


## The importance of reading from the perspective of students at the Filomena Lisboa Municipal School in the Brazilian Amazon

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### ABSTRACT

This article aims to understand and analyze the importance of reading from the perspective of 4th grade students at the Filomena Lisboa Municipal School, located in the municipality of Fonte Boa in the state of Amazonas. The theme also raises the factors that hinder the reading and writing process. This is a qualitative research, in which the descriptive method was used, in order to locate some indications to collaborate with the dialogue of the reading teaching process. The results indicated that the lack of appropriate structure in the school and the lack of incentives from parents and guardians of the students are the major impeding factors. Despite the young age of the students involved, everyone already realizes the importance of reading for success in the learning process and in the formation of competent readers. With this, we suggest that teachers pay attention to the individual characteristics of their students, to seek to expand, together with them, the understanding of the importance of reading and writing, on the way to the formation of avid readers and participatory citizens in society.

**Keywords:** Reading at School, Good Source, Importance of Reading.

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## INTRODUCTION

The present research presents an approach of the students to issues directly related to the importance of reading and possibilities to obtain a good use in their learning.

Learning to read is a complex process that involves many skills, we must be in constant practice, because the consequences of not exercising reading cause great deficiencies that can accompany students in each phase of their school life.

According to Dutra (2011), reading is one of the most important skills to be worked on with the student, especially after recent research (READING, 2022; MARTONI; BERTONI; BARCELLOS, 2022) that point out that this is one of the main deficiencies of the Brazilian student. Quality reading represents the opportunity to broaden one's vision of the world. Through the habit of reading, man can become aware of his needs, thus promoting his transformation and that of the world.

Aspects that hinder the practice of reading, although it is seen as an extremely important activity for human beings, its fluent and full exercise comes up against many factors that hinder it and make this an unpleasurable activity. It is also necessary to consider the points related to socioeconomic and cultural factors, which also make up the range of factors that hinder the practice. As Dronet (2002, p.08) states: "learning is gradual, that is, we learn step by step, throughout our lives. Therefore, it is a continuous constant process."

Reading plays an essential role in the life of the student, expands knowledge, enriches vocabulary, contributes to a critical performance in the face of reality, leads to knowledge of the world in which he is inserted and makes it possible with rationality with other people, with the universe. For Freire, (2003, p. 11) "the reading of the world proceeds from the reading of the word". Thus, even if the individual first learns to "read the world", it is after he learns to "read the word" that the chances of achieving a prominent place, socially speaking, increase considerably.

The issue of reading or more specifically the interest in reading is a factor that many educators and schools have focused on, due to the fact that it is a condition for the success or failure of many students.

The ability to read in this understanding is something that permeates the decoding of words, going beyond and entering deeply into the field of understanding of interpretation. It is within this understanding that the research addresses the theme based on the principles of learning development. This, however, has become increasingly difficult, as there are few students who have fluency in reading and many when they do, they are almost always syllable decoders. It is therefore necessary that the approach works within a full understanding of reality, so that the one who reads, is also the one who understands and interprets. According to Soares:



"It is not enough to know how to read and write, it is also necessary to make use of reading, writing, knowing how to respond to the demands of reading and writing that society continuously makes." (SOARES, 2002, p. 08).

Thinking about the problems presented above, we realized the relevance of conducting studies aimed at collecting data from students about their perspective on the importance of reading. We defined as the general objective of the article: To analyze the importance of reading, from the perspective of 4th grade students, for the learning process at the Filomena Lisboa Municipal School in the municipality of Fonte Boa, in the state of Amazonas.

The specific objectives were defined:

- a) To determine the factors that interfere in the process of teaching and learning reading at the Filomena Lisboa Municipal School;
- b) To stimulate reflection in students for the habit of reading for the formation of good readers;
- c) To awaken the participants to the importance of reading for quality teaching.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Nowadays, it is not possible to live without knowing how to read. The achievement of reading skills is one of the first steps towards assimilating society's values, considering that modern society is surrounded by all kinds of written reports. The concern, currently, is located in the quality of the reader and writer, which constitutes the basis for the individual to be able to act in a functional way in society.

[...] It is considered that, through the literary text, thinking, feeling and creating the child has its maximum development. It is in childhood that one acquires a taste for reading and one can well imagine the immense possibilities and the fundamental importance of children's reading in triggering this process, as a reinforcement of the affective, creative and cognitive areas (COSTA 2006, p. 339).

Developing reading comprehension through literature is the most suitable path, but the student must have the required conditions, adequate guidance, with prepared teachers and great enthusiasm for the work, in order to develop their motivation.

One learns to read and write when one understands its context, one's daily life is able to associate classroom practice with one's own day-to-day experiences, in addition to the perception of what writing means and how it represents in relation to spelling rules. "To learn to read and write, it is necessary to think about writing, to think about what writing represents and how it represents graphically" (BRASIL, 1997, p.82). It is up to the teacher to make situations feasible so that students are able to perceive that formal writing is a convention and obeys a standard of norms, in which an idea in writing, communication will be effective.



Oliveira (2007, p. 13) considers that:

Reading means much more than a simple process by which a person deciphers signs or symbols such as words and letters and reproduces the sound. He reads when he understands what to read, interpreting the written signs. There are children who know the letters, but do not read them (OLIVEIRA, 2007, p.13).

Vygotsky (1993, p.117-124): "the teacher is a competent mediator between the student and knowledge, someone who must create situations for learning, which provoke intellectual challenge". Therefore, the teacher must mediate the teaching of reading, leaving students free to think, act, challenging them to create, give opinions, share ideas, helping them without "imposing" or detracting from their tastes, choices. According to Paulo Freire (2002, p. 69):

My common sense tells me: knowing that I must respect the autonomy, dignity and identity of the learner and, in his practice, seeks coherence with this knowledge leads me irrevocably to the creation of some virtues or qualities without which that knowledge becomes inauthentic, empty and inoperative verbiage (FREIRE, 2002, P.69)

In other words, the educator must respect the values and knowledge brought by the students, applying them to the daily practice of reading, seeking coherence between "having" and "opening". We must provide students with a dignified and authentic identity, forming a competent and determined reader.

According to Martins (2003), reading can be understood and characterized as the mechanical decoding of linguistic signs, that is, letters, through a previously established means of learning. This definition takes into account only the act of reading, it does not consider interpretation and understanding of what one is reading.

Freire (2005) presents a more in-depth approach to the theme, for the author the practice of reading goes beyond words. It is necessary for the reader to understand what he is reading and not just mechanically decode the graphic symbols, there must be a critical perception, interpretation and "rewriting" of what has been read. Reading must happen as a whole, or look, reality, context and not just words must be read.

In view of this, it is understood that reading is linked to the environment, inserted in society, establishing a link between the reader and the material read. The practice of reading can also happen individually, as the readings are chosen by each reader. An example of collective reading is the one that takes place daily in the school environment, which is governed by the teachers.

In basic education schools, in the early years, the reading work that is developed in Portuguese language classes does not correspond to a practice that aims at the formation of competent readers, who acquire the skills and abilities necessary for the student's education.



Cafiero (2010, p. 16) makes the following statements: "it is important that, in reading classes, the student asks questions, raises hypotheses, confronts interpretations, tells about what he has read and not just makes questionnaires of questions and answers of location and information".

Encouraging students' taste and passion so that they can take personal advantage of reading needs to be the goal of the whole school. It is very important that the school contributes to the preparation of students capable of participating as subjects in the learning development process:

(...) we understand that the teaching of reading must go beyond the monotonous act that is applied in many schools, in a mechanical and often decontextualized way, but a process that must contribute to the formation of critical and conscious people, capable of interpreting reality, as well as actively participating in society (OLIVEIRA AND QUEIROZ, 2009, P.02).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research was qualitative, adopting the focus that aimed at understanding the students' perspective for the factors that influence the lack of reading habit. From the data obtained, the inductive method was then developed from the observation with the students for the development of the thesis of this article. Data collection occurred through direct and daily observations, interviews and questionnaires, whose targets were always the students, with the objective of acquiring concrete and accurate data.

This study carried out different phases of research, which began with a bibliographic research, then included a field research where written material and reports on the subject in question were collected, to continue with the analyses and conclusions.

The research involved the participation of a population of 42 students from the 4th year of elementary school I, from the morning shift at the Filomena Lisboa Municipal School. This school serves the public of the municipality of Fonte Boa (602 km from the capital Manaus) in the stages of kindergarten and elementary school, both of regular education.

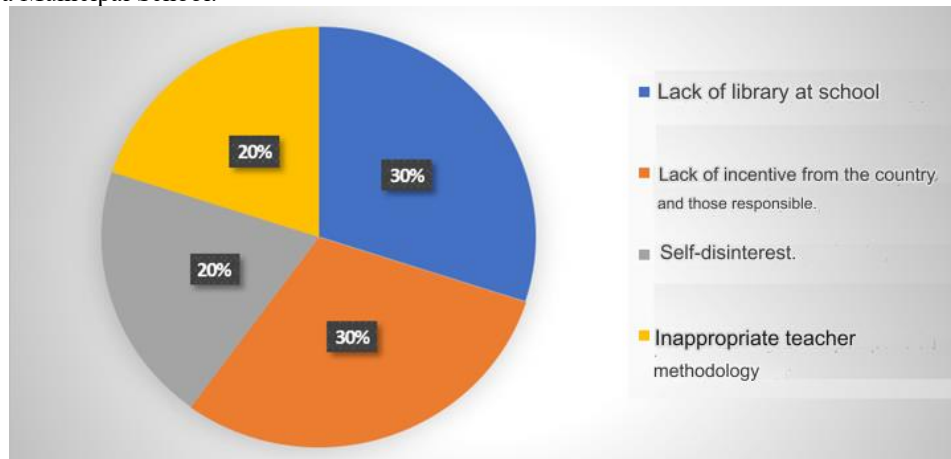
A direct questionnaire was applied, which has the power to bring the researcher, the observation and the problem closer together, in addition to ensuring a broad understanding of the vision of the problem according to the students' perspectives.

Direct observation and interviews ensured the researcher a face-to-face and very in-depth analysis, with this it was possible to verify how the problem is constituted and occurs.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

There are several factors that interfere in the process of teaching and learning reading in public schools, each one presents a specific reality. For the 42 students of the 4th year of elementary school I of the Filomena Lisboa Municipal School, the main factors directly related as impediments to the development of reading can be observed in figure 01.

Figure 01: Indication of elementary school students about the factors that interfere with the reading process at the Filomena Lisboa Municipal School.



Source: Survey data

For a good part of the students (30%) the lack of a structure in the school, such as a library, represents an impediment to expanding the reading process. Libraries really are symbolic places of study, research and reading. The lack of this structure is really needed in an educational establishment. Today libraries are equipped with computers and usually with internet access. This lack represents not only a structural lack in the school, but also a symbolic issue within a school environment. Which ends up having a negative impact on the reading process. Unfortunately, this is a reality in many municipalities in the Amazon, especially in schools far from large urban centers, as Paiva and Berenblum (2009) point out:

According to Werthein (Correio Brasiliense, April 10, 2005), former representative of Unesco in Brazil, it is estimated that 73% of the books are concentrated in the hands of 16% of the population and, according to IBGE data, 89% of the municipalities do not have public libraries and 65% do not have bookstores or music stores. Well-equipped libraries are located in urban areas and in city centres. Data obtained from the 2004 School Census, from the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (Inep), show that, of the 53 thousand school libraries existing throughout the country, 46 thousand (86%) are located in urban areas, and the private network concentrates the largest number of school libraries (39% of the total).

These alarming statistics show the huge regional inequalities and inequality in the distribution of cultural goods. The investigation carried out portrayed the multiplicity of difficulties faced by principals and teachers in Brazilian schools to establish libraries, to ensure adequate functioning to the needs of teachers and the demands of students and to enable access to books, as well as revealed the state and calamity in which books were found (PAIVA & BERENBLUM, 2009).

Therefore, a poorly structured school leads to a deficiency in the teaching and learning process.

Another 30% of the students indicated that the lack of incentives from parents and guardians represents an impediment to the advancement in the process of reading development. Really to learn to read it is necessary to have support at home, because it is at this moment that the socialization of



the knowledge learned at school occurs. The participation of parents and guardians is of fundamental importance to verify and encourage the advancement of students' cognitive development.

In the past, the competencies for teaching literacy were centered on specific professionals, however, authors such as Mata (1999) point out the importance of the family, today, for the advancement in the learning of reading and writing.

There is thus a new vision and a new position on the role of parents and the child himself and on his contribution to the learning process. Traditionally, this was an exclusively professionalized process, since only a technician could know how to initiate and control children's development in the mastery of a technique as complex as reading and writing (Teale & Sulzby, 1989). Parents were practically excluded from the process, or else the valued participation was directly linked to school tasks. Currently, there is a new position regarding what may be the role of parents and the whole family in the process of learning written language. They have come to be considered as important elements, whose participation must be mobilized. Only with parents and family as partners can the learning of written language be more natural and meaningful (MATA, 1999, p. 66).

Therefore, the school, parents and teachers must be prepared to meet all the needs of students and collaborate for the learning of reading and writing.

It is also worth noting that 20% of the students indicated that they themselves are the biggest obstacles to advance in the reading process. This result is worrying, as these are students in the 4th year of elementary school, that is, they are children. Embedding and attributing responsibilities to them as the main responsible for reading difficulties is untrue, since these are the result of a complex reality, composed of social problems, lack of investments, the need for more effective public policies, among other broader issues. But it is also worth paying attention to the self-criticism already present in students. Again, the participation of the family is necessary to develop the self-esteem of these students, as Petronilo (2007) points out:

In order for the child to increase his self-esteem, the family must praise, encourage and speak well of his qualities and strengths. When you try to do something you find difficult, encourage her not to give up; not to depreciate your successes; reassure and highlight their cleverness and intelligence. It is necessary to involve them so that they can develop their skills (PETRONILO, 2007, p. 31).

Finally, another 20% of the students pointed out that the lack of a methodology more appropriate to the students' reality directly interferes with the processes of learning to read. Because they are children, this result also draws attention because it presents a critical sense of these for the techniques applied in the classroom. But it is revealing because it indicates a certain dissatisfaction of these with the so-called traditional methods used by teachers to teach reading and writing.

In this sense, sometimes the teachers' speeches cause frustration and become an obstacle to learning, as Petronilo (2007) points out.



The teacher's goal should not be for everyone to learn equally; This is very difficult to achieve. The goal should be for everyone to be able to work reflexively and build thought collectively, without anyone being marginalized or left out. Unfortunately, many teachers are unaware of the causes of children's learning difficulties and label them as failures and laziness. (PETRONILO, 2007, p. 25).

The problems pointed out in this research emerge as the main impeding factors for the process of teaching and learning to read at the Filomena Lisboa Municipal School. This result is far from being an isolated case in Brazil, as there are other surveys, such as those pointed out by Paiva & Beremblum (2009) that already stated problems with the lack of structure in schools and teacher training:

From the investigation carried out, it was possible to verify the difficulty of teachers to work with the books distributed, the almost total absence of training that would allow them to reflect on their pedagogical practice and discuss different conceptions of language, reading and writing, the limits in the use of the available material and the anguish due to the lack of time to exercise their own reading. With the fundamentals presented, eight categories were highlighted that allowed us to understand, in an evaluative way, the reality of pedagogical actions and practices in their complexity, with regard to the use and meanings of the library and literary works offered. The categories emerging from the fieldwork were the following: 1) reading and social and cultural conditions; 2) conceptions of reading and writing and of readers; 3) reading spaces in schools; 4) children and adolescents who escape us: don't they like to read?; 5) reading and curriculum activities/practices; 6) reading as the foundation of the school's political-pedagogical project (PPP); 7) Are teachers readers?; 8) teacher training to work with books (PAIVA & BERENBLUM, 2009, p. 183).

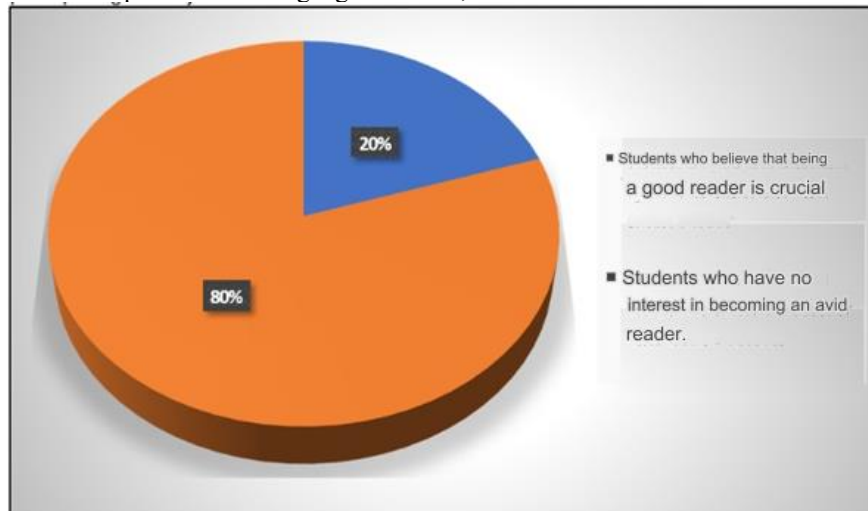
Students in the 4th year of elementary school were asked if they consider reading as a relevant factor for good learning at school. Despite the young age of the students involved, all the students questioned in the survey already realize the importance of reading for success in the learning process and formation of competent readers. Thus, it is the role of teachers to know the individual characteristics of their students in order to seek to expand their reading and writing comprehension, as Petronilo (2007) points out:

Children live in contact with various types of writing in their daily lives. So it is up to the teacher, together with the students, to reflect on the possibilities of writing, and to observe that very individual marks restrict the possibility of reading and that, in order to facilitate communication between all people in a society, a code has been established, a drawing for the letters has been conventional. Not all students write from left to right and top to bottom. Thus, the teacher has to be attentive to the entire writing process of his students (PETRONILO, 2007, p. 16).

Another reflection made with the students concerns what they think about the importance of being a good reader, or those who, due to lack of interest, do not want to develop in reading (figure 02).



Figure 02: Distribution of the percentages of the answers of elementary school students from the Filomena Lisboa Municipal School about the importance of being a good reader, or those who show disinterest in being an avid reader.



Source: Survey data

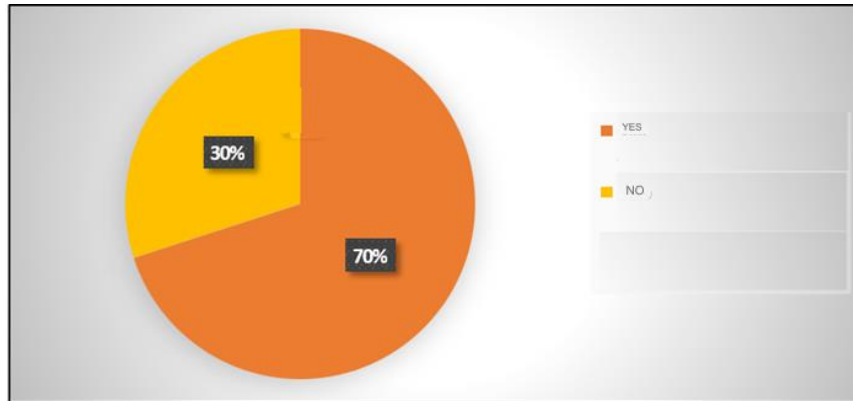
As can be seen, 80% of the students involved in the survey answered that they have no interest in becoming an avid reader. While only 20% of students indicated that they believe it is crucial to be a good reader. This result apparently clashes with the results presented previously, however, it reinforces the results of the problems presented at the beginning of these results, which indicate the difficulties in the reading process at school, such as appropriate physical structure at school and lack of family incentive.

The result indicates the need for a pedagogical strategy that encourages students to practice reading. In this case, the teacher's stimulus is fundamental, as Petronilo (2007) points out.

The difficulty of learning in reading and writing is a difficulty that some children have and that can be overcome throughout the educational process with the help of a well-qualified teacher interested in working with the child with difficulty. It is important to note that individuals with this difficulty have other skills and facilities to learn, allowing them to compensate for and overcome the initial difficulties. This indicates that these individuals are not "dumb" as many label them, and that they can achieve success in their social and professional lives as long as they receive the necessary attention and guidance (PETRONILO, 2007, p. 11).

Continuing the process of stimulating reflection with the students of the 4th year of E.M. Filomena Lisboa, we asked them if they like to read and write. The distribution of the answers can be seen in Figure 03 below.

Figure 03: Distribution of the percentages of the answers of the students of the E.M. Filomena Lisboa about whether they like to read and write.



Source: Survey data

Of the total number of people involved in the survey, 70% reported that they like to read and write, while 30% answered that they do not like to read or write. This percentage distribution indicates that if they are increasingly stimulated at school for the constant development of reading and writing, they may become avid readers, even the smallest number that reported negatively, because with the advancement of the majority, the rest may feel motivated and driven to develop the practice of reading and writing.

The differences between children as to who like or dislike to read and write may be associated with learning disorders, such as dyslexia, as stated by research such as those by Calafange (2004) and Martins (2003): "the term dyslexia is applicable to a situation in which the child is unable to read with the same ease with which his peers read, despite possessing normal intelligence, intact health and sensory organs, emotional freedom, normal motivation and incentives, as well as adequate instruction."

Thus, it is up to education professionals, such as teachers and pedagogues, to know how to identify and guide the parents of children who have this type of disturbance in learning to read and write regarding the search for support from health professionals. As Fonseca (2009) states:

It is an unexpected learning difficulty, and not incapacity, and much less a disease, considering the average and higher intelligence of the individual and the educational opportunity in which he is integrated. [...]  
 Dyslexia is therefore not synonymous with a low IQ, as it can occur at all levels, or with visual and auditory dysfunctions detected by conventional medical means. Nor should the manifest evidence of lack of motivation to learn to read, or of the presence of unfavorable and deviant socioeconomic conditions, be considered in its definition. [...]  
 By exclusion, the dyslexic child or young person cannot be considered in any defectological category or taxonomy, and should never be confused with mental deficit or dysfunction. By inclusion, dyslexic children and young people reveal disorders and problems: subtle, unusual, multicomplex, sometimes inexplicable, of non-symbolic and, above all, symbolic information processing, which may involve cognitive difficulties in understanding, analysing and using the systems and subsystems of spoken and written language, that is, they may include, alone or systematically, receptive, integrative, elaborative and expressive components.  
 Dyslexia can be overcome in a timely manner with multitherapeutic re-education, but its causes remain unchanged. Many predictive signs can be identified as early as preschool, but dyslexia begins with the learning of reading, where problems in sound awareness

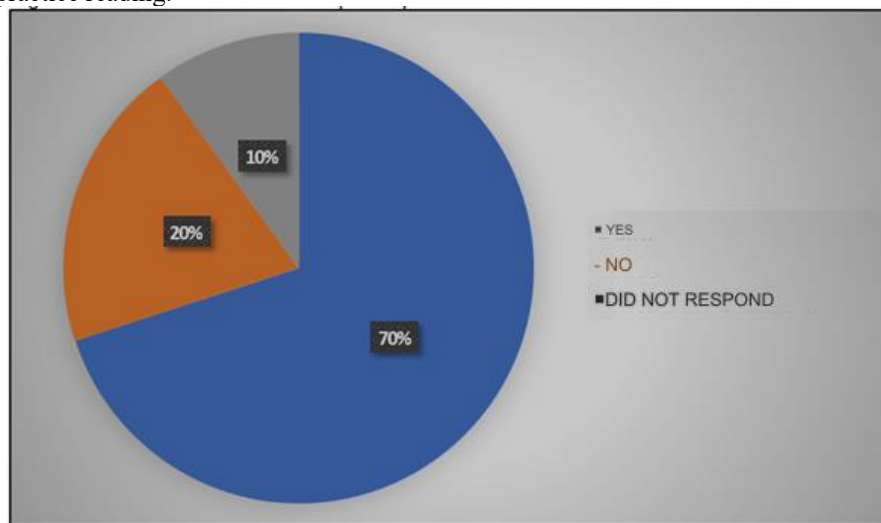
(phonemes), letter recognition (optemas), verbal expression (articulemes), copying (graphemes), etc. (FONSECA, 2009) begin to be detected.

It is necessary to be aware of reading, writing and language disorders, and the exercise of writing and dictation can help teachers with these problems. This learning difficulty is widespread in the world and can occur in any classroom, because as Fonseca (2009) states "dyslexia affects a very wide spectrum of behavioral expressions; some children overcome the difficulty without sequelae, while others do not reach literacy".

The important thing is that children are not targets of prejudice or suffer *school bullying* because of a learning disorder. The school must be welcoming and offer accessibility to literacy and knowledge for all.

Another question to encourage the importance of reading among 4th grade students consisted of asking them if they read regularly and if they are encouraged to practice reading. The answers are distributed in figure 04.

Figure 04: Answers from 4th grade students at E.M. Filomena Lisboa about whether they read regularly and whether they are encouraged to practice reading.



Source: Survey data

Among those surveyed, 70% reported that they read regularly and that they are encouraged to practice reading. Another 20% reported that they do not read and are not encouraged, while 10% did not answer the question. But once the attention should be paid to those who do not like to read and to those who do not read regularly, to improve the relationship of all students with the practice of reading.

Condermarin (1986) listed a series of disturbances that directly interfere in the learning process, namely:

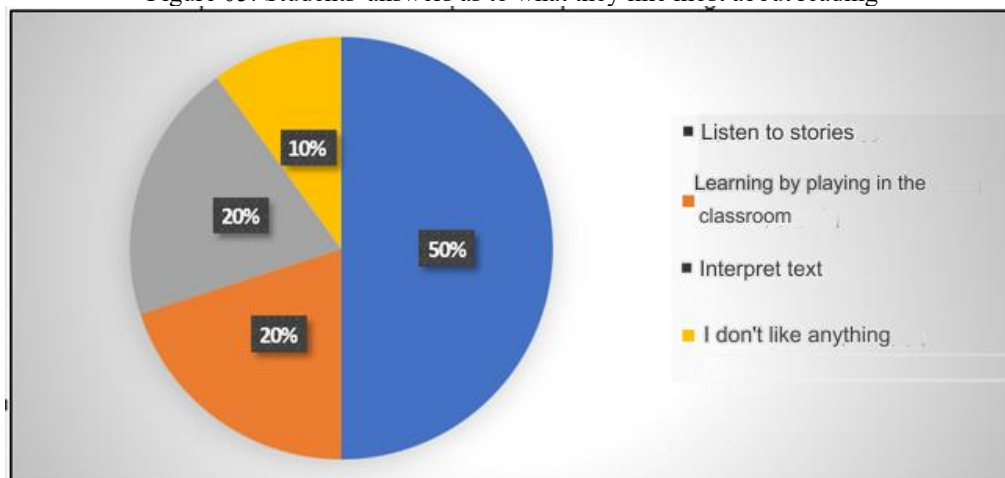
- Memory alterations: some children have difficulties in immediately remembering past facts, cannot remember words or sounds they hear, have difficulty visually memorizing

objects, words or letters.

- Changes in the memory of series and sequences: such as the days of the week, the months of the year, the alphabet and the time.
- Right-left orientations: children are unable to orient themselves properly in space and learn the notion of right and left. They cannot locate the right and the left in their own body or when looking at another person.
- Written language: when the child cannot read easily, he or she is not able to properly use the graphic symbols of written expression. When he writes, he reveals signs of confusion, inversions, additions, omissions, and substitutions.
- Difficulties in mathematics: cannot understand the formulation of the problem. Therefore, it is difficult to read, they invert numbers or their sequence (CONDERMARIN, 1986).

It is necessary for teachers and pedagogues to be aware of these characteristics, as they represent an obstacle to the learning and development of reading. Another means used in the research to awaken the importance of reading, among the participants, was to question them about what they like most about reading. The answers are distributed in figure 05.

Figure 05: Students' answers as to what they like most about reading



Source: Survey data

Among the interviewees, 50% reported that what they like most about reading is listening to stories, it is worth remembering that we are talking about children. This result corroborates Garcia (2005) when he states:

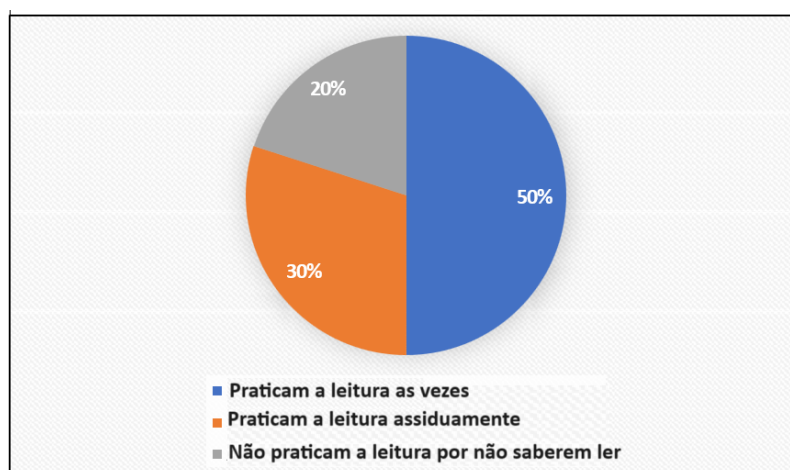
"For the learning of reading and writing, it is essential that the child has the opportunity to create their stories heard by transforming them, to hear stories told by other people (whether adults or children) and to read and write their stories" (GARCIA, 2005, P. 10).

Another 20% indicated that they like to read to learn by playing in the classroom. This demonstrates the importance of using play in the classroom, how it attracts the attention of students and makes learning pleasurable.

Also 20% of those surveyed reported that they like to interpret texts. At the age of children attending the 4th grade, it is necessary that the didactic material is attractive, that the texts are engaging and that they are completed with pictures and schemes to activate the students' senses, as some children need to visualize drawings between reading to be able to interpret what they are reading, making reading more motivating (OLIVEIRA, 2014).

It is known that reading needs to be practiced daily by students. Therefore, they were asked how often they practice reading (figure 06).

Figure 06: Answers of the students of the E.M. Filomena Lisboa regarding the frequency with which they practice reading.



Source: Survey data

For 50% of the students questioned, they informed that they practice reading sometimes, that is, they need to be more motivated for such practice. While 30% indicated that they practice reading assiduously, thus demonstrating their taste for the practice of reading. Another 20% reported that they do not practice reading, they also justified it by informing that they do not know how to read. The latter are the most serious cases and deserve more attention by teachers, so that they can make a diagnosis and seek to identify why these students still do not know how to read. Perhaps the causes may be those already indicated in this research work.

It is important to make students motivated to practice reading. For this, it is necessary to have a good and accessible methodology, which is available to the teacher didactic support materials and that he uses his creativity to motivate his students more and more to the practice of reading and writing.

It is also worth highlighting the role of information and communication technologies as a means of disseminating the practice of reading. Today, children are exposed from an early age to



computers and smartphones and to the handling of social networks, with reading and writing being the great means of communication. These tools should also be used as means for the development of literacy, because as Chartier (2007) states:

Unlike those who predict the end of reading and books because of computers, Chartier thinks that the internet can be a powerful ally to maintain written culture. "In addition to assisting in learning, technology circulates texts in an intense, open and universal way and, I believe, will create a new type of literary or historical work. Today we have three forms of production, transcription and transmission of texts: hand, printed and electronic – and they coexist" (CHARTIER, 2007, p. 22).

It is necessary to use various techniques that are capable of awakening in students the interest and pleasure of reading, only then will it be possible to form readers for life, because the habit and interest in reading is a constant process.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The lack of appropriate structure in the school, such as a library or reading room, represent impediments to expanding the reading process. Another important impeding factor is the lack of incentives from parents and guardians of students. Despite the young age of the students involved, a good part of them already realize the importance of reading for success in the learning process and in the formation of competent readers.

The problems for reading difficulty can be associated with learning disorders, so it is up to education professionals, such as teachers and pedagogues, to know how to identify and guide the parents of children who have this type of disorder in the learning of reading and writing regarding the search for support from health professionals. Attention should be paid to those who do not like to read and to those who do not read regularly, in order to improve the relationship of all students with the practice of reading.

We also concluded that among those who like reading the most, their greatest satisfaction is listening to stories, it is worth remembering that we are talking about children. Others indicated that they like reading to learn by playing in the classroom. This demonstrates the importance of using play in the classroom, how it attracts the attention of students and makes learning pleasurable.

With this, he concludes that reading is a social activity, only with the commitment of all can we achieve the formation of avid readers and active citizens in society.



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