

Evaluation of the implementation process of a new mathematics curriculum for Grades 1-9: A discussion of the main results

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Recently, a new Mathematics curriculum for basic education (Grades 1-9) has been introduced in the Portuguese educational system. This curriculum was designed to bring together some disperse curricular documents and to substitute the former one that was being used since the early 90s. But, above all, the new curriculum was aimed at providing a more sustained development of students' mathematical learning based upon recent international recommendations for mathematics teaching and learning.

The new curriculum implementation was strongly supported by a special designed programme aimed at providing scientific and pedagogical support to all teachers of Grades 1-9 throughout all the schools of the country. Before its generalization to all basic education schools of the country, the new curriculum had been put into practice by 40 teachers of the different grade levels for a three-year period. These teachers had the opportunity to attend a number of workshops and to share their experiences in a variety of contexts. In fact, they functioned as a true network, working in close collaboration. Besides they were also in touch with the authors of the new curriculum to insure that it was put into practice according to the authors' proposal.

At the same time the Ministry of Education appointed a team of three mathematics educators to conduct a three-year evaluation study of the whole process of implementation of the new curriculum. An overview of this evaluation study will be presented: Besides, teachers' classroom practices as well as the ideas they shared through their collaborative work, will be also presented and discussed. This discussion will illustrate some of the features of the new curriculum. As a matter of fact, data seem to suggest that some improvements are already visible, namely regarding students' attitudes and competences and teachers' practices. Tasks selected and used by the teachers, teaching strategies they used, and students' work on those tasks will also be presented and analysed.