Associação de
Jardins-Escolas
João de Deus

READING SKILLS AND TEACHERS TRAINING
(PORTUGAL)

1. LITERACY CONCEPT

Reading literacy is «the ability to comprehend and use the written language forms required by society or valued by the individual. The readers can attribute meaning to various text formats. They read to learn, to be part of reading communities, at school and in everyday life, and they read for pleasure» (Mullis and Martin, 2015, p.12).

The term "Literacy" is used to conceptualize the concept about reading and writing skills. Lopes (2005) states that reading and writing skills are "essential cognitive instruments not only for school success but also for social success, as we live in a society in which literacy demands are greater and greater" (p.96). This concept has suffered changes through the years, considering society's changes. Thus, in a social and cultural perspective, in a constructivist train of thought, literacy can be defined as "the whole corpus of knowledge and strategies that is acquired through the constant exercise of those abilities" (Morais and Kolinsky, 2004, p.600).

Since the 60's, "the emerging literacy concept […] [is created to] define the acquisition process of specific written language skills that happen before formal reading learning" (Viana, Ribeiro, & Baptista, 2014, p.17).

In the 80's, influenced by the work of constructivist and social-constructivist authors, such as Piaget and Vygotsky, "it is now valued the child's active role and the mediating role of those with whom the child interacts to comprehend the appropriation process of the written language" (Mata, 2002, p.10).

Benavente, Rosa, Costa e Ávila (1996) state that literacy: …is not about knowing what people learn or do not learn, it is to know what, in life situations, people are able to use. Literacy appears, defined as the ability of written information in everyday life (p.23)

Citizenship notion gave even more importance to literacy nowadays. Simple actions as filling out a cheque, understand a doctor's prescription, knowing how to consult a buses timetable, correctly ask for information, handle taxes, knowing how to calculate interest, and so forth, are big little requisites in each citizen's life (Benavente, Rosa, Costa, & Ávila, 1995). The domain of this "simple things" requires literacy, but simple things determines

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our independence and autonomy, which is something to value in everyone's life, especially in children's education.

In this information age, reading and writing are part of daily life. "However, neither reading nor writing in the alphabetical system are discovered, they're learnt. Our writing system was created nearly two millennials ago, and language after the first written representations of ideas and language appeared." (Beard, Siegel, Leite, & Bragança, 2010, p. 5). "From the little every day's tasks – that usually we don't even notice – up until the tasks that allow to exercise fully our citizenship, we need to read everything around us, performing countless automatic fragmented reading operations, that we aren't even aware of." (Viana, et al., 2014, p.7).

"To comprehend the process involved in learning to read, it is important to distinguish the goal and the specific reading aspects. The reading goal is to comprehend what is read. However, written text comprehension, is not a reading specific aspect, as it depends of many external factors, such as the oral language domain, cognitive skills and world knowledge, and so on." (Viana, et al., 2014, p.9).

According to Silveira (2013)

"The reader is anyone who, when reading is an accomplice of themselves another, with whom can interact in their privacy. […] The complicity established and the ability to empathize with the reading act is subject to the optimized development of reading structures, their interaction with other people, namely memories. It is essential that an individual be able to associate information received with the one already in their mind. Reading is a remembering and reconstructed process. Reading skills are the result of a learning process, of activities, and continuous repetitions of neuronic, hemispherical and non-hemispherical connexions. The (skilled) reader is the one who gradually acquires, by repetition, the ability to decode a message to understand it and interpret it." (p. 55).

From another point of view, some researchers also refer that the teaching of reading and writing also concerns educational policies, the importance of demanding curricula, the precision of objectives, contents and methods, the assessment of acquired skills, inspections of schools and, above all, to the need to define a strategy capable of rapidly raising the level of reading and writing to goals that place [Portugal] above the average of developed countries and at least to a level consistent with the degree of transparency of the orthographic code of the language. " (Beard, et al., 2010, p.6)

Once reading literacy is so important nowadays, aforementioned authors point out the importance of applying a reading method, that facilitates learning and it is a good vehicle for acquiring this skill, they "call for the teaching programmes to use methods science and experience have shown to be more suited for learning: phonic methods." (p. 7)

Will teachers be educated, in training schools, to teach how to read to their students?

This is the question that this research is attempting to answer, it considered an educational teachers' school in Lisbon, which qualifies kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers since 1920. However, the kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers's education does not end with the initial training. It must be continued throughout life. Therefore, it is fundamental that teachers be educated and informed, so they can be able to handle appropriately the 21st century society's challenges.
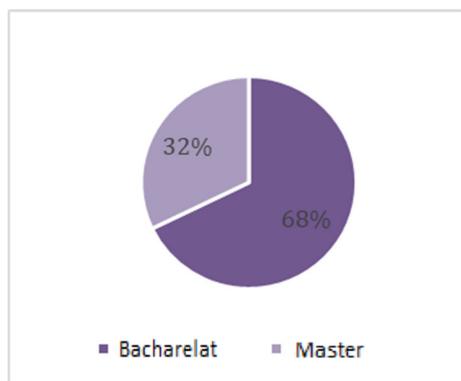
Life-long kindergarten teacher and primary school teacher's education is a key tool for teaching quality. Trained and informed teachers are the most precious tool, to not only themselves, as citizens, but also and specially to the training and education of their students, and in the development of methodologies that allow an improvement in school rendering. Thus, is essential to highlight the importance of educating the future kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers, particularly students of master's degrees in early childhood education (3-6 years old) and teaching of the 1st cycle of primary school education (6- 10 years old) of Escola Superior de Educação João de Deus.

In order to have a real and deeper knowledge of the current situation, of the way reading competences are developed and worked on, in the initial phase of kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers' training, a theoretical analysis was conducted, and the data was collected by two ways: a questionnaire for master's students in kindergarten teaching and in 1st cycle of primary school teaching and an interview to educational centres' directors, which characteristics are the following.
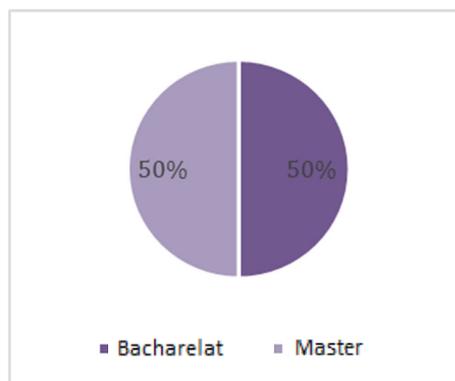
1.1. Description of students taking the Kindergarten Teachers Degree and the Primary School Teacher Degree

The sample is taken by 52 students of Escola Superior de Educação João de Deus (ESEJD), during the academic year 2019/2020, 28 of them intend proceed a job position as kindergarten teacher while 24 of them are willing to become primary school teacher. They were asked to fill out the questionnaire, in particularly to those questions concerning

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sociodemographic characteristics, about their academic tuition, about their know-how achieve during their training as well as actions engaging other primary school teachers and kindergarten teacher working at João de Deus Kindergartens. 53,8% of students are attending the kindergarten teachers studies (68% are taking the BA and 32% the master degree; picture 1) and 46,2% are just taking the basic primary teachers course (50% are taking the BA while the other 50% are taking the master degree; picture 2).

Picture 1 – Kindergarten Teachers
Students' courses/degree distribution

Picture 2 – Primary School Teachers
Students' courses/degree distribution

Concerning the gender, only 4% of males are taking the kindergarten teacher studies while the other 4% are taking the primary school teacher studies.

Regarding their nationalities, all students are Portuguese and their languages skills are shown bellow according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Table 1 – ESEJD Students' Common European Framework of Reference for Languages							
Levels ⇨	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	Total
Language ⇩	Initial		independent		advanced		
English	12%	21%	8%	4%	10%	12%	65%
French	31%	8%	12%	4%	0%	2%	56%
German	4%	2%	0%	0%	0%	6%	12%
Spanish	---	---	---	---	---	---	17%

Having said that, English is the most spoken language (65%), having 22% of students showing advanced level of communication skills. Some students speak French (56%, of them, while 2% are at the advanced level) and German (12%, but 6% of them are at the advanced level). Finally, 17% of students reffered that they are also able to express

themselves easily in Spanish but they did not get any certificate proving their knowledge because they are self-taught students.

1.2.   João de Deus Kindergartens'directors

Associação de Jardins-Escolas João de Deus is a non-profit association, managing 55 educational centres located in continental and insular Portuguese territory, namely in Madeira and in the Azores.

Our sample is represented by some directors of these educational centres. In addition to that, we clarify that some educational centres have nurseries (for children from 0 up to 3 years old), kindergartens (for children from 3 up to 6 years old) and primary school – 1st cycle (for children from 6 up to 10 years old). The questionnaire was distributed to the directors, to find out what strategies do they most often use when it happens to develop their students reading skills.

2.   KEY IDEAS TO PROMOTE READING COMPETENCE IN JOÃO DE DEUS EDUCATIONAL CENTRES

«Change the way you look at things, and the things you look at change. »
WAYNE DYER

Every João de Deus Educational Centre, especially those that welcome trainee students, is equipped with the will and knowledge to look at the educational system in a permeable way, receptive to change and modernity, integrating these changes into their practices, researching them, reflecting on them, deconstructing and reconstructing new methodologies and learning strategies, whenever this represents, in a reasoned and scientific way, an improvement in the service quality they provide to children and student trainees. That involves alter procedures, redesigning curricular plans and programmes, whenever necessary, with the aim of developing pedagogical practices that favour values and behaviour, not only programmed content, and knowledge.

The Curricular Guidelines for Pre-school Education (OCEPE, 2016 – Orientações Curriculares para a Educação Pré-escolar) state, as established in the Framework Law (Law

No. 5/97, 10th February), that the education of children between the ages of 3 years old and entry into compulsory education is considered to be the first stage of basic education in the lifelong education process. In the Domain of Oral Language and Approach to Writing, a particular emphasis is given to oral communication and linguistic awareness, pointing out the role of the kindergarten teacher saying that it is up to him/her to "intentionally extend the situations of communication" (p. 62). Likewise, children should be exposed to both of functional literacy, which implies using and knowing what reading and writing are for.

In turn, the Curricular Programme and Goals of Portuguese for Primary School, 1st cycle (2015), is structured in four reference domains, namely, Orality, Reading and Writing, Literary Education and Grammar, which reinforce and develop the skills acquired during pre-school education, giving great prominence to Literary Education, in which students learn to interpret oral and written texts, of literary and non-literary expression, in gradually more complex modalities. In the 1st and 2nd grades of Primary School Education, children learn how to read short narrative, informative and descriptive texts, as well as poems and cartoon strips. In the 3rd grade, children work on piece of news, letters and invitations, culminating in the 4th grade with the reading of descriptive texts (physical and psychological portrait), encyclopaedia and dictionary texts. In the questionnaire answered by the directors of João de Deus educational centres, we verify that several strategies are carried out and it is given a great deal of importance to the excellency of the service.

We are going to display next the given answers by the directors of those João de Deus educational centres, taking into account the most significant indicators, we elaborate that:

Question 1 - "What factors do you consider to be essential to promote reading in educative centres?" we registered as frequent indicators the following ones:

- Educative community engagement promoting activities;
- Motivation and promotion of reading habits;
- Reading stories, language twisters and poetry;
- Motivation, access and mobile materials;
- Participation in litterary contests, story telling, library corner and family interaction.

Question 2 - "How can we potenciate, in João de Deus educational centres, reading programmes where families can take part, aiming to benefit the access to reading habits outside the school premises?" we registered as the most common indicators:

- To include in the curricular project activities that implies families participation on story telling in the classroom;
- To implement specific projects such as to perform stories in small groups in family open days;
- Sending home short texts to exercise participated reading among children and parents (ex.: read laughing, slow reading, quick reading, read singing, read crying, read loudly, read slowly, etc.);
- To implement the library day: children go to the municipal library and chose a book to bring home to be read with their parents; to do an illustration of the story just read and to tell it again to their colleagues;
- Taking part of contests;
- To create games and rhymes;
- Creating stories involving interaction between students and their families;
- Children visiting libraries with their parents;
- To participate in theatre performances.

Question 3 - "How can educative centres promote reading communities, where students, teachers, families, municipalities, entities and neighbours can participate? Please, mention an activity proposed by you feasible through formative activities and cultural extension, in the classroom as well as outside the school premises." To this question we took the following indicators:

- To have a library access card to the library nearby the school;
- Going to the municipal library in order to listen to a story telling activity;
- To engage parents in reading routines, even during holidays;
- To look for dynamic institutions of cultural activities;
- To invite writers to launch their books at school or to have a talk with students about their books;
- To invite professional story tellers;
- To invite theatre actors to perform at school;

- To promote parents' participation in school reading activities;
- To promote a "Book Fair" to the school community;
- To invite actors to perform a certain story;
- To do a "Book Shelf" – where students can take a book home and bring another one to replace it;
- To conceive a theatre workshop to perform to the educative community litterary texts studied in the classroom according to children age.

Question 4 - "What resources, services and actions aiming reading do you promote at the school library in order to seek family participation?". To this question, we registered the following indicators:

- Monitoring the book requisition by families at the school library;
- To participate in national projects promoting reading habits;
- To promote the open school day, allowing families to participate at school activities for one day;
- To take books home from the school library;
- To invite parents to contribute with oral presentations at the school library;
- To launch a school newspaper.

Question 5 - "Please, mention a best practice to promote reading", we registered, as common indicators:

- To participate in competitions promoting reading such as "A litterary adventure" from Caminho publisher;
- Children seeing an adult reading;
- Story telling;
- Daily skim reading;
- Reading and listening to daily stories;
- To promote the contact with multimedia devices to create stories or texts on a digital basis to divulge them outside the school community.

Question 6 - "What measures can be taken to reinforce language and to help the community skills, that can also respond to certain students needs and to assure the coordination of all teachers? Do you consider your school has enough resources?"

We consider that there is no real motivational help. Institutions, namely, publishers, the *Plano Nacional de Leitura* and municipal libraries disseminate the reading importance but not always do they find the right way to dynamize those projects at schools. Those are the challenges schools and teachers embrace, not always with good results due to the fact of lack of human resources and experts in the area. Curriculum is quite vast and teachers face the lack of time to listen all students carefully, to share ideas and to pass on the knowledge torch as well as to listen the different text interpretations. Curricular plans are complex and they are not articulated with other subjects.

The directors of João de Deus educative centres consider that it is difficult to change mentalities and habits, mentioning that teachers often change what transmit to adapt to the most recent orientations, but in fact they do not change the working methods that are often ingrained in their minds. They also state that a project activity has to congregate all students, making learning process meaningful; so, the paradigm should change, stimulating curiosity and autonomy, creating learning pleasure. On the other hand, some directors consider that there are programmes promoting reading but they are not in enough number; there is a lack of professionals to be in charge of dynamizing libraries and promoting reading activities. Other say that the existing activities are enough and recognize that the school makes an effort to promote reading activities but there is still the need of a change in Portuguese society, including on school sector. That would make the difference to allow the school to have free time to better plan their reading activities. Rarely there are teachers with extra time to dynamize the library. Often those who dynamize the school library are the teachers that combine duties.

Question 7 - "Do you consider you have enough daily time to dedicate to reading in your educative centre?". In this question we analyze the current following indicators:

Some directors consider to be enough the time dedicated to reading activities in their educative centre. Some other consider that time is definitely not enough because the curriculum is vast. Even some other consider that time is enough if they include all reading activities students do during the day in the different subjects. Reading is a transversal action to all subjects. At the interdisciplinary project work all readings made by students allow

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them to understand a mathematics information as well as to comprehend the world. But often tidy schedules do not allow free time to litterary readings. We consider that reading is to understand the written message and it is a required student skill. Therefore, it is impossible to restrict reading just to litterary reading. Directors also think that curricular plans of their educative centres already have enough reading activities in their daily basis and they are also promoting linguistic skills.

Question 8 - "What pedagogical guidelines related to reading and writing skills could be developed to facilitate the coordination between kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers?"

Directors of educative centres do consider that *Associação de Jardins-Escolas João de Deus* has specific pedagogical orientations and has a specific spelling book methodology (João de Deus Reading Method) and they see it as common ground because kindergarten teacher and primary school teacher both use the spelling book called Cartilha Maternal". That consciousness and articulation are best practices promotors. All directors know the obtained results by the all teachers teaching on their school. They say that work project dynamics, whenever it is integrative, it has brilliant results in articulation with students from several different classrooms and from several different educational degrees.

In Portugal, the OCEPE (2016) promotes the articulation of students passage from pre-school education to primary school education. In public kindergartens children visit their future primary school before the academic year ends, to let children get to know their future school space, teachers and educational activities that school use to embrace. But on João de Deus educational centres, both kindergarten students and primary school students share common space. So that knowledge is achieved since the very beginning, at the first day of school. This physical proximity promotes integration. Kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers plan and share knowledge about students before they move on to the next grade. Teachers have several meetings to coordinate and to facilitate integration as well as promoting skills. Besides that, trainees also play an important role promoting integration, organising drama performances and other kind of didactic activities to kindergarten students and to primary school students. Against all odds, directors say that coordination and team working is the key of their success.

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3. INITIAL TEACHERS TRAINING IN PORTUGAL

In Portugal the first educational institutions to children up to 6 years old date from 1934, due to private initiative, but with social awareness. The beginning of pre-school education as a public system just started in the last decades of the Monarchy regime, corresponding to the first legislation regarding children education, which is shown at *Diário do Governo, n.º 141, de 27 de junho de 1886*, regarding the goals for teachers pre-school teachers training.

Later on, in 1911, during the 1st Republic two laws were issued to establish the basis and goals of pre-school education, but also their programme and teachers' qualifications. However, not much was done to fulfill the chaotic financial crisis Portugal was facing at the time. From 1910 to 1926, 11 kindergartens were inaugurated, 7 public ones and 4 private (João de Deus Kindergartens).

In 1920 this Association opened a kindergarten teachers' training course, called *Curso de Didáctica Pré-Primária pelo Método João de Deu*s, the first kindergarten teachers training course in Portugal.

Facing a Government that was lacking of initiative, the private sector took advantage and started developing their own initiatives. In this context, in February 1943 was inaugurated by Associação João de Deus, in Lisbon, a kindergarten teachers training course based João de Deus methodology.

Later on, other kindergarten teachers training were inaugurated, in particularly one from the private sector, in 1954 in Lisbon, integrated in the a religious background, the *Instituto de Educação de Infância e a Escola de Educadoras de Infância*. In 1960 other private institutions were founded to train kindergarten teachers, but the major part were run by religious institutions.

In 1971, the Ministry of Education, Veiga Simão, integrated the pre-school education under the educative system, making big changes to the Portuguese educational system. However, that renovation was interrupted due to the 25th April 1974 revolution.

When in the early 80s *Escolas Superiores de Educação* where creating training teachers' courses, a big leap was taken on education in Portugal.

Once legislation for the educative system was finally issued (*Lei n.º 46/86, de 14 de outubro)*, the basic qualifications to become a kindergarten teacher or a primary school

teacher tended to be a four-year training course (BA). This situation drastically changed after the Bologna process, which defines 30 ECTS and reduced one semester of tuition.

History of initial primary school teachers training - 1.º Cycle

Historically, on the first half of the XIX century and becoming more consistent in the sencond half of the same century, was inaugurated in 1862 the *Escola Normal Primária de Marvila,* in Lisbon, a training course, just to men who would like to become primary school teachers. In 1866 opened *Escola Normal Primária,* a similar training course just to women, located in Calvário, also in Lisbon.

In 1930, during the transition period from the Military Dictatorship to the *Estado Novo*, all *Escolas Normais* were replaced and adopted a new designation: *Escolas do Magistério Primário*. They used to training primary school teachers (1st Cycle).

In the 80s *Escolas Superiores de Educação* (ESE) were created and a new training paradigm was designed, to guarantee that all students had the possibility to be integrated in a system of polytechnic education. At a certain degree, some universities also gave that possibility of specialized trainings.

Trainings and study plans to organise this was issue by the decree-law (Decreto-Lei n.º 303/80, de 16 de agosto), through a scientific council's proposal and after listening to the pedagogic councils it was issue the decree-law (Decreto-Lei n.º 316/83, de 2 de julho). Teachers training was a three-year course and teachers would get the BA degree.

It was given to *Escolas Supriores de Educação* the legal capacity to train primary school teachers (from the 1st to the 6th grade) –, and empowered them to reconvert senior teachers, this means, to provide them a specific course to let them get their BA.

The pedagogic practice is obtained through several different activities, during increasing time periods and increasing responsibility, and it should be developed in four aspects: evaluation-analyze, collaboration-intervention, teaching responsibility and curricular concretization, integrating in a coordinated way *Escolas Superiores de Educação* teachers and primary school teachers according to selected criteria, empowering the first ones the coordination (Portaria n.º 336/88, 28th May, art.ºs 2.º, 3.º e 8.º).

In the 90s, the kindergarten teachers' course and the primary school teachers' course are no longer a three-year courses but four-year courses, and students would get a BA graduation. *Escolas Superiores de Educação* have restructered their primary school teachers' technical courses into BA as well, but they kept unchangeable the training compounds. So, the

courses did not suffer any changes from that passage from a three-year course to a four-year course but increased the workload by adding one more year to the duration of the course. (Decreto-Lei n.º 413-E/98, 17th July).

The creation of an European space of university studies, which relevancy is often mentioned by several ministries of education in the joint declaration signed in Bologna (Bologna Declaration), on the 19th June 1999, is the basis of the Bologna process common ground to harmonize university national educational systems, and it also aims to ensure comparability, compatibility and coherence between European educational systems, that from that moment on every course start being a three-year course based on ECTS credit system (*European Credit Transfer System*), making easier the the recognition of the obtained graduation.

The decree-lay (Decreto-Lei n.º220/2009, 8th September) and the ordonnace (Portaria n.º 1189/2010, 17th November) regulate the courses of professional qualification into Master Degree.

The vingent model for initial teachers training is structured into to different cycles. Therefore, it is called "sequential model": in an initial fase (1st cycle) the specialized scientific training is given and in a second fase (2nd cycle) the theoretical and practical pedagogic training is given.

The general teachers training (kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers – 1st and 2nd cycles) still consisting of a BSc with Honours is still the current model. The 1st cycle has compulsory to be a BA on Primary School Teaching, following an integrated model under the pedagogic-scientific point of view (Teachers training; Especialized didactics; General educational training and Iniciation to the professional practice). The 2nd cycle of studies is the Master Professionalizing Degree, compound by 90 ECTS (3 semesters) to the kindergarten teachers training, and 120 ECTS to the primary school teachers training – 1st cycle, with their curriculum divided into Teachers Training, General Vocational Training, Specific Didactics and Teaching Practice Supervision (Decreto-Lei n.º 74/2014, de 14 de maio), that regulates the qualification, aiming to reinforce the kindergarten teachers and the primary school teachers qualification, namely at the teaching areas, on specialized didactics and on professional practice initiation, enlarging the studies cycles' duration to one extra semester and 30 ECTS.

In Portugal the responsability of courses approval /accreditation is under the control of A3ES – *Agência para a Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior* that establishes the

number of vacant places for new students, taking into consideration the needs of the educative system, the rationalization of training offer and the national politics of human recourses training (Decreto-Lei n.º 74/2014, 14th May, art.º 10º, nºs 1 e 2).

The *Associação de Jardins-Escolas João de Deus* is linked to kindergarten teachers training since 1920 ad it is linked to primary school teachers (1st cycle) since 1988 when *Escola Superior de Educação João de Deus* was inaugurated. As a matter of fact, it is still engaged with those trainings till the present time, providing BA in primary school teachers and the Master Degree in Pre-School Education as well as combining Pre-School Education and Primary School Education (1st cycle).

3.1. Pre-school education students' skills

The Table bellow demonstrates the skill typologies achieved by kindergarten teachers students during their training. Therefore, we clearly see that every student understood the daily routines and its dynamics on daily pre-school education, requiring teamwork and flexibilit (question 4 – 100%). All students also felt that they were capable of getting useful information and tools to their future job during the training (question 14 – 100%). Above 90% of knowledge we trace question 1 (goals and curriculum contents); question 7 (technics and resources to let children to express themselves in oral and in written way; question 13 (to make use of resources to animate reading activities; question 17 (critical attitude and knowledge autonomy, values and social and public and private institutions) and question 20 (to analyze and to incorporate critical thinking, social issues that have direct impact on family and school atmosphere).

On the other hand, students feel they are more fragile (under 50%) in the skills of question 12 (learning process of reading and writing but also teaching it; 28,6%); question 11 (to have oral and written skill techniques; 32,1%); question 5 (evolutive steps of the language development in early childhood and to identify possible issues in order to intervene on time to correct them; 35,7%) and question 9 (domain the language curriculum, reading and writing curriculum, and finally to be aware of the theories on how to get knowledge and about the learning process; 46,4%).

In general, 76,8% of students feel they got the skills they were inquired about.

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Table 3 - Achieved skills by students during their training to become kindergarten teacher	No	Yes
1. I know the goals, counting of the curricula and evaluation criteria of Kindergarten Teacher	7,1%	92,9%
2. I am able to design, to plan and to evaluate teaching and learning processes, both individually and in collaboration with teachers and professionals of the educational center.	25,0%	75,0%
3. I know and am able to perform the functions of educator and guide the families of children aged from 0 to 6 years old.	17,9%	82,1%
4. I do understand that daily dynamics in childhood education changes according to each child, group and situation, as well as I am flexible on my educator's role.	0,0%	100,0%
5. I know the evolutionary phases of language development in early childhood, I know how to identify possible dysfunctions and intervene for its correct evolution.	64,3%	35,7%
6. I am able to effectively address language learning situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts.	39,3%	60,7%
7. I know how to use techniques and resources for children to express themselves orally and in writing way.	7,1%	92,9%
8. I know and am able to adopt in the classroom information and communication technologies (ICT) to develop reading skills.	10,7%	89,3%
9. I know the curricula of language and reading and writing, as well as theories on the acquisition and development of the corresponding learnings.	53,6%	46,4%
10. I understand the rhythm of orality and writing, as well as know the different records and uses of the language	21,4%	78,6%
11. I know and domain oral and written expression techniques.	67,9%	32,1%
12. I know the learning process of reading and writing, as well as its teaching.	71,4%	28,6%
13. I know and know how to use resources for reading animation.	7,1%	92,9%
14. I am able to acquire literary training to know children's literature and its didactics.	0,0%	100,0%
15. I know how to foster a taste for reading in children and encourage them to express themselves through written language.	10,7%	89,3%
16. I am able to collaborate with the different sectors of the educational community and with their social environment.	10,7%	89,3%
17. I have a critical and autonomous attitude about public and private knowledge, values and social institutions.	7,1%	92,9%
18. I understand the role, possibilities and limits of education in today's society, and the fundamental skills that affect educational centres as well as their professionals.	10,7%	89,3%
19. I know the difficulties of children who do not have Portuguese as their mother tongue.	25,0%	75,0%
20. I am able to analyze and critically incorporate social issues that affect family and school education (social impact of audiovisual and technological language, discrimination and social inclusion, sustainable development...).	7,1%	92,9%
Global averages	**23,2%**	**76,8%**

3.2. Primary school teacher students' skills

Table 4 shows us the typology of gotten skills by students that intend to become primary school teachers. In this case we analyzed that none of the skills asked in the questionnaire was taking into account by every student. The skills they say they achieved were (over 80%) those shown at question 4 (to get skills on childhood literature and on literature training (82,1%); on question 12 (to stimulate reading and to encourage students to express themselves through written language (82,1%) and on question 20 (to connect education and ambient, to cooperate with families and with the school community (82,1%).

On the other hand, students feel they are fragile at the skills displayed on question 14 (students are capable to express themselves, speaking and writing, in a foreign language; 25,0%). In all other questions the answers were always over 50%, visibly showing that students are already skilled. In fact, 70,4% of students say they got the required skills during their training.

Table 4 – Achieved skills by students during their training to become primary school teacher	No	Yes
1. I know the curricular areas of the 1st Cycle of Basic Education, the interdisciplinary relationship between them, the evaluation criteria, didactic knowledge and the respective teaching and learning procedures.	7,1%	78,6%
2. I am able to design, plan and evaluate teaching and learning processes, both individually and in collaboration with teachers and professionals of the educational center.	7,1%	78,6%
3. I understand the basic principles of the sciences of language and communication.	10,7%	75,0%
4. I am able to acquire skills in literary training and to know children's literature.	3,6%	82,1%
5. I am aware of the importance that the school library has as a resource center for reading, for information and continuous learning.	7,1%	78,6%
6. I know and am able to apply information and communication technologies in the classroom.	7,1%	78,6%
7. I am able to effectively address language learning situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts.	32,1%	53,6%
8. I am able to encourage the reading and critical commentary of texts from the various scientific and cultural fields that are part of the school curriculum.	21,4%	64,3%
9. I know the organisation of educational centres and the diversity of actions that involve their operation.	32,1%	53,6%
10. I know the school curriculum of languages and literature.	17,9%	67,9%
11. I know the process of learning the written language and its teaching.	7,1%	78,6%
12. I am able to encourage reading and encourage students to express themselves through written language.	3,6%	82,1%
13. I know the difficulties of learning the Portuguese language by students who do not have it as their mother tongue.	14,3%	71,4%
14. Students express themselves orally and in writing in a foreign language.	60,7%	25,0%
15. I know the current proposals and developments of learning reading skills.	14,3%	71,4%
16. I am able to identify and plan the resolution of educational situations that affect students with different abilities and different learning rhythms. multicultural and multilingual contexts.	7,1%	78,6%
17. I know the processes of interaction and communication in class, which help to address and solve problems of indiscipline.	14,3%	71,4%
18. I know and am able to perform the functions of tutor and advisor in relation to the families of children aged from 6 to 10 years old.	32,1%	53,6%
19. I understand the role, possibilities and limits of education in today's society and the fundamental skills that affect educational centres as well as their professionals	10,7%	75,0%
20. I am able to relate education to the environment, as well as cooperate with families and the community.	3,6%	82,1%
21. I am able to analyze and critically incorporate social issues that affect family and school education (social impact of audiovisual and technological language, discrimination and social inclusion, sustainable development...).	7,1%	78,6%
Global averages	**15,3%**	**70,4%**

3.3. Activities done by trainees during their training in kindergarten teaching

From all activities displayed on the questionnaire (Table 5) only 2,1% are just done by students. Question 5 was the most positively answered, showing that students fulfill that

activity (reading in small groups; 14,3%). In addition to that, students intentionally left question 6, 7, 9, 12, 14 and 20 blank, showing that they do not organise any of the displayed activities.

On the contrary, in mixt type activities requiring cooperation between teacher and trainees, the most answered question was the 1ˢᵗ proposal (to establish relationships between written language and oral language; 57,1%). In this context, question 2 and 4 were mentioned by 50% of inquired students. Regarding the activities proposed by the cooperative teacher reported by trainees, in a percentage over 80%, were the following questions: question 18 (we do evaluate students at the beginning of the school year to identify their weaknesses and strong points; 89,3%), question 20 (there are specific moments during the school year used to evaluate students' reading and writing skills in the classroom; 85,7%) and question 19 (we do have particular moments during the school year to evaluate students' learning process; 82,1%).

The proposed activity that was less reported by trainees was question 9 (we do chance the classroom programme according to students needs during the school year; 71,4%). Although kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers make changes on the desks displayed in the classroom during the day according to the activities' requirements, this kind of changes are never proposed by trainees during their training in the classroom.

Table 5 – Activities done with children during the training	Not pr.	T	T+S	S
1. Relationships are established between written language and oral language.	3,6%	35,7%	57,1%	3,6%
2. Dynamics of reading animation are established (change of characters, change of endings, creation of stories with images...).	7,1%	39,3%	50,0%	3,6%
3. The classroom is organised according to childrens' needs with different learning corners and workshops.	3,6%	71,4%	21,4%	3,6%
4. Reading activities are carried out in large groups.	7,1%	39,3%	50,0%	3,6%
5. Reading activities are carried out in small groups.	17,9%	25,0%	39,3%	14,3%
6. Individual reading activities are carried out.	25,0%	35,7%	35,7%	0,0%
7. Children learn to read by following a reading manual from a publisher.	39,3%	50,0%	7,1%	0,0%
8. Reading activities are from a project, teaching unit and/or center of interest.	21,4%	53,6%	17,9%	3,6%
9. The programming of the classroom is changed according to the needs of the children throughout the school year.	71,4%	21,4%	3,6%	0,0%
10. Groups are organised considering the different levels of reading of children.	10,7%	71,4%	10,7%	3,6%
11. There is in daily routines a time destined to the learning of reading (assembly, corners ...).	10,7%	67,9%	17,9%	3,6%
12. There is a quiet place in the classroom dedicated to individual reading (classroom library).	21,4%	64,3%	10,7%	0,0%
13. Several ICT resources are used in the classroom to perform interactive reading activities (internet, interactive whiteboard /projector).	25,0%	35,7%	32,1%	3,6%
14. Information is transmitted to families to promote the learning of reading at home (workshops, quarterly meetings, tutorials, parents' school).	39,3%	53,6%	7,1%	0,0%

Table 5 – Activities done with children during the training	Not pr.	T	T+S	S
15. Families carry out teaching activities and/or a center of interest with their child at home.	39,3%	57,1%	3,6%	0,0%
16. There is coordination between teachers to programme and / or carry out activities on reading.	14,3%	75,0%	7,1%	0,0%
17. Other agents of the educational center or other professionals participate in actions that favor the learning of reading by students.	42,9%	39,3%	10,7%	0,0%
18. A diagnosis evaluation is made at the beginning of the school year.	10,7%	89,3%	0,0%	0,0%
19. Different moments are provided throughout the school year to evaluate the children's learning.	7,1%	82,1%	10,7%	0,0%
20. Different moments are provided throughout the school year to evaluate the children's learning.	10,7%	85,7%	3,6%	0,0%
Global averages	**21,4%**	**54,6%**	**19,8%**	**2,1%**

Caption:	Not Pr.	Did not promote the activity	T	Promoted by the kindergaten teacher	T+S	Promoted by both teacher ans student	S	Promoted by the student

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

From all activities displayed on the questionnaire (Table 6) only 2,5 % are just done by students, future primary school teachers.

The most validated proposals were those from question 3 (activities accomplished to make students summarize and synthetize what they have learnt, immediately after reading a text) and question 6 (individual reading activities), both validated by 10,7% of inquired students. Moreover, the activities mentioned on questions 10 and 19 did not get any students' feedback.

On mixed proposals, whenever the trainees had to work under the supervision of a cooperative teacher, only question 3 got feedback over 50 % (activities leading students to sumarize and synthetize knowledge after reading a text) (57,1%).

From the activities trainees say were proposed by the colaborative teacher, six of them were reported by over 50% of trainees: three of them were mentioned by 64,3% of students (question 8 – students use a spelling book in the classroom when they are learing Portuguese; question 10 - we do chance the classroom programme according to students needs during the school year; and question 18 – have specific moments during the school year to evaluate students with a reading test).

Activities that, under the students' point of view, were not fulfilled were two: the one mentioned on question 1 (do you ask children if they are understanding the text while they are reading it, to make sure that they are understanding its content?) and the one on question 3 (to propose activities to be done immediately after reading a text in order to synthetize it and summarize it).

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Table 6 – Activities done by the trainees during their training in a primary school classroom	Not Pr.	T	T+S	S
1. Students are asked questions when reading a text to ensure their understanding.	0,0%	42,9%	39,3%	3,6%
2. Families are encouraged to participate in the organisation of reading activities (cultural week, representation of works...).	28,6%	50,0%	3,6%	3,6%
3. Activities are proposed for students to summarize and summarize knowledge after reading (themes, main ideas, protagonists, events, conclusions...).	0,0%	17,9%	57,1%	10,7%
4. Reading activities are carried out in large groups.	10,7%	35,7%	35,7%	3,6%
5. Reading activities are carried out in small groups.	14,3%	32,1%	35,7%	3,6%
6. Individual reading activities are carried out.	7,1%	32,1%	35,7%	10,7%
7. Pair readings are done.	42,9%	21,4%	17,9%	3,6%
8. Students use a reading manual for the discipline of Portuguese.	7,1%	64,3%	10,7%	3,6%
9. Reading activities are based on a joint project with the rest of the curricular areas.	21,4%	28,6%	32,1%	3,6%
10. The schedule of the lesson is changed according to the needs of the students throughout the year.	10,7%	64,3%	10,7%	0,0%
11. Groups are organised considering the different levels of reading of the students.	17,9%	57,1%	10,7%	0,0%
12. Students do activities focused on the speed of reading aloud.	35,7%	39,3%	10,7%	0,0%
13. Students do activities focused on the speed of reading in silence.	39,3%	39,3%	7,1%	0,0%
14. Students are asked questions before, during, and after reading a text.	3,6%	42,9%	39,3%	0,0%
15. ICT is used to promote the development of language skills.	28,6%	35,7%	21,4%	0,0%
16. Activities are carried out so that students compare different textual typologies.	21,4%	42,9%	21,4%	0,0%
17. In the center a reading manual for the discipline of Portuguese.	39,3%	42,9%	3,6%	0,0%
18. Specific moments are used during the school year to evaluate students with a reading test.	17,9%	64,3%	3,6%	0,0%
19. Students are proposed to read readings aimed at promoting the development of social skills that help to face and resolve conflicts in the classroom.	25,0%	57,1%	3,6%	0,0%
20. Different techniques of analysis of a read text (conceptual maps, dramatizations, murals, portfolios, opinion, debates...) are used.	21,4%	32,1%	28,6%	3,6%
Global averages	**19,6%**	**42,1%**	**21,4%**	**2,5%**

Caption:	Not Pr.	Did not promote the activity	T	Promoted by the kindergarten teacher	T+S	Promoted by both Teacher and Student	S	Promoted by the student

4. LIFELONG TEACHER EDUCATION

"Educational success is no longer mainly in the reproduction of content, but in the extrapolation of what we know and in its creative application to new situations. In other words, the world no longer rewards people only for what they know - Google knows everything - but for what they can do with it. Therefore, education has more and more to do with the development of creativity, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making; and with forms of work that imply communication and collaboration."

(Andreas Schleicher, Director of OECD Directorate for Education and Skills, in Expresso, on April 30, 2016)

Over the past few decades, the education of primary school teachers and kindergarten teachers has gained great importance in society. The need to integrate teachers with the ability to think critically, analytically and creatively, who are able to fully exercise the rights and duties of citizenship, know how to problem-solve and who are aware that the community's well-being is an individual responsibility, it is an aim and purpose of school nowadays. Today's school is no longer the "school of skills, nor the school of content, it is the school in which content, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values are intertwined in the construction of competences much more demanding than the mere repetitive routine", as enrolled in the Student Profile and Decree-Law 55/2018 (Pacheco, 2019, p. 5). In that regard, not only, the reflection on the lifelong education of teachers is at the centre of concerns. On one hand, the main reason that seems to motivate the professional class is career development. On the other hand, the need to acquire skills in the implementation of new projects such as the National Programme for School Success Promotion (PNPSE – Programa Nacional de Promoção do Sucesso Escolar) and the Project for Autonomy and Curriculum Flexibility, "within a framework of commitments and challenges that have gained another impetus with the educational policy measures adopted by the XXI constitutional government, led by António Costa" (Alves (org.), 2019, pp. 5,6). "The educational commitments and challenges arising, to a large extent, from the enactment of the Decree-laws no. 54/2018 and no. 55/2018, have brought to schools an urgent need to train their staff to respond appropriately to the needs of the school population". Lastly, the biggest challenge today in the field of lifelong teacher education is the "need to value reflection on teaching practices and the eventual transformation of these practices" (idem, p.6). This is a challenge for educational entities who have to find "other solutions that imply other ways of conceiving and organising training plans, as well as establishing another relationship with the trainers who will have to be supported to rethink their projects and their practices, in order to assume more consequential and isomorphic practices regarding the relationship they establish between what is proclaimed and what is done in training contexts "(Alves, 2019, p. 7).
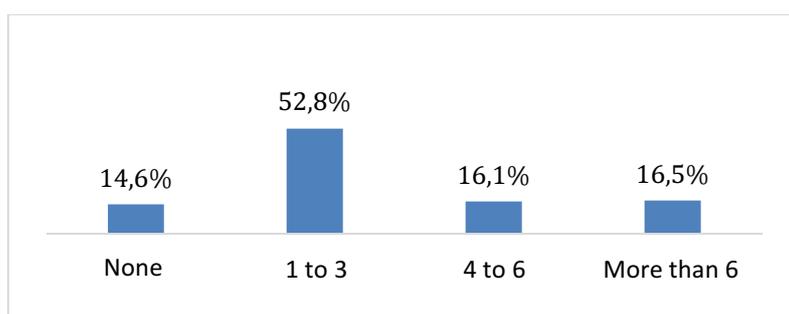
To train teachers and educators with the characteristics mentioned by Schleicher, an educational school of great charisma is needed. In this sense, the question is to know what the profile is of a 21st century teacher.

We conclude that it urges to raise awareness of the importance of lifelong education for education professionals, early childhood educators, kindergarten teachers and primary

school teachers not only as a right, but as an obligation of the professional themselves in order to best serve their students, to the school where they develop their educational activities and to the country. In this sense, it is essential to have a good initial training, in which the educational schools adequately prepare their professionals for the field, providing them with the necessary tools to develop methodologies and appropriate strategies to their students and with a natural yearning for research and continuous search for knowledge. They must know how to articulate theory with practice and implement cooperative work between teachers, creating conditions that allow students to achieve essential basic skills, enhancing the transformative character of the school.

For this purpose, our study aimed to get to know how the education of teachers was carried out, analysing the questionnaires applied to kindergarten teachers and to primary school teachers (1st cycle of primary school) of professionals who work at *Associação de Jardins Escolas João de Deus*.

Taking into account the results of the questionnaire (Picture 3), we draw the conclusion that still 14,6% of teachers did not attend any workshop or training course in the last five years to enlarge their linguistic skills. On the other hand, 52,8% of kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers did attend one to three training courses in the same period of time. Only 32,6% (1 in every 3 teachers) did attend, at least, one training course in the last five years. Although the results are not so bright as we wish them to be, we can clearly see that teachers take into consideration doing training course during their career.

Picture 3. Training courses attended by teachers to enlarge their linguistic skills (in the last five years)

Table 7 shows us the percentage of answers given about the considerations teachers make about the educational centres where they are currently working in or where they have worked before. More than 95% affirm that the schools where they are currently working in do establish measures to reinforce the reading access, both in school as at home with

children's families; and more than 60% already participated in institutional procjets related to reading. The Table bellow clearly shows us that almost 50% of institutions where those teachers worked before did not use any innovative practice.

Table 7 – Educational centres using innovative practices	Yes	No
1. Where I am currently working, we have established measures that favour access to reading, both at school and in the family, to provide an environment that motivates and invites children to read at home and at school.	95,7%	1,4%
2. Where I worked before there was a pre-established reading method to be adopted.	76,3%	20,9%
3. I have worked in educational centers using innovative practices.	51,1%	46,0%
4. I participated in institutional or administration projects related to reading teaching.	60,4%	36,7%

To conclude, taking a last insight over this matter, we say that, kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers are more and more exposed to new realities. This situation will be a challenge to the initial training (i) making links between teaching and academic research in school context (Lüdke, 2012); (ii) better knowledge of what true reseach is, to make possible to turn down, to interprete and to get better work quality, and not just getting good intentions. (Roldão, 2012).

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