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LEARNING RECOVERY STRATEGIES IN LITERACY AFTER THE PANDEMIC: AN EXPERIENCE REPORT IN SCHOOLS IN A MUNICIPAL NETWORK IN NORTHERN SANTA CATARINA STATE

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Abstract: This paper presents the results of the Aprender Mais (School Reinforcement) Project, implemented post-pandemic in 2022, as a priority action aimed at guaranteeing the full right to learn for all students with learning gaps, difficulties and disorders enrolled in schools in a municipal network in northern Santa Catarina. In order to develop actions to restore and recover learning, the education professionals involved in the School Reinforcement Program received continuing training based on the precepts of Neuroscience and Psychology applied to Education, in order to stimulate the target audience of Aprender Mais, which made it possible for the analysis of data and the preparation of lesson plans applied during this period to stimulate students as active subjects and autonomous shapers of their learning. Structured in accordance with the Federal Constitution, the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law, and using the results obtained by the Municipal Education Network, as well as data from the Brazilian Institute of Research, Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the Aprender Mais (Learn More) Project was drawn up in accordance with the Curriculum and Unique Regulations of the Municipal Education Network's School Units. The results of this study show that the strategies used to enhance learning, such as: teacher training, personalization of teaching, diversification of resources, as well as intervention in productive groupings, are essential for reducing learning gaps and difficulties and thus achieving successful academic development.

Keywords: School reinforcement. Recovery. Learning recovery.

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to present the results of the Aprender Mais Project, implemented in 2022, as part of a set of actions aimed at restoring and recovering learning, with the aim of guaranteeing the right to meaningful learning to all students enrolled in schools in a municipal network in northern Santa Catarina.

It emerged as a response to the need to promote an inclusive educational environment, capable of meeting the needs of each student in overcoming educational difficulties, promoting equity, access to knowledge and ensuring literacy at the right age. It corroborates the results of the Census carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics [IBGE] (2022), which state that 5.6% of people aged 15 or over, equivalent to 9.6 million people, declared themselves illiterate in Brazil. The illiteracy rate reaches 16.0% among people aged 60 or over, and among young people the rate of completion of basic education is just over 50% (IBGE, 2022).

In view of the national scenario, and in line with current legislation, the project presented here is linked to *Article 161 of the Unified Regulations of the Teaching Units of a municipal network in northern Santa Catarina (2022)*, which states that "Retained students, those approved by the Class Council, as well as those with learning difficulties should be included in remedial activities and, when the need is proven, in after-school tutoring." *Article 172, item XII (2022)*, establishes, as one of the student's rights, "to participate, when necessary, in remedial classes and after-school tutoring". Also according to *Article 154 (2022)*, "the restoration of learning aims to promote learning situations that were not offered and/or to which students did not have access."

According to the *Unified Rules and Regulations of the School Units of a Municipal Education Network in Northern Santa Catarina (2022)*, elementary school students (2nd to 9th grade) who meet at least one of the following requirements take part in the Learn More Project: retained in the previous year; approved by the Class Council; not literate; with learning difficulties; students with specific reports that affect learning - except for those assisted or accompanied by the Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) service; with the performance standard Below Basic in the

Diagnostic and Formative Assessments sent by the Municipal Network during the school year and applied in the schools, and/or with low performance in the Portuguese Language and/or Mathematics components in each quarter.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

Schools must provide access to Aprender Mais as a matter of urgency and inform the family of the student's duty to "take part in recuperation and school reinforcement when determined by the school", as described in the *Unified Regulations of the Schools of a Municipal School Network in Northern Santa Catarina*. Article 173, item IV.

Student care should be carried out in conjunction with the school's planning, pedagogical organization and physical space. It can be carried out for a minimum of four hours with a pedagogue and/or trainee (Primary I), and 4 hours/class per week with specialists and/or trainees in Portuguese Language and Mathematics (Primary II). It can be offered in a combined way: during regular class time, during the 6th class, and/or during the after-school hours.

After defining the type of assistance that will be offered to students, it will be up to the School Unit, in line with what is expressed in the Unified Regulations, to establish the offer of "School Reinforcement" in the Pedagogical Political Project (PPP).

According to the *Curriculum for a Municipal Education Network in Northern Santa Catarina* (2022), the teaching of the Portuguese language curriculum component aims to enable students to develop and expand their literacy skills, so that they can actively and critically participate in social practices through speaking, reading, writing and interpreting, as well as other contemporary languages.

In the teaching of mathematics, the emphasis is on developing mathematical literacy in students, in order to identify the fundamental knowledge for understanding and acting in the world, as well as developing logical and critical reasoning, stimulated by investigation and the pleasure of thinking mathematically.

In this sense, in accordance with the *Curriculum of a Municipal Network in Northern Santa Catarina* (2022) and the *National Common Curricular Base [BNCC]* (2018), the following basic competencies to be considered when planning activities stand out in order to meet the objectives of Aprender Mais: knowledge, scientific, critical and creative thinking, communication.

Learning assessment in Aprender Mais classes follows the Municipal Education Network Guidelines. Diverse assessment instruments will be developed and applied by the headteacher or Aprender Mais teacher, taking into account the gaps identified in internal and external assessments in order to diagnose learning and adjust planning according to the skills and competences not consolidated by the students.

RESULTS

According to the survey related to the number of students with an annual average of less than 5.0 - carried out by the Internal Management System - EVN, throughout 2023, the following data was found:

		Mathematics
3rd Year	3,45%	3,34%
4th Year	2,96%	3,81%
5th Yea	r2,37%	3,75%
6th grade	2,66%	6,04%
7th grade	4,53%	8,72%
8th grade	3,89%	7,95%
9th grade	3,13%	7,18%
Total	3,26%	5,68%

Percentage of students with an annual average below 5.0 -2023

The effects caused by the pandemic period are evident above all in the 7th and 8th grade classes, since, during the isolation between 2019 and 2020, they were the students who attended 3rd and 4th grades; and 4th and 5th grades, respectively.

The average percentage of 5.68%, in 2023, in averages insufficient for direct approval in the Municipal Education Network shows how intense the process of recomposition and recovery must be considered, not only in actions such as the Learn More Project, but in Regular Education itself, since prior knowledge that has not been consolidated affects approaches in current enrollment years.

In Mathematics, the lowest scores were given by 7th graders, who reached 8.72% of the total in the network, while 8th graders had the second lowest average, representing 7.95% of the students in a municipal network in northern Santa Catarina. The other classes had average scores varying between 3.18 and 7.18%.

As far as Portuguese is concerned, the hotspots are the 7th, 8th and 3rd grades, accounting for 4.53%, 3.89% and 3.45% respectively.

Among the aforementioned effects that remote and hybrid teaching had on primary and secondary school students, it is important to note that the 3rd years had their Early Childhood Education course interrupted due to the isolation, which interfered directly in the provision of pedagogical stimuli essential for the development of competencies and skills that predict Literacy, which inevitably led to a drop in academic performance.

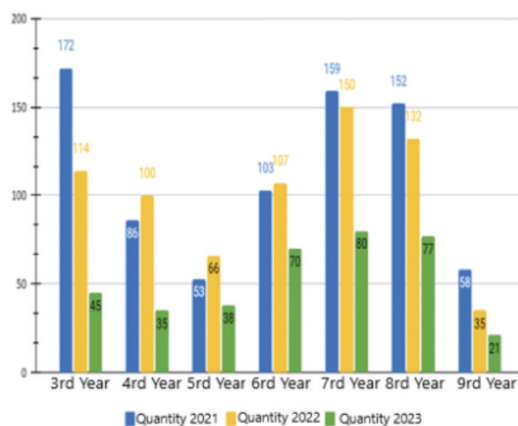
An important aspect to discuss with regard to the decreasing number of retentions between 2021 and 2022 was the teaching system adopted at the time, to the detriment of isolation.

It can be seen in the graph below that in the Portuguese Language component, the following again stand out: 3rd grade with a

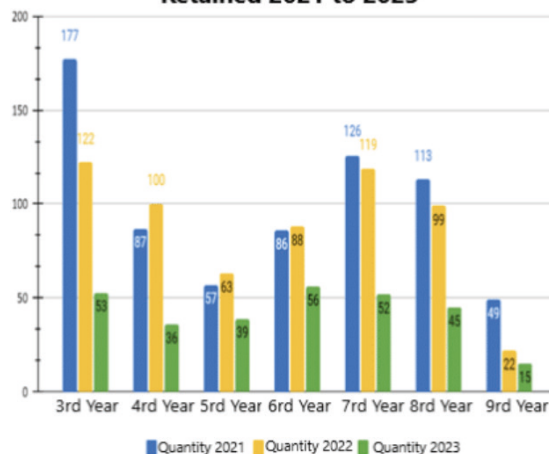
70.05% reduction in retention, 7th grade with a 58.73% reduction in the number of students retained and 8th grade with 60.17% fewer students retained. These percentage reductions compare the years 2021 and 2023.

In the same period, 2021 and 2023, the analysis is applied to the Mathematics component, in which the same years referred to: 3rd, 7th and 8th grades show respective reductions of 73.83%, 49.68% and 49.34% in the number of retained students.

MATHEMATICS - Number of Students Retained 2021 to 2023



PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE - Number of Students Retained 2021 to 2023



Coming from a period of remote approaches, which progressively moved to face-to-face, the way in which the students were stimulated and had their evaluative activities conducted during this period is still unclear, given the fact that a number of aspects invol-

ve family literacy, school management and the student himself, as an active subject and shaper of his learning. These learnings are impossible to verify in terms of consistency and veracity.

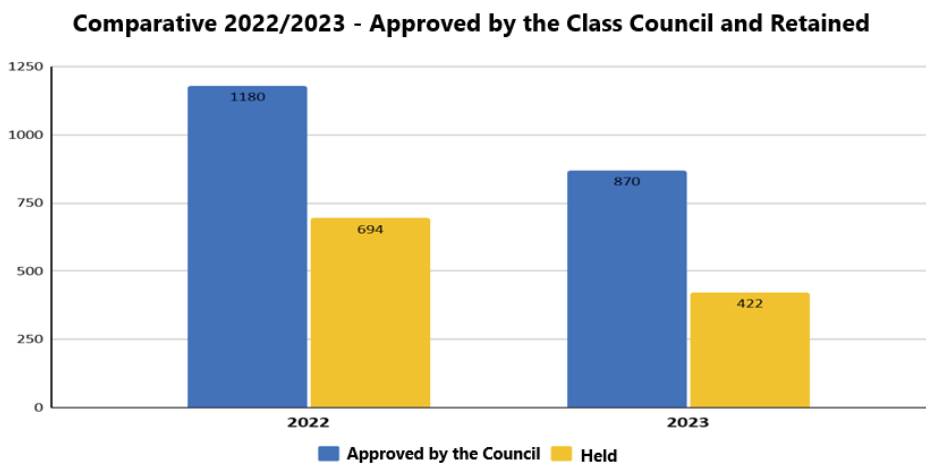
In this way, the figures we are using are not necessarily related to real learning levels, but to evaluation criteria that have not been met. Even so, it is possible to determine a 39.19% reduction in the number of retentions from 2022 to 2023.

For this reason, the year 2023 was crucial for establishing comparative parameters, as it was the first year of fully face-to-face classes after the pandemic.

Another extremely important point is the number of students approved by the Class Council. It is well known that this type of approval verifies the lack of academic competence for direct approval and, by convention, excludes retention.

If we look at the gap that an approval by the council transfers to the following year, it becomes clear that the number of referrals for remedial action and learning recovery will be proportional.

Considering the figures calculated by the Internal Management System - EVN, related to approvals by Class Council, we have:



If we compare the years 2022, in the education system, and 2023 - with the full resumption of face-to-face classes, we will see a 26.27% reduction in the number of approvals by Class Council.

It can therefore be seen that between the years 2021, the period of resumption of hybrid face-to-face classes, 2022 the full return to the classroom and 2023, the period of intensification of measures aimed at learning recovery, is responsible for the significant numerical variation between the 3rd and 9th grade classes.

As actions to achieve results, lists of descriptors to be prioritized by teachers and trainees in Portuguese Language, Mathematics and Pedagogy were made available for the

preparation of didactic sequences that made up the planning, in order to develop the deficient skills of the students who were part of the Aprender Mais service groups. In addition to materials that demonstrate how vocabulary patterns interfere with understanding and the acquisition of skills and competences.

It is worth highlighting the ostensible formative approach to Learning Disorders in the classroom, by professionals specialized in the area, to support the development of the pedagogical differentiation strategies necessary for the development of the work of recomposition and recovery of learning by the teachers and trainees of Aprender Mais.

The concept of conscious pedagogical intervention for the professional responsible for caring for a group as diverse as Aprender Mais demonstrates that it is possible to develop remaining skills and abilities, as long as we consider what, when, how and to whom to teach.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The results are the fruit of assertive educational measures, aimed both at the specific needs of students who were underdeveloped, due both to the insufficient stimulation that the period provided, and the consistency in teacher training to deal with a teaching reality that had been experienced until then.

The challenge of reconciling the different conditions that each care group presented required the Aprender Mais teachers, above all, to take an individualized view of the subjects that made up the productive groups, in such a way as to demand refined flexibility when adapting the Lesson Plans.

It was up to the group responsible for training teachers and trainees at Aprender Mais to develop training trails aimed not only at analyzing data, but with aesthetic approaches to how subjects learn, beyond what this data represents.

According to the strategies applied in tutoring to enhance student learning, it can be said that personalizing teaching, using diverse resources and systematically monitoring

small groups of students are key elements in promoting academic success and overcoming educational difficulties.

The effectiveness of the strategies adopted highlights the importance of rethinking and innovating teaching practices in the context of tutoring, taking into account the specific needs and learning pace of each individual. The student-centered approach, focusing on the development of cognitive, socio-emotional and metacognitive skills, proved to be fundamental in stimulating motivation, self-esteem and interest in learning.

In this sense, it is recommended that educators, school principals and educational policy makers consider implementing strategies similar to those of Aprender Mais, in tutoring programs, aimed not only at students' academic performance, but also at their all-round development the continuing training of teachers, focused on the Learning Sciences.

It should also be emphasized that collaboration between teachers, families and the community is essential to strengthen support for students in situations of educational vulnerability and ensure that everyone has access to an inclusive, quality public education.

In short, investing in innovative pedagogical practices tailored to students' individual needs in tutoring represents a significant step towards building an equitable, effective and transformative education.

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