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# **FINAL REPORT**

## **EVALUATION OF READING PRACTICES FOR EARLY YEARS EDUCATION**

**Málaga University-Spain**

**Compiled in Málaga in September 2020**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This compilation report synthesizes the results of studies carried out by each of the partners on reading practices in Early Years Education. Thus, the main ideas on the state of reading pedagogy in each of the participating countries (Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece and England) are taken as a starting point. In addition, sociodemographic data about the teachers and families who participated in these studies are presented.

Following this, the data obtained are analysed in a comparative manner in relation to questions regarding teaching methodologies (methods; organization of activities; spatial, material and human resources; evaluation and types of texts) and the role of families in learning to read.

### 1.1. CURENT STATE OF READING PEDAGOGY

In the following section, we analyze the most notable aspects of learning pedagogy in the 0-6 years stage in each of the contexts where this project was conducted.

#### **Spain (UMA-CEIP Rosa de Gálvez)**

In the case of Spain, we have two clearly differentiated educational realities that determine the methodologies and strategies that teachers use in their classrooms.

In recent years, one of key aspects of educational quality in the development of educational policies has been the initiation (approach) to reading and writing in Early Years Education, in particular at the last level within this stage (5 years).

The instigation of knowledge of written codes should be done through the use of significant words and phrases, such as the children's names or the titles of stories. Gradually, and in an independent manner, children will use different resources for written language such as books, magazines, newspapers, advertising brochures, travel guides, posters, product labels and, of course, the various devices available in today's knowledge and technological society. Through experience of the format and content of these resources, children will understand that each text is usually presented in a specific medium. The experience of reading aloud on a daily basis ensures children become participants in shared literary practices during this stage - reading, understanding and interpreting the content of the text, and experiencing magical moments where the text is converted into oral language. This helps children to understand the functions and structure of written language, as well as to gradually develop their use of the same.

These readings, listened to with interest and attention, are concerned with all kinds of social texts, and respond to the social and cultural uses of written language as a means of communication, information and enjoyment, progressively helping children to understand the important function it fulfils.

### **Melilla: details of interest for this study (UGR)**

Melilla has a high population density, well above the Spanish and European Union average, and this translates into a 100% occupation of Early Years Education classrooms for the second cycle (2nd cycle) with a ratio of 28.7, the highest in Spanish communities (in accordance with the provisions of the addendum, for Ceuta and Melilla, of the 2019 Report on the state of the educational system (Consejo Escolar del Estado, 2019).

Another distinctive feature of this region is its cultural diversity, a result of its populations of European, Berber, Hindu, Gypsy and Jewish origin. This cultural diversity brings with it linguistic diversity, since the respective mother tongues of Spanish, Tamazight, Hindi, Romany and Haketia, are totally different. Although these last three are not particularly widespread in their corresponding speech communities, the first two form the linguistic reality of the two majority population groups, thereby producing transfers and interferences characteristic of the linguistic phenomenon of languages in contact, which means Spanish in this region evolves in a distinct way (Martín Ortega and Molina-García, in press).

This diversity of languages is the greatest difficulty that teachers in Melilla face and, therefore, the relevant authorities find ways to provide complementary reinforcement through a Language Immersion Program aimed at Early Years Education.

*Melilla legislation* (See appendix).

### **Portugal (Associação Jardim Escola João de Deus)**

Today, a determining role in learning and school success is attributed to reading. It also seems agreed that exposure to an environment conducive to reading from an early age is not only a facilitator, but also a catalyst for this process. The sooner and more often children are in contact with reading or, rather, with the pleasure of reading, the

more evident progress in the development of the individual's communication skills will be.

Finally, within the current communication context, the Portuguese report highlights the role that technologies should play as an educational tool.

*Portugal legislation* (See appendix).

### **Italy (Centro Machiavelli - Istituto Comprensivo Statale Giovanni XXIII)**

One of the most significant elements amongst students who read regularly is the role of the family. Studies reveal the strong connection between family environment and attitude towards reading demonstrated by children and young people. The family is the trigger which awakens children's taste for reading, encourage them to read and be passionate about it.

With this key idea in mind, that national administration in Italy has developed several projects on reading education for parents, and over time, these have become established and effective practices.

When compared to the relevance of the family environment, school seems to play a secondary role in encouraging children to have a healthy passion for reading. Within the educational context, reading is mainly perceived by students as a study commitment (especially by adolescents).

In relation to the current legislative situation, an educational system integrating ages 0-6, and fully operated by the national Ministry of Education, is being outlined. At the moment, services for 0-3 years are regulated and managed regionally.

*Italy legislation* (See appendix).

### **Greece (Institutouto Technologias Ypologistonkai Ekdoseon Diofantos)**

In the Greek educational system, preschool programmes are focused on developing children's emerging literacy skills through play experiences, rather than systematic training in phonics or teaching the alphabet. Therefore, fostering the development of emerging literacy skills through playful activities is an important function of preschool institutions, providing a basis for the formal teaching of reading in the later stage of Primary Education.

*Greece legislation* (See appendix).

### England (Manchester Metropolitan University)

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS) (DfE, 2017) sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years. It identifies seven areas of learning, one of the main ones being "Communication and Language"; one of the specific areas is "Literacy". The EYFS is based on sociocultural theory and the work of Vygotsky.

- **Communication and Language:** opportunities should be provided to enable children to 'experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations' (DfE, 2017: p. 8).
- **Literacy:** children should be encouraged 'to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest' (DfE, 2017: p. 8).
- **Reading:** children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. (DfE, 2017: p. 11).

## 1.2. DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

This section outlines the samples of both early years teachers and families who participated in this research by completing a questionnaire prepared by the team at the University of Malaga.

### 1.2.1. DESCRIPTION OF EARLY YEARS TEACHERS

The total sample of early years teachers is 655.

The main strengths and weaknesses found in the samples for each of the participating partners are presented below.

#### Spain (UMA-CEIP Rosa de Gálvez)

Number of teachers: 200

A sample of 200 Early Childhood teachers from the province of Malaga has been selected. Most of the participants are women (94%). 42.2% are between 36 and 45 years old, 28.1% between 46 and 55 years old, 15.6% between 26 and 35 years old, 12.1% over 55 years and 2% under 26 years. Regarding the years of experience, the majority are between 21 and 25 years old (25.6%) and we find only 8.5% between 0 and 5.

In relation to the type of centre where the participating teachers are located, most are in urban settings (92%) and a minority in rural settings (8%). Of these, 90.5% is public, 9% arranged and .5% private. 31% of teachers work in bilingual centres and 18.5% in educational compensation centres.

Next, training will be analysed from two different dimensions: academic training and the number of training activities that teachers have carried out in the last 5 years. The highest degree of studies they have corresponds to a bachelor's degree (23.1%), only 5.5% have the current degree (the minimum requirement previously was a diploma). These qualifications have allowed him to be specialized teachers in Early Childhood Education (89.4%). Regarding the number of training activities, 16% have not carried out any training activity, 53% have carried out between 1 and 3 activities, 13.5% have carried out between 4 and 6 and 17.5% more than 6 activities (Figure 1).

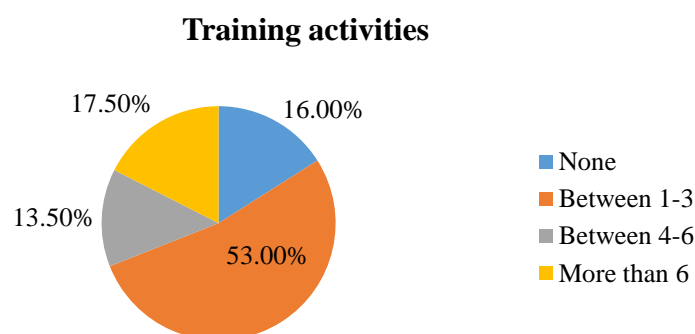


Figure 1. Sector diagram of the training activities carried out in the last 4 years

The percentage is similar depending on the course where *they are tutors or if they are support teachers*, with a total of 80.8% tutors and 19.2% support teachers. Most of the tutors are in 4 years (29.1%), followed by 5 years (27.6%) and 3 years (24.1%).

Teachers use an eclectic methodology of the various methodologies for reading learning, since they indicate using more than one of them. Thus, the most frequent is phonological awareness (65.1% indicates using it in class), followed by the mixed method (52.3%), constructivism (47.7%), the syllabic method (25.6 %), the global method (22.6%), the phonic method (21.5%) and finally, the alphabetical method (20.5%).

For this, many rely on a great diversity of texts, the most used being those of the expository type (69.3%), followed by the literary (66.8%), the enumerative (65.8%), the informative (58.3 %%) and prescriptive (45.2%).

Regarding the practical difficulties found in reading, they are mainly due to the oral and written comprehension that students develop (this is indicated by 45.7% of the teaching staff regarding each one), followed by aspects related to reading technique (37.25%) and improving the reading taste (24.6%).

Along the same lines, to promote reading, the materials they use the most in class are the materials produced by the students in the classroom library (75.4%), classroom library books (74.9%), books they bring from home (56.8%), school library material (57.3%) and reading textbook (51.8%).

94.4% of teachers indicate that in their centre, teachers establish measures to promote access to reading, both at school and in the family, to provide an environment



that encourages and invites children to read in both contexts. 55.6% indicate having been in centres with innovative practices and 38.3% having participated in Institutional or Administration Projects related to the teaching of reading. 34.2% report that in the centre where they worked or have worked, there is a reading method prescribed by the school (Table 1).

Table 1.

*Strengths and weaknesses participants teachers UMA-CEIP Rosa de Gálvez*

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Teaching experience (25,6% with 21-25 years' experience)	Few continue postgraduate training (21,6%)
Bilingual centres (31%)	Teachers are mostly women (94%)
Teachers do continuous training (31%)	Few educational compensation centres (18,5%)
They are tutors of their courses (80,8%)	Most urban centres (92%)

## Melilla (UGR)

Number of teachers: 19

A sample of 19 Early Childhood teachers from Melilla has been selected. All participants are women. Regarding the age, 50% of them are between 36 and 45 years old, 22.2% between 46 and 55 years old, 11.1% between 26 and 35 years old and 16.7% over 55 years.

Regarding the years of experience, the majority are between 16 and 20 years old (44.4%) and we find only 5.6% between 21 and 25. But if we take into account the years of teaching at the Infant stage, those teachers who have been teaching at this stage for between 11 and 15 years predominate (50%), followed by those who have accumulated between 16 and 20 years in Infants (22.3%). This ensures that a large number of professionals surveyed know the teaching performance for these early ages,

apart from the fact that they are all specialists in this stage of Early Childhood education, although a percentage of 38.9% work as support teachers at this stage and do not tutor any course at present.

27.8% of these teachers have other teaching specialties, among them, the most numerous is Foreign Languages (16.7%), the rest is equally distributed between Therapeutic Pedagogy and Music (5.6% each).

On the other hand, the courses that they tutorise are varied: a 22.2% to students of 0 and 4 years old, but the greater number is with students of 5 years old (38.9%) and the minor with 3 years old (16.7%).

In relation to the type of centre where the participating teachers are located, most of them are public centres (88.9%) and a minority in privates centres (11.1%). 11.1% of teachers work in bilingual centres and 11.1% also in educational compensation centres.

Considering the importance of continuous training of teaching professionals, Early Childhood teachers were asked to indicate the number of training actions related to linguistic competence they carried out in the last 5 years: those who did between one and three actions (61.1%) stood out, followed by those who did between four and six (22.2%) and, most worryingly, 16.7% of the participants responded that they had not carried out any course.

This last percentage is surprising given the difficulties in communicative skills, among them the linguistic one that the students of Melilla have, either for their lack of knowledge of Spanish or for their socioeconomic and cultural characteristics, we find a certain lack of motivation towards these educational aspects. For these reasons, it is very important to train the Early Education School teachers in linguistic competence in order to initiate the students in the knowledge of the Spanish language as this will have repercussions on their educational development and even on their integral formation as a person (Table 2).

Table 2.

*Strengths and weaknesses participants teachers UGR (Melilla)*

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<b>Years of experience</b> (72.3% are between 11 and 20 years of experience). The courses that they tutorise are varied: 0-4 years (22.2%), 5 years (38.9%), 3 years (16.7%).	It is <b>insufficient</b> that only 61% of teachers carried out between one and three actions, given the difficulties of communicative competences that many students of Infant School have in Melilla.
Teachers use an <b>eclectic methodology</b> for reading learning: 1st, mixed method; 2nd, Phonic and global; 3rd, alphabetic... <b>Varied reading resources</b> : classroom library (100%); textbook (88.9%); book from classroom (83.3%); library of the city (50%); book from home (27.8%).	16.7% of teachers have not carried out <b>any course</b> related to linguistic competence in the last 5 years.
The 94.4% indicate that in their centre, teachers establish measures to <b>promote access to reading</b> (school & family): innovative practices and institutional projects of teaching reading; exchange reading experiences (66.7%).	<b>Practical difficulties</b> of students in: 1 <sup>st</sup> oral and written comprehension (72.2%); 2 <sup>nd</sup> reading technique (22.2%); 3 <sup>rd</sup> improving the reading taste (11.1%).
Variety of <b>coordinated actions</b> Childhood Education-Primary School: projects and curricular materials of joint action; and share objectives, methodology, routines, evaluation and resources (72.2%, both).	---

Teachers use an eclectic methodology of the various methodologies for reading learning as they indicate that they use more than one of them (see Figure 2). Thus, the most frequent is the mixed method (61.1%) and the last is the syllabic method (5.6%).

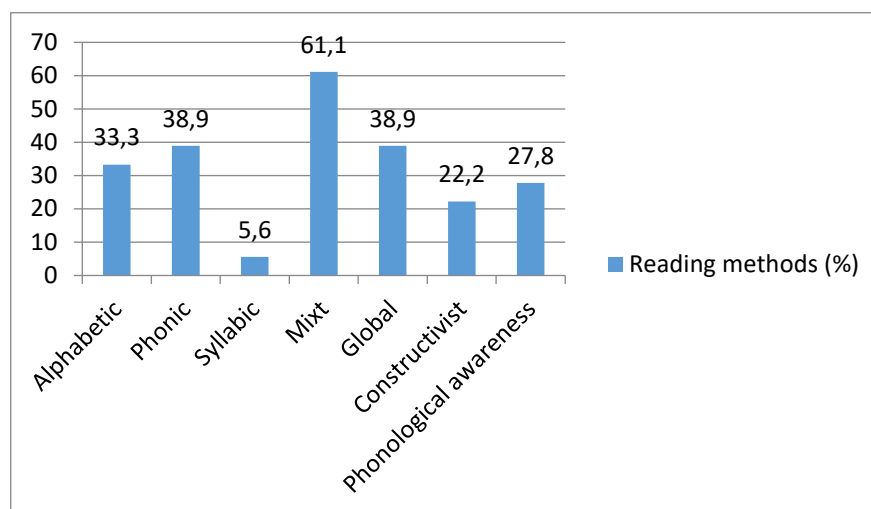


Figure 2. Methodologies for reading learning

Regarding the practical difficulties found in reading, they are mainly due to the oral and written comprehension that students develop (this is indicated by 72.2% and 50% of the teaching staff regarding each one), followed by aspects related to reading technique (22.2%) and improving the reading taste (11.1%).

In order to promote reading, in Figure 3 the materials they use in the majority of the cases are presented. In class, they have the materials produced by the students in the classroom library (100%), followed by reading textbook (88.9%), the least used is the books they bring from home (27.8%).

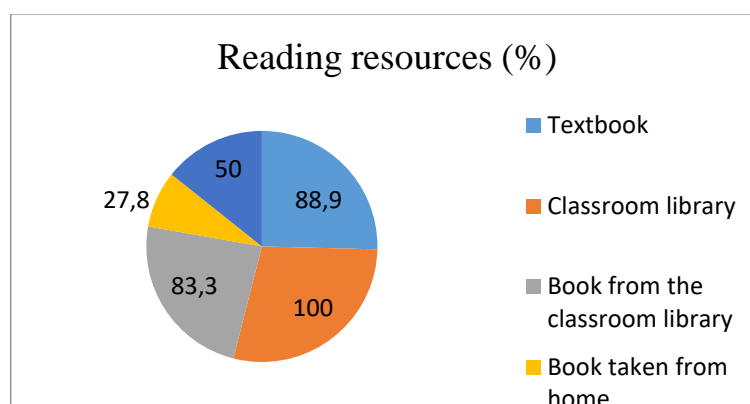


Figure 3. Resources to promote reading (%)

The 94.4% of teachers indicate that in their centre, teachers establish measures to promote access to reading, both at school and in the family, to provide an environment that encourages and invites children to read in both contexts. 55% indicate having been in centres with innovative practices and 38.9% having participated in Institutional or Administration Projects related to the teaching of reading. 27.8% report that in the centre where they worked or have worked, there is a reading method prescribed by the school.

With regard to the coordinated actions between the Infant School stage and the first year of Primary School at the same centre in order to encourage reading, Table 3 reflects the variety of actions taken.

Table 3.

*Coordination actions between the Early Childhood Education and Primary stages in the same school centre*

Action	Percentage of statements
1. Design of projects and curricular materials based on lines of joint action.	72.2
2. Share objectives, work methodology, groupings, routines, evaluation and resources.	72.2
3. Plan regular meetings throughout the course to unify criteria and actions between both stages.	55.6
4. Exchange reading experiences on some levels with others.	66.7
5. Carry out shared activities among the students of both levels (sponsorship of readers, visits to the classroom and its facilities, sharing the recess or the assemblies in class, telling the experience of the students from the 1 <sup>st</sup> to the 5 <sup>th</sup> year old).	44.4

### Portugal (Associação Jardim Escola João de Deus)

Number of teachers: 135

We have selected 135 kindergarten teachers from the whole country that are currently working at João de Deus Kindergartens (Figure 4).



Figure 4. João de Deus kindergartens' location.

Analysing that data we conclude that the major part of those kindergarten teachers is female (91.1%) and their average age is between 36 to 45 years old. We also conclude that just 3.7% of younger teachers filled out this questionnaire (Table 4).

Regarding their working experience (Table 5), we came to the conclusion that the most representative sectors are: 31.9% have more than 25 years of working experience and 23.7% have less than five years of working experience.

Table 4.	%
<i>Age</i>	
Less than 26 years old	3.7%
From 26 to 35 years old	23.0%
<b>From 36 to 45 years old</b>	<b>31.9%</b>
From 46 to 55 years old	23.0%
More than 55 years old	18.5%

Table 5.	%
<i>Working experience</i>	
From 0 to 5 years	23.7%
From 6 to 10 years	5.9%
From 11 to 15 years	15.6%
From 16 to 20 years	11.9%
From 21 to 25 years	11.1%
<b>Counting more than 25 years</b>	<b>31.9%</b>

Concerning the institutional tipology, the questionnaire has only been put into practice in one institution of the private sector that manages several kindergartens in Portugal. In this matter, 72.6% of those who answered the questionnaire live in big cities and just 6.7% work in rural areas. Suffice to say that 0.7% work in a bilingual kindergarten and 2.2% work in educational compensation schools.

We are going to analyse next the educational background of the kindergarten teachers and the number of training courses they have attended in the last five years.

According to their educational background, we can affirm that 69.6% have a BA (pre-Bologna). Nevertheless, 26.7% have a Master degree (2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of Bologna or a pre-Bologna master especialization).

Bearing in mind that nowadays in Portugal that degree of pre-Bologna kindergarten teacher is now possible to achieve on the second of Bologna system (Master degree) and to complete the studies it is compulsory to have the concluded the BA in kindergarten teacher (1<sup>st</sup> cycle). Almost 70% of kindergarten teachers attended more than six training courses in their expertise field but on the other hand, one-third of them did not attend any training at all.

The major part of kindergarten teachers is the teacher responsible for the classroom (90.4%); 9.6% are helping the kindergarten teachers and 1.5% have a master in Special Needs Education (one-third). In any case, other specializations are also representative such as Psicology, Psychopedagogy, Mathematics, Fine Motor Skills and Pedagogic Supervision.

Portuguese kindergarten teachers that filled out this questionnaire make use of eclectic and diverse methodology in the classroom to motivate children to the reading learning process.

Analyzing the following graph (Figure 5), we conclude that the phonologic consciousness is often used (71.1%). The phonic method is used (51.9%) and the mixed/interactive (41.5%). The less used method is the construtivist one because only 11,1% of the paticipants of this questionnaire mentioned that they use it.

During the teaching reading process (Figure 6), most participants gave priority to literary texts (64.4%) and descriptive ones (62.2%). The less used is the instructional text (25.9%).

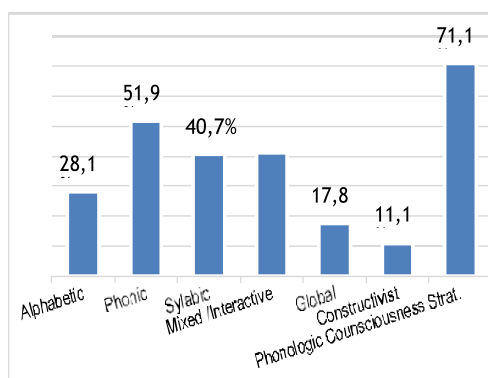


Figure 5. Learning reading

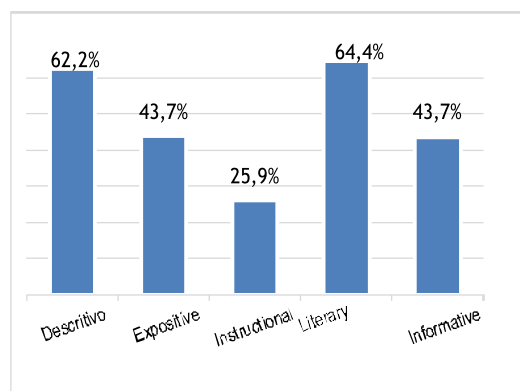


Figure 6. Diversity of text types

Most participants refer that have difficulties in speaking comprehension (51.1%) and in written comprehension (45.5%). A bit more than one- quarter of participants refer that have difficulties using reading technics and only 14.1% have difficulties awakning the interest in reading. Most kindergarten teachers mentioned that make use of books that children bring from home to promote reading (92.6%) and a significant number of them prefer books from the school library or even from the classroom library. The school manual is the less preferable by the participants (17%) and more than half of them (54.1%) make use of other educational reading materials that were not named in this questionnaire, such as “Cartilha Maternal”, mobile letters and other games (from 10% up to 13%), or make use of the computer (6%).

### Italy (Centro Machiavelli - Istituto Comprensivo Statale Giovanni XXIII)

Number of teachers: 180

The sample for the READ-COM's research in Italy is constituted by 180 teachers working in public and private preschools of two Tuscany's provinces, that of Florence, including Florence Municipality and its metropolitan area, and that of Arezzo, with Terranuova Bracciolini Municipality and Valdarno area. Almost the totality of the sample is represented by women (97.8%). Since in Italy the qualification status to access the teaching profession (both for Childhood Education and Primary Education) is ruled by the Law, all the participants have the requested titles, according to the legislative evolution in time. Therefore, they have the "*Magistrale*" or Socio-Psycho-Pedagogical High School Diplomas, achieved within the school year 2001-2002 (D.I. 10 March 1997) or Childhood & Primary Education Degree-"*Scienze della Formazione Primaria*" (Law N. 169, 30 October 2008, Art. 6). Additionally, it is interesting to note



that among the highest (and latest) level of qualifications mentioned by teachers (8,9%) there are specific Post- Degree qualifications and academic specializations on support schemes for special needs children in different areas. According to the detected answers on the type of centre where the participating teachers are located, the most indicated is represented by the public school (63.9%), in the urban setting (23.3%). The centres located in rural areas are the 7.8%. The achieved range on the other options (*private school; school sponsored by a public voucher system; bilingual; educational compensation*) related to this item are equal or inferior to 1%.

The participants' age spectrum presents a prevalence of more mature teachers: 33.30% From 36 to 45 years old; 31.10% From 46 to 55 years old; 16.7% more than 55 years old; 15.6% From 26 to 35 years old; 3.3% Less than 26 years old (Figure 7).

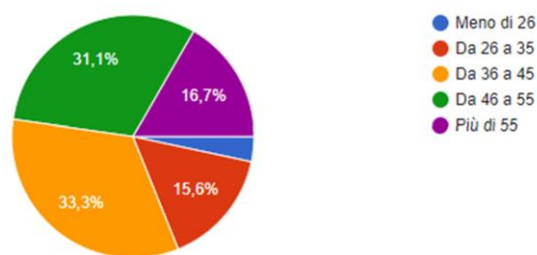


Figure 7. Participants' Age distribution

Concerning the years of teaching service in schools the sample shows: 21.1% From 0 to 5 years; 18.9% From 6 to 10 years; 23.30% From 11 to 15 years; 16.7 % From 16 to 20 years; 20 % From 21 to 25 years (Figure 8). As for the peculiar experience done by the teachers' sample within the Childhood Education, it is included in a range from the minimum of 1 year of experience to the maximum of 37 year of experience in the educational area focused by the questionnaire.

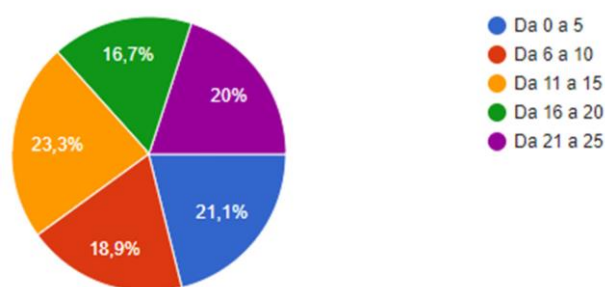


Figure 8. Years of teaching services

The teachers' training has been explored considering the number of actions on linguistic competence in which they participated in the last 5 years: the majority attended between 1 and 3 (63.3%) training actions, the 14.4% took part between 4 and 6 actions and 7.8% more than 6 actions. The teachers who didn't attend any training are 14.4% (See Figure 9).

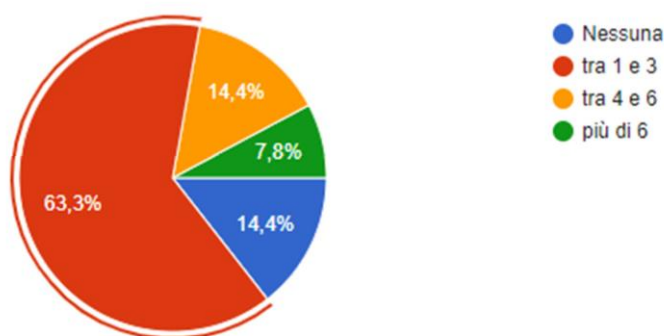


Figure 9. Teachers' Training in the last 5 years on linguistic competence

Next, concerning their specializations, the 66.6% of the sample didn't answered to the question "If they are tutor", but among those who declare to cover this role, the indicated activities were tutor for new-employed, for children with special needs, for sport extra-curricular activities. The 14.4% of the professionals constituting the whole sample is represented by support teachers (e.g for orthophrenic support and/or psychophysical support for children with hearing or vision diseases).

**Greece (Institouto Technologias Ypologistonkai Ekdoseon Diofantos)**

Number of teachers: 121

The questionnaire was sent to hundreds of schools and it was replied by 121 kindergarten teachers mostly from Patra, Thessaloniki and Athens. All of them are women, specifically 99%. Less than half of the teachers (42%) are in the age range of 46 to 55 years, followed by teachers aged between 36 to 45 years (21%). As for the youngest teachers, under the age of 26, there is a very low percentage (1%). Regarding their studies, 61% are graduates 34% Master's, 5% PhD. Concerning teaching experience, 57% have more than 16 years of teaching experience. Regarding the seminars they have attended, 53% have attended 1-3 seminars in the last five years as shown in Figure 10. Almost all of them are not support teachers (96%)

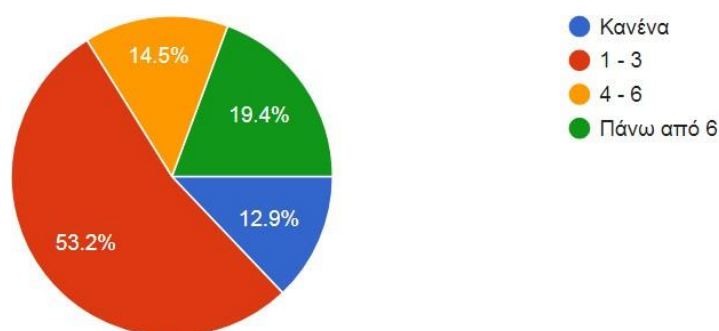


Figure 10. Number of seminars attended in the last 5 years

Most of them (82%) teach both 4-year-old and 5-year old children.

Teachers use an eclectic methodology of the various methodologies for teaching reading skills. Table 6 summarizes the methodologies and reading strategies for the development of reading competence in early childhood education students.

Table 6.

*Methodologies and reading strategies for the development of reading competence*

MORE USED METHODS	LESS USED METHODS
82% Phonological awareness	25% Alphabetic
46% Phonic	13% Constructivism
44% Mixed	
36% Syllabic	
31% Global	

In relation to the practical difficulties found in reading, they involve principally Reading techniques (44%) written comprehension (36%) followed by oral comprehension (34%). They don't see promoting Reading for Pleasure (56%) as an issue, as it is reported as a difficulty only by 24%. It is not clear if it is because it is not something they expect from children or because children of this age love reading. Along the same lines, to promote reading, the materials they use the most in class are from the school library (83%) and the classroom library (82%) and books brought from home (63%). Very few use a textbook (13%).

As for the type of center where the participating teachers are located, the majority are in urban settings (62%) and the minority, in rural settings (38%). Schools in this particular sample are 65% public and 35% private.

Almost all teachers (94%) indicate that in their center, teachers establish measures to promote access to reading, both at school and in the family, to provide an environment that encourages and invites children to read in both contexts. Only 34% indicate having been in centers with innovative practices and 18% have participated in Institutional or Administration Projects related to the teaching of reading. 84% report the existence, either in the center where they currently work or have worked, of a reading method prescribed by the Ministry of Education.

### England (Manchester Metropolitan University)

Number of teachers: Information gathered via secondary research and ethnographic data.

### 1.2.2. DESCRIPTION OF FAMILIES

The total sample of early years' education families is 1,342.

The main details of the samples gathered by each partner are detailed below.

#### Spain (UMA-CEIP Rosa de Gálvez)

Number of families: 218

The sample is made up of 218 families of students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education stage in educational centres in the province of Malaga, of which 211 come from public schools (96.8%) and 7 private schools (3.2%). Figure 11 shows that the majority of the schools (72.48%) have not established any educational compensation measure, while 14.22% are compensatory and of these, 13% are classified as centres of difficult performance. Figure 12 shows that 38.99% of families come from bilingual centres.

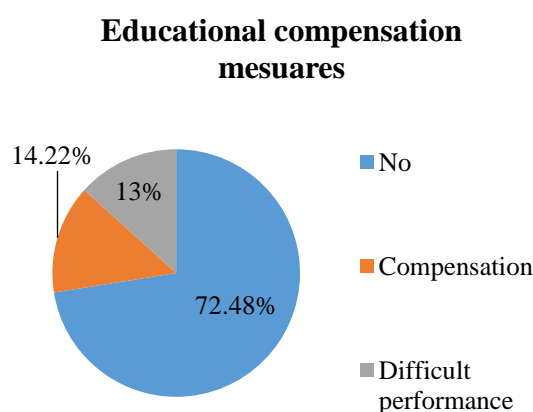


Figure 11. Centres with educational compensation measures

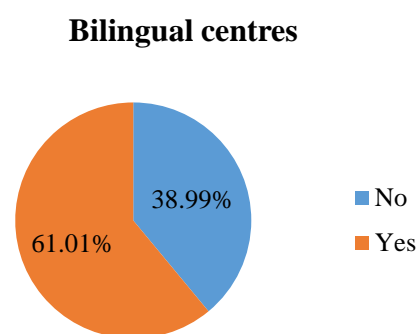


Figure 12. Centres with bilingual education

To better understand the nature of the results, the characteristics of the participating families are described. 87.16% of families are two-parent while 12.84% are single-parent. As for the number of members of the family unit, the average number of children is 1.97. The age of the oldest son is at an average of 6.43 years. Of the 218 families, 158 have two or more children and only 5 have five or more children. The nationality of the parents can be found in tables 7 and 8.

Table 7.  
Mother's nationality

Nacionalidad de la madre		
	Frequency	%
<b>Spanish</b>	198	90.8
<b>Arabic</b>	3	1.4
<b>Australian</b>	2	0.9
<b>China</b>	2	0.9
<b>Colombian</b>	1	0.5
<b>French</b>	1	0.5
<b>Moroccan</b>	4	1.8
<b>Paraguayan</b>	1	0.5
<b>Polish</b>	1	0.5
<b>Romanian</b>	2	0.9
<b>Venezuelan</b>	1	0.5
<b>Italian</b>	1	0.5
<b>No answer</b>	1	0.5
<b>Total</b>	218	100

Table 8.  
Father's nationality

Nacionalidad del padre		
	Frequency	%
<b>Spanish</b>	200	91.7
<b>Arabic</b>	2	0.9
<b>Australian</b>	1	0.5
<b>British</b>	1	0.5
<b>China</b>	1	0.5
<b>Estonia</b>	1	0.5
<b>Moroccan</b>	3	1.4
<b>Venezuelan</b>	1	0.5
<b>Italian</b>	1	0.5
<b>No answer</b>	7	3.2
<b>Total</b>	218	100

Furthermore, it is observed that there are more mothers of foreign origin than fathers. There is only a single family seems to be formed by the father. When asked about the mother tongue, the percentage decreased, in the case of Spanish, to 86.7%, so that there are fathers and mothers who have Spanish nationality and a different mother tongue.

Regarding occupation, it was interesting to know the proportion of people who were engaged in domestic work, unemployed, retired or who were working. As expected, the percentage of mothers engaged in domestic work (16.97%) is much higher than that of fathers (1.38%).

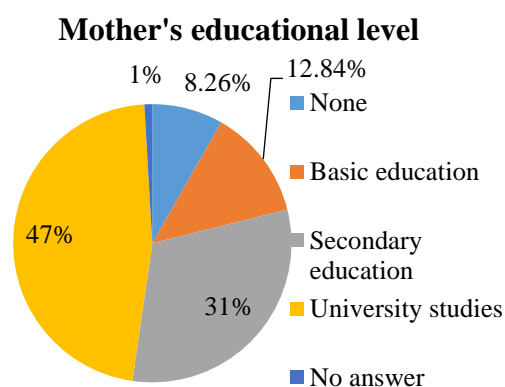


Figure 13. Educational level of the mother

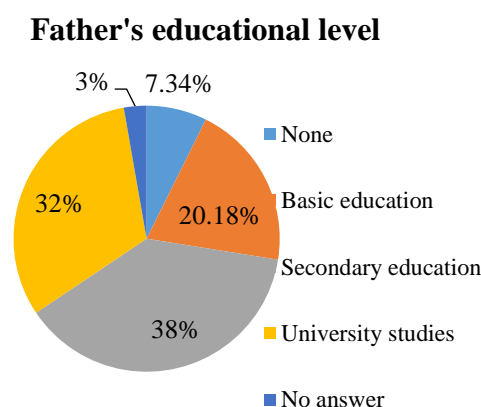


Figure 14. Educational level of the father

Despite the fact that the percentage of active mothers is lower than that of fathers, the data in the training indicate that there is a higher proportion of mothers (47%) who have higher education than fathers (32%) on the opposite side, the Proportion of parents without studies is very similar in both cases (8.26% of mothers and 7.34% of fathers) (Figures 13 and 14).

### **Melilla (UGR)**

Number of families: 101

The sample is made up of 101 families of students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education stage in educational centres in the city of Melilla.

To better understand the nature of the results, the characteristics of the participating families are described. 87% of families are two-parent families while 13% are single-parent families. As for the number of members of the family unit, the responses are varied, with more families having two children (39.3%), followed by those having only one (24.6%); 23% are general large families with three children and 13.1% with four children. In addition, most of the families that participated in the study, 90.3%, have their children in the course of 5 years of Early Childhood Education (with 5 and 6 years old), so they are supposed to have more family experiences with reading at early ages.

The nationality of the parents can be found in Figure 15. Given the proximity of Melilla to the Kingdom of Morocco, it is not difficult to find parents of pupils who have Moroccan nationality even if they live in the city, in this case we find small percentages, somewhat higher among mothers. It is very common for Spaniards from Melilla of Berber origin to have Moroccan families and their contact is constant, they tend to visit each other very often and even, parents from Melilla have a second residence in Moroccan territory, this makes the flow of Berber citizens from both countries frequent. We found only one case of a mother with Argentinean nationality, as shown in the graph.

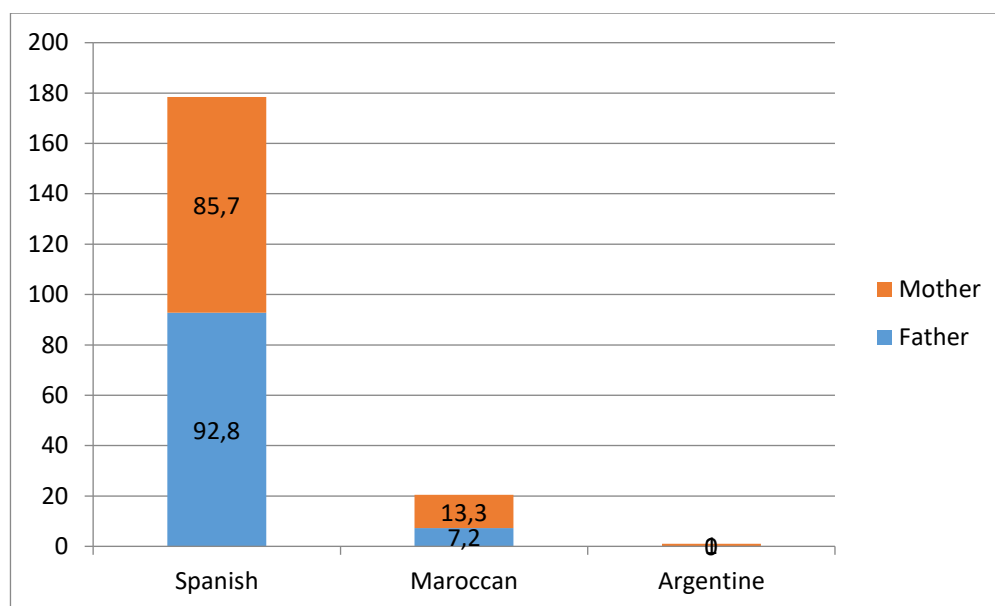


Figure 15. Nationality of the parents (%)

When asked about the mother tongue, it is interesting to note that 91.1% of the families indicated the Spanish language, although the cultural origin of many of them is Berber, whose characteristic mother tongue is Tamazight, indicated by only 5.9% of the sample, along with 2% who have Arabic and 1% who speak Portuguese.

Apart from these mother tongues, the families were asked to inform if any other language is spoken at home, the results are reflected in Figure 16. Apart from the official language (Spanish) and the other predominant language of the city (Tamazight), English stands out over the rest, a foreign language in Melilla, but widely spread in the school environment, where many schools are bilingual Spanish-English.

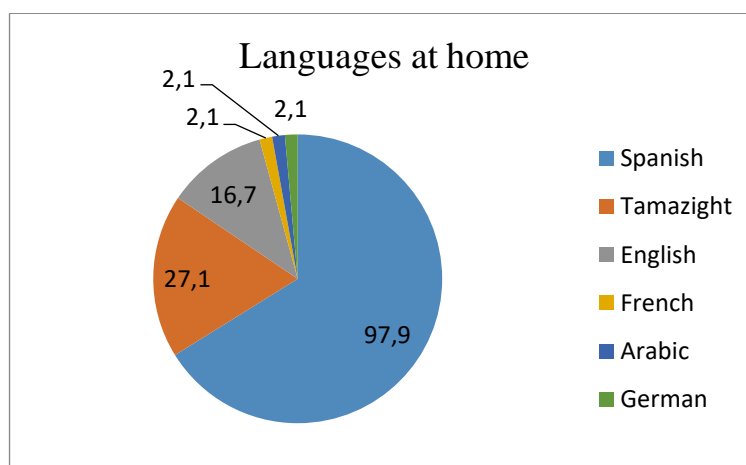


Figure 16. Languages spoken at home (%)



Of all these languages indicated by the families, the level of each one, except the official one, is shown in Figure 17. Note how the second language of the city, Tamazight, stands out with the highest level, indicated by 38.3% of the families. It is followed by English, but with low and medium levels (40.4% and 38.3% respectively).

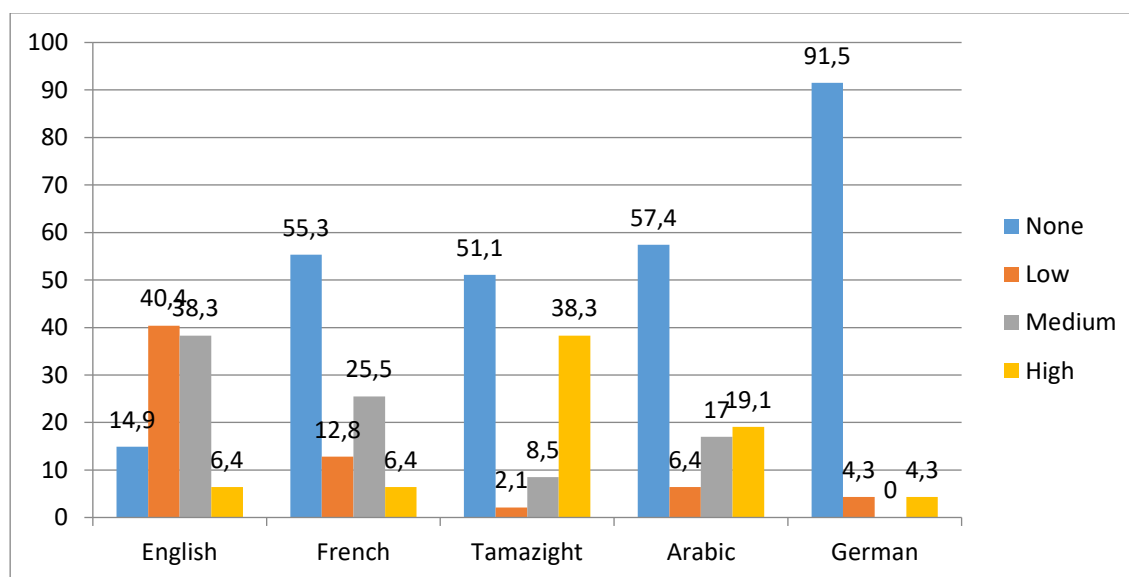


Figure 17. Language levels in the families (%)

Regarding the occupation of the mothers, those who work outside the home correspond to most of the sample (52.1%), followed by those who are engaged in domestic work (33.8%) and the 14.1% of mothers claim to be unemployed. The profession that predominates in them is teaching (60.9%), followed far behind by those belonging to the security forces (17.4%). The rest of the professions of working mothers are very diverse (public service, health, business, commerce...).

As for the parents, none of them said that they work at home, 89.9% are active, 8.7% are unemployed and only 1.4% are retired. As with mothers, their professions are very varied, with those related to security forces standing out (58.5%), followed by those in the business sector (11.3%).

With regard to the academic training of parents, Figure 18 contrasts that of mothers and fathers, it is noteworthy that it is the mothers who have a higher academic level, predominantly university graduates (46.4%) compared to fathers with the same

training (37%). The percentage of those with secondary education is very similar, whereas more mothers have no education.

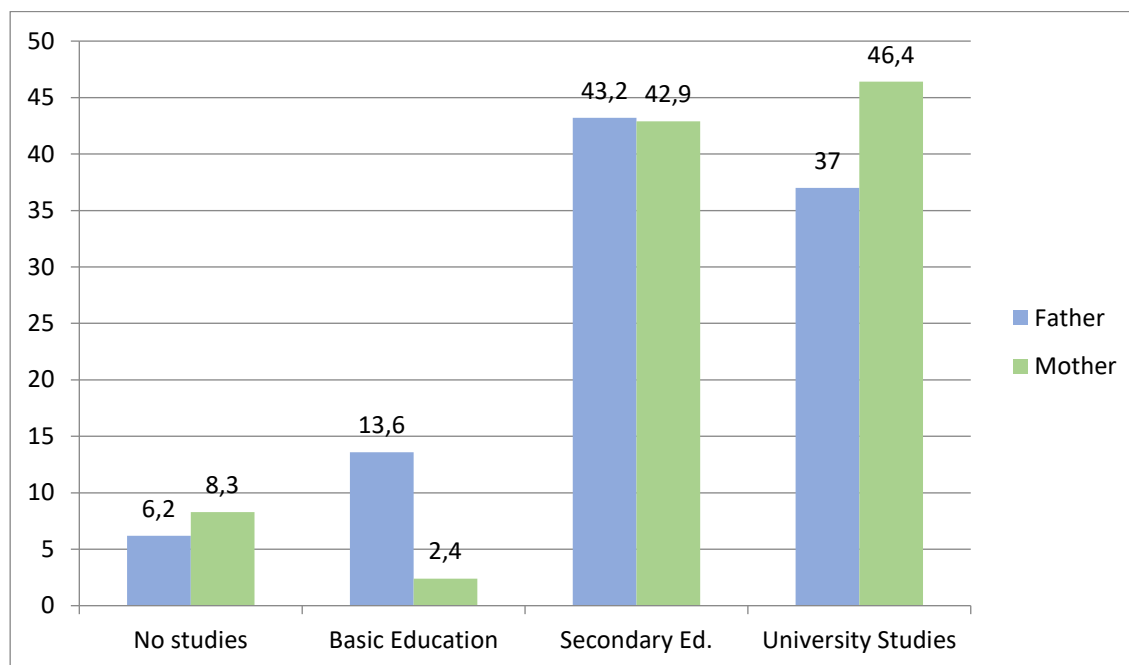


Figure 18. Educational level of parents (%)

In addition to all this socio-demographic data, it was interesting to find out in this project the preferences and reading habits of the families of students in the Infant School stage. 57.6% of parents said that at home they read in the paper format, while 42.4% chose the electronic format. Among the latter option, the most used medium is the mobile phone (41.6%), followed by the tablet (39.6%) and finally the computer (17.8%). Parents' reading motivation is similarly distributed and from greater to lesser choice between reading necessary for home activities, such as instructions or recipes, (57.4%), reading for fun and enjoyment (47.5%), for work reasons (40.6%) and, finally, for study (30.7%).

The types of reading in the household were also asked to the families. Table 9 reflects the different readings and their preferred format.

Table 9.

*Preferred format according to the type of reading*

Reading	N/A	No reading	Paper	Electronic
Reference or school support books (encyclopaedias, dictionaries, manuals...).	11.8	17.19	22.4	48.7
Reading books (novels, stories, poems, comics...).	15.8	50	10.5	23.7
Daily press (newspapers).	17.1	19.7	48.7	14.5
Specialized magazines (QUO, National Geographic...).	43.4	13.2	31.6	11.8
Non-specialized magazines (information on celebrities, television programming...).	56.6	9.2	27.6	6.6

### Portugal (Associação Jardim Escola João de Deus)

Number of families: 722

722 families having children attending pre-school education in João de Deus Kindergartens filled out the questionnaire (Table 10). From this figure, 86.6% are biparental families (Figure 19). Each family has an average ratio of: only one child 41.1% and two children 45.7% (Figure 20).

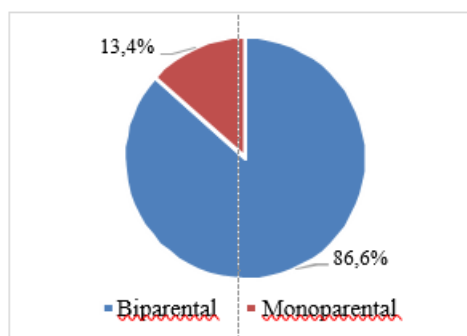


Figure 19. Family type

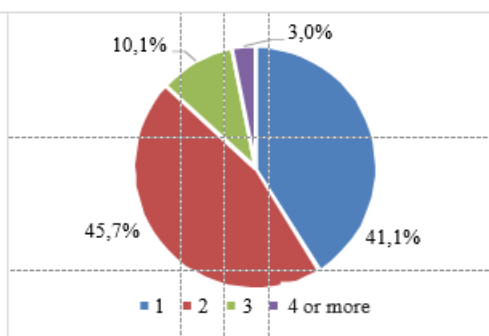


Figura 20. Number of children

Regarding their nationality, 97% of mothers and 98% of fathers are Portuguese. It was impossible to determine the nationalities of those who are not Portuguese. Nevertheless, it was possible to identify their mothertongue. In that sense, 95.6% of parents speak portuguese (being native speakers) and 4.4% speak other eight languages (Figure 21).

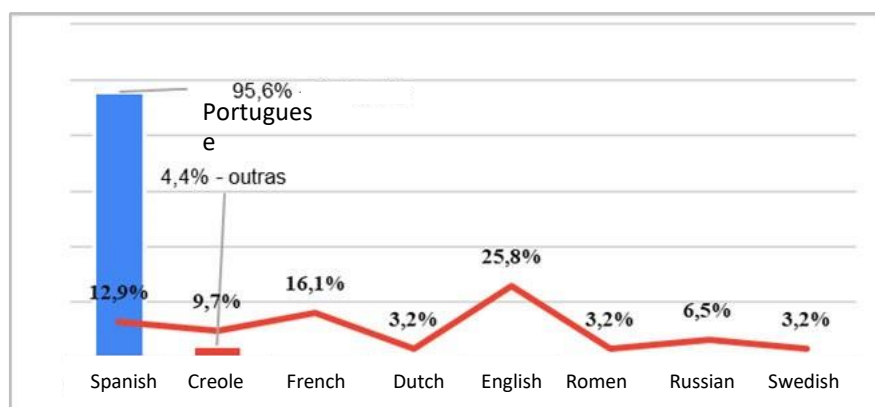


Figure 21. Parents native languages (considering a total of 4,4%)

Most parents have university educational background (Figure 22): 80.1% mothers and 62.9% fathers. Only 2.1% of mothers and 5.1% of fathers have primary school background studies.

According to their working activities (Figure 23) it is possible to identify how many parents dedicate their time to housekeeping activities, as well as the percentage of unemployment affecting the family relationships. Therefore, 4% of mothers are unemployed, contrasting with 2.6% of fathers that are unemployed. 2.4% of mothers are housekeepers but only 1.1% of fathers are housekeepers. On the other hand, 0.4% of fathers are retired but no mothers are in such situation, most probably due to the fact that retired women are, in general, no longer fertile.

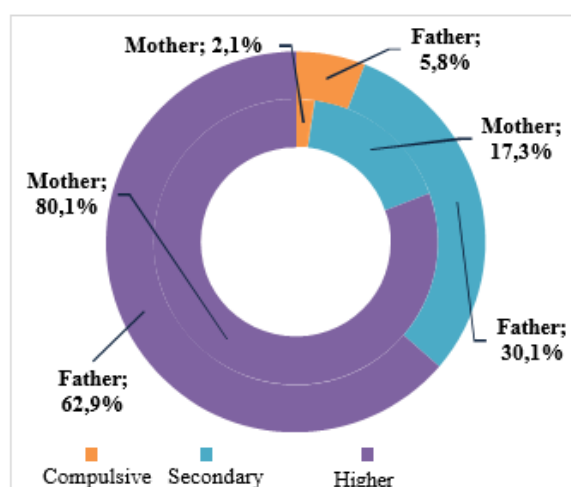


Figure 22. Educational background

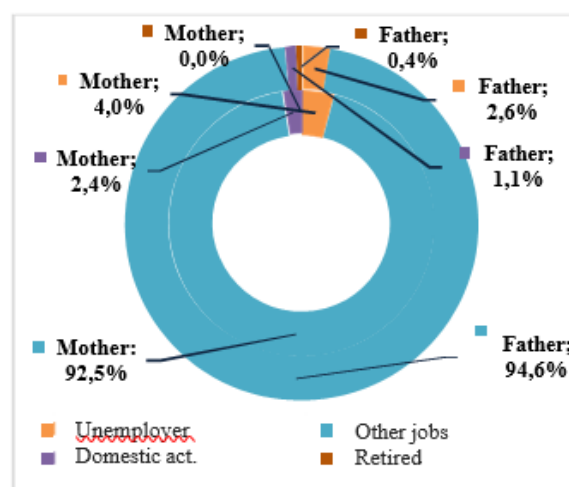


Figure 23. Working status

Table 10.

*Strengths and weaknesses participants families Portugal*

STRENGTH	WEAKNESSES
Structured and biparental families	Number of children per family (1 or 2)
Educational background	
Working status	

**Italy (Centro Machiavelli - Istituto Comprensivo Statale Giovanni XXIII)**

Number of families: 178

The sample for the READ-COM's research in Italy is constituted by 178 families mainly coming from two Tuscany's provinces, that of Florence, including Florence Municipality and its metropolitan area, and that of Arezzo, with Terranuova Bracciolini

Municipality and Valdarno area. The sample show essentially biparental families (95.5%) with one or two children with at least one baby in the focused age spectrum (families of 3 children constitute the 7.9% and those of four children the 2.8%). The single parent families are a small percentage of the whole sample (4.5%). The participant families have children enrolled in local Preschools (and in schools of other educational levels, if they have more than one child with different ages), and they are mainly Italians. This latter info is also confirmed by the detected nationalities (95.50% Italian fathers; 96.62% Italian Mothers) and by the percentage of languages spoken by the participant parents: only the 5,6% of the sample has a different mother tongue (Spanish, Arabic, Indian) from that of the country where they live. The wide majority obviously can speak (98.9%) and write (96.6%) in Italian. In the families where one or both parents are not Italian, at home they speak also other languages from the official that children use at school (e.g. Spanish, Arabic, English, other), but the cases detected constitute a very low percentage (6.7%). The known foreign languages (other than Italian as mother tongue and/or as official language at school) are represented mainly by English and French with prevalence of basic and intermediate levels of proficiency. The additional nationalities to the Italian showed by the involved parents are: Spanish, Indian, Moroccan, Tunisian, Dominican and Peruvian (Table 11).

Table 11.

*Parents' nationalities*

Mothers' Nationality			Fathers' Nationality		
		%			%
<i>Italian</i>	<i>172</i>	<i>96.6</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>170</i>	<i>95.5</i>
<i>Spanish</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.6</i>	<i>Peruvian</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1.1</i>
<i>Tunisian</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>Indian</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.6</i>
<i>Peruvian</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>Moroccan</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1.1</i>
			<i>Dominican</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1.7</i>

Next, the sample of families is characterized by a medium-high level of education, which is also reflected by the observed employment status (the percentage of families with unemployed is very low: only the 2.4% of fathers are unemployed and the 7.8% of the mothers) (Figure 19).

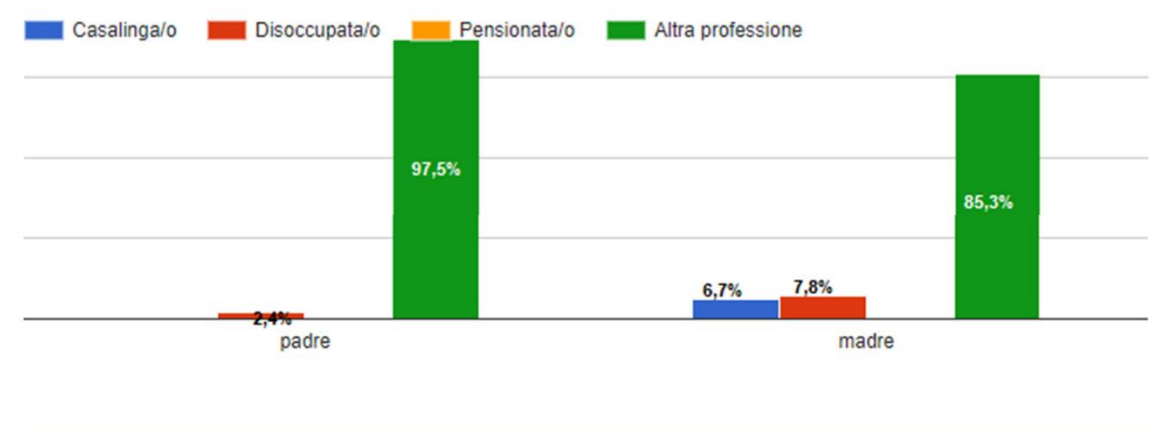


Figure 19. Parents' Employment Status

Despite the questionnaires have been massively circulated among the families belonging to partners' local networks (including e.g. preschools, social cooperatives working in early education, parents' associations, etc.), the collected feedback showed a greater participation of those with stable socio-economic conditions and with a good level of education, that - probably - makes them more interested and aware of topics such as reading education (Figures 20 and 21). Fragile families with more precarious economic conditions or with migrant backgrounds participated less in the survey. This low level of participation of such category was more likely affected by the lack of direct contact with the school and teachers during the lock-down phase (when the survey action has been mainly carried out), who could have played a key role as intermediary in reaching them as well as in making them more aware about the research's focus and items. We should add also that this specific category is used to take part little to the different kind of School's social activities. The main reasons limiting their participation generally are connected with linguistic obstacles or working commitments.

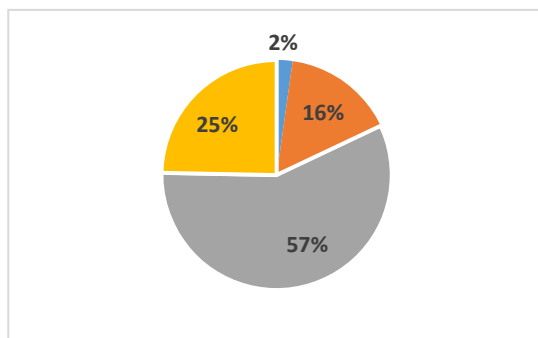


Figure 20. Fathers' Educational Status

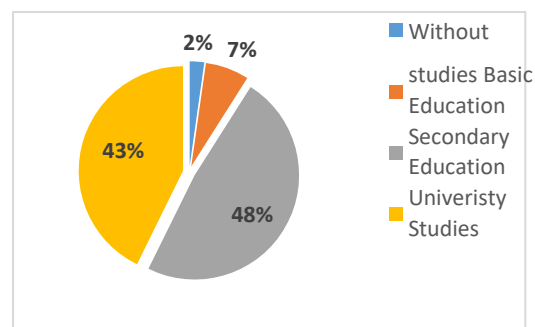


Figure 21. Mothers' Educational Status

Concerning the reading preferences, the majority of the participant families (86.5%) opt for the paper format, while those who choose preferably the electronic one, show a marked preference for the mobile phone (41.6%), followed by tablets (20.2%) and computer (19.10%). Only the 1.1% mentioned other devices such as, for example, the smart TV. Reading in family is essentially conceived as something of pleasant related to leisure and recreational time: among the motivations to read the 69.6% - indeed - indicate fun, while professional or study purposes connected to this practice are indicated respectively by the 14.6% and by the 5.6% of the sample. It is interesting that the 10.10% of families read for home activities such as instructions, recipes, etc.

### Greece (Institouto Technologias Ypologistonkai Ekdoseon Diofantos)

Number of families: 123

The sample is made up of 123 parents of children enrolled in the Early Childhood Education stage (Nipiagogia) in educational centers from different parts of Greece, including Athens, Thessaloniki, Patra, Trikala, Korinthos and Aigeira.

To better understand the nature of the results, we will describe the characteristics of the participating families. 90% of families are two-parent while 10% are single-parent. The number of children per family are indicated in Figure 22.



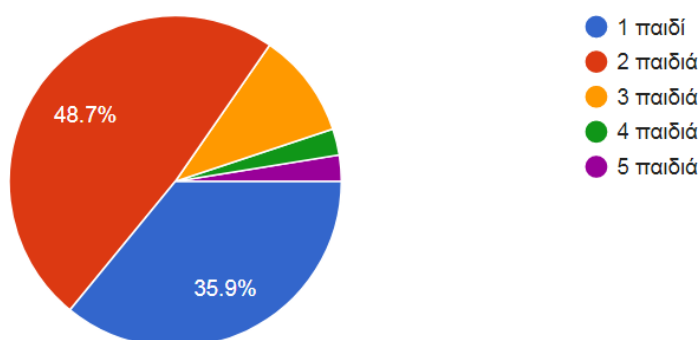


Figure 22. Number of children in family

With regard to the nationality of the parents, 93% of mothers and 99% of fathers are Greek with the rest of nationalities including Cypriot, British and Italian. Other characteristics include:

- 100% can write and read in Greek.
- 91% of the mothers are university graduates.
- 78% of the fathers are university graduates.
- 82% of the mothers are employed, 10% do household activities and 8% are unemployed.
- 99% of the fathers are employed and 1% unemployed.

It has to be noted that these percentages are not representative of the Greek population. Our estimation is that, since the questionnaire was voluntary, the parents who chose to answer it, in other words the type of parents interested in the Promotion of Reading (especially in young ages) are the ones with the above characteristics.

### England (Manchester Metropolitan University)

Number of families: Information gathered via secondary research and ethnographic data.

## 2. TEACHING METHODOLOGIES IN LEARNING TO READ

In this section, each partner has reviewed the academic literature on teaching methodologies most frequently used in the Early Years Education stage of their country. This is later used to reflect on methodologies used in classrooms by the teachers surveyed: the selection of methodological principles, organization of activities and resources, as well as the methods of evaluation. This section also includes the theme of coordination between the Early Years and Primary stages.

Following this, the most significant results obtained from the data collected by each of the partners are presented.

Regarding the review of the academic literature, reports from Spain (University of Málaga-CEIP Rosa de Gálvez and University of Granada) and Portugal (Associação Jardim Escola João de Deus) point out some of the different methods used to teach children to read when they begin formal instruction. These have traditionally been classified into two overarching groups: synthetic methods, with a phonic or syllabic basis, and global or analytical methods, in which the whole word is central in the reading process. Subsequently, mixed methods were added; these attempt to combine analytical and synthetic activities, linking global perception and phonological analysis. Over time, these approaches have evolved towards trends allowing for greater openness in initial assumptions, although there is usually an inclination for one or another perspective, for instance, direct teaching, integrated language and constructivism.

In addition, there are alternative strategies that support improvements in learning, as reflected in the Italian Report (Centro Machiavelli and Istituto Comprensivo Statale Giovanni XXIII) where playful aspects play a cross-cutting role in this educational stage and in all the learning it entails.

As the report about the situation in England (Manchester Metropolitan University) indicates, here learning to read is based on a careful planning process (in which spaces, possible learning experiences and games are taken into account), based on the continuous evaluation of students.

The methodological guidelines for learning to read require, as stated in the Greek Report (Instituto Tecnologias Ypologistonkai Ekdoseon Diofantos), a set of emerging literacy skills: knowledge and understanding of the conventions of written language;

phonological awareness; identification / recognition of words; knowledge of phonics; and fluency.

Given the importance of the educational process with regard to written language, it is necessary to reach a consensus among teaching staff who cover several educational stages. For this reason, mechanisms are needed to determine processes to guarantee the continuity of learning throughout children's schooling.

Regarding **coordination between the educational stages of Early Years and Primary Education**, there are a series of activities carried out by teachers to promote reading development in their educational centres.

To this end, teachers were asked a series of questions related to coordination between stages (see Table 12). The results show that of the Portuguese participants gives great importance to teacher coordination between educational stages, having obtained scores above 90%, followed by Italy, Spain and Greece in this order.

If we carry out a detailed analysis of the different questions asked, we observe that the highest degree of agreement is obtained in sharing objectives, work methodology, groupings, routines, evaluation and resources (74.6%), followed by the relevance of exchanging reading experiences between educational levels (72.9%); design of projects and curricular materials based on joint lines of action (69.7%); and planning of periodic meetings throughout the school year (68.3%) to unify criteria and actions between both stages, as well as sharing these among students of different levels.

Table 12.

*Survey questions on teacher coordination*

COORDINATION	UGR	UMA	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
We design projects and curricular materials based on joint lines of action	72.2	56.3	91.9	78.3	50	69.7
We share objectives, work methodology, groupings, routines, evaluation and resources	72.2	67	94.1	88.3	51	74.5

We plan periodically throughout the course to unify criteria and actions between both stages	55.6	64.2	93.3	74.4	54	68.3
We exchange reading experiences between levels.	66.7	63.6	92.6	77.8	64	72.9
We carry out shared activities between students of both levels.	44.4	81.3	75.6	67.2	64	66.5

## 2.1.TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

Three questionnaires were designed to collect information on: the methodologies teachers use to teach reading; the learning experiences that promote reading; and the types of texts used when learning to read.

The first instrument, the ‘Questionnaire on methodologies in initiating reading’, is made up of seven dimensions that bring together a series of teaching strategies to develop student learning corresponding to current methodological trends. The dimensions relate to the alphabetic method (composed of 6 items), phonic method (4 items), syllabic method (5 items), mixed methods (5 items), global methods (11 items), constructivist methodology (7 items) and phonological awareness (16 items).

Because the same item appears within both the alphabetical and phonic methodologies (the teaching-learning processes of reading and writing are exercised simultaneously), and in both the constructivist and global methods (based on the prior knowledge that students have in relation to the meaning and functionality of learning written language), the number of items presented to teachers was 52.

Before presenting the results, it is interesting to briefly give an overview of each of these methods:

- Alphabetic: the study of the letters, their shape, their value, and finally words. This method goes from letter to word, with an emphasis on the name of the letter.

- Phonics: focuses on the recognition and learning of the sounds of letters. In other words, the relationship between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language.
- Syllabic: it connects reading and writing as children are taught to break down words into syllables. It consists of the teaching of vowels, and subsequently, the teaching of how consonants change with the vowels, forming syllables and then words.
- Mixed (Whole-Language approach in the UK): aims to combine analytical and synthetic activity, combining global perception and phonological analysis. Word recognition, comprehension, and the discovery of grapheme-phoneme correspondence occur in combination and feed into each other.
- Global approach: is based on providing children with access to meaningful and natural texts e.g. environmental print that they can look at and listen to and memorise.
- Constructivist: be recognising the fact that children bring prior knowledge and experiences to a text. They are given opportunities to share, discuss and reflect on those experiences. Presents situations of interest to children in which there is a problem or a challenge, and invites them to find ways to solve this.
- Phonological awareness: This includes identifying and manipulating units of oral language such as words, syllables, and onsets and rimes.

In relation to the methods most used by teachers (Table 13), in England, the methodology of teaching reading is regulated by state in the form of a national curriculum (mmu report, p. 7). this places an emphasis on phonics. This method is also used in Portugal, Greece and Melilla.

The sample from UMA-CEIP Rosa de Gálvez shows support for a constructivist methodology, along with phonological awareness. However, the most used approach is mixed methods.

The use of phonics often goes hand-in-hand with phonological awareness, as suggested by the responses from Greek and Portuguese teachers.

Table 13.

*Most frequently used methodologies for learning to read*

Methods	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ENGLAND
Alphabetic	20.5	33.3	28.1	-	25	
Phonics	21.5	38.9	51.9	3.3	46	National Primary Curriculum (2013)
Syllabic	25.6	5.6	40.7	-	36	
Mixed	52.3	61.1	41.5	36.7	44	
Global	22.6	38.9	17.8	6.7	31	
Constructivist	47.7	22.2	11.1	11.1	13	
Phonological awareness	65.1	27.8	71.1	40	82	

Below, we describe the most common methodological strategies used by teachers.

As can be seen in table 13, the majority of partners, Portugal, Italy, Spain (UMA-Rosa de Gálvez) and Greece, share an overall methodological approach to learning to read: phonological awareness.

The particular strategies that are most often used by European teachers in this sample are those that relate to global methods (items 26, 27, 20, 22, 25, 21, 22 and 25), followed by constructivist methods (items 31, 35, 30, 32, 34 and 33), phonological awareness (37, 42, 40 and 41), syllabic methods (items 10 and 13) and phonics (item7).

The reports from the Spanish partners (UMA-CEIP Rosa de Gálvez and UGR), suggest that teachers here use a great diversity of strategies to develop the initial stages of learning to read through the use of wide-ranging methodologies. The results obtained

by the Portuguese partner are similar, suggesting that Early Years Education teachers use various strategies to involve their students in the reading process.

In Italy, the educational process - and also that of reading specifically - is derived mainly from an emotional and affective dimension, with the relationship between the child and their educator having a key role. Starting from this premise, teachers offer children various activities related to reading for pleasure, in which the discovery of the book as an object, and of the written word, is paramount.

In England, there are explicit regulations regarding reading methods, specifically systematic synthetic phonics (MMU Report, p. 7).

The least frequently used strategies, as mentioned previously, relate to the alphabetic method (items 1, 6, 3, 2 and 4) followed by the syllabic method (items 14, 11 and 12).

Finally, it is worth mentioning the diversity of scores in the strategies relating to phonological awareness; although some items are amongst the highest values, the opposite is true for others (see items 52, 46, 47, 44, 51, 43, 39, 48 and 45) (Table 14).

Table 14.

*Reading methods*

PART I. READING METHODS	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
<b>ALPHABETIC METHOD</b>						
01. I follow alphabetical order to teach reading.	20.5	16.7	87.6	20.0	20.0	33.0
02. Each letter is studied by pronouncing its name.	67.0	66.7	86.1	36.7	34.0	58.1
03. The teaching and learning processes of reading and writing are carried out simultaneously.	79.0	94.4	73.6	36.7		56.7
04. Once students have learned the alphabet, consonants are combined with vowels to form direct syllables first, then inverse and finally, mixed syllables.	68.5	77.8	71.4	40.0	88.0	69.1
05. I combine syllables to create words and then sentences.	64.0	77.8	52.0	73.3	-	66.8
06. To learn letters, I use resources such as card games, movable letters, matching word/image cards	91.5	94.4	14.4	0.9	70.0	54.2
AVERAGE	65.1	71.3	64.2	34.6	35.5	56.3
<b>PHONICS METHOD</b>						
07. I begin by teaching the vowel sounds, then the sounds of diphthongs (two vowels together) and, finally, the sounds of consonants.	94.5	83.3	88.8	63.3		82.5
08. I combine the sound of phonemes with onomatopoeia. gestures and / or kinesthetics.	95.0	27.8	86.2	77.7	75.6	72.5
09. I combine syllables to create words, and then sentences.	99.5	16.7	83.5	63.3		65.8
AVERAGE	96.3	42.6	86.2	68.1	25.2	63.7
<b>SYLLABIC METHOD</b>						
10. I begin by teaching the sound and spelling of vowels simultaneously.	99.5	100.0	82.9	56.7		84.8
11. Students learn to combine consonants with each of the vowels (ta-te-ti-to-tu...).	98.5	0.0	76.5	70.0		61.3



12. Students begin by learning direct syllables, then closed, inverse, and finally, mixed syllables (diphthongs and closed).	93.0	66.7	71.6	30.0	70.0	66.3
13. Students begin by combining consonants with vowels (syllables); meaningful linguistic units (words, phrases...) are introduced later.	96.0	88.9	42.2	60.0	96.0	76.6
14. I carry out activities in which syllables can be added and / or removed.	86.0	-	31.0	73.3		47.6
AVERAGE	94.6	51.1	60.8	58.0	55.3	67.3
<b>MIXED METHOD</b>						
15. Students learn letters by presenting a word whose initial is the one they are learning (shown in alphabetical order), accompanied by an illustration.	95.5	94.4	83.9	70.0		86.0
16. To understand the sound of each letter we use onomatopoeic examples (e.g. for the letter “s” we use the sound of the wind “ssss”).	97.0	77.8	72.6	90.0		84.4
17. Students learn a syllable by analyzing a word that contains it.	90.5	83.3	71.6	36.7		70.5
18. I teach a syllable as a part of a word.	70.5	88.9	62.4	80.0	-	75.5
19. I show the words as well as the letters so that students can recognize words and letters.	87.5	94.4	34.0	80.0	-	74.0
AVERAGE	88.2	87.8	64.9	71.3		78.1
<b>GLOBAL METHOD</b>						
20. I present various words and sentences that refer to world that surround them and is part of their environment and daily routines.	70.0	94.4	95.6	86.7	-	86.7
21. From first contact, I work with students on the writing of words and phrases, working with them on graphomotor skills.	81.5	72.2	94.5	86.7	-	83.7
22. I do activities to identify syllables within a whole word	89.5	93.4	92.1	80.0	50.0	81.0
23. I perform tasks to recognize phonemes within the word.	73.0	77.8	77.8	66.7	-	73.8
24. I reinforce linguistic knowledge with vocabulary, grammatical structures, word order ...	85.5	88.9	75.0	30.0	-	69.9

25. Students identify and recognize playful texts (stories, songs ...).	63.0	83.3	74.7	93.3	-	78.6
26. I reinforce the intonation of stories, as well as the rhythm of songs.	99.0	100.0	73.6	93.3	-	91.5
27. I create situations that favour student creativity.	94.0	100.0	68.2	100.0	-	90.6
28. I present texts to help students understand words and sentences, so that they are able to assimilate and understand what is being read.	93.0	67.7	67.8	60.0	-	72.1
29. Written language tasks are related to the development of oral language.	96.0	83.3	63.8	0.6	-	60.9
AVERAGE	84.5	86.1	78.3	69.7	50.0	79.6
<b>CONSTRUCTIVIST METHOD</b>						
30. I use reading in real life scenarios so that students discover their functionality (leisure, learning, news).	85.0	77.8	94.7	80.0	-	84.4
31. I use words that are meaningful for students (their own name, likes/dislikes ...).	80.5	100.0	93.6	96.7	-	92.7
32. I start from the previous knowledge that students have in relation to the meaning and functionality of written language	92.0	83.3	88.3	73.3	-	84.2
33. I work with different types of texts, such as enumerative (lists, menus ...), informative (notes, posters ...), literary (poems, songs, stories ...), expository (project dossiers, biographies...), prescriptive (recipes, instructions ...).	96.0	66.7	84.8	60.0	-	76.9
34. I develop educational experiences in the classroom through projects on topics chosen by the students.	94.5	61.1	80.4	73.3	-	77.3
35. I support students' communication abilities (active listening, empathy, dialogue, assertiveness, argument ...).	89.5	94.4	78.3	100.0	-	90.6
36. I encourage students to use different types of language (body, gesture, music, visual...).	77.5	94.4	76.1	100.0	-	87.0
AVERAGE	87.9	82.5	85.2	83.3		84.7
<b>PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS</b>						

37. I play syllable and phoneme counting games (with or without clapping).	82.0	100.0	99.1	96.7	-	94.5
38. I use rhyming games.	94.5	72.2	97.4	100.0	-	91.0
39. I do activities in which students learn to differentiate words from pseudo words.	89.5	44.4	90.4	46.7	-	67.8
40. I do activities in which syllables are counted to learn to discriminate long and short words.	88.5	66.7	89.3	80.0	-	81.1
41. I do activities for students to isolate and alter initial and final syllables.	90.5	66.7	86.8	56.7	-	75.2
42. I do activities for students to isolate and alter the initial and / or final sound of a word.	94.0	66.7	86.7	83.3	-	82.7
43. I carry out activities in which students pronounce the sound of each phoneme that a word contains.	64.5	83.3	86.7	86.7	13.3	66.9
44. I carry out activities that involve adding, omitting, inverting and changing the order of syllables and phonemes.	87.5	55.6	86.0	0.6	43.3	54.6
45. I carry out activities in which the position of the phonemes within the words must be identified.	96.0	66.7	77.7	0.5	50.0	58.2
46. Students name words that begin, contain or end with a specific syllable aloud.	83.0	94.4	77.0	1.0	0.0	51.1
47. Students classify images according to their syllabic structure (number of syllables per word).	58.5	66.7	76.8	0.4	60.0	52.5
48. Students name the word of an image, omitting the syllable that has been previously indicated (initial, middle or final).	82.0	27.8	71.7	53.3	46.7	56.3
49. I present words and students indicate if they start, contain or end with a given phoneme.	70.0	88.9	70.8	76.7	23.3	65.9
50. Students segment words into phonemes.	85.0	77.8	66.1	76.7	23.3	65.8
51. Students compare words that begin and / or end with a specific phoneme.	89.5	83.3	61.1	80.0	20.0	66.8
52. I teach two sentences for students to indicate which word has been added, changed and / or deleted.	95.0	50.0		46.7	53.3	49.0
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>84.4</b>	<b>69.5</b>	<b>76.5</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>64.5</b>

## 2.2. PSYCHO-PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES FOR LEARNING TO READ

The second instrument, 'Questionnaire on learning experiences that promote reading pedagogy', is made up of four dimensions that bring together a series of teaching strategies to develop students' learning through 37 items. The dimensions correspond to psycho-pedagogical principles and methodologies of learning to read (comprised of 8 items); organization of activities for reading (11 items); spatial, material and human resources used for reading (12 items); and evaluation of learning (6 items).

Table 15 shows the statements presented to the teachers to discover their educational practices around psychopedagogical principles and methodologies of learning to read, and the results obtained by each partner.

Table 15.

*Psycho-pedagogical principles and methodologies of learning to read*

PSYCHO-PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES AND READING METHODOLOGIES	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
01. I ask children questions during the reading of texts to ensure that they understand the content.	96.0	94.4	95.6	-	98.0	96.0
02. I encourage children to interpret illustrations, even if they cannot read the text.	95.0	83.3	99.3	-	-	92.5
03. I establish links between written language and oral language.	94.5	100.0	98.5	66.7	92.0	90.3
05. I introduce texts whose contents are related to children's past-experiences.	92.0	77.8	95.6	-	-	88.5
06. I take advantage of the inputs from children while reading a text, even if they are not related to the topic we are dealing with.	75.5	83.3	92.6	-	97.0	87.1
07. I establish creative and playful approaches to reading (change of characters, change of endings, creation of short stories with images...)	85.0	94.4	96.3	100.0	98.0	94.7
08. I organise the classroom with different workstations and learning corners, according to children's needs.	66.0	72.2	93.3	100.0	-	82.9
AVERAGE	87.6	88.2	96.3	88.9	96.3	91.4

The report from UMA-CEIP Rosa de Gálvez (Spain) states that almost all teachers apply the principles presented. It is worth noting that teachers usually present work carried out by their students in the classroom (96.5%); encourage the interpretation of illustrations of a text, even if students cannot read the words (95.0%); and ask questions while reading texts to ensure their comprehension (96.0%). Teachers also organize the classroom according to the needs of students with different learning corners and workshops (66%), and establish relationships between written language and oral language (94.5%) as well as creative and playful approaches to encourage reading (change of characters, ending changes or creating stories with images, among others) (85%).

The vast majority of teachers in Melilla always, or almost always, use all of these approaches, although the fact that 100% of the sample establish relationships between written and oral language and display students' work stands out.

Similarly, a high percentage (above 90%) of Portuguese teachers use all the psycho-pedagogical principles included in the survey. Those used in practically all early years classrooms are: I encourage my students to interpret the illustrations, even if they cannot read a text (99.3%); I exhibit work done by the children in the classroom (99.3%); and I establish relationships between written language and oral language (98.5%).

In Italy, the data should be interpreted taking into account the playful and immersive dimension that teachers use to bring children closer to the written word and the experience of reading. This suggests that its strengths, indicated by 100% of the sample, are the principles: I establish creative and playful approaches to reading (change of characters, change of endings, creation of short stories with images...) (item 7) and I organise the classroom with different workstations and learning corners, according to children's needs (item 8). Although more than half of the participating teachers (67.7%) promote activities to establish relationships between written language and oral language, this is the least frequently mentioned, in contrast to the rest of the statements in this survey, and also differing from Spain, Portugal and Greece.

The data obtained in Greece indicate that a majority of teachers use four principles: asking children questions during the reading of texts to ensure that they understand the content (98%); establishing creative and playful approaches to reading (98%); taking

advantage of the inputs from children while reading a text, even if they are not related to the topic being dealt with (98%) and establishing relationships between written language and oral language (92%). However, organising the classroom with different workstations and learning corners, according to children's needs (item 8) is the least used principle the Greek context, in contrast to the situation in Spain and Italy.

Finally, the report from England indicates that children are encouraged to analyze and share reading experiences and responses, mainly through shared (whole class group) and guided reading (in groups of 4 to 6 children). They work on vocabulary, comparing stories and relating texts to their own experiences. One approach to promote concentration is the curiosity approach, based on the use of neutral colours on the walls of classrooms, in addition to the use of real items for play rather than plastic toys (MMU Report, p 9).

If we reflect on the results across partners and countries, it is important that students are aware that their work is displayed in their classrooms (98.6%), while we ensure that they understand what they hear or read (96%) through creative and playful approaches (94.7%) and encouraging them to interpret the illustrations in texts (92.5%).

When addressing language learning, it is essential that oral language and written language be related (90.3%), through content related to children's experience (88.5%), and taking advantage of their comments (87.1%).

Last but not least, we must take scrupulous care of the organization of our classrooms, creating learning environments that promote autonomous, meaningful and holistic learning for students (82.9%).

### **2.3. ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVITIES (PROGRAMMING OR PLANNING, TIMING, STUDENT GROUPINGS)**

With regard to **student groupings**, there is a preference for large group activities (77.2%), followed by small groups (72.4%), individual work (63.8%) and organizing groups according to the different level readers (65.8%).

The Spanish (UMA-CEIP Rosa de Gálvez Report) is large group reading activities are the most used in Greece (81%). On the other hand, amongst teachers in Melilla, individual reading activities are most used (94.4%). However, for Portuguese (88.7%)

and Italian (90%) teachers the most frequently chosen option is reading in small groups (Table 16). In England, students are mostly organised into large groups and small groups (4-6 children); individual reading is dependent on the school or setting (MMU Report, p. 10).

Regarding **class routines**, Spanish (UMA- CEIP Rosa de Gálvez, 94.4% and UGR, 94.4%) and Greek (87%) teachers establish a time dedicated to learning to read, through assemblies, book corners or other strategies. This is also important amongst Portuguese (94.8%) and Italian (90.0%) teachers, although it should be noted that they make changes in the scheme of work according to the needs of children throughout the school year (Portugal, 92.6% and Italy, 93.3%).

Across partner reports, it was found that timetables must be flexible so they can be altered depending on the needs of the students (91.3%), and it is important to establish routines with specific times for learning to read (84.9%) (Table 16).

With regard to **reading activities**, the data for Spain highlight that most teachers base these on a project, teaching unit or centre of interest (85%). However, this approach is one of the least frequently adopted by Portuguese teachers (only 26.7%), together with the use of topics discussed in assembly to plan meaningful and motivating reading activities (15.6 %).

In the analysis of the data across partners, activities most frequently start with a project, teaching unit or centre of interest (68.2%), taking advantage of themes that arise in the classroom (67.5%) and at different times of the day such as the class assembly (53%) (Table 16).

Before concluding, an idea that seems encouraging to us is that teachers do not generally favour the use of a textbook (48.4%) even if it is one they create themselves (47%), leaving children free to develop their learning without pressure, which can lead to ongoing frustration with written language (reading and writing).

Table 16.

*Activity planning*

ACTIVITY PLANNING	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
19. I have a specific time for learning to read as part of the class routine (assembly, corners ...).	58.5	94.4	94.8	90.0	87.0	84.9
16. I modify the scheme of work according to children's needs throughout the school year.	96.0	83.3	92.6	93.3	-	91.3
14. I take advantage of situations that occur within the classroom to carry out reading activities.	87.5	94.4	88.1		-	67.5
10. Reading activities are carried out in small groups.	50.5	66.7	86.7	90.0	68.0	72.4
12. Children learn how to read by following a published textbook.	89.0	-	85.2	13.3	6.0	48.4
11. Individual reading activities are carried out.	73.0	94.4	78.5	73.3		63.8
09. Reading activities are carried out in large groups.	67.0	83.3	77.8	76.7	81.0	77.2
17. I organise groups taking account of children's different reading levels.	94.5	66.7	72.6	33.3	62.0	65.8
13. In class, we work through a notebook that we prepare taking children's interests into consideration.	95.5	55.6	71.9		12.0	47.0
15. Reading activities begin from a project. teaching unit and/or topic of interest.	85.0	77.8	26.7	83.3	-	68.2
18. The subjects debated in assembly help me to plan more meaningful and motivating reading activities.	49.0	94.4	15.6		-	53.0
AVERAGE	76.9	81.1	71.9	50.3	45.1	65.1



## 2.4. SPACE, MATERIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES (TYPE, ORGANIZATION, PARTICIPANTS, TYPE OF PARTICIPATION).

Considering spatial resources, Spanish teachers (UMA-CEIP Rosa de Gálvez (98.5%) highlight the value of having a quiet place dedicated to individual reading, specifically a classroom library (88%), in addition to a corner with activities to promote reading. Both spaces are also found in schools in Melilla (77.8% and 72.2% respectively), but are not amongst the features with the highest percentages of responses in this section. In Portugal, both the reading corner (94.8%) and the classroom library (91.9%) are also notable for their high use by early years teachers. All participating Italian teachers and 97% of Greek teachers have a library in their classroom (Table 17). In England, all classrooms have an area dedicated to books / reading (MMU Report, p. 10).

The overall results show the need to have a corner in the classroom for activities that promote reading (92%), as well as a quiet place (classroom library) for individual and / or small group reading (88%), resourced with a variety of types of texts (85.4%) which are used at different times and / or daily routines (74.9%).

Regarding **material resources**, a high number of Spanish (UMA) teachers use ICT resources to carry out interactive reading activities (such as the internet, interactive whiteboard, published or self-created materials) (97.5%). This high use of ICT is also reported amongst teachers in Portugal (80.7%) and Melilla (83.3%). However, whilst in the latter, the use of interactive whiteboards (videos, games, children's websites ...) is also of particular relevance (88.9%), this is less well-used by Portuguese teachers (54.8%). In England, interactive whiteboards are used quite frequently to write / segment words during the teaching of phonics (MMU Report, p. 10), but the use of this type of resources is quite low in Italy (only 36.7%). In Greece, ICT is most frequently used for the creation of stories (70%).

Portuguese, Greek and English teachers also make use of various types of texts in class, such as picture books, stories, newspapers, magazines, cookbooks, encyclopaedias or dictionaries.

In England, schools, especially those in disadvantaged areas, provide literacy-related reading books and games for children to take home and use with their families (MMU Report, p. 10).

Table 17.

*Physical, material and human resource*

PHYSICAL, MATERIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
23. I use flashcards (word recognition and repetition) to support reading development.	48.5	77.8	98.5	-	-	74.9
20. Children use an activity corner to promote reading.	98.5	77.8	94.8	-	97.0	92.0
21. The classroom has a quiet place dedicated to individual reading (classroom library).	88.0	72.2	91.9	100.0	-	88.0
22. I use several types of texts in the classroom (picture books, short stories, newspapers, magazines, cookbooks, encyclopaedias, dictionaries...).	74.0	77.8	91.9	-	98.0	85.4
30. I coordinate with other teachers to programme and/or carry out reading activities with children.	94.0	83.3	88.1	76.7	-	85.5
28. I provide information to families to promote reading at home (workshops, termly meetings, tutorials, family learning).	90.5	66.7	85.9	56.0	65.0	73.6
25. I use various ICT resources to carry out interactive reading activities (internet, interactive whiteboard/projector, ...).	82.5	83.3	80.7	36.7	78.0	72.2
24. I use ICT to create short stories.	95.5	33.3	78.5	26.7	70.0	60.8
27. Families participate in activities connected to reading in the classroom.	86.5	50.0	77.8	40.0	76.0	66.1
29. Families carry out suggested reading activities with their child at home.	92.0	66.7	77.8	86.7	-	
31. Other teachers from the educational centre or other professionals participate in actions that promote children's reading skills in my classroom.	96.0	55.6	71.9	60.0	25.0	61.7
26. I use the interactive whiteboard /projector to carry out selected reading activities from the internet (videos, games, children's websites...).	97.5	88.9	54.8	23.3	17.0	56.3
AVERAGE	87.0	69.5	82.7	56.7	65.8	72.3

Turning to **human resources**, Spanish teachers (UMA- CEIP Rosa de Gálvez) prioritize the role that families play in school, which is why they are provided with information to encourage reading at home, through workshops, termly meetings, tutorials or family learning sessions, among others (90.5%). Likewise, 86.7% of the Italian teachers surveyed suggest activities for families to carry out with their child at home. Among the Greek teachers, the participation of the family in reading activities in the classroom is a notable feature (76%). In Melilla, the approach taken is for teachers to co-ordinate with each other to programme and / or carry out reading activities with students (83.3%). In the Portuguese context, both these aspects are important with percentages above 85%.

As already mentioned in section 2 of this report, coordination between teachers (85.5%) is a priority, in addition to the invaluable help and co-operation of families to instil a love of reading with activities in the home (80.8%) and learning how to boost their children's reading (73.6%).

In addition, the finding suggest that the participation of different agents, both internal and external, in schools fosters the necessary dynamism and motivation in the teaching-learning processes of students, which is why it is essential to develop adequate joint programming (61.7%).

## 2.5. EVALUATION

The basic purpose of evaluation in Early Years Education should be to intervene to allow educational decisions to be made, being aware at all times of the development of students and being able to propose appropriate measures to ensure the maximum development of their capacities.

Participating Spanish teachers make use of different opportunities to evaluate their students' progress in learning to read. Specifically, they carry out an initial evaluation at the beginning of the school year (UMA- CEIP Rosa de Gálvez 89% and UGR 94.4%) and analyze different moments in the classroom during the course of the year to evaluate their students' reading (UMA - CEIP Rosa de Gálvez, 93.5% and UGR, 83.3%). The results obtained by the Portuguese partner are along the same lines (87.4% and 86.7% respectively); in addition, 86.7% report that, after finish a reading task, children think about what they have just learned. This last item is the most relevant in

Italy as a form of evaluation, being used by 93.3% of teachers and Greece, where it is used by 76%. For Greek teachers evaluation at the beginning of the school year is key (83%) (Table 18). In England, teachers assess regularly and formatively, every 5-6 weeks, with an emphasis on decoding skills. There are plans to introduce a new initial assessment test, in autumn 2020, the purpose of which is to provide a starting point from which to measure the progress of students until the end of the Primary stage (MMU Report, p. 12).

Table 18.

*Evaluation*

EVALUATION	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
36. I analyze tasks the students do in order to evaluate them.	95.0	94.4	97.0	-	3.0	72.4
32. I make an initial (diagnostic) evaluation at the beginning of the school year.	89.0	94.4	87.4	53.3	12.6	67.3
33. I analyze different moments during the school year to evaluate children's reading.	93.5	83.3	86.7	60.0	13.3	67.4
37. After finishing a reading task. children think about what they have just learned.	79.0	61.1	86.7	93.3	13.3	66.7
35. I use a specific rubric on reading skills to evaluate children.	94.0	55.6	49.6	-	50.4	62.4
34. At specific moments during the school year. I evaluate children with a reading test.	96.0	61.1	48.9	26.7	51.1	56.8
AVERAGE	91.1	75.0	76.1	58.3	24.0	64.9

In the reports by Spanish partners, the most widely used evaluation approach is the analysis of the students' tasks (UMA-CEIP Rosa de Gálvez 95% and UGR-94.4%). This is also the most used in Portugal (97%) and Greece (75%) (see Table 18). In England, observation and questions are the main tools; a portfolio will also be prepared for each child (MMU Report, p. 11).

Evaluation is an essential element in the educational process, being undertaken through the analysis of the students' tasks (72.4%), as well as self-reflection at the end

of a task (66.7%). Such evaluation should be continuous, taking place at different points during the school year (67.4%), including an initial diagnostic evaluation (67.3%) that enables the adaptation of educational programmes to the needs of each student. Among the instruments used are a rubric (62.4%) and specific reading tests (56.8%).

## 2.6. TYPES OF TEXT

To read is to understand a written text. It is an active process whereby each reader has a specific objective, a reason to read, building meaning by interacting with the text and bringing their previous knowledge into play. Reading, thus understood, generates thoughts, feelings, ideas and emotions, enhancing the idea of reading as a process of interpretation and understanding, rather than the association of sounds with letters. In this way, children read and write as a process of progression to knowledge of written language.

The reading culture of young children is based around opportunities they have to interact with texts in everyday life situations, and the knowledge and interpretations that adults bring to these texts. To generate an appropriate literacy environment, these situations must involve a majority of texts for social use, in different media, such as newspapers or magazines, advertisements, instructions - everything that can and should be read. During these interactions, alternating reading and dialogue, and encouraging children's responses to questions about the text content and format are strategies that help focus children's attention.

From experience of a variety of text types, children can learn that we read and write to:

- Remember, identify, locate, record, store, find out ... data.
- Communicate or access information
- Enjoy, communicate emotions, events, dreams ...
- Study, learn, deepen knowledge
- Learn know-how... how to do things.

This is why we consider it essential that teachers use various types of text in the classroom to introduce reading to their students.

To study this, a third instrument has been used, the ‘Questionnaire on types of texts used whilst learning to read. This is made up of five dimensions that bring together a series of types of texts that are currently used in classrooms for learning to read. The dimensions correspond to enumerative texts (composed of 9 items), expository (5 items), prescriptive (4 items), literary (7 items) and informative (7 items).

Because the same item is included as both an enumerative and a prescriptive text (cooking recipes), the number of items presented to teachers was 31.

Table 19.

*Typology of texts*

TYPE OF TEXT	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
Enumerative (Report)	76.7	26.5	67.7	27.8	73.9	54
Expository (Argument)	71.7	40	61.5	34.7	72	54,4
Prescriptive (Procedure)	53	52.8	73.3	65.6	92	65
Literary (Narrative)	66.1	77.8	87.1	78.6	93.8	79.2
Informative (Explanation)	70	35.7	59.3	20.9	65	50
<b>AVERAGE</b>	67.5	46.6	69.8	50.0	79.3	60.5

The teachers surveyed consider the use of various types of text essential in the classroom. The texts most used by teachers are literary (79.2%), followed by prescriptive (65%), expository (54.4%), enumerative (54.0%), and, finally, informative (50%) (see Table 19).

Table 20.

*Literary texts*

LITERARY TEXTS	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
Picture books	22.5	72.2	91.1	100.0	100.0	77.2
Poetry	98.0	100.0	91.1	53.3	97.0	87.9
Comics or cartoons	82.0	27.8	63.7	40.0		53.4
Stories, narratives or legends	45.0	100.0	96.3	93.3	82.0	83.3

Sayings, songs or riddles	58.0	100.0	97.0	100.0	100.0	91.0
Classroom anthologies of stories, poetry, songs, proverbs..	99.0	72.2	74.8	86.7	-	83.2
Theatre or dramatization	58.5	72.2	95.6	76.7	90.0	78.6
AVERAGE	66.1	77.8	87.1	78.6	93.8	79.2

Literary texts are the most preferred text type amongst Greek (93.8%) and Portuguese (87.1%) teachers, although they are also popular amongst the rest of the sample too.

Sayings, songs and riddles are well-used resources in the classroom (91%), as are poetry (87.9%); stories, narratives or legends (83.3%); classroom anthologies (83.2%); theatre and dramatization (78.6%); and picture books (77.2%). Comics and cartoons are the least used (53.4%) (Table 20).

Table 21.

*Prescriptive texts*

PREScriptive TEXTS	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
Rules (of games, of behaviour)	33.0	83.3	91.1	90.0	100.0	79.5
Leaflets for children's medicines	66.5	0	77.8	20.0	-	54.8
Instructions	59.5	22.2	51.1	86.7	84.0	60.7
AVERAGE	53.0	52.8	73.3	65.6	92.0	65.0

Prescriptive texts are the second most widely used. As has been indicated by various studies, didactic works are important due to their widespread presence in society (Rivas, et al., 2017; Enrique Mirón and Molina-García, 2017). Rules are the most widely used (79.5%), followed by instructions (60.7%) and drug leaflets (54.8%) (Table 21).

Table 22.

*Expository texts*

EXPOSITORY TEXTS	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
Project dossier	56.0	22.2	65.2	40.0	-	45.9
Book reviews, school outings, experiments.	79.5	38.9	71.9	83.3	79.0	70.5
Textbooks or school books	71.0	72.2	31.9	3.3	60.0	47.7
Texts for the development of an oral presentation	61.0	27.8	74.8	0.0	77.0	48.1
Reference books	91.0	38.9	63.7	46.7	-	60.1
AVERAGE	71.7	40.0	61.5	34.7	72.0	54.4

In relation to expository texts, book reviews, outputs and experiments are the most popular (70.5%), followed by reference books (60.1%), texts for the development of oral presentations (48.1%), textbooks (47.7%) and project dossiers (45.9%). It is worth highlighting the fact that teachers in both Spain (UMA 71%; UGR, 72.2%) and Greece (60%) show a preference for textbooks in Early Years Education over the preparation of project dossiers (45.9%) (Table 22).

Table 23.

*Enumerative texts*

ENUMERATIVE TEXTS	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
Lists (shopping, toys, class lists, story titles ...)	86.0	50.0	74.8	23.3	90.0	64.8
Menus (school, restaurants)	57.5	5.6	61.5	76.6	45.0	49.2
Encyclopaedias, dictionaries, atlases	74.0	11.1	63.7	0.0	75.0	44.8
Schedules (of TV programmes, school activities, chores...)	90.5	22.2	61.5	3.3	58.0	47.1
Index (books, magazines, stories ...)	88.5	38.9	62.2	73.3	79.0	68.4
Labels (clothing, food)	74.5	11.1	66.7	36.7	81.0	54.0
Leaflets or posters	90.0	38.9	87.4	13.3	95.0	64.9
Catalogues, phone books, agendas ...	67.0	27.8	49.6	6.7	68.0	43.8
Recipes	62.0	33.3	82.2	16.7	-	48.6
AVERAGE	76.7	26.5	67.7	27.8	73.9	54.0



The most popular enumerative texts are indexes (68.4%), lists (64.8%), leaflets or posters (64.9%) and labels (54%). The least used are encyclopaedias, dictionaries, atlases (44.8%); schedules (47.1%); recipes (48.6%); and menus (49.2%) (Table 23).

Table 24.

*Informative texts*

INFORMATIVE TEXTS	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
Newspapers or magazines	73.5	50.0	83.7	13.3	89.0	61.9
Correspondence (Letters)	84.5	27.8	56.3	6.7	61.0	47.3
Illustrations	52.5	88.9	89.6	96.7		81.9
Conceptual maps	66.0	16.7	27.4	23.3	67.0	40.1
Emails or social networks	53.5	16.7	31.9	0.0	37.0	27.8
Advertisements or propaganda	84.0	33.3	54.8	3.3	71.0	49.3
Information books, brochures	76.0	16.7	71.1	2.7		41.6
AVERAGE	70.0	35.7	59.3	20.9	65.0	50.0

The most frequently used informative texts are illustrations (81%), followed by newspapers or magazines (61.9%), advertisements (49.3%), letters (47.3%), information books (41.1) and concept maps (40.1%). Despite being in an era of new technology, with the access to knowledge it offers, emails and social networks are the least frequently used (27.8%) (Table 24).

Carrying out a detailed analysis of the results by country, the texts most widely used by teachers surveyed by UMA-CEIP Rosa de Gálvez (Spain) are enumerative texts (76.7%), with brochures or posters (90%), indices (88.5%) and lists (86%) being the most common. However, the highest scores are obtained for literary texts, more specifically classroom anthologies of stories, poetry, songs and proverbs (99%), as well as poetry (98%). In Melilla, the most popular are literary texts: sayings, songs, riddles, poems, stories, narratives and legends (100%).

Among Portuguese teachers, literary texts (87.1%) are, once again, the most popular in terms of use. In this case, the types with the highest percentages are the same as those indicated by Spanish (UGR) teachers, with the addition of theatre and dramatization (95.6%) and picture books (91.1%).

In the case of Italy, the most used type of text is expository (62.2%), specifically reviews of books, school outings, experiments ... (83.3%).

High percentages of teachers in Greece indicate the importance of both literary texts (85%) – the use of stories, narratives or legends, as well as sayings, songs or riddles (100%) - and expository texts (71%) – again reviews of books, school outings and experiments being most heavily used.

Finally, in England, Early Years professionals must provide children with access to all kinds of texts: phonics scheme books, picture books (fiction), picture books (non-fiction), instructions (recipes, games, etc.), reports, explanations, dictionaries, poetry, comics, brochures, maps, online websites ... (MMU Report, p. 13).

### 3. THE ROLE OF FAMILIES IN LEARNING TO READ

Information on the role of families was collected using the instrument ‘Questionnaire on Family Reading Attitudes and Habits in Early Years Education’. This was designed to elicit a dichotomous response (yes / no), from families on 40 statements related to their attitudes and habits towards reading and the implications of these for the early development of their children’s reading.

The instrument consists of four dimensions, each containing 10 items. Two dimensions collect information about reading attitudes, and two about reading practices. The first two address the attitudes that parents have towards reading (dimension 1), and the attitudes they have about their involvement in day-to-day activities to support their children's early reading development (dimension 2). The next two dimensions deal with parents’ practices to develop this learning through daily activities within the family environment (dimension 3), and practices in which they specifically work with icons or letters to develop their child’s early reading, therefore, promoting reading and writing (dimension 4).

**Family attitudes towards reading** (the first dimension surveyed) are favourable overall (see Table 25). In this regard, reading in families is perceived as important as a means that helps to resolve different family situations (99.1%), and cannot be replaced by viewing videos on the internet (80.8%), or by adopting a trial and error approach to the use of devices, without reading the instructions (78.5%).

There is agreement that reading is not a waste of time (98.8%) and is essential in daily life (95.6%), allowing individuals to take advantage of leisure and entertainment

opportunities (94.9%); exchange information with the others on topics read about in magazines, books, the internet ... (92.6%); and take advantage of spare moments during the day (69%).

Libraries and bookshops are exceptional places to cultivate a love of reading, providing tranquillity, as well as a variety of resources for all types of audience. (91%) (Table 25).

The responses from Spanish families (UMA-CEIP Rosa de Gálvez Report) stand out for their understanding that reading is not as a waste of time (99.4%). They also consider reading to be a form of entertainment (94.1%). In the context of Melilla, the highest percentages relate to statements relating to reading as being essential in daily life (99%) and reading the text that appears on the screen when watching television (99%). However, it is striking that, although 98.0% say that reading helps to solve everyday situations (such as cooking or taking a medicine), close to half of the sample (47.5%) prefer to watch videos on the Internet and avoid websites that have a lot of text. Furthermore, 70% admit that when buying an appliance, it is more useful to use it directly than to read the instructions.

The results obtained from Portuguese families clearly show that a significant number of parents collaborate with school teachers to boost their children's reading skills. The highest figure, with 98.8%, relates to considering reading as an aid to solve everyday situations. In the case of Greek families, this percentage increases to 100%.

In all the Italian and Greek families surveyed, parents were interested in helping their children learn to read and of course, they understand that reading is not a waste of time.

Studies in the UK have shown how the family learning environment plays an important role in explaining how early socio-economic risk impacts on reading ability. One of the most recent is Crampton and Hall (2017) (MMU Report, p. 14).

Table 25.

*Family attitudes towards reading*

FAMILY ATTITUDES TOWARDS READING	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
Q 1. I find pleasure in going to a bookstore or to a library.	89.3	94.0	91.0	80.9	100.0	91.0
Q 2. I usually read the subtitles of television shows.	3.0	99.0	11.4	92.1	-	51.4
Q 6. Reading is essential in everyday life.	89.9	99.0	95.6	97.8	-	95.6
Q 14. Reading is a waste of time.	0.6	4.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.2
Q 15. I prefer to browse videos on the internet and to avoid webpages that have a lot of text.	14.9	47.5	10.2	12.4	11.0	19.2
Q 18. Reading should be one of people's favourite entertainments.	94.1	98.0	92.5	-	-	94.9
Q 23. I like sharing information I have read on the internet, in books or in magazines.	92.3	96.0	89.6	-	-	92.6
Q 31. I take advantage of moments to read throughout the day.	67.9	87.9	51.1	-	69.0	69.0
Q 39. Reading helps to solve everyday situations (such as cooking or taking medicine).	99.4	98.0	98.8	-	100.0	99.1
Q 40. When I am buying an electronic device, it is more useful to use the device straightaway rather than reading the instructions.	13.7	30.0	20.9	-	-	21.5
AVERAGE	56.5	75.3	56.2	56.6	67.3	63.5

Regarding the second dimension, **attitudes that support children's reading development** (see Table 26), families surveyed believe that they should teach the usefulness of reading (99.7%), recognizing that a book is always a good gift for a child (98.7%). Reading as a family should be an important activity (98.7%), showing interest

in, and responsibility for, their children's learning, (88.1%) and responding to the needs of their children at each stage of development (98%).

There are many moments within the family that can be used to promote reading for pleasure, such as meals, trips, bedtime ... (96.2%). It is beneficial to have a physical place in the home dedicated to printed material (family library) (92.8%) and a time routine established to use it (90.8%).

New technologies have the potential to motivate children from the earliest ages, and are a good resource to take advantage of as a family by selecting educational programs to promote learning (89.1%).

Another element that helps children is the participation of their families in the life of educational centres and schools (72.4%) as the second most important environment for children.

Around 10% of Spanish and Portuguese families consider that parents are not responsible for their children learning to read, but rather the school is.

Most Italian families (96.6%) find it useful to dedicate a certain time per week to reading at home.

In the Greek context, 100% of families surveyed think that reading should be an important activity at home: they believe they should teach their children the usefulness of reading and should help and encourage their children to learn to read. However, only 40% participate in school-organized reading promotion activities. This participation is significantly higher in Spain (UMA- CEIP Rosa de Gálvez 76.6% and UGR 95.7%) and Portugal (70.2%). The UK study also indicates that the majority of families participate in reading activities offered by the school. In fact, parents can be quite competitive and interested in comparing their children's progress with others in the class (MMU Report, p. 14).

Table 26.

*Family attitudes to developing children's reading skills*

FAMILY ATTITUDES TO DEVELOPING THEIR CHILDREN'S READING SKILLS	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
Q 5. Reading should be an important activity for families.	97.2	98.0	99.2	98.9	100.0	98.7
Q 12. A book is always a good gift for children.	98.1	100.0	99.6	98.9	97.0	98.7
Q 19. It is advisable that family devote a regular time each week to reading at home.	93.5	97.0	92.7	78.7	92.0	90.8
Q 24. It is advisable for parents to teach their children the advantages of reading.	99.0	100.0	99.3	100.0	100.0	99.7
Q 26. There are many moments in family life that are suitable to teach children how to read (at mealtimes, on the go, in bed before they fall asleep...).	95.4	99.0	99.2	94.4	93.0	96.2
Q 29. Parents are not responsible for teaching their children to read, because that what school is for.	10.7	13.0	12.9	-	11.0	11.9
Q 32. Parents should show an interest helping their children learn how to read.	96.3	99.0	98.8	-	-	98.0
Q 33. It is advisable for families to select or recommend educational programmes (television, mobile phone, computer) for their children to teach them to learn how to read.	88.5	98.0	85.0	78.7	92.0	88.4

Q 35. It is important to have a space at home dedicated to the use and maintenance of a family library.	88.0	95.0	88.9	93.3	99.0	92.8
Q 38. It is advisable that families encourage the correct use of reading carried out with new technologies (computer, mobile phone, television...).	93.1	98.0	86.1	76.4	92.0	89.1
Q41. I participate in activities that the educational centre organizes to stimulate reading.	76.6	95.7	70.2	59.6	60.0	72.4
AVERAGE	85.1	90.2	84.7	86.5	83.6	86.0

Regarding the third dimension, **family practices that affect reading development** (see Table 27), families identify the following as priorities: parents talk with their children about things they have done together (99.7%); carry out joint activities such as reading a printed or digital book (94.1%); sing songs, recite poetry and riddles (93.6%); and tell or invent stories (90.2%). Habits and attitudes are learned by imitation, hence the importance of parents reading in places in the house where children can see them (89.5%); carrying out joint activities (86.8%); answering questions children ask (88.2%); and selecting books in libraries or bookshops (79.6%).

Television (69%), as well as mobile devices (60.6%), can help children to learn to read, so it is interesting that parents select programmes for their children to watch or apps for them to use.

Families in Portugal (99.9%), like those surveyed in Spain (98.8%), prefer to talk with their children about things they do together and read printed or digital books together (97.4%).

Italian families show a high level of interest in talk about things done (100%), or when they come across with a different language from my children's mother tongue, usually answer their questions (99%).

All the Greek families surveyed indicated that they use a strategy that is less frequent amongst families in other countries: responding when their child asks "What does this word mean?". On the other hand, the least common activity reported by Greek families is watching television programmes that teach their children how to read (42%).



Table 27.

*Family behaviours to engage children in reading through everyday situations*

FAMILY BEHAVIOURS TO ENGAGE CHILDREN IN READING THROUGH EVERYDAY SITUATIONS	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
Q 3. I read at home in places where my children can see and follow my example.	89.2	89.1	85.2	91.0	93.0	89.5
Q 4. My children and I talk about things we have recently done.	98.8	100.0	99.9	100.0	-	99.7
Q 7. My children and I read a printed or digital book together (cookbook, a short story...)	88.6	95.0	97.4	95.5	-	94.1
Q 8. When we come across with a different language from my children's mother tongue, I usually answer their questions.	64.8	99.0	90.2	99.0	88.0	88.2
Q 11. I watch children's programmes (on television or on the internet) that show how to read with my children	64.8	87.0	70.8	38.2	84.0	69.0
Q 20. I do activities with my children to engage them in reading habits.	76.6	95.0	86.6	88.8	-	86.8
Q 21. My children and I tell or make up oral short stories.	79.8	94.9	90.6	95.5	-	90.2
Q 25. My children and I sing songs or recite poetry, tongue-twisting or riddles together.	88.5	98.0	94.5	93.3	-	93.6
Q 28. I select educational reading programs for my children to use on my mobile phone, tablet...	61.3	91.0	48.1	-	42.0	60.6
Q 36. I look at and/or select books in the bookstore or in a library with my children.	75.6	86.0	77.1	79.8	-	79.6
AVERAGE	78.8	93.5	84.0	86.8	76.8	85.1

Finally, regarding **word/icon-based activities in the family environment that facilitate learning to read and write** (see Table 28), the most frequently used are reading children's books or websites with illustrations (91.7%); playing games that involve the alphabet (89.9%); reading aloud texts such as comics, recipes, instructions (89.8%); identifying images in books or websites (80.4%); reading and writing notes (80.4%); and reading product labels, logos of well-known brands, traffic signs (76.2%),

The least frequently mentioned activities are reading the television schedule to choose a programme or film (53.7%); word composition and decomposition games (62.3%); writing a shopping list (53.7%); and guessing words that contain a certain syllable (75.5%).

The Spanish population (UMA) surveyed had lower scores in this dimension overall, in particular in relation to reading aloud together (88.7%). In Melilla, the most common activities are playing with toys that contain the alphabet, and reading aloud (a story, a toy instruction, a recipe ...) with their child (both 96.0%). The former is the most common response amongst Portuguese parents (90.4%).

Table 28.

*Family behaviours benefiting reading and writing*

FAMILY BEHAVIOURS BENEFITING READING AND WRITING	UMA	UGR	PORTUGAL	ITALY	GREECE	ALL
Q 9. My children and I read children's books or websites with illustrations to let them interpret the images.	87.5	92.9	89.6	96.6	-	91.7
Q 10. My children and I read or write notes (shopping list, messages...)	79.2	87.1	74.8	-	-	80.4
Q 13. My children and I play games that contain the alphabet.	82.1	96.0	90.4	91.0	-	89.9
Q 16. My children and I read television programming schedules to choose a	51.2	88.1	46.7	-	29.0	53.7

children's film, a contest....						
Q 17. My children and I play games in which we name words that contain a syllable we choose.	62.4	91.1	57.3	91.1	-	75.5
Q 22. My children and I read product labels, logos of well-known brands, road signs aloud.	76.2	95.0	64.5	-	69.0	76.2
Q 27. My children and I play games composing and decomposing words.	51.8	84.0	51.0	-	-	62.3
Q 30. My children and I identify images from a book, a website or a place (museum, library...).	78.6	89.1	87.4	-	-	85.0
Q 34. My children and I read aloud together (a short story, a game' instructions, a cooking recipe...).	88.7	96.0	84.8	-	-	89.8
Q 37. My children and I read or write a shopping list with symbols/icons or words together.	51.8	72.7	49.0	-	-	57.8
AVERAGE	70.9	89.2	69.6	92.9	49.0	76.2

It is noteworthy that in the Italian family environment, priority is given to activities that involve children through games and leisure: playing with toys that contain the alphabet (91%) or telling or inventing stories orally (95.5%).

Reading picture books with their children is an activity carried out by almost all Greek families (97%). The second most important for these families is reading product labels aloud (90%).

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The data obtained in this study, and the analysis and reflection on them, have led us to the following conclusions:

- ✓ Literacy in the early stages of education facilitates the consolidation of this learning in later stages.
- ✓ Coordination between teachers is essential to guarantee a successful educational model.
- ✓ The use of a range of methodologies makes it possible to adapt to the needs of each student group.
- ✓ It is important to use a playful approach based on the interests and motivations of students, as well as not forgetting the importance of the emotional and affective dimension of the educational process, in which the relationship between a child and their educator plays a leading role.
- ✓ It is recommended that reading begins with a project, teaching unit or centre of interest, taking advantage of themes that arise in the classroom, at different times of the day such as the class assembly.
- ✓ It can be stimulating to have a corner of the classroom for activities that promote reading, as well as a quiet place (classroom library) for individual and / or small group reading.
- ✓ Reading activities are supported with educational programs, videos, games and children's websites through the resources offered by ICT (interactive whiteboard, tablets, computers and mobiles ...).
- ✓ Teacher training is a key element, so an adequate training offer is necessary to allow teachers to keep their knowledge up to date.

- ✓ Using different types of texts for social uses is a priority so that students progressively master written language, that is, they are able to produce and interpret texts progressively including the conventions of writing.
- ✓ The family, as the child's main environment, acts as a facilitator of learning to read. Schools often try to provide additional support for students from more deprived backgrounds.

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## APPENDIX

### *Melilla (Spain) legislation:*

- Andalucía. Decreto 428/2008, de 29 de julio, por el que se establece la ordenación de las enseñanzas correspondientes a la Educación Infantil en Andalucía. *Boletín Oficial de la Junta de Andalucía*, 164, 7-12.
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- España. Real Decreto 1630/2006, de 29 de diciembre, por el que se establecen las enseñanzas mínimas del segundo ciclo de Educación Infantil. Publicado en BOE núm. 4, de 4 de enero de 2007.
- España. Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación. Publicado en B.O.E. nº 106, de 4 de mayo.
- Melilla. Orden ECI 3960/2007, de 19 de diciembre, por la que se establece el currículo y se regula la ordenación de la educación infantil. Boletín Oficial del Estado. 5. 1016-1036.

### *Portugal legislation:*

- Decreto-ley 281/09, de 6th de octubre, crea Sistema Nacional de Intervención Del Sistema de la Primera Infancia (SNIPI).

### *Italy legislation:*

- D.M. 254 de 16/11/2012.
- Ley L.107/2015 y sus posteriores decretos de aplicación, con especial atención a la N. 65/2017. 7MIUR – Ministerio de Educación sobre Preescolar <https://www.miur.gov.it/web/guest/scuola-dell-infanzia>
- Ley Núm. 53, 23 de marzo de 2003.

### *Greece legislation:*

- Greek Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework (2003). [http://www.pi-schools.gr/programs/depps/index\\_eng.php](http://www.pi-schools.gr/programs/depps/index_eng.php)

### *England legislation:*

- Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS) (2017).
- Child Care Law (2006).
- Education Law (2011).