

**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
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Purposes for reading and writing in the disciplines: teachers' perceptions of their practice

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The study: The literacies of the disciplines

A research and intervention project in 2 phases

Main Goals

To develop subject teachers' awareness of the role of reading and writing for learning disciplinary content;

To develop in all teachers a shared vocabulary and grammar about reading and writing;

To provide teachers (8th and 9th grade) with knowledge and strategies to facilitate content learning.



1st phase goals and research design

- ✧ To identify the texts genres and supports in use in the several disciplines;
- ✧ To identify the purposes for reading and writing
- ✧ To characterize the specialized reading tasks and demands of the disciplines

Descriptive: combining quantitative and qualitative methods

Inquiring teachers - Natural Sciences; Physics & Chemistry; Maths; Geography; History; Portuguese; English; French - **through a questionnaire (105) and interviews (6)**

Focus of the inquiry: What, why, when and where do teachers ask for reading and writing

Analytical categories: Time, situations, aims, tasks, texts, organization

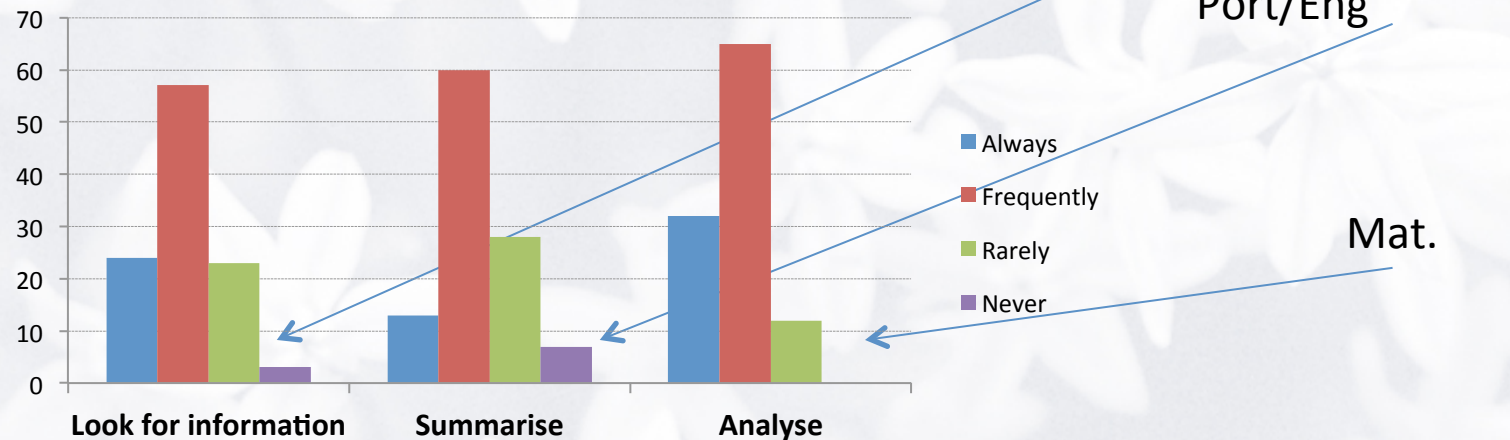


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1st phase data

Purposes for reading



Interviewed teachers recognize the relevance of reading, but not immediately for learning. Reading is *relevant for developing values, good social habits, critical awareness*

They regret “not to have more time for motivating for reading”

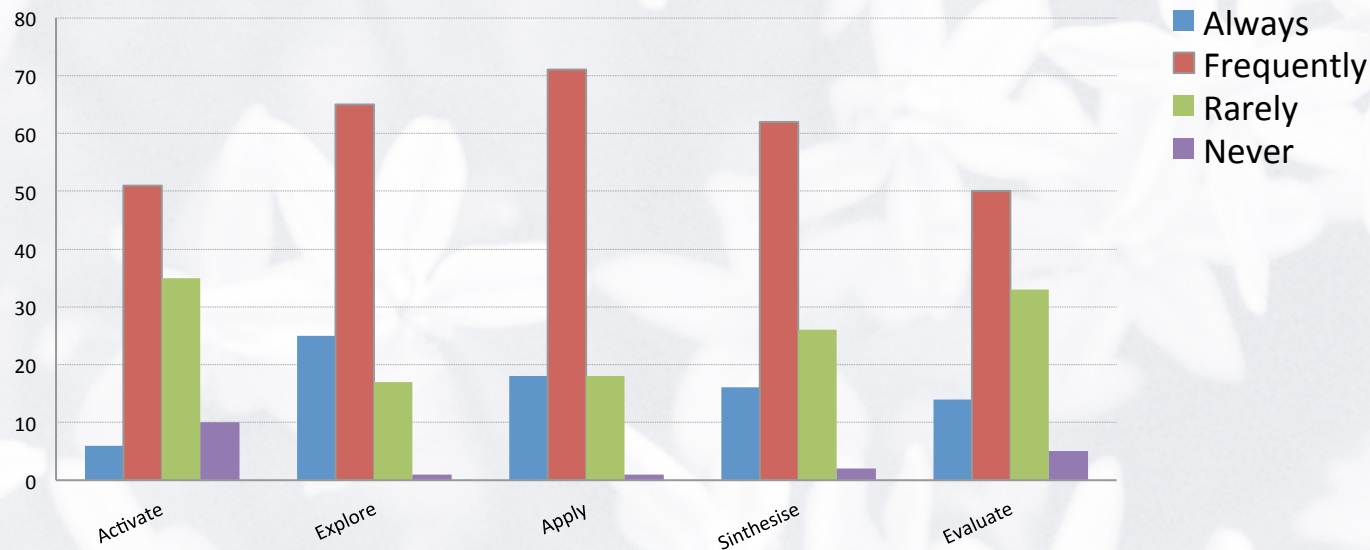


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1st phase data

Reading for learning tasks



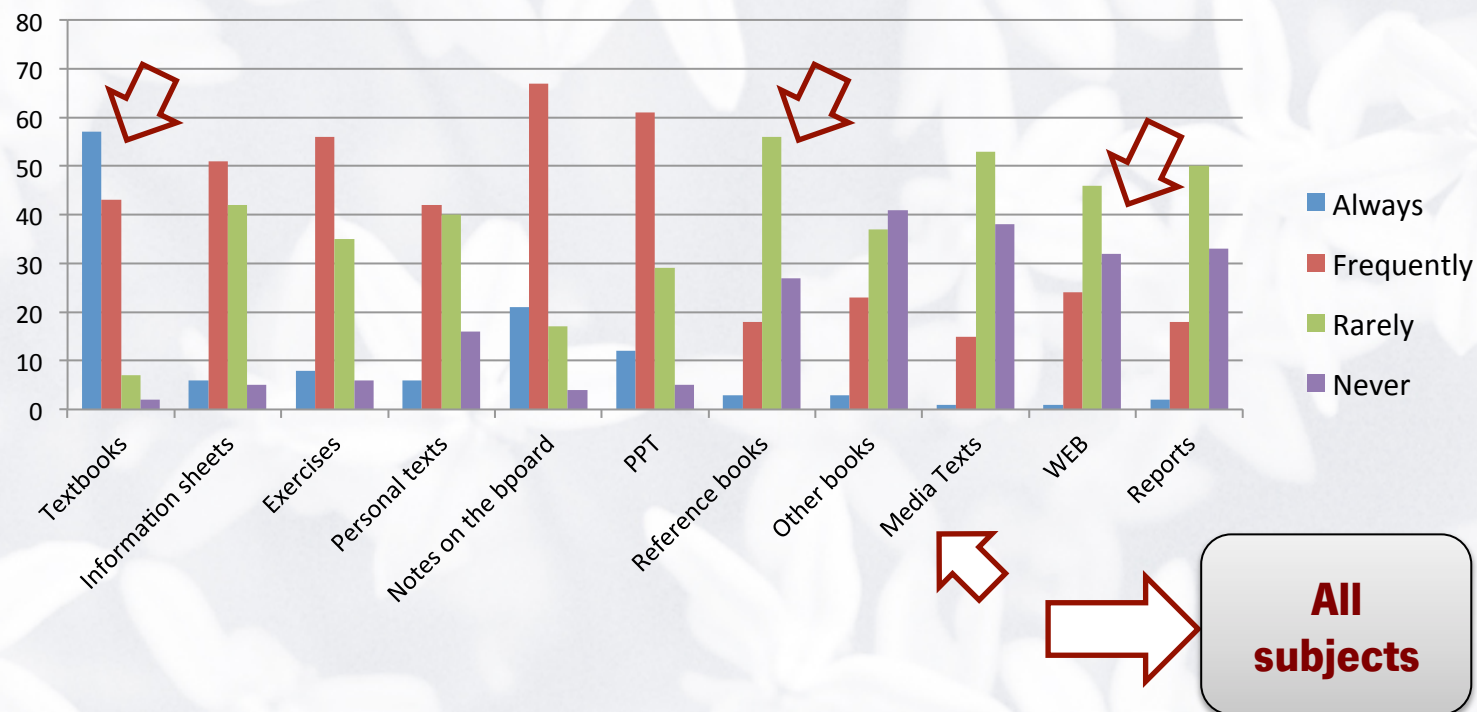
Teachers recognize that they read for accessing disciplinary knowledge in the classroom. and report that reading is present and serving 'frequently' all learning situations suggested.

But... when interviewed they assume that some of those tasks are not reading

Science teachers do not recognize the exploration and synthesis of texts as reading...

Maths teachers do not recognize learning formulas and graphs as reading/understanding texts

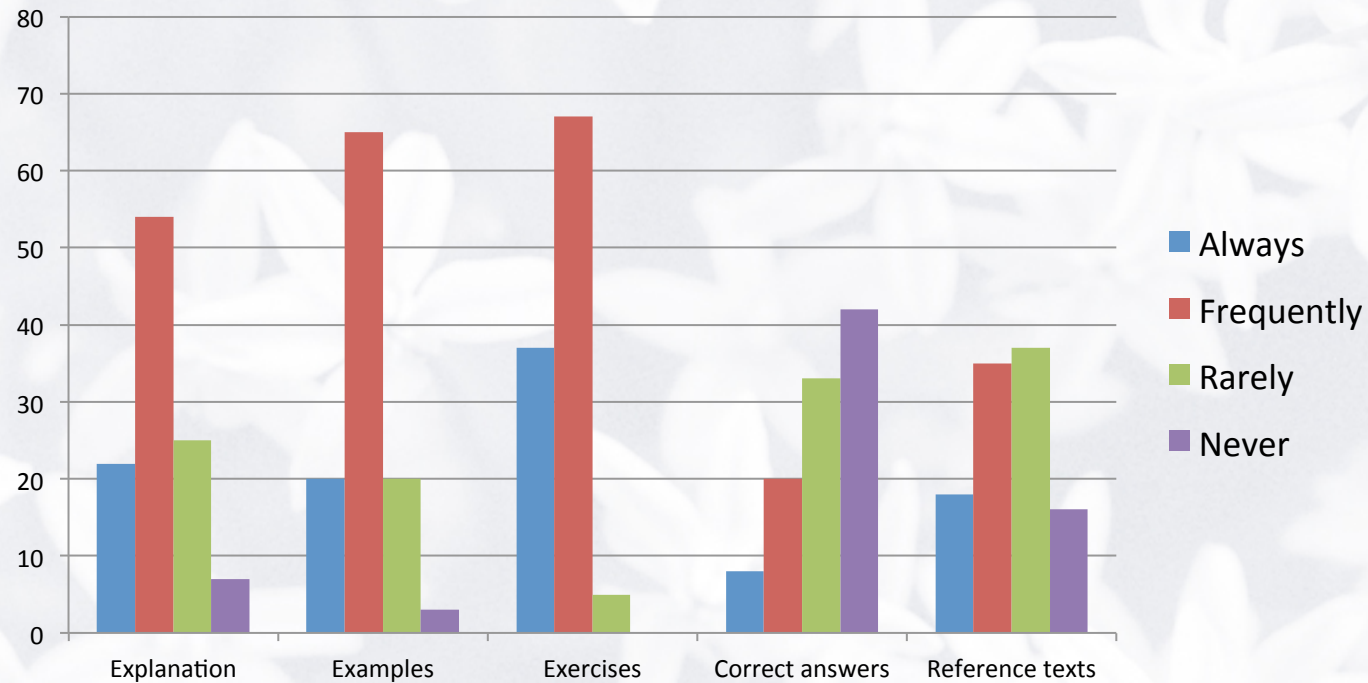
What is read ...



- The textbook is the place of ALL readings
- Reading of other texts is a kind of add-on in the beginning of the class for example, for motivation



What, in the textbook?

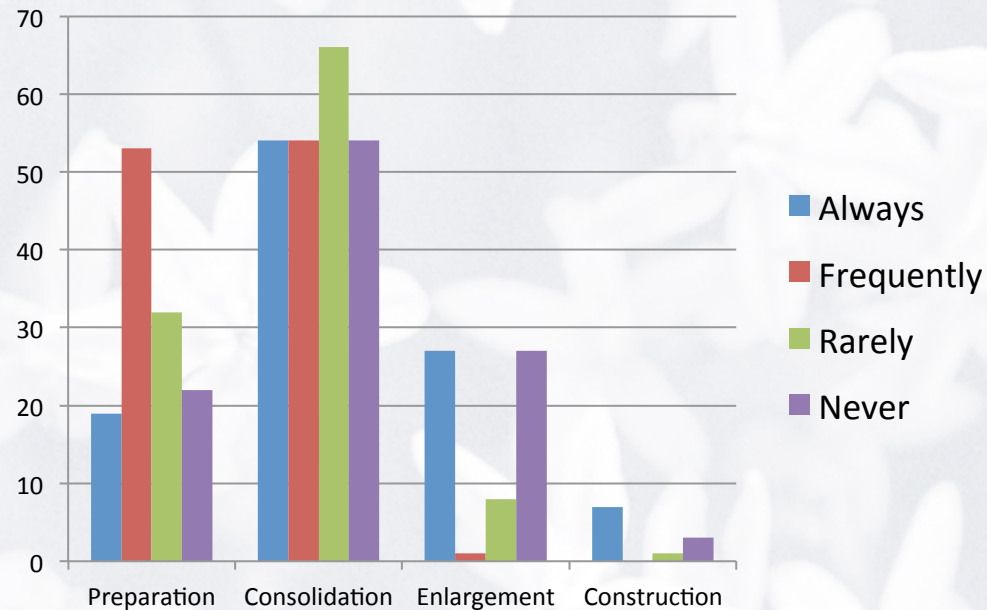


In the textbook, of all disciplines, students mainly read content explanation, examples and do exercises.



Students are supposed to read outside school in order to

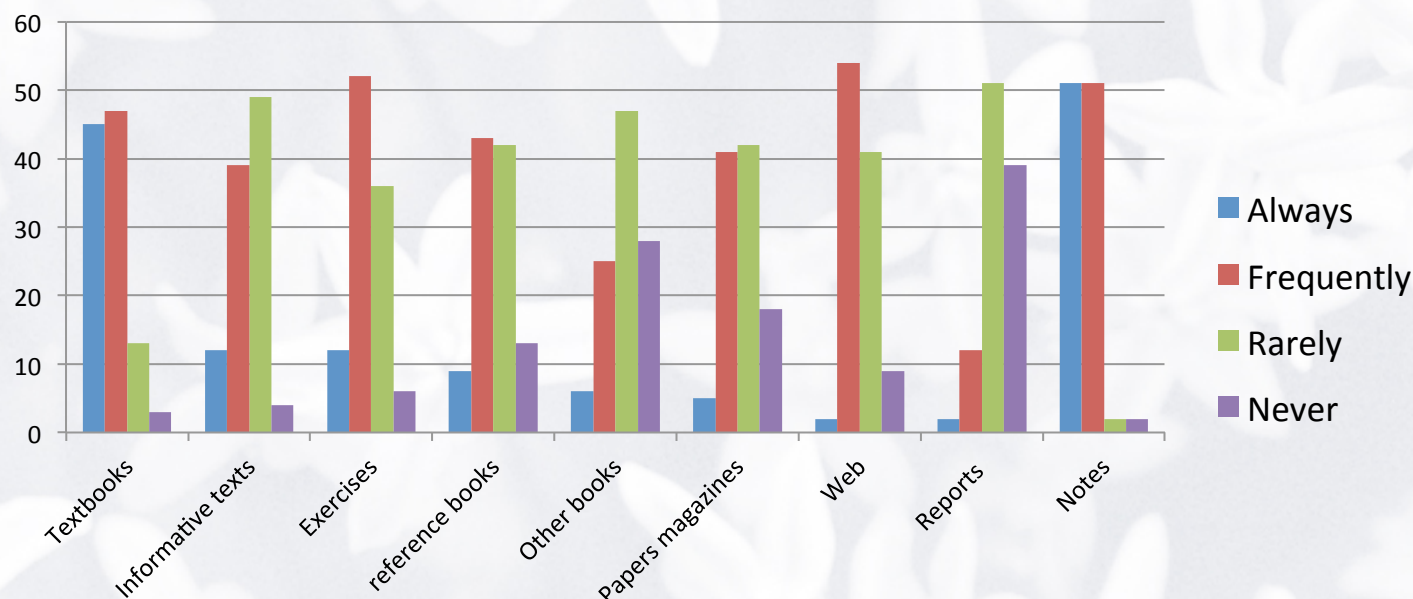
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Reading outside the classroom is HIGHLY expected but not controlled by the teachers
It is not a planned and intentional activity: pre-reading/reading/after reading



Outside classroom students read...



Reading requested by teachers to students is often limited to the textbook or the 'lecture notes'. Exercises and information sheets are also referred as frequently read as well as 'Web pages'.

Elicited reading outside the classroom is not different from reading in the classroom.



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Main findings

Generally there seems to be no recognition of the relationship between reading, writing and learning and, apparently, the inclusion of reading and writing activities in lesson plans does not seem to be intentional in most cases.

Concerns about reading and writing activities disappear (reading is something that one learns once and for all)

Teachers showed in the interviews a little bit of resistance to think about texts and reading (or writing) and to general-purpose strategies

Teachers' resistance to literacy trainers confirm other studies (O'Brien, Stuart, & Moje, 1995).



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2nd phase goals and research design

- ✧ To identify specialized reading skills within maths, physics, social studies;
- ✧ To characterize the specialized reading tasks and demands of the various disciplines
- ✧ To produce materials for the development of those reading skills.

Action research: 6 teachers (2 of each discipline)

Think alouds (about own reading processes) – to devise “reading facilitators” and strategies (Shanahan, Shanahan, 2008)

Focus Group: 12 teachers (to discuss strategies and materials)

Starts September 2018 every two weeks



1st meeting topics of discussion

- 1st phase findings
- Student difficulties
- Presentation of the literacy framework (vocabulary and comprehension processes);
- To think and gather evidence till the next meeting:

“... although the disciplines share certain commonalities in their use of academic language (Snow, 1987), they also engage in unique practices. That is, there are differences in how the disciplines create, disseminate, and evaluate knowledge, and these differences are instantiated in their use of language” (Shanahan, Shanahan, 2008, p. 48)



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1st meetings 'results'

- ✧ The concepts of text and reading were broadened
- ✧ Student difficulties: vocabulary knowledge; attention and concentration on task
- ✧ Teachers beliefs about acquiring vocabulary
- ✧ Teachers' difficulties in understanding what 'decontextualized/abstract' language is; or why a text is difficult

Next steps

- ✧ Gather information about 'disciplinary ways of reading': what is unique in texts and in the ways to learn from them
- ✧ Analyse textbooks texts
- ✧ Work concept of academic vocabulary and sentence structures
- ✧ Work on content area general reading strategies to devise ways of using them for specific disciplines.



Your comments are welcome!

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