

Contributions to the development of reading competence: results of an action research in the Teacher Training Course /

Contribuições para o desenvolvimento da competência leitora: resultados de uma pesquisa-ação no Curso Normal

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ABSTRACT

Although linguistic theories have advanced and reading is a central topic in various discussions and recent research, large-scale assessment results show that Brazilian students still face significant difficulties in reading competence. Therefore, the question arises: why is there still so much difficulty in teaching and learning to read? In view of this, this study aims to analyze the development of reading competence among students entering the Curso Normal (teacher training program) at a state public school in Rio de Janeiro. The investigation is guided by the following hypotheses: (i) There is little encouragement for the development of a taste for reading; (ii) in practice, at school, work is restricted

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to decoding and locating information in the text; (iii) there is low reading proficiency among students entering the Normal Course; (iv) there is a direct relationship between teaching reading strategies and developing literacy levels in reading. This research highlights the close relationship between the development of reading competence and an in-depth approach to different texts through appropriate pedagogical interventions, based on the theoretical perspectives defended, namely: sociocognitive theory (Koch; Cunha-Lima, 2011) and the theoretical assumptions of Tedesco (2012; 2020), Cosson (2021). Methodologically, action research with a qualitative-quantitative approach was conducted. The results revealed that teaching reading strategies, considering the levels of reading literacy, significantly improved students' reading ability, moving them from level 2 to level 4 of literacy.

KEYWORDS: Curso Normal; Reading instruction; Pedagogical intervention; Literary text reading; Levels of reading literacy.

RESUMO

Embora as teorias linguísticas tenham avançado e a leitura seja um tema central em várias discussões e em pesquisas recentes, os resultados das avaliações em larga escala mostram que os alunos brasileiros ainda enfrentam dificuldades significativas em relação à competência leitora. Portanto, pergunta-se: por que ainda há tanta dificuldade no ensino e na aprendizagem da leitura? À vista disso, este estudo tem como objetivo analisar o desenvolvimento da competência leitora de alunos que ingressam no Curso Normal (formação de professores) de uma escola pública estadual no Rio de Janeiro. Para tanto, partiu-se das seguintes hipóteses: (i) há pouco estímulo para o desenvolvimento do gosto pela leitura; (ii) em prática, no chão da escola, há um trabalho restrito à decodificação e à localização de informações no texto; (iii) há baixa proficiência de leitura nos alunos ingressos no Curso Normal; (iv) há relação direta entre ensino de estratégias de leitura e desenvolvimento de níveis de letramento em leitura. Esta pesquisa evidencia a estreita relação entre desenvolvimento da competência leitora e abordagem aprofundada de diferentes textos por meio de intervenções pedagógicas apropriadas, a partir das perspectivas teóricas defendidas, quais sejam: a teoria sociocognitivista (Koch; Cunha-Lima, 2011) e os pressupostos teóricos de Tedesco (2012; 2020), de Cosson (2021). Metodologicamente, foi realizada uma pesquisa-ação de abordagem quali-quantitativa. Os resultados revelam que o ensino de estratégias de leitura, considerando os níveis de letramento em leitura, permitiu aos alunos desenvolverem significativamente sua capacidade leitora, passando do nível 2 para o nível 4 de letramento.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Curso Normal; Ensino de leitura; Intervenção pedagógica; Leitura de textos literários; Níveis de letramento em leitura.

1 Introduction

The experience in the classroom, as a Portuguese language teacher and teacher trainer for basic education, early childhood education, and elementary school 1, has enabled the observation of the serious deficiency in the reading ability of students who enter the Normal Course¹, which corroborates the difficulties highlighted by the results of large-scale assessments.

¹The High School Normal Course is a professional training course guaranteed by the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB) 9394/96 art. 62 and regulated by Resolution CNE/CEB nº. 02/99, which establishes National Curricular Guidelines for the Training of Early Childhood Education Teachers and the initial years of Elementary Education, at the high school level, in the Normal modality. Due to a mistaken interpretation of Article 87 - § 4º of Federal Law Nº 9.394/96 – LDBEN – that only teachers qualified at a higher education level would be admitted, the

Hence, there is an interest in addressing this issue: the reading proficiency of these students is far below what is expected for their level of education.

Given this, to find a way to alleviate this problem, seeking to answer why there are still so many difficulties concerning teaching and learning to read, a study was conducted with the general objective of analyzing the development of reading skills of students entering the Normal Course of a state public school. The aim was to describe the reading literacy levels of these students through activities applied before, during, and after the implementation of a pedagogical intervention proposal, mediated by the teaching staff. The starting point was the following problematizations: (i) there is little encouragement for the development of a taste for reading; (ii) in practice, in the school, the work is restricted to decoding and locating information in the text; (iii) students enter the Normal Course with a low level of reading proficiency; (iv) reading strategies are not taught, which leads to the non-development of reading literacy levels.

The research is based on the sociocognitive theory (Koch; Cunha-Lima, 2011) and the theoretical assumptions of Tedesco (2012; 2020) and Cosson (2021). From a methodological point of view, it is applied research, and considering the type of data treatment, it is classified as qualitative and quantitative.

In addition to seeking to understand the problem in depth and the reasons for the students' difficulties in understanding/interpreting during the reading process, we intended to contribute, to some extent, by proposing teaching practices for Portuguese classes - Mother Tongue, more specifically to work on the reading literacy process in basic education. This involves implementing practices based on reading strategies to help and train students to advance their reading literacy levels.

2 Theoretical assumptions

To carry out this study, the assumptions of sociocognitive theory were adopted, since it considers the integration of three elements - producer, text, and reader - characterized as the main pieces of the "language game" (Koch, 2002). From this perspective, the text began to be recognized

offer of the Course was reduced and was even extinguished in some places. However, the course continues to be offered in some states of Brazil, such as Rio de Janeiro.

as the *locus* of interaction. Furthermore, since the need to work from the perspective of literacy(ies) is identified, it was also based on the theoretical contribution of literacy levels in reading, proposed by Tedesco (2012).

2.1 Sociocognitive theory

Sociocognitive theory is a theoretical framework that seeks to understand how people learn and construct knowledge through social interactions, and how these interactions influence cognitive development. Unlike other theories that emphasize the individual's role in learning, this theory highlights the importance of the interrelationship between individual cognitive processes and sociocultural influences present in the environment, resulting from the dialogue between the perspectives of classical cognitivists and researchers interested in the social aspects of language. Thus, this theory recognizes the existence of the faculty of language and knowledge, but understands that meanings are generated as mental constructions, legitimized in the flow of interaction in a real communication situation.

From this theoretical perspective, cognition is not considered something that occurs “within” individuals, as postulated by classical Cognitivism, but a situated and social phenomenon. Mind and body are not two separate entities but a whole. Language and cognition are influenced by the social context. They do not occur in isolation, so they are not treated artificially and disconnected from reality. They are not individual and internal processes but are rather socially and culturally mediated.

Language is conceived as a situated socio-interactive activity. It is a type of joint and social action because, at the basis of linguistic activity, “there is the interaction and sharing of knowledge and attention: linguistic events are not the gathering of several individual and independent acts. They are, on the contrary, an activity that is done with others, jointly” (Koch; Cunha-Lima, 2011, p. 283). It is understood that there is a social aspect because it is an activity that occurs “in social contexts, with a purpose and with socially distributed roles” (2011, p. 285). As Koch (2002, p. 23) explains, “any and all manifestations of language occur within a given culture, whose traditions, uses and customs, and routines must be obeyed and perpetuated”. Meanings are established through complex social relations. Speakers only grasp particular meanings when considering the culturally and historically situated relations during textual interpretation.

The text is understood as a communicative event that establishes the discursive dimension of language, being a “communicative entity that forms a unit of meaning” (Marcuschi, 2008, p. 72). It is seen as a (re)construction of the world, not just a reflection, as it “refracts” the world by reordering and reconstructing it (2008, p. 72). According to Marcuschi (2002, p. 24), the text is “a concrete entity materially realized and embodied in some textual genre”. For textual understanding and interpretation, social practices and the production of the text are considered, reflecting the specific conditions and purposes of the communicative, interactional sphere, through its content, verbal style, and compositional construction. The text is “a communicative event in which linguistic, social, and cognitive actions converge” (2008, p. 72).

Reading, therefore, is a process of constructing meaning, which involves the interaction between the reader, the text, and the context. According to this approach, the reader actively constructs meaning, using their linguistic and cognitive skills and prior knowledge to understand and interpret the transmitted message. As Tedesco (2020) explains,

reading, first of all, is an act of understanding what the author intends to say (or what the author of the text says). This act of understanding necessarily presupposes knowing the context in which the text was produced. This knowledge implies knowing what the reader knows about the topic the text deals with, about the author who wrote the text, about the sociohistorical moment the text deals with (Tedesco, 2020, p. 707).

For this reason, pedagogical practices cannot be separated from their broader socio-historical character. Thus, the teacher must seek to equip the student so that he or she can actively participate in the world around him or her, in his or her society, practicing the use of language in the most varied contexts. This is what it means to teach a student to read.

2.2 Reading literacy levels

Studies on literacy emerged from the need to deal with a new social reality, in which simply being literate, knowing how to “read and write”, or rather, knowing how to decode and encode, were no longer sufficient to meet society’s demands for reading and writing. The “new” concept of literacy aims to educate an individual to be capable of acting in the world and of creating meanings through reading and writing in the most diverse social practices of language use. From this perspective, for example, an illiterate individual, inserted in different social groups, that is, a participant in a society,

has some type of literacy, because he or she has the ability to communicate and interact with the social and cultural world around him or her. Teaching literacy is impossible, but providing situations that foster different literacy practices is possible. Literacy is the result of learning the social practices of reading and writing. Living in society means being permeated by the most diverse situations that require a particular type and level of literacy, because they are social practices of reading and writing.

According to the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), the Portuguese Language component is responsible for “providing students with experiences that contribute to the expansion of literacy, to enable significant and critical participation in the various social practices permeated/constituted by orality, writing and other languages” (Brazil, 2018, p. 67-68).

Working from the perspective of literacy(ies) means understanding that it is necessary to provide students with a didactic-pedagogical practice in which they have broad access to textual diversity and are guided and trained so that they can establish multiple relationships and conceptions within and outside the text.

Following the example of the *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development* (OECD) proposal, Tedesco (2012) proposes five processes associated with the global and integral understanding of the text. They are: locating information in different texts; building a global understanding of the text; relating information; creating hypotheses; and critically evaluating. By being able to carry out what is set out in these five processes, the student demonstrates his/her proficiency in reading. According to the author,

considering the area of language, codes and their technologies, it is understood that the literate student in reading and writing must be able to do a critical, transformative reading, developing their potential and being able to interpret the world, summarizing it, translating it and transforming it into writing (Tedesco, 2012, p. 236).

Therefore, considering the five processes, Tedesco (2012) proposes five levels of reading literacy that bring together the necessary linguistic-discursive conditions for a proficient understanding of the information in a text. These levels start from a more superficial, more explicit textual approach to the information, up to a critical evaluation of what is outlined in the text. The five levels are presented below in Table 1.

Table 1: Reading literacy levels

Levels	Description of linguistic-discursive conditions
Level 1	In the most basic reading literacy process, the reader must locate isolated , explicit information in the text, without the help of competing information. The reader must recognize the central theme and the objective of a text. The reader will likely be able to locate this information in a familiar theme. Therefore, the reader must be able to relate, in a simple way, information from the text with knowledge from his/her daily life.
Level 2	At this level of literacy, the reader is already capable of dealing with competing information and locating fragments of information, which may require multiple criteria for interparagraph association, predominantly. The reader identifies the central idea of the text, understanding the relationships between the information presented. The reader is able of explaining the meaning of a limited section of the text when the information is not evident, requiring low-complexity inferences. The reader is able to compare information in the text with external knowledge, whether formal or informal, explaining the characteristics of the text.
Level 3	The reader is expected to be able to locate fragments of information and establish relationships between them. The reader must be able to deal with evident competing information. The reader must integrate different parts of a text to identify the main idea, understand a relationship, or explain the meaning of parts (words or phrases) of the text. The reader must also use processes of manipulating the available information, such as comparison, contrast, or categorization, to understand the text comprehensively, making connections or comparisons, and being able to explain the information, including implicit details, in a text.
Level 4	The reader is expected to be able to use a high level of inference, based on the text, to understand and apply categories in an unfamiliar context and to explain the meaning of parts of the text, considering it as a whole. The reader can deal with ambiguous ideas. The reader uses formal or public knowledge to formulate hypotheses about a text or to evaluate it critically.
Level 5	At the fifth level of literacy, the reader should be able to combine fragments of deeply embedded information, some of which may be outside the main body of the text. The reader understands and explains the meaning of the linguistic resources used, demonstrating complete and detailed understanding of a text. The reader should be able to critically evaluate or formulate hypotheses, using specialized knowledge. The reader should also be able to have reading autonomy, seeking new strategies that allow for constant updating and improvement in their reading proficiency.

Source: Tedesco (2012, p. 237-238)

The set of reading literacy levels proposed by Tedesco (2012) aligns with the reading approach adopted in this research: sociocognitive, in which the focus is on interaction. The concept of reading is based on “a sociocognitive interactional conception of language that privileges individuals and their knowledge in the process of interaction” (Koch; Elias, 2015, p. 12). The student is no longer seen as a passive reader, who merely receives information, but as an active subject, who interacts with the text, adds meaning to it, produces and constructs meanings, mobilizing a wide range of knowledge.

As in studies from the theoretical perspective of sociocognitivism, literacy levels in reading highlight the need to work with metacognitive strategies, with the activation of prior knowledge, with

the establishment of relationships necessary for understanding, with the realization of inferences and reflections, and with the development of critical thinking.

All five levels involve reading skills, but at different levels of complexity. Level 1 is the most basic and is related to locating information in texts. Level 2, more advanced than the first, is related to constructing a global understanding of the text. At this stage, the reader can make comparisons between the information in the text and external knowledge. Level 3 involves the ability to understand and interpret between the lines, to infer meanings, and to understand the context of the text. The reader relates the various pieces of information. Level 4 is associated with the process of formulating hypotheses. The reader is already able to present more complex inferences and is already able to be critical. Finally, level 5 is related to the ability to analyze the text in depth, to question the information presented, to critically evaluate the author's argument, and to compare what is read with prior knowledge. At all these levels, the reader seeks to understand and interpret a text. The main difference is in the understanding depth, interpretation, and analytical ability developed at each stage. By knowing the reading literacy level of their students, the teacher can use this information to help them during mediation.

3 Methodological research procedures and applied pedagogical practices

This section presents the type and context of the research, the methodological procedures adopted, and the pedagogical practices applied. First, the methodology used is detailed, as it intersects with the didactic strategies used. Then, the didactic procedures applied during the pedagogical intervention are described, highlighting the stages of the preparatory sequence used.

3.1 Methodology

The research falls within the area of Language Studies and is classified as applied, as it uses theoretical frameworks to analyze a studied reality. As for the technical procedures, it is an action research, since it uses the participants to obtain the data. From the point of view of the approach to the problem, the study is qualitative and quantitative.

The experiments were carried out in a public school in Rio de Janeiro state with students from three classes of the Normal Course – High School (teacher training), aged between 14 and

16. To this end, to ensure the integrity of the participants, the project of this research was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of the responsible institution (UERJ), subsequently obtaining approval through the substantiated opinion (CAAE-74538223.0.0000.5282). The selection of these classes was made possible because one of the authors was the head of the Portuguese Language discipline for them. Adding the number of students in the three groups, there were 85 students, 29 from Class 1, 26 from Class 2, and 30 from Class 3.

During the pedagogical intervention, five main activities were applied, namely: questionnaire to know the reading profile of the participating students, through interviews (with 10 questions); textual production of interpretative analyses of the poem *Retrato* and the chronicle *Dois velhinhos*, texts similar to the target works: *Chapeuzinho Amarelo*, by Buarque (1979) and *O Menino e o Tuim*, by Braga (2013), respectively; initial review of the target works²; questions of comprehension/interpretation of the target works (10 for each work); and final review.

These activities were applied to all students, but only 36 participated in all the didactic experiments. Of these, 15 were selected, considering the content of their productions, five from each of the three classes. Productions copied from the *internet* and those that were too short, with only three lines, for example, were eliminated.

The *corpora* enabled three categories of analysis to classify these productions: the interpretive category, which is based on the interpretation of the data collected and can be modified during the study, being crucial to give meaning to the qualitative data and identify relevant patterns; the performance category, which assesses the student's ability to develop what is proposed, classifying the answers as correct or incorrect; and the literacy category, which corresponds to the reading literacy levels proposed by Tedesco (2012). The students' answers to the questionnaire on the reading profile were analyzed, based on the interpretive category, while the answers to the comprehension/interpretation questions were assessed by performance. Thus, if the student was able to answer the question, his/her answer was classified as RC (correct, satisfactory answer), but if he/she was unable to answer or answered incorrectly, his/her answer was classified as NR (did not answer/did not answer satisfactorily). The textual productions were classified according to the reading literacy levels, being necessary to reach level 4 or 5 for the text to be considered a

²The review genre was chosen because, in addition to being part of the program content, it is a genre that allows the student to materialize their complete reading. To write a review, it is necessary to understand the text in order to summarize it and present a critical assessment. In this way, students are encouraged to develop a deeper and more reflective reading, which contributes significantly to the advancement of reading literacy levels.

review, requested genre as written production, as it is characterized by the obligation of a critical appreciation.

3.2 Teaching procedures

To carry out the didactic procedures, we sought to intersect Solé's (1998) reading strategies with those of the basic sequence (Cosson, 2021), also taking the levels of reading literacy as "essential and necessary strategies or conditions for a reader in the process of understanding a text" (Tedesco, 2012, p. 236-237).

Solé (1998) explains that some strategies should be taught before, during and after reading. The author suggests some strategies with the objective to enable students/readers to master the basic reading processes in order to achieve, in practice, reading proficiency. These strategies are in line with the theoretical contribution of Tedesco (2012) and Cosson (2021).

Cosson (2021) divides the basic sequence into four stages: motivation, introduction, reading, and interpretation. In short, motivation is the moment to encourage the student to read the literary text that will be worked on. The introduction is the stage to introduce the author and the work to work on the paratextual elements. Reading is the stage at which the teacher must monitor the student's reading. There are also intervals to present the results of the students' readings, and there may be readings of other works. Interpretation is the stage of constructing the meaning of the text, when the student-reader begins to construct the meaning in a dialogical relationship between author, reader, and world, through inferences, based on the reading. This stage is divided into two moments: internal, in which the reader individually constructs his or her meanings for the text; external, in which the readings of several readers are added to give a broader meaning to the text.

The pedagogical implementation was developed in 16 days, totaling 32 class periods, as shown in Table 2. Before applying the preparatory sequence for the development of reading skills, interviews were conducted, using questionnaires to understand the students' reading profiles. Afterwards, the first diagnoses were applied. The preparatory sequence was carried out through workshops.

Table 2: Teaching procedures

DAY	STAGE	DESCRIPTION
1st	Interviews	A questionnaire to know the reading profile of participants
2nd	Writing of diagnostic productions	Interpretative analysis of two texts: <i>Retrato e Dois velinhos</i> - to assess the students' level of reading literacy
3rd	Reading of diagnostic productions/review class	Class on typologies and textual genres
4th	Beginning of pedagogical intervention	Beginning of the preparatory sequence for reading development/ Presentation of the proposal/ Survey (about the review genre)
5th	Workshop I – Work: <i>Chapeuzinho Amarelo</i>	Motivation Activities – Texts on the same theme as the target work: “Medo e coragem; Por que sentimos medo?” / Playful moment / Review class on literary and non-literary texts; verbal and non-verbal language
6th	Workshop II – Work: <i>Chapeuzinho Amarelo</i>	Introduction Activities (contextualization of both the work and the author)
7th	Workshop III – Work: <i>Chapeuzinho Amarelo</i>	Full reading of the work/ Playful activities: drawings/ Initial review
8th	Break Workshop	Intertextuality work/ Texts: <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> , by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm; <i>The Wolf's Tale</i>
9th	Workshop IV – Work: <i>Chapeuzinho Amarelo</i>	Comprehension and interpretation activity – literacy levels/ Class comments
10th	Workshop I – Work: <i>O Menino e o Tuim</i>	Motivational Activities/ Questions related to the theme/ Debate
11th	Workshop II – Work: <i>O Menino e o Tuim</i>	Introduction Activities (contextualization of both the work and the author)
12th	Workshop III – Work: <i>O Menino e o Tuim</i>	Full reading of the work/ Playful activities: drawings/ Initial review
13th	Workshop IV – Work: <i>O Menino e o Tuim</i>	Comprehension and interpretation activity – literacy levels/ Class comments
14th	Workshop V – Genre of textual production	Class to work on/get to know the review genre
15th	Workshop V – Continuation	Class to differentiate the review genre from other genres.
16th	Sharing/delivering the rewrite	Before submitting the rewritten review, students shared their readings

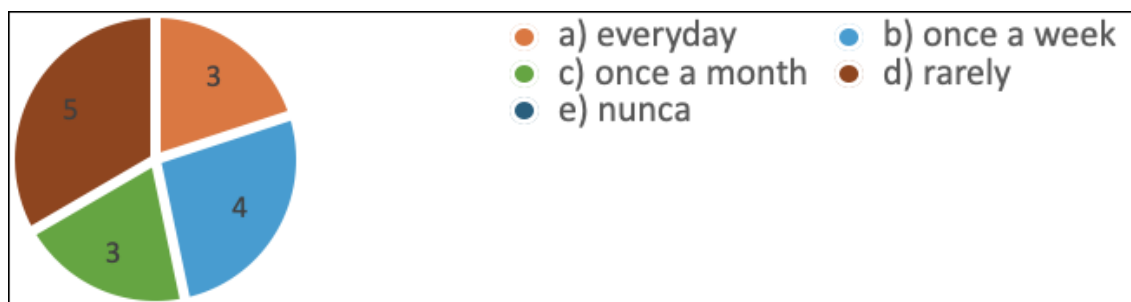
Source: Developed by the authors

4 Results and discussions

The data collected in this research reveals that, despite the many studies and discussions on the topic of reading, there are still many challenges in ensuring students' access, learning and teaching of reading, especially literary texts.

Regarding the data obtained from the responses to the questionnaire to learn about the reading profile of the participants, three questions were chosen for the intended discussion here. The selection criteria were those that could indicate the frequency of reading of the participants, the possible cause of such frequency and the way of working with reading that they had contact with in the previous years of schooling. Thus, the first question chosen was: “How often do you like to read? a) every day / b) once a week / c) once a month / d) rarely / e) never”. The answers can be seen in Graph 1 below.

Graph 1: Answers to the 1st question chosen

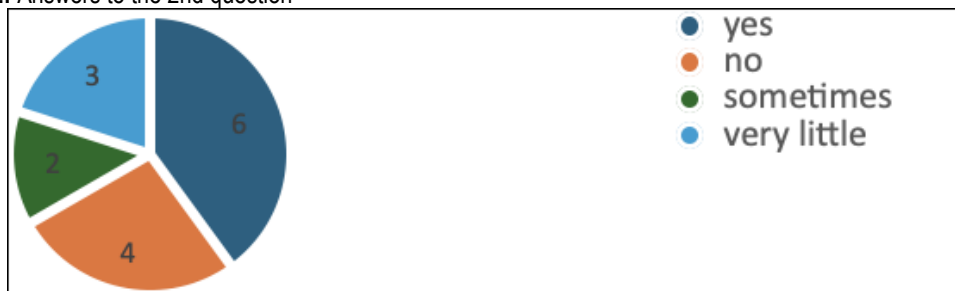


Source: Developed by the authors

According to the graph above, the most chosen option was (d) “rarely” (followed by (b) and (c)), showing that reading is not a priority. It is understood that, despite the difficulty in accessing physical books, these students can access the internet. Therefore, they would be able to read works available on the web. However, regarding the reasons for this infrequency concerning the reading habit, students reported preferring to use their smartphones to play games on apps, to access social networks, to record videos on *TikTok*, among other activities, rather than reading.

The second chosen question was: “When you were a child, did you often listen to stories?”. Of the 15 students, six answered “yes”; 4 of the others answered “no”, 2, “sometimes”, and 3, “very little”, as shown in Graph 2 below.

Graph 2: Answers to the 2nd question

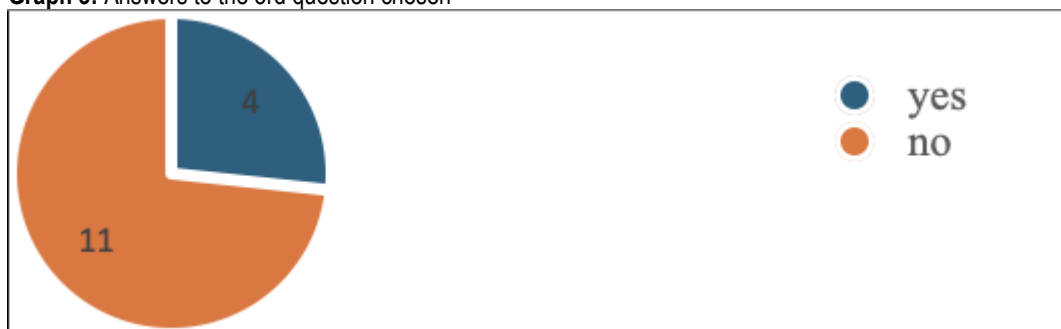


Source: Developed by the authors

These data may prove the first hypothesis: students were not encouraged to develop a taste for reading when they were younger. Of the 6 students who responded that they listened to stories as children, 3 responded that they like to read and read every day, and the other 3 like to read at least once a week. Therefore, when children are encouraged to read and develop a taste for reading, they usually maintain this taste when they grow up.

Finally, the third chosen question was: “Did you have any subject that worked only with reading/texts?”. The answers are represented in Graph 3 below.

Graph 3: Answers to the 3rd question chosen



Source: Developed by the authors

The majority of students, 11, answered “no”. Of these, two answered “no, only in Literature classes”; two other students said “no, only in Portuguese classes”; and 7 answered only “no”. Of the four students who answered “yes”, one said “yes, in the literacy stage”; 1 answered “yes, more or less, it was in the writing class”; 1 answered “yes, in the Storytelling class” (a class he was currently taking); and 1 said only “yes”. These data indicate that the content related to reading is generally the responsibility of Portuguese Language teachers. However, this reading has still not been worked on in a more in-depth way, that is, with the teaching of strategies based on the literacy levels in reading. The justifications indicate that the work is restricted to decoding, proving the second hypothesis.

Regarding the diagnostic productions materialized in the interpretative analyses of the texts *Retrato* and *Dois velinhos*, the data demonstrate that the students' reading literacy level did not exceed level 2 (global text understanding) before the intervention carried out (Table 1). Of the 30 selected diagnostic productions³, there was no production in which the student was unable to write the text or wrote something that did not correspond to what was stated in the source text; 26 productions, 86.7%, correspond to level 1, textual production that addresses the subject of the source text, but without developing it, with isolated information; 4, 13.3%, correspond to level 2, textual production that, in addition to addressing the central theme of the source text, demonstrates that there was an understanding of the relationships between the information contained within and outside the text, with low complexity inferences, thus enabling explanations of the meanings of specific passages, even if such information is not expressed.

Table 1: Reading literacy level of students in diagnostic productions

Diagnostic productions			
Classification	Texts		Total
	<i>Retrato</i> (n) / (%)	<i>Dois velinhos</i> (n) / (%)	
Level 1	13 / 43.3%	13 / 43.3%	26 / 86.7%
Level 2	2 / 6.7%	2 / 6.7%	4 / 13.3%
Total	15 / 50%	15 / 50%	30 / 100%

Source: Prepared by the authors.

According to the analyzed diagnostic productions, it can be stated that the students have great difficulty in understanding, starting with what they should do. When they were carrying out the proposal, they were told that they should write a text with a beginning, middle and end, explaining to the reader what a certain text is about, what they understood about the text and, to do so, they should explain parts of the text. Few students tried to contextualize the text. They did not have a plan to write their texts. The students simply wrote whatever came to mind. Almost all assumed that their readers (in this case, they considered the teacher) knew the texts, so some failed to highlight key information for understanding the text.

³An initial production of each of the two works analyzed by the fifteen participating students, totaling thirty (30).

After analyzing the diagnostic productions, the initial reviews of the target works, *Chapeuzinho Amarelo* and *O Menino e o Tuim*, were analyzed. These are also diagnostics, because, in addition to being used to confirm the students' level of reading literacy, they served to verify what the students already knew (or did not) about the genre they were supposed to write, in this case, a review. Through these initial reviews of the participants, it was confirmed that the students did not exceed level 2 of reading literacy, and it was found that they still did not know how to write a review, in fact ⁴.

Thus, the third hypothesis of the study was confirmed. It might be thought that the participants in this research, as they were in a teacher training course, would have a higher reading level than most who complete elementary school. However, the results confirmed their low level of reading proficiency.

Regarding the analysis of the responses to the questions formulated, based on the levels of reading literacy, the data prove that the participating students achieved a satisfactory quality in their reading, as they demonstrated proficiency in all five processes: locating information, building a global understanding of the text, relating information, creating hypotheses and critically evaluating.

Of the 300 answers given, 249 were correct, that is, 83% of correct answers in the overall total. As for correct answers by level, at level 1, there was a percentage of 85%; at level 2, 76.7% of the answers were correct; at level 3, the rate was 75%; at level 4, 90% were answered correctly; and, finally, at level 5, the performance was 88.3% of correct answers, as shown in the table below (Table 2).

Table 2: Student performance regarding the answers given to the questions about the target works

STUDENTS' RESPONSES						
Works		Chapeuzinho amarelo		O Menino e o Tuim		TOTAL RC IN (%) BY LEVELS
Levels	Questions	RC (n)	NR (n)	RC (n)	NR (n)	
Level 4	Q.7	12	3	15	0	90%
	Q.8	12	3	15	0	

⁴As a comparative analysis of the initial and final reviews was carried out, in order to avoid the text becoming repetitive, the comments on these results of the analysis of the initial reviews are presented together with those on the results of the analysis of the final reviews.

Level 5	Q.9	10	5	13	2	88.3%
	Q.10	15	0	15	0	
Level 1	Q.1	14	1	7	8	85%
	Q.2	15	0	15	0	
Level 2	Q.3	14	1	13	2	76.7%
	Q.4	5	10	14	1	
Level 3	Q.5	9	6	14	1	75%
	Q.6	9	6	13	2	

Caption: Q – Question . (n) – absolute number. RC – used when the student presented the **correct, satisfactory answer** . NR – Used when the student could not answer the question or offered an **incorrect answer** .

Source: developed by the authors.

These questions were formulated with the purpose of working with a textual approach that explored all five levels of reading literacy, starting from the explicitness of the information until reaching the level at which a critical evaluation of the text is necessary. Thus, two questions were proposed regarding each of the five reading literacy levels for each work. However, in order to avoid making this text too long, it was decided to discuss the results using data related to the work *Chapeuzinho Amarelo*, since it was the text about which the students had the most doubts and encountered some difficulty, compared to the text *O Menino e o Tuim*.

Questions 1 and 2, relating to level 1, were designed to work on proficiency in locating information, recognizing the central theme, and being able to relate, in a simple way, the information in the text to world knowledge.

To answer the first question, “Write two words that represent (indicate) the theme of the text.”, the student should infer the central theme. One suggested answer is “fear and overcoming” or others related to this. Of the 15, only one student did not answer this question. All the others answered correctly. The answers given were the following: “fear and overcoming”, “fear and confrontation”, “fear and courage” and “fear and transformation”, which proves that the students were able to infer the text theme.

To answer question 2, “Why was the wolf upset?”, the student had to locate isolated, explicit information in the text, without the help of competing information. All 15 students answered correctly, that is, the students demonstrated proficiency in the most basic process: locating

information. A possible answer to this question is this: “because the girl was no longer afraid of him ('The wolf was upset to see that girl looking at his face, but without being afraid of him'. – Buarque, 1997)”. An example of an answer given was this:

Example 1 – Student's answer to the second question

2 - Because the girl had lost her fear of him. (transcription of the student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

Of the 60 answers given to the questions related to level 1, the students got 85% correct. This means that, in general, they were able to decode the text, understanding its meaning. At some point, however, they were unable to locate the correct information and/or did not understand the meaning of a specific passage.

To answer question 3, “Which elements and/or passages made you notice the intertextuality with the work *Chapeuzinho Vermelho* (*Little Red Riding Hood*)?”, in addition to the ability to compare, the student should “locate fragments of information”. He or she would need to know the story of *Chapeuzinho Vermelho* (cultural repertoire). Only one student got this question wrong, presenting the answer in example 2, because of a lack of attention to the question's command. This student tried to classify the two texts in the same category, but did not relate or list the elements that refer one text to the other. With the exception of this student, all mentioned the name of the work and the wolf. In addition to these elements, two students mentioned the size of the wolf's mouth (as in example 3), which is a striking characteristic of the wolf, as it is related to his role in the story: eating people and/or other animals; and only one student highlighted the wolf's other characteristics, such as his large eyes (example 4).

Example 2 – Student's answer to the third question

3 - Both are female fairy tales (transcription of student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

Example 3 – Student's answer to the third question

3) The name is similar, only the color of the hat changes, we see the similarity of the wolf in both stories, the fear of the wolf, and the similarity in some lines, such as the line that refers to the size of the wolf's mouth. (transcription of the student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

Example 4 – Student's answer to the third question

3 – The name of the story, the characteristics of the wolves are the same, for example: the big mouth, the big face, the big eyes, and this made both of them afraid. (transcription of the student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

It was highlighted that the intertextuality is not only in the title of the work, but there is a reference to the wolf's action of "eating" ("he was capable of eating two grandmothers, a hunter, a king, a princess, seven pots of rice and a hat for dessert"); there is mention of the characters that appear in the story *Chapeuzinho Vermelho*: grandmother, hunter, wolf and girl; and the physical characteristics of the wolf are presented: "the big face of a WOLF / the large eyes of a WOLF, the manner of a WOLF / and mainly a mouth / so big [...]", as is highlighted in the story of *Chapeuzinho Vermelho*.

It was essential to address the issue of parody. *Chapeuzinho Amarelo* is a form of appropriation, and although it breaks with the model, it establishes a relationship with the story of *Chapeuzinho Vermelho*. In this story, the plot arouses fear, but there is no mention of it. The story is told to children so that they obey their parents, so that they feel fear when they think about disobeying. In *Chapeuzinho Vermelho*, fear is the central element of the story. Therefore, there is also this implicit intertextuality. Chico Buarque appropriated the work *Chapeuzinho Vermelho* to parody it, so the reader is expected to recognize the intertext.

The second question proposed for this level, question 4, "In the excerpt below, the figure of speech 'anaphora' is used. What is the effect of the meaning generated by it? "He didn't go outside so as not to get dirty. / He didn't eat soup so as not to get soaked / He didn't take a bath so as not to come unstuck. / He didn't say anything so as not to choke. / He didn't stand up for fear of falling." The idea of it is, unlike traditional teaching, which is concerned with "memorizing" nomenclature, to work on the functionality of the stylistic resources used in literary texts. Therefore, to answer the question, after the students were heard, it was shown that, besides providing musicality to the text, these repetitions of "no" seemed to demonstrate that the character was involved in such a way that she did nothing because of the paralyzing fear. In fact, there is anaphoric parallelism: "No...for", which makes the text more pleasant (musicality). In this way, the

anaphora served to intensify an expression, reinforce its meaning, emphasize a specific idea, create a rhythmic cadence, and amplify the impact of the speech.

The students had difficulty with this question. Only a third of the students were able to answer it. Although they could not provide a complete answer, they highlighted that it emphasizes and intensifies the meaning (cf. example 5).

Example 5 – Student's answer to the fourth question

4) To bring greater emphasis to the fear that the girl had revealed an exaggeration of fear at each 'no' mentioned. (transcription of the student's response)

Source: Authors' archive.

That said, it is worth highlighting how much the teaching of some content needs to be reviewed, such as figures of speech. Two-thirds of the students had difficulty with this question, as they did not answer it adequately. This difficulty may be related to the fact that students end up memorizing the names of the figures of speech, through listed sentences, without often seeing how these figures function in an authentic text.

Regarding the questions at this level (2), there was a percentage of 76.7% correct answers; that is, out of the 60 answers, the students got 46 correct. This means that, although the students, in general, can locate information and understand it, some still have difficulty in making some inferences and comparing information from the text with external knowledge, such as formal knowledge, for example, and are unable to understand or explain specific characteristics of the text.

Questions 5 and 6, related to level 3, were designed to work on proficiency in relating information. At this stage of reading comprehension, the reader must be able to locate fragments of information and relate them. They can make more complex inferences and even explain implicit details in the text, demonstrating a comprehensive understanding.

To answer the fifth question, "Explain why the author preferred to use the forms '*Chapeuzim*' and '*inteirim*' instead of '*Chapeuzinho*' and '*inteirinho*'.", the student should be able to understand the text comprehensively, making connections or comparisons, and mainly being able to explain the implicit information in the text. Therefore, one of the objectives of this question was for the student to make connections with the characteristics of the poem genre. They should perceive the marks of orality, the linguistic variation (previously worked on content) and the

aesthetic intention – rhymes: “*pudim*”, “*Chapeuzim*” and “*interim*”. Regarding the use of these forms, it can also be stated that there is a stylistic intertextuality, since the text, in a certain way, imitates styles and linguistic varieties existing in other sources.

No student was able to give a complete answer, presenting the information highlighted above. Answers in which students highlighted the author's intention to rhyme the words were considered adequate, as in example 6, below.

Example 6 – Student's answer to the fifth question

5 – The author wants to rhyme the verses, wolf with cake, and cute, pudding, little red riding hood and whole. (literal transcription of the student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

Some students even mentioned related information, such as the answer reproduced in example 7, in which the reader probably noticed the rhyme and considered it a fun feature to include in a work aimed at children. However, the student did not mention the rhyme, so it was not considered appropriate.

Example 7 – Student's answer to the fifth question

5 – To make the language more current and fun. (transcription of the student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

However, the students who presented the answers reproduced in examples 8 and 9, despite not having answered satisfactorily, perceived the issues of cultural diversity, linguistic variation and the representation of orality (of speech), more specifically the one who wrote the answer reproduced in example 9. This demonstrates the students' perception of these issues, but, at the same time, their difficulties in materializing and writing about them. It can be said that this gap in relation to writing is directly related to the gap in reading. How will the student write if he or she does not know what to write? This is highlighted, considering both the issue of repertoire/content, as well as the issue of structure, the way in which he or she will write. As the student reads, he or she acquires knowledge and has an easier time understanding the structures of the texts read.

Example 8 – Student's answer to the fifth question

Question 5: To demonstrate that the girl lived or that the story occurred in the countryside.
(transcription of the student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

Example 9 – Student's answer to the fifth question

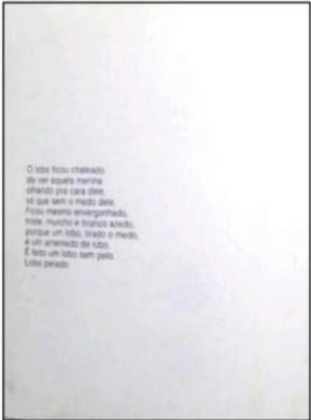
5) Well, maybe because of the accent, or culture, or ease of writing, or the habit of speaking in a certain way and writing the same way. (transcription of the student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

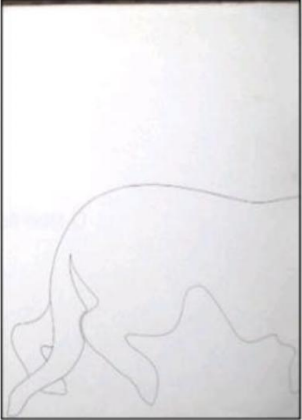
To answer the sixth question, "Read the text in verbal language, observe the image (nonverbal language) on the next page, and explain how this nonverbal language completes the transmitted information. Write the popular expression used on this occasion." (Fig. 1), the students should read the nonverbal text, relate it to the verbal text, and have cultural knowledge. They should comment that the wolf was embarrassed; he felt hairless, naked, humiliated, and got embarrassed; they should mention that the image refers to the popular expression "tail between the legs", which means precisely that, to leave humiliated, cowardly, terrified, avoiding facing an adverse situation. Fleeing or frightened animals run away with their tails down between their legs. These issues were discussed with the class, and the importance of reading in this sense was also highlighted, as the readers increase their repertoire, their knowledge of the world, and this helps them to make inferences, to identify, to perceive intertextualities, which are sometimes decisive for interpretation. This question also helped the students to realize that the illustrations in the works are not pointless; that is, there is a purpose.

Figure 1: Reproduction of question 6

Question 6 — Read the text in verbal language, observe the image (nonverbal language) on the next page (Figure 1) and explain in what sense this nonverbal language completes the information transmitted. Write the popular expression used on this occasion. Figure 1 - Reproduction of the book pages



Source: Buarque, 1979



Reproduction of the text:
The wolf was upset to see that girl looking at his face, but without fearing him. He was really embarrassed, Sad, withered, and sour white because a wolf without fear is a wolf's imitation. He's like a wolf without fur. A naked wolf.

Source: Developed by the authors

One third of the students did not answer the question correctly; they could not relate the non-verbal text to the verbal text, because the construction of the meaning was based on the popular expression “tail between the legs”, which is part of world knowledge. Therefore, if the readers do not have such knowledge, they will not be able to perceive the relationship, as seen in example 10, below, in which the students raised a hypothesis, interpreting it according to the meaning they knew.

Example 10 – Student's answer to question six

6 – The wolf was embarrassed and left, “he ran away”. (transcription of the student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

Based on the data, it can be seen that students had more difficulty with questions related to this level (3). Of 60 answers, 15 were inadequate, that is, one quarter (25%). Despite the 75% success rate, this demonstrates the need for classroom practice using texts to equip students, enabling them to identify and relate information, so that they can integrate different parts of the text to grasp the main idea. Some students were unable to use the clues presented in the texts to

recover what was not expressed, that is, they failed to make connections to explain implicit information; they need to practice reading more to be able to make more complex inferences.

Questions 7 and 8, related to level 4, were designed to work on proficiency in the process of formulating hypotheses and to enable students to work with ambiguous ideas. At this level of literacy, the reader is expected to be able to explain certain parts of the text, implicit information, and to make more complex inferences “to understand and apply categories in an unknown context and to explain the meaning of parts of the text, but considering it as a whole” (Tedesco, 2012, p. 238). In addition, the reader is expected to be able to analyze and evaluate the text critically.

To answer the first question proposed for this stage, question 7, “What is the message conveyed in the following verses? [...] from thinking so much about the WOLF / from dreaming so much about the WOLF / from waiting so much for the WOLF / one day she came across him [...]”, the students should realize that there is a polyphony in these verses: the voice of common sense. They might not know this technical nomenclature, but should grasp the message. Thus, after listening to the students, we commented on this ‘voice of common sense’: living in fear of something, waiting for this something, will make it happen at some point, that is, what one fears the most ends up happening. Fear interferes in people's lives, preventing them from actually living or carrying out a specific action, as happened with the protagonist of the work studied. Only three students got this question wrong, answering that the message was to highlight the girl's fear of the wolf, as seen in example 11. In general, the students grasped the message, presenting answers, as in example 12, reproduced below.

Example 11 – Student's answer to question seven

7. Emphasize one of Chapeuzinho's greatest fears. (transcription of student's response)

Source: Authors' archive.

Example 12 – Student's answer to question seven

7 – She keeps thinking about the wolf so much, anxiously, that this ends up happening. When we overthink, it happens. (transcription of the student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

Regarding question 8, “Why does the word WOLF appear in capital letters throughout the story and then, later, it is usually written in lowercase letters?”, the students should realize that the

author's choice to put the word WOLF in capital letters and, later, in lowercase letters towards the end of the work, was not pointless. There is an explanation. While *Chapeuzinho Amarelo* was very afraid of the WOLF, the word appeared in capital letters, after the girl faced and overcame her greatest fear, the wolf, it lost its significance. That is why, at the end of the story, it appeared in lowercase letters. In other words, as long as a person does not face their fear, it will seem big, as long as they “feed” it, it will grow, but when a person faces it and no longer accepts it, it will lose its “strength”, it will diminish until it loses its effect.

The students also performed well on this question. Only 3 students were unable to answer satisfactorily, but their answers did not expose any incorrect information, they simply failed to establish or express the necessary relationship, as they responded that the word WOLF was in capital letters to emphasize Chapeuzinho's fear and did not complete the answer as can be seen in example 13. All the other students performed very well as in example 14.

Example 13 – Student's answer to question 8

8 – The author wanted to use capital letters to refer to the great fear she had. (transcription of the student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

Example 14 – Student's answer to question 8

Because in capital letters it would be demonstrating how great Chapeuzinho's fear was, and after the word (wolf) was written in lower case, it would be proving that she had lost her fear (that he was just an ordinary wolf) (transcription of the student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

Comparing the students' performance in answering questions at this level (4) with the two texts, the data show that they had more difficulty making more complex inferences, as required in questions 7 and 8 of the work *Chapeuzinho Amarelo* (with six wrong answers). However, in answering the questions of the work *O Menino e o Tuim*, the requirement was to present a critical statement because they understood the communicative purpose, they could state their views, and no student got these questions wrong. This result indicates that they can understand and interpret the work.

The students' performance was highest on the questions formulated to work on this literacy level. Out of 60 answers, 54 were correct, or 90% accurate. Therefore, this percentage means that the students went from a level where they could only locate information to a level where they could create hypotheses and present a critical view.

Questions 9 and 10, related to level 5, were designed to work on proficiency in the critical evaluation process. At this literacy level, the reader fully and in detail understands the text. "They must be able to critically evaluate or formulate hypotheses, using specialized knowledge. They must also have reading autonomy, seeking new strategies for constant updating and improvement in his/her reading proficiency." (Tedesco, 2012, p. 238).

To answer question 9, "What can the wolf represent today (in our lives, in our society, in our state, in our country)?", the student should comment on the fears experienced today in Brazil. One hypothesis is that the character can represent society, and her fear can represent the discomfort of modern society since it finds itself in deep sadness when faced with the most common situations (just like Chapeuzinho Amarelo); thus, fear is a social issue. During the discussion, it was pointed out that the fears experienced by the Brazilian population can be different from those experienced by other people. As seen in the answer reproduced in example 15, in Brazil, many people are afraid of being mugged, of being hit by a "stray" bullet, etc. However, where there is practically no such practice of robbery or assault, people would not mention these fears. Other types would be mentioned.

Example 15 – Student's answer to question 9

9 – Nowadays, it would be COVID, being mugged, and robbed. (transcription of the student's answer)
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Source: Authors' archive.

One-third of the students did not understand the question and made mistakes in their answers; for example, the student who gave the answer reproduced below (example 16). In this case, the inadequacy of this answer is attributed to a lack of attention, as some students asked the teacher to check if they had understood the question, and she explained it out loud to everyone.

Example 16 – Student's answer to question 9

9 – That we don't need to be afraid of our imagination, because if we always think the worst, we will never live. (transcription of the student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

To answer question 10, "What lesson can you learn from this story?", the student should be able to identify the author's position on the topic and assess the information presented to take a stand. Thus, the student would need to write about overcoming fears and not failing to experience certain essential moments and situations because of fear.

The girl in the story was practically unable to live due to her many fears, but when she faced them and overcame them, she realized how much she was missing out on, unable to go out, play, and live. Fear is essential, as discussed in one of the motivational texts, but people should not be dominated by it. The story also conveys the message about transforming fears into something good, as *Chapeuzinho Amarelo*, who transformed every fear she had into a companion.

All students were able to answer this question nicely. Below is an example of an answer given to this question. In this answer, reproduced in example 17, the student even mentions what was learned when working on the motivational text *Por que sentimos medo?* (Why do we feel fear?).

Example 17 – Student's answer to question 10

10 – That fear can be a protection and a warning. Chapeuzinho, for example, was afraid of everything and could not enjoy her life. So we learned from her that fear cannot dominate us (transcription of the student's answer)

Source: Authors' archive.

Regarding the level 5 reading literacy questions, there was a percentage of 88.3% correct answers, which indicates the students performed well. When answering these questions, the students demonstrated that they were able to formulate hypotheses, using specialized knowledge, in addition to being able to critically evaluate the text, thus showing a certain degree of reading autonomy.

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that the intervention, through questions formulated based on the input on literacy levels, helped to understand the studied works. The percentage of correct answers at each level was not less than 75%. It is also worth noting that the

best performances are at levels 4 and 5, those that involve a critical evaluation. This means that the students advanced in literacy levels, because, to be able to have a critical statement (required at levels 4 and 5) on a text, in general, they need to understand and interpret it.

The students wrote the final review after the activity based on reading literacy levels. This time, they could produce a review (with its constituent parts). The comparative analysis between the initial and final reviews revealed significant progress in the students' reading skills. In the initial productions, most students did not go beyond level 2 of literacy, limited to copying parts of the text and making simple summaries. In contrast, all the texts were classified as reviews in the final productions. The students not only summarized the works, paraphrasing them, but also presented critical comments, highlighting the positive and negative issues of the books. This shows that they improved the reading literacy level, reaching at least level 4, which requires critical appreciation. Therefore, the pedagogical intervention effectively developed the students' reading skills, allowing them to understand and interpret texts more profoundly and critically.

Through this activity, it is possible to see the need for the teacher to guide and mediate the learning process. The students performed well in their readings. To this end, it was essential for the teacher to show them “what” and “how” to achieve this result. The teacher must show the students the necessary strategies to obtain a satisfactory reading. Simply telling the students what they should do is too abstract because they often do not have the necessary knowledge to carry out such activities, so they do not understand what is being asked and, consequently, cannot advance in the reading process. One of the strategies to help with textual comprehension and interpretation is to ask oneself questions about the text. However, the students need to know how to ask such questions. This activity is an example of a teaching strategy that has a powerful impact. Thus, it is understood that, first, the teachers must practice “how to ask” with the students and then guide them.

Final considerations

This study highlights the urgent need to reformulate reading teaching and learning processes, since many students finish primary school without being proficient readers. This research showed that reading teaching (in some schools) is still limited to decoding and locating information in the text, without addressing reading strategies that take literacy levels into account.

However, when these strategies are applied, students can make significant progress, as observed in this research, in which participants went from level 2 to level 4 of literacy, after the teacher's intervention was proposed to mediate the learning process of reading texts. The research demonstrated that teaching based on literacy levels is an effective strategy for developing reading skills, contributing to overcoming the difficulties encountered.

The difficulty in carrying out more profound readings is due to the lack of practices contemplating the necessary processes for a global and critical understanding of the text. Although there are relevant studies on reading and its strategies (Solé, 1998; Tedesco, 2012; Cosson, 2021), the transposition of these theories into practice is still deficient, due to factors such as problems in the teacher training course, inadequate infrastructure in schools, unequal access to materials and lack of family encouragement.

For students to develop a taste for reading and acquire reading proficiency, a joint effort is required from the school, teachers, students, and families. Teaching should be planned based on literacy levels, promoting reading for interaction, reflection, and critical formation. Teacher training, supported by adequate theoretical subsidies, is essential for the planning and implementation of pedagogical practices to be effective (Tedesco, 2020). Therefore, critical reading should be encouraged in different contexts and spaces, consolidating itself as a fundamental pillar in student education.

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