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## IDENTIFYING RISK IN READING AND WRITING IN THE 2ND YEAR OF SCHOOLING: A STUDY IN NORTHERN PORTUGAL IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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The present work falls within the scope of the "Promoting Reading and Writing" Project, implemented from 2018 to 2021 in 11 school groupings of the Intermunicipal Community of Terras de Trás-os-Montes (CIM-TTM).

This project pursued objectives such as:

- (1) screening the students of the first four years of schooling in order to detect risk in the learning of reading and writing skills of the children involved, at an early stage of the school year;
- (2) training the respective teachers in the teaching of reading and writing with a view to improving their classroom practices, in order to contribute to the success of all their students in these skills.

We now present the quantitative results obtained by the 2nd year classes (N= 559) of the eleven clusters in the screening carried out in the school year 2020/2021 (in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic and after months of distance learning), as well as the reflection and capacity building work done with the teachers involved, in the context of a webinar and specific sessions in which different digital technologies (namely Storyjumper and Vizia.co) were used to develop reading and writing activities. For this screening, the data collection tool used was the "Know, Act and Change (CAM) tests - Version 3 (2020)" that allow the classification of students "at risk" vs "no risk", based on a cut-off point. The 2nd grade tests assess: letter and syllable recognition, listening comprehension, word reading fluency, grammar and word dictation. After the analysis of results, using descriptive statistics, it was possible to observe, as regards letter recognition, that 0.89% (n=5) of the students identified between 0 and 10 letters, 4.65% (n=26) of the students identified between 11 and 19 letters and 94.45% (n= 528) of the students recognised between 20 and 23 letters. As for the recognition of syllables, 1.61% (n=9) of the students recognized from 0 to 10 syllables, 15.92% (n=89) of the students recognized from 11 to 28 syllables and 82.47% (n= 461) of the students recognized from 29 to 31 syllables (being that the total was 31 for identification). In listening comprehension, 18.25% (n= 102) students were identified as being at risk, in word reading fluency 27.55% (n= 154), in grammar 37.39% (n= 209) and in word dictation 42.93%. When analysed the cumulative risk it was found that 38.28% (n= 214) showed no risk in any area assessed and 22.36% (n= 125) was at risk in one area, 20.75% (n= 116) in two, 12.16% in three and 6.44% (n= 36) in four areas.

It was concluded that:

- most of the students assessed were not at risk at the level of letter and syllable recognition;
- most students were not at risk in the comprehension of heard texts, in word reading fluency, in

grammar, nor in word dictation;

(iii) the highest percentages of students at risk appear in word dictation, followed by grammar, highlighting that, in the case of word dictation, the value is close to half of students;

(iv) most students are at risk in at least one of the four skills mentioned.

We stress the importance of a close look at the students who, not being in the majority group, are at risk in one or more of the skills assessed. It should be noted that these students are the focus of our work with the teachers involved in this project.

**keywords: reading, writing, grammar, risk, digital technologies.**