

READING COMPETENCE AND TEACHER TRAINING

JULIE SCANLON & SARAH MCNICOL

MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

This report outlines issues around reading competence and teacher training compiled from the individual partner reports provided. It starts by exploring the concept of literacy in each country and keys to the promotion of literacy in educational centres, before describing issues around teacher training - both pre-service and in continuing professional development contexts.

1. THE CONCEPT OF LITERACY

There are some differences, but also many similarities in the concept of literacy as understood in each of the partner countries. The following section outlines the approaches to literacy taken in each country, followed by a summary of key messages in relation to this project.

England

Understanding the concept of literacy in England is to understand the potential tensions of the skills-based curriculum and the home-school divide.

The Skills Based Curriculum

Brian Street (1984) described an 'autonomous model' of literacy, that is, one which privileges particular literacy practices familiar to dominant western cultures (Street and Lefstein, 2007). It is a model in which literacy has autonomy from the particular social contexts in which it is employed (Lankshear, 1987), and is therefore viewed as a set of decontextualized skills to be learnt, for example phoneme-grapheme correspondence when learning to read. As such skills are highly valued, individuals' performance can be assessed and monitored. These skills, once learnt, can be transferred to any situation that requires an individual to read and write. The trend of conceptualising literacy as a set of skills, the acquisition of which will go on to boost cognitive practices and improve the individuals' employment prospects, is questionable yet remains firmly in place (Street, 2012). It could be argued that the autonomous model of literacy has been, and continues to be evident in England's national testing policy and various Primary National Curricula for English (DfES/WO, 1988; DfE/QCA, 1999; DfE, 2013) over the past twenty-five years with the most

recent version of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) emphasising word recognition skills over language comprehension skills for children in Key Stage 1.

The alternative to the autonomous model is the 'ideological model,' which suggests that literacy varies from one context to another and from one culture to another and is, therefore, culturally sensitive. It considers how individuals use literacy and adapt their practice in relation to their needs and the power structures within society and can, therefore, capture the negotiations of power involved in reading and writing (Bartlett and Holland, 2002). The ideological model of literacy addresses the fact that literacy learning does not just take place in the formal context of schools; instead it is a key aspect of everyday life and concentrates on the 'overlap and interaction of oral and literate modes, rather than stressing a great divide' (Street, 1984: 3). In doing this, it also recognises that there are multiple literacies, literacies that do not conform to the dominant written print text of highly valued 'schooled literacy' practices.

It is important to state that the Primary National Curriculum (2013), whilst emphasising the Simple View of Reading and a systematic synthetic phonics approach to teaching and developing early reading skills, also stresses the importance of children reading for pleasure.

The Home School Divide

A number of studies have focused on comparing literacy practices in the domains of school and home. Such studies have tended to focus on three main groups; young children who are in nursery or starting school (Dyson, 2013; Levy, 2008, 2009; Marsh, 2003), bi-lingual children and their families (Gregory and Williams, 2000; Kenner, 2004; Pahl, 2002) and adolescents and the use of technology (Carrington, 2009; Dowdall, 2006).

Cairney and Ruge (1998: 30) found that school literacies dominated the home setting and that literacy practices associated with school were the practices most valued by parents who were often 'goal directed'. According to Moje et al (2009: 415), there has been a 'recent identity turn in literacy studies' which they recognise as being motivated by two key factors. Firstly, the shift from an autonomous view of literacy to recognising literacy practices as being socially situated. This shift has led theorists to recognise that people's identities mediate, and are mediated by, the texts they read, write and talk about (Lewis and del Valle, 2009; McCarthy, 2001; McCarthy and Moje, 2002). However, it would appear that teachers and schools still

do not always take into account the literacy practices of children outside school (Heath 1981; Cairney and Ruge, 1998; Bradford and Wyse, 2013).

Greece

"Γραμματισμός" is a relatively new term in the Greek vocabulary and, while it includes the meaning of literacy, it is broader than that. It is a translation of the English term literacy, which has also been translated into Greek as "εγγραμματισμός" (see Ong 1997), which does not simply refer to the ability to read and write.

The role of the teacher in developing a love of reading is different from the traditional role of a knowledge transmitter as the teacher is called to act as a mediator and co-reader (Givalou, 2008), as an assistant and collaborator, trying to create 'reading motivation' in students (Malafantis, 2008). The new Curricula for the Teaching of Modern Greek Language and Literature in the Primary School (Curriculum, 2011) encourage the development of practices and activities related to books and especially literature. They highlight the potential, guiding, animating role of the teacher. Major steps to enhance the reading environment have recently been made in Greece through various programmes e.g. innovative actions to strengthen students' Reading for Pleasure and ongoing initiatives of the National Book Centre. In addition, the interest of publishing houses or bookstores in children's books helps to create a climate of Reading for Pleasure. The media - mainly newspapers and some magazines with book presentations, book reviews, etc., but also the state television with shows dedicated to books - actively participate in shaping such a climate. The family also plays a primary role, regardless of its educational and financial level, by providing children with opportunities to read, even if they do not consciously cultivate a positive attitude towards reading. Research has shown that children of privileged social strata become acquainted with reading practices earlier than children of lower strata, while the role of the mother is always important.

Italy

The etymology of the Italian word "*leggere*" (to read) suggests the multiple pedagogical implications connected to this action. "*Leggere*" derives from the Latin word "*legere*", that means to pick up and collect something. So, first of all, reading is *to gather* something (information, study contents, stories, etc.) from the world all around us, and it underlines how this action goes far beyond the simple mechanical repetition of words and sounds. Also, the Latin root - *leg-* is based on the term *lògos*, that is intrinsically associated with the concepts of "word", "speech", "cause", "reason", "intellect". Therefore, reading can be considered as a multidimensional action that involves the whole person (child), who "raccoglie" (picks up) and "coglie" (gathers) the profound meaning of what he or she reads. Therefore, reading

is a process that aims not only to understand a written text or an image, but -more broadly -to become an instrument of knowledge and growth, both individual and collective.

In accordance with this premise, *“Reading Literacy is understanding, using and reflecting on written texts, in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential and to participate in society. This definition goes beyond the basic notion of reading literacy as decoding and literal comprehension: it implies understanding, using and reflecting on written information for a wide range of purposes. Thus, it takes into account the reader’s active and interactive role to gain meaning from written texts”*.

Reading impacts on all learning areas, and school success is connected with the ability to correctly decipher a verbal and/or written message (both from phonological and semantic), so as to acquire sense, knowledge and competencies. As well as teaching children how to read and write, a teacher should become an **active agent for the reading education promotion**.

According to Gianni Rodari, “a good teacher should always keep in mind that neither books are prescribed nor imposed: books are suggested and proposed to help young readers also to discover their beauty”.

In addition to this wide extended concept of reading education, there is the Literacy, which is more strictly linked to the process of concrete skills acquisition for reading and writing and their use for personal developmental, growth and studying purposes.

In Italy, the national curriculum for Preschool and for the First Cycle of Education including Primary School (and First Grade Secondary School) is prescribed by the D.M. 254 of 16/11/2012 - and subsequent legislative integrations - and by the related National Indications by the Ministry of Education (MIUR). For Childhood Education, the National Indications set out specific *“Fields of Experience”* that offer a set of objects, situations, images and languages that refer to the symbolic systems of Italian culture able to evoke, stimulate and accompany children’s learning. These Indications also provide teachers with the main educational goals to be pursued.

When children arrive at the Preschool, they already have significant linguistic expertise - but with differentiated skills - to be carefully observed and enhanced. In school, children develop further linguistic competences through different activities such as: learning to listen to stories; talking with adults and peers; playing with the

language they use; experiencing the pleasure of communication; and starting to explore written language.

Preschools are responsible for promoting mastery of the Italian language in all children, whilst also respecting the use of the language of origin in the case those born outside Italy. Indeed, children often live in multilingual environments and, if properly guided, they can familiarize themselves with a second language, becoming progressively aware of different sounds, tones and meanings. Teachers carry out appropriate educational activities aimed to extend the children's lexicon and to the correct pronunciation of sounds, words and sentences, as well as to promote the practice of different verbal interaction modalities (listening, speaking, dialoguing, explaining), also contributing to the development of logical thought and creativity.

Within Primary Education children acquire instruments and competencies for *functional literacy*: they increase their own oral expression expertise and learn how to read and write, gradually perfecting and enriching their lexicon and mastering related techniques. Functional literacy is placed in the wider frame of the *social and cultural literacy* acquisition promoted by School. Social and cultural literacy is linked with language and code acquisition related to the Italian culture and to new media, in a plurilingual and intercultural context which includes valuing mother tongue, school language, and European languages.

Reading practice mastery, in particular within the first cycle of education (including Primary School), requires particular techniques and strategies taught by teachers, including: reading aloud, proper oral expression with adequate lexicon and written text comprehension. Reading capacity, indeed, is fundamental in order to search for and elaborate information and widen knowledge. Reading is promoted as a way to develop fantasy and creativity by introducing children to different tales and stories from diverse civilizations and time periods.

Portugal

Lopes (2005: 96) states that reading and writing skills are “essential cognitive instruments not only for school success but also for social success, as we live in a society in which literacy demands are greater and greater”. Since the 1960s, “the concept of literacy emerges to define the process of acquiring specific written language skills that occur before formal reading instruction” (Viana et al., 2014: 17). Benavente, et al. (1996) state that literacy: “...is not about knowing what people learn or do not learn, it is to know what, in life situations, people are able to use”.

In recent times, the notion of citizenship has placed even more emphasis on literacy. Simple actions such as understanding a doctor's prescription, knowing how to consult a bus timetable, correctly asking for information, handling taxes, knowing how to calculate interest, and so forth, are small, but important, tasks in everyday life (Benavente et al., 1995). They determine our independence and autonomy, which is valuable in everyone's life, especially in children's education.

Therefore reading and writing are part of daily life. "However, neither reading nor writing in the alphabetical system are discovered, they're learnt." (Beard et al., 2010: 5). It is important to remember that written text comprehension...depends on many external factors, such as the oral language domain, cognitive skills and world knowledge, among others" (Viana, et al., 2014: 9).

According to Silveira (2013: 55), "Reading is a remembering and reconstructed process. Reading skills are the result of a learning process, of activities, and continuous repetitions of neurological hemispherical and inter-hemispherical connexions. The (skilled) reader is one who gradually acquires, by repetition, the ability to decode a message to understand it and interpret it".

From another point of view, the teaching of reading and writing is concerned with educational policies: curricula with objectives, contents and methods; the assessment of acquired skills; inspections of schools and, above all, to the need to define a strategy capable of rapidly raising the level of reading and writing to goals that place Portugal above the average of developed countries. This perspective stresses the importance of applying a reading method that facilitates learning and it is a good vehicle for acquiring this skill, that is, "methods science and experience have shown to be more suited for learning: phonic methods." (Beard et al., 2010: 7).

The Curricular Guidelines for Pre-school Education (OCEPE, 2016 - Orientações Curriculares para a Educação Pré-escolar), as established in the Framework Law (Law No. 5/97, 10th February), state that the education of children between the ages of 3 years old and entry into compulsory education is considered to be the first stage of basic education in the lifelong education process. In the Domain of Oral Language and Approach to Writing, a particular emphasis is placed on oral communication and linguistic awareness.

The Curricular Programme and Goals of Portuguese for Primary School, 1st cycle (2015), is structured in four reference domains, namely, Orality, Reading and Writing,

Literary Education and Grammar, which reinforce and develop the skills acquired during pre-school education, giving prominence to Literary Education, in which students learn to interpret gradually more complex literary and non-literary oral and written texts. In the 1st and 2nd grades of Primary School Education, children learn how to read short narrative, informative and descriptive texts, as well as poems and cartoon strips. In the 3rd grade, children work on news, letters and invitations, culminating in the 4th grade with the reading of descriptive texts, encyclopaedia and dictionary texts.

Spain

As Colomer points out (1993), reading is not the sum of a set of skills, but rather a holistic and global process of the interpretation of texts. In this process, skills act in relation to one another. The reader actively constructs their interpretation based on their knowledge and interrelation with the written text. The reader acts intentionally by directing their attention to the different aspects of the text and constantly monitoring their understanding to detect possible errors and correct them (Colomer, 2000). Reading is, therefore an interactive process between the reader and the text, a process by which the reader tries to satisfy (obtain pertinent information for) the objectives that guide their reading (Solé, 1987). Thus, for students, reading will only make sense to the extent that it meets their needs, responds to their interests and provides them with something of use.

Writing and reading skills are tools for acquiring culture (reading in different formats, writing texts with different structures, or learning languages from an early age). Therefore, programmes endorsed by current regulations need to develop competence in linguistic communication, offering strategies and methodological resources that complement the school curriculum with support measures to improve reading, writing and oral language. For example, at national level, the *Orden ECD / 65/2015* describes competence in linguistic communication as the result of communicative action within certain social practices, in which the individual acts with other interlocutors and through texts in multiple modalities, formats and supports.

The regulations further state that educational centres will promote reading programmes in which families participate, in order to promote the acquisition of reading habits by students outside the school context (*Instrucciones 24/7/2013* on reading treatment). Moreover, educational centres will favour the constitution of reading communities in which students, teachers, families, municipalities and entities and people from the school environment may participate, for which training

and cultural extension activities may be organized, both in school hours and in those dedicated to complementary and extracurricular activities. Therefore, educational centres need to develop participatory reading programmes and support the creation of reading communities, in order to achieve a taste for reading, the habit of reading or strategies for searching for information beyond compulsory schooling.

Primary data collected

As part of this initial research, the majority of partners¹ collected primary data through two methods: 1) a questionnaire for Early Childhood and Primary Education students and 2) interviews academics and educators. Table 1 outlines the characteristics of the samples from which data were collected by each partner. These data are analysed in the remainder of this report.

Table 1: Overview of data collected

	Portugal	Spain (Granada)	Spain (Malaga)	Italy
Early years students	28 students	63 students	317 students	N/A
Gender distribution	96% female; 4% male	87% female; 13% male	97% female; 3% male	N/A
Course level	68% BA; 32% Masters	48% Year 2; 37% Year 3; 15% Year 4	41% Year 2; 25% Year 3; 34% Year 4	N/A
Primary students	24 students	119 students	362 students	74 students
Gender distribution	96% female; 4% male	71% female; 29% male	67% female; 33% male	84% female; 16% male
Course level	50% BA; 50% Masters	27% Year 2; 26% Year 3; 47% Year 4	29% Year 2; 35% Year 3; 36% Year 4	27% Year 1; 14% Year 2; 35% Year 3; 19% Year 4; 5% Year 5
Total questionnaire sample	52 students of Escola Superior de Educação João de Deus (ESEJD)	182 students of the University of Granada (Melilla Campus)	679 students of the University of Malaga	74 students from universities of Florence, Bologna and Padova
% of sample with other nationalities	None	Not given	2%	None
Other languages spoken	65% English 56% French 17% Spanish 12% German	Not given, although Berber/Tamazight, French and Arabic widely spoken	Not given	100% English 57% French 3% German 3% Spanish 3% Portuguese 3% Dutch

¹ MMU, the UK partner was unable to collect primary data due to a) restrictions in place through the university's ethical committee and b) Covid-related school and university closures which made the original plan to collect data from a case study school impossible.

In the case of Greece, a survey was distributed to students of Primary Education and students of Early Childhood education, from the following universities: Democritus University of Thrace, University of Patras, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Metropolitan College and University of Crete, but no further information about responses is available, so this is not included in Table 1.

Number of stakeholder interviews	Not given	N/A	13	10
Types of stakeholders interviewed	Directors of education centres	N/A	Education Inspectors (5), senior academics (2); School Libraries Coordinator; school leaders (5).	Pedagogists (2); School Librarian; School Manager; Town Councillor; Coordinator of Reading Education projects (2); former Primary School Deputy Director; Managing Director for Educational Services (2)

2. KEYS TO PROMOTE READING COMPETENCE IN EDUCATIONAL CENTRES

Through interviews with key stakeholders and/or secondary research, partners collected data to identify the factors that help to promote reading across early years and primary education. There was a particular focus on practices that can help to involve families and communities in children’s reading development.

Note: As indicated above, different types of stakeholders were involved in each country, so the factors identified may differ depending on the perspectives represented.

Key factors that contribute to the promotion of reading in schools

The following are the main factors felt to contribute to the promotion of reading in schools identified within the partner reports.

- Modern, well-equipped, and appropriately-used, school libraries (Italy, UK, Malaga)
- Making reading part of daily school life (Italy, UK)
- Taking a holistic approach to the teaching of reading (Italy)
- Providing adequate spaces/environments for reading within classrooms (e.g. reading corners) (Italy, Portugal, UK)
- Encouraging teachers -and/or others- to act as reading promoters or champions (Italy, Malaga, UK)
- Reading aloud (and paying attention to tone of voice, eye contact and providing opportunities for children to express themselves) (Italy, UK)

- Ensure teachers have an up-to-date knowledge of children's literature and of reading promotion strategies (Italy, Malaga)
- More time for reading - within timetable and extra-curricular (Italy)
- Links with public libraries (Italy, UK, Malaga)
- Involving the whole education community in reading promotion (Portugal, Malaga, UK)
- Promoting reading for pleasure (Portugal, Malaga)
- Reading stories, tongue twisters and poetry (Portugal)
- Participating in reading/literary competitions (Portugal, UK, Malaga, Italy)
- Holding special events (e.g. World Book Day, book weeks, Word Poetry Day) (UK, Malaga)
- Holding storytelling time/book groups (Portugal, UK, Malaga)
- Provision for the development of reading in law (Malaga, UK)
- Designing a coherent, functional and meaningful Reading Plan (or reading list) for students, with the age-appropriate use of texts that promote interest and critical skills in students (Malaga, UK)
- Planning activities that support use of the school library and involve families (Malaga, UK)
- Author/storyteller visits (UK, Malaga)
- Reading displays (UK, Italy)
- Bookstore visits (UK, Malaga)
- Book reviews and recommendations (UK)

Involving families to promote reading outside the school context

The following are the main ways in which schools involve families to promote reading outside school, as identified within the partner reports.

- Identifying a time of day when the family reads, either individually or in a shared way (Malaga)
- Taking advantage of reading opportunities in everyday family life (e.g. trips, recipes, adverts, news (Malaga, Italy)
- Tutoring or reading workshops for parents/carers to provide guidance, advice and ideas on how to promote reading habits from home (Malaga, Italy, UK)
- Recommended reading lists to help parents select books for their child (Malaga)
- Encouraging parents/carers to let their children see them reading (Malaga, UK)
- Involve families in classroom storytimes (Portugal)
- Highlight reading activities at parents' evenings/open days (e.g. library open, performing stories in small groups) (Portugal, UK)

- Sending home short texts to encourage shared reading experiences (e.g. read loudly, read slowly, read laughing, games and rhymes) (Portugal, UK)
- Collaboration with public libraries, e.g. library visits to select a book to read at home with parents, or children visiting the library with their parents (Portugal, Italy, UK)
- Competitions/sponsored read (Portugal, UK)
- Creating stories involving interaction between students and their families (Portugal)
- Newsletters for families (UK, Portugal)
- Involving parents/carers as volunteer reading buddies or to help in the school library (UK)
- Links with local bookshops (UK)
- Involving parents/carers in displays/book reviews (UK)
- A parents' shelf in the school library (UK, Portugal)
- Book exchanges - students can take a book home and bring another to replace it (Portugal).

Ways in which schools can promote reading through partnerships with other organisations in their local community

Additional ways in which schools can work with other bodies to promote reading within families and communities were described by some partners. These approaches included the following.

- Co-ordination between public and school libraries (e.g. regarding book purchases or reading promotion activities) (Malaga, Italy)
- Creation of reading groups (Malaga, Italy)
- Reading marathons and sponsored reads (Malaga)
- Author/storyteller/performer/publisher visits (Malaga, Portugal, Italy)
- Jointly organised competitions, readings, performances etc (e.g. involving schools, public libraries, parents' associations) (Malaga, Italy)
- Participation in externally-funded projects or national projects (Malaga, Italy, Portugal)
- Arranging public library access cards (Portugal)
- Visiting the public library for storytelling (Portugal)
- Book fairs (Portugal).

Specific examples of good practice from each country to encourage reading are provided in Appendix A.

Measures to reinforce and support competence in linguistic communication to respond to the specific needs of the students and ensure the coordination of all members of the teaching team that serves the student

England

In 1998, the UK government set up a National Strategies development programme, designed to provide training and targeted support to teachers through a three-tier delivery model, comprising the Department for Education (DfE) and its national field force, local authorities deploying their own advisers and consultants, and then schools and settings in England. The Primary National Literacy Strategy was the first of the strategies to be implemented and this implementation saw significant improvement in teacher subject and pedagogical knowledge related to the teaching of literacy, as well as pupil outcomes in reading and writing. According to the DfE (2011), 2250 reading recovery teachers were trained to provide expert coaching support in their own and other schools. Children who fell behind in reading in Year 1 were supported through the Every Child a Reader (ECaR) programme. The National Strategies left behind a legacy of high quality training materials, teaching and learning frameworks and well-trained teaching professionals (DfE, 2011).

Since 2011, there has been a move away from central provision and initiatives in order to allow schools to determine their own needs and support. This has been evident in the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics, where schools have sourced commercial phonics reading schemes from an approved list providers (as recommended by the Department for Education), and the training to support the use of those schemes in the classroom.

The current need is for both qualified teachers and teachers in training to fully understand the spaces and places children engage with beyond school in order to improve the teachers understanding of possible barriers to learning and to appreciate children's different cultural and linguistic contexts and competencies. Universities/ teacher education providers can play a significant role in educating and supporting the profession in relation to this issue.

Italy

Although the Italian National Indications of 2012 for the Preschool and Primary School national curriculum include strong recommendations on reading education, there are no systematized official training programmes to support this. In the main, professional updating is entrusted to the individual teacher. Whilst there has been a growing awareness in recent years around reading education, leading to a significant interest in training activities in this area, there remains a need for these activities to

be improved and better organised to ensure greater coordination between the various educational agencies (schools, training centres, universities etc.) and to provide a more complete and comprehensive training plan corresponding to the real and concrete teachers' needs on these issues.

Although schools are equipped with a 'standard' supply of resources to support reading, some interviewees would like additional tailored specific resources (this includes not only financial resources, but also human resources, e.g. librarians, experts in reading education). Furthermore, the majority of interviewees would like further resources to support possible linguistic communication difficulties faced by children (and families) from fragile socioeconomic contexts or with a migrant background.

Portugal

Institutions such as the *Plano Nacional de Leitura* and municipal libraries emphasise the importance of reading, but do not always succeed in integrating these projects in schools. Schools face challenges due to lack of staff to provide individual support. The curriculum is extensive and teachers lack the time to listen to all students and share ideas as well as to listen to different text interpretations. Curricular plans are complex and are not well connected to other subjects.

It is, of course, difficult to change teachers' mentalities, habits and working methods. In addition, there are insufficient programmes promoting reading, alongside a lack of professionals to stimulate libraries and promote reading activities.

Spain

The 'Centre's Linguistic Project' is one of the measures put in place to involve the entire teaching team. This integrates linguistic and non-linguistic subjects, having implications for both the taught content and teachers.

Other activities include: daily readings; debates; written compositions; radio workshops; oral exhibitions; dictation; tongue twister poems and riddles; active methodologies to promote the use of languages (discursive, artistic/creative, musical, bodily); or projects from different areas or subjects. Further measures could be: reducing school hours to increase teacher coordination hours; increasing human resources to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio; improvements teacher training, etc. There are also various support programmes that can be put in place if student difficulties are detected.

Although the educational administration does what it considers possible with the available resources these are limited - and demand is increasing. Teachers are still excessively reliant on textbooks, so other issues for student development are not always prioritized.

Time devoted to reading in schools on a daily basis

England

In terms of explicit reading activities, there is a significant difference between children in the Foundation Phase, Reception Class and Key Stage 1, and those children in Key Stage 2. In Reception and Year 1, children will have a daily phonics lesson (30 minutes to 1 hour depending on the school's context). This may continue in Year 2. Children also engage in guided and shared reading activities. There is no specified time allocation. Children in Key Stage 2 will usually read daily for 20 minutes. During this time, the teacher will work with groups of children for guided reading. It is recognised that reading is a requirement to access the whole curriculum. Therefore, access to a variety of texts and incidental teaching takes place throughout the school day. Teachers would appreciate more time to read to children in order to build a love of reading.

Italy

Many interviews agreed that reading time should be increased within school hours, and perhaps also by taking advantage of extra-curricular activities, especially when reading practice is focused on recreational and creativity purposes, and aims to promote a love for reading.

Portugal

It is important to remember that reading is relevant to all subjects and is not restricted to literature. Perhaps for this reason, there are differing opinions about whether sufficient time is devoted to reading activities in schools.

Spain

Under current regulations, education providers must guarantee the inclusion of a reading time of one hour, or the equivalent of an hourly session, in all the courses of the stage of basic education. In addition, debate and oratory are encouraged in these sessions. It is recommended that this is complemented by reading at home.

Coordination between the Early Childhood Education and Primary stages of education

England

The Government has set clear policy on how Early Years progress is reported to schools, which is as follows. An EYFS Profile document must be completed for each child moving from the Foundation Stage to Year 1. This must be completed no later than 30 June. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile must reflect: ongoing observation; all relevant records held by the setting; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers must be given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities.

Children also have an opportunity to visit their primary school as part of the transition from nursery/home.

Italy

Italian preschools and primary schools are already quite well-connected since they both report to the Ministry of Education. Therefore, there are already numerous pedagogical and structural connections between the two educational levels concerning reading and writing promotion.

A ludic approach to the reading is considered important within preschool, and from the continuity perspective, this method could be later gradually included at primary school. Another suggestion is for pre-primary and primary schools in the same region to initiate an "educational dialogue"- facilitated and managed by their related pedagogical coordinators - choosing common themes to work on that support children in their transition to the next step in education. A further idea is the promotion of peer reading initiatives, creating continuity projects where older children (Primary) can read aloud to younger children.

Portugal

In Portugal, the OCEPE (2016) promotes students' passage from preschool education to primary school education. In public kindergartens children visit their future

primary school before the academic year ends to let children get to know their future school space, teachers and educational activities. However, in João de Deus educational centres, both kindergarten students and primary school students share a common space. This physical proximity promotes integration. Kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers plan and share knowledge about students before they move on to the next grade. Teachers have meetings to coordinate and to facilitate integration. In addition, there is a specific spelling book methodology (João de Deus Reading Method) which provides a common ground between kindergarten and primary school teachers as they both use the same approach. Trainees also play an important role promoting integration, organising drama performances and other kinds of activities across both stages.

Spain

In general, co-ordination is insufficient in teaching practice. However, in the academic year 2017/18 a programme was launched on an experimental basis, to coordinate actions and design of the programmes for key areas and subjects (Spanish Language and Literature, Mathematics and Foreign Language); coordinate the selection of textbooks; establish guidelines on the common use of material; exchange information on methodologies used, with special emphasis on correction, evaluation and qualification; and exchange of information on study techniques.

3. INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

BACKGROUND TO INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING IN EACH COUNTRY

The following section outlines the approaches taken to initial teacher training in each partner country.

England

Over 30,000 individuals enter Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in England each year through several routes. Key distinctions between the different ITT routes are whether they are university- led or school-centred, and whether the trainee pays tuition fees or receives a salary.

In the academic year 2019-20 there were 34,543 new entrants to ITT (DfE, 2019). The majority (29,580) were new entrants to postgraduate initial teacher training. Only 4,963 were new entrants to undergraduate ITT (DfE, 2019). The total number of Primary/EY applications for 2019/20 totalled 12,482.

The policy of recent governments has been to move toward “an increasingly school-led ITT system.” In line with this, the general trend has been an increasing proportion of trainees entering school-led routes. In the academic year 2019-20, 55% of those entrants were on school-led routes, whilst 45% were enrolled on University PGCE courses (DfE, 2019; Foster 2019).

Initial Teacher Training and School Placements

There is a Government requirement for all ITT courses that lead to an award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) to include time spent teaching in at least two schools and in adjacent Key Stages. This means that trainees will experience teaching across the age phase for which they will qualify. University-led training requires all trainees to spend at least 120 days in placement schools (Foster, 2019).

During their placement in a school setting, students will undertake a number of activities in relation to the teaching of early reading in order to ensure that they meet the relevant Teachers’ Standards. Before moving on to planning, delivering and assessing literacy lessons for a whole class, students will undertake tasks to develop their understanding of the concept of literacy.

The requirement for Qualified Teacher Status

Teachers in local authority maintained schools in England are required to have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The same general requirement to hold QTS is *not* in place for mainstream academies, free schools or for independent schools. Of the 453,000 full-time teachers employed in 2018, 5% (21,500) were unqualified, i.e. they did not hold QTS.

A number of Primary ITT courses (undergraduate and postgraduate) offer Early Years Specialism routes. Such courses also lead to the award of QTS, allowing graduates to lead early years provision in maintained nursery and primary schools.

Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT) provides specialist training covering the education and care of children from birth to the age of five. Training is delivered by accredited ITT providers. Successful EYITT trainees are awarded early years’ teacher status (EYTS). They are not eligible for the award of QTS at the end of their course. As a result, individuals with EYTS are not able to lead classes in a maintained nursery or primary schools. Early years teachers (EYTS) can lead teaching in all other early years settings in the private, voluntary and independent sector (sectors).

There are several routes leading to the award of EYTS. Trainees can undertake an undergraduate course, which allows them to earn a degree in an early childhood related subject and EYTS combined, normally over a three-year period. Postgraduate EYITT courses can be undertaken through the graduate entry route. These courses usually take one year. Trainees are assessed against the Teachers' Standards (Early Years). These operate in parallel with the current Teachers' Standards, and have been designed specifically for early years teachers. In 2019/20, 352 new entrants (99%) started on a postgraduate route to EYTS and 2 trainees (1%) started on an undergraduate route to EYTS.

Content of ITT programmes

The ITT Core Content Framework sets out "the minimum entitlement of all trainee teachers". Providers are expected to "ensure that their curricula encompasses the full entitlement described in the...Framework, as well as integrating additional analysis, and critique of theory, research and expert practice as they deem appropriate." The Framework is presented around the Teachers' Standards (2012). In May 2019, the Government announced that an expert group had been appointed to review the content of teacher training and recommend ways to align this with the Early Career Framework.

Initial Teacher Training providers are expected to ensure that the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics is firmly embedded into their courses. However, ITT providers recognise the importance of raising trainee teachers' awareness of alternative strategies to encourage both the skills required and a love of reading.

Non-Graduate Route to Early Years' Teaching

The *Diploma for the Early Years Workforce (Early Years Educator) CACHE Level 3* is not a degree qualification and does not provide Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS). However, holders of the qualification are able to work as practitioners in nurseries and primary school reception classes. Applicants for this qualification must be at least 16 years of age and hold GCSE (or equivalent) in English language or literature and mathematics. Providers of these courses will focus on children's health, wellbeing, and development. Courses focus on learning through play and supporting emergent numeracy and literacy skills. In addition to the academic element of the programme, students undertaking the course will spend time on placement in two settings, i) working with children aged 0-5 and ii) working

with children aged 5-7 in order to develop an understanding of progression and transition.

Greece

Early Years training

There are two types of early childhood professionals in Greece: (a) pre-primary teachers (kindergarten teachers) who deal with children at the age of 4 and 5 years old, and (b) infant-toddler pedagogues and care providers (vrefonipiokomoi) who deal with children under the age of 4. The training of early childhood professionals follows two distinct paths according to the age of children they are going to deal with. The kindergarten teachers are educated in universities following a 4 year Bachelor programme. They follow a model of initial teacher education which provides, concurrently, a general component and a professional component accompanied by a practicum. Kindergarten teachers with a Bachelor's can work in public and private kindergartens. However, in order to work in public kindergarten they should have succeeded in national written exams. The infant-toddler professionals are educated in Higher Technological Educational Institutes following a 4 year higher education programme and they can work in infant-toddler centres and child centres for children under the age of 4. They follow a consecutive model of training which provides a professional component of one semester practicum with the form of paid placement in a centre-based day care institution. There are also a number of early childhood practitioners who are trained as infant-toddler care assistants and they work in centre-based day care. These practitioners are trained for two years either in post-secondary vocational training centres supplemented by an accreditation from the Organization for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK), or in vocational high schools (EPAL) with a specialty in early childhood care (the second choice of training assistants ended in 2013). The minimum required level to become a qualified teacher is Bachelor level (ISCED 5). Length of training is 4 years (European Commission/ EACEA/ Eurydice/Eurostat 2014, p. 101). Continuing Professional Development is not obligatory (Eurostat 2014: 104-105).

Primary training

Greek primary education teachers are educated in universities, in various Departments of Pedagogy across Greece. Admission to the university departments is based on the final test score of candidates to the Panhellenic Exams (panelinies exetasis), held each year. Teacher recruitment is mainly based on written exams held by the Higher Council of Staff Selection (Anotato Simvoulío Epilogis Prosopikou - ASEP). For primary education teachers, the tests examine knowledge of Modern Greek Language and Literature, Maths, Science and pedagogic competency. A table of successful candidates, based on their exams score and other qualifications, sets those eligible for recruitment in public schools. Primary

teachers are educated in Universities follow a 4 year Bachelor programme which focuses both on scientific knowledge and pedagogic competency. All primary teacher trainees are required to have a practicum in schools for a semester or more. Important teacher competences are a) the assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each individual student they teach, b) selection of appropriate instructional methods and c) instruction in an effective and efficient manner. According to the latest ASEP exams for recruiting teachers (Presidential Decree in the National Gazette 515/08-10-2008), the important competencies examined focused mainly on scientific and theoretic knowledge of candidates and their pedagogic competency. Specifically, for primary teachers, literacy expertise regarding: knowledge of the literacy curriculum, basic linguistic concepts, phonological, morphological and grammatical knowledge, composition of written texts and genres, and the role of literature in the curriculum. All teachers are also examined on their pedagogic competence, which covers:

- 1) General Pedagogic Methodology: current teaching approaches, issues of everyday school life, school as an institution within society
- 2) Specific Pedagogy of literacy lessons: ability to solve teaching and pedagogic problems within a given classroom setting, ability to make teaching plans by using modern pedagogic approaches.

Italy

According to Law N.169 of 30 October 2008, the academic course “*Scienze della Formazione Primaria (LM-85 bis)*” is the only study pathway officially and legally recognized at

national level to become teachers both in Early Childhood and Primary Education.

The

Degree Course is a unique training qualifying pathway, lasting 5 years, without subcourses expressly devoted to Childhood Education or to Primary Education. It promotes an advanced level of theoretical-practical training in the field of psychopedagogical, methodological-didactic, technological and research disciplines, covering all aspects that characterize the teacher's professional profile of both educational levels (3-6; 6-11).

In addition to academic courses, students are also required to attend specific workshops and internships in preschools and primary schools. These help to bridge academic teachings and their internship experience. Workshops are generally focused on practical-experiential topics, related both to *subject teaching* (for Primary School) and to *the fields of experience* (for Preschool), as required by the National Indications. Within their daily activities in schools, students are led, coordinated and monitored both by a specific University Tutor

and by school designated personnel, specifically appointed to this assignment. The available number of the open training positions within the Degree Course is defined by MIUR, so aspiring teachers have to pass a specific preliminary test for the access to University. The legal title acquired at the end of the University course is the only recognized licence to work as teacher in Childhood or Primary Education.

Literacy acquisition and, more generally, reading education, are treated macro-topics within the academic course such as methodologies for the reading and writing learning process, lexicon enrichment, and the development of textual skills. Students acquire and strengthen their abilities to select and propose appropriate teaching materials (texts), according to children's learning needs, and learn how to base their choices on criteria such as readability and comprehensibility.

Portugal

In 1911, laws were issued to establish the basis and goals of pre-school education, but also the training programmes and teachers' qualifications. In 1920, the first kindergarten teacher training course in Portugal was established: *Curso de Didáctica Pré-Primária pelo Método João de Deus*. The private sector therefore took the initiative and, in 1943, a kindergarten teacher training course based João de Deus methodology was inaugurated by Associação João de Deus, in Lisbon. Other private institutions were later founded to train kindergarten teachers, but the majority were run by religious institutions.

Once legislation for the educative system was finally issued (*Lei n.º 46/86, de 14 de outubro*), the basic qualifications to become a kindergarten teacher or a primary school teacher became a four-year training course (BA). This situation drastically changed after the Bologna process, which defines 30 ECTS and reduced one semester of tuition.

In 1862 the *Escola Normal Primária de Marvila*, was opened in Lisbon. This training course for primary school teachers, was open only to men. Four years later, *Escola Normal Primária*, a similar training course just for women opened, also in Lisbon.

In the 1980s *Escolas Superiores de Educação* (ESE) were created and a new training paradigm was designed. Teacher training was a three-year course and teachers would get a BA degree. In the 1990s, the kindergarten teachers' course and the primary school teachers' courses both became four-year courses. *Escolas Superiores de Educação* restructured their primary school teachers' technical courses into a BA as well.

The model for initial teacher training is structured into two different cycles: an initial phase (1st cycle) when the specialized scientific training is given and in a second phase (2nd cycle) the theoretical and practical pedagogic training is given.

The general teacher training (kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers - 1st and 2nd cycles) leading to BSc with Honours is still the current model. The 1st cycle is a BA in Primary School Teaching. The 2nd cycle of studies is the Masters Professionalizing Degree, consisting of 90 ECTS (3 semesters) for kindergarten teachers training, and 120 ECTS for primary school teacher training - 1st cycle, with the curriculum divided into Teachers Training, General Vocational Training, Specific Didactics and Teaching Practice Supervision (Decreto-Lei n.º 74/2014, de 14 de maio).

In Portugal, responsibility for course approval /accreditation is under the control of A3ES - *Agência para a Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior* that establishes the number of vacant places for new students, taking into consideration the needs of the education system, the rationalization of training offer and the national politics of human resources training (Decreto-Lei n.º 74/2014, 14th May, art.º 10º, n.ºs 1 e 2).

Spain

The training objective of the Education Degree is to combine basic general knowledge and transversal knowledge related to teachers' comprehensive training, together with the competencies and specific knowledge aimed at their incorporation into the workplace. It is the responsibility of the University to design Study Plans that revolve around the development of competencies which have been established as fundamental. The Curriculum for the Degree in Early Childhood and Primary Education is structured in four blocks of content: Basic training, Mandatory disciplinary didactic modules, Practicum (includes the Final Degree Project), and Optional training. Each block is organized into Modules, subjects and disciplines.

3.1. Early years education students' skills

Portugal, Malaga and Granada asked early years teaching students about the skills or competencies they had acquired during their training². Although the questions asked were similar, it is not possible to make direct comparisons between countries

² Greece also surveyed teaching students, but reported the results as 'strengths' and 'weaknesses' so these are not included in this table, but are noted where relevant in the conclusions below.

because different scales were used³. The table below therefore lists the skills identified as strengths and weaknesses overall in each country or region.

³ In fact, there are a variety of ways in which a ‘top 5’ and ‘bottom 5’ might be identified. To make the reporting between countries as consistent as possible in the circumstances, the highest percentages of ‘yeses’ and ‘noes’ are used here.

Table 2: Skills of early years students

REPORT OF READING COMPETENCE AND TEACHER TRAINING. MAY 2020

		Portugal	Spain (Malaga)	Spain (Granada)
Top 5 skills (strengths)	1	=I understand that the daily dynamics in Early Childhood Education changes according to each student, group and situation, and I know how to be flexible as a teacher.	I understand that the daily dynamics in Early Childhood Education changes according to each student, group and situation, and I know how to be flexible as a teacher.	I understand that the daily dynamics in Early Childhood Education changes according to each student, group and situation, and I know how to be flexible as a teacher.
	2	= I am able to acquire literacy training to learn about children's literature and its teaching.	I know the objectives, curricular contents and evaluation criteria of Early Childhood Education.	I understand the difficulties that students can have learning our official language if they do not have it as their mother tongue.
	3	= I know the objectives, curricular contents and evaluation criteria of Early Childhood Education. = I know how to use techniques and resources so that students can express themselves orally and in writing.	I am able to acquire literacy training to learn about children's literature and its teaching	I would like to encourage reading in students, and encourage them to express themselves through written language.
	4	= I know of, and would know how to use, resources for reading stimulation.	I have a critical and autonomous attitude about knowledge, values and public and private social institutions.	I know the objectives, curricular contents and evaluation criteria of Early Childhood Education.
	5	= I have a critical and autonomous attitude about knowledge, values and public and private social institutions. =I am able to critically analyse and incorporate social issues that affect family and school education	= I am able to design, plan and evaluate teaching and learning processes, both individually and in collaboration with other teachers/ professionals in the centre. = I am able to collaborate with the different sectors of the educational community and the social environment	I am able to design, plan and evaluate teaching and learning processes, both individually and in collaboration with other teachers/ professionals in the centre.
Bottom 5 skills (weaknesses)	1	I understand the learning process of reading and writing, as well as its teaching.	I am able to deal effectively with language learning situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts.	I know and am able to apply information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the classroom to develop reading competence.

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2	I know and have mastered oral and written expression techniques.	I understand the transition from oral to writing, and I know the different registers and uses of the language.	I have mastered the language and literacy curriculum of this stage, as well as the theories about the acquisition and development of the corresponding learning.
3	I know the developmental phases of language learning in early childhood; I am able to identify when children are not making appropriate progress and recommend an intervention.	I know and am able to apply information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the classroom to develop reading competence.	I am able to deal effectively with language learning situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts.
4	I have mastered the language and literacy curriculum of this stage, as well as the theories about the acquisition and development of the corresponding learning.	I have mastered the language and literacy curriculum of this stage, as well as the theories about the acquisition and development of the corresponding learning.	I have a critical and autonomous attitude about knowledge, values and public and private social institutions.
5	I am able to deal effectively with language learning situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts.	I know and have mastered oral and written expression techniques.	I am able to critically analyse and incorporate social issues that affect family and school education

In summary, skills or competencies identified as strengths by all groups of students surveyed were:

- I understand that the daily dynamics in Early Childhood Education changes according to each student, group and situation, and I know how to be flexible as a teacher.*⁴
- I know the objectives, curricular contents and evaluation criteria of Early Childhood Education.*

Skills or competencies identified as weaknesses by all groups of students surveyed were:

- I am able to deal effectively with language learning situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts.*
- I have mastered the language and literacy curriculum of this stage, as well as the theories about the acquisition and development of the corresponding learning.

⁴ * indicates that this statement was also identified as a strength/weakness in the report from Greece.

3.2. Primary school education students' skills

Portugal, Malaga, Italy and Granada asked primary education students about the skills or competencies they had acquired during their training³. The questions asked differed somewhat from country to country depending on the course students were studying for. Furthermore, it is not possible to make direct comparisons between countries because different scales were used. The table below therefore lists the skills identified as overall strengths and weaknesses in each country or region.

Table 3: Skills of primary education students

REPORT OF READING COMPETENCE AND TEACHER TRAINING. MAY 2020

		Italy	Portugal	Spain (Malaga)	Spain (Granada)
Top 5 skills (strengths)	1	I am aware of the importance of the school library as a resource centre for reading, information and lifelong learning.	=I am able to acquire literary training and knowledge of children's literature. =I am able to encourage reading and encourage students to express themselves through written language.	I am aware of the importance of the school library as a resource centre for reading, information and lifelong learning.	I am able to encourage reading and encourage students to express themselves through written language.
	2	I would like to encourage reading in students, and encourage them to express themselves through written language	= I am able to relate education to the environment, as well as cooperate with families and the community.	I am able to encourage reading and encourage students to express themselves through written language	I know the curricular areas of primary education, the interdisciplinary relationship between them, the evaluation criteria and the body of didactic knowledge around the respective teaching and learning procedures.
	3	I know the difficulties in learning the official languages of students of other languages.		I know and I am able to apply information and communication technologies in the classroom.	I am able to relate education to the environment, as well as cooperate with families and the community.
	4	I know of, and would know how to use, resources for reading stimulation.	= I know the curricular areas of primary education, the interdisciplinary relationship between them, the evaluation criteria and the body of didactic knowledge around the	I am able to design, plan and evaluate teaching and learning processes, both individually and in collaboration with other teachers and professionals of the centre.	I understand the process of learning written language and its teaching.

	5	<p>I understand the difficulties that students can have learning our official language if they do not have it as their mother tongue.</p>	<p>around the respective teaching and learning procedures.</p> <p>=I am able to design, plan and evaluate teaching and learning processes, both individually and in collaboration with other teachers and professionals of the centre.</p> <p>=I am aware of the importance of the school library as a resource centre for reading, information and lifelong learning.</p> <p>=I know and I am able to apply information and communication technologies in the classroom.</p> <p>=I know the process of learning written language and its teaching.</p> <p>=I am able to identify and plan the resolution of educational situations that affect students with different abilities and different learning rhythms.</p> <p>=I am able to critically analyse and incorporate social issues that affect family and</p>	<p>I know the curricular areas of primary education, the interdisciplinary relationship between them, the evaluation criteria and the body of didactic knowledge around the respective teaching and learning procedures.</p>	<p>=I understand the basic principles of language and communication sciences.</p> <p>= I am aware of the importance of the school library as a resource centre for reading, information and lifelong learning.</p>
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REPORT OF READING COMPETENCE AND TEACHER TRAINING. MAY 2020

Bottom 5 skills (weaknesses)	1	I know and am able to exercise the functions of tutor and counsellor in relation to family education in the period 6-12.	I am able to have my students express themselves orally and in writing in a foreign language.	I am able to have my students express themselves orally and in writing in a foreign language.	I am able to have my students express themselves orally and in writing in a foreign language.
	2	=I am able to design, plan and evaluate teaching and learning processes, both individually and in collaboration with other teachers and professionals of the centre.	=I am able to deal effectively with language learning situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts.	I am able to deal effectively with language learning situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts.	I am able to deal effectively with language learning situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts.
	3	= I know and am capable of exercising the functions of tutor and counsellor in relation to family education in the period 0-6 years.	=I know the organization of primary and primary schools and the diversity of actions that comprise their operation.	I know the difficulties in learning the official languages of students of other languages.	=I know the school curriculum of languages and literature. =I know and am able to exercise the functions of tutor and counsellor in relation to family education in the period 6-12.
	4	= I am able to have my students express themselves orally and in writing in a foreign language.	=I know and am able to exercise the functions of tutor and counsellor in relation to family education in the period 6-12.	I know and am able to exercise the functions of tutor and counsellor in relation to family education in the period 6-12.	
	5	= I am able to identify and plan the resolution of educational situations that affect students with different abilities and different learning rhythms.	I know the school curriculum of languages and literature.	I know the current proposals and developments based on learning skills.	I know the current proposals and developments based on learning skills.

Skills or competencies identified as strengths by the majority of groups of students surveyed were:

- I am aware of the importance of the school library as a resource centre for reading for information and lifelong learning.*⁵
- I would like to encourage reading in students, and encourage them to express themselves through written language.*
- I know the curricular areas of primary education, the interdisciplinary relationship between them, the evaluation criteria and the body of didactic knowledge around the respective teaching and learning procedures.

Skills or competencies identified as weaknesses by the majority of groups of students surveyed were:

- I know and am able to exercise the functions of tutor and counsellor in relation to family education in the period 6-12.*
- I am able to have my students express themselves orally and in writing in a foreign language.*
- I am able to deal effectively with language learning situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts.*

3.3. Activities done by early years trainees during training

Portugal, Malaga, Italy and Granada asked early years education students about the activities they and their tutors had carried out during their training⁵. The questions asked were similar in each country or region. The table below gives the **average percentages** across the four partners, as well as the **percentage range of responses**⁶.

⁵ Again, the survey was also conducted in Greece, but the results were reported only as strengths and weaknesses. It is therefore not possible to include these in the table, but they are reflected in the general conclusions where relevant.

⁶ Some partners included a 'both' option. We have combined this with the tutor and student responses in the comparison table to enable us to include data from the four partners, but it should be noted that respondents in some countries may have responded differently as they were not given the same options to choose from.

Table 4: Activities reported during early years training

REPORT OF READING COMPETENCE AND TEACHER TRAINING. MAY 2020

Statement	Tutors	Students	Not done
Relationships are established between written language and oral language.	83.7% (70.3%-92.8%)	55.7% (29.7%-71.3%)	4.6% (0%-7.4%)
An initial evaluation is carried out at the beginning of the school year.	78.8% (48.2%-97.3%)	29.6% (0%-92.6%)	9.0% (0%-17.7%)
The classroom is organized according to the needs of students with different learning corners and workshops.	79.8% (92.8%-70.4%)	34.1% (16.2%-50.0%)	9.8% (2.7%-18.0%)
Creative and playful approaches to reading are used	74.6% (67.6%-89.3%)	51.1% (27.0%-63.0%)	9.9% (0%-17.7%)
There is a designated time in class for learning to read	82.4% (79.6%-85.8%)	36.4% (13.5%-55.6%)	9.9% (5.4%-12.3%)
Reading activities are carried out in large groups.	74.9% (61.1%-89.3%)	48.5% (18.9%-61.1%)	11.6% (2.7%-18.5%)
Particular moments in the classroom are analysed to evaluate the reading development of my students.	79.6% (74.0%-92.8%)	20.6% (10.7%-37.0%)	13.3% (2.7%-22.2%)
There is co-ordination between teachers to schedule and / or carry out reading activities with our students.	78.6% (70.4%-83.8%)	18.8% (7.1%-31.5%)	15.0% (0%-25.9%)
Reading activities start from a project, teaching unit and / or centre of interest.	75.4% (71.5%-78.4%)	27.7% (16.2%-40.7%)	16.6% (5.4%-21.4%)
Various ICT resources are used in class to carry out interactive reading activities	77.4% (67.8%-84.2%)	38.7% (10.8%-54.2%)	16.7% (13.3%-25.0%)
Families do suggested classroom literacy activities with their child at home.	67.0% (60.7%-73.0%)	17.3% (3.6%-24.1%)	18.9% (5.4%-39.3%)
Information is provided to families to encourage learning to read at home	76.3% (60.7%-89.2%)	16.9% (7.1%-33.4%)	19.7% (2.7%-39.3%)
Reading activities are carried out in small groups.	52.5% (37.8%-64.3%)	55.1% (48.9%-62.2%)	20.2% (0%-36.9%)
At specific times during the school year my students are evaluated with a reading test.	73.2% (51.4%-89.3%)	21.9% (3.6%-31.5%)	21.4% (10.7%-45.7%)
Reading activities are carried out individually.	52.0% (13.5%-71.4%)	53.6% (35.7%-81.1%)	21.8% (5.4%-29.6%)

REPORT OF READING COMPETENCE AND TEACHER TRAINING. MAY 2020

There is a quiet place in the classroom dedicated to individual reading	64.2% (54.1%-75.0%)	28.4% (10.7%-43.2%)	22.6% (2.7%-35.2%)
Groups are organized according to reading level.	68.6% (52.1%-82.1%)	23.5% (10.7%-37.0%)	23.1% (2.7%-45.7%)
Classroom planning is modified according to the needs of the students throughout the school year.	69.3% (25.0%-86.5%)	22.5% (7.2%-36.6%)	25.3% (2.7%-71.4%)
In my classroom, other agents of the educational centre or other professionals participate in actions that support the reading development of my students.	65.3% (50.0%-94.6%)	15.3% (5.4%-26.0%)	30.7% (0%-44.5%)
My students learn to read by following a published textbook.	54.9% (51.8%-59.3%)	24.5% (7.1%-35.2%)	33.9% (18.9%-43.9%)

As the figures for range of responses demonstrate, in many cases there was considerable variation between partners in terms of activities carried out by students and their tutors. Overall, however, the most common activities were:

- Relationships are established between written language and oral language.^{*7}
- An initial evaluation is carried out at the beginning of the school year.
- The classroom is organized according to the needs of students with different learning corners and workshops.
- Creative and dynamic approaches to reading are established.*
- There is a designated time in class for learning to read.*

Less common activities included:

- Classroom planning is modified according to the needs of the students throughout the school year.
- In my classroom, other agents of the educational centre or other professionals participate in actions that support the reading development of my students.*
- My students learn to read by following a published textbook.

However, whilst these activities were most common overall, there were differences between the activities carried out by tutors and students. For tutors, the most common activities were generally those concerned with the overall management and organisation of the classroom:

⁷ * indicates also noted as strengths/weaknesses in the Greek report.

- Relationships are established between written language and oral language (average 83.7%)
- There is a designated time in class for learning to read (average 82.4%)
- The classroom is organized according to the needs of students with different learning corners and workshops (average 79.8%).

Whilst for students, the most common activities were more frequently concerned with supporting individuals and small groups of students:

- Relationships are established between written language and oral language (average 55.7%)
- Reading activities are carried out in small groups (average 55.1%)
- Reading activities are carried out individually (average 53.6%).

3.4 Activities done by trainees during training in primary school teaching.

Portugal, Malaga, Italy and Granada asked primary education students and tutors about the activities they had carried out during their training⁶. The questions asked were similar in each country or region. The table below gives the average percentages across the four partners, as well as the percentage range of responses.

Table 5: Activities reported during primary education training

REPORT OF READING COMPETENCE AND TEACHER TRAINING. MAY 2020

Statement	Tutor	Student	Neither
My students are asked questions while reading texts to ensure their understanding.	69.6% (43.2%-82.2%)	50.0% (42.9%-73.3%)	3.4% (0%-6.9%)
I ask my students questions before, during and / or after reading a text.	63.4% (29.7%-82.2%)	63.4% (39.3%-76.5%)	5.9% (0%-11.6%)
My students use a language textbook.	74.5% (64.9%-86.6)	36.3% (14.3%-63.0%)	7.2% (2.7%-10.5%)
Reading activities are carried out in large groups.	73.6% (68.2%-82.0%)	48.6% (27.0%-67.2%)	7.6% (0%-11.3%)
Activities are planned for my students to summarize and synthesize knowledge after reading	69.5% (54.1%-80.9%)	61.4% (49.5%-70.6%)	8.6% (0%-8.8%)
Reading activities are carried out individually.	56.1% (5.4%-83.8%)	64.2% (46.4%-83.8%)	8.7% (7.1%-10.8%)
Classroom planning is modified according to the needs of my students throughout the school year.	76.3% (72.2%-83.8%)	30.4% (10.7%-47.9%)	9.6% (0%-15.8%)
At specific times during the school year my students are evaluated with a reading test.	68.9% (65.2%-74.8%)	25.6% (3.6%-39.5%)	16.0% (0%-30.9%)
Different reading text analysis techniques are used	62.0% (59.7%-65.5%)	44.4% (32.2%-58.0%)	16.5% (0%-25.4%)
Reading activities are carried out in small groups.	56.3% (35.1%-67.8%)	53.4% (39.3%-62.7%)	18.8% (2.7%-32.9%)
ICTs are used to support the development of linguistic competence.	61.8% (56.8%-66.9%)	43.6% (21.4%-71.4%)	18.8% (8.4%-28.6%)
Groups are organized taking account of reading levels.	67.7% (59.7%-83.8%)	28.7% (10.7%-45.4%)	19.5% (0%-34.0%)
My students are directed readings to support the development of social skills that help to face and resolve conflicts in the classroom.	59.3% (54.1%-63.6%)	35.0% (3.6%-52.1%)	19.7% (0%-28.7%)
My students do activities focused on reading speed aloud and in silence.	56.4% (45.9%-68.1%)	40.2% (10.7%-60.5%)	20.5% (0%-35.7%)
The participation of families in the organization of reading activities is encouraged.	67.2% (53.6%-86.5%)	14.7% (7.2%-28.6%)	21.8% (0%-29.8%)

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Reading activities are based on a joint project with the rest of the curriculum areas.	68.3% (34.0%-94.6%)	27.6% (5.4%-37.8%)	22.3% (0%-39.0%)
Activities are carried out for students to compare texts by format or genre.	59.8% (46.2%-75.7%)	28.5% (21.4%-42.9%)	26.0% (2.7%-49.5%)
My students do activities focused on reading speed in silence.	51.8% (46.4%-58.8%)	34.4% (7.1%-52.1%)	26.5% (0%-43.9%)
Buddying is carried out whereby my students tell stories to students from lower grades.	53.1% (43.7%-70.3%)	19.2% (3.6%-34.4%)	35.1% (13.5%-44.8%)
Paired reading takes place	33.1% (24.3%-40.1%)	38.1% (21.5%-62.2%)	38.9% (13.5%-53.9%)

Once more, there was considerable variation between partners in terms of activities carried out by trainees and their tutors. Overall, however, the most common activities reported by primary trainees were:

- My students are asked questions while reading texts to ensure their understanding.*⁸
- I ask my students questions before, during and / or after reading a text.
- My students use a language textbook.
- Reading activities are carried out in large groups.*
- Activities are planned for my students to summarize and synthesize knowledge after reading.*

Less common activities included:

- My students do activities focused on reading speed in silence.
- Buddying is carried out whereby my students tell stories to students from lower grades.*
- Paired reading takes place.

However, whilst these activities were most common overall, there were differences between the activities carried out by tutors and students. As with early years training, for tutors, the most common activities were generally those concerned with the overall management and organisation of the classroom:

- Classroom planning is modified according to the needs of my students throughout the school year (average 76.3%)
- My students use a language textbook (average 74.5%)

⁸ * indicates also noted as strengths/weaknesses in the Greek report.

- Reading activities are carried out in large groups (average 73.6%).

Whilst for students, the most common activities were more frequently concerned with working directly with individuals and supporting small groups of students:

- Reading activities are carried out individually (average 64.2%)
- I ask my students questions before, during and / or after reading a text (average 63.4%)
- Activities are planned for my students to summarize and synthesize knowledge after Reading (average 61.4%).

4. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PERMANENT TRAINING) FOR TEACHERS

For the five partners for which data are available (with the exception of Primary School teachers in Italy⁹), between 10.1% and 17.5% of teachers (i.e. approx. one in 6 to one in 10) had not attended any training on linguistic competence in the last 5 years. In each case, the modal number of training activities attended was 1-3.

The following section explores the approaches taken to continuing professional development for teachers in each partner country.

England

Support for the professional development for teachers and support staff has been changing rapidly in recent years. Traditionally, continuing professional development was delivered through attendance at in-service training courses and school training events. However in 2016, the UK Government recognised that teachers' professional development should be prioritised by school leadership and highlighted a new standard for professional development consisting of four key aims:

1. Professional development should have a focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes.
 2. Professional development should be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise.
 3. Professional development should include collaboration and expert challenge.
 4. Professional development programmes should be sustained over time
- (DfE, 2016: 6)

⁹ The figure for Italian Primary teachers was 56.6%. This is not included as it is such an extreme outlier from the rest of the data, but it would be interesting to explore possible reasons for this.

This new standard for professional development means that schools are drawing on the many different opportunities for CPD, including the use of commercial short courses, which are often expensive. Schools may therefore send their literacy subject leader to the training and then cascade this to the rest of the staff during dedicated staff meetings or training days in order to embed the approach across the school.

All staff participate in the moderation of phonics, reading and writing tasks and assessments across the school in order to ensure pupil progression. This process is completed either termly or annually and is viewed as professional development for non-specialist staff. Those teachers in academies also work across schools within the group in order to develop their understanding of teaching and learning in different social contexts and to share best practice.

Part 2 of the new standard has resulted in a number of schools and individual teachers opting for postgraduate accredited CPD in the form of Masters degrees or Professional Doctorates (EdD).

Greece

Continuing professional development is optional in Greece. The aims of in-service education and training of teachers (INSET), in Greece, are:

- training focused on the new curricula in Compulsory Education
- training on ways to organise and implement Experimental Actions and Projects, based on the principles of experimental and inquiry-based learning
- training specialised in ICT, drama, music, arts and intercultural education,
- training on the use and application of ICT in the teaching practice.

There are not many initiatives regarding the improvement of the quality of literacy instruction, but there is an increasing attention paid to initiatives for tackling reading difficulties, such as the programme “Screening pupils with learning difficulties - Creation and standardisation of Twelve Assessment Tools” (University of Patras) and the project “Primary and secondary prevention of learning difficulties and speech problems in preschool and school age for all children” (Pedagogical Institute). Those programmes are mostly on a local level, in collaboration with specific schools, rather than on a national level. Another important initiative for Continuous Professional Development of Teachers was the programme Philanagnosia (love for reading). This programme ran for three school years (2011-2014) as part of the literacy curriculum on primary schools, implementing “Philanagnosia” for an hour per week in every grade. It included teacher training and

seminars, support of reading groups in schools under the motto ‘a reading group in every school’.

Portugal

Today's school is no longer the “school of skills, nor the school of content, it is the school in which content, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values are intertwined in the construction of competences much more demanding than the mere repetitive routine”, as set out in the Student Profile and Decree-Law 55/2018 (Pacheco, 2019, p. 5). “The educational commitments and challenges arising, to a large extent, from the enactment of the Decree-laws no. 54/2018 and no. 55/2018, have brought to schools an urgent need to train their staff to respond appropriately to the needs of the school population”.

Italy

Training linked to linguistic skills maybe be felt to be less urgent for teachers than other skills, for example *disciplinary, planning/organizational* and *relational competencies*. Among the most widespread training needs of Primary School teachers are those related to *didactic competencies* that are based on pedagogical, methodological-didactic, psychological, sociological, and anthropological knowledge. These include also useful upgrading on specific teaching methodologies for educational technologies applying (e.g audiovisual, multimedia ICTs, etc.), that acquire ever greater relevance.

Didactic competences also involve the mastery of evaluation procedures. For example, in the Valdarno area, school refresher courses are organized for common thematic area. Teachers follow many refresher courses on emotional education, conflict resolution and the use of ITCs, but few attended courses on linguistic skills.

Spain

In the 1980s, Teacher Training Centres were established in Andalusia as stable platforms for training, innovation and exchange of pedagogical information. Then, from 1992, the First Andalusian Training Plan emerged, conceiving a framework for the organization and coordination of the human and economic resources necessary for teacher training.

The needs and challenges of society changed over time, however, giving rise to the II Andalusian Plan for Ongoing Teacher Training (2003). Over time, the hallmarks of the teaching centres changed, implementing the current III Andalusian Training Plan ten

years later through the *Decreto 93/2013*, which currently establishes the strategic lines focused on:

- I. Improvement of educational practices, performance and educational success.
- II. Continuous improvement and training of teaching staff.
- III. Shared knowledge, research and innovation.
- IV. Educational centres as collaborative learning and training environments.
- V. Teaching of Special Regime (Artistic, Permanent and Languages) and Vocational Training.

The training need of education professionals is not only as a right but as an obligation, not simply for the teacher, but on the part of Educational Administrations and centres. Training plans responding to the promotion of reading and communicative competence focus attention on the use of libraries and the promotion of reading, having a named coordinator of the Reading and Library Plan, as well as a team that helps with certain administrative and management tasks. Teacher Training Centres and certain internal bodies of each centre are able to detect training needs, propose them to the community of teachers, and develop them. In addition, the Andalusian Government has designed the Reading Promotion Plan 2017-2020, under the motto "Reading gives you extra lives", offering training in three routes for participants (technical and organizational tasks in the school library; the use of information and learning resources; and selection of digital resources). In parallel, the Local Educational Authority of Málaga offers two more options are offered: inter-centre library cooperation and promoting reading in a foreign language (English, French, and German).

Schools are provided with technical, documentary and pedagogical advice in relation to reading have through the provincial services, as well as the reference adviser. The educational inspectorate also offers technical advice. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Education of the Andalusian Government have been developing plans to promote reading and school libraries for many years, and the Local Educational Authority has advisers on this matter.

CONCLUSIONS

The following indicate the main conclusions obtained from the analysis and synthesis of data from the six partner reports.

- Teaching the 'skills' of reading, e.g. grapho-phonetic awareness, are prioritised in the 3-7 age group.

- Children of lower socio-economic groupings tend to enter school with a reduced understanding of the concept of reading and the requirements of schooled literacy.
- Only in Malaga and Granada have a mandatory time allocated to teaching reading.
- Narratives are the dominant text type, especially in early years and lower primary school.
- The role of the teacher in motivating children to read for pleasure is a priority highlighted by all partners.
- Opportunities for children to read in and outside of school are common to all partners e.g. sponsored read, author visits, sending books/activities home. Many of these activities relate to schooled-literacy practices being undertaken into the home.
- The school-home-community links suggest that teachers make assumptions about children reading at home and there is little indication of teachers valuing the reading children do outside school that is not directly associated with school.
- Initial Teacher Training weaknesses are highlighted by the majority of groups of students surveyed. These suggest they do not feel adequately prepared to deal effectively with language learning situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts. This suggests that this should be a priority for universities and teacher education.

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APPENDIX A: EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE TO ENCOURAGE READING

Italy

- *The "Bibliobus" experience* done in Terranuova Bracciolini, consisting in a travelling library that stopped not only in the hamlets far from the city centre, but also in the several aggregation local centers to bring and share the books within the local community;
- *Visits to public city libraries (including toy libraries), to printers or publishing houses* to show also how a book "is born and grows" (both for preschool and primary school children, according to their related educational levels).
- *Media-Education pioneer activities for Preschool Children*, promoted by the Florence Municipality⁸. These activities combine the use of some ICTs tools with the reading (e.g. "*I-Theatre*", a technological storyteller to support the thought processes and collective construction of storytelling in Preschool; the "*Image education, media education and digital citizenship*" project, organized in collaboration with the University of Florence (SCIFOPSI) and addressed to the Pedagogical Coordinators for 0-6. Specific paths to be implemented in Preschool have been designed for the use of multimedia and digital texts for children. These paths aim to bring out from the texts the emotional and playful aspects as well as the problematic ones (to train children on reflection, problem posing and problem solving), and the creative ones (storyboard, realization of simple cartoons, etc.).
- *Silent reading workshops*: the classroom is adequately equipped with cushions and mattresses, to maximize the pleasure and the involvement in reading (both for preschool and primary school children, with the necessary educational and logistical differences);
- *The "Presta Libro" (lend book) initiative*, for preschool children: in a defined day of a week, the children choose a book from the selection proposed by the teacher according to the treated themes in classroom, and they can bring it at home to read it with their parents and siblings.
- *The "reading notebook"*, for primary school children, to work on keeping track of the books read and the thoughts and emotions aroused by reading.
- *The "book reviews"* (for primary school children): under the teacher's guidance, the children write the review of the books they read among those proposed within the normal school activities. The reviews are available for all the classmates, and children are encouraged to read one book rather than another, basing their choice on the advice, suggestions, and impressions of their friends and companions.

- *Creative reading activities such as the "book-talk"*, where children tell to their classmates the books they read, representing the story through artefacts invented by them and made according to their own sensitivity and imagination (for primary school children).
- *The "Book speed dating"*, where children tell fast to a classmate the book he read, trying to make him passionate to the story in few minutes, highlighting its most attractive aspects, using the method of the "American speed date" (for primary school children).
- *The introduction in the school library's catalogues of graphic novels and other genres* that usually are not included by the school literature.

Portugal

Competitions promoting reading such as "A literary adventure" from Caminho publisher;

Children seeing an adult reading;

Story telling;

Daily skim reading;

Reading and listening to daily stories;

To promote the contact with multimedia devices to create stories or texts on a digital basis to divulge them outside the school community.

Malaga

Reading support (older students tutor younger students in reading), school radio workshop, bibliography, reading corner, booktrailer, the reading tree (each sheet It comes out when a student has read a book, corroborated by the teacher), people book (students dressed in their favourite book, and read to classmates their favourite excerpt, explaining which book it is, the author), etc.

UK

- World Book Day: All primary schools in England, and some nurseries and secondary schools, take part in World Book Day. Trainee teachers are made aware of this charitable initiative and most will take part whilst on placement. Others will engage in book related activities at university. For the last 25 years it has brought together children of all ages in over 100 countries to appreciate reading. The main aim of World Book Day in the UK and Ireland is to encourage children to explore the pleasures of books and reading by providing them with the opportunity to have a book of their own. Participating schools receive packs of Book Tokens and age-ranged World Book Day Resource Packs (age-ranged into Nursery/Pre-School, Primary and Secondary) full of ideas and activities, display material and more information about how to get involved in World Book Day.

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- World Poetry Day: Some primary schools will celebrate world poetry day by engaging with activities such as memorising and reciting poems, performing poems, responding to poems through the mediums of art, music and dance.
- Reading Passport: This is a pdf document, available via <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/reading-passport-11623801>, which is ready to print with 22 "destinations" or books to be read, where children have to fill very simple information about the books they read.
- Book weeks: The format of book weeks can vary for each school, but might include a book fair, a dressing up day, an author visit etc - See <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/tips-and-advice/reading-in-schools/childrens-book-week/creative-ways-to-celebrate-at-schools-and-libraries/>
- Reading Champions (An initiative which uses peer influence to target reluctant readers and increase their enjoyment of reading - www.literacytrust.org.uk/reading_champions) and buddy reading
- Recommended reading lists: these can be created by individual teachers, but there are also many examples available online (e.g. <https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/>)
- Chatterbooks groups: Chatterbooks started in 2001 and is now the UK's largest network of children's reading groups. Almost 9,000 children belong to Chatterbooks groups, which are run in libraries and schools to generate discussion and encourage children to enjoy reading. Chatterbooks is a flexible model that can be used with children from 4 up to 12, for all different abilities and in targeted or mixed groups. (<https://readingagency.org.uk/children/quick-guides/chatterbooks/>)
- Summer Reading Challenge: The Challenge encourages children aged 4 to 11 to enjoy the benefits of reading for pleasure over the summer holidays, providing lots of fun as well as preventing the summer reading 'dip'. Each year the Challenge motivates over 700,000 children to keep reading to build their skills and confidence. (<https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk/about-the-challenge>)