


Enhancing response-ability through transnational women authors' short stories in EFL: a didactic proposal with future Primary School teachers

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Fecha de publicación: 29.04.2024

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Citar: Recchioni, VP (2024). Enhancing response-ability through transnational women authors' short stories in EFL: a didactic proposal with future Primary School teachers. *REIDOCREA*, 13(16), 213-225.

Área o categoría del conocimiento: Multidisciplinar

Revisión por pares abierta		
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Abstract: This contribution aims at fostering 'response-ability' in the class of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) with undergraduate education students. In the practices described in this work, we enhance students' communicative competence in the FL through a 'response-able pedagogy' where students engage with global issues from their local position. By working on short stories by transnational women authors, students address social issues as cross-curricular contents, especially gender equality. This paper offers a detailed didactic proposal which has been put forward at the University of Granada (Spain) in the Degree in Primary Education and in the Double Degree in Primary Education and Physical Education and Sports Sciences. The procedure and materials are specified, and students' opinions are discussed. This practice illustrates that future teachers can address social issues in EFL through literature by making the corresponding adaptations to the young age of their students.

Keywords: Short Stories

Fomentando la responsabilidad en inglés como lengua extranjera a través de cuentos cortos de escritoras transnacionales: una propuesta didáctica con futuros docentes de Educación Primaria

Resumen: El presente artículo tiene como objetivo fomentar la 'responsabilidad' en la clase de inglés como Lengua Extranjera (LE) con estudiantes universitarios de educación. En las prácticas que se describen en este trabajo, fomentamos la competencia comunicativa del alumnado en la LE a través de una 'pedagogía responsable' donde el alumnado se compromete con problemáticas globales desde su posición local. Al trabajar con cuentos cortos de escritoras transnacionales el alumnado aborda temáticas sociales como contenidos transversales, especialmente la igualdad de género. Este artículo detalla una propuesta didáctica que se ha realizado en la Universidad de Granada (España) en el Grado en Educación Primaria y en el Doble Grado en Educación Primaria y Ciencias de la Actividad Física y el Deporte. Se especifican tanto los materiales como el procedimiento y se analizan las opiniones del alumnado. Esta práctica ejemplifica que los futuros docentes pueden abordar temáticas sociales en inglés como LE a través de la literatura haciendo las correspondientes adaptaciones a la corta edad del alumnado.

Palabras clave: cuentos cortos

Introduction

Current societies are going through rapid change, and this poses new and multifarious challenges for teachers at any level in the twenty-first century. Teachers need to make a significant effort to adapt to diverse factors that are gaining relevance in our lives, for instance, new technologies, social networks, plurilingual citizenship, cultural diversity, or sustainability, and at the same, they should prepare students to be fully competent citizens in their life as adults. These challenges that teachers must face involve all the areas of the school curriculum, and the teaching and learning of a Foreign Language (FL), whose main aim is to foster students' communicative competence, presents itself as a unique opportunity to apply a wide diversity of practices that address cross-curricular contents. As the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

(CEFR) (2001, 2020) details, within the goals of FL teaching and learning, the development of plurilingual and pluricultural competence is gaining increasing importance.

The aim of this study is to demonstrate that EFL classes can engage with students' local environment as well as with global issues from a socially committed perspective by following a 'response-able pedagogy'. This proposal provides an example of how a solid theoretical framework, like Donna Haraway's 'situated knowledges' (1988) and her conception of 'responsibility' (2008), can be applied in FL teaching by means of authentic short stories written by transnational women authors. Our ultimate goal is that future teachers can interiorise diverse practices to face the challenges of today's societies and later adapt them to the young pupils they will work with.

This article starts by providing a conceptual background that supports the practices we have carried out and it proceeds to develop the didactic proposal based on short stories which we already put forward with undergraduate education students in 2023 at the Faculty of Education of the University of Granada (Spain). The proposal took place in two subjects: Foreign Language Culture and its Didactics (FLCD), a subject in the fourth year of the Degree in Primary Education which is taken by those students who choose to specialise in TEFL, and Foreign Language and its Didactics (FLD), which is a compulsory subject in the second year of the Double Degree in Primary Education and Physical Education and Sports Sciences. In the final sections, the feedback given by the participants is detailed and discussed.

Conceptual framework

Society today needs to face significant challenges that cover all the aspects of our daily lives. Most of them play a crucial role in guaranteeing our possibility to survive as well as that of future generations', such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set in the 2030 Agenda (United Nations, n.d.). Within these issues, the growing plurality of current societies is a reality that professionals in the field of education cannot ignore. Thus, with this work we aim at encouraging the compromise of teachers and undergraduate students to our common future in order to achieve a positive effect that will extend to the rest of the citizenship in general.

We frame this work following Beatriz Revelles-Benavente and Ana González Ramos's (2017) work as we agree with the contributors to their volume in their view of education as a key tool which has the potential to free the subject. We also agree with the need they perceive to co-create learning environments where we build knowledge with our students "in order to begin teaching a feminist politics of responsibility" (Revelles-Benavente and Ana González Ramos, 2017, p. 2).

In this contribution, we follow Donna Haraway's (2008) understanding of responsibility as 'response-ability'. As Esther Sánchez-Pardo states "responsibility, then and now, demands a display of response-ability, an ability to respond and account for one's investment, one's position in any theoretical or material production ..." (2017, p. 66). Thus, the materials selected for this work and the didactic proposal we have put forward are permeated by the 'situated' (Haraway, 1988) position we adopt. This means that we assume that our perspective is partial and local, but it allows us to reflect on global issues and to contribute to finding local solutions to global problems collectively. We focus on transnational women authors' short stories by considering Azade Seyhan's (2001) definition of 'transnational literature' as works that share a physical location but present a cultural or linguistic distance among them and sometimes, they do not either fit in the host or the home cultures. So, in the class of EFL we intend to increase students'

motivation in these cultural aspects through works by transnational women authors. Women are the most prolific in writing this kind of literature, probably because, as Lukić, Forrester and Faragó (2019) state, being transnational problematises the idea of 'home', a space traditionally assigned to women. Furthermore, it problematises the way we define our identity. As Susan Stanford Friedman (1998) analyses, our identity can be more connected to our 'roots' (finding similarity to a group) or to the 'routes' we are taking in our lives (being more open to diversity).

Thus, the proposal developed in this study aims at taking 'response-ability' to the classroom context of EFL in Higher Education by means of short stories while enhancing communicative competence. Even though literary material is not often included in EFL classes, scholars worldwide support its use (Van, 2009; Yimwilai, 2015) and the CEFR does recognise the importance of "imaginative and artistic uses of language" (2001, p. 56), which can include activities such as production, reception, or performance of literary texts. The CEFR (2001) emphasises that "literature studies serve many more educational purposes- intellectual, moral and emotional, linguistic and cultural- than the purely aesthetic" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 56). Furthermore, as regards the cross-curricular contents, the CEFR (2001, 2020) adopts an action-oriented approach where learners are regarded as social agents with their own interests and needs and it accounts for plurilingualism in the context of pluriculturalism.

This is particularly important to validate the implementation of the 'response-able' pedagogy mentioned above as the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) incorporates descriptors for plurilingual and pluricultural competence where they consider, among other criteria, "readiness and capacity to expand linguistic/plurilinguistic and cultural/pluricultural awareness through an attitude of openness and curiosity" (Council of Europe, 2020, p.124) and "the capacity to deal with 'otherness' to identify similarities and differences, to build on known and unknown cultural features etc. in order to enable communication and collaboration" (Council of Europe, 2020, p.124). In the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*, Jean Claude Beacco et al. (2016) describe aspects such as learning one or more languages effectively and valuing diversity and otherness as components that "tend to foster inclusion and social cohesion; they are a preparation for democratic citizenship and contribute to the establishment of a knowledge society" (Beacco et al., 2016, p.16).

When narrowing down the context of this study, we observe that in the Spanish education system where it is set, fostering 'response-ability' with undergraduate students can train them to acquire tools for developing most of the eight key competences established by Royal Decree 157/2022, of the 1st of March, which establishes the ordinance and basic curriculum for Primary Education. Through the suggested practices, the following key competences can be fostered: Plurilingual Competence, Competence in Linguistic Communication, Personal, social and ability to learn Competence, Citizenship Competence, Digital Competence, Entrepreneurial Competence and Cultural awareness and expression Competence.

To enhance 'response-ability' in the EFL class with undergraduate education students, we follow communicative approaches where we work on authentic literary material written by transnational women authors. In this practice, we integrate Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Brown and Lee (2015) define CLT as an approach that aims at equipping students with tools to use the language in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. CLT concentrates on fostering effective communication in social contexts, thus, fluency in the FL is given more priority than accuracy. Moreover, TBLT is put into practice in this didactic proposal as we organise classes around communicative tasks that, as Ellis (2003) emphasises, let

teachers consider students' interests and needs. Learners usually feel motivated in TBLT as these affective factors are considered and the completion of tasks gives them a sense of achievement. Tasks are meaningful and connected to students' reality and they are organised following a pre-task, during-task and post-task procedure as Ellis (2003) proposes. The pre-task introduces students to what they will work on afterwards (for example, some key vocabulary for completing the task could be pre-taught in this phase), the during-task is the core of the class where some materials are explored in more detail and communicative skills are practised and the post-task is a follow-up of the main task where a different communicative skill can be applied or reflection on a specific aspect can be encouraged. Students have an active role in class while teachers guide and monitor students' learning process.

As regards the materials, in this case, we have included three authentic short stories by transnational women authors: "Girl" (1983/2000) by Jamaica Kincaid, "Light" (2017) by Lesley Arimah and "Treasure" (2020) by Oyinkan Braithwaite. The reason for including these stories is because they are part of research on transnational women's literature that the authors of this paper are currently conducting (Recchioni and Sánchez-Espinosa, 2022) where they address how the writers reflect and/or create their identities through their works.

Objectives

General objective: To foster response-ability through short stories in EFL teaching, especially those written by transnational women authors.

Specific objective 1: To provide a theoretical background that integrates the commitment to the challenges of today's societies, short stories, and communicative approaches in the field of EFL teaching.

Specific objective 2: To describe a detailed didactic proposal based on transnational women authors's short stories carried out with undergraduate education students.

Specific objective 3: To obtain students' feedback on the proposal they take part in and analyse it to identify possible areas of improvement.

Method

The proposal described in this paper is inspired by the urgent need to address socially committed issues in the EFL class in Higher Education, especially gender equality. This didactic proposal was put forward in May-June 2023 in the subject Foreign Language and its Didactics (FLD) within the Double Degree in Primary Education and Physical Education and Sports Sciences and in November-December 2023 in the subject Foreign Language Culture and its Didactics (FLCD) in the Degree in Primary Education.

Description of the didactic proposal

This didactic proposal to foster 'response-ability' through transnational women authors' short stories has been organised into four steps. The phases are developed in the following subsections: Step 1 is 'Task design', Step 2 is 'Task development', Step 3 is 'Students' learning situation' and Step 4 is 'Students' feedback'.

Step 1: Task design

The theoretical framework described above should be applied following the teaching guides of the two subjects involved. Thus, we have carefully planned the didactic proposal before introducing it to the EFL class. As a result, we have selected those General Competences (GC) from the subjects' teaching guides that could be developed through the corresponding tasks. The most relevant GCs are:

- GC10. To value social and cultural diversity, within the realm of respect for human rights and international cooperation.
- GC25. To carry out language learning situations in multicultural and plurilingual contexts efficiently.

In the case of the subject FLD of the Double Degree, we have selected the following General Competences:

- GC11. To foster and guarantee the principles of universal access, equality, non-discrimination, democratic values, and culture of peace.
- GC17. To face personal and work challenges with responsibility, certainty, self-improvement, and critical self-assessment.
- GC36. To know the functions, possibilities, and limitations of education to face social responsibilities, putting forward alternatives that answer these needs, to contribute to a future of solidarity and sustainability.

As to the subject FLCD of the Degree in Primary Education, we have considered General Competence 27:

- GC27. To design and organise learning spaces and interventions in diversity contexts that account for gender equality, equity, and respect for human rights as values in a plural society.

Regarding the Specific Competences (SC) of the subjects, as communicative competence in the FL is promoted, in both cases we have complied with SC64 "To communicate in oral and written form in a FL". Furthermore, as to the cross-curricular contents, in the case of FLCD we have fostered the development of SC 63 "to face language learning situations in multilingual contexts" and in FLD we have enhanced SC03: "to address language learning situations efficiently in multilingual and plurilingual contexts. To foster the reading and critical assessment of texts of diverse scientific and cultural domains within the school curriculum".

As mentioned earlier, this didactic proposal is based on literature, more specifically, students have worked on short stories written by transnational women authors. The stories are "Girl" (1983/2000) by Jamaica Kincaid, an Antiguan-born author who migrated to the U.S., "Light" (2017) by Lesley Arimah, a Nigerian author born in London, and "Treasure" (2020) by Oyinkan Braithwaite, a Nigerian-British writer born in Lagos (Nigeria) and brought up between the UK and Nigeria.

Once the short stories have been selected, the teacher designed the worksheets to follow the 'response-able' reading of the narratives with her undergraduate students in both Degrees. This practice will be described in Step 2, the next subsection. The teacher has also prepared the guidelines for students to do the assignment based on the same authentic materials, as the core of this didactic proposal is that after working on the stories, the undergraduate students could plan their own class. This class would be part of a learning situation based on the same short stories that they would develop with their

future Primary School students aged 11-12. This process is described in Step 3. To conclude, the teacher will deliver an anonymous questionnaire to obtain the undergraduate students' feedback on the practice, which is discussed in Step 4.

Step 2: Task Development

The first step when taking this proposal to the EFL classroom is to motivate our students to address social issues in the English class, which is not the usual case. In order to be introduced to the topic and the corpus of short stories, students first got in contact with "Girl" (Kincaid, 1983/2000). This is a one-page story in which a girl listens to an exhaustive list of directives given by a voice representing her mother.

As a pre-reading activity, students were provided with visual input since they were shown a black and white photograph representing the story. Students were asked to observe the photo of a girl in her early teens hanging clothes in the clothesline under the sun and they were encouraged to infer information about the story they were about to read. In this case, students answered the following questions orally: *What can you infer from the picture? What time and place are the story set?* Then, as a while-reading task, students skimmed the text and answered some general questions to check their comprehension of the gist. Basically, students tried to answer: *What is the main topic? Who are the characters? What is the conflict? Is it solved? If so, how?* After students discussed these more general ideas about the story, they listened to the recording of the story, and they answered two comprehension questions which refer to the type of society they could imagine the story is based on. In the first question students should distinguish whether the society is fair and egalitarian or patriarchal and male-dominated and in the second question students should identify whether the type of phrases used in the story are mainly orders or suggestions.

We continued working on post-reading tasks, in this case, we wanted to encourage students to make use of their imagination by developing the characters further. We call this section 'Back to the future!' since the story is set approximately in the middle of the 20th century and the idea was to take the story to the present time. Students were encouraged to be as creative as possible while taking this story and the conversation between mother and daughter to our time. Students created a conversation on a live chat between the girl and her mother where she defied the patriarchal norms imposed on her. Students shared their chats on the digital board, and they read them aloud or even acted them out. To do this task, students made use of an online tool such as *iFake Text Messages*.

Afterwards, the teacher provided students with basic biographical information about the author. However, it would have been better that students looked up the information on the internet themselves to encourage active learning, but we could not do this due to the time limitation. The objective was to create a class discussion in which we checked whether, after being acquainted with data about Jamaica Kincaid, the students' interpretation of the story had changed and whether they found any connection between the story and the author's identity. During this discussion, we want our students to be critical of their own perceptions and to widen the possibilities to explore diverse readings. It is of paramount importance that teachers insist on the fact that there is not one unique and valid reading of the story. Thus, to connect these tasks with our conceptual framework, we want our students to reflect on the next question: *Do you think we are responsible readers?*

After this introductory phase with "Girl", we continued working on the following two short stories "Light" (Arimah, 2017) and "Treasure" (Braithwaite, 2020). In this case, students

looked up basic information about the two transnational women authors before reading the stories and they commented on any facts that called their attention. Then, students read the story “Light”, and they checked their comprehension of the plot. The teacher had previously shortened the story by skipping some paragraphs so as to gain time for further discussion. Afterwards, students were asked inferential questions about the story that fostered critical thinking and intended to make them aware of the social aspects present in the material, which we can relate to our lives. Some example questions are: *How is the girl supposed to behave? What’s the role of technology in the story? What do you think about ‘roots’ and ‘routes’ in this story?*

Regarding “Treasure”, the third short story, as it is much longer than the other two, students were provided with some excerpts. In this part of the lesson, students were already acquainted with the authors and the cross-curricular topics we were addressing so, as a while-reading task, they were instructed to answer more inferential questions that involved them in fostering the response-ability mentioned in the conceptual framework. For instance, students were asked: *Can you describe how men and women are described in the stories? How can you describe the society where the characters live? Can you find any connections between the stories and the authors’ lives?*

Once students discussed the previous questions in collaborative groups, during the post-reading stage, they commented on how they thought the story ended and they were asked to put into practice their creative writing skills to provide an ending for the story. Another suggested post-reading task is to connect with the location where the story is set. To do so, students entered a link about the city of Lagos (the capital of Nigeria) and its history and then they commented as a whole class or in collaborative groups whether watching the video helped them understand the story.

As a final task to be carried out in the coming lessons or as homework, students can choose one of the stories and make a short story trailer to recommend it. In this case, the teacher should remind students not to give out the ending. Due to time constraints, students were not assigned to do this final task during the proposal.

Step 3: Students’ Learning Situation

In this part of the didactic proposal, the undergraduate students started working on the material as future teachers. Thus, they had to design a learning situation aimed at Primary School students in the 6th grade (aged 11-12 approximately) based on the selected stories. To this aim, the teacher uploaded a template for the learning situation onto the university’s educational platform. In the template students had to complete the following information: introduction and justification, contextualisation, a table with precise information about the learning situation, bibliography, and an appendix to include the resources students would create for the class.

Within the subject FLD there were three collaborative groups (identified as A, B and C), so each group was assigned one short story at random to plan their class. Group A was that working on the story “Girl”. This group decided to address gender equality by trying to make children aware of the fact that house chores should be done by everybody irrespective of their gender. In their class, they set the following challenge: “The main challenge for our students is to know how to get more independent by learning house chores. They need to think by themselves which chores they should do to become independent”. As a final product for Group A’s learning situation, the Primary School students would write a newspaper article in groups to upload to the school website. In this learning situation, as a pre-task the teacher introduces the topic of house chores with pictograms. Students look at the images and listen to the words and they must

identify the vocabulary. The worksheets used in the rest of the class have been designed as if they were part of a newspaper page. In the during-task, students read an excerpt of the short story “Girl” and they answer some comprehension questions. Students must identify the house chores that appear in the text, and they have to answer whether the story includes suggestions or orders. In the post-task stage students fill in a table where they must write the house chores that appear in the text and classify them according to who is responsible for doing them at home (men, women, both) according to their own experience. Finally, the teacher together with the students discuss why those chores should not be associated to any gender.

Group B worked on the short story “Light”, and this group decided to focus on social inequality and gender equality. The group’s justification of the learning situation was that “it is very important that students obtain their own critical thinking and more related to the issue of social inequality. When working on this topic, students will know more accurately what actions to take to foster respect and gradually destroy said inequalities from an early age. This learning situation also helps to improve the values of respect and empathy”. As a final product the Primary School students would have to make a poster in digital or physical format where they would present a factor that would contribute to improving the world with respect to gender equality. In Group B’s learning situation, as a pre-task, the teacher introduces the cross-curricular contents by talking about Port Harcourt (Nigeria), the place where part of the story is set, and students watch a video about it. Then, as part of the during-task, students read four excerpts from “Light”, and they match them with pictures that represent the main topic in each of them. As part of the post-task, the teacher writes three possible topics that represent the main idea of the story and students identify which one is correct and why. Finally, as a post-task students work on more traditional and more modern concepts of society. The teacher writes on the board ‘boys’, ‘girls’ and ‘both’ and students come to the front, take a card, and place it under the label they think fits best within Spanish society. As a post-task, students classify actions in a list under the heading ‘boys can/can’t do’ and ‘girls can/can’t do’ in a traditional society. Some of the actions that are included as examples are: play football, do rhythmic gymnastics, wear pink clothes, wear tattoos, cry in public and play with dolls or cars.

Group C was assigned the short story “Treasure”. In this case, the undergraduate students found it hard to work on the story with children aged 11-12. Thus, the participants agreed with the teacher that they could create a learning situation inspired by the topics addressed in the short story rather than give part of the text to their future Primary School class. They decided to work on self-esteem since they justified that “we want students to work on their self-esteem and realise that not everything that appears on social media is real”. As a final product for Group C’s learning situation, students will make an individual collage with images, drawings, and words that describe their personality. The collage must include a drawing of themselves, and things that represent their personality and abilities. In this learning situation, as a pre-task the teacher explains some personality adjectives to describe themselves. Then, in twos or threes, students match some pictures representing the adjectives with the corresponding word. As part of the during-task, the teacher shows students some photos of celebrities, they examine the pictures together and discuss how those famous people are portrayed, considering that in some photos the celebrities are in a bad mood or have a different physical appearance. The intention is to make students reflect on the idealised appearances, glamorous lifestyles and filtered realities that are often depicted in social media. As a post-task, students make a description of themselves. After that, one classmate picks a description, and the other students must guess who has written it.

In the subject FLCD there was one collaborative group to which we will refer to as Group D. They chose to base their learning situation on the short story “Girl” and their

justification was that “we intend to educate children in equality to prevent future situations of violence at home. Therefore, in this Learning Situation we will try to educate students in respect and values. For this purpose, we set out the following question that we intend to solve with our learning situation: Who does the housework?”. The final product of this learning situation will be for students to create their own diary in which they will include the chores they do each day; say how many times they do each chore during the week and paste a picture of themselves doing it. In Group D’s pre-task the teacher shows students flashcards with pictures of household chores. The teacher asks students to identify the activity they see in each picture and repeat the words to improve pronunciation. Afterwards, students are given a table with a list of daily chores and each student writes whether they participate in carrying it out and, if they do not, they must state who does it in their family. Once they complete the table, they compare their answers and reflect upon them. In the during-task, students read some excerpts from the story, and they must decide what rules the girl protagonist has to comply with. In groups, students complete two lists under the headings “must do” and “must not do”. The next task aims at checking students’ comprehension of the excerpts, so students answer multiple-choice questions related to the text using an online tool. As a post-task, the teacher revises the typical word order in English sentences and then she gives students a set of cards with written words. Students put these words in the right order to form phrases representing equality. Once the class checks the meaning of the phrases, students represent them on a poster, for example, in the form of a drawing, photograph or cartoon. At the end of the lesson, students are encouraged to present the poster to their classmates.

Step 4: Students’ Feedback

In this section we focus on the perception of the undergraduate education students about the didactic proposal we have carried out. We describe the sample of participants, the instrument to collect data (which is a questionnaire) and we discuss the information qualitatively. Nonetheless, some quantitative details to aid readers’ comprehension are also provided.

Sample

The students that took part in the study were those enrolled in both subjects: Foreign Language Culture and its Didactics (FLCD) and Foreign Language and its Didactics (FLD). Thus, the type of sampling that has been applied is non-probability sampling of a purposive nature as all the students that answered the questionnaire were those who took part in Step 2 ‘Task Development’ and Step 3 ‘Students’ Learning Situation’. The sample consisted of 13 students. Their mean age was 22.53 and, out of the total, 38.5% defined themselves as female and 61.5% as male.

Instrument

The questionnaire has been created as an instrument to gather the undergraduate students’ perception on the tasks carried out within the two subjects. It encompasses 32 questions, out of which 27 are close-ended and 5 are open-ended. The questionnaire was fulfilled by students in class once they had finished all the practice, that is, once they had performed the tasks designed by the teacher and conducted the classes they had developed (Steps 2 and 3 described above). However, the questions students answered made them reflect upon the three parts of the process, namely, before starting to work on the three short stories, while working on the stories (during steps 2 and 3) and after finishing the whole process.

Data analysis and discussion

We proceed to discuss the participants' answers to the questionnaire in the order in which they were asked, beginning with students' responses to close-ended questions and finishing with the open-ended ones. Firstly, as regards the questions about the preliminary phase, namely, before students began working on the short stories (Step 2), the vast majority of students (92.3%) claimed that before starting the practice they had read or worked on stories in English; however, 53.8% of the participants stated that they had not been in contact with stories in English from more peripheral contexts, for instance, those that show a reality which is not typical of the U.K. or U.S. In this preliminary phase, almost half of the students (46.2%) did not know different types of activities to work on stories in EFL classes, but most students (76.9%) confirmed they got very much interested in the stories and tasks put forward by the teacher (commenting on photographs, listening to the story, creating a chat between mother and daughter, etc.).

Before starting the practice (Step 2), only 53.8% of students were interested in addressing issues such as gender equality or social inequality through stories in English; nonetheless, almost all students (92.3%) got highly interested in these cross-curricular contents during the first class. Furthermore, through the tasks students fulfilled, their interest in literature in English has risen (as confirmed by 61.5% of the participants) and their interest in addressing cross-curricular contents has increased to a high degree (69.2%). To the aim of this study which tries to foster response-ability through transnational women's literature, it is particularly relevant to consider that all students believe it is highly important to deal with the cross-curricular topics mentioned above at university level. Besides, all participants consider that (within the time constraints we had to do the tasks) we managed to address the stories in a responsible way, applying Haraway's (1988) terminology.

Secondly, as regards the process of designing the learning situation by the students (Step 3), almost all participants (92.3%) admitted that, while developing the learning situation, they addressed the cross-curricular topics they had selected by means of the stories and that teamwork, creativity and critical thinking were considerably fostered. All the students in the study claimed that they got closer to problems that prepared them for their future reality as teachers. With respect to designing materials, all the participants used ICTs or some audio-visual resources and 69.2% confirmed they had created a teaching resource. As to communicative oral skills in English, all students admitted they had put them into practice to some degree.

Thirdly, considering students' perception of the whole process, 84.6% of students stated that through the tasks their interest in addressing gender issues (for instance, gender stereotypes) in their future teaching profession has risen considerably. Moreover, all students admitted they developed competences and skills for their professional work as teachers through the tasks.

When asked about some of the competences from the subjects' teaching guides, all students of the subject FLD stated that the Specific Competence 3, which refers to addressing language learning situations efficiently in plurilingual contexts and critically assessing texts of diverse scientific and cultural domains, has been highly fostered. In the case of the subject FLCD, all students confirmed that General Competences 25 and 27, which refer to carrying out language learning situations in plurilingual contexts and to developing learning spaces that account for gender equality, equity and human rights have been enhanced.

With respect to the overall practice, most of the students 84.6% perceived that the tasks developed together with the rest of the class (Step 3) have been highly useful and that they were motivated to do high-quality work. The participants' level of satisfaction with the activities put forward by the teacher was the following: 76.9% highly positive, 15.4% medium and 7.7% low. The students' level of satisfaction with the activities put forward by the rest of their classmates was high (92.3%) and medium (7.7%) and the level of satisfaction with the activities students put forward with their collaborative group was high (84.6%) and medium (15.4%).

As regards the five open-ended questions, the first one asked students what cross-curricular contents (including SDGs) they had addressed in their work. Students confirmed they worked on equality in general, gender equality, social inequality, self-esteem and social cohesion and they pointed out SDG 4 "Quality education" and SDG 5 "Gender equality".

In the second question students had to identify what aspect of the learning situation they had designed had been more complex for them. Many participants mentioned delivering the class in English due to their poor oral skills in the FL. Students also pointed at creating the activities, completing the written document before the deadline, connecting vocabulary to the main topic, consulting the local regulations, and adapting the texts and the topic to young students so that they enjoyed the tasks. Here is an example testimony of Student 8 "adapting the contents and developing the activities have been complex for me because I believe they are processes where the level of the students must be taken into account together with students' interests. Also, designing activities is a process that is particularly hard to me".

Question number three asked students what aspect of their learning situation they liked the most. The vast majority of students mentioned carrying out the tasks in class so as to check how the tasks could be performed and how their classmates participated and showed interest in them. Other aspects they mentioned were group work, creative task design, cooperative work and the possibility to learn about diverse cultural contexts. For example, Student 9 said that they enjoyed "the oral presentation because when you start you are always nervous but then, as time passess, you forget about that and everything is fine".

Question four inquired students about what aspect of their learning situation they liked the least. Most students mentioned they did not like checking the basic knowledge, specific competences and assessment criteria in the local regulations. Some other students pointed at designing the tasks according to the topic and the time constraints, coming up with creative tasks and talking in English. For example, Student 4 mentioned "designing the activities and adapting them to a lower level than that of our class".

Finally, students were asked about how they thought this practice could help them in their future professional career. They claimed that it helped them to gain more fluency, to learn by trial and error so as not to make the same mistakes in the future, to create varied tasks that enhance students' motivation, to gain experience in the teaching practice, to benefit from the constructive feedback given by the classmates and the teacher, to open up to new ideas and resources to deal with gender equality and cultural issues in class. For instance, Student 11 stated that "this practice could help us to integrate activities related to gender equality in class" and Student 13 commented that "these activities will help us to treat topics which are not so visible but that are necessary to cover in education in a playful and dynamic way. In the future we could search for texts by these women authors we didn't know and adapt them to our needs."

Conclusions

In this contribution we aimed at fostering response-ability in EFL while improving communicative competence. We have worked on short stories by transnational women authors in English to explore the cultural and identity issues that we can draw from their narrative texts. We have detailed how we planned and organised the practice in class as teachers of Higher Education with undergraduate education students. We have also described students' original didactic proposals to work with their future Primary School students and we have discussed students' feedback on the whole practice.

As observed in the 'Students' feedback' section, the results point out that the participants value the practice in positive terms. Their interest in working on short stories by transnational women authors and the cross-curricular contents (such as, gender equality and social inequality) has highly risen during the classes. Students enjoyed the experience and felt it was useful as they became aware of the need of dealing with these issues at university level for later taking them to the Primary School context.

Based on the challenges of today's societies, the support given by the regulations and the results of this study, the authors feel the need to continue promoting this kind of practices in EFL classes. It would be interesting to back this proposal by working collaboratively with teachers from different fields in Higher Education since students showed they welcome practices that involve contributing to a fairer society. A future line of action could focus on creating a bank of resources for teachers in Higher Education as well as detailed guidelines for adapting authentic literary materials to Primary School children.

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