

Intercultural and citizenship objectives through picturebooks in early language learning

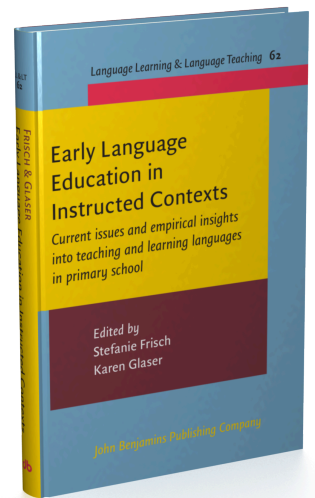
Teacher-made resources for Taking Action projects

 **Nayr C. Ibrahim** | Nord University

 **Sandie Mourão** | NOVA University Lisbon

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Intercultural and citizenship objectives through picturebooks in early language learning

Teacher-made resources for Taking Action projects

Nayr C. Ibrahim & Sandie Mourão
Nord University | NOVA University Lisbon

This chapter describes a continuing professional development course (the ICEPro Course) which aimed to empower teachers and learners to become democratic citizens and proffers a case for intercultural citizenship education through picturebooks. The main pedagogical frameworks and models developed for the ICEPro Course – the Picturebook Selection Guide and a template for the teacher made resources (ICEKits) – are presented to establish whether they support practitioners in developing intercultural and citizenship objectives. Using data from the ICEKits, participant evaluation surveys, recordings of teacher presentations and teacher reflections suggest that the pedagogical frameworks, models and modelling are successful. However, implications for teacher education stress the need to provide additional support in the form of mentoring within a sustained professional development experience.

1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on a set of teacher-made resources for developing intercultural citizenship through picturebooks, which were prepared and piloted during an Erasmus+¹ project “Intercultural Citizenship Education through Picturebooks in early English Language Learning” (ICEPELL).² The ICEPELL project involved

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1. Erasmus+ is an EU funding programme that aims to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe [<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>]
 2. Information about the ICEPELL project can be found on the project website: <https://icepell.eu/>

a consortium of six partners, all engaged in language teacher education or professional development, from five European countries: Germany, Italy, Norway, Portugal and the Netherlands. Together, the partners planned and ran a 25-hour professional development course (the ICEPro Course), the objectives of which were to equip practitioners – English language teachers, teacher librarians and student teachers – with the competences to adopt a comprehensive approach to English language teaching and learning with picturebooks to develop intercultural citizens through an ELL curriculum. By bringing practitioners together from the five countries, the intention was also to develop an international community of practice – an enriching cross-cultural and personal educational experience for those practitioners who agreed to be part of the ICEPELL project’s activities.

The ICEPro Course combined theory with practice-related tasks and was designed around the seven features of effective continued professional development (CPD) outlined by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017). The ICEPro course was (1) content focussed, engaging participants with the theoretical concepts of intercultural, citizenship education, picturebook mediation and approaches to self-assessment. It (2) incorporated models of effective practice, providing participants with pedagogical frameworks and modelled approaches and involved active learning encompassing artifacts, interactive activities, and reflection to connect new learning with participants’ individual teaching contexts. It (3) supported collaboration between the participants from different country contexts as they came together to interact, think, and share human resources to succeed in a common goal and it (4) offered opportunities for reflection through key reflect and review activities at regular intervals. Finally, it (5) provided mentoring and expert support over (6) its sustained duration which incorporated the traditional 25-hour training course, (7) followed by classroom-based implementation over a period of three to four months.

One of the tasks in the ICEPro Course was “to design principled teaching and learning sequences for intercultural citizenship education through picturebooks” (Valente & Mourão, 2022, p.2). These learning sequences were transformed into concrete teaching materials, called ICEKits, which served as models for scaffolding the materials creation process and outcome. A draft of the ICEKit was co-created during the 25-hour training course, and then trialled and revised during classroom implementation. A total of 15 ICEKits were co-created by practitioners during the ICEPELL Project, and they are all available as Open Access teacher resources on the project website.

This chapter takes a critical look at the pedagogical frameworks and models developed for and used during the ICEPro Course: the Picturebook Selection Guide (PSG), for selecting appropriate picturebooks for intercultural citizenship education and three of the teacher-made ICEKits – resulting directly from an

ICEKit template and model – with a view to identifying how successfully, as resources, they supported the teachers in reaching the ICEPELL Project’s aims – to plan, implement and evaluate intercultural citizenship-related activities developed around picturebooks.

2. Theoretical background

In this section we start by explaining the concept of intercultural citizenship education. Then we define the picturebook and discuss its potential as a vehicle for intercultural and citizenship education in ELL.

2.1 Intercultural citizenship education

Intercultural citizenship education (ICE)³ “fuses foreign language learning and civic action in local and/or international communities based on citizenship education principles” (Mourão et al., 2022, p. 26). This develops from Byram’s seminal model of “intercultural (communicative) competence” (2021, p. 44) that has been influential in language education and comprises five interrelated dimensions:

1. Attitudes: relativising self; valuing other
2. Knowledge: of self and other; of interaction, individual and societal
3. Skills: interpret and relate
4. Skills: discover and interact
5. Education: political education, critical cultural awareness.

Byram states that “intercultural competence is certainly not attainable in all its dimensions at the end of primary schooling, but the foundation for this important competence can be laid” (2008, p. 83). Little empirical evidence of a foundational development of all five dimensions in ELL contexts has been published. The first four dimensions have been identified in a long-term study in New Zealand with teachers of other languages (e.g., Māori or Japanese) and their 11 to 13-year-old learners. The research team suggested that children were still “developing the reflective skills that are necessary to gain a deeper awareness of their own cultures, as a precursor to considering and developing an understanding of cultural others” (Howard et al., 2019, p. 11). Brunsmeier (2021) has advanced a set of “empirically validated task features” (p. 116) for the first four dimensions, attitudes, knowledge and the two sets of skills, which provide a useful support for EFL practitioners.

3. Michael Byram uses the acronym ‘ICit’ rather than ‘ICE’.

The concept of ‘intercultural citizenship education’ (Byram, 2008) supports the development of the fifth dimension, critical intercultural awareness, by suggesting that teachers should encourage their learners to reflect critically on what is happening around them and engage in socially conscious, action-taking activities. This can be successful if the teaching approach is ‘action oriented’, i.e., teachers and their learners take action and move beyond their classroom walls to engage with their communities, and ‘political’, i.e., teachers and their learners are motivated to become “proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world” (UNESCO, 2014, p.15).

However, to become intercultural citizens, teachers and their learners need to engage in cross-border communication, as “transnational communities” (Byram et al., 2017, p.xxii) acting together as pro-active contributors to a better world. A unique ‘intercultural environment citizenship’ project called ‘Green Kidz’ (Porto et al., 2016) involved Argentinian and Danish children (10 to 13 years old) in a virtual exchange project, incorporating local action-taking in both countries. Results suggest that these children developed Byram’s fifth dimension of critical cultural awareness by acting upon a social issue (recycling trash) as a transnational group, thus recognising “the problem as a universal concern, acting upon it together” (Porto et al., 2016, p.155).

In ICE, the content for purposeful language learning focuses on citizenship matters and combines foreign language learning and civic action in local and/or international communities based on citizenship education principles (Byram et al., 2017). To develop ICE in their classes, teachers should plan for three sets of learning objectives, these being language, intercultural and citizenship objectives (Byram et al., 2017). Language is valued as a tool to support meaningful interaction with others, with the goal of becoming democratic citizens together.

2.2 Picturebooks for intercultural and citizenship and language education

Picturebooks are a form of multimodal children’s literature where pictures, words, and design are all used to convey meaning. As a multimodal object, where the visual mode is no longer secondary to the verbal one, meaning emerges from the interplay between the two modes. When picturebooks are brought into the English language classroom, the objective is not to teach children to read but rather to furnish a context that is familiar to the child as well as provide a “springboard for a wide variety of related language and learning activities” (Ellis & Brewster, 2014, p.6). The picturebook thus becomes a rich, authentic resource where teachers and learners make the most of the language, concepts and themes found within.

Picturebooks have been taken seriously in ELL for the last four decades. Together with age-appropriate English language pedagogy they assure a quality,

flexible and motivating approach to language teaching and learning that brings multimodal representation into the classroom. Additionally, as picturebooks are multi-layered, aesthetic objects they are interpreted on many levels satisfying children of different ages, at different points in their English language learning journeys (Ellis & Mourão, 2021).

The concept of interculturality is defined by UNESCO as “the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect” (2006, p. 17). Literature facilitates reading across boundaries, as per the oft cited and resonating metaphor of books acting as “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors” (Sims Bishop, 1990, p. ix). Picturebooks become an intercultural catalyst and are acknowledged for their potential to promote intercultural learning in general education (cf. Botelho & Rudman, 2009) and in language education where “literary texts form a gateway to new perspectives and intercultural awareness through the many literatures in English from the nations around the world” (Bland, 2018, p. 8). In discussing picturebooks by First Nation/Native American authors and illustrators, Alter (2013) encourages practitioners to avoid generalisations about other cultures and select picturebooks that allow children “to engage in balanced intercultural encounters” (p. 156) to ensure a solid foundation to their developing intercultural competence.

Global citizenship overlaps with the concept of interculturality through its focus on universal values and respect for difference but goes further in its commitment to social justice with an emphasis on civic responsibility (Lourenço, 2021; UNESCO, 2014). Children’s literature can foster civic responsibility, especially in a world where increasingly, local and global issues associated with climate change, sustainability and insurmountable human rights and refugee crises, often culminate in an increase in racism, marginalisation and fear (Leland et al., 2013). A picturebook can become the authentic stimulus for action and, through careful teacher mediation, prompt children to reflect on their local and global environments. Together with extension activities (i.e., after-reading and taking-action project work), picturebooks can afford real opportunities for children to be proactive contributors to a better world.

2.3 Pedagogical frameworks, models and modelling in development

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) envision pedagogical frameworks, models and modelling approaches and practices as anchors for future learning, for imitation and active reflection. Models for effective practice provide a template for curriculum development, materials creation and collaborative active learning, together with expert support in the context of professional development and through systematic reflection, experimentation and further reflection on learning.

Modelling is an explicit practice that, according to Loughran and Berry (2005), works on two levels as educators and students interact with learning and teaching: “it is about us ‘doing’ in our practice that which we expect our students to do in their teaching” and about “pedagogical reasoning, feelings, thoughts and actions that accompany our practice across a range of teaching and learning experiences” (p.194). The use of models and the integration of explicit modelling processes can provide a springboard for an embodied, meta-learning experience in teacher professional development.

Various pedagogical frameworks and models were developed specifically for the ICEPELL project and integrated into the ICEPro Course, together with the modelling of processes. These models supported teachers’ active engagement with picturebooks as potential pedagogical resources. For example, the Picturebook Selection Guide (PSG) supported teachers in selecting picturebooks for ICE; the ICEKit template and model provided a framework for the teacher-created resources; and a bank of reflect and review models underpinned teachers’ understanding of and confidence in the reflection process. Modelling procedures, such as giving picturebook read-alouds, or setting up and experiencing a systematic approach to reflection and reviewing learning (cf. Ellis & Ibrahim, 2016), were inherent to the shaping of the final ICEKit. The pedagogical frameworks and models that are relevant to this chapter, the PSG and the ICEKits, are discussed in more detail below.

2.3.1 *The picturebook selection guide (PSG)*

Underpinned by empirical work in picturebooks and intercultural and citizenship education, the PSG was developed “as a tool that provides teachers with a set of criteria for identifying the characteristics of picturebooks as related to dimensions of Intercultural Citizenship in early English language learning” (Ibrahim et al., 2022, p. 41). The PSG, which is freely accessible in ICEPELL Consortium (2022), consists of an introduction, followed by four parts: Part 1 elicits information about the picturebook, reminding teachers to look for evidence of awards or recommendations.

Part 2 focuses on the picturebook’s possible ICE content and is organised into four main ICE-related focal fields (pp. 43f), each with a focus on an action-taking and social responsibility dimension. The four focal fields contain sets of question prompts for the practitioner to consider whether a picturebook is explicit in answering positively or might need their mediation, if relevant at all. This way the PSG identifies explicit intercultural and/or citizenship themes but also serves as a springboard for teacher mediation of these potential themes, ideally with the objective of planning a Taking Action project in the community. Each focal field focusses on a slightly different aspect of ICE. Focal field 1, ‘Socially respon-

sible behaviour – interaction with others’, has an interpersonal dimension with a focus on respecting differences, empathising with and interacting with others respectfully and equally. The ‘social responsibility dimension’ encourages actions for peace, countering racism and discrimination, and improving individual lives. Focal field 2, ‘Socially responsible behaviour – interaction with local and global issues’, focuses on worldwide problems, such as, climate change, conflict, social inequalities, with resonance at a local and global level. The ‘social responsibility dimension’ encourages looking for age-appropriate solutions to the issues highlighted in the selected picturebooks. Focal field 3, ‘Sense of belonging and knowing about or respecting own, other and/or heritage cultures’, engages children with the areas of identity and belonging, representation and social injustice. The ‘social responsibility dimension’ encourages addressing, intentionally or unintentionally, stereotypes in the highly diverse contexts that children experience today. Finally, focal field 4, ‘General’, covered issues relevant to ICE with a strong focus on perspective shifting and action taking.

Part 3 targets the picturebook as an artefact and linguistic resource. Teachers are encouraged to consider the visual and linguistic affordances of the picturebook to support language development as well as that of ICE. Finally, Part 4, encourages teachers to justify some of their ideas and decisions about the picturebook. All parts of the PSG contribute to the creation of the ICEKit, where teachers must identify learning outcomes regarding language, intercultural learning and citizenship education and plan for a Taking Action project in the community.

Even though ICE aims for a holistic blend of the intercultural and citizenship dimensions, the completion of the PSG for the selected ICEPELL picturebooks, highlighted an imbalance in the presence of these dimensions. The PSG is therefore a flexible tool that helped the teacher identify whether there was a blend of these dimensions or whether one prevailed over the other. If the PSG helps in addressing gaps and ambiguities in uncovering or rendering visible the intercultural citizenship themes, which is clear in the ‘Explicit’ and ‘With Mediation’ columns, the role of the teacher is fundamental in mediating these potential themes in, and beyond the classroom. Ultimately, the PSG allows picturebooks to sit along a continuum, to explicitly address intercultural or citizenship issues, highlight more of one than the other or reflect a blend of these concepts (see Figure 1).

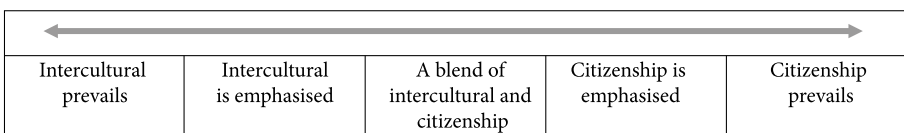


Figure 1. The intercultural and citizenship continuum

2.3.2 *The ICEKit template*

As described above, one of the objectives of the ICEPro Course was for practitioners co-create a teaching resource called an ICEKit in their Erasmus groups, with the support of their mentors, in an iterative process of creation, trialling in the classroom and reflection. To support the co-creation process, two model ICEKits were developed by the ICEPELL consortium following good practice in picturebook mediation, development of activity cycles and staging of learning, as well as integrating formative assessment and culminating in an ICE project. These were designed professionally, so that the practitioners could see what the final resources would look like (see ICEKit#1 *Perfectly Norman*⁴ and ICEKit#2 *Whoever you are*⁵). The practitioners were also given an ICEKit template, which together with the models became “a flexible blueprint for helping ELL teachers to create their own ICE-themed materials based on picturebooks” (Valente, 2022, p. 53; cf. also Valente & Mourão, 2022).

Each ICEKit contains three parts: Part 1 summarises the content and the learning outcomes; Part 2 includes a five-stage story sharing sequence, culminating in a comprehensive reflect and review activity. The ICEKit culminates in Part 3 with a suggestion for a project-like Taking Action Cycle, ideally to be undertaken as a virtual exchange project using the European eTwinning Platform. The practitioners were thus given a clear framework (see Figure 2) to follow when planning their ICEKits, as well as opportunities to interact with and examine ICEKit models prepared by the consortium partners as further support.

As models of effective classroom practice for supporting teachers with developing ICE themes through picturebooks, the PSG and the ICEKits were developed to be interconnected: the PSG questions provided a model of possible learning outcomes for the ICEKits, and the outcomes in the ICEKits reflect, and extend the teachers’ answers to the PSG’s question prompts.

3. Research aims and methodology

The research question we are attempting to answer in this chapter is “How do the pedagogical frameworks and models in the ICEPro Course support practitioners in developing intercultural and citizenship objectives through picturebooks?” In this section, we begin with an account of the research context and participants, then describe the pedagogical templates and models we used in the ICEPro Course. We complete this section with an outline of our methodology.

4. https://icepell.eu/Kits/ICEKito1_Perfectly_Norman.pdf

5. https://icepell.eu/Kits/ICEKito2_Whoever_you_are.pdf

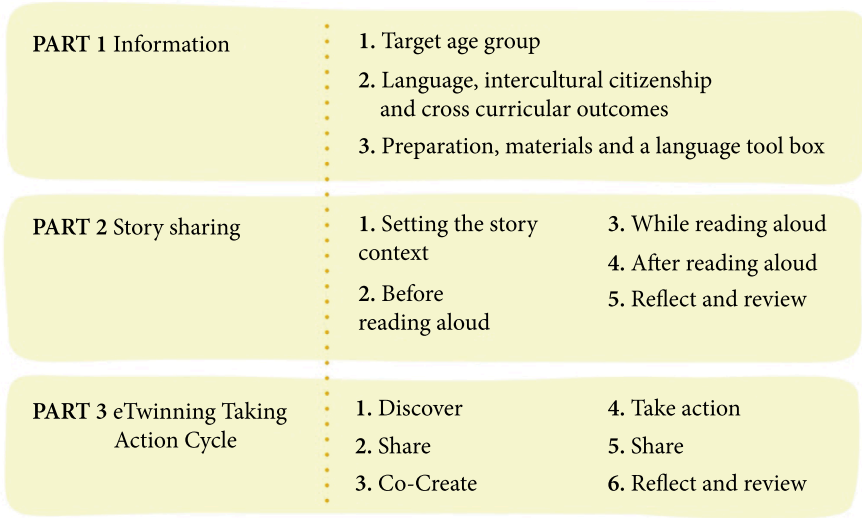


Figure 2. The ICEKit structure and components (Valente, 2022, p. 53)

3.1 The context and participants

The context of the research presented here is the second iteration of the aforementioned ICEPro Course⁶ which took place over 5 days in November 2021 and was organised as a hybrid event due to restrictions imposed to travel during the COVID19 Pandemic. As such, each ICEPELL Project partner ran the ICEPro Course in their local institutions with their country participants and then met together as a group (all participants and trainers) virtually, using Zoom, at key moments during the week. During the group work activities, which included the co-creation of the ICEKits, participants worked in virtual Erasmus Groups, made up of one participant from each country and a mentor. These meetings began during the hybrid training and continued through the implementation phase.

The practitioners attending the Hybrid ICEPro Course were in-service English teachers from Italy ($n=9$), Norway ($n=4$) and Portugal ($n=9$), and pre-service teachers from Germany ($n=9$) and the Netherlands ($n=8$), together with teacher educators ($n=9$) from these five countries. Most of the pre-service teachers stopped participating after the hybrid training as they needed to follow university schedules and were not undertaking practicum-based activities to coincide with the implementation phase. As a result, the ICEKits were piloted in Italy, Norway, and Portugal by the in-service teachers, although one German pre-

6. The first iteration was a completely virtual pilot due to the restrictions of the COVID19 Pandemic.

service teacher did continue with her Erasmus Group's⁷ meetings and even virtually attended some of the intervention lessons. The practitioners involved in the ICEKits we discuss later are described in Table 1.

Table 1. Practitioners involved in co-creating the ICEKits discussed in this chapter

Erasmus group n°	In-service teachers	Pre-service teachers	ICEKit name
Erasmus Group 11	Italy (TI ₁₁) Portugal (TP ₁₁)	Germany (STG ₁₁)	ICEKit#11 Clean up!
Erasmus Group 13	Italy (TI ₁₃) Norway (TN ₁₃) Portugal (TP ₁₃)	Germany (STG ₁₃) Norway (STN ₁₃)	ICEKit#13 Same, same but different
Erasmus Group 15	Italy (TI ₁₅) Portugal (TP ₁₅)	Germany (STG ₁₅)*	ICEKit#15 Unplugged

* This pre-service teacher accompanied her Erasmus Group during the implementation phase.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

The data was analysed with a view to finding evidence of new learning, i.e., the practitioners' ability to successfully plan for ICE through picturebooks, culminating in a Taking Action project and putting it into practice during the intervention stage of the ICEPro Course. Data came from four sources:

1. ICEPro Course surveys, completed by the Hybrid ICEPro Course participants. The surveys included Likert scale responses related to participants' confidence in intercultural education, citizenship education and using picturebooks, as well as open questions on the impact of the ICEPro Course or the implementation phase on future practices. These responses were analysed using content analysis, focussing on instances of new learning (Schreier, 2012).
2. Three of the nine ICEKits co-created during the Hybrid ICEPro Course which included a picturebook at either end of the intercultural and citizenship continuum and one in the middle. With the intention of verifying the application of new learning (Bowen, 2009), the three ICEKits underwent document analysis.
3. Transcripts from the three 20-minute dissemination presentations given at the Hybrid ICEPELL Conference by the Italian and Portuguese in-service teachers, together with the three Portuguese in-service teachers' final reflections at the end of the ICEPELL project. These documents were read with a

7. An 'Erasmus Group' was made up of one participant from each partner country.

view to identifying evidence of new learning and its successful application in practice.

4. Results and discussion

We start this section with the survey results, then provide a short introduction to each of three selected picturebooks and their position on the intercultural and citizenship continuum. We highlight how the practitioners formulated their learning outcomes with the support of the PSG. Then we provide an overview of the activities in the ICEKit which contribute to the setting up the Taking Action project and finally we give a description of the implementation phase which highlights what actually happened through the practitioners' voices.

4.1 Participants' increased confidence

All participants completed a survey before the 25-hour Hybrid ICEPro Course and another after. Data from these two surveys (see Table 2) clearly shows an increase in confidence in the three content areas that are the focus of this chapter, intercultural education, citizenship education and using picturebooks. Focusing on "Confident" and "Extremely Confident" in the four-level Likert Scale, the participants' confidence more than doubled for intercultural and citizenship education and increased by around 18% regarding using picturebooks.

Table 2. Responses to the pre- and post- ICEPro Course surveys

Hybrid ICEPro Course Survey items	All participants (<i>n</i> = 37)	
	Confident + Extremely confident	
	Pre-survey	Post-survey
Intercultural education	40.5%	91.9%
Citizenship education	43.2%	94.6%
Using picturebooks	59.4%	77.2%

Analysing the participants' responses to open questions about the impact of the course on their future practices, six themes emerged. These were: picturebooks (*n* = 32); Taking Action (*n* = 7); ICE (*n* = 5); new approaches (*n* = 7); collaboration (*n* = 5) and intercultural education (*n* = 3). The participants clearly favoured the learning they had undertaken regarding picturebooks, with the most categorised responses. These comments were associated with selecting picture-

books ($n=12$), such as: “The way I look at a picturebook or how I choose a picturebook has changed. There’s so much more to it than just what is visible (ice-berg)” and using picturebooks ($n=8$), for example, “I feel more confident about really exploring a picturebook with my students, rather than just having a read-aloud.” These comments suggest the PSG and the ICEKit template were relevant to their learning.

After the practitioners had taken their draft ICEKits into the classroom and tried them out, they completed a third survey, a post-implementation survey. This was done by 12 teachers – Portuguese ($n=6$) and Italian ($n=6$). Comparing their post-ICEPro Course responses to the post-intervention responses regarding “extremely confident” (see Table 3), the practical application of the ICEKit had a huge impact on their confidence, with over 80% of these teachers indicating they were now extremely confident about intercultural and citizenship education and over 90% about using picturebooks in class.

Table 3. Responses to the post-ICEPro course survey and the post-intervention survey

Italian and Portuguese participants ($n=12$)		
Hybrid ICEPro Course Survey items	Extremely confident	
	Post-survey	Post-intervention
Intercultural education	36.7%	83.3%
Citizenship education	32.2%	83.3%
Using picturebooks	41.7%	91.6%

The participants’ answers to the open question about the impact of the intervention on their future practices, were categorised into two clear themes, ICE ($n=8$) and picturebooks ($n=5$). In the eight responses associated with the theme ICE, five make reference to Taking Action, for example, “Increased awareness of the importance of going over the walls of school to make learning effective, tangible and long lasting”. It is relevant that ICE becomes more salient in the teachers’ responses at this point, and we would like to suggest that practical application of the pedagogical frameworks and models supported the co-creation of the ICEKits and their perceived success in practice. The next section focuses on the three selected ICEKits for discussion.

4.2 Picture book 1: *Clean Up!*

4.2.1 *The picturebook*

Clean Up! (Bryon & Adeola, 2020) is the story of Rocket, who visits her grandparents on a Caribbean Island and discovers that the sea life is threatened by

plastic pollution. Rocket decides something must be done, so together with her friends she cleans up the beach. As a book about community building and collective responsibility, there is no doubt that *Clean Up!* sits at the citizenship end of the intercultural and citizenship continuum proposed by the PSG.

4.2.2 PSG focal fields, and the intercultural and citizenship objectives

The practitioners involved in “ICEKit#11 Clean up!”⁸ taught children between 8 and 10 years old. They associated the picturebook with focal fields 1, 2 and 4 and the intercultural and citizenship outcomes they identified in the PSG were transposed into their ICEKit (see Table 4).

Table 4. Intercultural and citizenship outcomes identified in “ICEKit#11 Clean up!” based on the PSG focal fields

Intercultural outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Relate to and empathise with others. (FF1.1) – Provide examples of and engage in solidarity supporting others. (FF1.7)
Citizenship outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Advocate for political or social issues that can help others, e.g., recycling. (FF1.10) – Become aware of environmental issues and/or nature conservation. (FF2.2) – Explore possible solutions to the problems. (FF2.7) – Ignite interest and curiosity in local and global issues. – Connect a global issue to a local issue. (FF2.8) – Raise awareness of the importance of keeping the planet clean. (FF2.2) – Reflect on different types of pollution and their consequences. (FF2.2) – Take action action at a local level (FF4.10)

In the table, the objectives are heavily weighted in favour of citizenship, for the picturebook is explicit in its intentions and has an innate didactic purpose. Activities outlined in the ICEKit are very much geared towards preparing the children for their Taking Action activity. These include, counting the bins around the school and questioning whether there are enough, making a poster to explain the different kinds of pollution that exist and watching a video on the topic of “Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle”. The Taking Action project activity brings Rocket’s clean-up crew idea to the fore, and children decide what needs to be ‘cleaned up’ in their localities. They plan and ensure the plan is accomplished.

8. https://icepell.eu/Kits/ICEKit11_Clean_up.pdf

4.2.3 *The implementation phase*

One of the reasons the book was chosen by this group of practitioners was its overt focus on pollution. The Portuguese teacher worked in an *ecoescola* [ecoschool], an initiative coordinated through the Portuguese Ministry of Education in collaboration with the international “EcoSchool” network [<https://www.ecoschools.global/>]. This meant that in Portugal, children already knew about recycling, but through the project they expanded their knowledge and understanding in English.

During the conference presentation, the Portuguese teacher highlighted how motivated her children were to meet their Italian partners, so much so that when the meeting took place, they were keen to talk in English and share their ideas. This suggests that the children were actively developing the attitude and knowledge dimensions of Byram’s ICC model. This activity had a lasting impact on many children, and one rather “shy boy” opened up after the virtual exchange, and “really began to change himself (sic)” (Silva, 2022), speaking English more often in class.

The Taking Action activity involved children cleaning a local park in Italy and helping a road sweeper clean the streets in Portugal. This seemingly simple activity also had a lifechanging impact on the Portuguese children, who did not realise that there was such a job, or that the man they had seen so often was a street cleaner. With the class teacher, they prepared a set of interview questions in Portuguese and then interviewed the man. From then onwards, they referred to him as “Sr José”, showing their newfound respect. The cleanup activity involved helping Sr José, which contributed to the children’s realisation that their town was clean because someone cleaned it for them. This suggests that children were able to take a critical look at their environment, demonstrating signs of Byram’s fifth dimension, critical cultural awareness. They also showed an increased awareness in using the correct rubbish bins (e.g., blue for paper and yellow for plastic and tin), so that they would make Sr José’s job easier.

Another important outcome involved the inclusion of multiple actors across the school as well as the children’s families. In her final project reflection, the Portuguese teacher wrote:

So, the main takeaway is the chemical formula to connect creativity, affectivity, and cognition. The power of a story involved a great number of students, teachers, parents, and the community in general, so I feel that my mission has been accomplished and that I must go on trying to move groups to change the world just like Rocket did and my “Cleanup Crews” did it, too. I want and I need to try to keep making the difference. I always want to be an inspiring teacher!

(TP11, final written report)

This suggests that this teacher has reassessed her role as an English teacher and feels empowered to make a difference through English.

4.3 Picture book 2: *Unplugged*

4.3.1 *The picturebook*

Unplugged (Antony, 2018) is a story about a robot called Blip – “Blip spends all day plugged into her computer, playing games and having fun. But when there is a power cut, Blip discovers the joy of Being UNPLUGGED” (back cover blurb). Greyscale, angular, pixelated shapes represent Blip’s plugged-in, online, artificial world, but when she becomes unplugged and tumbles through her door into the outside world, it is a real spring day, illustrated in soft, pastel colours and rich in detail. Blip’s colourful outside world mirrors her black and white indoor one. This mirroring technique provides multiple opportunities for readers to notice and compare the two worlds and decide for themselves which they prefer.

4.3.2 *PSG focal fields, and the intercultural and citizenship objectives*

The practitioners involved in “ICEKit#15 Unplugged”⁹ taught children between 8 and 11 years old. *Unplugged* is an example of a picturebook that sits in the middle of the intercultural and citizenship continuum, and the practitioners decided it belonged to focal fields 1, 3 and 4. Table 5 shows the intercultural and citizenship outcomes they identified in the PSG and transposed into their ICEKit.

Table 5. Intercultural and citizenship outcomes identified in “ICEKit#15 Unplugged” based on the PSG focal fields

Intercultural outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Relate to others. (FF1.1) – Become aware of and question certain values. (FF1.8) – Find reflections of themselves and their ways of living. (3.1) – Recognise how interdependent and interconnected we all are. (FF4.4) – Discover, try out and reflect on traditional games from different countries. (FF3.4) – Interact in a more peaceful way with others. (FF2.4) – Engage in intercultural dialogue with others across borders. (FF4.6)
Citizenship outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Media choices and personal wellbeing. (FF3.1)

9. https://icepell.eu/Kits/ICEKit15_Unplugged.pdf

From the table, it might appear that the intercultural outcomes far outweigh those of citizenship, but the activities in the ICEKit involved very creative ways of pursuing media choices and personal wellbeing, with a variety of after read-aloud activities contributing to this outcome. These included categorising favourite free time plugged/unplugged and inside/outside activities; measuring, presenting and comparing time spent ‘Plugged in’ on different devices, and making and presenting a photo collage of the outdoor places that exist in and around their localities. These fed into the final Taking Action activity which comprised a project around traditional games, beginning with interviewing older family members about the games they used to play, learning how to play them, documenting the information, and creating either a traditional games book or tear off posters to be shared with the community. To conclude this project, the ICEKit proposes a traditional games celebration involving family members and the whole school “to participate, remember, demonstrate, and learn/share these traditional games” (ICEKit#15 Unplugged, p.12).

4.3.3 *The implementation phase*

In their presentation at the ICEPELL Hybrid Conference, the practitioners emphasised that their ICEKit was about “finding a balance between online and offline activities” (Nicolai & Dencola, 2022) and they were very positive about the results of their collaboration. The virtual exchange aspect of the project was said to be highly motivating for the children in Italy and Portugal with visible occasions of intercultural learning. For example, the excitement when the children in Italy realised that children in Portugal also learned English in school and they could speak to each other and develop a project together. In the final reflection activity, an Italian student wrote: “I felt interested and important”, referring to her participation in this international activity. These are examples of the attitude, knowledge and skills of discovery and interaction dimensions of Byram’s ICC model.

Reflection was a thread that ran through the project and on multiple levels. During the presentation the student teacher announced, “It involved the children reflecting on the time they spend online and thinking about how to manage that time” (Nicolai & Denicola, 2022) suggesting that she is confident the ICEKit’s main objective was reached. The Italian teacher foregrounded “improving my communication skills with the community [in relation to] what we do in the classroom”, an important aspect of successful action-taking for democratic citizenship.

The student teacher also emphasised her own learning through reflection, “As teachers, reflecting on our materials and bringing the Kit into action, reflecting on how it plays out with the children, as they created new play environments for

themselves” (Nicolai & Denicola, 2022). Changes in her students was something the Portuguese teacher also identified:

[The teacher assistants] considered that this type of activities (sic) had a positive impact on the children’s behaviour. They recognised that such variety of games, made out of simple objects and simple rules made the children interact in a more peaceful way with their peers. (...) My ability to act as an agent of change in my classrooms, in my educational environment, has been refreshed and reinforced.
(TP15, final written report)

This suggests that the ICEKit activities brought about change which went beyond the classroom walls.

4.4 Picture book 3: *Same, same but different*

4.4.1 *The picturebook*

Same, Same but Different (Kostecki-Shaw, 2011) follows the lives of two boys, Elliot and Kailash, who live in the United States and India, respectively and build a friendship based on similarities. The boys are depicted engaging in activities that are common in a child’s world with each opening highlighting the universal aspects of childhood. The term “same, same but different” becomes a recurring theme or mantra as the boys discover their fundamental shared experiences and emotions across different geographical contexts, with the emphasis on ‘similarities’ given prominence by the repetition of ‘same’. However, this positive and celebratory tone veils deep-rooted cultural stereotypes in the illustrations that need addressing to question and challenge power relationships and promote reflection, transformative change and action (Botelho & Rudman, 2009).

4.4.2 *PSG focal fields, and the intercultural and citizenship objectives*

The practitioners involved in “ICEKit #13 Same, same but different”¹⁰ taught children from 8 to 10 years old. They identified this picturebook as appropriate for exploring focal fields 1, 3 and 4 and described it as not only giving “children the chance to relate to and empathise with others, but it also helps them to reflect on themselves and their ways of living” (ICEKit#13, p. 5). Table 6 shows the intercultural and citizenship outcomes which they identified in the PSG and transposed into their ICEKit.

The activities position this ICEKit firmly at the intercultural end of the continuum, emphasising communication across cultures. For example, a stamp activ-

10. https://icepell.eu/Kits/ICEKit13_Same_same_but_different.pdf

Table 6. Intercultural and citizenship outcomes identified in “ICEKit#13 Same, same but different” based on the PSG focal fields

Intercultural outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Relate to and empathise with others. (FF1.1) – Identify differences and similarities between themselves and their peers. (FF3.8) – Reflect about the importance of knowing one’s world. (FF3.1) – Explore ways to communicate with people from around the world. (FF4.5) – Be aware of stereotypes and find ways to overcome / challenge them. (FF3.1)
Citizenship outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consider how to include everyone in the community. (FF3.5)

ity, based on the drawings of used stamps with cultural references in the end papers, resulted in a cross-border activity, which included “designing their own stamps, a symbol of communication across borders, writing an email to a group of children elsewhere, and finding out and sharing information about their place of birth and languages spoken by family members at home” (ICEKit#13, p.1). The three classes’ visual representations of their context reveal a context-specific perspective of their worlds, as reported by the Portuguese teacher,

In Italy, we have stamps that combine the cultural aspects of the country and their won tastes. If you look at Norway, you’ll see things that identify the features of the country, the eagle, the northern lights or the fjord and all that. If you look at the Portuguese stamps, and apart from the first one which has fado, a court and the Portuguese flag, you will see that all the others are related to their own personal worlds, friends, family, their own town and even their own bedroom. So, the way we looked at the concept of world is different. Routines, traditions, all these can vary, even within a certain space. (Santos, 2022)

The ICEKit addresses stereotypes in several of its sections, i.e., the Intercultural Outcomes, “be aware of stereotypes and find ways to overcome or challenge them” and later in the ‘Beyond words’ section, “to develop a critical stance towards comparisons between an urban life and a rural one, and the diverse realities of individuals in all countries” and “to question these representations, leading to a more informed understanding of nuances, individual differences and intercultural exploration of stereotypes” (ICEKit#13, p. 6). This critical stance was added to the reflect and review activity, in the form of Yes/No questions, for example, “Do all American children have a tree house? Do all Indian families live in rural areas?” (p.10), which aimed at encouraging children to read against the text and reflect critically on generalisations.

The Taking Action project revolved around creating and sharing a multilingual map, to encourage identifying and making visible children's languages in the school context.

4.4.3 *The implementation phase*

The intercultural focus of ICEKit#13 was reinforced in the conference presentation, where the desire to “celebrate diversity by creating a common world” (Santos, 2022) was emphasised. However, it is significant that the focus on stereotypes was only acknowledged in the initial discussions around the ICEKit creation with support from the mentor: “As [the mentor] said, we had to mediate other aspects, namely, the aspects of tackling stereotypes” (Santos, 2022).

The Portuguese teacher's reflections indicate a positive experience with challenging stereotypes:

We also created a table to compare and contrast lives in the three partner countries, because the students were so eager to learn about other countries and lifestyles ... We were able to address stereotypes in such a natural way that I believe they understood so well what I tried to do that now they are the ones telling everyone, “We can't make generalisations”. (TP13, final written report)

There is evidence here of Byram's dimensions of attitude, knowledge and skills of interpreting and relating. Additionally, through the virtual exchange opportunities, children in all countries were observed developing their skills of discovery and interaction. The citizenship focus required a more concerted effort of mediation on the part of the individual teachers. Both the Portuguese and the Italian teachers articulated their work with other school projects, like the ‘Gandhi’ initiative, a citizenship project in Portugal and the ‘Odd Sock Day’, an antibullying project in Italy. However, clear evidence of a critical cultural awareness, because of the ICEKit intervention, was not visible in these teachers' testimonies.

The three ICEKits selected for analysis sat across the intercultural and citizenship continuum, and all provided clear support for the two objectives ‘on paper’. Nevertheless, “ICEKit#11 Clean up!” and “ICEKit#15 Unplugged” were clearly more successful in ensuring both objectives were reached in practice. The picturebook positioned at the intercultural end of the continuum, “ICEKit #13 Same, same but different”, was an excellent catalyst for the development of Byram's first four dimensions of ICC, but less so in supporting the development of a critical cultural awareness and intercultural citizens, especially as the teachers did not reach “Part 3: Taking Action” of the ICEKit. This suggests that despite participants' self-perceived increase in confidence, evident in the surveys and engagement with the models provided, teachers may still struggle to put new learning into practice.

5. Implications for teacher education

Our research question focussed on, “How do the pedagogical frameworks and models in the ICEPro Course support practitioners in developing the intercultural and citizenship objectives through picturebooks?” The analysis of the data above highlights two key findings that underscore the contribution of such CPD projects to teacher education: (1) the scaffolding of learning through specific models and frameworks, and (2) the sustained nature of the professional development experience.

5.1 Scaffolding through models and frameworks

The final ICEKits, created during the ICEPro Course with scaffolding from the PSG and mentors, are the result of the choices the practitioners made to actively develop ICE in their classrooms around the picturebook they selected. The result is a plausible roadmap, which if followed in its entirety assures that both intercultural and citizenship objectives are met. Post-implementation feedback from the ICEPro Course participants highlighted the support the ICEKit gave, stating it was “A very organised unit of work, with everything needed to fully explore the theme... It helps to go into the invisible aspect of the iceberg” (survey response for most positive aspect of the ICEKit implementation).

The PSG promoted a holistic and flexible approach to ICE, favouring a blend of the intercultural and citizenship domains, while at the same time allowed for one domain to prevail over the other, depending on the main thematic focus of the picturebook. The PSG was described by one of the teachers as “a guideline [that] can easily contribute to the development of tolerance, of critical thinkers and, therefore, of better future citizens” (TP15 final written report). Nevertheless, in scaffolding teachers’ picturebook selection, it necessitated a proactive and concerted decision to plan for an action-oriented approach to English language education which can be found in the General focal field section. Selecting a picturebook which required positive answers to these questions in focal field 4, either in the “Explicit” column, like *Clean up!* which substantiated an explicit call for advocacy and activism; or in the “With mediation” column like *Unplugged* which easily led teachers up the digital citizenship path, would ensure that a relevant, doable Taking Action project would be possible. Even though anecdotal evidence from both within and outside the project has provided very positive feedback on the substantial support given in the ICEKits, “Part 3: Taking Action”, can be perceived as an optional extra. The inherent flexibility of the PSG, with no instruction for the compulsory selection of certain questions in the General

focal field, allowed practitioners to favour an exploration of the intercultural to the detriment of the Taking Action Cycle in ICEKit#13.

Valente and Mourão (2022) have identified additional opportunities in future ICEPro Courses for highlighting the difference between picturebooks at either end of the continuum, which would be a step towards alerting teachers to the difficulties they might encounter in a picturebook that sits at the intercultural end of the continuum. Additionally, they consider “an explicit emphasis on progressive task design and coherence within materials, so that each Part of the ICEKit, and its respective stages, incrementally build on each other” (p.22). This would contribute to overcoming the Taking Action project being considered as an optional extra.

5.2 The sustainability of the professional development experience

As the chapter has highlighted, the professional development experience involved a week-long professional development course where teachers discovered and engaged with models (e.g., the PSG, ICEKit templates and reflect and review processes), and modelling of good practice (e.g., reading aloud, sequencing activities etc.) and an implementation phase. The latter involved trialling their ICEKits in a collaborative, hands-on process which included:

- discussions with the mentor and co-creators in the Erasmus groups.
- trialling the ever-evolving ICEKits in the classroom.
- virtual exchanges, engaging children in intercultural learning through the ICEKit activities.
- reflection around the classroom and virtual experiences feeding into subsequent refinement of the ICEKits.

This extended, recursive process allowed for not only a continuous renewal and improvement of the materials but initiated a process of change in the teachers’ perceptions of their role in the English classroom. The teachers, with the support of the mentor, became the engine that drove the process forward. One teacher describes the process as empowering: “Finally, it gave me the power to co-create and to reflect and review about my own work” (TP11, final written report). It could be argued that the sustained teacher development process, with models and modelling support together with mentorship develop teacher self-efficacy and agency.

Even though our analysis of the data identifies gaps in the Taking Action stage of the ICEKit, teachers’ perceptions of their learning indicated an engagement with the concept and intention to integrate Action Taking projects in future picturebook lessons: “The taking action cycle taught me to go beyond the book boundaries and this is one of the most important ‘takeaways’ that I will try to integrate when using a picturebook as a pedagogical, didactic resource” (TP13,

final written report). The teachers' enthusiasm for their overall experience was evident during the mentored meetings and their sense of achievement and satisfaction was apparent at the conference where they presented their ICEKit and its implementation. However, it is the impact on the children's learning that highlights the effectiveness of the ICEPro course, and its impact on teacher learning. One teacher stated that working with picturebooks in this project encouraged the development of curiosity about the other, a key component of intercultural learning, and created better world citizens: "They realise the importance of learning languages, of respecting, accepting and valuing differences. They improve their cooperation, tolerance, and empathy" (TP13, conference presentation). Another teacher confirmed the positive effects of the virtual exchanges on their learners: "The connection with the Italian partners was amazing for them. They were excited about getting the chance to speak to foreign students and teachers and to get information about them" (TP11, final written report).

6. Conclusion

In this chapter we explored the extent to which pedagogical frameworks, models and modelling supported teachers who attended the ICEPro Course and participated in the implementation phase, to successfully undertake an intercultural citizenship project in ELL. The main aims of the ICEPro Course were to provide teachers with the competences to plan, implement and evaluate intercultural citizenship-related activities developed around picturebooks. The PSG and the ICEKit structure encapsulated the theoretical concepts of intercultural learning, citizenship education and picturebooks, and provided the teachers with a template for considering both the intercultural and citizenship dimensions of language education. The results discussed above suggest the ICEPro Course and all it involved was a positive and transformative learning experience and many of the teachers were optimistic in their ability to Take Action and make a difference – one teacher confidently concluded, "the more ambitious our goals are in terms of the taking action cycle, the better the result is going to be" (TP13, final written report).

New learning was mediated by a mentoring process together with collaborative cross-border interaction that guided discussions and creativity and expanded teachers' intercultural horizons. The triangulated analysis of the data sources demonstrated that teachers were successful in planning, implementing, and evaluating intercultural citizenship-related activities developed around picturebooks and felt empowered by this experience. Nevertheless, there were also lacunas in the intervention process which suggest that the action-taking aspect of ICE, which has been identified in other projects (cf. Porto et al., 2016), and of extreme

importance in the embodiment of democratic citizenship, was not always successfully achieved. The main reason for this has been discussed as a fault in the choice of picturebook i.e., one that sits on the intercultural end of the ICE Continuum, but local constraints might also contribute to less than successful achievements. ICEPELL partners identified aspects that were decisive for the teacher. These include perseverance and time-management regarding the virtual exchange activities which support the launching of the Taking Action project and the active engagement of the school community and families to ensure a successful completion of the project.

Possible future directions for research are available, and we will make two suggestions. The first focuses on the 18 readily available, open-access ICEKits which can be used successfully by teachers and their students anywhere in the world. The ICEKits provide a clear guide for teaching and learning with a view to developing citizenship projects and if used properly support in-depth learning experiences. Researching how teachers use and adapt the ICEKits in different contexts and with different groups of children, and to what extent they are successfully able to complete the Take Action projects would be revealing.





The second suggestion is associated with virtual exchange projects, which are becoming popular. There are an increasing number of resources to support teachers in setting up such exchanges with easy access to platforms like eTwinning. Nevertheless, research projects associated with primary learners are still rare (Dooley & Vinagre, 2022). The focus here would be on virtual exchange activities with a systematic approach to explicitly developing ICE-related projects prompted by picturebooks and supported by the ICEKits. Opportunities for collecting transnational data would be excellent and make an important contribution to the fields of early language learning and teaching approaches.

We close with a quote which highlights the significant impact of this professional development experience on one of the teacher participants:

The capacity to not only talk about such important Intercultural and Citizenship themes, but also the ability to go further than [just] understanding the problem; it encourages discovery and asks for action and therefore promotes awareness, in class and in the community. (post-implementation phase survey response)

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