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Action-Oriented Pedagogy as an Approach to Promoting Life Skills in English Language Teaching

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Outline

- 01** Motivations
- 02** Theoretical Framework
- 03** Methodological Framework and Didactic intervention
- 04** Data presentation and analysis
- 05** Final remarks

Motivations

Evolving world



The world has experienced major changes in digital and technological terms, in the labour market and in demographics in recent decades.

(European Commission, 2020)

Unaware and unprepared young people



Nowadays, it is essential to assess the quality of the information that reaches us and our students, predicting the best course of action by making good use of that information.

(Knight, 2020)

School detached from the real world



The challenge for teachers in the 21st century lies in planning and implementing educational activities that motivate students to take action and think critically.

(Ivanova & Kangro, 2018)

Life Skills



Educating for the 21st century: a focus in skills

Theoretical framework and key concepts

“Competence”

as the ability to use knowledge, demonstrating skills, attitudes and values that enable us to live, interact and work in society.

(Conselho da União Europeia, 2018;
European Commission, 2020;
Perrenoud, 1999)

Life skills

as the knowledge, abilities and attitudes that are fundamental to participating actively and consciously in society.

(Cambridge, 2020)



Frameworks

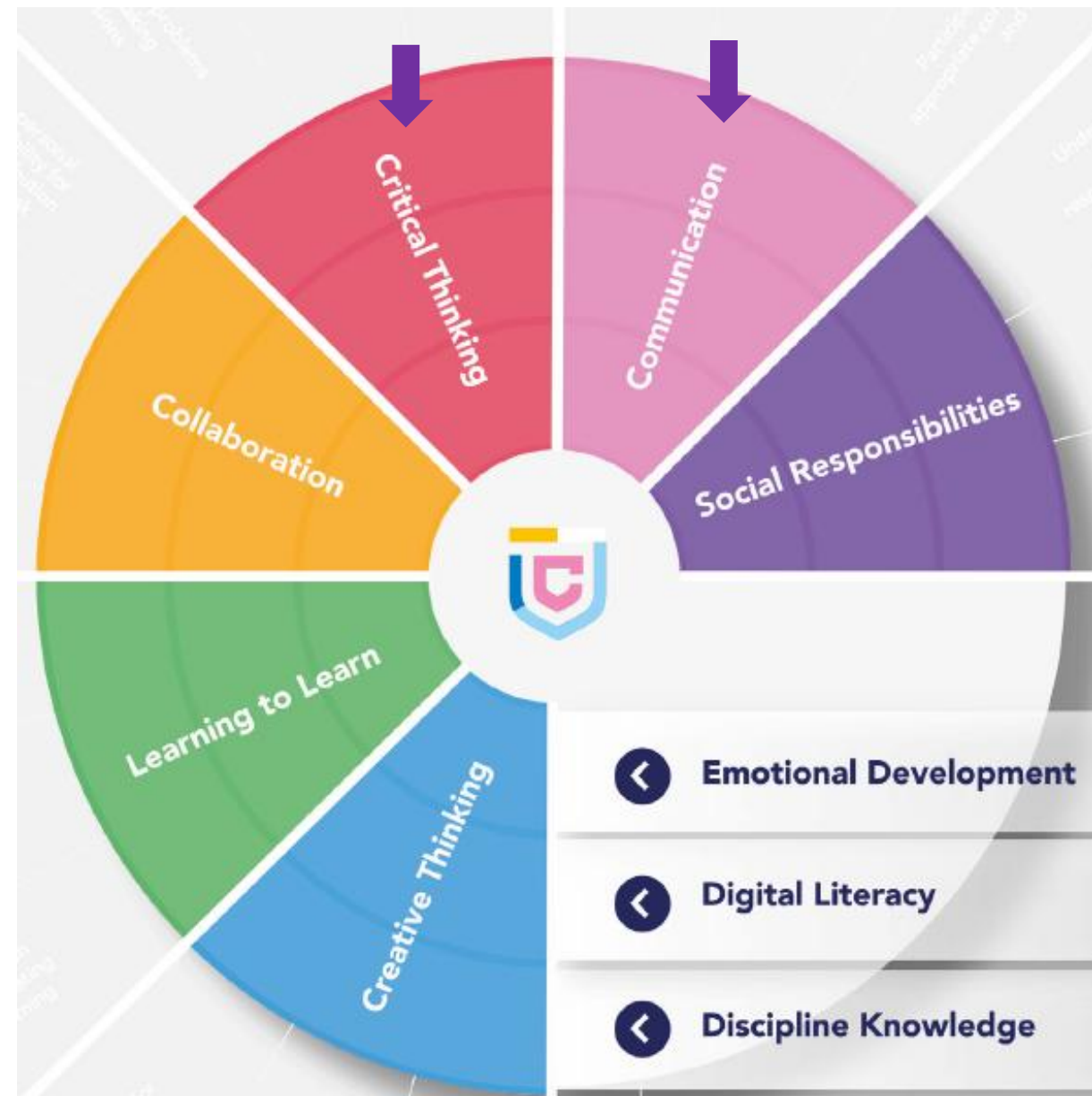
- *Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning* (Council of Europe, 2018)
- *OECD Learning Compass 2030* (2019)
- *Framework for 21st Century Learning* (Partnership for 21st Century skills, 2019)

The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework

(Cambridge, 2020)



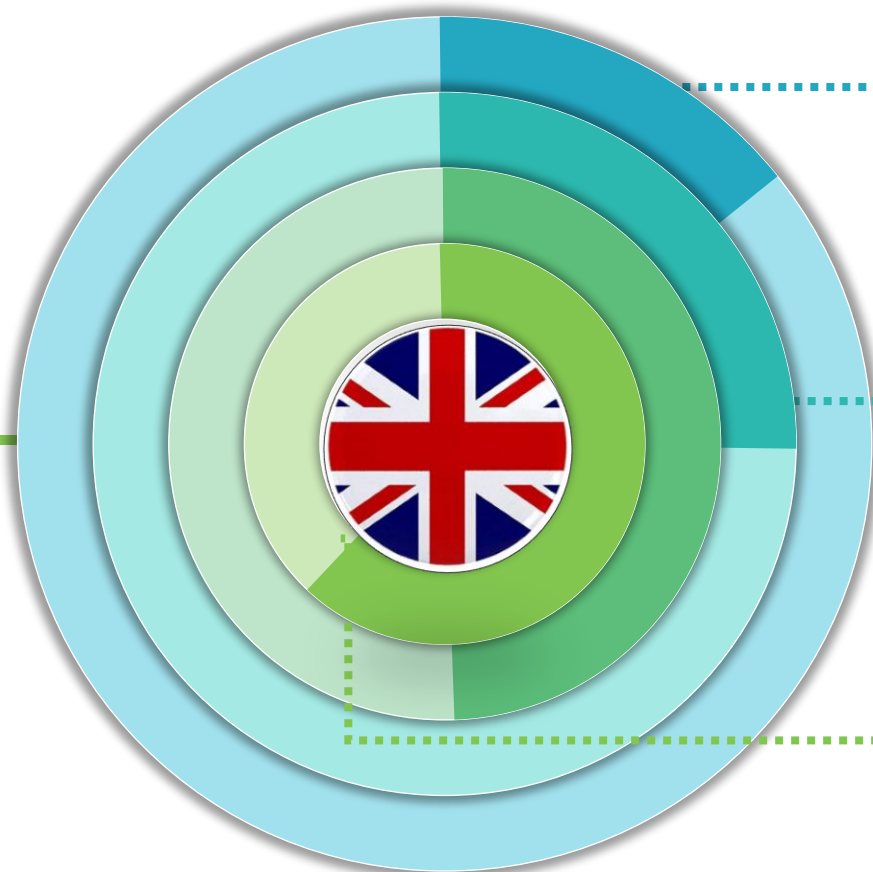
CREATIVE THINKING	Learners actively participate in creative activities, generate new ideas and use them to solve problems.
CRITICAL THINKING	Learners identify patterns and relationships, evaluate ideas and use these skills to solve problems.
LEARNING TO LEARN	Learners develop practical skills to support and take control of their learning and reflect on their own progress.
COMMUNICATION	Learners choose the most appropriate language to use in different situations, manage conversations effectively and express themselves clearly and confidently.
COLLABORATION	Learners work well together in groups through actively taking part in group activities, listening to others, sharing tasks and finding solutions to problems.
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES	Learners recognise and describe different roles and responsibilities in a variety of groups and understand cultural and global issues.
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Learners describe and manage emotions and develop positive relationships with others.



(Cambridge, 2020)

Learn by doing: the English language classes and action-oriented pedagogy

Theoretical framework and key concepts



The English as a Foreign Language Classroom (EFL) has been considered as an opportunity for learners to explore global issues and at the same time develop written communication skills and critical thinking skills.

(Lourenço & Simões, 2021)



Task-Based Learning (TBL) and Action-oriented Pedagogy state that language learning comes through action, that is, focusing attention on the student as a social actor who needs to fulfil and solve tasks to achieve a certain goal.

(Conselho da Europa, 2001)



Global simulation advocates the creation of fictional scenarios based on the real world, encouraging students to embody characters who move around in a specific real space, such as a hotel, for example. The simulation is built around a problem for which a solution must be found.

(Debyser, 1996; Fischer et al., 2006)

A person stands on a rocky shore, looking out at a large waterfall. The scene is dimly lit, with the waterfall's spray catching some light. The overall mood is contemplative and vast.

Research goal

Understand the impact of a didactic intervention, grounded in an action-oriented approach, on the development of life skills among vocational education students learning english.

Methodological Framework and didactic intervention

Paradigmatic positioning

- Socio-critical paradigm
 - Action- oriented approach
- (Amado, 2017; Coutinho, 2024)

Research objectives

- Plan a didactic intervention
- Analyse the results of the strategies implemented



Context of the project

- School year 2019/ 2020
- Vocational Training centre (district of Aveiro)
- Vocational education students aged between 16 and 18
- Module “ Debating the rights and duties of citizens”



Data collection instruments

- Students’ and teacher’s checklists
- Students’ scripts



Data analysis methodology

- Statistic and content analysis
- (Bardin, 2019; Campenhoudt et al., 2019)

Classroom activities and CdS

Seventeen sessions, of 90 minutes each, were developed based on the theme of the module to be taught – ‘**Debating the rights and duties of the citizens**’ – and the activities were organised according to the **task-based learning methodology**, with a view to developing objectives related to **Critical Thinking and Communicative Competence**, based on the ‘Can do Statements’ as described in the Cambridge reference framework in 2019.

STAGE OF LEARNING	CORE AREAS	CAN DO STATEMENTS
SECONDARY (CONTINUED)	Evaluating ideas, arguments and options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distinguishes between fact and opinion.• Identifies evidence and its reliability.• Identifies assumptions and inferences in an argument.• Gives reasons for an argument's plausibility.• Identifies problems in a proposed plan (e.g. to organise an event at school).• Analyses causes and effects of problems.• Examines possible solutions to a given problem and states how effective they are.• Assesses strengths and weaknesses of possible solutions.
	Synthesising ideas and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selects key points from diverse sources to create a new account and/or argument.

STAGE OF LEARNING	CORE AREAS	CAN DO STATEMENTS
SECONDARY (CONTINUED)	Managing conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effectively manages conversations using appropriate language to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– show understanding;– signal lack of understanding;– seek repetition;– seek clarification;– control speed and volume of others' speech;– check own understanding;– check others' understanding.• Can use simple techniques to start, maintain and close conversations of various lengths.• Uses appropriate strategies to deal with language gaps by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– signalling a gap;– appealing to conversation partners for assistance;– using non-linguistic means (e.g. pointing or drawing);– using an appropriate synonym;

Classroom activities

3 Groups of 5 students

- 1) *Rights and Duties of the Citizens*
- 2) *While there's a Family, there's hope*
- 3) *Family Tree* →
- 4) *The Neighbourhood*
- 5) *First global simulation*
- 6) *Family Dinner*
- 7) *Dining with my family*
- 8) *Final Project*
- 9) *Final Projects' presentations*
- 10) *Final Countdown*

Family Tree:
Name, age, nationality, religion, race, job, likes/ dislikes, daily routine, financial situation, food habits, cultural habits, among others.

```
graph TD; P1[ ] --- P2[ ]; P1 --- C1[ ]; P1 --- C2[ ]; P1 --- C3[ ]
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Classroom activities

- 1) *Rights and Duties of the Citizens*
- 2) *While there's a Family, there's hope*
- 3) *Family Tree*
- 4) *The Neighbourhood* →
- 5) *First global simulation*
- 6) *Family Dinner*
- 7) *Dining with my family*
- 8) *Final Project*
- 9) *Final Projects' presentations*
- 10) *Final Countdown*

3 Groups of 5 students



5 Groups of 3 students

Laundry Shop



Bakery & Pastry



Bus Stop



Garden/ Park



Broken Elevator



Classroom activities

- 1) *Rights and Duties of the Citizens*
- 2) *While there's a Family, there's hope*
- 3) *Family Tree*
- 4) *The Neighbourhood*
- 5) *First global simulation*

- 6) *Family Dinner*
- 7) *Dining with my family*
- 8) *Final Project*
- 9) *Final Projects' presentations*
- 10) *Final Countdown*

Group Work - Answer Sheet	
Ação:	
UFCD:	
Nome/ N.º:	
Nome/ N.º:	
Nome/ N.º:	
Classificação:	Formadora: <i>Madalena Tavares</i> _____

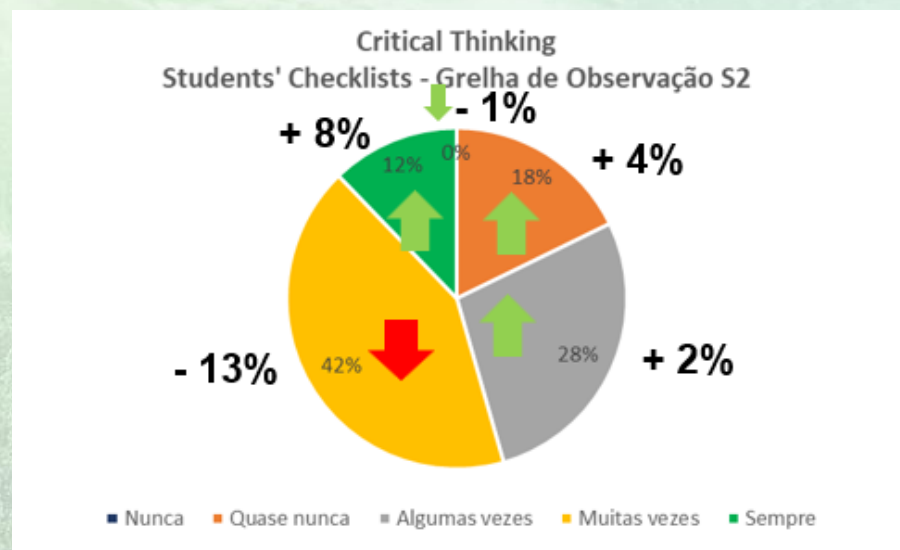
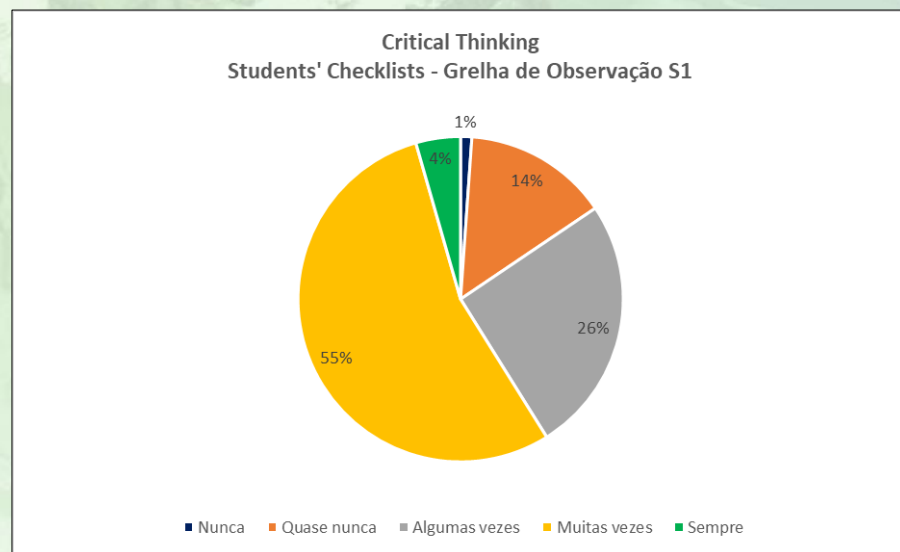
At the Bakery & Pastry



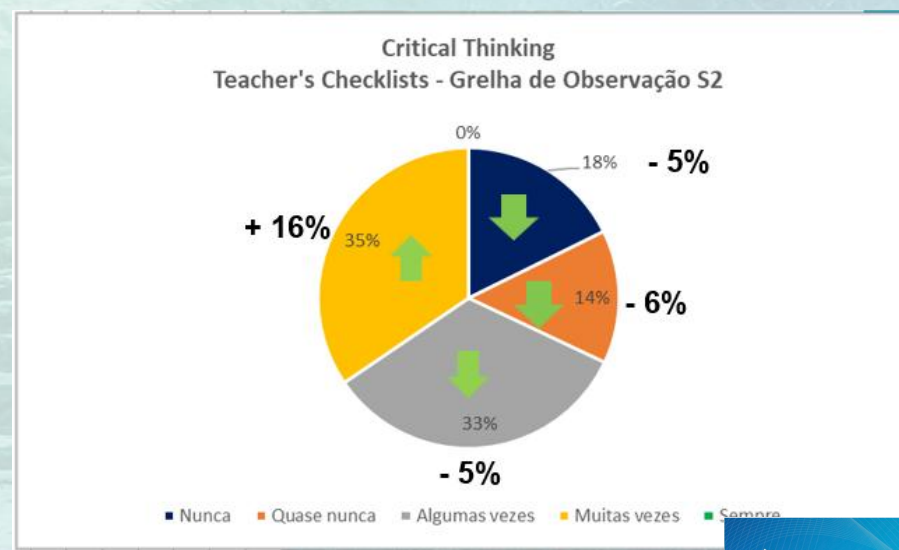
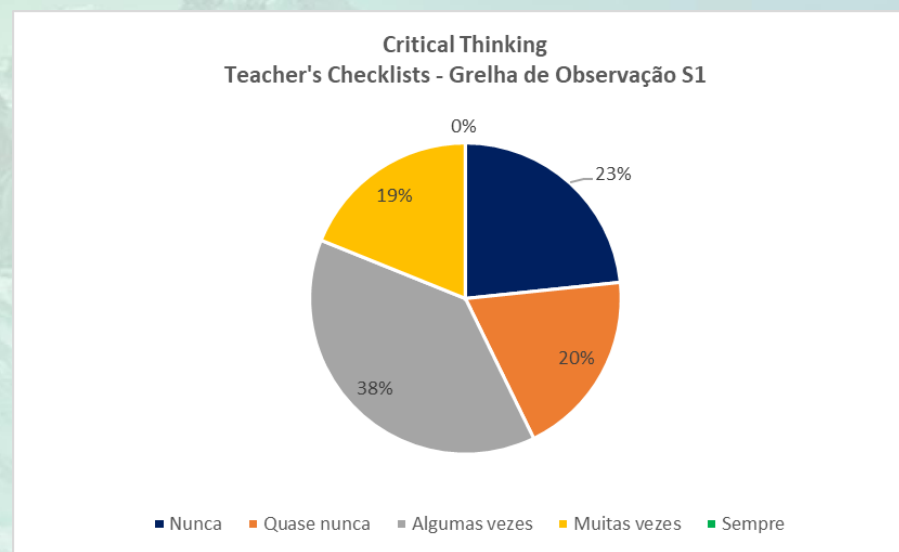


Statistical data analysis | Critical thinking

Students' Checklists – S1 and S2



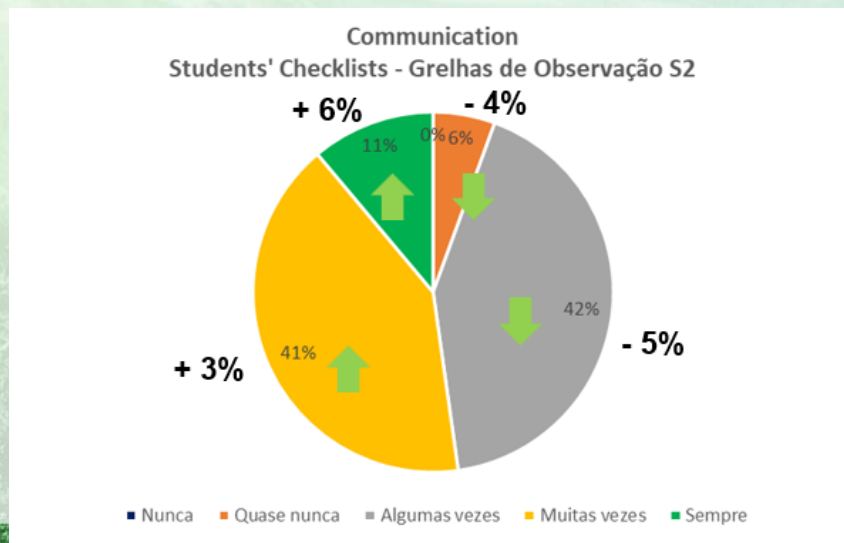
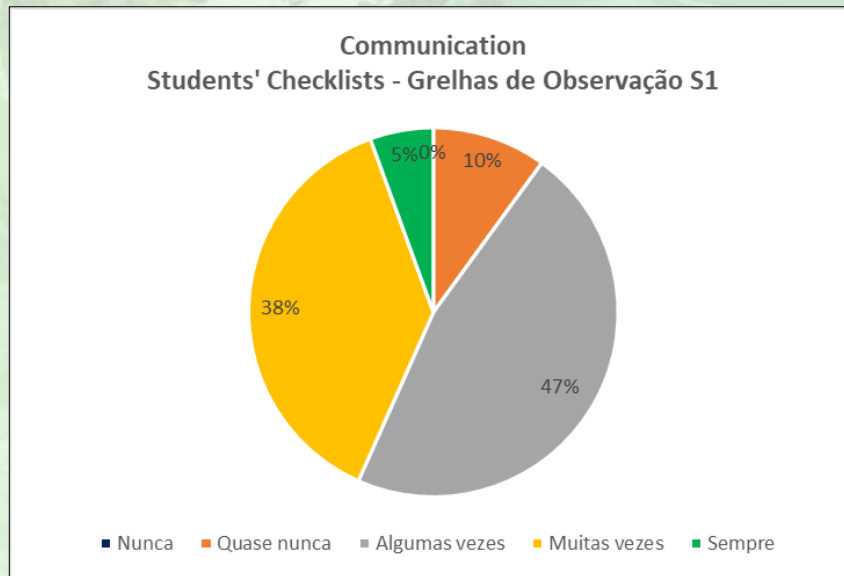
Teacher's Checklists – S1 and S2



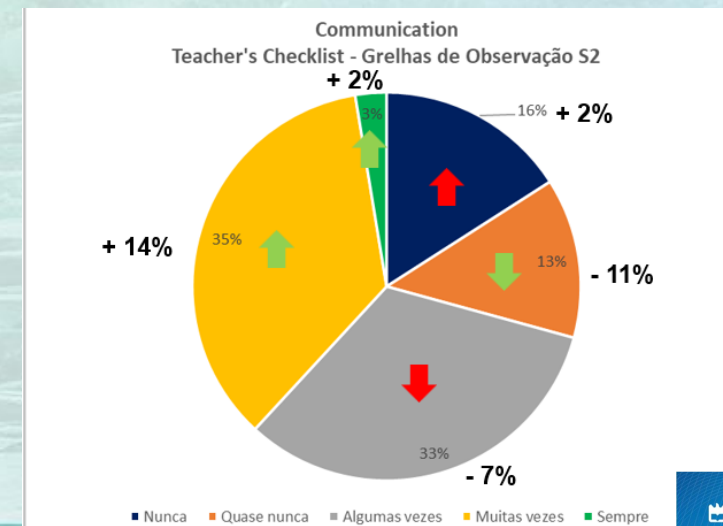
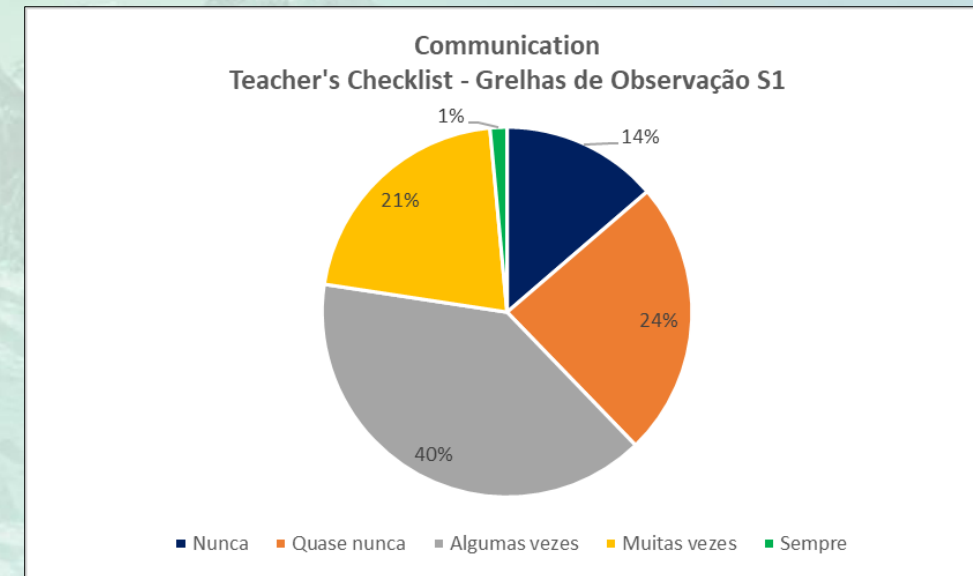


Statistical data analysis | Communicative Competence

Students' Checklists – S1 and S2



Teacher's Checklists – S1 and S2





Content analysis | Critical Thinking

Content Analysis S1

Critical Thinking

Objectives:

- CdS 9 – analyse the causes and effects of disrespect that “right and duty”,
- CdS 10 – examine solutions and test their feasibility,
- CdS 11 – verify the strenghts and weaknesses of the solutions found.

Laundry Shop



CdS 5, 7, 8, 9,
10, 11, 12

Bakery & Pastry



CdS 9,10,11

Bus Stop



CdS 7, 12

Garden/ Park



CdS 7

Broken Elevator



CdS 9, 10, 12

Content Analysis S1

Critical Thinking

Highlighted CdS:

- **CdS 9 – analyses causes and effects of problems,**

Jane: *I am a doctor, and I am able to recognize someone who is under the effect of anabolic substances.*

Adriano: *Yeah! Our body is like a car engine, if the engine has problems, the car won't work.*

- **CdS 10 – examines possible solutions to a given problem and states how effective they are,**

Jane: *If you want, I can help you with your shape but in a healthy way.*

Myriam: *I agree with Adriano, but he could have used other words (...).*

- **CdS 11 – assesses strengths and weaknesses of possible solutions.**

Jane: *It's a social obligation being educated and respect each other.*

Sandy: *Yeah! True! Despite being young, you are right and I need to rethink my life.*

Myriam: *If we all cared about each other, we would live in a better world!*

Highlighted CdS – *Family dinner*:

- **CdS 9 - analyse causes and effects of a “right or duty”,**
Collins: *People pay a lot of attention to the outside and don't see the inside, the feelings.*
James: *I have to agree with you, people care more about the way we look.*
- **CdS 10 - examines possible solutions to a given problem and states how effective they are,**
Mc Flurry: (...) *But the way the words were used was not the best way.*
Mc Flurry: *Judging is not the solution, I mean, what really matters is what we are, not what others think we are.*
- **CdS 12 – selects key points from diverse sources to create a new argument.**
Mc Flurry: *Judging is not the solution, I mean, what really matters is what we are, not what others think we are.*
Myriam: (...) *everyone has their problems and judge without knowing it (...). In the end we can realize that not everything is what it seems.*
Eddy: (...) *When I was young we used to respect the elders and, now, the world is lost.*

A person stands on a rocky ledge, looking out at a massive waterfall. The scene is captured in a high-contrast, green-tinted style, with the person's silhouette standing out against the bright, misty background of the falls. The foreground is dark and rocky, while the background is a bright, hazy expanse of water and rock.

Content Analysis– Communicative Competence

Content Analysis S1

Communicative Competence

Laundry Shop



CdS 13, 14, 15,
16, 18, 19, 21

**Bakery &
Pastry**



CdS 13, 14, 15,
16

Bus Stop



CdS 13, 14, 19

Garden/ Park



CdS 14, 15, 19

**Broken
Elevator**



CdS 13, 16, 18,
19

Highlighted CdS:

- **CdS 13 – using appropriate forms of address, greetings and farewells,**
Artur Morgan: *Nice to meet you!*
James Collins: (...) *It was good talking to you, my friends! Bye!*
- **CdS 14 – presenting point of view in a clear and persuasive way,**
Jane: *Stop! We all have our rights and duties. Everyone has the right to live the way they want if it doesn't disrespect the space of others. If you want to, I can help you with your shape but in a healthy way, that way you will not have those aggressive behaviours which are the result of those pills you are taking.*
- **CdS 16 – adapting language use according to the person who is talking to,**
Nugget: **Bro**, *I'm sorry, I just came here to buy some bread. I'm cool.*
- **Cds 18 – use appropriate language when speaking,**
Myriam: *I agree with Adriano but ...*
Myriam: *I'm glad we came to an agreement ...*
- **CdS 19 – use simple ways of starting and keeping a conversation.**
Artur Morgan: *Have we met before?; Mc Flurry – Sorry to interrupt...*

Highlighted CdS– *Family Dinner* :

- **CdS 15 – using a variety of language and communication strategies to achieve a desired effect,**

John: (...) *you don't even know what happened to me, mom!*

Adriano: *One of them could be my mother!*

Adriano: *Right in front of everybody!*

James: (...) *because of his grotesque attitude.*

Sandy: *I don't even comment.*

Eddy: *They are all "crazy"!*

Michael: *I taught him some good manners!*

- **CdS 16 – adapting language use according to the person who is talking to,**
"Hey, love", "idiot", "useless", "my boy".

Before the didactic intervention:

- × difficulty in developing complex reasoning,
- × lack of knowledge of how to argue in a valid and justified manner,
- × thoughtless, impulsive and personal responses,
- × opinions and perspectives heavily shaped by family influences and social context,
- × difficulties in communicating in English,
- × poor understanding of the need to adapt their language to the context of communication.



After the didactic intervention:

Statistical and content analysis (CT):

- ✓ Ease in identifying an argument,
- ✓ Less difficulty in presenting valid reasons to support an argument,
- ✓ Improved ability to analyse the causes and effects of a given problem,
- ✓ Greater ease in selecting and analysing different points of view in search of a solution.

Statistical and content analysis (CC):

- ✓ Better understanding of the register to be used according to the context,
- ✓ Improvement in the persuasive presentation of points of view,
- × Little autonomy in terms of fluency and spontaneous conversation.



Final remarks– positive aspects

- ✓ Positive impact of the student-centred lesson format and the development of tasks inspired by real life.
- ✓ Young people developed the skills under study and others (e.g. collaborative skills, creative thinking, learning to learn skills and social responsibility).
- ✓ Confirmation of the foreign language classroom as an ideal space for developing life skills,
- ✓ Development of more aware and proactive young people,
- ✓ Previous relationship between the teacher-researcher and students as a differentiating factor for the success of the project,
- ✓ Improvement of the teacher's practices and knowledge production.

Final remarks – limitations

- × Creation of adapted tasks,
- × Meeting deadlines,
- × Disagreements between students,
- × Uneven levels of proficiency and motivation,
- × Absence among students.

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Thank you!