Global Literacy Project with Schools in the USA and Portugal

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During the IASL conference in Rome this past summer, I had the opportunity to establish a connection with a group of passionate Portuguese librarians. Fatima Bonzinho, the inter-council Coordinator of the school libraries network in Portugal (RBE) introduced us and facilitated our communication. Recognizing the potential for collaboration, we decided to embark on a joint reading project aimed at connecting our students and fostering a love for literacy.

Utilizing communication tools, such as WhatsApp for planning and photo sharing, we coordinated our efforts. To facilitate student introductions, I employed Flipgrid, providing an interactive platform for them to share more about themselves.

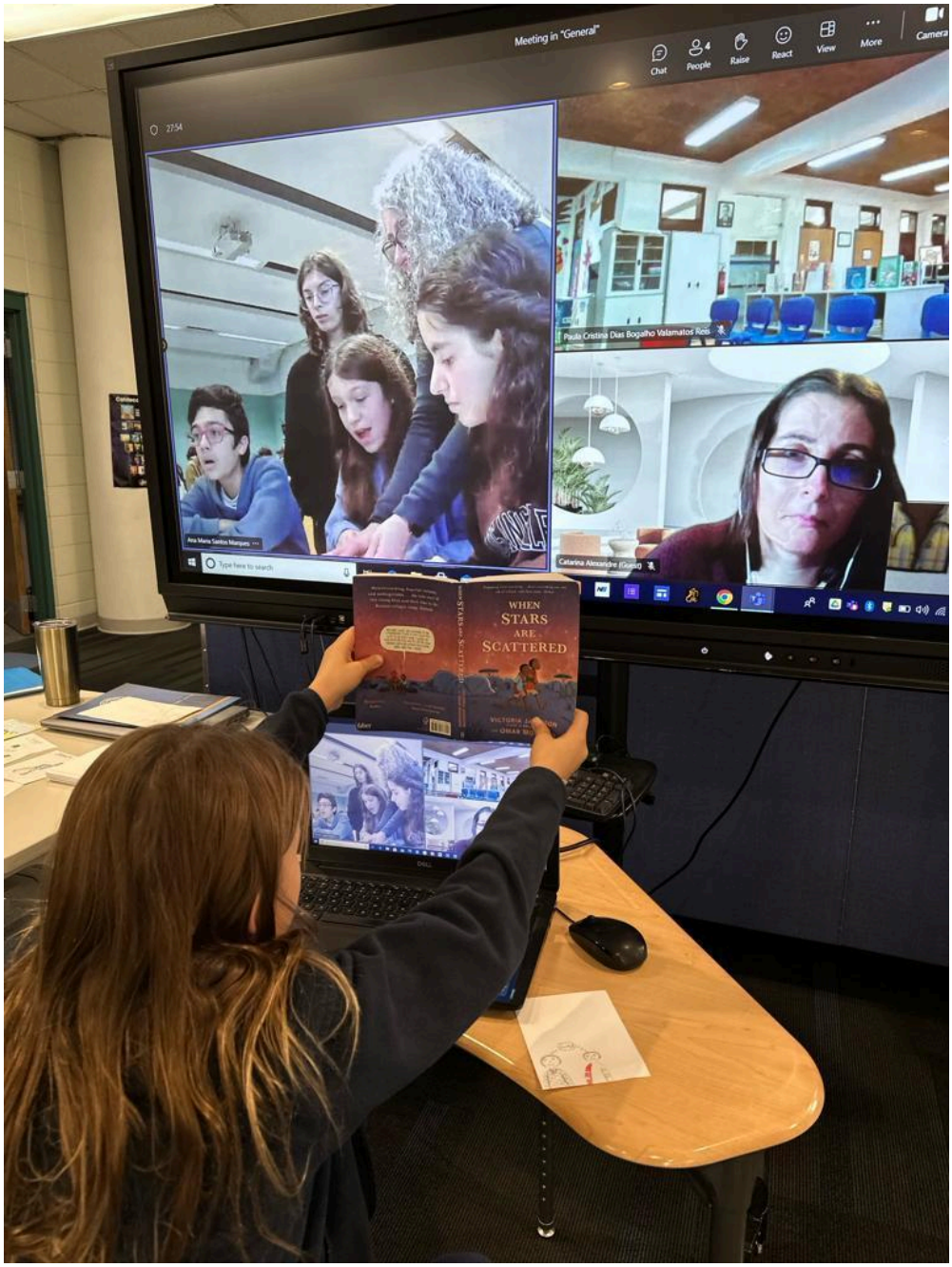
Our planning and virtual interactions took place through Zoom and Microsoft Teams, allowing for both large group sessions and more intimate gatherings with small groups of students. Paula Valamatos Reis, based in Portugal, contributed significantly by creating a comprehensive Wakelet containing valuable information about our respective

schools and the chosen book. This curated resource serves as a repository for the diverse works produced during this project.

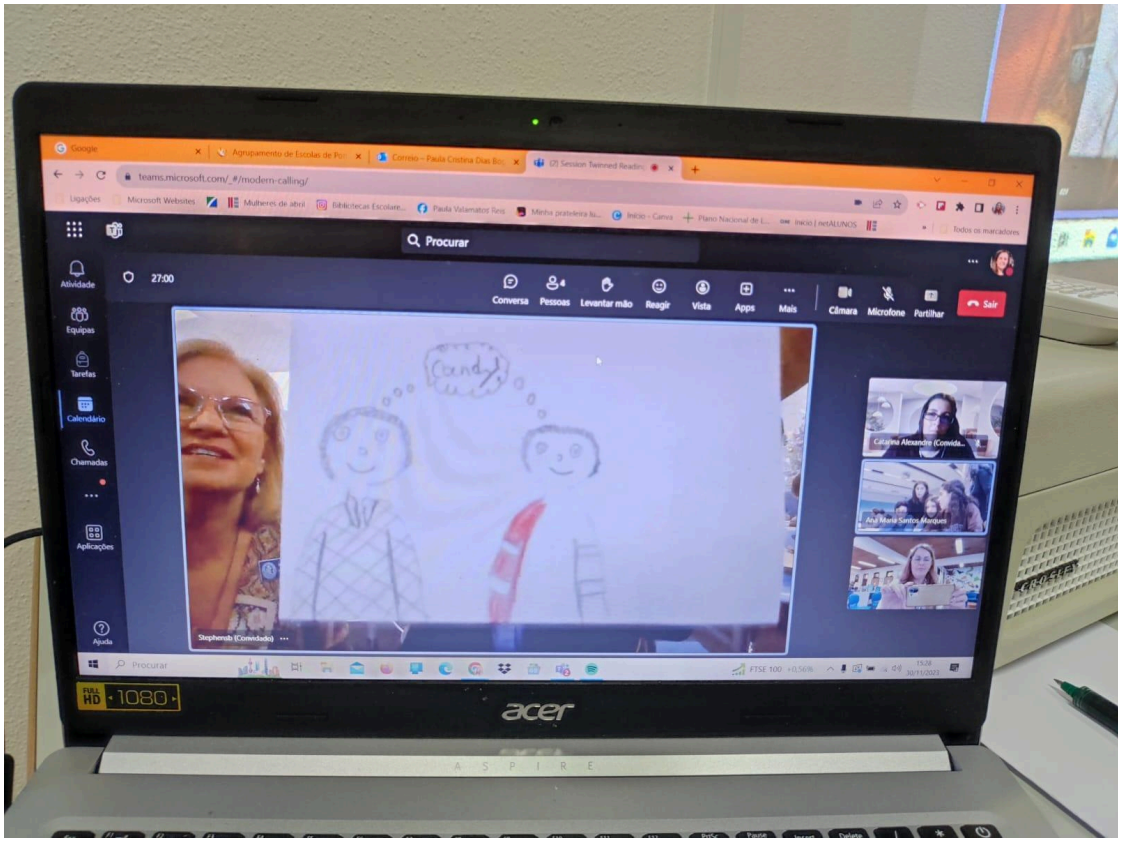
To further engage our students, Ana Marques crafted a Padlet where they could share weekly reflections on their reading experiences. Our chosen book, *When Stars are Scattered* by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed, served as the focal point for our bi-weekly virtual meetings over a span of two months.

In the culminating week, students not only shared their inspirational reflection projects but also surprised each other with culturally rich songs in their respective languages. These musical exchanges added a vibrant and personal touch to our project, reinforcing the diverse cultural backgrounds represented within our collaboration.

This unique initiative not only promoted literacy but also fostered a sense of unity among students across geographical boundaries, demonstrating the power of technology in facilitating meaningful connections in the realm of education. Our collaborative effort stands as a testament to the potential for innovative, cross-cultural learning experiences.



A student from the United States is sharing her character drawing from the book. Teacher librarians Paula Valamatos Reis and Ana Marques are shown.



Students shared their character drawings and reflections by holding their work up to the computer screen. Middle school librarian, Brenda Stephens, is shown on the left.



Students in the United States sang our school Alma Mater and Christmas songs. The students in Portugal sang a patriotic song, "Grândola, Vila Morena" by José Afonso.