

# TEACHING PORTUGUESE TO CHINESE STUDENTS: COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN REMOTE AND IN PERSON TEACHING IN A LANGUAGE IMMERSION CONTEXT

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## Abstract

The Bachelor of Social Sciences in Sino-Lusophone Trade Relations aims to provide students with knowledge in the areas of Law, Management, Economics and Trade between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. The course is also expected to promote Portuguese language skills and an understanding and respect for their culture. In order to successfully achieve these goals, the students' linguistic and cultural immersion was considered a benefit to their training. Therefore, a protocol was established between the Macao Polytechnic University and the Polytechnic of Leiria, so the second year of the course could take place in Leiria, Portugal. However, there was a particularly challenging period for all members of the educational community, since, taking into account the contingency measures arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the teaching and non-teaching activities took place in a distance format, namely in the academic years of 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. The research analyses the activities developed in the different teaching modalities and the results obtained by the students, in a comparative logic. The study has shown that remote teaching practices has made the implementation of some pedagogical actions more complex or, in some cases, impossible. Nevertheless, efforts were made to find alternatives that would provide the students with rich training moments that would contribute to the increase of their knowledge in the areas of speciality and proficiency in the Portuguese language.

Keywords: foreign language; language immersion; remote teaching; in person teaching.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Bachelor of Social Sciences in Sino-Lusophone Trade Relations (SSSLTR) arose from the need for the training and qualification of professionals who articulate the knowledge of the Portuguese language with four specialty areas (Trade, Law, Economics and Management). This course started in the academic year 2015/2016, and is a course of the School of Public Administration of the Macau Polytechnic Institute, currently named Macau Polytechnic University, with the contribution to the training of students from the School of Languages and Translation of the same Institute/University and the School of Education and Social Sciences of the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria. The students begin their studies in Macau - China (1st year), continue their studies in Leiria - Portugal (2nd year) and complete them when they return to Macau (3rd and 4th years).

Besides the course under analysis, the Polytechnic of Leiria, and in particular the School of Education and Social Sciences, already has more than a decade of experience and a varied training offer in the teaching of Portuguese as a foreign language to students from China, namely in the degrees in Applied Portuguese Language; Translation and Interpretation Portuguese/Chinese - Chinese/Portuguese; Chinese Portuguese - English Studies and Portuguese Language and Culture.

This know-how has allowed us to adequately welcome the 2nd year students of the Social Sciences in Sino-Lusophone Trade Relations course, providing them with a rich and beneficial teaching-learning environment in terms of language, speciality, cultural and interpersonal areas.

Despite the relevance given to the year of immersion that Portugal went through, the world was faced with a new reality arising from a pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, responsible for the Covid-19 disease. This virus, first identified in January 2020 in the Chinese city of Wuhan, caused the majority of the population to be isolated for long periods of time, which generated substantial changes to life within society. Education was one of the many areas that had to find more flexible mechanisms in order to mitigate the harmful consequences of physical isolation, ensuring the academic success of children and young people.

In Portugal, the isolation set forth on 13 March 2020, resulting from the indications established by the World Health Organization, and the remote working regime established by article 6 of Decree Law No. 2-A/2020 of 20 March, 2020 [1], made teachers start exercising their professional activity from home.

These alterations implied that the pedagogical practices which traditionally occurred in school spaces began taking place online through the use of technology, a format that was still a very underdeveloped reality in the country [2]. What became known as Emergency Remote Teaching was then implemented, which in some cases, represented a direct transposition from in-person teaching to a digital environment, but in other cases, it resulted in a demand for training by teachers, in order to obtain new methodologies, strategies, and resources that could be better suited to this new way of teaching and learning [2].

Emergency Remote Teaching is generically defined as a set of teaching methodologies which, in a crisis situation, seek to reproduce the in-person teaching by resorting to technology. This format gained strong visibility due to the recent pandemic, yet it has been readily referred to as Distance Teaching by the scientific community within the educational field. While the first one aims to offer a temporary alternative to in-person teaching in a quick, creative manner, adapted to the contexts' unstable circumstances, the second implies a solid, organized system, with specific pedagogical models and design and with dedicated and specialised teams [3].

Although both teaching modalities (Emergency Remote Teaching and Distance Learning) imply that the teachers have knowledge and skills, it is easy to understand that, in the case of Emergency Remote Teaching, these professionals, many without any training in this type of teaching, were required to respond in record time with strong implications in their daily teaching activity [4].

In the case of the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, its extensive experience in b-learning and e-learning courses and the fact that it has a Distance Learning Unit [5, 6] with qualified professionals who promote training and provide support in the use of innovative teaching-learning strategies, contributed to the necessary adjustments of the pedagogical practices. These resulted in rapid adjustments in the planning of the training sessions, namely regarding the teaching methodologies and the resources adopted, which were reflected in new forms of action and interaction with the students.

In light of the above, we sought to analyse the changes arising from Remote Teaching in the Social Sciences in Sino-Lusophone Trade Relations course which, as previously mentioned, has the particularity of investing in an immersion period in Portugal, which stopped occurring for approximately two years.

The article is organised into four parts, in which the first part corresponds to this introduction and the last part to the main conclusions obtained from the study. Throughout the text, the methodology adopted and the main results obtained are also presented, together with the respective discussion, based on referenced bibliographical sources.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The Social Sciences in Sino-Lusophone Trade Relations course takes place in Macau and in Portugal, where the Chinese students are welcomed in the School of Education and Social Sciences (Leiria – Portugal) in the 3rd and 4th semesters of their degree. This has taken place ever since the course was created, with the exception of approximately two years, resulting from the forced implementation of remote teaching.

In view of the rapid and significant changes implemented in the mentioned period, it was considered pertinent to develop research that sought to analyse, in a comparative manner, the in-person teaching, which, in the course in question, usually takes place in immersion in the Portuguese context, and the remote teaching which, despite continuing to rely on Portuguese teachers, was carried out at a distance, through digital platforms. It is therefore a case study, understood as being "an empirical research that studies a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context." [7, p. 17], attempting to answer "how" or "why" questions that follows a comparative approach. This aims to identify the similarities and differences between the two teaching methodologies, understanding them in greater depth and identifying the most effective teaching-learning practices [8].

The cooperation protocol between the Macao Polytechnic Institute (currently Macao Polytechnic University) and the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, signed by their respective presidents on 17 November 2015, states the following in the sixth clause [9, pp. 3-4]:

“Clause no. 6

- 1 The IPM and the IPL will constitute a Pedagogical-Scientific Commission for Class Monitoring, composed by:
  - a. Director of the School of Education and Social Sciences of Leiria (ESECS);

- b. Coordinator of the course at the IPM;
  - c. Esecs Teacher who is responsible for the monitoring of the class in Leiria.
- 2 The Commission shall meet, at least, once a year in Leiria and shall have the responsibility to:
- a. Ensure the normal functioning of the class;
  - b. Homologate the grades obtained by the students in the respective subjects;
  - c. Elaborate an annual report on the functioning of the class, which is to be submitted to the Presidents of the IPM and the IPL, as well as to the Director of the School of Public Administration (ESAP).”

In order to answer point 2, paragraph c), annual reports have been elaborated to systematize the way the 2nd year of the course takes place in Leiria, aiming to be an instrument of reflection and analysis about the practices in order to identify ways to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process and the consequent increase of the students' competencies.

In this 2nd year, the study plan includes four Curricular Units, two of the Portuguese language (Portuguese Language as an Applied Foreign Language I and II) and two of the English language (English III and IV). The first two units have a total of 450 hours, divided into two semesters, and the units in which English is taught are much shorter, with 45 hours each.

Due to the relevance of the Portuguese language units, which are considered essential for the course and the main reason why Chinese students live in Portugal for a year, it was decided that the focus of the research would be on the teaching-learning process of the language of *Camões*. It is important to highlight that, aside from the linguistic objectives (it was expected that students evolved from an elementary level-A, to a level of independent users-B). The Curricular Units of Portuguese as an Applied Foreign Language I and II also have the purpose of promoting basic knowledge in the areas of Trade, Law, Economics and Management.

The study used the document analysis of the reports drawn up so far, in a total of six, which included qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data was analysed using the content analysis technique, while the other data was analysed through simple descriptive statistical methods, which aim to summarise and describe the most prominent characteristics.

The content analysis was put into practice to enable the organization of information and, consequently, obtain a meaning [10, 11]. For this purpose, systematic procedures of classification, codification and interpretation of the reports were used, which allowed for the categorisation and identification of text fragments, susceptible to an inferential understanding [12].

The content analysis of the six annual reports was based on three main categories of analysis: Diagnostic Assessment; Obtained grades and Enrichment activities (out-of-class).

The descriptive statistics were adopted due to the fact that the sample was not representative of the population, allowing for the identification of trends. This technique allowed for the grouping of data and, consequently, the creation of graphs and tables that support the analysis of numerical variation [13].

### 3 RESULTS

The results obtained from the analysis of the reports that express the functioning of the 2nd year of the Social Sciences in Sino-Lusophone Trade Relations course are organised according to the categories of analysis stated in the previous point.

Considering that this is a comparative study, the information will be presented throughout the following pages, taking into consideration the differences and similarities found in two time periods, which correspond to the intervals in which different teaching methodologies were applied, generically considering: in-person teaching (academic years 2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019; 2019-2020) and remote teaching (academic years 2020-2021; 2021-2022).

However, it is important to highlight that emergency remote teaching began at the end of March 2020, which means that this modality was already in effect during the last two months of the 2019-2020 academic year, and continued during 2020-2021. In 2021-2022, the first semester continued to operate in this way, while in the second semester the hybrid format was adopted for the course in question, with about half of the class online and the remaining students of the class in the School of Education and Social Sciences, although with many social restrictions.

### 3.1 Diagnostic assessment

Given that the students of the Social Sciences in Sino-Lusophone Trade Relations course have different levels of language proficiency, a diagnostic evaluation has been carried out in the first few days of their stay in Portugal, in September, in order to adequately prepare the classes of Portuguese as an Applied Foreign Language. This assessment focuses on tasks which correspond to level A2 - Basic User [14] and has of four components: reading comprehension and structural competence; written production and interaction; listening comprehension and oral production and interaction.

The table below shows the final average of the grades obtained in the diagnostic tests, on a scale of 0 to 20, between the year 2016-2017 and the year 2019-2020.

*Table 1. Grades obtained by the students in the diagnostic assessment carried out in the beginning of the academic year.*

Student	Academic years					
	In-person teaching				Remote teaching	
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
A	7,4	4,6	6,7	5,3	-	-
B	5,2	8	4,7	8,0	-	-
C	11,3	5,4	9,2	7,9	-	-
D	10,2	4,8	5,2	7,9	-	-
E	8,5	8,9	7,9	6,8	-	-
F	6,6	10,4	8,7	4,4	-	-
G	9,4	12,1	8,9	11,2	-	-
H	6,15	4,4	15,9	12,3	-	-
I	11,3	5,7	9,2	6,0	-	-
J	8,05	3,8	10,3	8,6	-	-
K	6,3	9	5,6	11,0	-	-
L	7,9	5,1	9	6,0	-	-
M	15,6	8,7	4,3	9,8	-	-
N	5,4	12	2,6	9,4	-	-
O	17,1	8,3	11,3	10,3	-	-
P	7,4	2,9	16,4	6,2	-	-
Q	*	4,6	10,7	5,3	-	-
R	10,3	9	9,4	9,6	-	-
S	11,1	6,7	9,5	-	-	-
T	10	7,8	7,9	-	-	-
U	10,7	8,7	9,6	-	-	-
V	11,3	5,9	10,5	-	-	-
W	15	11,4	5	-	-	-
X	-	9,4	10	-	-	-
Y	-	9,1	6,2	-	-	-
Z	-	6,9	-	-	-	-

\* The student did not take the test as they were not in Portugal at the time of its administration.

The overall average of the tests taken by the class at the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic year was 9.6 and in the following year, 7.4. Through a more thorough analysis of the results of the diagnostic assessment expressed in the reports, it was also possible to verify that the students' language proficiency was very discrepant, and this discrepancy was notorious in all the four assessed components.

In the following academic years, the class average continued to be negative, in other words, below 10 marks. In 2018-2019, there was an average of 8.6 marks, with marks ranging from 2.6 to a maximum of 16.4 marks.

In the last year of in-person teaching, before the pandemic (2019), the average of the tests taken by the class was 8.1 marks, a result slightly lower than the one obtained in the previous academic year, which continued to highlight a lack of confidence and full command of the Portuguese language at its most elementary level (level A). The final marks are between 4.4 and 12.3 which demonstrate that the language proficiency among students is not homogeneous, although the differential between the student with the highest mark and the one with the lowest mark is not as significant as the one in the previous year.

These results were sent to the teachers of the curricular units of Portuguese as an Applied Foreign Language I and II, in order to determine the starting point from which each teacher could organise their educational plan, in order to establish a more effective and efficient learning process, for the heterogeneity of the class.

In the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, due to the fact that the students were in China, the diagnostic test, which had been prepared to be carried out in person, was not applied. For this reason, it is not possible to establish a comparison between the level of language proficiency with which the students arrived in Portugal in the period related to in-person teaching and later, during the remote teaching phase.

This reality increases the difficulty for teachers to previously know the group they will be working with. In remote teaching, this fact is added to the reduction of contact with the students, which is limited to teaching moments, and not spontaneous contact (in the hallway, in the bar, etc.), since these moments only take place through a screen, at a well-defined date and time.

### 3.2 Grades obtained

The annual course reports allowed us to organize the grades obtained by the students in the Curricular Units of Portuguese as an Applied Foreign Language I (1st semester) and Portuguese as an Applied Foreign Language II (2nd semester), throughout various editions of the course.

Table 2. Grades obtained by the students in the Curricular Unit of Portuguese as an Applied Foreign Language I.

Student	Academic years					
	In-person teaching				Remote teaching	
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
A	13	11	15	15	14	11
B	8	14	3	16	13	8
C	17	12	12	16	15	6
D	9	12	11	11	17	10
E	13	13	11	11	15	15
F	9	16	12	14	8	15
G	10	16	13	13	10	15
H	10	12	16	14	9	12
I	17	4	8	11	15	16
J	11	12	13	15	16	14
K	13	15	8	16	15	17
L	11	12	15	14	0	17
M	19	15	8	13	-	15
N	13	18	6	12	-	15
O	19	16	0	11	-	13
P	10	10	17	16	-	15
Q	11	11	17	16	-	13
R	16	17	16	15	-	-
S	16	10	16	-	-	-
T	12	14	15	-	-	-
U	16	13	15	-	-	-
V	15	12	16	-	-	-
W	18	18	7	-	-	-
X	-	15	16	-	-	-
Y	-	13	12	-	-	-
Z	-	13	-	-	-	-

When observing the final assessment results, it can be concluded that, in general, the approval rates always presented very positive grades, with a high percentage of success. However, it is important, not to forget that some students have failed the curricular unit of Portuguese as an Applied Foreign Language I, both in the continuous assessment process and in the two examination periods (regular examination period and resit examination period). It was also noted that other students obtained a mark of 0 (zero) for not meeting the minimum criteria to be assessed (e.g. they exceeded the maximum number of absences allowed by the school's regulations). This mark (zero) was also given in the case of remote teaching, because the online tests were cancelled due to fraud.

Not considering the cases where students were not assessed due to the above-mentioned reasons, the average mark for each academic year was calculated. In in-person teaching the marks obtained were: 2016-2017 (13.3 marks); 2017-2018 (13.2 marks); 2018-2019 (12.4 marks) and 2019-2020 (13.8 marks). In the two years of remote teaching, the average marks were: 2020-2021 (13.36 marks) and 2021-2022 (13.35 marks).

With the exception of the year 2018-2019, the average mark obtained in the Curricular Unit of Portuguese in the 1st semester by students of Social Sciences in Sino-Lusophone Trade Relations course is between 13 and 14 marks. The obtained grades do not allow for statistically significant differences to be found between the period corresponding to in-person teaching and the years of remote teaching. Thus, it is understood, as Anabela Durão and Albertina Raposo stated, that the sudden change from one teaching modality to another "created, especially at the beginning, many fears, uncertainties and constraints for both teachers and students, but it also created opportunities that allowed them to leave their comfort zone and adjust their teaching methodologies, which ultimately allowed for learning to continue in this context of social isolation" [15, p. 30].

Another factor to consider is the size of the classes that, in the years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, was the lowest ever. Aside from the possibility of developing more individualised work with small groups, this data may also be an indicator that, in spite of the atypical conditions of that period, the students who did not give up on their training are resilient and hard-working, seeking to adapt to new realities, not neglecting the development of their academic and professional skills.

The same statistical analysis was made for the Curricular Unit of Portuguese as an Applied Foreign Language II, and the grades obtained are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Grades obtained by the students in the Curricular Unit of Portuguese as an Applied Foreign Language II.

Student	Academic years					
	In-person teaching				Remote teaching	
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
A	14	14	14	15	15	12
B	10	15	6	16	14	8
C	17	14	13	15	15	4
D	12	14	10	12	18	10
E	14	14	12	15	15	17
F	10	17	13	14	11	17
G	14	16	12	13	12	17
H	11	13	15	13	0	13
I	16	11	8	0	16	18
J	14	13	13	15	17	15
K	14	15	9	15	15	16
L	12	14	14	16	-	18
M	19	12	10	13	-	14
N	14	18	6	13	-	17
O	19	17	13	13	-	15
P	13	12	15	16	-	16
Q	13	13	18	16	-	15
R	16	17	17	15	-	-
S	16	13	16	-	-	-
T	14	15	16	-	-	-

U	17	16	16	-	-	-
V	14	14	17	-	-	-
W	18	17	8	-	-	-
X	-	16	16	-	-	-
Y	-	15	12	-	-	-
Z	-	14	-	-	-	-

By observing the table, it can be seen that, as previously detected in the diagnostic assessment, there is a significant discrepancy of grades among students. It is clear that some students have consistent knowledge of the language that is appropriate for what would be expected for each of the Curricular Units (Portuguese Language as an Applied Foreign Language I - A2/B1 level; Portuguese Language as an Applied Foreign Language II - B1/B2 level), while others demonstrate very weak competencies.

Not considering once again the cases where students did not receive assessment, the averages marks were calculated for each academic year. In in-person teaching the marks obtained were: 2016-2017 (14.4 marks); 2017-2018 (14.6 marks); 2018-2019 (12.8 marks) and 2019-2020 (14.4 marks). In the two years of remote teaching, the average marks were: 2020-2021 (14.8 marks) and 2021-2022 (14.2 marks).

As observed in the Curricular Unit of the 1st semester, the academic year 2018-2019 was also an exception regarding the obtained grades. In both in Portuguese as an Applied Foreign Language I and in Portuguese as an Applied Foreign Language II, the average grades obtained in this period are between 12 and 13 marks. However, in the remaining years, the average mark is significantly higher in the second semester than in the first, ranging between 14 and 15 marks.

The data collected in the annual reports did not allow for an understanding of the reasons behind the difference found in the academic year 2018-2019 compared to the other academic years. However, it is possible to identify a strong reason for obtaining a higher average in the 2nd semester: "The average for the second semester is higher than that of the first [...] which seems to be due more to the grades obtained in the specialty classes than in the Portuguese classes" (Annual Report SSSLTR, 2017-2018).

According to the document analysis carried out, the number of hours of Portuguese in the first semester is much higher than that of the specialty (180 hours of Portuguese; 45 hours of specialty), which is not the case in the second semester, where there is a greater balance (105 hours of Portuguese; 120 hours of specialty), although the time specifically dedicated to Trade, Law, Economics and Management classes is greater than that dedicated to Portuguese classes. This situation leads to the inference that the level of language proficiency of these students is not what most influences the increase in grades in the 2nd semester, but rather their knowledge of the specialty areas of the course.

When comparing the grades obtained in in-person teaching with those obtained in remote teaching, the scenario found in the 1st semester is also repeated, that is, there are no statistically significant differences between the grades obtained in the two modalities.

In light of the literature that points out that emergency remote teaching tends to prioritize contents, often at the expense of real learning objectives and competencies [16], efforts were made to find reasons why this did not happen in the Social Sciences in Sino-Lusophone Trade Relations course. In the analysed documents it is stated that during the pandemic, practices were adjusted to maintain regular contact with students, even if online, and individualized tutorials were offered to address difficulties. In other words, it quickly became clear that educational actions had to be significantly altered due to the physical distance between members of the educational community. It was necessary to motivate and involve students, while still fulfilling the programme requirements [17].

On the other hand, the fact that distance assessments may open doors to potential academic fraud should not be overlooked. In fact, this was explicitly detected in some situations, where the use of unauthorised tools (e.g. dictionaries) or external people to the institution was a reality.

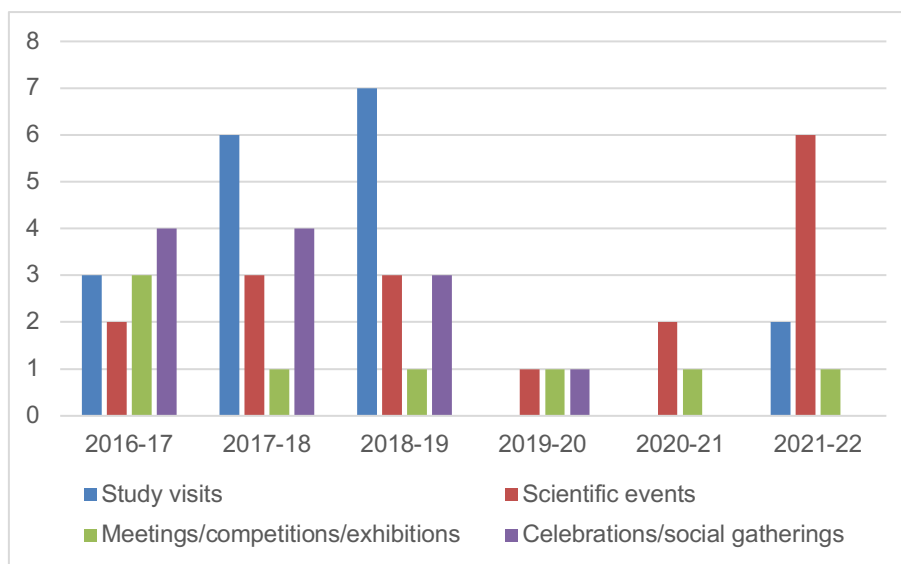
### 3.3 Enrichment activities (out-of-class)

Along with the teaching activity, the Scientific-Pedagogical Committee of the Social Sciences in Sino-Lusophone Trade Relations course has tried to get students to participate in activities for the dissemination of knowledge and cultural sharing. According to the reports analysed, "the dynamism and commitment of its teaching staff and collaborators, who continuously make efforts to ensure the success of their students, particularly international students, allowed [...] several initiatives to be developed" (Annual report SSSLTR, 2016-2017).

The following can also be read in the 2019-2020 annual report: "In this sense, in addition to the classes stipulated in the degree's curricular plan, we have always sought to involve students in complementary training activities, such as conferences, open classes and other events and activities for the dissemination of knowledge and culture that take place at ESECS and also in other initiatives with external entities" (Annual report SSSLTR, 2019-2020).

Based on the data collected, efforts were made to analyse the enrichment activities (out-of-class) that have been developed over the years, and it was possible to classify them into four major categories: study visits, scientific events, meetings/competitions/exhibitions, and celebrations/social gatherings.

Graph 1 presents the number and type of activities per academic year.



Graph 1. Number and type of enrichment activities (out-of-class) per academic year.

From the analysis of the graph, it is possible to see that in the first three years, students participated in more enrichment activities compared to the academic years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022. This situation is due to the fact that remote teaching began in late March 2020, causing students to return to China and attend the last two and a half months of classes of that academic year entirely online. According to the Annual report SSSLTR 2019-2020 "These initiatives were usually concentrated in the second semester, when students' language proficiency allowed them to take greater advantage of these moments", which is why the number of activities is so low.

In the academic year 2020-2021 "due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many events were postponed or cancelled and study visits could not take place, which is why students did not participate in as many activities as they are usually involved in." (Annual report SSSLTR, 2020-21).

In 2021-2022, there seems to have been some return to student participation in out-of-class activities. This situation is due to the increase in the number of online events and the fact that, in the 2nd semester of that academic year, some students chose to come to Portugal. Therefore, a hybrid system was adopted for that semester, with about half of the class online and the other half at the School of Education and Social Sciences. Therefore, the students' participation in enrichment activities was partial, in other words, only some students had the opportunity to enjoy these practical activities.

The low number of extra activities available during the emergency remote teaching is perceived as disadvantageous for the classes of the latest editions of the course, since "It is considered that the participation of students in these types of initiatives was a valuable contribution to their scientific, linguistic and cultural growth within the Social Sciences in Sino-Lusophone Trade Relations course. The relevance of the experiences and the active collaboration of the students allowed, in a real environment, the consolidation of knowledge acquired in the different Modules/Curricular Units and the development of new competencies (specific and transversal)" (Annual Report SSSLTR, 2017-2018).



## 4 CONCLUSIONS

It is established that the second year of the Social Sciences in Sino-Lusophone Trade Relations course takes place in Portugal, with the main objective of allowing students to experience a set of moments that enable them to develop their language proficiency in Portuguese, both within and out of the pedagogical context. However, the pandemic caused by COVID-19, required drastic changes in which new scientific, pedagogical, and technological issues had to be rethought, in the space of a few days, resulting in turbulent and uncertain moments [2]. From March 2020, this led to the adoption of emergency remote teaching.

The online classes became a reality, through a great investment from everyone, based on a practical research in context, which sought to find strategies that would promote, on the one hand, the Portuguese language and, on the other hand, bring the students' interests and central contents for future professional practice closer.

The dedication of the educational community allowed the students in the Curricular Units of Portuguese as an Applied Foreign Language I and II to maintain their grades, as it was possible to see from the analysis of the course reports. Nevertheless, it is impossible to consider that remote teaching was as enriching as in-person teaching, not only due to the fact that the classes are taught in another modality, but also due to the marked reduction of additional activities that allow contact with the Portuguese language and culture in more diversified and real contexts, which is not always possible to quantify.

In addition to the analysis of the results and activities associated with the moment when remote teaching was implemented, it will be pertinent to carry out a more longitudinal study to compare these data with those obtained in the post-pandemic years, since the fear of harmful long-term consequences, both academically and professionally, is high. However, it is hoped, that "after the crisis of the Covid-19 Pandemic we can look back and realise that this time was used to reinvent ourselves" [4, p. 149] and serve as a basis for building "more open, inclusive and flexible educational systems" [18, p. 2].

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