

STEPS UP



U. PORTO

S.T.E.P.S – UP

Support for Teaching English in
Primary Schools
University of Porto

European Label Award Winner

2008



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Pre-project context in Portugal

- **February 2005:** English language lessons to be offered in first cycle of basic education for 3rd and 4th year children (8-10 year olds)
- **September 2005:** English language lessons began as 'optional extra-curricular' subject
- **Major concern:** Lack of appropriately qualified teachers



National priority → local needs



Municipal Council of the city of Porto



Department of Anglo-American Studies ,
Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University
of Porto

Department of Anglo-American Studies to recruit primary English language teachers and provide pedagogic support.

THE PROJECT: S.T.E.P.S – UP Support for Teaching English in Primary Schools – University of Porto

Beneficiaries:

- Primary English language teachers in primary schools in and around city of Porto



- Primary school children aged 8 – 10 in primary schools in Porto



Aims of Project

To ensure coherence and quality in the teaching of English in schools across the city of Porto

- To develop positive attitudes to the learning of foreign languages and in doing so promote pluri-lingualism and pluri-culturalism
- To establish horizontal and vertical cohesion within and between the first and second cycles of basic education
- To encourage and support teacher development through collaboration
- To promote and develop Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)
- To develop a shared understanding within the school community that the English language can enrich other curricular areas

Project outcomes

- Primary English language teachers: appropriate pedagogic and attitudinal preparation
- Extension of a spirit of collaboration within school communities



Scale of Project 2005 - 2009

56 Primary schools

Children attending English language classes in
Porto:

- 2005/2006 - 4336
- 2006/2007- 5054
- 2007/2008 - 5331
- 2008/2009- 5577 children and 87 teachers

There was no initial time limit for the project. It came to an end abruptly in 2009.

Global Project Management

Porto City Council: project financing, school needs

- number of children and classes per school; timetables; coursebooks for children

University of Porto

1 administrative coordinator

1 pedagogic coordinator (recruitment of teachers, pedagogic programme and teacher development)

1 financial coordinator (monitoring teacher numbers, payment of teachers)



Action plan – Pedagogic programme

To provide constant and varied support through the following:

STEPS ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS including:

- Guidelines for collaborating with school teachers within and between the cycles of compulsory education
- Coherent four-year content and language syllabus
- Assessment criteria

In-service teacher development sessions (on general aspects of pedagogy and according to teacher needs)

Monthly face-to-face meetings (general reflection on practice; planning in school cluster groups; focus groups for key areas of concern e.g., assessment; vertical cohesion)

Virtual platform for teachers to share ideas and materials; submission of monthly planning; weekly summaries; termly evaluation of children by teachers; termly teacher reflections

School support visits

Personal tuition when required

Resources service



Spirit of Collaboration



'The loneliness of the innovator can be overcome by mutual support.'

Budd & Wright in Nunan (ed) 1992

U. PORTO Help

Build Teach Student View S.T.E.P.S. UP - Support for teaching English in primary schools - 2007-2008

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 General Information	 Planning	 Teaching materials
 Useful links	 Schools and teachers	 Colocação de Sumários
 Plans	 Collaborative teacher development	 Assessing Children

Self-supporting community of teachers

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Build Teach Student View S.T.E.P.S. UP - Support for teaching English in primary schools - 2007-2008

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You are currently on: [Home Page](#) > [Teaching mate...](#) > [food](#) > [TEACHING IDEA...](#) > [food rap](#) > **food rap**

hi, teachers!

i'd like to share a great idea my kids came up with after singing the sausages chant on zabadoo2 book. I asked them to sing the chant as if they were rappers and the result was amazing;) afterwards they proposed singing in various music styles: opera, hard rock, samba, ... we had so much fun and the results were very interesting too!

Give it a try... use the chants in more creative ways and amaze yourselves with the wonderful little artists we have in our classes!!!



Nurturing a sense of responsibility

- To educate the whole child
- To be aware that primary education is integrationist: subjects feed and nourish each other
- To forge links with the rest of the primary curriculum
- To make the content of lessons more relevant
- To plan for content, language and developmental skills





Extending collaboration

S.T.E.P.S teachers encouraged to engage in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) projects

Main goals:

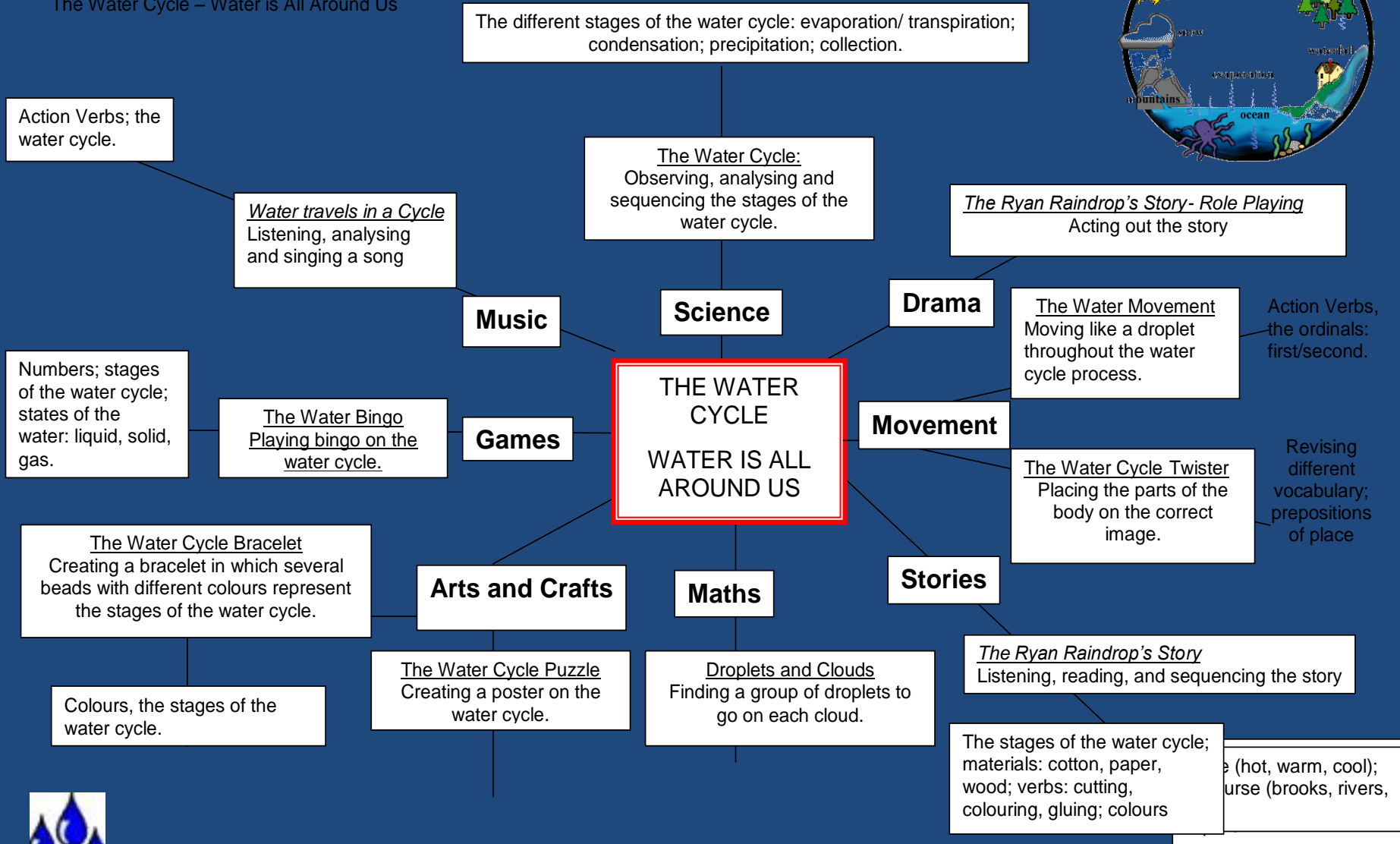
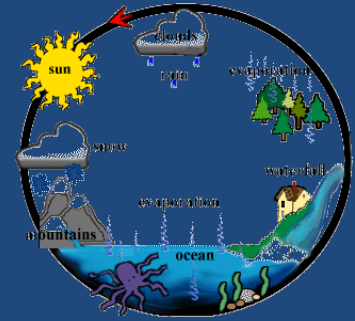
- To make learning more relevant and meaningful
- To improve collaboration within schools so school community becomes aware of positive contribution English language lessons can make
- To raise profile and status of English language teachers



Constructing CLIL

- Consult the content syllabus of primary curriculum
- Planning: Content, Communication, Cognition and Culture goals
- Reconstruct methodology

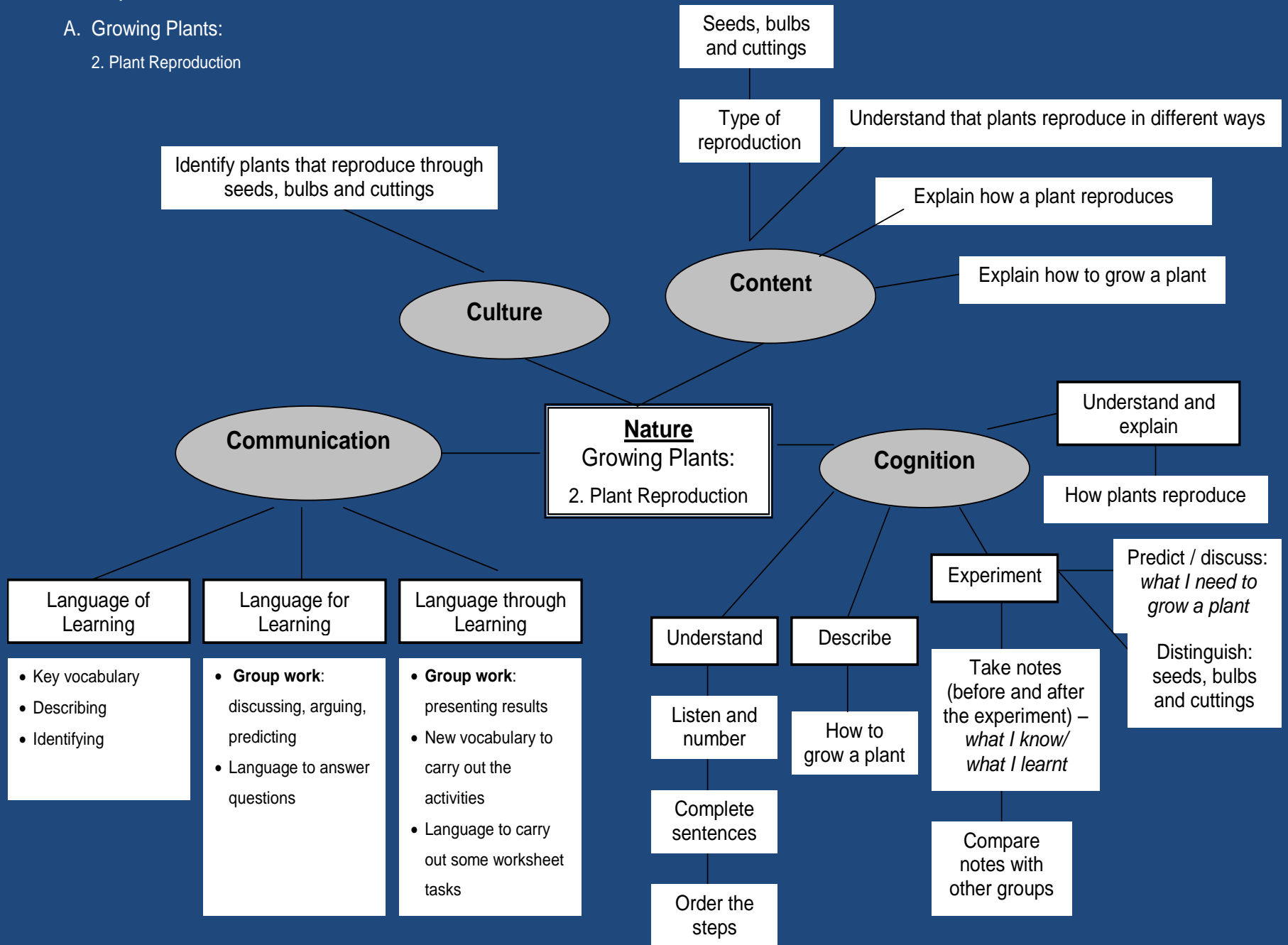




Mind Map – Nature

A. Growing Plants:

2. Plant Reproduction



Small-scale research

2008 - 2009

- Primary English language teachers' perspectives on carrying out CLIL projects.
- Data collected from questionnaires and written reflections revealed benefits to teaching and learning and challenges faced by teachers

Project monitoring (yearly)

- **Partner Meetings:** City Council and University (initial, mid, end of year) SWOT report (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats); virtual platform (MOBIUS) for summaries accessible to all stakeholders
- **University:** within STEPS project: monthly f2f meetings with teachers; online written reflections; monthly planning; weekly summaries; termly evaluation of children by teachers; teacher evaluation
- **In schools:** horizontal and vertical meetings encouraged; termly evaluation of children and presence of English language teachers at end of term parents' meetings

Improving quality with the project

- 2007 – 2008: New MA in Teaching English and other foreign languages in basic education
- Students and student-teachers incorporated within STEPS project
- Insights gained from STEPS project inputted into this MA programme

Dissemination

- **Within schools:** end of term parties/performances/exhibitions of work
- **Across schools in the city:** end of year events for all stakeholders – exhibition of children’s work; parties/theatre
- **University:** within teacher meetings; national and international conferences; publications; ‘promotional film’; website
<https://sites.google.com/site/stepsuporto/>



The date is 7th

The month is June

Today is Sunday

The weather is

rainy

cloudy



May I sharpen my pencil, please?

UNIVERSITY OF PORTO

Support in Primary



Not now, Bernard and Thomas

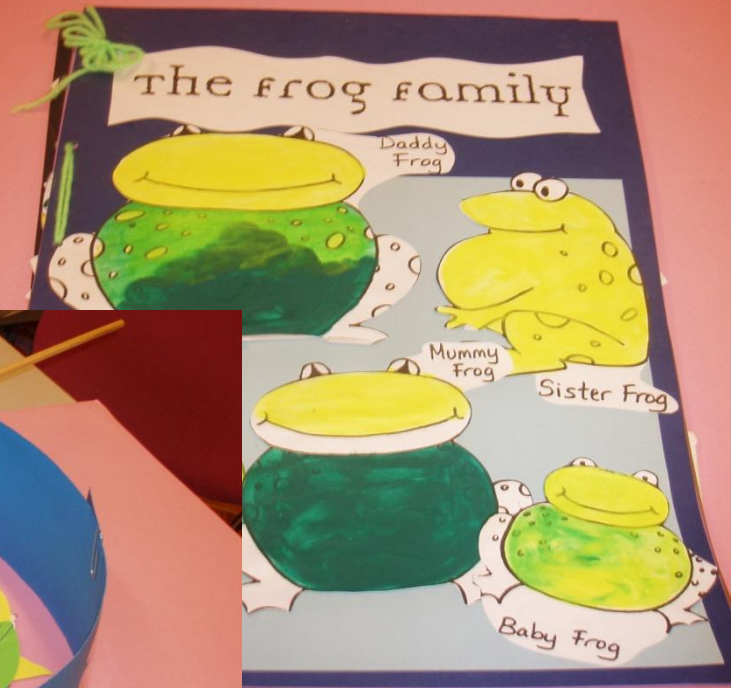


Class what you see

Green Book, Green Book! What do you see?







Constraints/areas for improvement

- Teacher mobility into and out of the project
- Human resources at University
- Monitoring within and between schools
- Finances: teacher payment and budget for STEPS pedagogic programme
- Teacher contracts

Impact of the European Language Label

- **Recognition** – confidence to elaborate other projects – Higher STEPS (Supporting the teaching of English in Plurilingual Higher Education Settings)
- **National and international interest:** invitations to events/conferences/new project partnerships/dissemination of ‘expertise’ (cited as model project by Conselho Nacional de Educação de Portugal)
- **Content of pre- and in-service courses for teaching foreign languages benefited from STEPS**

Potential impact beyond STEPS

Project transference:

- As a model within Portugal for the same beneficiaries
- For different educational sectors in national and international contexts

Further recognition: European Language Label of Label Awards 2012



- STEPS Project nominated by National Agency of Portugal as best of the winners of the European Language Label Award in Portugal since 2002.
- Award ceremony in Limassol, Cyprus presided over by European Commissioner for Education, Culture and Youth, Androulla Vassiliou

Further dissemination

- European Commission publication: 'European Language Label – Empowering People'



Advice

- Project transfer to other contexts
- High visibility and exposure: website; conferences; flyers; good networking; published articles
- Opportunities for research



Thank you
and
Good luck!

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