



Educating for global citizenship and positive peace through the awakening to languages approach: a case study with children in institutional care

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SOCIO-LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND	AGE GROUP	THEMATIC STRAND
Foreign languages	0 – 6	Early bilingual/multilingual education

Global citizenship education (GCE) has been deemed an educational imperative of the 21st century to respond to the times of unprecedented change we are living in (Tarozzi & Torres, 2016). Existing research with preschool children indicates that GCE nurtures personal respect and respect for others, and raises children’s civic engagement (Hancock, 2017; Twigg et al., 2015). These are fundamental aspects in creating and sustaining peaceful societies and contributing to positive peace (Galtung, 1996). Despite this, empirical studies focusing on GCE pedagogies for the early years are still lacking, particularly in non-formal contexts.

This study aims to understand the contribution of the Awakening to Languages approach, a multilingual and cross-curricular approach to language education (Candelier et al., 2017), in the development of attitudes and values conducive to global citizenship and positive peace. The study was guided by qualitative methodology and was conducted with a group of Portuguese children aged 3 to 6 living in a residential home run by a religious congregation. Children participated in a five-month-project titled “A house where we all can fit”, which included multilingual activities and virtual exchanges with children in similar care institutions in Colombia and Tanzania. Data were collected via questionnaires, self-assessment sheets and fieldnotes, which were treated using content analysis. Results suggest that the activities promoted children’s awareness of and respect for diversity, raised their self-awareness and self-esteem, and helped them develop a broader sense of belonging. Implications of these findings for GCE research and practice in the early years are discussed.

Vera Silva is a schoolteacher and an MA student in Education and Training at the Department of Education and Psychology of the University of Aveiro, Portugal. She has a degree in Modern Languages and Literature and 17 years of teaching experience mainly in primary and secondary education. She is also a volunteer in a residential home run by a religious congregation. Her research interests include peace education, language education and multiculturalism.

Mónica Lourenço is a researcher and teacher educator at the University of Aveiro, Portugal. She has a PhD in Didactics and Teacher Education and over 15 years of experience teaching and supervising students in the fields of language didactics and early years education. Her main research interests include global citizenship education, plurilingualism, and education for linguistic and cultural diversity.