



The European Day of Languages

26th September 2008

Manifesto for the Improvement of Language Teaching and Learning in Portugal

The National Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations

Within the programme of the International Year of Languages as declared by UNO, and the European Year for Intercultural Dialogue and the European Day of Languages, declared by the Council of Europe, the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations (*FNAPLV*) made up of the English (*APPI*), French (*APPF*), German (*APPA*) and Portuguese (*APP*) teachers' associations, intends by way of this manifesto to draw attention to the public in general to the importance of modern languages for Portuguese citizens and their education. It is also an alert for the Portuguese educational authorities and the need for an in-depth reflexion prior to decision making for the possible development of plurilingual competences within the different years of schooling.

Taking into consideration of both the cognitive and communicative advantages, these competences stand for a value added asset towards the access to information and for lifelong education and professional performance.

The following recommendations focus on the establishment of a school curriculum, namely the access to language learning, the management of the teaching process, teacher training, the assessment of language learners' skills, knowledge and needs.

These competences are to be sought after both in the Basic and the Secondary levels of the Education System. There should be a special emphasis on pre-service and in-service training.

Thus FNAPLV considers the following as priority points:

1. To enhance the importance of language education and emergent literacy in pre-school language education.
2. To increase the time allocated to Portuguese per week by bringing it into line with the average time undertaken in the OECD countries.
3. To generalise and consolidate the availability of Portuguese as a Second or Foreign language (PFL), to be always considered as “class work” for teachers.
4. To make the learning of FL1 compulsory from the 1st year of Primary school.
5. To introduce the learning of three FL in Basic Education, not necessarily simultaneously but in a “discontinued” approach; FL3 should be available from Year 7.
6. To expand the FL offer in Secondary to include other languages such as Arabic, Mandarin Chinese and Russian.
7. To make it possible to learn up to three FL simultaneously at Secondary level: the learning of one of these - FL1, FL2, FL3 or FL4 - should be compulsory; the learning of two FL (1, 2, 3, 4) should be an option; the learning of three FL (1, 2, 3, 4) should be an option in the Languages and Humanities course.
8. To introduce the mother tongues spoken by ethnic minorities, both native and foreign, as a school offer and/or extra curriculum activity open to a wider community.
9. To expand the teaching of CLIL involving a number of curriculum subjects throughout the course of a schooling cycle with motivated learners.
10. To adapt the two regulatory documents for curriculum development of Language Teaching in Basic Education: the language syllabus (1991-1995) and the *Currículo Nacional do Ensino Básico – Competências Essenciais* (2001).

11. To promote the cross-development of competences both in Portuguese and Foreign Languages.
12. To limit FL class size to a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 learners.
13. To allow and encourage the division of classes in order to carry out experimental work and to practice listening/speaking and writing competences in the classroom.
14. To foster the use of ICT as an indispensable tool in language teaching.
15. To promote exchange programmes of language teachers and learners.
16. To achieve the certification of Portuguese and foreign language textbooks.
17. To establish a framework to support the teaching of languages, management of exchanges, etc., within the Ministry of Education.
18. To adopt international systems of external assessment and certification for all FL learning as has already been set out for Portuguese as a Second or Foreign Language.
19. To make it mandatory to assess the learners' oral competence to be undertaken by the school and at a national scale. In this case students who did not achieve the minimum on the written paper would be excluded from the orals.
20. To set out the profile of the language teacher.
21. To ground the education of every language teacher on two stages: 1) language, literature and culture and 2) didactics and pedagogy.
22. To strengthen the possible articulation between schools and universities for pre-service and in-service teacher training.
23. To acknowledge the role played by teacher associations in the sphere of in-service training as based on partnerships with schools.

24. To make sure that every language teacher maintains a permanent bond to the education system.

On behalf of The National Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations (FNAPLV)

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