

PORTUGAL [1] - 2012

PORTUGUESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE [PSL]

A. BASIC INFORMATION

Country:	Portugal
Title of initiative:	[PT] <i>Português Língua Não Materna (PLNM)</i> [EN] Portuguese as a Second Language (PSL)
Coordinator/ Organization:	Ministry of Education and Science/Directorate-General for Education
Key competences addressed:	[PT] <i>Comunicação em línguas estrangeiras</i> [EN] Communication in foreign languages; [PT] <i>Consciência e expressão culturais</i> [EN] Cultural awareness and expression;
Type of initiative and channels used for implementation (e.g. curriculum reform introduced through legislation etc.)	Creation and development of a PSL curriculum area through legislation
Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Regional Directorates of Education · Schools
Scope: (student/teacher/school level; local/regional/national)	National, regional and school level
Learning context: (formal or non-formal)	Formal
School education level/s: (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary)	Primary, lower secondary and upper secondary
Target groups:	Students whose first language is not Portuguese
Time frame: (start and end date)	2009—on-going

Relevant links:

- DGE - Direção-Geral da Educação (Directorate-General for Education): <http://www.dgidec.min-edu.pt/outrosprojetos/index.php?s=directorio&pid=64>;
- Brochure about PSL: http://area.dgidec.min-edu.pt/BROCHURA_PLNM/INDEX.HTML
- ACIDI - Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e Diálogo Intercultural (High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue):
- <http://www.acidi.gov.pt>
- http://www.acidi.gov.pt/institucional_book.pdf

B. SUMMARY

For students from an immigrant background, the knowledge of the language of the host country is fundamental for access to the curriculum and academic success and favours the integration of students not only at an educational level but also at a socio-affective level.

In order to respond to the linguistic and cultural diversity in Portuguese schools, the Ministry of Education and Science created the subject of *Português Língua Não Materna* (Portuguese as a Second Language – PSL) within the national curriculum.

When students whose first language is not Portuguese enter the Portuguese education system, they are placed according to their language proficiency level (elementary, intermediate or advanced) according to which they carry out specific PSL activities. Only when these students reach the advanced level, are they integrated into Portuguese classes.

C. IN DEPTH INFORMATION

Rationale/contextual background/motivation for introducing the initiative/reform:

Most countries today have a culturally and linguistically heterogeneous school population. For a long time multilingualism was not a priority in Portugal, probably due to its tradition as a country of emigration and to the fact that the vast majority of immigrants in Portugal were from countries where Portuguese is an official language. However, from the 1990s, this situation began to change, with a growth in the number of immigrants from non-Portuguese speaking countries.

The measures developed by the Ministry of Education and Science, within the scope of Portuguese as a Second Language (PSL) teaching in primary and secondary education, emerged from the need to respond to the growing linguistic and cultural diversity in Portuguese society, resulting from changes in migration. The knowledge of the language of the host country is fundamental for access to the curriculum and to academic success, and PSL supports the integration of students not only at an educational level but also at a socio-affective level.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the PSL initiative are:

- to provide equal access to the curriculum and to academic success, particularly with regard to learning and gaining sufficient knowledge of the Portuguese language as a vehicle for all school knowledge;
- to ensure an effective integration of students within the national education system, regardless of their language, culture, social status, age or origin;
- to create the necessary conditions to be able to receive and monitor PSL students;
- to adapt teaching practices to the needs of students and to mobilise their knowledge, linguistic or other, in order to facilitate access to the curriculum;
- to educate speakers of other languages on an equal basis to native Portuguese speakers;
- to rethink education, bearing in mind linguistic and cultural diversity, in order to encourage a school culture.

Dimensions targeted by the initiative/reform (e.g. student curriculum, assessment, initial/in-service teacher education, school autonomy etc.):

The main dimensions targeted are:

- Student curriculum
- Assessment
- School autonomy

Overall approach (e.g. holistic – existence of an overarching strategy, or targeted approach focusing on a specific dimension etc.):

The implementation of a PSL programme in Portugal was based on an overarching strategy, i.e. on the publication of national regulations, the creation of a PSL subject from ISCED 1 to ISCED 3 (International Standard Classification of Education), as well as the development of specific tests for external assessment.

Detailed explanation of the key competence/s concerned:

Key competences concerned:

- Communication in foreign languages
- Cultural awareness and expression

A young person from a foreign country will need to adapt to a new culture and learn the language of the host country, often with characteristics substantially different from their own. The school, as a privileged space of learning, performs a fundamental role in the effective integration of these students by implementing adequate measures for their needs.

Each student is placed in the school year equivalent to that of his/her country of origin, according to previous formal education received. The student will attend classes in different subjects with other classmates but, not being a native speaker of Portuguese, will attend classes in PSL rather than the standard Portuguese classes or will benefit from specific PSL activities.

Specific subjects concerned or cross-curricular approach:

Subject concerned: PSL

There is also an element of cross-curricular approach in that there is cooperation among the different class teachers regarding the language of schooling.

How the initiative/reform is being implemented (e.g. process followed, political commitment, consultation with stakeholders and their respective roles, incentives for stakeholders, dedicated funding, teaching material, definition of goals and standards, assessment and evaluation mechanisms, impact on teacher training/professional development and school practices/leadership, scaling-up approach, based on research/evidence? etc.):

1. Diagnostic assessment and placement at a language proficiency level

When a student enters the Portuguese education system, he/she is given a PSL diagnostic test at school. Diagnostic assessment is made for each language skill (listening, reading, speaking and writing) in order to determine the student's proficiency level. This test provides the teacher with information on the student's knowledge of the Portuguese language and, according to the results obtained, will allow the student to be placed at a language proficiency level

at which he/she will carry out specific PSL activities.

For teachers to be able to define specific strategies for these students, they need to know their prior formal education. Information is also requested on the language spoken at home and with friends and family, the expected period of stay in Portugal and other aspects of the students' background.

2. Language proficiency levels

Three levels of linguistic proficiency have been defined, taking into account the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages:

- a) Elementary (A1, A2)
- b) Intermediate (B1)
- c) Advanced (B2, C1)

The transition from one level to the next occurs according to the student's progress in the Portuguese language, evaluated by tests results.

3. Measures for PSL students

- a) Students placed at the elementary or intermediate level:
 - attend PSL classes, with specific curriculum guidelines, instead of Portuguese classes
- b) Students placed at the advanced level
 - attend Portuguese classes, with extra time given to work on material related to literary texts in the syllabus.

4. Assessment

All students enrolled in grades 6, 9 or 12 whose first language is not Portuguese and who have been monitored at elementary or intermediate level in PSL throughout the academic year are able to sit the national PSL exam instead of the national Portuguese exam. If students are at the advanced level, they sit the national Portuguese exam, along with native Portuguese speaking students, rather than the PSL exam, and they are able to use a monolingual dictionary.

Present stage/phase of implementation:

- At present, PSL activities are being implemented in Portuguese schools where there are students with a first language other than Portuguese.
- For external assessment, these students sit the national PSL exam if they are at elementary or intermediate level.
- The Directorate-General for Education (DGE) is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this measure, giving technical and pedagogical support to teachers and schools.

Pedagogical issues (issues related to how key competences are being taught to students and how are teachers being prepared to teach them):

The pedagogical activities are based on the PSL curriculum guidelines published by the DGE and are organised by proficiency level and by thematic areas. This information is available on the DGE website, which also provides regulations, educational resources, reports, publications and useful links: <http://www.dgidec.min-edu.pt/outrosprojetos/index.php?s=directorio&pid=64>

What works well (to identify enablers):

The first effect of the success of this national measure is the successful integration of these students, not only in schools, but also in Portuguese society.

When these students arrive at schools, teachers create conditions for their reception and monitor their progress. Teachers also adapt teaching practices to the needs of students and mobilise their knowledge, linguistic or other, in order to facilitate access to the curriculum.

Challenges and how these are being addressed (to identify obstacles and solutions):

One of the challenges of the implementation of this measure is the placement of students in the appropriate proficiency level. In order to facilitate this process, the DGE has published models of placement tests from ISCED 1 to ISCED 3.

Monitoring & evaluation so far/planned, and which methods are being used (e.g. internal/external quality assurance, inspection, national assessments, international tests, self-evaluation, formative or summative evaluations):

Results of national PSL exams

- A report has been drawn up on external assessment based on the results of these students in the national PSL exams, which concluded that there is a high rate of school success.

Assessment of the project

- We expect that these educational measures will be assessed at the national level by a Portuguese University within the coming year.

Impact (e.g. any planned impact assessment?):

We expect that the impact of these educational measures will be assessed at national level by a Portuguese University within the coming year.

Communication of the initiative/dissemination of outputs and activities:

The dissemination of these measures is being made through the DGE website:
<http://www.dgidc.min-edu.pt/outrosprojetos/index.php?s=directorio&pid=64>

Next steps/follow-up:

The assessment of the project at a national level in order to improve the political response to this challenge of integrating students whose first language is not Portuguese.

The KEYCONET project has been funded with support from the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission. Responsibility for this publication lies solely with the author, and the Commission is not responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.