

# PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE AND MENTAL HEALTH: A DIDACTIC EXPERIENCE IN A HIGH SCHOOL IN SOUTH BRAZIL

## LÍNGUA PORTUGUESA E SAÚDE MENTAL: UMA EXPERIÊNCIA DIDÁTICA EM UMA ESCOLA DE ENSINO MÉDIO NO SUL DO BRASIL

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**Abstract:** *This paper presents and discusses a pedagogical experience conducted in the subject of Portuguese language in a Brazilian high school that promoted social practices and knowledge about mental health. It is suggested that assuming diversified and transversal themes in language classes in Brazilian schools was a way to contemplate the competencies proposed by the National Common Curricular Base (Brasil, 2018) in line with aspects related to mental health. To this end, these considerations are discussed based on a pedagogical experience that involved students and teachers and mobilized textual productions capable of bringing fruitful discussions about stigmas about health and life prevention. The use of the Canva platform proved to be a potential tool to support student writing. Reading, writing, speaking, technologies, and mental health assumed their relevance in the Portuguese language discipline, showing that it is possible to give new meaning and transform learning in school language classes.*

**Keywords:** *Portuguese Language. Mental Health. Education. Language.*

**Resumo:** *Este trabalho apresenta e discute uma experiência pedagógica realizada na disciplina de língua portuguesa em uma escola de ensino médio brasileira que promoveu práticas sociais e conhecimentos sobre saúde mental. Sugere-se que assumir temas diversificados e transversais nas aulas de língua nas escolas brasileiras foi uma forma de contemplar as competências propostas pela Base Curricular Comum Nacional (Brasil, 2018) em consonância com aspectos relacionados à saúde mental. Para tanto, estas considerações são discutidas com base em uma experiência pedagógica que envolveu estudantes e professores e mobilizou produções textuais capazes de trazer discussões frutíferas de estigmas sobre saúde e prevenção a vida. O uso da plataforma Canva provou ser uma ferramenta potencial para apoiar a escrita dos estudantes. A leitura, escrita, oralidade, tecnologias e saúde mental assumiram sua relevância na disciplina de língua portuguesa, mostrando ser possível dar um novo significado e transformar o aprendizado nas aulas de língua da escola.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Língua Portuguesa. Saúde mental. Educação. Língua.*

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## Introduction

The different approaches that are established in the mother tongue teaching practices have raised and are still raising relevant studies in contemporary times. Pondering the transformations that are part of the new looks and ways of contextualizing the language practices are feasible for a pedagogical and didactic work aligned with the real needs that need to be established and improved in the students' initial schooling: reading, writing, and speaking. Seeking a new look at the perspectives of Portuguese language teaching, as well as transversal themes, this study contributes to significant practices in Portuguese language classes by adopting a new stance regarding the teaching of the mother tongue.

This study aims to investigate how the subject of Portuguese language can be a potential space to address and address skills prescribed by the National Common Curricular Base - BNCC (Brasil, 2018) and knowledge about mental health with the support of different languages supported by a script of tasks. In addition, it seeks to present theoretical reflections on the subject of Portuguese language, education, languages and mental health in order to contribute to the interdisciplinary perspectives of this study.

In this perspective, the Writing, Body and Mind project articulates conceptions of mental health, educational technologies, and teaching. Thinking about addressing mental health in school, since this knowledge promotes encounters between self-knowledge and emotion control (Brasil, 1998, 2018; Couto, 2001; Almeida, 1997; Estanislau, Bressan, 2014), the project was elaborated in the subject of portuguese with the intention of integrating mental health knowledge as a learning perspective in Portuguese language classes with 1st year Polytechnic High School students from a regular school located in the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre.

Studies and documents (Brasil, 2018; Almeida, 2016) point out that such approaches should be inserted and offered at school in line with disciplines and integrative projects. It is justified on the importance of this project in this work context, promoting, then, learning integrated to the students' needs, because talking about mental health at school is still little addressed from teachers' narratives (Estanislau, Bressan, 2014). Knowing this, if teachers do not understand the importance of working on this concept, it is necessary to establish training and conditions for the implementation of these approaches in the educational field.

This sense clarifies the relevance of promoting practices and reflecting on the results of work done in the classroom that emphasize such a perspective, in order for teachers to have guidance to apply methodologies that address mental health at school. From this point of view, Yellow September<sup>1</sup> can be a starting point to define actions and map contexts and situations that can be established and worked on in Portuguese language classes.

Seen this way, preventive actions that are established at school are opportune in this context and, if pertinent, beyond it, because educational institutions are spaces that promote behaviors and relevant reflections for young people to establish and understand their social conditions and, also, their physical and mental health (Almeida, 1998). Integrating approaches that contemplate mental health in school subjects is to promote the meeting of different areas, as well as to connect subjects that interconnect with everyone's knowledge needs (Brasil, 1998, 2018).

Thus, this study is organized into 5 parts. The first is the introduction, and presents initial considerations and the purpose of this study. The second part makes a cut of the methodological paths of this investigation, assuming the exploratory documentary research to consolidate the data analysis. The third part deals with a theoretical look at the repercussions that have been treated in academia based on the new ways of looking at the subject of Portuguese language, the use of technologies, and mental health at school. Next, the debates and discussions about some data collected in the document analysis point out that the language class is a potential space to expand mental health skills and knowledge. Finally, the final considerations resume some ideas and highlight that mental health is a useful subject for the school and, in particular, for the subject of Portuguese language.

Next, the methodological considerations are presented.

<sup>1</sup> Yellow September is a national movement to encourage reflection and behavior aimed at suicide prevention (Oliveira et al., 2020).

## Method

This study presents theoretical reflections on the work in the subject of Portuguese in Brazilian schools and investigates a didactic-methodological alternative capable of conceiving the teaching of Portuguese in contact with the conceptions of mental health. For this, based on Gil (2002), the exploratory documentary research is used, in order to identify and discuss about a pedagogical practice carried out in the discipline of Language, in the sequence, it runs over some theoretical and practical discussions with a view to contribute to the discussions through the teaching of Portuguese Language (Neves, 1990, 2002; Semeghini-Siqueira, 1998; Bezerra, 2004; Wamser, Rezende, 2013, 2014; Wamser, 2013; Rocha, 2015; Ildebrand, Fronza e Luiz, 2020). The results were analyzed according to the guidelines brought by Bardin (2011) under the lens of content analysis. The following shows information about the project that involved mental health knowledge and the data that will be considered in this study.

## Talking about the Writing, Body and Mind Project

The project entitled writing, body and mind was mediated and developed in the discipline of Portuguese language, besides these, it explored languages considered relevant in the classes through a script of tasks (Table 1) that included reading, writing, speaking and contact with communication technologies in education. To analyze the repercussions of this project and share potentialities that can strengthen the Portuguese language classes in line with conceptions that deal with mental health themes, we describe and discuss a pedagogical experience carried out in a public school for 1st year Polytechnic High School students of a school located in the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre.

The data that will be presented are part of a pedagogical collection of a Portuguese Language teacher who developed the project during the year 2018. It is worth saying that in this period in which the project was developed, per week, the teacher taught four periods of the Portuguese Language subject. The first-year students were aged between 15 and 16 years old. It is worth pointing out that the focus of this article is not on the personalities involved in the practice, but looks at the data from the teacher's collection, especially the didactic elements: planning, evaluation records, photographs about the learning process, notes and textual productions made during the pedagogical practice.

The first motivation, according to the pedagogical records for the construction of the writing, body and mind project arose from a conversation with teachers about students' self-mutilation behavior at school. In the record, the teacher mentioned that students also commented on working conceptions of mental health during classes. In the teacher's notes, some students gave personal accounts about experiences of sadness, disaffection, and intrusive thoughts. In Brazil (Brasil, 2018), according to the Base Nacional Comum Curricular - BNCC, a document that guides the prescribed work in school, students need to develop the competence to "know themselves, appreciate themselves and take care of their physical and emotional health, understanding themselves in human diversity and recognizing their emotions and those of others, with self-criticism and ability to deal with them" (Brasil, 2018, p. 9). To this end, these guidelines - based on the BNCC - are able to support and introduce the perspectives of language teaching and mental health in school.

The development of the project occurred in the month of September, an opportune moment to address the yellow September movement that deals with suicide prevention (Oliveira *et al.*, 2018). The project, organized through a script of tasks, had the collaboration of the disciplines of Art, Literature, English Language and Physical Education, integral components of the Language area, as highlighted by the BNCC (Brasil, 2018). Therefore, the project had characteristics of interdisciplinary actions, since it mobilized different components, besides the discipline of Portuguese Language, to strengthen the project.

The project was developed during two months, starting in September 2018. In the following example, in Table 1, one can follow the script of pedagogical actions developed in Portuguese Language classes. After the description of the script of tasks, theoretical reflections about the work

in the Portuguese Language discipline, the use of technology and health issues at school are shown.

**Table 1.** Roadmap of activities

Stage	Theme	Task	Period
1	<i>Researching behaviors that affect mental health</i>	Multimodal reading in the computer lab. Access to digital languages (blogs, videos, texts, podcasts, series etc.) and multimodal reading and analysis. Recording of data and readings. Debate and conversation about the learning effected.	September 3rd to 6th  2 periods
2	<i>Thinking collectively about actions that promote reflections on the theme</i>	Reading and accessing the Canva Platform. Repercussing the records in multimodal productions with the use of Canva. In collaboration, teacher and students planned textual productions. In the planning, they selected working with multimodal genres in Canva and posters, as they would be potential tools to mobilize for mental health prevention.	September 10th to 13th  2 Periods
3	<i>Text production</i>	Production of texts in Canva from the records collected in the two interior stages and on posters during the Portuguese language class.	September 17th to 19th  4 Periods
4a	<i>Interdisciplinarity in languages</i>	Literature: The Literature teacher organized reading moments. The text <i>September yellow: talking is the best solution</i> was read by the students.	NMI <sup>2</sup>
4b		Art: The students, under the teacher's guidance, prepared a book of life, with records of important and special moments.	NMI
4c		Physical Education: Moments of meditation and warm-up were offered in physical education classes. In addition, the teacher shared discussions about the impact of soccer on mental health aspects.	NMI
4d		English Language: Re-reading of the productions made on Canva in the Portuguese to English class.	NMI
5	<i>Interventions at school</i>	Analysis, debate and discussions about the textual productions made. Sharing of the productions on the school's social networks. Recording of a critical comment about the script of tasks and learning.	September 24th to 27th  2 Periods
6	Lecture with a psychologist	Lecture with a psychologist in the school.	NMI

**Source:** Prepared by the author based on the planning and teacher's notes (2018).

## Mother tongue teaching: searching for new paths beyond grammar

For years, the teaching of Portuguese language had approaches focused mainly on the teaching of normative grammar (Neves, 1990, 2002; Semeghini-Siqueira, 1998; Bezerra, 2004;

<sup>2</sup> No Major Information - There was only this information as per the Professor's record.

Wamser, Rezende, 2013, 2014; Wamser, 2013; Rocha, 2015). Such meaning is perceived since the literacy process, where metalinguistic teaching is exposed to the student, already emphasizing a normative approach regarding language teaching in the early years of elementary school.

Reflection on language in the teaching process is important, since it can encompass identifying and problematizing linguistic structures of use and formalistic conceptions. The teaching of grammar is often based on a similarity to the Roman objectives, that of dictating rules that “was based on the memorization and use of the norm, as well as on the authoritarian relationship between the doctrine and its users” (Wamser, 2013, p. 18). Therefore, meanings that diverged from the presented norm were considered wrong, showing little flexibility to analyze and study the language, focusing, therefore, on the study of grammar and excluding considerations and reflections of the constructs and forms of manifestation of the language used by speakers (Neves, 1990; Wamser, 2013; Rocha, 2015). It is also observed that grammar teaching follows a conservative model, “a model of language identified with the formal speech of the aristocracy and, in writing, a look back to the distant past” (Faraco, 2000, p. 20), a model that is not far from the approaches presented in the classroom in the Portuguese language discipline (Neves, 1990; Rocha, 2015).

In this sense, it is important to understand how and why language and grammar are taught in high school and how other approaches can contribute to a practice different from those prescribed and historically marked. First of all, according to the National Curricular Parameters - PCNs (Brasil, 1998), presenting only one doctrine is not feasible to achieve the goals proposed in the document, since the purpose of the discipline is to enable students to be able “to use writing effectively, to be able to take the word - also in writing - to produce adequate texts, it is necessary to organize the educational work so that they experience and learn it at school” (Brasil, 1998, p. 48).

Some interpretations can be made from these propositions that the PCNs establish as a goal for the teaching perspectives. To produce texts there is a range of skills that the student needs to master, in order to be able to articulate ideas and skills in the act of writing. However, the work that has been developed in some schools has not been presenting factors that show the linguistic maturation of students, students “learn to decode letters into sounds, in the case of reading, and to encode sounds into letters in the case of writing, without producing meaning in these activities. Thus, they cannot handle the reading and production of socially legitimated texts” (Goulart, 2000, p. 168).

Theoretical considerations make it possible to identify a pattern in the actions adopted in grammar teaching; the child begins its school journey segmenting and decoding letters and sounds, patterns that are adopted later in the final years of elementary school, but, in certain cases, with the conceptualization of normative nomenclatures. Moreover, it is worth noting that with the intention of systematizing the structures of the mother tongue, different researches on grammar emerged. Based on functionalism, this new meaning of grammar emphasizes “the speaker’s use of grammatical arrangements, while on the other hand we have the studies of those who conceived language as a system, intending only to describe it” (Wamser, 2013, p. 18).

It is worth bringing up that pointing out that “the central problem of teaching Portuguese is not whether or not to teach the standard norm; whether or not to teach grammar. It is how to get rid of normativism and grammaticality [...]” (Faraco, 2000, p. 21), so that we, as teachers or learning mediators, may offer the student situations connected to the social practices of language, be they oral or written, presenting language as a manifestation of thought in its various facets, not only the dualism of right or wrong. Thus, it is understood that already in literacy it is relevant to present to the learner that language can be guided by formalistic aspects and that these skills for the use of speech and writing will develop throughout his academic career, but it is essential to talk about and analyze the linguistic facts and uses that students express, because only then, later, he will be able to talk about language in its different propositions (Soares, 2002). Therefore, as this ability matures, it is up to them to identify the use of these aspects in different situations that introduces the different languages, especially in the acts of reading and writing (Soares, 2002; Antunes, 2007; Ildebrand, 2020). Still from this point of view, as Perini points out:

No one, to my knowledge, has ever succeeded in making a student who is weak in reading or writing improve his performance appreciably by grammar instruction alone. On



the contrary, all experience seems to show that among the prerequisites for studying grammar are, first, fluent reading ability and then a reasonable command of the standard language [...]. Thus, to study grammar profitably, one must be able to read well - which excludes the possibility of using grammar as one of the paths to reading (2006, p. 27 e 28).

Even when teaching grammar, it is necessary that the learner has a skill that comes before any normative doctrine: reading. This has been discussed by several authors (Heath, 1983; Street, 1984; Soares, 2002; Passamai et al., 2012; Caiado, Moraes, 2013; Oliveira, Monteiro, Martins, 2014; Araújo, 2015; Rojo, 2012). To introduce and explore grammar to learners is to show that language also follows patterns and variations, and that the greater the mastery of reading, the greater their understanding of linguistic phenomena. It is also pondered that it is the teacher who is responsible for presenting these different approaches, not overestimating or disdaining any doctrine, but providing skills and competencies to reflect on these aspects and use them in situations that best suit them.

## The use of technology in the Portuguese language classroom

It is remarkable the high growth of digital technologies of information and communication (TIC) within the school contexts, more specifically, in Portuguese language classes in different educational spaces. In this sense, it is noted that the use of technologies “modify, create and recreate forms of social interaction, texts, readings, learning and ways of human beings interacting in real and cyber space favoring the relationships of interactivity, mobility, exchange, dialogue, reading and hypertextual writing” (Caiado, Moraes, 2013, p. 2).

Information and communication technologies in education occupy different spaces in students’ daily lives. For young people, digital natives, it is noted that the use of technological resources is no longer a novelty, and can be compared as a resource that also mediates the most distinct interactions (Araújo, 2015; Coscarelli, 2017; Ildebrand, 2020). It is interesting to note that the most diverse interactions do not, in short, belong only to digital natives, since digital immigrants already make great use of the most diverse networks of digital interactions.

In these aspects, it is considered opportune to integrate, when pertinent, the technologies at school. In Portuguese language classes, the practices that are supported using technologies as a methodological strategy, from a simple reading to the creation of a text, can and do promote knowledge and diverse learning possibilities, as well as reflect a variation in teaching strategies. Thus, it is worth noting that:

In the case of teaching LP, there are numerous possibilities for using TIC in the classroom, from the simplest use in the form of Web research, to the creation by the students themselves of multimodal hypertexts that, due to the potential of digital technologies, can bring together various semiotics, such as image, sound and verbal text; and reaching the use of educational games in the form of software, of digital infographics, for example. Finally, I emphasize that I am not making an excessive apology for the use of technologies. In my opinion, these will not and should not supplant the use of other resources such as printed materials, for example, but should coexist in a balanced way with pedagogical practices/resources that have long existed in the classroom (Araújo, 2015, p. 155).

Therefore, the use of digital technologies in the perspectives of Portuguese language teaching can favor new writing practices (Soares, 2002, Rojo, 2012; Araújo, 2015; Coscarelli, 2017; Ildebrand, 2020). It is necessary, in this sense, that the teacher has knowledge and mastery of these tools, since they are the professionals who guide and encourage access to these resources in order

to re-signify their handling, as well as the methodology to be adopted in the mother tongue classes (Oliveira, Monteiro, Martins, 2014; Araújo, 2015). However, “for the application of technological resources in the classroom it is necessary that both the teacher and the school institution realize the potential of new technologies as a support tool for education” (Oliveira, Monteiro, Martins, 2014, p. 635).

Given that the teacher must appropriate and know such digital resources, as well as introduce them in the classroom. Reconfiguring the language classroom is a necessary path nowadays, because it can involve students and teacher in a collaborative, creative, and reflective way (Ildebrand, Fronza, Luiz, 2020). This does not mean that grammar, printed materials, or already prescribed activities should no longer be adopted in teaching practice, but it drives a contemporary sophistication and alignment in teaching perspectives (Araújo, 2015; Ildebrand, Fronza, Luiz, 2020). It is also pointed out that the support of digital technologies promote and vary the learning processes, becoming allies of language teachers, providing opportunities for teaching and learning “by word, by gesture, by emotion, by affectivity, by texts read and written, by television, but now also by the computer, by information in real time, by the layered screen, in windows that go deeper into our views” (Gouvêa, 1999, p. 139).

At present, then, there is a need for digital skills capable of mobilizing the most different languages (Soares, 2002, Rojo, 2012; Araújo, 2015; Coscarelli, 2017; Ildebrand, 2020), that is, knowledge that students need to appropriate through approaches that raise different writing and reading practices from those traditionally explained in educational institutions. It is noted that just as technologies are restructured, transform rapidly, evolve, being, in teacher training, fundamental for a specific and ordered training from contemporary needs (Brasil, 2018). The teacher becomes responsible for guiding this process and handling, when integrating technologies in their teaching context.

The contemporary world is demanding that the school proposes pedagogical dynamics that are not limited to the transmission or availability of information, inserting TICs in these dynamics, in order to restructure the closed curricular organization and the content-based perspectives that have characterized it. The school needs to be an environment in which the wide range of information that students have access to is discussed, analyzed and generates other knowledge, in which technologies are inserted as structural elements of new practices, practices that include an open and flexible curricular organization (Bonilla, 2009, 35).

The teacher needs to understand and identify the potential that technologies provide. This understanding should establish the new ways of teaching and learning, as well as solidify the practices adopted at school and modify the ways to structure the methodological-didactic paths in the Portuguese language classes (Gouvêa, 1999; Bonilla, 2009; Ildebrand, Fronza, Luiz, 2020).

## **Mental health, languages and Portuguese language**

Considering the theoretical conceptions presented above, we see that the language class is a potential space to bring students closer to languages capable of mobilizing mental health knowledge and wisdom. Mental health, when addressed at school, promotes encounters between self-knowledge and control of emotions. When one thinks about mental health, one immediately expects that this theme is considered in consulting rooms where psychologists and psychiatrists work.

The paths in the contexts of mental health care for children and adolescents were established from different movements regarding political parameters (Couto, 2001). Such movements were important for policies in this area to be consolidated in contemporary times. However, new parameters, aligned to the educational perspectives, have been established in official documents that guide the school curriculum in Brazil. We see, in this case, the Common National Curricular

Base that considers as one of its 10 general competencies conceptions that draw on mental health, with a view to forming an individual who values and appreciates life (Brasil, 2018). Given these aspects, it is now also the school's task to teach health. The reflections on this theme have been problematized for decades and are a challenge to be faced in the teacher's pedagogical practice (Couto, 2001; Oliveira et al., 2020).

Teaching health has been a challenge for education when it comes to the possibility of ensuring effective and transformative learning of attitudes and lifestyle habits. Experience shows that transmitting information about the functioning of the body and the characteristics of diseases, as well as a list of hygiene habits, is not enough for students to develop healthy living attitudes. It is necessary to educate for health taking into account all the aspects involved in the formation of habits and attitudes that happen in everyday life at school. For this reason, Health education will be treated as a transversal theme, permeating all the areas that make up the school curriculum (Brasil, 1998, p. 245).

To problematize this meaning and understand that the concept of health can enter the school is feasible for teachers to consolidate their practice aligned to meaningful learning concepts. More specifically, mental health can be integrated to different subjects promoting interdisciplinary proposals. Therefore, teaching institutions need “[...] to explicitly assume the responsibility for health education, since the formation of attitudes will be strongly associated with values that the teacher and the entire school community will inevitably transmit to students during their daily life” (Brasil, 1998, p. 260). Studies, according to Vasconcelos and Pasche (2006), show that the theme health, when inserted in school, is promoted through specific projects, partnerships with education and health departments or in science classes, being treated in a disconnected way with the reality of the students.

From this point of view, according to the theoretical notes treated in the context of Portuguese language teaching, it is suggested that bringing students closer to this knowledge - mental health - through the Portuguese language class is an alternative to reconfigure the traditional structures rooted in language classes at school. In Portuguese language classes, where students engage with reading and writing, providing moments of self-reflection, readings, and interpretations can be paths to establish different knowledge and health care.

This knowledge that is found through the language skills and competencies is introjected in the perspectives of BNCC (Brasil, 2018) and Literacy, a theoretical framework that supports the social function of reading, writing and speaking, as well as promotes language practices at school. Based on the framework of Literacy, this is responsible for presenting how human beings relate to social practices involving written or oral language (Heath, 1983; Street, 1984). In the area of health, we see studies linked to this knowledge, however they adopt functional health literacy (FHL) which is “[...] the degree to which individuals have the ability to obtain, process, and understand basic information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions” (Passamai et al., 2012, p. 301). Through Literacy, from an informative text, an experience report or shared conversations, it is possible to exchange knowledge on different themes, showing the social function of language in teaching, sharing, etc. The different readings in the classroom, with different methods can consolidate a Literacy that is pertinent and meaningful to the student's reality.

The perspectives presented here demarcate the possibility of working on mental health in Portuguese language classes based on theoretical and practical reflections. Thus, it is identified that the subject of Portuguese is not only about studying grammar, textual production or literary readings. When planning with cross-cutting themes, we can expand the repertoire and the practices adopted in Portuguese language teaching.

The debates and discussions of the results collected in the document analysis will be shown below. Based on the content analysis (Bardin, 2011) and the themes presented in Table 1, we consider some data and arguments capable of consolidating the Portuguese language discipline as a potential space to accommodate basic mental health demands and expand students' language skills.



## Discussions about the task script that mobilized the languages in the school

The Writing, Body and Mind project was mediated in the students of the 1st year of Polytechnic High School was situated capable of promoting knowledge different from the traditional knowledge adopted in language classes (Goulart, 2000; Faraco, 2000; Soares, 2002; Antunes, 2007; Rojo, 2012), evoking a new look towards mother tongue classes. Relying on digital technologies such as the Canva platform, social networks and hypertext readings, it provoked encounters between reading and writing practices in a perspective that integrates Literacy and the skills prescribed by the BNCC (Heath, 1983; Street, 1984; Passamai *et al.*, 2012; Caiado, Moraes, 2013; Oliveira, Monteiro, Martins, 2014; Araújo, 2015; Brasil, 2018).

In the first stage - researching behaviors that affect mental health - it is pertinent that the teacher organize readings to promote knowledge and, consequently, provide a favorable environment for debate and dialogue about the readings. After the readings, in the second step - thinking collectively about actions that promote reflection on the theme - students can explore the Canva platform, a tool that enables engagement and textual production. Through the teacher's collection, the students also gave their opinions about the textual production, showing that the construction process was collaborative. According to Ildebrand (2020), the Canva platform offers a simplified design for students and teachers with a feature that allows them to create infographics with the facility to share them on different social networks. The platform enhances creativity in the construction of different textual genres, both in the creation of the layout and in the production of writing and reading.

For the elaboration of the text, the students were challenged to produce a text with a welcoming language that would relate to yellow September. Since text is a fundamental support to address different issues that manifest themselves in the contemporary world, in the computer lab at school, the students read about the theme and analyzed videos, contemplating a reading mediated by the use of digital technologies.

One of the readings found that was mobilized through the Literature class is about Figure 1. In the link of Figure 1, a pertinent and enlightening reading was possible with the support of TIC. In this sense, the reviews on Literacy support and consolidate the shared knowledge, since through reading and conversation, knowledge about health and self-knowledge were considered, also with the support of technologies (Heath, 1983; Street, 1984; Soares, 2002; Rojo, 2012; Passamai *et al.*, 2012; Ildebrand, 2020). In these readings (in literature and Portuguese language classes) students were able to interpret about the importance of seeking help and even sharing with someone close to them about their afflictions, always seeking self-care and medical accompaniment when pertinent. Moreover, they accessed hyperlinks and hypertexts that were already on the link about other texts from the theme, leading to a wider and more instigating reading from the proposed theme.

**Figure 1.** Readings and interpretations with the support of digital technologies



Source: <http://www.cbnb.org.br/setembro-amarelo-falar-e-a-melhor-solucao> (2018).

In addition to readings, the skills in producing texts and manipulating writing as pointed out by the BNCC (Brasil, 2018) were raised in the subject of Portuguese language. Based on textual production and its discussion, according to steps 3 and 5 of Table 1, the digital writing exercise adopted, changed the reading scenario and practices around language in the mother tongue classes, not only teaching conceptions linked to grammar, but legitimizing other ways of reading and writing in school. In the following Figures, we highlight some multimodal productions of students produced

on the Canva platform and also the productions made through the poster genre.

**Figure 2.** Textual production made on the Canva platform by a student



Source: Based on the study's pedagogical collection (2018).

**Figure 3.** Textual production made on the Canva platform by a student



Source: Based on the study's pedagogical collection (2018).

**Figure 4.** Making posters in the classroom



Source: Based on the study's pedagogical collection (2018).

**Figure 6.** Posters produced in class on the wall in the schoolyard



**Source:** Based on the study's pedagogical collection (2018).

Based on the textual productions, it is clear that the students articulated their ideas and expressed creativity in the proposed activities. It is believed that the guidance and mediation was remarkable to conduct the quality of the planned productions and reconfigure the didactic and pedagogical actions in the Portuguese language class. The framework of Literacy talks to the proposal, showing that in this context the languages assumed the social function that is established in the language class and went beyond, in a positive sense, with this function, since they welcomed mental health knowledge. At the end of the project, the students were asked by the teacher to write their considerations about the project and the theme in an argumentative and critical way, using the first person singular.

During the data analysis, it was possible to observe the mental health theme in Portuguese classes. The task script was an effective tool, providing significant readings and necessary knowledge about self-knowledge and dealing with health-related aspects, more specifically, mental health. The technologies, which supported the pedagogical practices of this proposal, were significant in terms of the didactics adopted in the classes (Oliveira, Monteiro, Martins, 2014; Araújo, 2015). Based on the notes and productions, it was possible to see the students' relationship and involvement with the reading and writing processes. In addition, the theoretical reviews and the practice posted here consolidate the importance of working the conceptions around the theme in mental health caucused in skills prescribed by the BNCC (Brasil, 2018).

Regarding the writing of the project considerations, the students evaluated the learning and activities from the critical comment about the script of the activities. Through the critical comment, besides the theoretical assumptions, we can understand another affirmative issue to work with health education in school according to the narrative of the young people. Let's see in the following comments:

It is important to address this issue in schools, because many people think of such an act and many times they don't tell us about it and we end up not helping her, and maybe she is in dire need of some form of help (*Comment from a student - 1st year of Polytechnic High School*).

Addressing this issue in schools is very important to make people aware of suicide, which is present in young people's lives. It is important to study this subject, because most people have already thought of such an act (*Comment from a student - 1st year of Polytechnic High School*).

In my opinion, this subject should be talked about more in schools, because many people have no one to share their anguish with or even talk to. This subject was really cool to talk about, I, for example, have already had a case in my family and it was very tense, so I put myself in the other person's place (*Comment from a student - 1st year of Polytechnic High School*).

It is evident in the speeches of the young people how this theme involves their experiences on the theme. It is possible to identify that some have already had experiences of anguish or psychological suffering. The criticisms show that besides approaching this subject at school, the students have a predisposition to help and not judge situations like this. Nevertheless, other comments also raised other reflections.

We have to be very careful with this subject, because when approached incorrectly it can cause a rebound effect. Everyone has problems, but respecting and listening to those who really need help is a way to show love for others (*Comment from a student - 1st year of Polytechnic High School*).

Suicide prevention should not be dedicated only in September, it should be dedicated every day, whether the person is well or not (*Comment from a student - 1st year of Polytechnic High School*).

The project's initiative is beautiful and maybe it has helped someone, but there is still a long way to go to make people aware that it's not a cool thing to do (*Comment from a student - 1st year of Polytechnic High School*).

The narratives demarcate a stance with regard to the students' actions. Their interpretations of the theme show a behavior of empathy towards the suffering of others. It is also seen that the learning integrates the BNCC perspectives and the PCNs (Brasil, 1998, 2018), forming citizens capable of learning through reading and writing to manage their emotions, and put into practice, from their reality, the different shared and learned knowledge. In the final considerations, we highlight the final records of this study and its contributions to research and the discipline of Portuguese language.

## Conclusions

The application of the Writing, Body and Mind project marked a different perspective regarding the approaches adopted in Portuguese classes. It can be considered, in part, since many other discussions can be held from the theme, that the health issue needs to be guided in the school curriculum, aligning with cross-cutting contexts, and its presence in the classroom is pertinent. Therefore, this study presented theoretical and practical reflections about a project in the Portuguese language discipline that strengthened the minimization of traditional practices and expanded the students' involvement with reading, writing, speaking, technologies and knowledge about mental health.

Based on the exploratory documentary research, a script of tasks was found capable of expanding the skills and competencies addressed in school brought by the BNCC. Moreover, in an interdisciplinary dimension, the project worked in the Portuguese language subject was related to other components such as literature, English language, art and physical education. From the results and the theoretical and practical reflections, we highlight that digital technologies were promising in the reading and writing practices during the project, since they are inserted in the daily life of youth. According to the teacher's record, the students had an easy time with the productions, consolidating a fact already evidenced in the research: the ease in relating to and handling the different technological tools.

The learners' narratives can be clues for the teacher to think about, capture information, and plan task scripts based on the doubts expressed. Promoting encounters about the doubts with directed readings resignifies the students' social interactional practices towards this competence. Even so, it was not possible to describe how the meeting with the health professional was, which would be interesting, providing an opportunity for further reflection and guidance on the theme and the relations between education and psychology.

Health teaching, educational technologies, and teaching practice are perspectives that need to be in line with contemporary educational needs. It is necessary a training that fosters



this alignment to bring such knowledge to the school. Once these behaviors and knowledge are established, new meanings and attitudes shape and re-signify the learning process in Portuguese language classes.

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