



CATÓLICA PORTO
EDUCAÇÃO E PSICOLOGIA

Exploring Portuguese teachers' perceptions of the challenges they face in schools

Luísa Ribeiro, Margarida Rodrigues Baldaque, Ana Cabral, **Sofia Ramalho**, Teresa Dias, Rita Quintas, Leonor Cabral, Cristiana Sequeira e Rosário Cunha

sofiaramalho@colegiodorosario.pt

July 2017

INTRODUCTION

Schools nowadays face new challenges related to the changes that have occurred in the world, in society, in families and in students (Rodrigues, 2012).

Teachers tend to characterize their profession as stressing, since the classes are composed of many students with different characteristics and needs, so meet to the needs of each one becomes a very demanding practice (Caires, Almeida, & Martins, 2010; Flores, & Day, 2006; Newman, 2000).

Teachers are faced with new roles due to increasing heterogeneity and diversity of students and the emergence of new values (Conceição & Sousa, 2012; Kabilan & Izzaham, 2008; Rodrigues, 2012).

Do these changes bring new demands for teachers? What does it mean to teach and learn in the 21st century?

Studies on teachers' perceptions usually focus on teachers who are in the early years of their activity (Eg, Go & Matthews, 2011; Senom, Zakaria, & Shah, 2013), with limited research analyzing the challenges of teachers with many years of experience.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

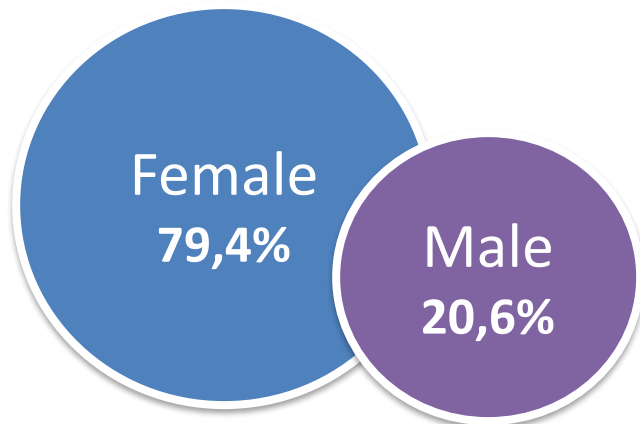
**Explore Portuguese teachers'
perceptions of the challenges
they face in schools**

METHOD

Participants

- 178 participants from 11 private schools from Oporto

Teachers from preschool throughout secondary school



Preschool

- n=38

Elementary school

- n=62

Middle school (5th, 6th grade)

- n=32

Middle school (7th, 8th, 9th grade)

- n=56

Secondary school

- n=49

METHOD

Instrument



Anonymous questionnaire

4 open-ended
questions:

1. Considering my professional experience and the grades in which I teach, how do I describe today's students?

2. In my daily experience as an Educator/Teacher, which aspects concern me the most?

3. Currently, which are the students' main demands concerning my teaching practices?

4. In which areas do I think I could improve and develop in order to become a better Educator/Teacher?

Procedures

Voluntary fulfillment

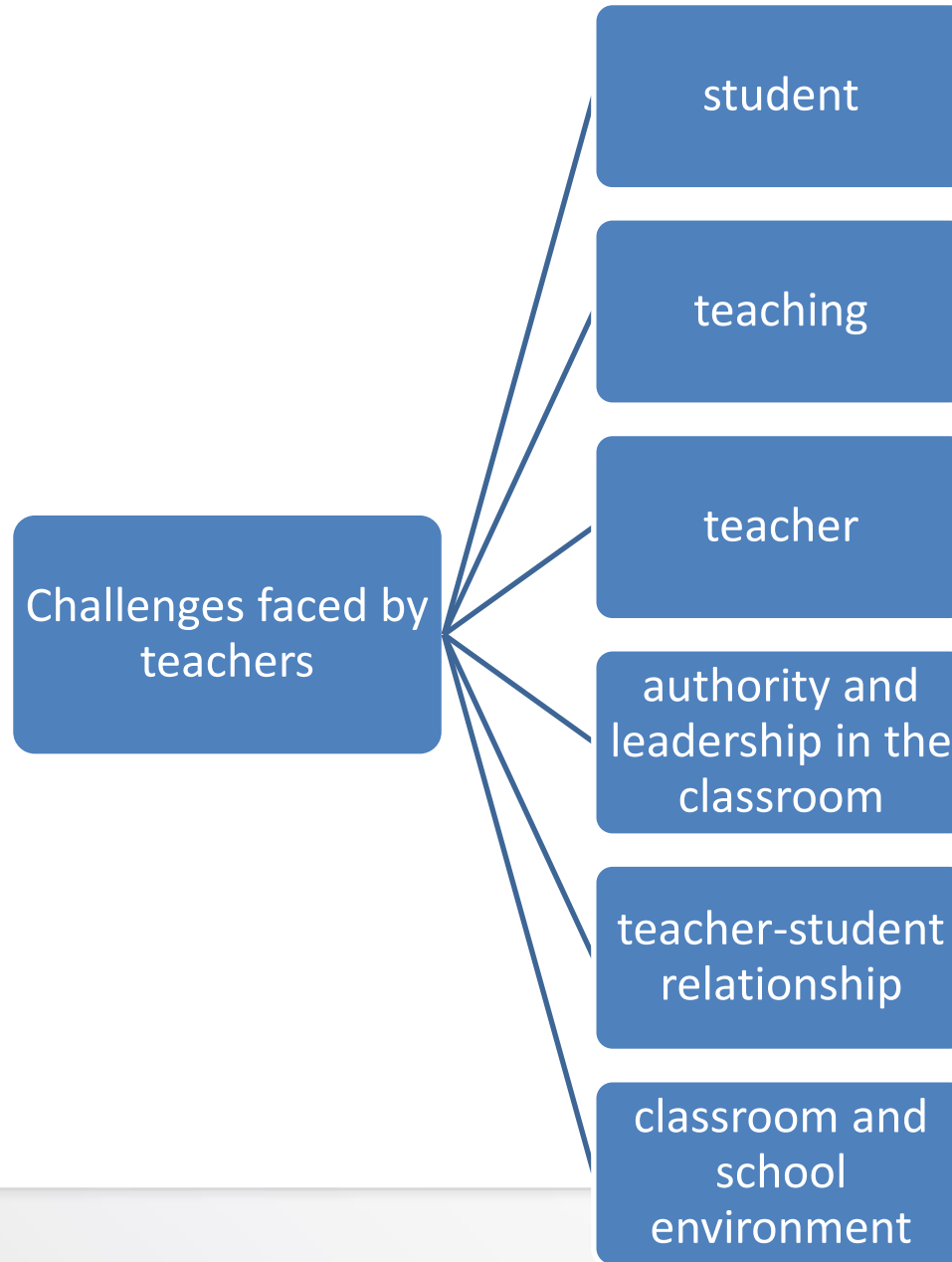


Nvivo 10.0



Content analysis

Q3. CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS



Q3. CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS

student

motivation	40	42
attention/concentration	26	27
little effort	6	6
stimulate the interest for learning	5	5
active students in the construction of knowledge	4	4
develop skills and knowledge in students	4	4
involve students	4	4
capture and maintain student interest	4	4
children capable of interacting, playing, laughing	4	4
delight and surprise students	4	4
look at the student as a whole	3	3
correspond to students interests and needs	3	3
help in solving students problems	2	2

Q3. CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS

teaching

diversify methods, instruments, resources and activities	38	40
novelty and inovation	27	29
dynamic and interactive teaching and less expositive teaching	18	19
deal with students heterogeneity	12	14
ludic activities	8	8
practical activities	5	5
pedagogical differentiation	4	4
attractive classes and appealing strategies	4	4
verify and correct tasks	4	4
explain well contents	3	3
individualized monitoring	2	3
adequate strategies to the students	2	2

Q3. CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS

teacher

technologies - updated knowledge and use	29	29
actualization of knowledge and practices	26	28
criativity	20	20
availability and dedication	13	14
actualization of knowledge in all areas	11	11
knowledge - scientific knowledge	10	11
constant research	9	9
rigor	6	6
adaptability, flexibility and versatility	6	8
prepared to answer questions	6	6
curriculum actualization and adequacy	5	5
teacher attentive and focused	4	4
approapriate and reformulated educational practices	4	5
energy	3	3

Q3. CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS

authority and leadership in the classroom

rules and discipline	8	8
manage indiscipline	6	6
respect	3	3
authority	2	2
manage conflicts	1	1
lead	1	1
prevent indiscipline	1	1
assertiveness	1	1

Q3. CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS

teacher-student relationship

affection	5	5
understanding	4	4
proximity	4	4
good teacher-student relationship	4	4
emotional involvement	3	4
empathy	1	1
listening	1	1
friendship	1	1
solidarity	1	1
trust	1	1

Q3. CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS

classroom and school environment

make the student feel safe	2	2
make the student feel calm	2	2
informal and not embarrassing environment	2	2
make the students feel good at school	2	2
stimulating work environment	1	1

DISCUSSION

The demands reported by educators and teachers participating in this study focus mainly on the sphere of the student (also identified in Hattie, 2009, and Zakaria, Reupert, & Sharma, 2013): promoting students motivation, attention and interest, i.e., promoting a high emotional, cognitive, and behavioral student engagement in school and in the learning process (Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, & Pagani, 2009; Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003; Zepke, & Leach, 2010) as a way to improve their learning (Muñoz, Scoskie, & French, 2013). Thus, teachers and psychologists should work together to mobilize a high degree of student involvement in their school life.

DISCUSSION

Teachers perceptions are also related to the teaching process, such as: using diversified strategies and innovative approaches; dynamic and interactive teaching; manage students heterogeneity.

Teaching and learning in the 21st century also implies, according to teachers' perceptions, an effort of constant updating of knowledge and development of competences, that allows a teaching of excellence (Hattie, 2009).

REFERENCES

- Archambault, I., Janosz, M., Fallu, J.-S., & Pagani, L. S. (2009). Student engagement and its relationship with early high school dropout. *Journal of Adolescence*, *32*, 651-670.
- Rodrigues, M. L. (2012). Os desafios da política de educação no século XXI. *Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas*, *68*, 171-176. doi: 10.7458/SPP201268698
- Caires, S., Almeida, L. S., & Martins, C. (2010). The socioemotional experiences of student teachers during practicum: A case of reality shock? *The Journal of Educational Research*, *103*, 17-27. doi:10.1080/00220670903228611.
- Conceição, C., & Sousa, O. (2012). Ser professor hoje, O que pensam os professores das suas competências. *Revista Lusófona de Educação*, *20*, 81-98.
- Flores, M. A., & Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape teachers identities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *22*, 219-232.
- Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, *74*(1), 59-109.
- Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London: Routledge.
- Jimerson, S. R., Campos, E., & Greif, J. L. (2003). Toward an understanding of definitions and measures of school engagement and related terms. *The California School Psychologist*, *8*, 7-27.
- Kabilan, M. K., & Izzaham, R. I. R. (2008). Challenges faced and the strategies adopted by a Malaysian English language teacher during teaching practice. *English Language Teaching*, *1*(1), 87-95.
- Muñoz, M. A., Scoskie, J. R., & French, D. L. (2013). Investigating the “black box” of effective teaching: The relationship between teachers’ perception and student achievement in a large urban district. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, *25*, 205-230. doi:10.1007/s11092-013-9167-9
- Newman, C. S. (2000). Seeds of professional development in pre-service teachers: A study of their dreams and goals. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *33*(2), 125-217.
- Senom, F., Zakaria, A. R., & Shah, S. S. A. (2013). Novice teachers’ challenges and survival: Where do Malaysian ESL teachers stand? *American Journal of Educational Research*, *1*(4), 119-125.
- Zakaria, N., Reupert, A., & Sharma, U. (2013). Malaysian primary pre-service teachers’ perceptions of students’ disruptive behaviour. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, *14*, 371-380. doi: 10.1007/s12564-013-92687
- Zepke, N., & Leach, L. (2010). Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, *11*(3), 167-177.