

An analysis of the Portuguese National Reading Plan: from the theoretical and program framework to the local and everyday practice

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PRESENTATION GOALS



- To present the Portuguese National Reading Plan (NRP):
 - The social and political context of its development
 - The main goals
 - The strategic guidelines

- To present the research: the case study of NRP as a Portuguese policy for literacy promotion among adolescents
 - The procedures of data collection and analysis
 - Some results: whether the main goals for the school context are or are not being achieved and what are the facilitating/constraint factors of the NRP implementation

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE PORTUGUESE NATIONAL READING PLAN (NRP) DEVELOPMENT



Created in 2006 by Portuguese Government and relaunched in 2017 until 2027

- The spread of a discourse of a 'non-reading' and its (socioeconomic) consequences
- The needs to encourage children and young people to read, to read for pleasure and to intensify their contact with books
- The creation of a national Network of School Libraries
- The 'problematic' results of the Portuguese population in the International literacy assessments, especially in PISA – 2000, 2003, 2006
- The policy ambition to change reading promotion practices in schools

NRP MAIN GOALS AND STRATEGIC GUIDELINES (2006-2016)



Main goals

- To 'raise literacy levels' of the Portuguese people in the international assessments, especially in PISA
- To enhance reading habits among the population, more specifically, among the school-age population

Strategic guidelines

- Creation of reading-friendly environments
- Promotion of the classroom guided reading
- Implementation of reading promotion activities in formal and informal contexts
- Mobilization of all educational players (including teachers of all disciplines, family and community) for reading promotion activities
- Establishment of partnerships and networks
- Interaction with teachers and students through a digital interactive platform
- Launch of awareness and dissemination campaigns
- Improvement/expansion of school libraries resources
- Development of research on reading

THE 2017-2027 NRP FRAMEWORK



What is similar?

- **The main goals**
 - “To promote the pleasure, the habits and the skills of reading of the Portuguese [school] population”
- **Some of the strategic guidelines**
 - Especially the ones related with the reading for pleasure and the libraries improvement
- **Some of the proposed activities**
 - It is reinforced the interest in the reading promotion activities
- **The literacy view**
 - The emphasis on the ‘literary reading’ and the importance of reading skills on the socioeconomic development of the country.

What is new?

- **The widening of the target audience**
 - Aiming at including parents, adults, private schools higher education system
- **The importance given to writing**
 - It is foreseen the implementation of writing activities by using, for instance, digital technologies
- **The inclusion of other disciplinary areas**
 - It is foreseen the implementation of activities in articulation with science, visual and technological education, and ICT
- **The greater openness to the digital technologies**
 - Not only through the development of activities for students by using digital resources, but also through the approximation to other governmental measures such as Portugal INCoDe2030

THE CASE STUDY OF NRP AS A PORTUGUESE POLICY FOR LITERACY PROMOTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS



Why study National Reading Plan?

- It is the only Portuguese policy measure explicitly developed in order to develop reading and writing skills of children and adolescents

Goals of the study

- To understand if the main goals of the NRP for the school context are being achieved
- To highlight the facilitating/constraint factors of the NRP implementation

PROCEDURES OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

1. Application of a **questionnaire**:

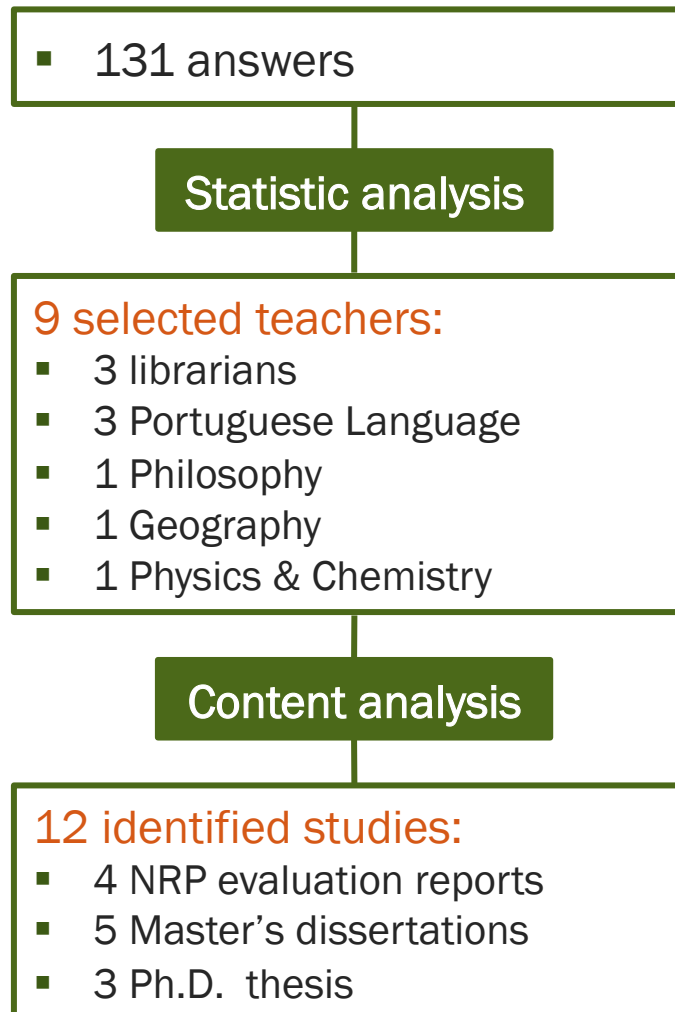
- to know the teachers' level of knowledge and involvement with NRP – basic (2nd/3rd cycles) and secondary teachers of all disciplines, working in schools across the country

2. Conducting **interviews**:

- teachers which, in the questionnaire, showed a very good level of knowledge and involvement with NRP

4. Constitution of a *corpus* of **existing research studies**

- about NRP carried out between 2006 and 2019, through desk research.



Categories of analysis

- Knowledge of the NR
- Involvement with the NRP and its activities
- Changes of practices
- Changes of conceptual attitudes concerning reading/literacy
- multidisciplinary
- Student's results

THE IMPACT OF NRP IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT: LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND INVOLVEMENT OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

- The level of NRP **knowledge by teachers** is “sufficient”
- Only **50%** of the teachers **use to participate in the NRP activities** carried out in schools (mainly Language teachers and Librarians)
- The activities most known and carried out in schools are: **Reading Week; National Reading Competition and Read+**
- The activities “are organized almost exclusively **by the school library** within the Reading Week” and/or by the Portuguese **Language teachers**
- NRP is “**being almost forgotten**” in schools
- Teachers **do not know the 2017-2027 NRP Framework**

Little knowledge and involvement

Not aligned with official discourse:

- “The proportion of teachers and educators involved (...) is quite significant”

THE IMPACT OF NRP IN SCHOOLS: CHANGES OF PRACTICES AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY

- Teachers acknowledge (in the **first years** of the NRP):
 - “an **increase of book requests** by students, mainly to take to the classroom, but also in some cases to take home”
 - “an **increase of the use and visits to the school library**”
 - “a greater presence of the **books in classroom**”
 - teachers “put the **NRP recommendations into practice**”

↓

Aligned with the official discourse:

- “increase of the book requests and the greater number of users of School Library”; “intensification of reading practices”

- a **decrease of these dynamics and practices** over the years

- “There is no such thing as multidisciplinary not and even multidisciplinary!”
- ↓

Not aligned with official discourse:

- “the participation (...) of areas such as (...) Sciences, Physical Chemistry, History, Visual and Technological Education, ICT”

Some impact on school and teachers’ practice (at the beginning), **but nowadays less and less relevant**

THE IMPACT OF NRP IN SCHOOLS: CHANGES OF CONCEPTIONS/ ATTITUDES AND STUDENT'S RESULTS

- Students read less and less and that they don't like reading
- The NRP didn't affect very much the attitudes and conceptions on reading of teachers; indeed, they continue to value a 'literary reading view' as the NRP:
 - "we cannot conceive a good scientist if he doesn't have a good mastery of the literature. (...) the literature is essential for any knowledge area"
- The teachers of other subjects than Language and also, in some cases, the school doesn't value reading neither the NRP; their major concerns are the national assessments and the compliance of the curriculum.
- "There may have been some improvement" in student's results, "But (...) it's not significant"

Very limited impact on the attitudes and conceptions on reading of school, teachers and students

Not aligned with official discourse:

- "students' interest in reading and the pleasure in reading will have been reinforced"
- "greater awareness of the importance of reading skills"
- "significant improvement in pupils' literacy and literacy skills and (...) school results"

CONCLUSION: WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE FACILITATING AND CONSTRAINT FACTORS OF THE NRP IMPLEMENTATION



Facilitating factors

- The **diversity** of the proposed **activities** (at least, at the beginning)
- The provided **guidance** for teachers, libraries and schools for reading activities implementation, including the list of books
- The **similarity** between **teachers' practice and NRP guidance** and principles
- The more **systematic** and frequent **work with books** (not only with excerpts)
- The enrichment of the libraries and schools with **reading resources**
- The promotion of the **library and its importance**
- The relative increase of **reading books interest** (at least, at the beginning), mainly during the Reading Week, and perceived through the increase of the book loans and library visits
- The **possibility of strengthening** the reading culture of school

Constraint factors

- The teachers' concern with the **compliance of the curriculum**
- The school concern with **national assessments**
- The centrality of the **textbooks** in the teaching practice
- The relative **teachers' resistance** (others than librarians and language teachers) to value/accept **literacy as cross-curricular**
- The (still) **unawareness** of the parents and community **on literacy importance**
- The **stagnation** of the type of the activities (they are always the same or similar)
- The **scarce dissemination** and the training on the NRP and its activities
- The **weak follow-up and support** by NRP coordination
- The **insufficient funding** for the activities
- The **narrow teachers' understanding on the NRP and its goals**
- The (narrow) **literacy view** (a 'literary view of reading literacy') underlying the developed activities

THANK YOU.

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