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## PLEASE SUMMER CAMP e-DIARY

TEACHER: *Sofia Coelho, Portugal*

### DAY 1

Monday

22.06.20

15

After the initial speech given by the Greek teachers and an explanation about what this project was, its goals and the way it was going to be run I introduced myself briefly with the help of the Greek teachers. Then, participants began introducing themselves and getting to know the other members of the group. To do this we used the action game (tool GR\_3). Most of the adults were not the grandparents of the children so it was necessary to allow time for building a good relationship. It was obvious that the gap between the children's English level and the grandparents was a great one.

The next tool (SP10) was implemented as a way to further the introduction stage and allow participants to work in a smaller group before sharing information with the whole class.

Children began to understand that they should help the adults and translate instructions when it was impossible for the teacher to convey the meaning.

Some of the children had a good level of English but some of them were too shy to speak to the grandparents and it was necessary for the teacher to remind them constantly that the grandparents needed their help as some of them were non users of English and were not used to be in a classroom setting so they were unsure of how to behave and apprehensive about speaking English. I observed a very interesting action of one of the students; he began to help "his" grandmother pronounce the words so that she would be able to present her work to the class. Later on, Gina the Greek teacher, told me she heard the student saying in Greek: "Now write this on your notebook, write this word three times so that you learn, tomorrow I'll ask you again to see if you remember" This young man was unknowingly teaching



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this lady a learning strategy and was spontaneously adopting the role of the grandmother's teacher/ helper. I think this was a clue for me to try to use this pair as a model of behavior for the other pairs, Some of the children were still very shy and reticent to communicate and help "their" grandparents because it was something new to them.

It became a matter of extreme importance to try to soften this barrier between the pairs. The young man quoted above was also very confident in his English and he became a bridge between the participants and the teacher by translating into L1 when neither the grandparents nor the children were understanding instructions. This was necessary during the next tool (GR\_13). It was also necessary for the Greek teachers to translate some words to the pairs when the children didn't know them.

After day 1 it seemed to me that some of the activities I had chosen had to be simplified in order to be possible for the grandparents to be actively involved.

**Pic.1** – Tool SP\_10: Participants write down their names with the corresponding words.



**Pic.2** – A pair works together to practice writing and



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	<p>reading the words they chose to stand for each letter of their names.</p> 
<p>DAY 2 Tuesday 23.07.20 15</p>	<p>Tools PT_17 and PL_11 were implemented by The Greek teacher Gina Manos as I was too ill to leave the house. After the break Gina and Markella also accompanied the participants during the walk around the neighborhood when they had the opportunity to take pictures of shops and other places. In the evening I had a brief meeting with the Greek teachers to discuss what had been done during the day. This helped me to prepare the activities for the next day and to decide on how to implement the remaining tasks of tool GR_13 if I was feeling better in the morning.</p>
<p>DAY 3 Wednesd ay 24.07.20 15</p>	<p>Classes started with the second part of the tool “My neighborhood”. Participants were supposed to upload the photos taken on the previous day. Most of the pairs didn’t have laptops, they only had tablets. We discovered it was impossible to compile the photos in a Word document using the tablets, so some of the pairs had to wait for the existing laptops. This was a problem because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It took too much time to upload the photos and some of the pairs had to wait long;</li> <li>- When they finally got the laptop they experienced some difficulties as the laptops were not theirs so they were not</li> </ul>



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accustomed to working with them.

- Also I was relying on the children to help the grandparents with their ICT skills as I was informed most children had a computer at home. However, most children were also unable to use “Microsoft Word” documents. I had to help each pair individually which was time consuming and damaged the fluidity of the lesson. Later on, I found out children don’t usually use computers to do school work, so this is something that needs to be taken into consideration when choosing tools.

I found that most of the vocabulary needed for this activity (shops and places in town) was completely new to the grandparents and some of it unknown to the young people so I decided to incorporate a simple memory game to help the pairs write their captions.

The language school provided the flashcards at a short notice what was a great help.

This memory game made use of flashcards with pictures of places in town. When there was no flashcard for a particular shop one of the students drew it on the whiteboard. The flashcards were displayed on the board and numbered. Participants should raise their hands and say a number so that the player, with his back to the flashcards, could say what image that number belonged to. This game was chosen because I hoped that its competitive nature would keep the children interested but mainly because grandparents could participate if only by saying a number (I hoped they felt confident enough to do that).

The game worked very well, by the end of it children knew most of the vocabulary and the grandparents managed to participate once they felt more confident.

I and the Greek teachers noticed that it was better that they were not inside the classroom the whole time because participants would not try to understand the instructions in English and would only wait for the explanation in Greek. Once the Greek teachers began to be more absent the children were forced to take a more active role in the activities and had to ask questions in English so that they could explain them to the grandparents.

The end of the lesson was used to show the participants the PLEASE Facebook page. Most of the participants did not have a Facebook account and the grandparents did not own a computer so the initial posts were done by me after explaining that the page would work as a communication platform between participants from different groups and countries.

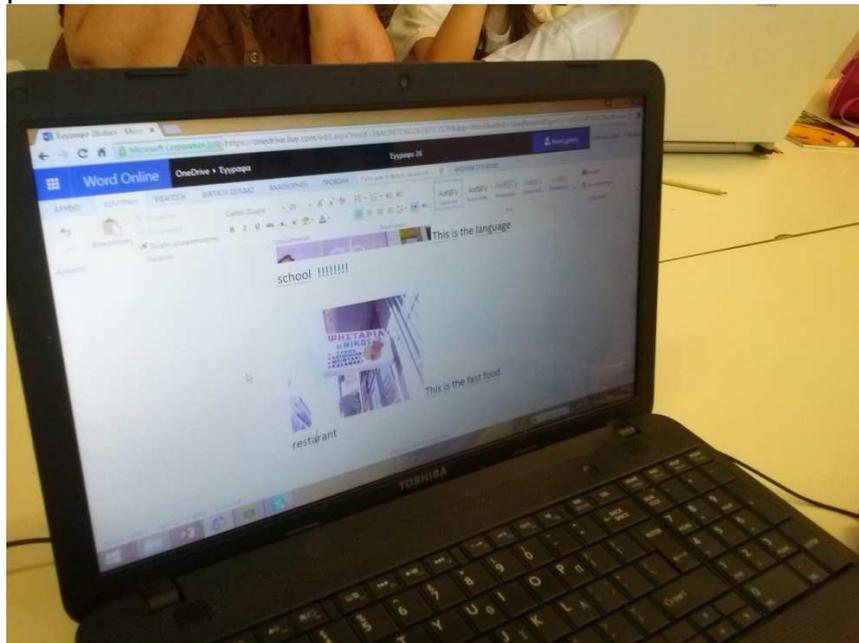


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**Pic. 3** – Participants look at the pictures taken the day before and try to upload them into a computer.



**Pic. 4** – Students start their word file introducing their neighborhood. They use their own pictures.



DAY 4  
Thursday  
25.07.20  
15

Grandparents seemed to like writing down everything on their notebooks. I think they were expecting that the project incorporated direct teaching because they didn't know the language and were used to the traditional method of grammar-translation. Because this was not the goal of this project and I personally believe in a more communicative approach to language learning I tried to find a way of avoiding a teacher



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centered approach but providing an opportunity for the grandparents to learn some words at their own pace without the stress of producing big chunks of language at such an earlier stage of their learning.

The tools were designed to be fun and entertaining and by using games as warmers and pair work I tried to keep the children interested and give enough time for the grandparents to feel comfortable using English.

Before starting the tool I used a PowerPoint presentation that I had used before with adult students: Each slide showed a flag of a country. Students should try to guess the name of the country; once they guessed correctly I would show the name of the country written on the slide. Then, the same thing was done with the capital city. This warmer worked very well because the grandparents contributed with their knowledge of some of the flags and the children knew some of the names of the countries in English and taught them to the grandparents. After this the grandparents wanted to write the names of the countries on their notebooks so the group did that.

I decided to use a template to do tool PT\_4 as previous classes had shown me that most participants would not be able to do the activity as it was originally planned due to lack of laptops and insufficient ICT skills. Although all participants had their own sheet to fill in they were encouraged to work in pairs and to help each other, what was by now something that came natural to the participants. Most of them were very eager to help whenever they could. The young people assumed it was their responsibility to teach the grandparents.

Each participant presented their work to the class. One of the pairs (the only one composed by a grandmother and her grandson) decided to present their work together.

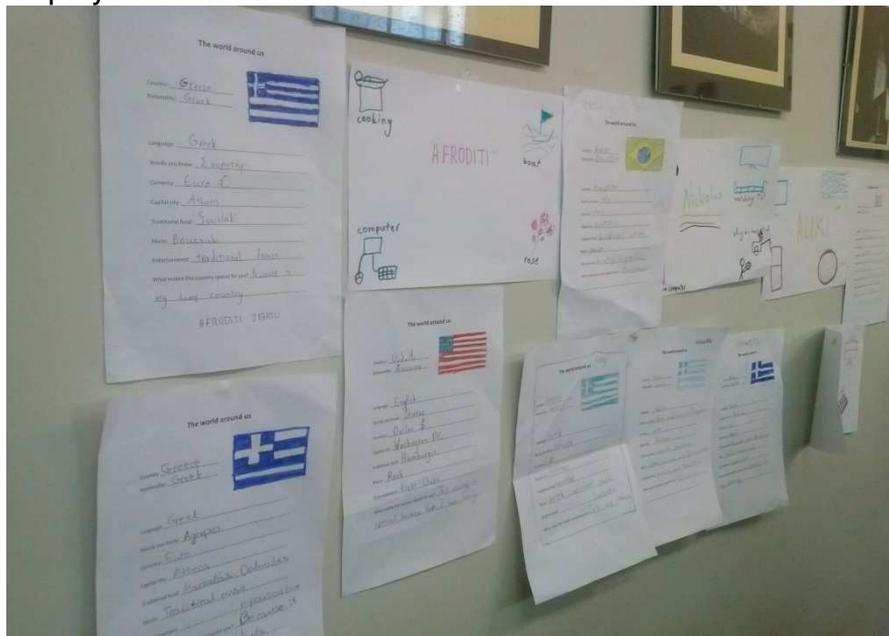


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**Pic.5** – Participants fill in their chosen country information. One of the girls is writing down something that one of the grandmothers was unable to write in English.



**Pic.6** – After the presentation the participants' work was displayed on the wall.



DAY 5

I had chosen the tool “Who am I?” before I met the group I was going to work with. After the first day it was obvious that some of



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Friday 26.07.20 1	<p>the activities I had chosen had to be simplified or required some previous language preparation. All of them were carried out with some alterations but I felt that due to the adults' English level the tool SP_11 "Who am I?" would take too long to prepare, it would be necessary to explain a lot of vocabulary and practice saying a variety of different structures before playing the game. Also this was an oral activity which was the grandparents' weaker skill. Because this was not the objective of the tool I decided to do another tool instead, one that would be a better fit to this group's level. I decided to choose the tool PT_3 "Alphabet chase" for two reasons. Grandparents were familiar with the English alphabet because they had studied it recently in their English classes; Children loved to go out and after a week working in a small classroom (there was no playground or garden nearby) they craved an opportunity to move around and be outside. I have mixed feelings about the result of this activity. I think it was extremely successful when it came to the children and it was the first time I saw one of the more shy students so excited and willing to communicate in English. On the other hand it was not an activity that promoted work between child/grandparent. Because the children were so much faster and more knowledgeable, the grandparents decided to let them run back and forth and were happy to stay in the background. They seemed very happy when "their" child managed to get to the next letter but they were not involved as they could not keep up with the children's pace.</p> <p>The next tool, GR_12 "My best friend" was deliberately left to the last day because I wanted participants to get to know each other well before choosing their friend. Once again the pairs worked together and the children helped the grandparents because they didn't know the vocabulary.</p> <p>After the break participants filled in their feedback questionnaire and we had some time to take pictures, exchange contact information and talk about the summer camp. This was done with the help of the Greek teachers. Some of the ladies were very enthusiastic about the course and they told the Greek teachers that they would like to continue the classes using this method, with the help of the children. One of the ladies said that at home her grandchildren didn't have the patience to teach her but she liked working with her adopted child in the project as the girl was very patient and kind.</p> <p>To prepare for the next activity, which was food related,</p>
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participants made paper cards with drawings of food and played a simple card game that required them to ask their partner for a card using the structure “Have you got a...,please?”. If the participants forgot to use the word PLEASE at the end of the sentence they would lose their turn to play.

Near lunch time we did our last tool PT\_1 “A taste of English”. I found it helpful to use flashcards depicting food items to explain the meaning of the words (sweet, sour...) because this way there was no need to translate them. Also, it was appealing to visual learners. Another positive aspect of this tool was the fact that some of the members of the other group decided to join in and help “my group” finish the activity.

The children were able to form simple sentences expressing their preferences. The adults couldn’t do this but they used gestures and some of them used “like” while pointing to the food. One of the ladies used the expression “no like” to express dislike. That showed me she was applying the knowledge she had (even though it was not grammatically correct) to try to communicate in English. In my opinion this was an important accomplishment for her because it showed she was beginning to feel comfortable to produce language without worrying so much about making mistakes.

The farewell was heartfelt and it was difficult to say goodbye even though we only knew each other for a short period of time. It was very fulfilling for me as a teacher to be able to witness the commitment of the participants, especially the grandparents who left their responsibilities on hold for a few hours each day just for the sake of learning something new.



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**Pic. 7-** Tool PT\_3 “The alphabet chase”, begins.



**Pic.8 –** The pairs playing the card game.





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**Pic. 9** – Grandparents manage to play with little help from the students because they had time to practice saying the sentence “Have you got a...please?” which was also written on the whiteboard.



**Pic. 10** – Participants discuss what adjective should be placed next to the pizza.



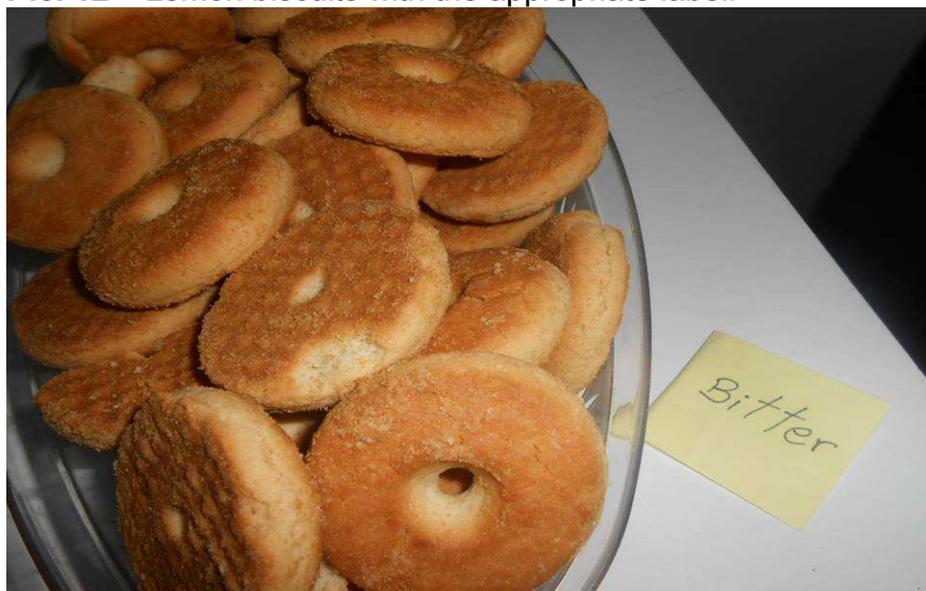


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**Pic. 11** – All the food is labelled according to what participants expect it to taste like. Afterwards, they have the chance to taste everything and change labels if necessary.



**Pic. 12** – Lemon biscuits with the appropriate label.





Erasmus+

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