on developing pupils' critical thinking skills.

Overall, the main focus of IBL is on improving pupils' problem-solving, critical thinking, and research skills. It also gives importance to cooperation and collaboration. It can be indicated that IBL and PBL are similar in terms of their focus on skills. However, unlike IBL, PBL not only does provide pupils with a problem or a challenge to solve, but it might also require them to develop a product. Moreover, the phases of IBL and PBL share some common features as well, such as doing the work step by step, the guidance, and scaffolding from the instructor, and presenting the final work. Nevertheless, IBL does not seem to value language skills, nor increase the awareness of intonation, pronunciation as much as PBL does, and the teacher does not seem to help with the use of target language before the presentation.

Taking everything into consideration, PBL seems to be more in-depth, in comparison with TBL and IBL. It involves several goals to improve all four language skills, as well as other skills, such as the 21st century skills, which TBL and IBL entail.

3.5. CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL)

There has been an increase in research regarding CLIL and its effectiveness in the EFL classrooms in Portugal. CLIL is considered one of the most innovative approaches which fosters pupils' 21st Century Skills by combining language learning with content.

As stated by Ellison (2015, p. 61) CLIL is described as "an educational approach where school curricular content is taught through an additional language, usually a foreign language."

Ellison (2014) points out an issue stating that CLIL is sometimes confused with bilingual education. Though there are controversial points of view regarding this aspect, the author goes on to say that pupils who are given the opportunity to have CLIL-based lessons are not expected to be proficient in their L2. In fact, pupils' mother tongue and foreign language can coexist in the classroom. Taking the principles of CLIL into account, Coyle (2009, as cited in Ellison, 2014) points out 4 main principles: content (subject matter), communication (language use), cognition (thinking processes) and culture (intercultural awareness).

Table 1

The 4Cs curriculum

Content	Integrating content from across the curriculum through high quality language interaction
Cognition	Engaging learners through creativity, higher-order thinking, and knowledge processing
Communication	Using language to learn and mediate ideas, thoughts, and values
Culture	Interpreting and understanding the significance of content and language and their contribution to identity and citizenship

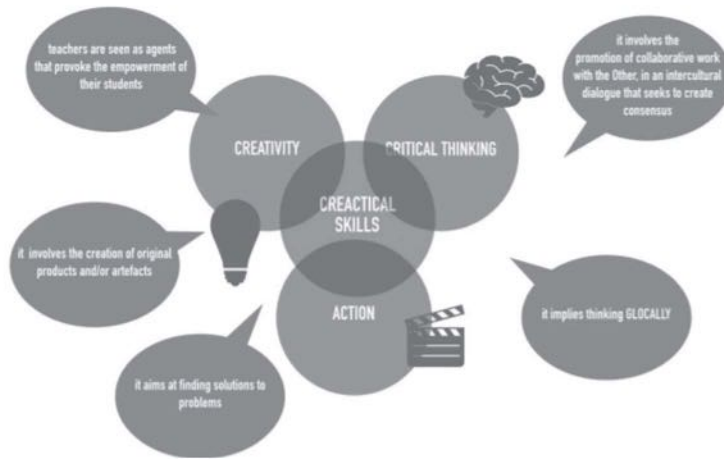
Note: Adapted from Coyle et al., 2009, p. 12, as cited in Ellison, 2014, p. 54.

Ellison (2015) also highlights the importance of the 4Cs curriculum while planning the lessons. During our internship practice, we went beyond rote learning which only focuses on vocabulary memorization. Pupils were given the opportunity to learn the content by thinking, bringing their existing knowledge into the lessons through K-W-L charts, brainstorming, and learning by doing. This shows that pupils not only did acquire knowledge but also, they constructed their own knowledge and skills. Pupils would also learn the language in context and communicate in L2 to share their ideas, give suggestions, and solve a problem. As it is stated by Ellison (2014), CLIL puts emphasis on the use of language.

Considering CLIL and its benefits, it is stated that pupils become more motivated as they can learn autonomously and see that they can communicate effectively in L2. They would also enhance their 21st Century Skills as they work with others to solve a problem, think, and share their thoughts (Ellison, 2014). Hence, it can be concluded that CLIL and PBL share common characteristics in terms of enhancing pupils' "creactical skills" (see figure 3), mainly fostering creativity and critical thinking while taking part in the learning process, i.e., solving a problem. Cruz (2021) also emphasizes that incorporating an approach based on PBL would offer pupils a safe learning environment in which they can think critically and creatively.

Figure 3

The "Creactical Skills"



Note: Obtained from 'Escapando de la clase tradicional': the escape rooms methodology within the Spanish as foreign language classroom (Cruz, 2019, p. 120)

CHAPTER 4 – ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED THROUGH STORYTELLING

This present chapter begins with a brief introduction to children's literature and storytelling referring to the picture books. This is then followed by the benefits of storytelling through picture books. The chapter seeks to provide a great deal of information regarding the efficiency of storytelling and picture books in various skills and competencies from which pupils can benefit. Other advantages of storytelling are also illustrated to highlight the effectiveness of picture books and the necessity of implementing them into the EFL classrooms. The chapter also outlines how picture books can serve as a bridge to PBL.

4.1. CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE CASE OF EFL YOUNG LEARNERS

The authentic use of children's literature to teach a foreign language dates back to the 20th century (Ghosn, 2013, as cited in Mourão, 2019). As Erkaya (2005) states, in the 19th century pupils would learn a second or a foreign language through methods that would not put any emphasis on literature, namely: The Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, and Audolingual Method, neither did The Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, The Silent Method, Total Physical Response in the seventies. Over the last decades, there has been a dramatic increase in ELT in the use of children's literature (Erkaya, 2005; Mourão, 2019). Having found its way back to the EFL language classrooms, children's literature has been involved in ELT coursebooks as well (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Erkaya, 2005). As it is pointed out by Mourão (2019), the term used in the children's literature referring to a form of literature is known as a 'picturebook'; however, it is also called 'picture book' or 'storybooks'.

4.2. BENEFITS OF STORYTELLING THROUGH PICTURE BOOKS

Listening to stories is a natural, fun, and engaging activity for children, especially when they are used to listening to storybooks in the home environment as well. Storytelling has been seen as powerful and appealing in classroom practices (Ellis & Brewster, 2014).

There are plenty of important reasons and benefits for using picture books. It has been advocated by several authors that stories are vital resources to motivate pupils. As Ghosn (2002, p. 173) emphasizes, “authentic literature provides a motivating, meaningful context for language learning since children are naturally drawn to stories”.

Mourão (2019) agrees with the aforementioned opinion and emphasizes that pupils' engagement can be measured by observing their personal responses to the picture book. If pupils make personal connections, give opinions about the characters in the story and talk about their own choices in a similar situation, it shows that they are clearly motivated and engaged. Additionally, a personal

response to the picture book, such as laughing, being shocked, imitating the characters, and interacting with them shows that pupils are engaged in the story. Considering pupils' engagement and motivation, Mourão (2019) also points out that though it can be considered inappropriate by some teachers, pupils' performative response, which involves jokes or an effort to make their colleagues laugh, can demonstrate pupils' engagement.

Another significant point in favour of using picture books in language classrooms is that stories develop children's language skills. Stories do not teach grammar points explicitly; however, children acquire a rich diversity of linguistic items such as vocabulary and sound patterns along with different contexts naturally in the classroom environment (Ghosn, 2002). As Huang (2006, p. 57) points out, "storytelling may serve as a steppingstone to the learning of syntax as it demonstrates grammatical and syntactic features in meaningful context". In addition to this, pupils exposed to new vocabulary and structures in varied and familiar contexts can have the opportunity to enrich their thinking. Ultimately, they can use these language patterns in their oral responses (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Povey, 2019). Mourão (2019) also states that pupils can develop metalinguistic skills when they demonstrate understanding by translating the vocabulary into L1, correcting their colleagues when they mispronounce a word in L2, repeating words, or saying how easy/difficult to pronounce them. Thus, one should also mention that listening to stories helps young learners increase their awareness of intonation, rhythm, and pronunciation of the targeted language.

Next, stories are a useful tool to build social cohesion as they provide a shared social experience. In other words, children become excited, happy, or sad with others. Thus, this enhances their social and emotional development. During storytelling, pupils interact and communicate with each other, which leads to harmonious social relationships. In a story-based lesson or project, pupils can work together to reflect on a story and have "a shared response of laughter, sadness, excitement and anticipation" (Ellis & Brewster, 2014, p. 7). Moreover, pupils can foster an understanding of other people's lives no matter where they are and develop a sense of empathy.

Additionally, as Povey (2019, p. 5) states, "storybooks can act as the gateway to literacy learning". Ghosn's (2002) outlook does not seem to contradict this idea and he highlights that children with access to print books are privileged. He goes on to say that teachers can use this opportunity to introduce critical thinking and reasoning by implementing activities such as looking for cause-effect relationships, asking questions to find evidence in the stories, etc. Ellis and Brewster (2014) also mention the importance of storybooks as they tackle universal themes such as family, friendship, health, moral values, and so on. Therefore, stories can be considered useful as they allow children to develop personally and understand the world around them (Povey, 2019).

One of the vital reasons for using picture books in the classroom is that they address pupils' different learning styles and intelligence. They can have the opportunity to respond to the stories at their own rate and each child's learning becomes more meaningful.

Another reason that is worth mentioning regarding storytelling activities is that stories promote a link among other disciplines (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). In other words, it values the application of an interdisciplinary approach. Povey (2019) highlights the similarity of the story-based curriculum with PBL since they can be centered on a topic with several related cross-curricular activities.

Additionally, it is believed that storytelling activities promote diversity and intercultural understanding, which is crucial in today's world. By developing intercultural awareness, pupils become more open to different views and respect diversity. Stories not only do provide information about the authors' cultures but various folklores and fairytales across cultures (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Povey, 2019).

Of all the benefits, the one that excites us the most about picture books is that they can be perfectly used to introduce critical thinking into the EFL context. Fisher (1999, p. 17) has affirmed that "the use of stories has long been recognized as a valuable means for stimulating philosophical discussion with young children in the primary classroom." While interpreting and being involved in the stories, children enhance inferring and critical thinking skills as well. Picture books can be cognitively challenging and are also entertaining in nature (Erkaya, 2005; Fisher, 1999). Hence, pupils would have fun while thinking critically and it would feel like a natural process.

Taking into account pupils' levels, numerous types of activities can be used to activate their low-order and high-order thinking. Bloom's Taxonomy that is created by Benjamin Bloom gives us insights about levels of reasoning skills: analytical, critical thinking and problem-solving (Erkaya, 2005; Scott, 2015). The first level is, the level of Knowledge, and in this level, pupils are asked questions to show if they have obtained some information such as dates, events, places, or reasons of the events asking 'why...?'. This level is considered to be effective in low-order thinking. Pupils, then, can move to the second level which is the level of Comprehension, and it is not only about gaining knowledge. Instead, pupils are expected to interpret, compare, and contrast information and state the main idea. In the third level, the level of Application, pupils' level is considered more advanced, and they can apply the knowledge they have gained to solve problems. Next, in the level of Analysis, learners can scrutinize, explain, infer, and investigate along with comparing ideas. In the last two levels, the level of Synthesis and the level of Evaluation, pupils can analyze and synthesize the choices characters made, imagine, create and debate (Erkaya, 2005).

In addition, Mourão (2019) highlights the significance of student-response during storytelling. The author goes on to say that teachers should choose adequate picture books to ensure that pupils respond in various ways to picture books. It is also endorsed that picture books can foster learners' cognitive development since they can analytically respond to the narrative and the pictures. For instance, pupils should be given the opportunity to make predictions and inferences about the illustrations, retell the parts of the story using their own words and give analytical responses to the picture book itself.

4.3. PICTURE BOOKS AS A BRIDGE TO PBL

Polette (2007) stresses that schools must teach children how to think, question, analyze, evaluate, and solve problems instead of focusing only on rote learning. She reinforces her opinion by stating that children need these skills to be able to tackle the amount of information they meet in today's modern world. The author believes that the best way to expose children to these skills is through quality literature. Thus, she focuses on improving pupils' thinking skills using picture books.

There can be found a great number of picture books that aim to enhance pupils' 21st Century Skills, mainly critical thinking and problem-solving. According to Crawford et al. (2018), many picture books can offer examples from real-life situations that pupils have never experienced and provide an understanding of those issues. Some of these can be refugee problems, homelessness, wars, hunger, climate change, environmental problems, and so on. Picture books are considered essential as they provide learners to gain insights into important topics and develop a critical perspective while engaging in the story. Such powerful picture books would help pupils to think critically, learn how to act in a world with such issues, and develop empathy towards those who are facing these problems (Crawford et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, picture books do not necessarily have to cover sensitive topics to foster 21st Century Skills. By analyzing several picture books on numerous topics such as animals, houses, food, feelings, celebrities, etc., and giving examples of creative pre- and post- reading activities, Polette (2007) highlights that young learners can benefit from several more strategies such as decision-making, divergent thinking, brainstorming, hypothesizing, imagination, inferring, interpreting and judging, among others. Young learners can also do research if they are provided with clear information and guided well.

In the following part, the picture books which were used during the PBL-based projects are analyzed and discussed.

PART II - THE STUDY: PBL IN ACTION

CHAPTER 1 – DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This chapter outlines the research methodology applied for this study. This is followed by the research questions and aims which are then described by taking into account opportunities and research tools used in the framework of this action research to collect data. The final section describes the learning environment in which the action research was carried out.

1.1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS

After witnessing the aforementioned benefits of PBL and storytelling on improving pupils' 21st Century Skills among other positive aspects, and due to the fact that there are not many studies in the area of PBL in the EFL young learner contexts, it is our intention to study the effects of PBL through storytelling on enhancing pupils' 21st Century Skills in the 1st Basic Cycle (CEB) in Portugal.

The action research which is carried out during the internship practice aims to use an ethnographic research methodology since the research is conducted in a natural real-life environment (Khindri, 2021). The study intends to integrate both qualitative and quantitative research methods. It can also be stated that the triangulation strategy is used during the study. This triangulation strategy is defined by Denzin (2017) as methodological triangulation which promotes the use of different data collection tools i.e., interviews and observations, as well as different techniques which are combined to provide more comprehensive information. As stated by Bowen (2009), mixed-method studies (qualitative-quantitative research methods) provide credibility as the researcher draws upon several sources of evidence. Analysis and interpretation of qualitative research tools provide valuable information and insights (Bowen, 2009). As emphasized by Holliday (2007, p. 6-7):

It maintains that we can explore, catch glimpses, illuminate and then try to interpret bits of reality. Interpretation is as far as we can go. This places less of a burden of proof on qualitative research, which instead builds gradual pictures. The pictures are themselves only interpretations - approximations - basic attempts to represent what is in fact a much more complex reality - paintings that represent our own impressions, rather than photographs of what is 'really' there. They are created by collecting a number of instances of social life.

Considering the effects of PBL on fostering 21st Century Skills, the document analysis method is also used as they provide insights and a deeper understanding of the issue. Bowen (2009, p. 29) points out that "as a research method, document analysis is particularly applicable to qualitative case."

The study focuses on PBL and storytelling and explores their effects simultaneously. Thus, the research questions, objectives as well as data and analysis options are the following:

Table 2*Research questions, aims, data and analysis options*

Research Questions	Objectives	Data	Analysis Options
To what extent PBL can be implemented in the Portuguese young learner EFL classrooms using storytelling?	To critically observe and analyze to what extent PBL can be implemented in the Portuguese young learner EFL classrooms using storytelling.	Scientific literature (studies on PBL); Field notes; Project-based lesson plans	Content analysis
What challenges do the teachers encounter while implementing PBL in the Portuguese young learner EFL classrooms?	To ascertain the challenges teachers may encounter while implementing PBL approach in the Portuguese young learner EFL classrooms.	Scientific literature (studies on PBL); Field notes; Teacher questionnaires	Content analysis Statistics analysis
What are teachers' and pupils' perceptions of PBL and storytelling?	To describe teachers' and pupils' perceptions of PBL and storytelling.	Field notes; Project-based lesson plans; Pre- and Post-project questionnaires; Teacher questionnaires;	Content analysis Statistics analysis
Which 21st century skills may pupils develop through undertaking a PBL approach enhanced by storytelling?	To critically observe and analyze which 21st century skills may be fostered through PBL approach using storytelling.	Scientific literature (studies on PBL); Field notes; Projects and pupils' products; Pre- and Post-project questionnaires; Teacher questionnaires;	Content analysis Statistics analysis
Which sort of activities and resources cater for an effective PBL approach using storytelling?	To identify what types of activities and resources provide an effective PBL approach enhanced by storytelling, which also fosters pupils' 21st century skills.	Field notes; Project-based lesson plans; Lesson plans	Content analysis

Therefore, considering the methodology, it can be stated that multiple data collection types are used in the study: a) one-on-one interviews; b) pre- and post-project questionnaires; c) field notes; d) unit plans; e) photos and films from the lessons; f) teacher questionnaires; g) document analysis on PBL, storytelling and 21st Century Skills; h) projects and pupils' products. Data-gathering tools were spoken and/or written both in English and Portuguese.

To start with the first data-gathering tool mentioned above, a structured interview (Appendix A) was conducted with the pupils to understand their perceptions of the picture book *The Water Princess* by Susan Verde and gain their perspective on their team members in the *Water Project* as well as their collaboration skills.

In relation to the questionnaires for the pupils, pupils were encouraged to reflect on their performance as well as the project. Although questionnaires are not as popular as other methods for research with children, they have been used to some extent. It is also stated that while some pupils might find questionnaires easier than face-to-face interviews, others might have difficulties in writing, or they might not be willing to take part in (Fargas et al., 2010). Hence, we tried to implement both questionnaires and interviews carefully. Additionally, we witnessed that pupils were more

eager to respond to short questions and they normally do not show much interest in open-ended ones.

The pre-project questionnaire (Appendix B) was distributed to the pupils a few lessons before the storytelling activity to find out pupils' perceptions of storytelling, collaboration, communication, and research skills. Furthermore, we aimed to understand whether pupils like to do projects, present them and what types of projects they prefer. The questionnaire mostly consisted of "Yes/Sometimes/No" questions and pupils were expected to choose smiley faces coloured green, yellow, and red. These questions also included an additional and optional question for the pupils to share their reasons. The post-project questionnaire (Appendix C) aimed to gauge pupils' self-reflection on their 21st Century Skills, mainly: collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills. Moreover, we attempted to find out which stages of PBL were most and least liked by the pupils. Pupils were also asked which activities they liked the most in the unit to reflect on whether they enjoyed the project. In both questionnaires, pupils had the opportunity to reflect on the intern teacher's performance and they were asked to share their opinions to improve the storytelling activities and projects next time.

Another data-gathering tool to be considered is field notes made during and after the observation of lessons. Critically reflecting on these notes about storytelling and project-based lessons, we could gather information on pupils' views on PBL and storytelling, the improvement in their 21st Century Skills, the effectiveness of the resources as well as the challenges which can be encountered while implementing the PBL approach in the EFL young learner classroom.

Furthermore, data were collected and processed through the intern teacher's reflections on the unit plans, and complementary evidence such as the lesson plans, photos, and films of lessons was used to verify the reflections in this study.

Visual data has often been treated as something different and marginal within the largely word-oriented disciplines of anthropology, ethnography and qualitative research (Ball and Smith 1999, P. 7, as cited in Holliday, 2007, p. 65)

Moreover, as it is significant to understand teachers' perceptions of PBL and storytelling, we seek to analyze how they perceive the implementation of these in their practice. To ascertain whether primary school English teachers in Portugal have positive or negative views on the effects of PBL and storytelling to enhance pupils' 21st Century Skills, the teachers were kindly asked to share their opinions through questionnaires on Google Forms. Nevertheless, as we believed it might not be feasible to spread the questionnaire on a large scale or since some of the teachers might not have time, availability, or willingness to respond to the questionnaires, as a complement method, we focused on document analysis on PBL. Bowen (2009) highlights that analyzing documents as part of an ethnographic case study helps researchers gain insights while exploring the beliefs and practices of teachers. Documents provide rich source of data and is considered efficient (Bowen, 2019). By carefully analyzing the documents with a critical eye and being cautious in the selection of the documents, we can state that we gathered credible supplementary data from the documents.

Throughout the project, pupils' processes and products were analyzed to have a richer interpretation of pupils' engagement in the storytelling and project work as well as the effects of PBL using storytelling on pupils' 21st Century Skills.

1.2. SCHOOL DIMENSION AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

To start with, the internship has been undertaken at a private primary school located in Oporto, Portugal⁷. The school has three educational levels: Nursery, Pre-School, and 1st Basic Cycle (CEB) which consists of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year. Considering the school environment, it must be stated that it is quite large, and it has ample in and out playground areas. Moreover, the school offers several rooms i.e., a gym, library in which pupils can access computers, a psychology office, an atelier as well as a multipurpose room. We can witness how much importance is given to pupils' creativity by looking at the walls of the school adorned with pupils' marvelous arts and crafts.

By considering the schools' Educational Project, we can state that the school values the development of cultural and artistic creativity by defending the importance of collaborative dynamic in this aspect. It can be stated that teachers have created a collaborative team which leads to an increase in already talented pupils' curiosity. As Moran (2001) states, collaboration among teachers, teachers-parents, teachers-students, and the school administrator is crucial to creating an effective school environment. Hence, analyzing the Educational Project, we can point out that our school intends to: a) stimulate every child's innate potentials by valuing different skills and competencies; b) encourage imagination and creativity through Arts; c) encourage democratic perspectives; d) value cultural plurality and encourage respect towards each child's unique culture; e) build a collaborative culture in and out of school; f) create a school environment which is consisted of members who are open to thinking and learning to think by sharing thoughts, observing and reflecting on experiences continuously; g) provide a feeling of belonging, generosity, and respect, among others. The school also offers integrated activities such as music, projects, workshops, school trips as well as extra-curricular activities, for instance, ballet and English for very young learners, among others. Considering the educational project of the school where the internship has been undertaken, it is interesting to note that our study is in accordance with its objectives and actions.

Focusing on the socio-educational context and classroom profile, we are to describe our 4th year class that contributed to this study. 4^o A consists of 26 pupils, 16 boys, and 10 girls, aged between 9 and 10 years old. This age group is considered young learners. Hence, the lesson plans and the project were conceived taking young learners' characteristics into account (Bruner, 1996; Piaget, 1975, as cited in Musthafa, 2010). Given that children's attention span is rather short, we tried to implement various activities during the lessons (Musthafa, 2010). In addition, we gave importance to active learning strategies as young learners learn better from hands-on physical experience and when they

⁷ The name of the school cannot be disclosed in the scope of both the Helsinki Declaration and the Oviedo Declaration.

are actively involved in their learning process to construct knowledge (Musthafa, 2010). Moreover, as children learn from direct experiences, we included activities in which pupils used their senses and moved around the classroom as sitting still would not be so enjoyable and engaging (Musthafa, 2010). We had the chance to observe such characteristics in the classroom and sometimes changed some of the strategies we had planned to implement.

Generally speaking, pupils were energetic, and their attention span was quite short. Due to two Covid-19 isolations, pupils had to stay home for a few weeks, and this made some of them a little bit distracted when they returned to school. Incorporating various classroom management strategies, pupils became more attentive to the lessons. Pupils also showed an interest in using English in and out of the classroom. They were quite creative and into arts and crafts. Drawing and creating posters always drew their attention throughout the lessons and we can state that they always paid full attention to such activities. They also showed enthusiasm towards games and hands-on activities and participated enthusiastically. It was not surprising to see that pupils were always willing to play games. They were quite interested in both classroom games and online games or even fun quizzes. Their second test results showed that lessons were effective as the whole class improved their marks.

The pre-questionnaire played a crucial role in gaining some insights into the characteristics, habits, and preferences of the pupils. From qualitative and quantitative data obtained from the pre-questionnaire, several conclusions were drawn from the pupils' responses related to storytelling, willingness to do a project and their 21st Century Skills. Drawing upon the responses from the pre-project questionnaire (Appendix B) about storytelling, we concluded that most of the pupils chose the option "Yes" (91.6%), stating that they like stories, while fewer of them (75%) would like to hear more stories during their English lessons by stating "Yes". Two pupils explained why they would "Sometimes" like to hear more stories:

"Se calhar, não. Porque não conseguíamos acabar o que está planeado." (P2) ["Maybe not. Because then we would not be able to finish what is planned".]

"Não é bem o meu gosto" (P4) ["It is not really my taste."]

However, in our lessons, stories were told using picture books which proved to be engaging. Therefore, results about pupils' perceptions of storytelling are presented in the following chapters of this report.

Some of the questions in the pre-questionnaire aimed to obtain information about pupils' views on the 21st Century Skills. In question 3, pupils are asked if they like to work in a group and it indicates positive results since 18 (75%) pupils revealed that they like teamwork while 6 (25%) of them like it sometimes. Question 4 also gives us ideas about pupils' characteristics as it attempts to ascertain if pupils would contribute as much as they could in teamwork. 22 (91.6%) pupils chose the option "Yes" while 2 (8.3%) of them chose the option "Sometimes". Hence, this gave us valuable insights into pupils' attitude towards collaboration. Nevertheless, only 2 of the pupils, who chose the option "Yes"

for question 3 justified their responses by explaining why they liked to work in teams. The responses, which are given in Portuguese, are translated into English below:

"Claro que sim! São incríveis!" (P1) ["Of course! They are incredible!"]

"Assim temos mais pesquisa." (P2) [Thereby, we have more research.]

As mentioned before, pupils were not willing to explain their reasons. In question 4, a few pupils stated why they would contribute to their team as much as they could as follows:

"Gosto de ajudar, então contribuo muito." (P1) ["I like to help. Thus, I contribute a lot."]

"Porque não gosto de deixar as pessoas a fazerem todo o trabalho." (P2) [Because I do not like leaving people do all the work.]"

It was also crucial to analyze questions 5 and 6 as they gave us ideas about pupils' communication and social skills which helped us characterize the group. Interestingly, only 10 pupils (41.6%) said "Yes" as it means they would like to share ideas with the rest of the class while 11 (45.8%) of them said "Sometimes". While 1 pupil (4%) did not respond to this question, 1 of them (4%) said "No".

One of the pupils who said "Yes" pointed out his/her reason saying:

"Sim, tenho muitas ideias" (P1) - ["Yes, because I have a lot of ideas"]

One of the pupils who said "Sometimes" explained his/her reason stating:

"Não, porque alguns podem não gostar." (P2) ["No, because some (team members) might not like it."]

These answers made us more concerned about creating a safer atmosphere in which pupils can express themselves freely. Thus, throughout the lessons, pupils were encouraged to share their opinions without being judged.

18 pupils (75%) stated that they like to hear their classmates' ideas by choosing the option "Yes" while 5 of them (20.8%) said "Sometimes" and 1 pupil did not answer. It is important to note that though some pupils are not comfortable sharing their thoughts, they are eager to listen to others.

Additionally, pupils were used to doing projects as they have a subject called "projects". Though some projects may not be the same as PBL, since PBL has stages to follow throughout the project (Stoller, 2002; 2013), and its characteristics differ from simply doing a project (Harmer and Stokes, 2014; Larmer and Mergendoller, 2010; Stoller, 2012). Despite this, pupils would work in teams, do research, create products, and present them eagerly in some of the subjects. This information can be deduced from questions 7 and 8. While 18 pupils (75%) like to do online research, 5 of them (20%) chose "Sometimes" and 1 pupil (4%) said "No". The responses to question 8 in the pre-questionnaire provided us with enough evidence to conclude that pupils are used to doing projects and they enjoy them. 23 pupils chose the option "Yes" (95.8%) stating that they like to do projects and 1 of them (4%) said "Sometimes".

By observing pupils' arts and crafts in the classroom and all around the school, we were already aware of their creativity. Thus, being curious, we attempted to know what pupils would like to create as a final product in a project. Another reason behind this question was to understand which options to provide pupils when we gave them a choice for their final product (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010). Analyzing this question was more challenging than the other ones as some of the pupils chose more than one answer, while 3 pupils did not answer the question. We obtained 6 responses for a theatrical performance, 8 responses to create a poster, 10 responses for a video, we got only 1 response for writing a letter, and 1 response for an oral presentation. As we thought it would not be confusing for pupils to see all the options to choose for the project, we offered 5 of these options in the preparation stage of our *Water Project*. Pupils' choices for their final products are revealed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2 – PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

DISCUSSION

This chapter applies the theoretical part analyzed in Part I to study the research questions by implementing the PBL approach to work on two projects. Results are illustrated and analyzed following our data-gathering tools defined previously. The results are presented and discussed in two sections: a) data obtained from primary school English teachers and researchers; b) data obtained from the pupils. As mentioned previously, in both sections, our interpretation of this data is also carefully presented. Brief descriptions of the small projects, which have been put into practice in a primary EFL classroom, are also demonstrated to highlight the differences between simply doing project work and PBL-based projects. This is then followed by short-term PBL-based projects which are implemented throughout our practice in a primary EFL young learner classroom. However, only one of the projects will be explored thoroughly in this report due to constraints regarding the expected length of the internship report and the quality of data on the PBL we have implemented.

2.1. DATA OBTAINED FROM THE TEACHERS AND RESEARCHERS

This section aims to identify primary school English teachers' perceptions of PBL and storytelling. Thus, two questionnaires were administrated online. Both questionnaires attempt to gauge and understand teachers' perceptions and experience regarding PBL and storytelling, as well as their opinions about the effects of those on enhancing pupils' 21st Century Skills. In addition to processing the data and presenting findings of teachers' perceptions on PBL and storytelling, this section also provides document analysis on teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of PBL in young learner EFL classrooms outside of Portugal.

The first questionnaire was entitled 'PBL in the EFL young learner classrooms' and aimed at gaining insights into teachers' perceptions of the implementation of PBL. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions such as Yes/No question - in some questions "Maybe" or "Not sure" were also used, and a 5-point rating scale as well as open-ended ones. In the first part of the first questionnaire, we aimed at getting specific information about teachers' age, gender, experience regarding teaching English as well as where they teach. The second part of the questionnaire was designed to understand if the teachers are familiar with the PBL approach (Q1); to find out whether they had already incorporated PBL in their lessons (Q2); to gauge how challenging implementing PBL was (Q3); to identify the challenges teachers encountered implementing PBL (Q4); to reflect on the teachers'

⁸ Questionnaire 1: <https://forms.gle/4KKkvTgTLiCwri6K9>;

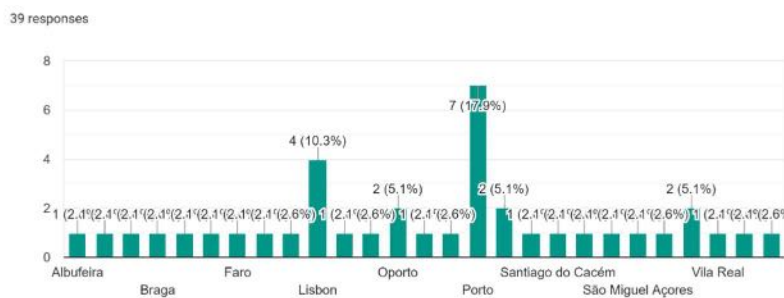
Questionnaire 2: <https://forms.gle/xC41j9RJptFQchFY7>

perceptions of 21st Century Skills enhanced by PBL (Q5; Q6); to obtain perspectives on teachers' enjoyment incorporating PBL (Q7).

In this questionnaire, the participants were 39 primary school English teachers across Portugal. 94.9% of the participants' ages ranged from 36-54, while 2.6% were aged between 18-35 and 2.6% were aged between 55-75, with 97.4% identified as female. The years of teaching experience of the participants ranged from 5 to 32 years. 22 participants (56.4%) have 11-20 years of experience, 13 participants (33.3%) have more than 20 years of experience and 4 participants (10.2%) have less than 10 years of experience as primary school English teachers. As shown in the graph below (Figure 4), the participants are from different parts of Portugal. Thus, analyzing the data, it can be stated that most of the participants (18) are from the cities that belong to the Oporto area and the second most stated region is Lisbon (6). These are followed by Setúbal (3), Açores (2), Faro (2), Aveiro (1), Braga (1), Bragança (1), Castelo Branco (1), Guarda (1), Vila Real (1), Viseu (1), Santarem (1).

Figure 4

The cities to which the in-service teachers' schools belong

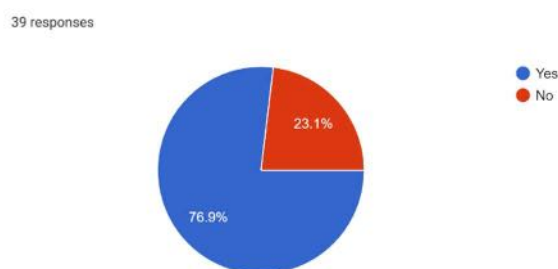


Note: The graph is retrieved from Google Forms

The second part of the questionnaire was structured to obtain data regarding teachers' experiences and perceptions of PBL. Question 1 revealed that most of the participants, 33 teachers (84.6%) were familiar with the PBL approach. 6 participants (15.8%) stated that they were not sure if they had ever heard of PBL. Question 2 aims to find out whether the participants had ever incorporated PBL in their lessons. As shown in the graph below (Figure 5), most of the participants (30) had implemented the PBL approach in their lessons while the rest (6) had never incorporated it.

Figure 5

Teachers' experience regarding the implementation of PBL

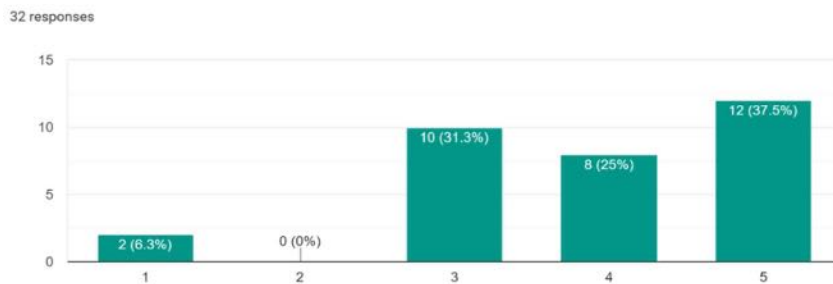


Note: The graph is retrieved from Google Forms

Question 3 focuses on the extent to which teachers can rate PBL regarding the challenges it poses. 32⁹ participants (82%) responded to this question. As shown in the graph below (Figure 6), views on the level of difficulty in implementing PBL vary to some extent. The participants who stated that they had never implemented PBL in their lessons chose the challenging level as 1 and 3.

Figure 6

How challenging PBL is considered by the participants

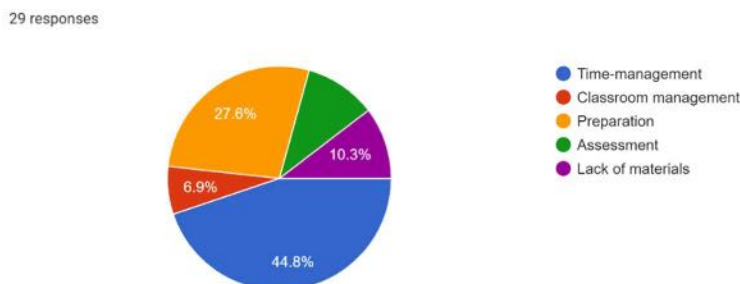


Note: The graph is retrieved from Google Forms

Question 4 relates to the challenges which teachers faced during the implementation of PBL. As can be seen in the graph below (Figure 7), 28 participants responded to the question. The two participants who had not implemented PBL in their lessons also responded to this question by stating that classroom management and lack of materials were the challenges they encountered. Most of the participants (13) found time-management the most challenging. The preparation stage was the second most challenging according to the participants (8). This is followed by assessment (3) and lack of materials (3). Lastly, classroom management is found the least challenging during the implementation of PBL.

Figure 7

The challenges encountered by the in-service teachers



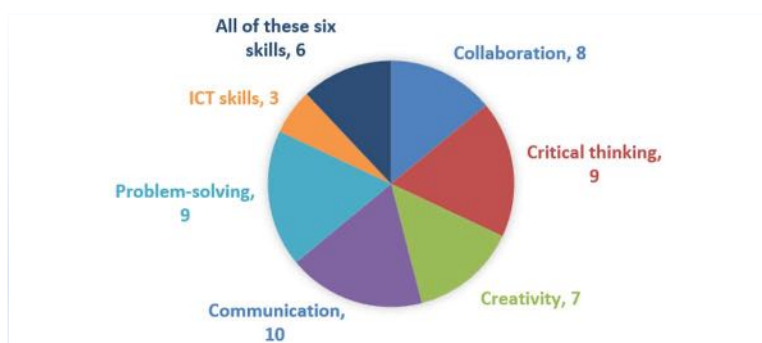
Note: The graph is retrieved from Google Forms

⁹ Though the number of the participants, who stated that they had incorporated PBL, was 30, two more participants commented on the follow-up questions as if they had implemented PBL. Hence, their responses are also taken into consideration.

Question 5 focuses attention on the effectiveness of PBL in developing pupils' 21st Century Skills. 27 participants (81.8%) acknowledged that PBL was effective in enhancing such skills by choosing "Yes", while 6 participants (18.2%) chose "Maybe". Question 6 aims to find out which 21st Century Skills were improved during the implementation of PBL. This question was structured as an open-ended one to encourage the participants to reflect on their experiences although the examples of the skills were given in parenthesis: a) collaboration; b) creativity; c) critical thinking; d) communication; e) problem-solving; f) ICT skills. 6 participants stated: "all of them", "all skills", "all above", "all mentioned", "all" and "all of the above". As shown in the graph below (Figure 8), the rest of the participants chose specific skills among the ones we mentioned and/or expanded their answers. Figure 8 shows how many times each skill was mentioned by the participants.

Figure 8

Teachers' views on the improvement of 21st century skills



Some of the other skills that are highlighted by the participants are: a) literacy skills; b) life skills; c) learning skills; d) social skills; e) oral skills.

The last question helped us obtain perspectives on the extent to which the teachers enjoyed incorporating PBL into their lessons. In total¹⁰, 17 participants (53.1%) rated their experience as "5", 10 participants (31.3%) rated it as "4", 3 participants (9.4%), chose "3" and 2 participants (6.5%) chose "1".

All in all, analyzing the results of teachers' PBL experience, we can conclude that most of the teachers found PBL challenging, yet they enjoyed the experience. Teachers also shared common ground on the effects of PBL in enhancing pupils' 21st Century Skills.

As mentioned previously, the report also explores studies carried out in the scope of PBL in young learner EFL classrooms. Nevertheless, since there have not been many research studies regarding the implementation of PBL in primary EFL classrooms, we focused on two studies (Hrušková, 2014; Tsiplakides & Fragoulis, 2009). The findings of these studies are analyzed and interpreted in order to

¹⁰ We would like to highlight that the responses of the two of the participants who had never incorporated PBL and rated their enjoyment as "1" and "3", are also counted.

gain a broader perspective on teachers' perceptions of PBL. As previously mentioned in Part I, Tsipakides and Fragoulis (2009) implemented a PBL-based project in a Greek young learner EFL classroom. The long-term cross-curricular project lasted six months and aimed to improve pupils' historical knowledge. It was stated that the project was effective in enhancing pupils' four language skills. Pupils were also motivated and eager to take part in the activities and their self-esteem was improved. Moreover, the authors highlighted that pupils' communication and collaboration skills were developed dramatically. Nevertheless, there were some challenges that were pointed out by the authors. One of the main challenges that was encountered was pupils' dedication in collaborative work. Though pupils had improved this skill, while some pupils did little work some others dominated the project. Additionally, pupils had the tendency to use L1 to communicate. It is also stated that shifting roles was not easy to accept for some pupils. Having been given choice and voice also made some pupils feel uncomfortable, though in the end, they realized that the teacher was there to guide the process. Finally, the authors unveiled teachers' perceptions of implementing PBL in the classroom stating that despite the difficulties encountered, lack of resources, and being inexperienced, teachers indicated that they gained vital experience and overcame their initial fears. All in all, the potential PBL offers was evaluated positively by the teachers. Nevertheless, they urged that systematic training in this approach should be available.

Furthermore, in a study Hrušková (2014) carried out with EFL learners, a long-term PBL-based project was implemented. The project was based on creating comics using the English language and Czech literary works. The main aim of the project was to improve learners' communication and social skills as well as language and learning abilities. Having administered questionnaires to the pupils, Hrušková (2014) gained an understanding of how the project was viewed by the pupils. The findings showed that pupils found the project fun and they liked it. Nonetheless, likewise what teachers indicated in the study of Tsipakides and Fragoulis (2009), Hrušková (2014) also pointed out the challenge of working together. Pupils stated that collaboration was worse than they had expected, they did not have time for meetings, only the group leader was inclined to work, some pupils did not collaborate, and so on. It was concluded that most of the pupils were not satisfied with teamwork. Regarding teachers' views on designing a PBL-based project, Hrušková (2014) states that teachers found it challenging but rewarding. According to the author, though pupils had both negative and positive experiences, they appreciated the fact that they finally took an active role in their learning. It was also expressed that though teachers faced challenges, the benefits of PBL outweighed the negatives since both teachers and pupils were curious and open to learning new things. In conclusion, two teachers who did not have any experience in PBL claimed that it was a positive experience and worth a try since it broadens both teachers' and learners' horizons.

Furthermore, the main aim of our second questionnaire was to explore teachers' views on storytelling and opinions about the 21st Century Skills enhanced by using this method in their lessons. In this questionnaire, some questions were repetitive from the previous questionnaire regarding understanding teachers' beliefs in the effectiveness of storytelling. In total, 31 teachers

completed the questionnaire, with 96.8% reported as female. The highest proportion of participants (87.1%) was aged between 36-54. 6.5% of the participants were aged between 18-35 while 6.5% of them were aged between 55-75. In terms of teaching experience, we obtained a wide range of teaching years. While approximately 13% of the participants have 1-10 years and 54.8% of the participants have 14-20 years, 32.2% of the participants reported to have 21-32 years of teaching experience. In this questionnaire, question 1 clarifies for how many years teachers have been incorporating storytelling as a mode of teaching into their lessons. The results revealed that 8 participants (25.8%) started implementing storytelling in the same year they started their teaching career. 7 participants (22.5%) incorporated storytelling after a few years of teaching (1-5 years). While 10 participants (32.2%) took between 6-15 years, it took more than 15 years for 5 participants (16.1%) to use storytelling as a form of teaching in their lessons. One of the participants has only a year of teaching experience and he/she did not state if he/she had already incorporated storytelling. Question 2 aims to fully understand whether teachers were willing to continue implementing storytelling. Teachers' responses indicated that most of the teachers (96.8%) would continue using storytelling in their lessons. One of the participants stated that she was no longer going to teach young learners and she would "maybe" use it with older learners. It was also imperative to fully understand the challenges teachers encountered while implementing storytelling, in order to gain a better understanding of their perceptions. Hence, question 3 encourages teachers to reflect on their experiences. It was an open-ended question to obtain a wide range of opinions. 29 participants (93.5%) expressed the challenges they encountered. Since some participants mentioned more than one challenge, the challenges will be presented in categories.

A) Attention span/Concentration:

Drawing on existing literature, we can point out that storytelling captures pupils' attention (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Ghosn, 2002). Nevertheless, 6 in-service teachers (20.6%) indicated that one of the challenges they had encountered was pupils' attention span and concentration. Some of the participants' responses are presented below:

"Managing their attention span, (...)." (P1)

"You need to become the characters to fully concentrate their minds." (P17)

B) Motivation and Engagement:

Furthermore, some participants pointed out another challenge which is related to the previous one. Storytelling has been effective in motivating and engaging pupils especially since young learners are drawn to stories (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Ghosn, 2002). However, 4 participants (13.7%) commented on learners' motivation and engagement during the storytelling as a challenge they had faced:

"Learners' motivation." (P2)

"Making them feasible and engaging." (P11)

"Being able to surprise each time." (P22)

"The ability to always introduce a sense of wonder in every story you tell." (P30)

C) Preparation and Time-management:

While planning the lesson, we must bear the pre-, during and post-storytelling framework in mind. For each one of them, being willing to prepare valuable and effective activities might take more time than we expect/plan. Preparation also involves the resources, and some story books/picture books can be costly if they are not provided by the school. Additionally, managing time while telling the story and interacting with the learners can become more challenging.

Hence, considering these challenges, we present some of the participants' views on this matter in the following:

"Lack of resources (story books, picture books, etc.)." (P3)

"Creating new resources." (P4)

"Time management and expensive material." (P19)

"Time for preparation." (P31)

Category D: Choosing out appropriate books

Picking out the books at an appropriate level for young learners might require a little thought and research to find the right graded stories. Therefore, the next challenge reported by 3 participants (10.3%) is the appropriate selection of the stories regarding pupils' age and language level. Some of the teachers pinpointed that:

"We need to be careful when choosing the level of the story." (P10)

"Choosing adequate stories and adapting the language to the children's proficiency." (P29)

E) DELIVERING THE STORIES IN L2

Though we can implement some techniques to ensure that pupils understand the story, it might still be challenging. 4 participants (13.7%) elaborated on this point:

"Assuring everyone understands the vocabulary, the "message" of the book as well." (P1)

"Getting the meaning across without using L1." (P15)

"Comprehending the story without using the mother language." (P18)

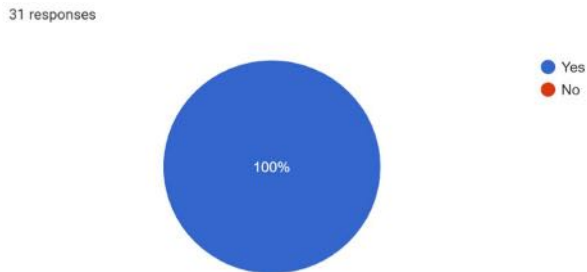
"Language and overcoming the " I don't understand" part." (P27)

Moreover, question 4 leads teachers to reflect on how effective storytelling is in enhancing pupils' language skills. It was a close-ended question and the result indicated that all the participants (100%) agreed that storytelling is a useful tool for teaching English language skills. Question 5 is particularly pertinent and seeks to find out whether teachers believe in the effectiveness of storytelling in developing pupils' 21st Century Skills. As it is shown in the graph below (Figure 9), all teachers had a

positive perception towards the effectiveness of using storytelling and acknowledged that pupils' 21st Century Skills can be nurtured through storytelling

Figure 9

Teachers' views on the effectiveness of storytelling in 21st century skills



Note: The graph is retrieved from Google Forms

In question 6, teachers were asked which 21st Century Skills have been developed using storytelling in their EFL young learner classrooms. It was an open-ended question and here the aim was to obtain details if possible. Hence, we can state that 29 teachers out of 31 corroborated their responses from the previous question by giving examples of the 21st Century Skills which are developed in their classrooms. As shown in the graph below (Figure 10), we processed and analyzed the responses. The responses are presented according to how many times they were mentioned by the participants.

Figure 10

Teachers' perceptions of 21st century skills enhanced by storytelling



Another skill that was addressed by one of the participants was the "creactical skills", which combine creativity with critical thinking (Cruz, 2019). Some of the other aspects that were pointed out by the participants were: a) imagination; b) curiosity; c) values; d) empathy; e) citizenship. None of the participants mentioned that storytelling would develop intercultural awareness.

All in all, most of the participants strongly agreed that the use of storytelling can nurture pupils' 21st Century Skills by getting them involved in collaboration (during the pre- and follow-up activities),

creating a safe environment for critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, engaging them in active communication and developing their social skills.

2.2. PBL IN AN EFL YOUNG LEARNER CLASSROOM

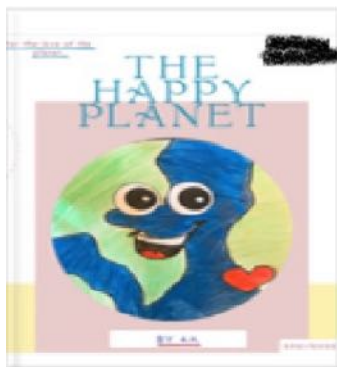
This section sets out to demonstrate the implementation of PBL using storytelling during our internship practice. By conducting document analysis as well as focusing on our unit plans, we attempted to incorporate the PBL approach into our classroom. Although we also focused on a great number of activities throughout this internship practice, our main purpose is to figure out how PBL can enhance pupils' 21st Century Skills using storytelling.

The first part of our practice can be considered between October 19th and December 16th. Starting with observing our coordinating supervisor's lessons, we had the opportunity to incorporate our unit plan into the lessons on November 10th. While planning the first unit plan, we divided it into two parts. The first part consisted of three lessons in which we worked on the first unit in the coursebook. The second part was also comprised of three lessons to implement our PBL-based project. However, since this time was not enough, we had to ask for more time and the class teacher spared us two more hours to complete the project. It is crucial to highlight that we were expected to cover the first unit on pupils' coursebook (*Let's Rock! 4 Inglês 4º Ano* by Cláudia Regina Abreu; Vanessa Reis Esteves). The unit was called "*Let's Protect the Planet!*" which mainly focused on recycling putting the emphasis on vocabulary learning, and four main language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). However, CLIL was also incorporated to cover air, noise, and water pollution. During these lessons, we needed to cover what was in our coursebook before embarking on implementing PBL. Trying to go beyond the coursebook, we started to think about infusing different activities into our lessons i.e., hands-on learning by sorting out the trash, making a compost heap in the classroom, digital games/quizzes on "*Plickers*", "*Baamboozle*", "*Quizizz*", "*WordWall*", and so on. Nevertheless, it is not our intention to cover all of those in our report.

By taking into consideration the differences between doing a project and PBL, we decided to focus on simply doing a project in our first lesson which was online. After brainstorming about how to protect the planet by filling in a K-W-L chart on "Padlet" regarding pupils existing knowledge and what they would like to learn, covering vocabulary through online activities as well as realia, we went through a picture book called *The Earth Book* by Todd Parr. Pupils were asked questions during reading, being invited to think critically. As a post-reading activity, pupils were told that they were going to create their happy planet book (Figure 11) related to the topic and explained that they could draw a picture and write what they could do to protect the planet. The cover of the book was created by us and used during the lessons.

Figure 11

4A's e-Book: The Happy Planet



Note: This E-Book is created based on the Earth Book by Todd Parr and Unit 1 - Let's Protect the Planet! on *Let's Rock! 4* by Cláudia Regina Abreu and Vanessa Reis Esteves. It can be found at t.ly/aNzn.

In total, 22 pupils drew outstanding pictures, and each wrote sentences regarding protecting the planet. While some just wrote only one sentence, some others made a list of things to do or not to do to save the planet as can be seen in Figure 12. Unlike PBL, which focuses on both the process and the product (Bell, 2010; Harmer & Stokes, 2014; Thomas, 2000), in a simple project like this one, the focus was on the final product. Though pupils were still tackling real-world questions likewise in PBL (Fandiño, 2013), the project was not as authentic as a PBL-based project since pupils were not directly involved in discussions and solving a problem (Larmer, 2020). Although pupils were free to design what they wished, they were not given voice and choice while choosing the outcome since they were all expected to create a drawing (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010). Pupils practiced vocabulary and learned by doing likewise in PBL (Harmer & Stokes, 2014). Nevertheless, 21st Century Skills were not considered during the project, which proves how simply doing a project can be differentiated from PBL-based projects since PBL is considered as an alternative to infuse the 21st Century Skills into the classroom (Fandiño, 2013). Pupils were given feedback only after they had created their product and there was not any continuous feedback during the process which is different from PBL-based projects since one of the essential elements of PBL is feedback and revision during the process (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010). It can be concluded that the project still aimed at involving pupils in their learning and had some traces from the PBL approach, but it was different from PBL-based projects.

Figure 12

One of the pupils' design for the e-Book



Furthermore, after learning how to recycle by sorting out the trash collaboratively in the classroom, pupils were involved in another small project to create their "recycling bin" posters (Figure 13). Each group drew a recycling bin and the trash to recycle in each bin. After designing their bins, pupils would also label each item to be recycled. The posters were then displayed in the classroom. Likewise in the previous project work, the stages of PBL were not implemented (Stoller, 2002; 2013). The topic nor the final outcome were determined by the pupils. Pupils also were not involved in sustained inquiry or critical thinking (Larmer, 2020). However, unlike the previous small project, pupils worked collaboratively in this one.

Figure 13

Group Yellow Plastic working on their poster



Taking both project work into account, we can state that these small projects are quite effective in having made pupils' learning more memorable since they took an active part in their learning

(Philominraj et al., 2020). Nevertheless, as can be seen from the projects, they can be done without our guidance and collaboration. They are also based on our directions rather than pupils' decisions. As mentioned previously, pupils are not given the opportunity to make many choices. Thus, pupils' products are the same in terms of the outcome. Although it is always the teacher's decision to incorporate a project implementing PBL, in general such projects do not get pupils to work on a 'driving question' which is an essential element of PBL and is effective in engaging pupils (Bell, 2010; Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010). Additionally, these projects are not as suitable to be used to solve problems in real-life contexts as PBL-based projects. Finally, we can also state that although teachers can also work on enhancing such skills, even in a simple project without implementing the PBL approach, developing pupils' 21st Century Skills is not of utmost importance in every simple project work.

2.3. PBL IN ACTION: THE WATER PROJECT

Our Entry Event: A picture book to initiate questioning

After a few lessons covering the unit with various types of activities including such small project work, we embarked on incorporating PBL using storytelling. During the selection of the picture book, we analyzed some great ones such as *Miss Maple's Seeds*, *The Adventures of a Plastic Bottle*, *The Giving Tree*, *Compost Stew*, and so on, we decided on *The Water Princess* by Susan Verde, as mentioned previously. For being an international story, which tackles a serious problem, the picture book can be considered quite effective in getting pupils to think about such global issues. Thus, *The Water Princess* can be considered one of those picture books which help pupils gain insights and develop critical perspectives (Crawford et al., 2018). Since the picture book is based on a true story, we believed it would be even more intriguing for the pupils. *The Water Princess* is based on Georgie Badiel's childhood and illustrates how a young girl, who must walk far with her mother to fetch some water every day, dreams about finding clean freshwater.

With this picture book, we aimed at raising pupils' awareness about how lack of water and wasting water may be a huge problem. The picture book was an example of an effective one since it is cognitively engaging and stimulating (Erkaya, 2005). Moreover, instead of a digital book, we opted for the paper version. Before reading, pupils were asked to complete a mind map about "water". During the activity, we showed some pictures to encourage pupils to think and gave positive feedback after each answer. Pupils were also told to use their dictionaries to look up some words. As it can be seen in Figure 14, whilst pupils were sharing their ideas, the mind map was filled in.

Figure 14

Digital mind map (from Mind Meister)



After awakening pupils' minds and drawing their attention, pupils were introduced to some unknown vocabulary with some pictures on the interactive board. Unlike repetition, pupils were asked some questions about each one of the words/pictures throughout the pre-reading activity. Before starting the storytelling activity, we also introduced Georgie Badiel, who is a model and activist, and is represented in the picture book by the character Gie Gie, the Water Princess, to make it clear that it is based on a true story. During reading, we used gestures, showed the pages on the picture book as well as some printed pictures on the wall i.e., home, a well, a pot.

Figure 15

Storytelling: The Water Princess by Susan Verde



We had an opportunity to observe how stories can be effective to build bridges with other disciplines (Ellis & Brewster, 2014) since this picture book helped us develop cross-curricular links by bridging English with Social Studies and Arts. Pupils were engaged in finding ways to save water and they also communicated in English during the creation and presentation of their theatre scripts and posters. Furthermore, this led to an improvement in pupils' language skills since they were exposed to a rich diversity of linguistic items and were exposed to L2 naturally (Ghosn, 2002).

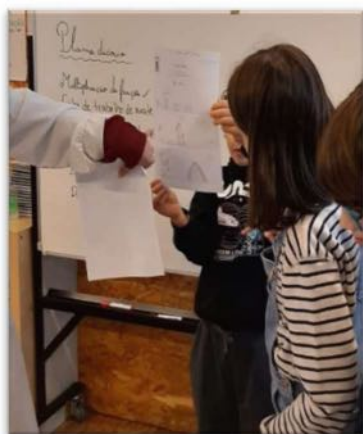
Moreover, we can note that even some of the pupils who normally pay less attention compared to the rest of the group were attentive. Thus, authentic literature proves to be effective in engaging

and motivating pupils (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Ghosn, 2002). After the story, pupils worked in groups to create their story maps (Appendix D). Pupils worked collaboratively and they showed great interest. It was also important to state that even less engaged pupils took part in the presentation of their story maps. One of the ways to reflect upon pupils' understanding of the story, we were to interpret their story maps. At this step, we can see that pupils' thinking was activated according to the first and second levels of Bloom's taxonomy, which are the level of Knowledge and the level of Comprehension. They gained new insights regarding the water problem, recalled what happened in the story, and presented it (Erkaya, 2005; Scott, 2015).

We can also state that storytelling was effective in fostering pupils' imagination and creativity (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Povey, 2019) as it is displayed in pupils' story maps (Appendix D). For instance, in the first story map, we can see that pupils drew Gie Gie dreaming about water in the morning. After the sun rises, Gie Gie walks with a pot on her head and returns home with some water in the evening. Moreover, in the second story map, Gie Gie's mother is waking her, there is a dog that was tamed by Gie Gie, like it was shown in the picture book. Then, Gie Gie walks with her mother and there are some other women walking with their pots to get some water. The water is earth-coloured as it is mentioned in the story. In the end, Gie Gie comes back home and meets her father. Pupils then presented their story maps in groups and mainly in English. We can affirm that pupils' language skills were enhanced, and they improved their vocabulary and grammatical features as well since they were exposed to L2 in a structured and familiar context (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Povey, 2019).

Figure 16

One of the groups presenting their story map



Pupils then were distributed a worksheet to think critically and build intellectual empathy towards Gie Gie, and others who are facing the water problem around the world (Crawford et al., 2018). The interpretation of the drawings would suggest that pupils raised awareness of the scarcity of drinking water. Pupils applied what happened in the story and they could make empathy, which also corroborates the level of Comprehension. We can also deduce that pupils not only did become more sensitive to the problem but also, they had a shared social experience and common feelings which

brought them closer to finding a solution. This shows how stories can help develop a sense of empathy and build social cohesion (Ellis & Brewster, 2014).

In Figure 17, we can see how the pupil recalled what Gie Gie said at the end of the story while dreaming about clean accessible water and dreamt with her. For instance, in another drawing, the pupil does magic to provide Gie Gie with some water. Also, another pupil draws himself with Gie Gie and her mother saying: "I am feeling thirsty. When we get home, I am going to drink water". It is incredible to see how young learners can actively imagine themselves in the place of other people through powerful picture books (Crawford et al., 2018). Pupils also developed an understanding of the world around them (Povey, 2019).

Figure 17

One of the pupils' empathy outcome



Given that storytelling has been found appealing in a classroom context (Ellis & Brewster, 2014), we decided to interview pupils to gain insights into their views on storytelling based on the picture book *The Water Princess*. In addition, to find answers to one of our aims in this study about pupils' perceptions of storytelling, this one-on-one interview was quite necessary. It was conducted both in English and Portuguese to make the pupils feel more comfortable. Before the interview, each pupil was asked if they would like to answer some of our questions. In total, 21 pupils were interviewed. Since one of the pupils arrived late on that day, he did not respond to the questions related to storytelling. Another pupil was not present on the storytelling day. Therefore, we analyzed 19 pupils' responses related to storytelling. During the interview, their responses were written down as much as possible. The interview was made after finishing the project. However, what can be asserted from the interview is reflected upon and presented in this section. Analyzing pupils' responses, in general terms, we can conclude that the picture book yielded positive results. The first question was: "Did you like the story? Why? / Why not?". Responses to the first question describe pupils' positive attitude towards storytelling and the picture book itself. 16 pupils (84%) said that they liked it and

some of them even said they liked it very much/loved it and it was cool. Moreover, pupils' intercultural awareness was enhanced through storytelling (Erkaya, 2005; Fisher, 1999) since the pupils witnessed a problem that the character faced in another continent, stimulated for discussion, and developed empathy. Some of the answers, which are translated into English, are presented below:

P1: "It made me understand that some people have difficulties in finding clean water."

P2: "I liked it. It was interesting and real."

P3: "I found it cool when Gie Gie managed to drink water."

P5: "I want to buy this book. It is very interesting."

On the other hand, 3 pupils (15%) said that they did not like it so much. While one of them talked about a personal reason, the other two stated:

P6: "It was not as cool as adventure stories."

P7: "They had difficulties in finding water. They walked very far."

Although the story maps created by the pupils already proved that pupils understood the story, the second question attempted to reveal whether each pupil understood it although it was told in English. 18 pupils (94.7%) said that they understood the story well while 1 pupil (5%) said "more or less". Although it is not shown in the interview grid (Appendix A), some of the pupils were asked what helped them understand the story. Some of the answers were the following: expressions (2 answers), gestures (2 answers), pictures (3 answers). To verify this, the third question was asked so that pupils can share what they still remembered from the story though it was told three to four weeks before. Our interpretations of pupils' answers would ascertain that they remembered the plot points of the story and the picture book can be considered compelling in this regard. It was rewarding to see how pupils answered the question enthusiastically and could remember a lot of points from the beginning, middle, and end of the story. As there was no time limit, pupils expressed themselves freely. It was not possible to write all the information, but pupils got a (+) when they told what they remembered. Some of the answers were written down briefly. Hence, 19 pupils (100%) would retell the story and/or mention the points they recalled eagerly. Interestingly, even those who did not like the story as much as their classmates, showed that they remembered a lot of things from the story. Most of them specifically mentioned Gie Gie's trip to find water, coming home to meet her father and drinking water. Two of the answers, which are directly translated into English, are demonstrated below:

P1: "She dreamt about water and a lot of people went to get water. She came back home, and her father arrived. It was cool when she drank water."

P2: "Gie Gie walked with her mother, played with her friends. Then, they arrived home. The father arrived home too, and they drank water."

With the next question, we aimed at understanding whether the picture book helped enhance pupils' intercultural awareness and critical thinking. It was also our intention to analyze if pupils applied the given message in the story to solve the problem (Erkaya, 2005). Asking pupils whether the story and the activities (post-reading) helped them think and find a solution for saving water, we could assert from pupils' answers that the picture book was effective in helping them think critically which is considered one of the 4Cs as a 21st Century Skill (Halvorsen, 2018).

While 18 pupils (94.7%) stated that they thought about the problem, 1 pupil said, "more or less". Pupils would also share their ideas regarding the issue. Some of the pupils' answers, which are translated from pupils L1 to English, are demonstrated in the following:

P1: "I thought about various ways to save water. Each can do more to save water."

P2: "I thought that to save water we can have a clock which gives us 'one' minute. If we waste more, we break the rule."

P3: "We need to be careful. If not, there would be no water on the planet."

P4: "It made me understand that some people suffer. Gie Gie walked a lot to find water."

P5: "I think the story helps us understand saving water is very important."

P6: "It gives importance to saving water. Some people don't have water and we don't value this enough. We should also give more importance to saving water."

P7: "People don't even notice that they can help save water. I talked with my mother about this. (...) People waste a lot of water."

2.4. STAGE BY STAGE PBL

After having analyzed documents regarding PBL, during the implementation of the approach, we took its characteristics into account (Harmer & Stokes, 2014; Larmer, 2020). Considering both storytelling and PBL value interdisciplinarity (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Solomon, 2013; Thomas, 2000), we can state that our project can be considered cross-curricular. Moreover, PBL was implemented by considering its four stages and applying them to the project as much as possible (Stoller, 2002; 2013). Starting with the preparation stage, pupils did not determine the topic of the project. Nevertheless, knowing that PBL-based projects can be built upon pre-defined units or topics (Thomas, 2000), we provided pupils with an entry event which was the picture book to engage them, stimulate their interest and activate their existing knowledge (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010). After giving responsibility to pupils as 'Water Heroes', they were asked to think about how they use water and why saving water is important in groups. Sharing their opinions, pupils employed critical thinking skills and they were already engaged in the project (Bell, 2010).

The main idea of the project was to make pupils think about what they can do or say to get people motivated to save water so that they can reflect on the problem and find solutions to it. Keeping in mind the importance of giving pupils voice and choice (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010), pupils were

proposed two questions to choose the 'driving question' to work on. By asking challenging questions, we brought real-life challenges into the classroom, which made the project more authentic since pupils were given a real-world problem to solve (Harmer and Stokes, 2014; Larmer, 2021). Each group was distributed the questions and were given time to vote: a) what can you do to save water at home/ in the school/ city?; b) why is saving water important?. The *option a* was the most voted option and was chosen as our essential question for the project. Pupils were then given the opportunity to decide on their final product of the project (Stoller, 2002; 2013). As mentioned previously, they were given 5 options: a) a poster; b) a video; c) a letter; d) an oral presentation; e) a theatrical play. Pupils were handed out a paper with these options to discuss and circle one of them in groups. Surprisingly, two groups opted for a theatrical play while one group chose to create a poster. As one of the groups had even votes for a theatrical play and a video, we decided to work on a theatrical play and record it as a video, instead of making one. Since collaboration is one of the most important characteristics of PBL which enables social learning by practicing how to be effective team members and tackle conflicts, pupils were encouraged to solve some issues they faced during the project (Bell, 2010; Kalabzová, 2015). The problems that arose during teamwork will be discussed and presented in the limitations section of this report. After having defined their end-product, pupil created their project framework (see Figure 18 for an example).

Figure 18

Water heroes' project framework

PROJECT FRAMEWORK	
"WATER PROJECT"	
GROUP'S NAME Water heroes	START DATE: 29/11/2021 END DATE:
GROUP MEMBERS 1. [redacted] 2. [redacted] 3. [redacted] 4. [redacted] 5. [redacted] 6. [redacted]	RESPONSIBILITIES - Color - [redacted] - Draw - [redacted] - The Leader Group - [redacted] - Time controller - [redacted] - Writer - [redacted]
"DRIVING QUESTION" 1) What can you do at home to get people motivated about saving water...	PROJECT OUTCOME Poster

After having completed the preparation stage of the project, pupils embarked on the realization stage in which they gathered and processed information (Stoller, 2002; 2013). During this stage, pupils were also asked to interview their families by asking *what they can do to save water* and think about it before discussing it with their team members. Pupils were asked to research the problem as we did not have enough time or conditions to do that together over an extended period in the school. The challenges regarding this issue will further be discussed.

It can be stated that most of the pupils were quite interested in the project. During this stage, they had the opportunity to discuss the given problem to find solutions creatively, share their ideas and use the language in context authentically (Figure 19). Pupils were encouraged to reflect on their own knowledge and share their ideas by working collaboratively, moving around the classroom, coming up with some ideas for their plays i.e., creating a fish, filling up a bottle with water and ink to create dirty water, using the computer to look up information (Appendix E). Considering the third level of Bloom's taxonomy, the level of Application, we can state that pupils could start applying the information they had gained through discussions with their team and family members, research, and the story itself (Erkaya, 2005; Scott, 2015). Moreover, pupils' role was shifted, and we can ensure that we promoted learner-centeredness in the classroom which helps to improve pupils' 21st Century Skills (Scott, 2015).

Being more autonomous, three groups then started to create their scripts for their plays and the other group worked on their poster. By analyzing the problem, questioning the ways to solve it along with drawing connections between the problem stated in the picture book and real life, pupils started working on their product. Thus, it can be highlighted that the fourth level of Bloom's taxonomy was integrated. By focusing on pupils' interactions and the process throughout the project as well as their final product, we can highlight that pupils developed "creactical skills" since they used both creativity and critical thinking skills to solve the given problem (Cruz, 2021). Therefore, we can say that pupils' high-order thinking was activated considering the fifth level of Bloom's taxonomy, which is the level of Synthesis (Erkaya, 2005; Scott, 2015).

Figure 19

Pupils sharing and writing their ideas



Before the presentation stage, we had a training session to practice pupils' pronunciation, intonation, and language use. Nevertheless, we realized that one more training session would have been effective if we had had some more time. Considering our lack of time, pupils were sent their scripts (Appendix F) through an online platform during their Covid-19 isolation. Their scripts were analyzed, corrected, and improved. We also recorded some audios reading the scripts to get pupils to hear

correct pronunciation and intonation. The concept of time during PBL-based projects will be analyzed and discussed as one of the challenges we faced during our internship practice in the following chapter. Before the presentation day, pupils showed enthusiasm by saying that they practiced a lot at home. One of the groups was also practicing the play in the school's bathroom before we recorded the video. Pupils then presented their projects. The first group, *blue paper*, worked on how to save water in the school. They were quite creative in terms of their script, and they also drew a picture as a background scene. Their drawing is still displayed near the bathroom in the school as can be seen in Figure 20.

Figure 20

Presenting the play: Saving Water in the School



One of the pupils was the narrator while the other pupils were actors: three pupils who are pretending to waste water in the bathroom (Figure 21) and another pupil who warns them to turn off the tap. By questioning why and how they can save water, pupils then were convinced by the other pupil who is responsible. Ultimately, they would promise to save water.

Figure 21

Pupils acting



The play was displayed in the classroom while the class teacher was also present (Figure 22). We did not have a public audience. Due to Covid-19, it would not have been possible and due to confidentiality, we would not have shared it online either nor revealed our pupils' voices/recordings, since it would not have been feasible to hide their faces.

Figure 22

Displaying the first play



The second group (Figure 23), *green glass*, worked on saving water in the city. Pupils were rather creative, and they even introduced a fish which was a piranha, and it would complain about water scarcity. Although they could not find it during the presentation, they also prepared a bottle with dirty water in it using ink. One of the group members had also done some research before and brought his findings to contribute to the script. The main idea of the play was to convince a girl, who does not like to save water, by explaining the problem and giving her suggestions. Getting more curious, the girl wanted to know more about how to save water. Finally, after receiving so many suggestions she was convinced to save water.

Figure 23

Saving Water in the City



The third group, *red batteries*, thought about some ways to save water at home. The group was quite productive, and they would share their ideas with each other. Likewise, the second group, this group involved a fish in their play by creating one in an aquarium (Figure 24). The group even gave themselves different names for the play. Pupils would also convince a grandmother who does not like water by telling her how we use water, why, and how to save water. Even the fish would explain to her that water is essential. The grandmother then also decides to save water.

Figure 24

Saving Water at Home



The fourth group, *group water heroes*, worked on a poster (Figure 25). Nevertheless, due to Covid-19 isolations, the group did not have enough time to contribute to the poster. Although they did a fantastic job and they were quite creative, they could not practice much or think about the issue as much as they wished. The group drew the water cycle and did some research on the topic using the class computer. They also added some slogans to their poster. The poster was presented and displayed.

Figure 25

"Save water!" poster

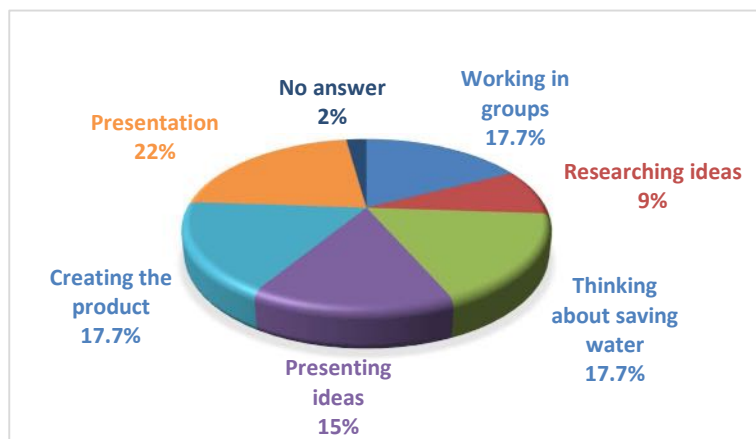


After having finished the project, pupils were kindly asked to collaborate with our post-project questionnaire. Our post-project questionnaire (Appendix C) aimed at finding answers to various questions. Within the levels of Bloom’s taxonomy, the level of Evaluation was considered at this step. Pupils could judge and evaluate their outcomes by focusing on the skills they have developed (Erkaya, 2005; Scott, 2015).

The findings which are extracted from the post-questionnaire indicated positive results. In the second part of the questionnaire, some questions were asked to understand pupils’ perceptions of the PBL-based project. This is analyzed through self-reflection on the project work (post-project questionnaire) and as mentioned previously our interpretation of the process i.e., field notes. Questions 7 and 8 revealed an overall positive attitude towards the project. 24 pupils responded to the questions while one of them did not answer these two. Choosing the most enjoyable part of the project, most of the pupils gave more than one answer and some pupils chose every option for the most enjoyable part stating that they enjoyed every step of the project. Thus, this is analyzed according to the total number of pupils' answers for each option (Figure 26; Figure 27). The total votes for the options were 45. The findings led us to conclude that the *presentation* was the most enjoyable step (10 votes). This is followed by *working in groups*, *thinking about saving water*, and *creating the product* (8 votes for each). *Presenting ideas* was also liked (7 votes). Nevertheless, *researching ideas* was only voted by a few pupils (4 votes).

Figure 26

The most enjoyable part of the project

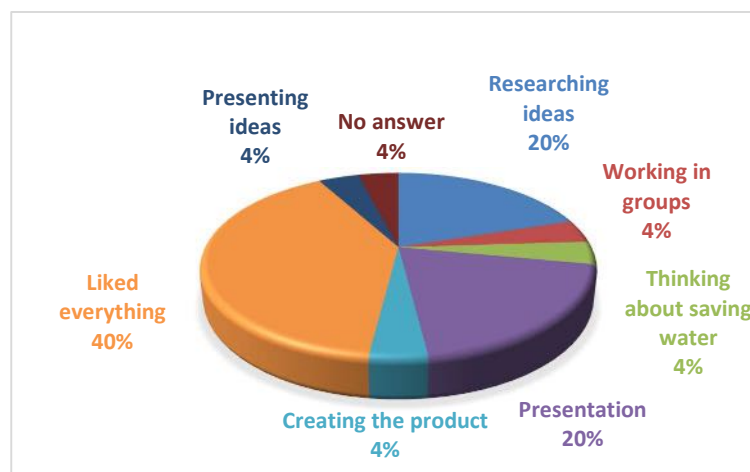


Moreover, we were also willing to understand and reflect on what was the least enjoyable part of the project, since it would give us insights regarding the implementation of PBL. 10 pupils asked us what they should do if they liked everything and cannot decide which was the least liked part. Thus, they did not answer the question, which overall revealed positive results. On the other hand, regarding the least liked step, we had 14 votes, unlike the most liked part which had 45 votes. Among these 14 votes, we could conclude that the least liked part of all was *researching ideas* (5 votes). This did not surprise us since it did not have a lot of votes as the most liked step. This is followed by

presentation by having the same number of votes as *researching ideas*. We had thought that the *presentation* step would be even less liked than the others since we had some difficulties during that step. It was the pupils' last lesson before the Christmas break, and they were quite excited about the holidays. Moreover, they practiced it less than we would like to. Though some pupils stated that they liked it the least, it was the most enjoyed step in this project too. *Creating the product, working in groups, and presenting ideas* have only 1 vote each. This was obviously clear by looking at the results from the previous graph. We believe we were provided with enough evidence to state that pupils enjoyed the steps of the project. Considering none of the pupils stated that he/she did not enjoy any step in this project, we can interpret that PBL yielded positive results.

Figure 27

The least enjoyable part of the project



In question 9, pupils were also asked how we could make the project work better next time, as intern teachers. This would help us think critically and reflect on the negative points of this project to improve our practice and ultimately, our pupils' skills. It was an open-ended question and pupils' responses were rewarding. It goes without saying that we could improve the project next time depending on the conditions. Nevertheless, most of the pupils (86.9%) stated that everything was well, and we would not need to change anything, and very few pupils (8.6%) gave suggestions and one pupil said he/she did not know.

"Fazendo mais jogos." (P1) ["Playing more games."]

"Acho que podíamos ter mais espaço." (P2) ["I think we could have had more room."]

Though we incorporated some games throughout the lessons, we did not include any games during the project. It is an interesting point of view. By having more time, we could incorporate some of the steps of PBL through games. Unfortunately, during the play, we struggled to create an ample space for the pupils. Bearing this in mind, next time we can present it outside the classroom, which was actually the initial aim.

As can be seen from the pupils' responses, the project seems to have been implemented well although we think that there were things to reflect on and improve. Moreover, it can also be derived from the pupils' responses that they developed a positive attitude to the project itself. It would not be possible to present all the positive responses from the pupils. Nevertheless, some of them are shown below:

"De nenhuma porque adorei a forma como trabalhou." (P3) - In no way, because I loved the way she worked."

"Eu acho que ela esteve bem, deu o seu máximo, não precisa de melhorar." (P4) ["I think she was good, did her best and doesn't need to improve."]

"Eu acho que estava fantástico e não podia fazer melhor!" (P5) ["I think it was fantastic and she could not have done better."]

"Eu acho que não precisava de melhorar nada, foi muito bom." (P6) ["I think there would be no need to improve anything, it was really good."]

To further investigate pupils' perceptions of PBL, we decided to find out which activity was the most favourable in the unit. Instead of giving multiple choice questions, pupils were given an open-ended question to express their preferences freely. 2 pupils chose "recycling" as their favourite activity throughout this unit while 2 pupils said that they did not know. 1 pupil mentioned that he/she liked learning about how to help the planet and 1 pupil liked working with friends the most. While 5 pupils said they liked "everything", the other 11 pupils either mentioned what they have done during the project as the activity they liked the most or they stated that it was definitely the *Water Project*. Hence, some of the responses are presented below:

"Este projeto. Eu achei mais interessante a parte da água." (P1) ["This project. I found the water part the most interesting."]

"A atividade mais interessante foi o teatro." (P2) ["The most interesting activity was the theatre"]

"Foi mesmo o WATER PROJECT." (P3) ["It was really the WATER PROJECT."]

Three pupils talked about what they did during the project and the activities they liked the most. For instance, they liked being the fish, doing research and drawing for the project.

Analyzing pupils' self-reflection on the project work through the post-project questionnaire, we made inferences on the effectiveness of storytelling and PBL to transmit a message as well as pupils' 21st Century Skills, mainly: collaboration, research, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. In response to the question about what the most important thing they learned was in this project, most of the pupils talked about saving water in short or long sentences. While 3 pupils did not answer the question, 2 pupils talked about their group and end-product in this question as well. One of them stated they he/she learned that "there are some people who do not work" (P4), hence criticising his/her group members. These issues were also discussed during our one-on-one interview with the pupils. The other pupil stated that "creating a video and a play is not a good idea" (P6), as it was not easy to record the video using the school's bathroom since other pupils were also passing. Despite

this, we believe it worked out quite well and they were successful. Furthermore, 9 pupils answered the question briefly stating they learned that: a) we should save water; b) how to save water; c) not to waste water. 10 pupils presented different points of view explaining what they learned in this project, some of which are shown in the following:

"A coisa mais importante foi que a água é muito importante para o ser humano, e essencial para toda a vida no planeta." (P1) ["The most important thing was that water is very important to the human being and essential for all life on the planet."]

"A coisa mais importante que aprendi neste projeto foi que a água é valiosa e importante para o nosso planeta." (P2) ["The most important thing I learned on this project was that water is valuable and important for our planet."]

"Aprendi que poupar água é muito importante para a vida animal e para nós." (P3) ["I learned that saving water is very important for animal life and for us."]

"...é que podemos poupar água de uma forma muito simples." (P4) ["... is that we can save water in a very simple way."]

"Aprendi que poupar água é mais importante do que parece." (P5) ["I learned that saving water is more important than it seems."]

"... é que todos nós temos de ajudar para poupar água." (P6) ["... is that we can all help to save water."]

Hence, these responses enabled us to understand that the message was transmitted effectively, and pupils gained a deeper understanding of possible water scarcity and how to save water. Nevertheless, we can also see how pupils also proved that they could analyze the message and reason it differently.

Regarding the effectiveness of PBL to help pupils develop 21st Century Skills, pupils were asked some questions to reflect on their experiences during the project. Though we had an opportunity to observe these skills, it was crucial to understand how pupils felt. In the post-project questionnaire, pupils were asked in what ways they collaborated with their colleagues. 23 pupils responded to the question. While some of them did not mention how they collaborated and just gave short answers stating "yes", "well", or "no" some others explained how they collaborated in the project. One of the pupils said that he/she did not collaborate, 5 pupils stated that they collaborated "well", 7 pupils said that they collaborated while 9 pupils explained in what ways they collaborated, some of which are presented below:

"Eu colaborei fazendo meus colegas treinarem muito." (P1) ["I collaborated getting my classmates to practice a lot."]

"Eu escrevi muito, e acho que também pintei um bocadinho." (P2) ["I wrote a lot, and I think I also painted a little."]

"Ajudei a fazer o guião e tive ideias de que iamos fazer." (P3) ["I helped make the script and had ideas about what we would do."]

"Colaborei, participei e fiz muita coisa, escrevi e desenhei." (P4) ["I collaborated, participated and did a lot, wrote and drew."]

"Colaborei e dei ideias." (P5) ["I collaborated and gave ideas."]

In addition, the questionnaire also aimed to find out if pupils learned how to be more effective team members during this project. This was a crucial one to understand what pupils thought about their development of collaboration skills. While a few pupils did not show a willingness to collaborate much during the project work, the others were quite enthusiastic. We can also note that one of the pupils did not participate much during the realization stage of the project, since he did not discuss or give ideas for the script, but he worked on designing a fish for their play. Another pupil in another group did not contribute much to their script either, but he drew a picture as the background for their play and he was rather inclined to the presentation stage. We can interpret this as collaboration being comparative. Each pupil is unique and so is the way they collaborate.

21 pupils (87.5%) believed that they became more effective team members during this project by circling the option "yes", while 3 pupils (12.5%) said "no". The one-on-one interview has also contributed greatly to understanding how pupils collaborated during the project work. Pupils were also eager to share their opinions about their and their team members' performance. Hence, what we could ascertain from pupils' responses was that though some team members did not collaborate much, most pupils were satisfied, and they said that everyone in the group did their best. However, 6 pupils stated that not everyone did their best and they explained what happened and how it affected them. We can note that this must have taught them how some people in life may not be willing to collaborate. Most of the answers were from one of the groups.

Despite that, the other team members always tried hard to do a great job when they had fewer people contributing to the project. Some of the pupils' answers, which are translated into English, are in the following:

P1: "Some did not participate much but they helped a little bit. It affected me a lot. We could have done better."

P2: "Everyone collaborated except 'X'. I was upset because he could have helped. It would have been better."

P3: "Some were missing. 'Y' was not present. I wanted to do great work, but others wanted to play."

Furthermore, most pupils said that they did their best for the project. 3 pupils said that they did not do their best and explained how they would improve themselves for the next time. For instance, one of them stated that next time she would pay more attention and listen to her team members. In addition, some of the pupils who said they did their best were also eager to change some things next time. Some of the examples are pronouncing the words better, participating more, paying more attention/being more attentive, listening to the team members, organizing better, practicing more, having more ideas, doing more research, etc.

Taking everything into consideration, we can state that most pupils collaborated in their own ways. While some were not seen as collaborative enough by their team members, some others' efforts were fine by the others. As we can see in the pre-questionnaire, all pupils said that they would contribute to their team as much as they could while two pupils stated "sometimes", none of them said "no". However, they might not be so willing to participate or try as hard as other team members. Although they stated that they liked the picture book and talked about what they learned through the project, that might not be enough to engage them to collaborate fully. Nevertheless, we were provided with enough evidence to state that pupils enhanced their collaboration skills to some extent by being involved in this project. Since we had already done some group work activities before, we could observe how they used to collaborate. Especially those, who were not willing to participate and collaborate much, developed a positive attitude towards collaboration though they were still not fully involved.

In addition to collaboration, pupils would also reflect on their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. As it was presented previously, most of the pupils (94.7%) had mentioned that the story, which was our entry event, helped them think about the ways to save water. Nevertheless, we asked the pupils a similar question regarding the whole project. Question 5 and 6, in the post-project questionnaire, would provide us with an understanding of pupils' problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Regarding question 5, which attempts to figure out whether pupils learned different ways of solving the problem, 22 pupils (91.6%) said "yes" while 1 pupil (4.1%) did not answer, and 1 pupil (4.1%) said "no". In relation to question 6, which aims to analyze if the project was effective to make pupils think about ways of saving water, all pupils (100%) said "yes".

In addition to the data extracted from the interview and the questionnaire, we could also observe that pupils questioned, analyzed, and thought about the issue during the project. Taking everything into account, we can state that PBL has a positive impact on developing pupils' problem-solving and critical thinking skills. By analyzing pupils' answers, we could draw on pupils' communication skills from a different perspective as well. Pupils were encouraged to share their ideas with each other to find solutions to the problem. Some of the pupils had already mentioned this stating that they gave their opinions when they collaborated. By having observed pupils throughout the project, we can also state that pupils could communicate well during this project since most of them shared their ideas, especially while creating their scripts, and were eager to listen to their team members' opinions. They also presented their plays and posters. Hence, the project was effective to develop pupils' communication skills to some extent.

Taking into account pupils' research and ICT skills, we did not have the opportunity to develop such skills during this project. This will be discussed in the limitations section. Nevertheless, question 4, in the post-project questionnaire, would analyze if pupils did research during the project though this would not provide us with enough information regarding pupils' research skills. However, we can point out that only 8 pupils (33.3%) did research during the *Water Project*.

The following project, by which we aimed to improve pupils' ICT and research skills, will be presented briefly in the subsequent sections.

2.5. OUR PBL FAILURE: AN ENDANGERED ANIMALS PROJECT

"A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new."

Albert Einstein

Our second PBL-based project was undertaken after the Christmas break, in January 2022. After having covered some topics in *Unit 2: Let's Visit the Zoo!* in pupils' coursebook *Let's Rock! 4* through games, flashcards, a virtual zoo trip, etc., we embarked on implementing our PBL-based project. The project was introduced after the storytelling activity, and stages of PBL - Preparation, Realization, Presentation, and Evaluation – were taken into account (Stoller, 2002).

The picture book, *Splat and the Cool School Trip* by Rob Scotton was chosen accordingly, after having analyzed some other picture books such as *One Day in the Eucalyptus*, *Eucalyptus Tree*, *I Am Not a Penguin: A Pangolin's Lament*, *Slowly, Slowly, Slowly*, *said the Sloth*, *The Koala Who Could*, and so on. The plot of the picture book was about a cat called Splat who gets excited to have a school trip to a zoo to see his favourite animal, penguins. It is a fun and adventurous story that can also be related to friendship. This picture book was also a bridge to our second PBL-based project. However, pupils would not understand what they were going to work on as soon as they heard the story, unlike the previous project. The project was entitled *Saved by You* and aimed to encourage pupils to act on endangered animals' problem. After the storytelling activity, pupils would be asked some questions and later on, they were told that some penguin species were endangered, and they would get some information about them. Pupils would develop empathy when they saw that Splat's favourite animal, which was a penguin, could be endangered, so could theirs. They would also develop intercultural awareness when they did research for their projects about endangered animals from different countries. Pupils were asked to think about the reasons for this issue, try to find solutions, and make people aware of this problem. They would also do research and learn about different animals and some facts about them.

The picture book was our entry event to engage pupils in the project (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010). Pupils were divided into groups and distributed badges which showed their responsibilities, i.e., 'time-controller', 'problem-solver', 'materials manager', 'voice controller' and 'question leader'. Pupils' roles were explained before starting the lesson. They were shown the cover of the picture book called *Splat and the Cool School Trip* and asked some questions to 'judge the book by its cover', namely: "What is the title of the book?" and "What can you see on the cover?", etc. We interacted with the pupils while they were sharing their ideas. Pupils then were asked to discuss with their group to guess what the story was about. Considering pupils' level of English, we explained that pupils could use both English and Portuguese to make them feel more comfortable while expressing themselves.

Hence, on our 'language fan', the arrow was on both Portuguese and English part. After brainstorming, pupils shared their ideas with the rest of the class. Their ideas were written on an online "thinking map". While one group shared their ideas in English, the other groups used both English and Portuguese.

In this project, unlike the previous one, we used the projector to show the picture book (Figure 28). The story was told by using finger puppets, gestures, mimics, showing some pictures as well as pointing at the pictures on the picture book. Throughout the story, pupils were asked questions to develop their critical thinking skills (i.e., "What do you think Splat's favourite animal is?", "Why do you think so?", "If you could plan a school trip, where would you go? Why?", "Why is Splat upset?", "What do you think is going to happen next?", etc.). While interacting with pupils, some more questions came up. Pupils enthusiastically shared their ideas.

Figure 28

Storytelling: Splat and the Cool School Trip by Rob Scotton



As a follow-up activity, sequencing the picture book and retelling it, proved how well they understood the story as they could demonstrate every page in order, talk about it, and finish the activity on time.

By observing and interpreting pupils' attitudes during this lesson, we can state that the storytelling activity was quite motivating and engaging likewise the previous picture book. All the pupils showed interest, they were motivated and curious to know what was going to happen next. We can state that we could measure pupils' engagement by observing their responses to the picture book (Mourão, 2019). They gave opinions about the characters and even criticized some points in the picture book. The story enriched pupils' thinking also because they were exposed to a natural and familiar context (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Povey, 2019). Pupils also collaborated well when they brainstormed about the story and during the follow-up activity. Asking them questions to awaken their minds and make them think critically also worked wonders. Even those who were normally distracted or did not pay enough attention to some other activities during the lessons participated and showed enthusiasm.


Furthermore, our coordinating supervisor was kindly asked to complete the observation grid to reflect on pupils' skills and perceptions of the picture book. As it can be seen in Figure 29, the groups were totally interested in the storytelling and they participated before, during and after storytelling.

Figure 29

Observation grid completed by the coordinating supervisor

Observation grid

Trainee: Birgül Yaşar Lesson 10
Coordinating teacher/Observer: Ali Date: 19th of January, 2022



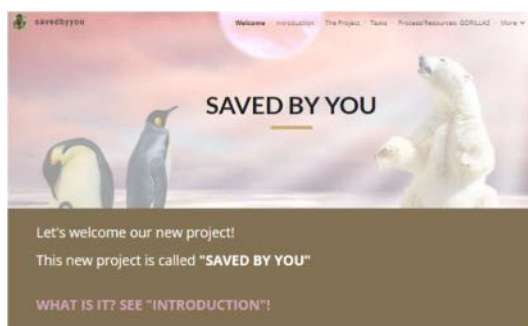
Performance levels: 5 – very good / 4 – good / 3 – fair / 2 – poor / 1 – very poor

Checklist	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
Interest in storytelling.	5	5	5	5	5
Curiosity and imagination.	5	5	5	5	5
Critical thinking during storytelling.	4	5	5	5	5
Participation.	5	5	5	5	5
Active collaboration.	5	5	5	5	5

In the following lesson, we provided five computers to embark on the project through a WebQuest (Figure 30) (<https://sites.google.com/view/savedbyyou/welcome>). The WebQuest was designed taking the stages of PBL into account (Stoller, 2002; 2013), and all the steps were included on the WebQuest.

Figure 30

A WebQuest on endangered animals



Focusing on the preparation stage of PBL, we are to present the steps that were taken during the project. Since we were expected to cover the unit in pupils' coursebook, we did not negotiate with pupils on the topic. In the introduction part of the WebQuest, pupils were reminded of Splat and his favourite animal. Pupils were also asked to look the word 'endangered' up and told that “many species of animals on Planet Earth are endangered and they may become extinct (they may disappear) if we don't help them”.

Afterwards, pupils were provoked to think about the issue with another entry event. Pupils were also told to watch the video about National Endangered Species Day which showed why animals were becoming endangered and how to help them. The second step of the WebQuest was 'The project'. In this step, pupils were given a responsibility as animal caretakers to make people understand how to save five of the endangered animals: Axolotls, Bengal Tigers, Western Lowland Gorillas, Philippine Eagles, and Polar Bears. Pupils then chose an animal to research by picking a card we had prepared in advance. After that, pupils were explained that they could either create a digital poster or a video and shown some examples. Pupils then discussed with their team members and determined their final product. They wrote what they wanted to create on a shared document on Google Docs. All the groups opted for designing a video. Moreover, the third step on the WebQuest was 'Tasks' in which pupils were explained what to do step by step: a) find the information and photos on the process; b) see and complete your endangered animal fact file; c) create your video on 'Animoto' or your digital poster on 'Glogster'. In the fourth step, pupils were provided some website links so as not to get distracted during the research and photos of their animals to use while creating their product.

In the realization stage of our PBL-based project, pupils were expected to do research to solicit and process information (Alan & Stoller, 2005). This stage was right after the preparation stage in the same lesson. Nevertheless, it did not work out as we had expected. Since the library/computer room was going to be occupied on that day, we had provided computers for each group as we had stated before. Pupils were enthusiastic and could not wait to start using the computers. It was a good sign. However, before the lesson, we tried to connect all computers but having too many computers at the same time was a problem. We would only be able to connect two of the computers to the internet. As it was unexpected, we had to come up with another solution, which was using our cellphones and reorganizing the groups so that we would have fewer groups and enough devices to work with. One of the groups worked really well using a cellphone and instead of completing their animal fact file on Google Docs, they were given a printed one. Another group, whose internet was working well, was also eager to work. However, one group was not collaborating, and they were rather distracted by the computer. They would not focus on their task. Moreover, the most challenging part was that some of the pupils did not want to reorganize their groups to work with other pupils. They were also given a cellphone but while some of them did most of the job, the others did not work at all and were disruptive. Nevertheless, it was still rewarding to see that a lot of pupils were eager to learn new things and at the end of the day, it proved to be a positive experience. When we checked pupils' findings on that day, we realized that despite all these challenges, some groups gathered valuable information on their endangered animals. Their findings were analyzed, and pupils were given feedback.

Since it was already expected that pupils would need more time to gather information about their endangered animals and find ways to solve the issue, we were going to continue the research in the following lesson as well. Having faced challenges due to the internet connection, we needed to ask if the library/computer room could be spared for us on that day. Thankfully, the teachers were

helpful and available to change their schedules. Nevertheless, since the room was too small for a group of 26 pupils, one group stayed in the classroom while the rest was using the computers in the library/computer room as it is shown in Figure 32. Though most of the pupils were motivated and their curiosity was aroused, some were poorly motivated and did little work. After they finished their research, they were asked to present their findings in the classroom. A lot of pupils demonstrated that they were drawn to this issue and our effort paid off. However, pupils completed their research on the last day of our internship. As we had 6 lessons and three of those covered the unit, we could spare only 3 lessons (3 hours in total) for our project, one of which would include storytelling. Hence, it was rather obvious that we would not be able to finish the project unless we asked for more time. Due to our limited time, we did not carry on the project.

Figure 31

Pupils doing research



Pupils were distributed self-assessment (Appendix G) and group members evaluation (Appendix H) checklist after the second day of their research. They both were in Portuguese. We managed to collect information from 12 pupils on self-assessment. Pupils were explained that they had 3 stars in total and were expected to assess their performance regarding these two days of inquiry. Starting from the self-assessment checklist, question 1 aimed at understanding if pupils shared their ideas with the members of their groups. 7 pupils (58.3%) gave themselves 3 stars, 5 pupils (41.6%) rated themselves with 2 stars and none of the pupils chose 1 star. Question 2 attempted to gain an understanding of pupils' collaboration. While 10 pupils stated that they did their job and helped their groups by 3 stars (83.3%), 2 pupils (16.6%) gave themselves 2 stars. With question 3, we referred to pupils' focus and eagerness to do research. It was essential to understand whether this project using a WebQuest would encourage them to become focused inquirers. While one of the pupils gave himself/herself only 1 star, 7 pupils (58.3%) chose 3 stars, and 4 pupils (33.3%) gave themselves 2 stars. It was also important to understand if PBL helped pupils to improve their social skills and one of the points was to see if they were open to other people's opinions. Thus, pupils were asked if they listened to their team members' opinions and suggestions. The results were positive. While 8 pupils (66.6%) gave themselves 3 stars, 4 pupils (33.3%) chose two stars.

Next, pupils were asked to assess their team members' performance. They would need to choose three emojis on the checklist. The first one implies that they were quite satisfied, the second one states that they were ok and the last one implies that they were not happy. After having been explained, 13 pupils responded to the checklist.

First, we focused attention on collaboration once again asking whether the team members encouraged one another and collaborated well. While 6 pupils (46.1%) stated that it was ok, 7 pupils (53.8%) were satisfied with the collaboration in their teams. We then attempted to analyze whether each one of the team members shared their ideas, then listened to and valued each other's opinions. 6 pupils (46.1%) were satisfied while 6 (46.1%) of them stated they were ok. One of the pupils (7.6%) was not happy with his/her team's communication. It was also vital to analyze how pupils dealt with the inquiry process. Pupils were asked if every team member helped each other during the research and the use of computer. One pupil did not respond to the question. While 8 pupils (61.5%) stated that they were satisfied by choosing the smiley face, 4 pupils (30.7) stated that it was ok. Pupils were also asked what their groups did best during this time and what they would improve next time. Not all the pupils responded to these questions. 5 pupils stated that it was the 'research', 3 pupils said that it was the 'computer', while 1 pupil said 'everything' and another one reported it was 'collaboration'.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that it was a rewarding experience for us, and we still believe that pupils learned and enjoyed a lot with the picture book as an entry event, and with the first stages of PBL. It was a big challenge to implement a WebQuest for the first time with a group of 26 pupils who are not familiar with the PBL approach, even though they had previously conceived other project work. The essential finding for us was that despite the obstacles, pupils' 21st Century Skills were still fostered as they collaborated, became inquirers, and worked on their ICT skills through a WebQuest. Moreover, although it did not work out as planned, it was worth seeing that a lot of pupils did an excellent job during their research, especially two groups which investigated Bengal Tigers and Polar Bears gathered a lot of information about their endangered animals (Figure 33). In addition, all the pupils took part in activities which would ultimately enhance their critical thinking and communication as well. Likewise, when pupils worked collaboratively, they also learned that they would need to work in a team where some issues may occur due to unwillingness to work.

Figure 32

Research day 2 - Pupils' research on Bengal Tigers

Endangered Animal Factfile

Group 3: Group name: Bengal tigers

Description

What is the name of your animal? Bengal Tiger.

What is its size? The tiger is big.

Some interesting characteristics about your animal. Tigers are orange and black. They have got a large tail.

Habitat

Where does your animal live? Bengal tigers can be found in eastern and central India.

Endangered Species

How many of your animal is there in the world? It is estimated that on the planet there are 2 503 Bengal tigers living in wildlife.

Why is your animal endangered? The Bengal tigers are endangered because they are hunted.

Furthermore, we urge to focus on several 'fails' in this project that made us reflect on our experience. First, we failed in planning our time. The first project was conceived in a very short time with a lot of difficulties. Hence, we should have known that focusing on improving pupils' 21st Century Skills through PBL, especially by implementing a WebQuest would require much more time. Next, though we believe we planned the WebQuest well and it was appealing, we did not keep in mind that pupils were already too distracted due to the pandemic as mentioned previously. Additionally, we implemented every stage of PBL on the WebQuest, which was a mistake. Pupils' attention span would prevent them from focusing on this activity for so long. Moreover, we could have provided printed fact files for them to complete instead of doing everything on Google Docs. Some of the pupils were deleting what the other group members added into their fact file. Though the second lesson which was spared for the research was much more productive than the first one, some pupils were not motivated enough. All in all, this research proved that it is likely to encounter challenges while implementing PBL. However, this project provided us with deeper learning as we had the opportunity to reflect on our failures. Next time we will make sure not to underestimate some important aspects while implementing a PBL-based project.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the final part of this report, the main findings of the study are presented mainly focusing on our *Water Project*. The research questions of the study are answered by considering the data gathered during the research. The implications for teaching are then listed. This is followed by a section that presents and discusses the limitations of the study. Next, possible suggestions for further research are outlined.

This study focused on the effectiveness of PBL on fostering pupils' 21st Century Skills through storytelling in EFL young learner classrooms. Hence, as the basis for our study, we undertook document analysis before implementing our cross-curricular PBL-based project. We attempted to gain a better understanding of the possibilities of implementing this approach in the 1st Cycle Basic Education (CEB) in Portugal. Furthermore, we designed questionnaires and a one-on-one interview regarding the understanding of views on PBL and storytelling. It was also essential to reflect on our experience throughout our internship practice, to enable a greater understanding of positive and 'less positive' points of this approach. We then aimed to find out which 21st Century Skills can be fostered by conceiving a PBL-based project supported by storytelling as a tool, and which resources can be effective in the process of implementing this approach.

Therefore, the findings allowed us to answer the research questions of the study which are illustrated as the following:

- a) To what extent PBL can be implemented in the Portuguese young learner EFL classrooms using storytelling?
- b) What challenges do the teachers encounter while implementing PBL in the Portuguese young learner EFL classrooms?
- c) What are teachers' and pupils' perceptions of PBL and storytelling?
- d) Which 21st century skills may pupils develop through undertaking a PBL approach enhanced by storytelling?
- e) Which sort of activities and resources cater for an effective PBL approach using storytelling?

Regarding our first question, as we pointed out throughout this report, as intern teachers we were expected to conceive our unit plans in accordance with pupils' coursebook (as required by the intern centre). This led to some challenges as we did not have enough experience to be able to cover the coursebook by implementing it in a PBL-based project. However, instead of focusing only on the water problem, we could have designed a project which focused on protecting the planet in general. By doing this, pupils would learn the vocabulary and grammar we had to teach without focusing on the coursebook. Hence, though there might be several ways to cover both grammar and vocabulary in a PBL-based project too, our main focus was to work on pupils' 21st Century Skills. Having been

expected to teach vocabulary and grammar and four language skills according to the national curriculum, we did that by taking the coursebook as a guide and did not focus on the vocabulary and grammar which were taught in the coursebook in our project.

Although we prepared our activities beyond what was on the coursebook, we could not totally leave it behind to focus on our project. This led to certain challenges. First, neither we nor pupils had a choice in determining the topic. We could not base our project on pupils' interests and preferences. Second, we did not have time for our PBL-based project since it requires much more time than what is generally believed. We can state that the curriculum and pupils' coursebook did not carry many of the elements PBL carries (Larmer, 2020). The unit was based on real-life problems about our planet, which was well implemented as CLIL, and thinking were also present. Nevertheless, it would not have been sufficient for our PBL project. Thomas (2000) states that projects are the central point in PBL, and they are the curriculum. Hence, taking this into account, as intern teachers, we would not have been able to change the whole process of teaching in the school.

Based on our findings, we can state that PBL is quite engaging and appealing. Despite its challenges, it can be considered effective as young learners cultivate their own projects bringing their interests and existing knowledge into the process. EFL young learners can benefit from this approach while taking an active part in their learning and enhancing their self-esteem. By involving young learners and giving them responsibilities, we can ignite their passions and interests. PBL-based projects mostly inspire pupils. Hence, they also become more motivated and engaged, which is indispensable in the learning and teaching process. The findings of this study also made clear that pupils developed positive attitudes towards the project and using L2. All in all, it is vital to highlight that PBL can be implemented in young learner EFL classrooms since the projects can be in accordance with the requirements of the national curriculum. Especially because PBL enables the improvement of four language skills (Stoller, 2002). The projects can be designed accordingly. Considering that we need to follow the topics in the curriculum, it might be unlikely to give pupils choice to determine the topic. Nevertheless, pupils can choose the driving question, project outcome, and so on. It must be highlighted that when pupils have an opportunity to be autonomous in the classroom, they can become more motivated and engaged (Harmer & Stokes, 2014). Hence, it is possible for the teachers to shift their roles and allow pupils to 'own' their learning process. We still believe that despite the challenges and obstacles, teachers can incorporate this innovative approach into their lessons to some extent considering the inflexibility of the curriculum in Portuguese EFL young learner classrooms.

Considering our second research question which addresses the challenges teachers might encounter while implementing PBL. It is evident that PBL might pose some challenges which appear before and during the implementation of the project. Though there are several research studies and reviews on the challenges PBL brings, few studies in the literature have addressed the challenges teachers encountered while incorporating PBL in EFL young learner classrooms. The common challenges that

are encountered are: a) time-management, b) teamwork, c) motivation, d) pupils' attitude, e) unexpected situations, f) shifting roles, g) lack of resources, h) preparation, i) assessment (Condliffe et al., 2017; Harmer & Stokes, 2014; Kalabzová, 2015; Thomas, 2000). Nevertheless, as presented in the previous chapter, regarding document analysis of this study, two research studies were reflected upon to gather evidence on the difficulties teachers encountered in the EFL young learner classrooms (Hrušková, 2014; Tsiplakides & Fragoulis, 2009). The findings revealed that the challenges do not differ much from the common challenges which are listed above. As it was presented previously, in both studies, the authors found teamwork as the biggest obstacle.

Drawing on our experience during our internship practice, we can state that PBL was a great challenge but a rewarding experience for us. There is no doubt that the benefits of PBL outweigh its challenges. Regarding our PBL experience, as we mentioned before, implementing PBL using storytelling definitely engaged pupils. A few pupils showed more interest in the picture books and projects than they did in the previous lessons. Nevertheless, we can point out that one of the biggest challenges was that although these pupils were more motivated than they were before, they were still lacking the enthusiasm to collaborate. Though it was only two/three pupils, we would like each one of the pupils to be engaged. Thus, getting each one of the pupils to collaborate was also challenging. Whilst some were contributing as much as they could to do a great job, a few of them were not really trying much. While those who were aware of their non-cooperation did not make enough effort to change it, we tried to talk to them a few times, and the other team members would also mention this issue. Ultimately, they got more collaborative, but it required a lot of effort from our side.

Although these problems are avoidable, as intern teachers, we did not know much about pupils' characteristics yet to create more effective groups. However, we believe every approach has its disadvantages and it might not be possible to motivate all the pupils at the same time. Also, working in groups does not only belong to this approach. Thus, we cannot really see this as a disadvantage or challenge of PBL. Furthermore, we must emphasize that our endeavor was appreciated by most of the pupils, and we believe that our effort paid off since we managed to encourage almost all the pupils and aroused interest to work on a real-world problem.

Another challenge that we encountered was time-management as PBL entails discussions, sharing ideas, creating the product, etc., sometimes it was not easy to estimate whether the given time was sufficient, or we were spending a lot of time on the steps of PBL. Moreover, another challenge emerged due to unexpected issues during our practice. In our opinion, being in Covid-19 isolation twice in a few months might have affected pupils' concentration and motivation. It also affected pupils' teamwork as they sometimes could not work with their team members since while some of them were in the classroom, some had to stay home. We were already facing a problem regarding the little time spared for our project. Thus, not being able to work with all the pupils at the same time affected our first project negatively.

Furthermore, it was not easy to follow every basic principle of PBL to implement a successful project. The stages of PBL require time and preparation as it can be demanding. Not having enough experience and familiarization with PBL might prevent us from being able to apply every essential element of this approach easily. We did long-term research in order to design successful project(s), considering the basic characteristics and stages of PBL and organize ourselves. In addition, lacking resources was one of the challenges we encountered during our practice. It was rather challenging to conceive our second project due to the lack of school equipment, i.e., technological devices and poor internet connection.

We would like to highlight that we also focused on Portuguese in-service primary English teachers' opinions by collecting data from the questionnaires to discover the challenges they faced while implementing PBL. It is beyond the aim of our study to analyze teachers' projects to figure out whether the stages and the essential elements of PBL were taken into account. Nevertheless, as previously shown, most of the participants (62.5%) rated their projects as challenging. While 37.5% rated PBL as '5', quite challenging, 25% rated it as '4', challenging.

To sum up, all the challenges which are mentioned above are possibly evitable. We can ensure that PBL exerts more benefits than challenges, which will be presented and discussed in the following questions.

Our third question yielded positive results. The findings of the study revealed that most of the in-service teachers liked incorporating PBL into their classrooms despite the challenges it posed. These teachers also believed that PBL improved pupils' language skills along with their 21st Century Skills. It implies that PBL not only does have a substantial positive impact on the skills recommended by the curriculum, but it also provides benefits beyond the classroom. Since the participants mentioned the challenges but most of them acknowledged its efficacy in enhancing such skills and reported that they liked to implement it in their classrooms, we can interpret that it was worthy of the time the teachers spent.

By looking into the studies by Tsiplakides and Fragoulis (2009) along with Hrušková (2014), we also found that those teachers described a positive experience when incorporating PBL due to the benefits it provides. The benefits emerged with PBL are indispensable according to these authors. The questionnaire which aimed at examining teachers' perceptions of their experiences with storytelling also revealed very positive results. The participants of the study listed a wide variety of benefits that storytelling provides, and they showed that they were concerned about finding appropriate books and engaging pupils using storytelling.

By exploring pupils' perceptions through questionnaires, the one-on-one interview as well as our observations during the lessons, we can state that this study affirmed that PBL not only did motivate and engage pupils but also made them enjoy and improve their learning. Although a few pupils were poorly motivated at the beginning, PBL proved to be efficient in engaging them. Pupils tried to come

up with ideas and discuss the problems to find solutions to the water problem as well as the endangered animals issue. We could see that they liked the projects by observing their attitudes during every stage of PBL. We also gained enough evidence by interviewing them and analyzing their questionnaires. By taking all of these into account, the results of the study showed that most of the pupils had a positive perception of the implementation of PBL. Pupils were motivated in general. They would share their ideas, encourage each other, work on their script willingly and enthusiastically.

Moreover, regarding pupils' perceptions of storytelling, the study revealed saliently positive results. Almost all pupils loved both *The Water Princess* by Susan Verde and *Splat and the Cool School Trip* by Rob Scotton. As it was stated previously, even the distracted pupils (mostly 2 or 3) were totally engaged in the storytelling and this motivated them more for the project, though they were not fully motivated. Hence, we can state that our final acclaim regarding teachers' and pupils' perceptions of PBL and storytelling is very positive.

Regarding our fourth question, it was of utmost importance to shed light on the effects of PBL on developing pupils' 21st Century Skills. The study showed that PBL has a substantial positive impact on pupils' 21st Century Skills, mainly: critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, collaboration, communication, and social skills. As can be seen from the responses of the participants, teachers also affirmed that the implementation of PBL-based projects in their classrooms developed the aforementioned skills along with other skills. First, based on the pupils' responses to the interview and the questionnaires, we can infer that PBL positively impacted pupils' critical thinking skills. Pupils were given the opportunity to think and express themselves in both projects. Considering the *Water Project*, pupils' communication and participation during the process were also observed to ensure that PBL was effective in promoting this skill. We could affirm that pupils thought outside the box. As it was shown in the previous chapter, pupils would focus on the given challenge and discuss new ideas freely. Pupils also agreed that both the story and the project made them think about the water problem. Therefore, they became predominantly motivated to come up with solutions to the problem. By carrying out research and working collaboratively on the problem, pupils' problem-solving skills were enhanced. By becoming better critical thinkers, pupils also became problem-solvers.

Although pupils did not have an extended inquiry process in the *Water Project*, we could ensure that they focused on the question and applied in-depth thinking together with their team members, families, and with us. Since pupils worked in groups, they had different ideas and thoughts. This eventually led to an improvement in such skills as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. Though some pupils had the tendency to use L1, we found it rather natural given that they were young learners. Therefore, we believe we created a safe atmosphere for the pupils to express themselves. Pupils eventually would have to use English to create their scripts and poster. They did that by using their dictionaries and the internet. They also wrote some sentences in

English without any help. As a result, considering that pupils shared their thoughts, discussed upcoming ideas on the topic, and worked on their scripts and posters, their communication skills were enhanced. In addition to these, as they had a non-Portuguese intern teacher, they would make more effort to use English to communicate with her.

Regarding pupils' creativity, we had already observed that pupils were quite creative before undertaking our project. By having been provided an active learning environment in which they could reflect on their thoughts and opinions shared among their team members, pupils could explore their creativity. In addition to being provided a safe environment to share their ideas freely and think outside the box, pupils were encouraged to come up with solutions, which ultimately led to a fantastic learning process and final products. Since the project was student-driven, pupils were inspired to imagine and create instead of being transferred the knowledge. We believe that the more pupils were allowed to communicate their thoughts, the more creative they became.

Furthermore, we valued that PBL enhanced pupils' collaboration skills, but we can also state that some of the benefits and challenges of PBL can be intertwined. Though we were provided with enough evidence to claim that PBL fosters collaboration, some challenges can emerge with the implementation of teamwork. Those who did not collaborate well or did not contribute much to the first project were already aware of this. During the interview, they said that they would improve this next time, and they did. It was surprising but they worked well at the beginning of the second project despite the internet connection issue which ultimately led to a collaboration problem on the first day. On the second day, pupils showed that they improved their collaboration skills as they were willing to do research with their team members. In addition, pupils' social skills were ultimately fostered. They also learned what to do when someone does not make much effort. We believe pupils also started to make more empathy as they were asked a few times if they did their best and contributed to the project. During the interviews, we also shared our opinions with them to help them make empathy and respect their team members.

Regarding pupils' research and ICT skills, we do not have much data from the *Water Project* since most of the pupils did not do research and we could not provide them with the opportunity to improve these skills. For this reason, we attempted to improve these skills in our second project. During the first part of the project, pupils worked on a WebQuest and were involved in the inquiry. Although we did not have enough time to continue nurturing these skills, we believe PBL would be effective in enhancing research and ICT skills when implemented well. Most of the pupils showed great enthusiasm when they were allowed to do research although some of them began to get distracted after some time. Furthermore, using effective picture books, we believe we improved pupils' critical thinking, communication, collaboration, problem-solving and social skills as well. Pupils would reflect on the stories, communicate, and work collaboratively during pre, during, and post-storytelling activities.

As a conclusion, we can state that PBL has undeniably positive effects on pupils' 21st Century Skills. By inspiring pupils to have a safe learning environment to think critically, awakening their curiosity to explore, and igniting their passion to be creative, PBL predominantly does nurture such skills. Pupils learned to be inquirers and problem-solvers from which they can benefit beyond the classroom. Furthermore, despite not being able to motivate a few pupils from the beginning of the project, we believe PBL resulted in high engagement not only due to the implementation of real-world tasks but also allowing pupils to have a say and encouraging them to own their learning. We can conclude that those skills, which were outlined as our aim to improve, were reinforced.

Taking into our fifth and last question into consideration, we sought to foster pupils' 21st Century Skills by applying effective resources and activities which could cater for an effective PBL approach using storytelling. We also aimed at creating excitement for the project(s), using these resources. In this account, we analyzed the findings of the study and observed pupils' views on the activities and resources throughout the project(s). With regards to both our projects, we used picture books as an entry event which inspired pupils to work on the projects. The first picture book *The Water Princess* captured pupils' interest as they were provided an authentic reason and a real problem to question and solve. As a pre-reading activity, pupils were encouraged to reflect on their existing knowledge about 'water' through a digital mind map. This activity served as a hook that grabbed pupils' attention and kept them thinking. By recalling and sharing ideas, pupils learned new vocabulary from each other's prior knowledge as well. Thus, mind maps are effective for successful PBL projects. They can also be used in the preparation stage of the project work to activate pupils. Our follow-up activity was group story-mapping, and it also proved to be efficient. As outlined in the previous chapter, pupils worked collaboratively and were able to understand what was being told in the story. This helped them comprehend the important elements of the story to retell it and they were all eager to do so. Moreover, it was a valuable strategy since it provoked pupils to think about the problem one more time. Thus, they were more drawn to the project work.

Afterwards, pupils worked on an 'empathy worksheet' and thought about the problem and how they would feel if they faced the water scarcity problem as the main character of the story did. In the preparation stage of the *Water Project*, pupils were asked to think about how they used water and why saving water was important. During this discussion, pupils shared their views on the topic and learned from one another. Eventually, we could maintain pupils' focus on the issue along with making them think deeply. In addition to these activities, pupils were allowed to determine the driving question and their final product for the project. This led to an increase in pupils' interest. In conclusion, picture books as a resource can promote effective strategies to implement such as story maps and mind maps. Picture books also proved to be motivating especially when they are implemented interactively. In addition to this, we can say that involving pupils in a real-world task by giving them freedom to choose and independence to express themselves, find solutions, and create a product were effective and contributed to the success of PBL.

Regarding our second project, *Saved by You*, the picture book, *Splat and the Cool School Trip*, did not directly pose a challenge to the pupils. Before the storytelling, pupils' interest and curiosity were stimulated since they were asked to guess the plot and comment on the cover of the picture book. Pupils were also provoked by questions during the story to think about the upcoming events in the story and this helped them gain thinking skills. Later, we referred to the picture book before starting the project in order to make them excited about their task. The project was built upon a WebQuest as mentioned previously. It was challenging both for some of the pupils and us. Despite this, as pupils were scaffolded throughout the process, and enjoyed researching ideas together with their team members, we can say that WebQuests can be effective in implementing PBL. Pupils not only did improve their 21st Century Skills but they also had fun. All in all, in our second project, since the picture book was quite stimulating, it can be affirmed that using picture books is an efficient tool in PBL. Likewise in our first project, giving pupils autonomy and encouraging them to be active learners catered for an effective PBL-based project, despite not being able to finish it.

1.1. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Considering the implications of the above for implementing PBL in a young learner EFL classroom, we would like to outline the aspects teachers should be conscious of. There is no doubt that PBL is an effective approach, and it can be demanding to apply it correctly and successfully. First and foremost, in-service teachers should spare some time for research to successfully implement this approach by putting its characteristics, principles, and stages into practice.

We believe that although we might not have to apply every step in the stages of PBL straightforwardly, it is crucial to implement its principles. Thus, a long-term inquiry would be helpful in successfully incorporating this approach. It is also important to go through the literature to gain a better understanding of the differences between PBL and simply doing a project. Teachers can use up their knowledge gained through research and ensure that the procedures of PBL are well implemented. This would lead to better scaffolding. Next, although gaining detailed knowledge about the benefits and challenges of PBL is crucial, we would like to highlight that the challenges in the literature do not necessarily mean that teachers would face those in their practice. It always depends on some aspects such as the project, pupils' characteristics, and the conditions we are provided, among others. We can therefore state that it is vital to critically examine the literature. Thus, teachers should not get discouraged by looking into those obstacles.

Furthermore, PBL is generally considered motivating and stimulating (Bell, 2020; Stoller, 2002). However, we would like to point out that though pupils are given choice and autonomy in the process, it might still not be enough to awaken some of the pupils' interests. In addition to this, when some of the pupils are not initially enthusiastic to work, it might affect those who are hardworking and eager to do their best. As they see that their team members are not contributing, they might get discouraged. It then takes time and effort to remotivate them.

Therefore, this leads to another issue. It has been frequently stated that PBL promotes a set of 21st Century Skills, and collaboration is one of the most frequently mentioned, and it is also seen as an essential element of PBL (Bell, 2010; Harmer & Stokes, 2014; Stoller, 2002). As mentioned previously, young learners might not be ready to work collaboratively for a long time. By facing some challenges, teachers might need to improvise. Thus, we suggest new teachers know their pupils better to create effective groups. Teachers could also build their projects upon pupils' interests if they do not have to cover a specific unit/topic. By seeing that their preferences are valued, those who are less motivated can be more eager to cooperate. In addition, implementing WebQuests can be profoundly engaging and effective in enhancing pupils' 21st Century Skills. Nevertheless, engaging pupils in online research through WebQuests might be demanding in big groups, especially if there are not enough computers or good internet connection. We can advise teachers to assign one or two groups a day to do research if possible. We believe then it would be easier and more efficient to scaffold and facilitate the process. By doing this, pupils would also feel more comfortable, and they would not find it confusing.

Lastly, we can say that teachers must be aware that PBL requires time and endeavor. During our practice, we were assigned 12 hours of teaching. We used 6 hours of these to cover the coursebook. Three hours were spared for each project. Nevertheless, it is no secret that implementing a PBL-based project would not be possible in a few hours considering its principles. Therefore, in our first project, we managed to get some more time to finish it.

Now that we are reflecting on this and we are more familiar with the approach, we can state that trying to implement two PBL-based projects during our internship practice was a mistake. Although both provided benefits and the *Water Project* was a success, we believe it could have been much better with more time spared for it. We have not experienced the effects of long-term projects and we cannot comment much about it. However, incorporating projects in such a short time is not suggested. Although the study showed that it is likely to face some obstacles during the implementation of PBL, we can guarantee that it offers a lot of benefits and in the end, it is worthwhile to see how we can engage pupils' minds and hearts.

1.2. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research study was carried out only in one primary school classroom and therefore, it focuses on the experience of a limited number of pupils. It should also be emphasized that it was a private school, and we were given the flexibility to incorporate PBL. Moreover, the pandemic affected the study negatively. Furthermore, the study examined the experiences of in-service teachers through questionnaires.

We can say that the findings can be used in possible future research to obtain more data regarding the implementation of PBL. Though we still managed to get enough evidence, we cannot generalize the results.

Additionally, one of the problems which has emerged during the study was the willingness of pupils to respond to the questionnaires. We can state that although they answered the questions, some pupils were not so enthusiastic, and they did not want to answer the open-ended ones. Next time we would try to make the questionnaires more child-friendly to reflect on this issue. The other circumstance which was crucial to consider was that significantly few studies addressed PBL in the EFL young learner classrooms. Hence, a deep analysis of teachers' perceptions of this approach was still not feasible.

1.3. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

If given the opportunity, we would like to take the current study further by conducting a long-term project with different groups of pupils. An interesting line of research would be to carry out a more detailed study in a public school as well in order to analyze the overall results of PBL.

Another improvement we would consider is to widen the scope of activities to give more autonomy to the pupils. We would start doing that by allowing pupils to determine the topic of the project. Indeed, it might motivate pupils even more. Furthermore, we would research more about creating groups in young learner classrooms. Since we reckon it is one of the most important issues, we would work on that to observe pupils' collaboration skills once again.

Further study could also examine in-service teachers' perceptions and experiences through interviews as well as questionnaires. It would provide a better understanding of what their projects were about, what kind of resources they incorporated during the implementation of the projects, how their pupils reacted to the projects, and so on. This could be further reinforced if teachers applied the procedures and principles of PBL.

Another suggestion for further study would be to make pupils' work public. Although we could not manage to do it with our first project due to our limited time and Covid-19, we believe that pupils' products would have been more authentic (and hence appreciated) if they had been displayed to the public. We pondered on the possibility and efficacy of this and aimed to do it in the second project but eventually, we could not. This could be done by getting pupils to present their process and/or final product to other groups in school or even to their parents. We would determine the audience with the pupils. Our aim would be to encourage pupils to create a high-quality product, and this would come from enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Therefore, we would like to observe if publicly presented products would lead to better PBL outcomes. However, we would also want to have pupils think that their effort is worth it. Finally, we would gain an understanding of the impact of PBL on pupils' self-esteem in a different atmosphere as well.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - INTERVIEW GRID

INTERVIEWS ON THE PROJECT AND STORYTELLING



Picture book: <i>THE WATER PRINCESS</i> by Susan Verde	
Project Name:	<i>WATER PROJECT</i>
1. Did you like the story? Why/ Why not?	
2. Did you understand the story even though everything was told in English?	
3. What do you still remember from the story?	
4. Did the story and activities help you think and find a solution for saving water? Why/ Why not?	
5. How could your teacher(s) change the storytelling to make it better next time?	
6. Did everyone in your group do their best during the project? Why? / Why not?	
7. How did it affect you?	
8. Do you think you did your best for the project? Why/ Why not?	
9. What would you do better next time?	

APPENDIX B - PRE-PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE


PUPIL VOICE QUESTIONNAIRE




























Please answer the following questions by circling the face of your choice, and explain why. /

Por favor responde às seguintes questões circulando a carinha que escolheres, e explica porquê.

YES/SIM 

SOMETIMES/AS VEZES 

NO/NÃO 

Question / Pergunta	Face / Carinha			Why? Porquê?	
1. Do you like stories? / Gostas de histórias?					
2. Would you like to hear more stories in your English lessons?/ Gostaria de ouvir mais histórias em suas aulas de inglês?					
3. Do you like to work in a group? / Gosta de trabalhar em grupo?					
4. If you had a group work, would you contribute as much as you can?/ Se tivesses um trabalho em grupo, contribuirias com o máximo que pudesses?					
5. Do you like to share your ideas with the class? / Gostas de partilhar ideias com a turma?					
6. Do you like to hear your colleagues' ideas? / Gostas de ouvir as ideias dos teus colegas?					
7. Do you like to do online research? / Gostas de fazer pesquisas online?					
8. Do you like to do projects? / Gostas de fazer projetos?					
9. Do you like to show your projects to the class?/ Gostas de mostrar os teus projetos à turma?					
10. Which one would you choose for your project? / Qual escolherias para o teu projeto? <u>CIRCLE YOUR ANSWER/ CIRCULA A TUA RESPOSTA</u>	A VIDEO/ UM VÍDEO	A POSTER/ UMA CARTOLINA	A LETTER/ UMA CARTA	AN ORAL PRESENTATION/ UMA APRESENTAÇÃO ORAL	A THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE/ UMA PEÇA DE TEATRO



THANK YOU!

APPENDIX C - POST-PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE



SELF-REFLECTION ON THE PROJECT WORK



THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU DID IN THIS PROJECT, AND HOW WELL THE PROJECT WENT. WRITE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE RIGHT COLUMN.

Student Name:	
Project Name:	WATER PROJECT
Driving Question:	<i>What can you do to save water in your home/school/city?</i>
About Yourself:	
1. What is the most important thing you learned in this project? (Qual é a coisa mais importante que aprendeste neste projeto?)	
2. In what ways (if any) did you collaborate with your colleagues in this project? Please explain. (De que maneira colaboraste (se colaboraste) com os teus colegas neste projeto?)	
3. Did you learn how to be a more effective team member during this project? (Aprendeste como ser um membro da equipa mais eficaz durante este projeto?)	YES / NO
4. Did you do research for the project? (Fizeste pesquisa para o projeto?)	YES / NO
5. Did you learn different ways of solving the problem regarding wasting water? (Aprendeste maneiras diferentes de resolver o problema do desperdício de água?)	YES / NO
6. Do you think the project made you think about ways of saving water? (Achas que o projeto te fez pensar em maneiras de poupar água?)	YES / NO

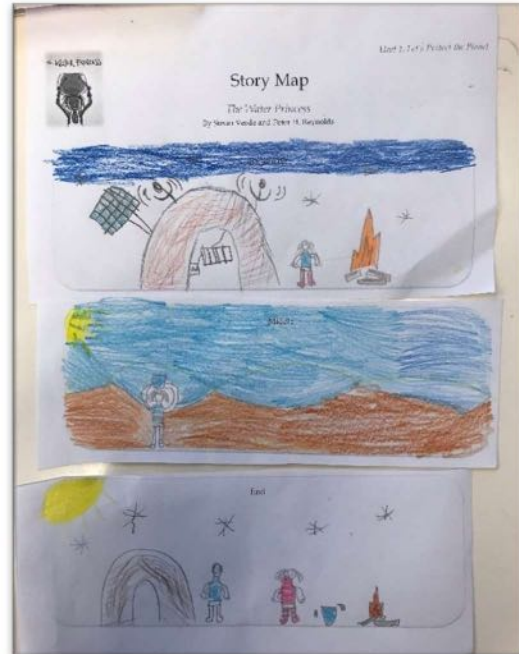
About the Project:			
<p>7. What was the most enjoyable part of this project? Circle your answer.</p> <p>(Qual foi a parte que gostaste mais deste projeto? Circula a tua resposta.)</p>	<p>Working in groups (Trabalhar em grupos)</p>	<p>Creating the product (Criar o produto)</p>	<p>Thinking about saving water (Pensar sobre poupar água)</p>
	<p>Researching ideas (Pesquisar ideias)</p>	<p>Presenting ideas (Apresentar ideias)</p>	<p>Presentation (Apresentação)</p>
<p>8. What was the least enjoyable part of this project? Circle your answer.</p> <p>(Qual foi a parte que gostaste menos deste projeto? Circula a tua resposta.)</p>	<p>Working in groups (Trabalhar em grupos)</p>	<p>Creating the product (Criar o produto)</p>	<p>Thinking about saving water (Pensar sobre poupar água)</p>
	<p>Researching ideas (Pesquisar ideias)</p>	<p>Presenting ideas (Apresentar ideias)</p>	<p>Presentation (Apresentação)</p>
<p>9. How could your teacher(s) change the project work to make it better next time?</p> <p>(Como é que a tua professora poderia mudar o trabalho de projeto para ser melhor da próxima vez?)</p>			
<p>10. Which activity was the most interesting in this unit?</p> <p>(Que atividade foi mais interessante nesta unidade/projeto?)</p>			

APPENDIX D - PUPILS' STORY MAPS

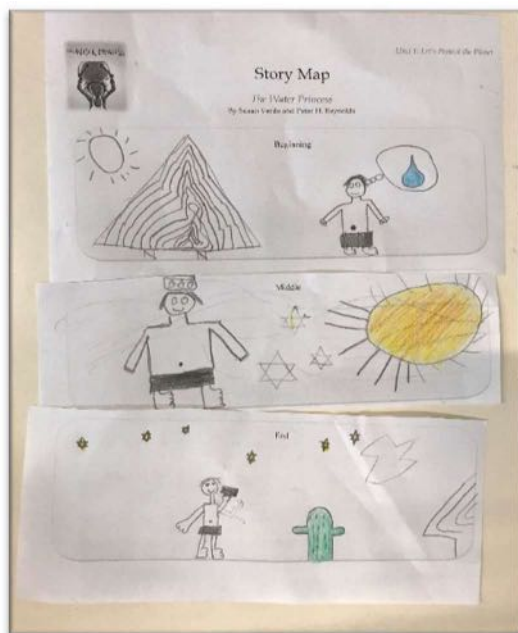
FIRST GROUP:



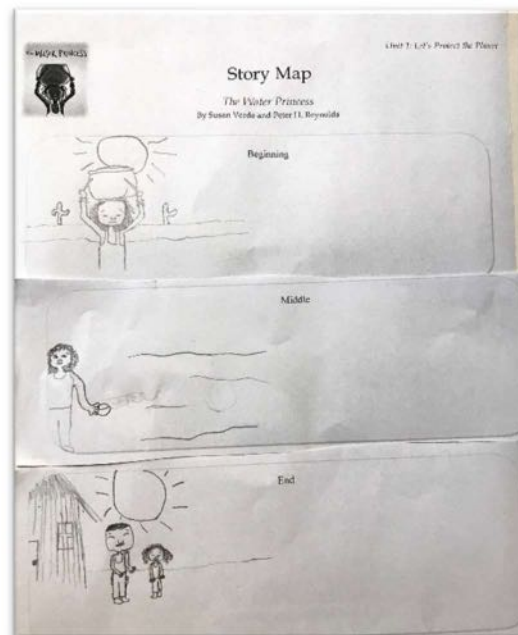
SECOND GROUP:



THIRD GROUP:



FOURTH GROUP:



APPENDIX E- PUPILS' AUTONOMY



APPENDIX F- PUPILS' THEATRE SCRIPTS

WATER PROJECT



Group's name: Blue Paper

Group Members: _____

Project Outcome: A video & A theatrical play

Narrator (Pupil 1) Every form of life needs water to live. A little fish needs water... Trees need water... Everyone needs water. We all need... WATER!

(The guys ignore...)

People need water to drink because our bodies need water to stay healthy.

Pupil 2: Hey guys! You need to turn off the tap.

Guys!!! You need to turn off the tap.

(Pupil 3, Pupil 4 and Pupil 5 are washing their hands in the bathroom.)

Pupil 3: Why? Why do we need to turn off the tap? We are washing our hands.

Pupil 4: How will I wash my hand without water?

Pupil 2: You need enough water to wash your hands.

Pupil 5: Why do we need to do that? There is water everywhere: in oceans, in lakes...

(Pupil 2 continues explaining.)

Pupil 2: Not all that water is for us to drink.

Pupil 4: Oh, of course!

Pupil 5: How can we save water?

Pupil 2: If you take a shorter shower, you can save water.

Pupil 3: Ok... We can turn off the tap while washing our hands or brushing our teeth.

Pupil 4: We should not waste water.

Pupil 5: You are right! It is important to save water for the planet.

I promise I will be more careful.

Pupil 3, Pupil 4, Pupil 5: Me too!

Pupil 2: Perfect!

Pupil 4: Let's go to the classroom!

Narrator: Now they know it is important to save water. They will be more careful.

NOTE: Pupil 6 had to leave earlier. Thus, the script is adapted. / Pupils' names are not revealed.

WATER PROJECT



Group's Name: Green Glass

Group Members: _____

Project Outcome: A theatrical play

Narrator (Pupil 1): Water is necessary for the human life. Water seems abundant, but it is a limited resource.

(Pupil 2 appears and starts wasting water!)

(Piranha very weak) **Piranha (Pupil 3):** No water! No water!!!

(Piranha dies.)

Pupil 4: M!! Turn off the tap!

Pupil 2: Sorry! I don't like to save water.

Pupil 5: We need water for our planet!!!

(Pupil 2 turns off the tap.)

Pupil 6: Water is the Earth's most precious resource.

Pupil 4: We can do a lot of things to save water.

Pupil 2: How can I save water?

Pupil 6: Well... When you see someone washing their car with a lot of water, tell them to stop.

Pupil 5: People can use a **broom** to clean the streets, not the **hose**.

Pupil 3: Or they can wait for the rain.

Pupil 2: What else?

Pupil 4: You can save water at home and use it to water your garden.

Pupil 1: When you do the laundry, make sure the washing machine is full.

Pupil 3: We hope that you start saving water.

Pupil 1: Do you remember Gie Gie? It is also important to keep water clean.

Pupil 4: Look, this water is dirty and we can't drink it! (Pupil 4 shows a bottle filled with dirty water.)

Pupil 2: Wow! You have many ideas! Thank you!!

Everybody: You are welcome!

Narrator (Pupil 1): After everyone shares their ideas with ...(pupil 2), ... (pupil 2) starts saving water.

NOTE: Pupils' names are not revealed.

WATER PROJECT



Group's Name: Red Batteries

Group Members: _____

Project Outcome: A theatrical play

Narrator (Pupil 1): Water is precious!

We must save water.

(The grandmother does not like water.)

The grandmother (Pupil 2): Water is not precious! I don't like water.

The fish (Pupil 3): You don't like water? Water is magical!

Narrator (Pupil 4): (Harry and Jack are talking with the grandmother).

Harry (Pupil 5): Grandmother! Fish live in the water! They need water to survive.

Jack (Pupil 6): How come you don't like water, grandma? I like drinking water.

The grandmother (Pupil 2): I don't like water!

The fish (Pupil 3): Everyone needs water.

Harry (Pupil 5): People use water for taking baths.

Jack (Pupil 6): People brush their teeth and wash their clothes with water.

The Grandmother (Pupil 2): What can I do to save water?

Pupil 7: Well, we are here to tell you.

Narrator (Pupil 1): Everyone wants to help the grandmother.

Harry (Pupil 5): Don't use more water than you really need.

Narrator (Pupil 4): You can help Mom or Dad fix **leaky** taps.

Jack (Pupil 6): It is easy. Turn off the running water when you brush your teeth.

Pupil 7: You should save a lot of water. We know you can do it!

Everyone ALL TOGETHER: You can do it, Grandma!

The Grandmother (Pupil 2): Ok, children. Thank you for informing me. I will save water from now on.




APPENDIX G- SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

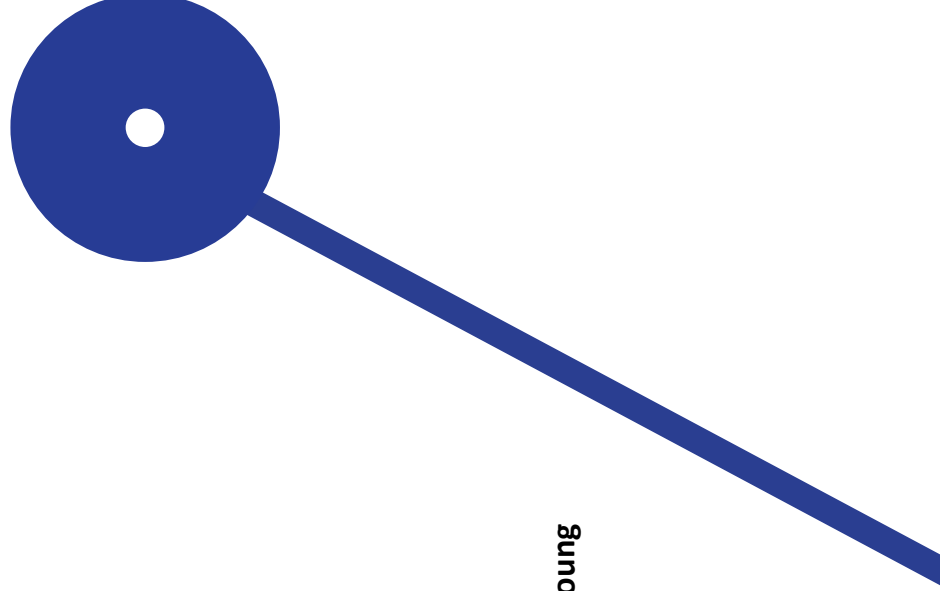


Compartilhei minhas ideias e informações com todos os membros de grupo.	
Fiz meu trabalho e ajudei meu grupo.	
fiz pesquisa e estava focado/a durante a nossa pesquisa.	
Ouvi as ideias e sugestões do meu grupo.	
Pensei em como ajudar nosso animal em extinção.	

APPENDIX H- GROUP MEMBERS EVALUATION CHECKLIST

GROUP NAME:

Encorajaram uns aos outros e colaboraram bem.	
Cada um de nós compartilhava nossas ideias, depois ouvíamos e valorizamos as opiniões uns dos outros.	
Cada um de nós ajudava um ao outro durante a pesquisa e o uso do computador.	
Fizemos o melhor em _____.	
Da próxima vez, podemos melhorar em _____.	



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