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## IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS AT RISK IN READING, WRITING AND GRAMMAR: A STUDY WITH STUDENTS FROM 3RD AND 4TH GRADES IN NORTHERN PORTUGAL

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The promotion of reading and writing has been a constant concern of the Portuguese government, through the financing of measures and projects for this purpose. In this context, the project «Promote Reading and Writing» has been developed since 2018, being implemented in 11 groups of schools in the Intermunicipal Community of Terras de Trás-os-Montes, with the aim of training educators and teachers of these groups, with a view to improving the teaching-learning practices of reading and writing with children in the beginning of formal learning, promoting the development of these skills. Thus, the objective on which this work is based emerges: early detection of reading and writing problems and, subsequently, developing a differentiated pedagogical action, able to promote the educational success of all students. This communication presents the results of a universal tracking carried out at an early stage of the 2020/2021 school year, with students from the 3rd (N=546) and 4th years (N=610) of schooling in the 11 groups schools, to detect students at risk in reading, writing and grammar. To carry out this tracking, the “Know, Act and Change” (CAM) – Version 3 (2020) tests were used as a data collection instrument. The tracking was carried out by the teachers of each class, after prior training for administering the tests. Regarding the results, it was possible to observe that, in the 3rd year, the data pointed to a risk situation in at least one of the areas involved in reading by 58.06% of the students and, in the 4th year, this percentage was of 53.28%. It was observed that reading fluency was the competence in which the results obtained reveal the highest percentage of students at risk (36.26% and 35.90%, respectively), followed by the comprehension of listened texts (35.71% and 25.41%, respectively) and the understanding of texts read (21.25% and 19.34%, respectively). In writing, the data collected point to a risk situation of 48.35% of 3rd year students and 41.15% of 4th year students. This risk was mainly verified in the dictation of words component.

The results referring to grammar indicated as being at risk 50.18% of the 3rd year students and 48.36% of the 4th year students. Therefore, it was concluded that:

- (i) More than half of 3rd and 4th grade students were reported to be at risk in at least one of the reading skills (mainly fluency);
- (ii) Less than half of the 3rd and 4th grade students evaluated obtained results that point to a risky situation in writing (especially in word dictation);
- (iii) Half of the 3rd year students and almost half of the 4th year students also obtained results that put them at risk in grammar.

In the analysis of the results, we cannot ignore the fact that students who were assessed in the 3rd and 4th years had been, in the previous academic year, part of the 2nd academic period without

classes and the entire 3rd period in the distance learning modality, because of the COVID-19 pandemic which, since March 2020, has caused strong constraints in Portuguese schools. Furthermore, the purpose of this tracking was not just to make a diagnosis, but above all to understand, at an early stage of the school year, which skills are even less developed and which students may be experiencing greater difficulties, seeking to support an action pedagogical aimed at learning and developing these same skills.

**keywords:** reading, fluency, writing, grammar, risk.