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A Comparative Analysis of the Current Literacy Policies from five European Countries

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Presentation highlights

- The background context
- Research questions and aim
- Research procedures
- Resulting *corpus* of the policy initiatives
- Preliminary findings
- Preliminary conclusions

The background context

- The shared belief on the importance of literacy:
 - social and economic progress
 - citizens' empowerment
 - lifelong learning
- The results of population in international assessments considered as a 'problem'
- The 'European literacy crisis'
- The institution (and constitution) of literacy as a policy target
- The implementation of several programmes, projects, initiatives:
 - Working groups
 - Networks
 - Project fundings

Examples: HLG and ELINET project (EAC/S05/2013)

High Level Group of Experts on Literacy

Mission

- To examine how to support literacy throughout lifelong learning
- To identify common success factors of literacy programmes and policy initiatives
- To provide some proposals and best practice examples for the improvement of the European literacy policies

European literacy network – ELINET

Mission

- To analyse literacy policies and practices of European countries
- To raise awareness of all European institutions about the importance of reading and writing in people's everyday life.
- To contribute to a greater involvement of all citizens with literacy

The research project *Policies and Practices for Literacy Education* – CIEd, Univ. of Minho, FCT-PT (SFRH/BD/115889/2016)

Research questions:

- What policies regulate literacy education for adolescents in Europe?
- What initiatives have been created to implement these policies?

Aim:

- To evaluate literacy policies and their implementation practices in 5 European countries: PT, ES, GR, RO, IE

Ultimately,

- To understand to what extent literacy policies are effectively in line with European concerns regarding (the 'lack' of) literacy

Research procedures

1. Identification of the initiatives (actions, programmes,...)

3 Key intervention policy areas:

- Creation of more literate environments
- Improvement of the quality of teaching
- Increasing participation, inclusion and equity

Since 2000

+ Collection of each initiative framing/supporting documents:

- Legislation,
- Guidelines,
- Working programmes,
- Reports
- Research articles
- Other official and unofficial web-based documents

Research procedures

2. Description of each initiative (action, programme,...)

- Goals
- Actors
- Contexts
- Funding
- Process of implementation (actions, resources)
- Theoretical framework
- Evaluation
- Social impact

3. Validation by national experts

Resulting corpus of policy initiatives (114 init.)

Portugal (32 init.)

- *Reading National Plan* (2006)
- *Navigating in reading* (2006)
- *Portuguese as econd language* (2006)
- *R e a d i n g ... communicate... intergrate* (2015)
- *Portuguese language for all* (2012)
- *More Educational Success* (2009)

Spain (32 init.)

- *Reading in families* (2013)
- *Reading in pairs* (2006)
- *Reading time* (2003)
- *Reading promotion plan* (2001)
- *Multiliteracy project* (2009)
- *Comprehensive Programme for learning Foreign language* (2010)

Ireland (15 init.)

- *Help my kid learn* (2011)
- *Right to read campaign* (2014)
- *Improving literacy and numeracy signature programme* (2012)
- *The national Strategy to improve literacy and numeracy* (2011)
- *Digital strategy for schools* (2015)
- *English language support*

Greece (14 init.)

- *National book centre* (2004)
- *Future library* (2011)
- *Digital school* (2010)
- *ICT in language teaching practices* (2013)
- *Remedial teaching* (2013)
- *Screening pupils with learning difficulties* (2007)

Romania (21 init.)

- *I want you to read for me!* (2013)
- *Battle of the books* (2014)
- *Reading circles* (2004)
- *Reading to learn* (2013)
- *Critical thinking and active learning* (2016)
- *MEDIASIS-Media literacy for teachers* (2012)

Preliminary findings

Goals

- To raise **levels**
- To develop literacy **skills**
- To increase **competences**
- To improve language **performance**
- To promote **school results**

Contexts

- School
- Classrooms
- School libraries
- F o r m a l educational environments

Actors

- Teachers
- Educators
- Students
- S c h o o l librarians

Focus

- R e a d i n g practices
- Books reading (literary book)
- Use of ICT for learning

Goals – some examples

National Reading Plan
(2006, PT)

“the main objective ... is to raise the level of literacy of the Portuguese people”

Reading circles (2004, RO)

“to improve the students’ literacy skills, which are tested in national examinations”

Right to read campaign
(2014, IE)

“to embed the development of literacy into the lives of communities ...”

Reading time (2003, ES)

“to contribute to the acquisition of key competencies...”

Education and lifelong learning (2007, GR)

“...development of students’ «horizontal abilities» transversing all school activities...”

The scope of the initiatives

- *Right to **read** campaign* (IE)
- *Navigating in **reading*** (PT)
- ***Reading** camping* (ES)
- ***Reading** together* (ES)
- *School libraries for **reading**, information and learning* (ES)
- *Metropolitan of **readings*** (RO)
- *Boys **reading*** (RO)
- ***Reading** more at home* (PT)
- ***Reading** more in various accents* (PT)
- *National **reading** Plan* (PT)
- ***Reading** in families* (ES)
- ***Reading** in pairs* (ES)
- ***Reading** time* (ES)
- ***Reading** promotion plan* (ES)
- *I want to **read** for me!* (RO)
- ***Reading** in line* (ES)
- ***Reading** circles* (RO)
- ***Reading** to learn* (RO)
- *Lifelong readers* (GR)
- *Development of **reading** skills* (RO)
- ***Reading** for the third millennium* (RO)
- ***Read** it* (RO)
- ***Reading**...Comunicate...Include* (PT)
- *Let's introduce a **book** - The Little Prince* (RO)
- ***Bookraft*** (GR)
- *National **book** centre* (GR)

Preliminary conclusions

- The predominance of a 'deficit model' (Clark, 2005) oriented to the development of basic skills needs.
 - A narrow perspective of reading and literacy where it is not visible solid theoretical grounds.
 - The predominance of an 'utilitarian' (and sometimes 'romantic') view of literacy (Macedo & Freire, 2000).
 - 'Empowerment' and 'emancipation' as well as with effective social inclusion do not encounter conditions to be fully reached.
 - There are few indicators that the activities acknowledge diversities (gender and linguistic) that they may promote critical thinking and transformed practices (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000)
- An 'autonomous' approach of literacy in opposition to an 'ideological' one (Street, 1984)**



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