

Cristina Pinto Albuquerque

Ana Maria Seixas

Albertina Lima Oliveira

António Gomes Ferreira

Maria Paula Paixão

Rui Paquete Paixão

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Challenges and Perspectives

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CHAPTER 6

THE TRAINING OF EDUCATORS AND TEACHERS IN PORTUGAL IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROPEAN SPACE FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING (2007-2018)

António Gomes Ferreira

Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Coimbra |

GRUPOEDE, CEIS20, UC

E-mail: antonio@fpce.uc.pt

Luís Mota

Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra, College of Education | GRUPOEDE, CEIS20, UC;

E-mail: mudamseostempos@gmail.com

Our intention is to discuss the training of educators and teachers in Portugal, from pre-school education to the 2nd grade school teaching, as well as its evolution from the beginning of the new millennium, taking into account the processes of Europeanisation and its impact on the nation-state and its educational policies. Within this perspective, we will proceed with an analysis of documents taken from a broad range of sources in an attempt to cast a more intelligible light on the options of educational policy on the initial training of educators and teachers, namely with respect to recruitment, training structure and the professional profile.

INTRODUCTION

Within a context in which the nation-state has lost its centrality as “the privileged unit of economic, social, and political initiative” (Santos, 2001, p. 42), large regional economic and political supranational entities have emerged (for example, MERCOSUL, NAFTA, or the European Union), acting with state-like initiative, with their objective being the expansion of their influence in the dynamics of globalisation, translating into new forms of action for the State in certain aspects of social life where often individual nations have found themselves unable to maintain control (Jessop, 2005). The European Union, an example of an advanced form of “network State” (Castells, 2007), presents itself as a more developed institutional configuration and since the 1990s has been assuming an increasing role in the area of social policies, namely education and educational policies, a theme that is taken up less and less by the nation-state (Moutsios, 2009).

The process of Europeanisation of education and educational policies gained steam following the *Lisbon strategy* and the undertaking of a political agenda that strove to transform the European Union during the time-horizon 2000-2010 “into the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy able to guarantee sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” (Conselho Europeu, 2000, p.1), by executing the programme *Education and Training 2010* and the European Space for Education and Training. More recently, a new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (EF 2020) was approved (EF 2020) (Conselho da União Europeia, 2009a) which “calls for common strategic objectives for Member-States, including a set of principles to achieve these objectives as well as common work methods with

priority domains for each work cycle in the period” (Conselho da União Europeia, 2009b).

The education and training programmes include the initiatives in the context of the inter-governmental platform for the *Bologna Process* (Conselho da União Europeia, 2009a) which dates back to the joint declaration of education ministers from 29 countries gathered in that Italian city in 1999, in which they expressed their will that within the time-horizon of one decade a European Space for Higher Education (ESHE) should be created.

The development of the process involved a set of courses of action for the creation and development of an attractive, cohesive, and competitive ESHE (Brito, 2012) as a response to contemporary societal transformations. Higher education distanced itself from the Humboldtian model, structuring itself with closer bonds to the market economy and a broader basis for competitiveness, as in the North American model (Neave, 1998).

As for higher education in Portugal, its ability to adapt to the commitment it assumed within the scope of the Bologna Process dates back to 2005, and this brought about a change in the paradigm of training, centred now “on the full scope of activity and on competences” (Decreto-lei n.º 42/2005, 2005a) to acquire along the different stages of adult life to be articulated with respect to the evolution of individual or collective knowledge and interests.

As a result, the Basic Law for the Educational System was revised for the second time since its passage in 1986 (Decreto-lei n.º 49/2005, 2005b). The model for organising higher education into three cycles was adopted. The objectives for higher education were redesigned, more clearly specifying the guidelines for the two subsystems: the universities and the polytechnic institutes. The universities and the polytechnic institutes confer Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees whereas the Doctorate degrees are reserved

to the former; in both cases, qualified teaching faculty are required. Thus is established the transition from an educational system founded on the transmission of knowledge to a system based on the development of competences and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS, based precisely on student work. Government made it possible for all citizens to have access to lifelong learning by defining the guidelines allowing access to higher education to persons 23 years of age and over with post-secondary qualifications (Decreto-lei n.º 49/2005, 2005b).

The following year meant new regulations would be implemented as a result of the changes made to the Basic Law for the Educational System (Decreto-Lei n.º 74/2006, 2006), later reviewed [Decreto-lei n.º 107/2008 (2008)]. Regulations governing the conferring of academic degrees and higher education diplomas established the framework for how each cycle would grant their respective degree, requiring 180 to 240 ECTS credits over six to eight semesters for degree courses in the first cycle (Bachelor's degree) and from 60 to 120 credits for the second cycle (Master's degree) over two to four semesters. The second cycle, in special situations common in the EU for access to a certain profession, an integrated format was established with 300 to 360 ECTS credits and lasting from 10 to 12 months. The government went on to clarify the competences required for the awarding of each degree, defined the general principles that underlie the process of accreditation, the rules to be applied for the reorganisation of degree courses currently being taught as well as the transitional norms to adopt for the creation of new study cycles leading to the creation and inauguration of the accreditation agency, and finally, issued rules for implementing any registry of alterations to the degree course's curriculum (Decreto-Lei n.º 74/2006, 2006).

Once the Legal Framework for Higher Education Institutions (RJIES) had been approved (Lei n.º 38/2007, 2007b), the Portuguese government created the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES), whose objective was the assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher learning and their study cycles as well as the performance of those functions inherent to Portugal's inclusion within the European system that assures quality in higher education. A3ES exercises scientific and technical autonomy and is responsible for how Portugal stands within the framework of quality assurance. It is a permanently functioning entity whose work involves the issues of student learning, the performance of both the teaching faculty and nonteaching staff, as well as the performance of the schools and of the system itself (Decreto-lei n.º 362/2007, 2007a). Since 2009 the agency has been an associate member of ENQA (Rosa & Sarrico, 2012).

1. Teacher training in Portugal since 2007

It is natural that the previously noted modifications to higher learning in Portugal should spark the need for adjustment to the initial training afforded to educators and teachers. Months prior to the creation of the A3ES, the first legal framework was published for the professional qualification and training of the teaching profession on the pre-school, primary, and secondary level (Decreto-lei n.º 43/2007, 2007c), with legislative alterations made to be in compliance with the Bologna Process.

The legal framework for the professional qualification and training of non-higher education teachers is an innovative document. In fact, it was the first time that Portugal addressed the training of educators and teachers in an integrated and articulated way. However, it should be noted that this was an initiative that the government pursued of

its own volition and not one stemming from any manifest appeal or expression coming from institutions of higher education.

The Portuguese government, taking into consideration the improvement of educational opportunities for its citizens and the consequent need for a teaching corps that is better trained, more qualified and stable, enacted a reformulation of the domains of professional qualifications and granted a broader scope for level and cycles of teaching, allowing for mobility of teachers amongst them. From the standpoint of the legislation, this mobility enables teachers to accompany students for a longer period of time and makes the management of human resources and career paths for teachers more flexible. The domains of qualification for the generalist teacher were extended to include qualification in the field of pre-school and primary school or qualification for the primary school and 2nd grade school teaching.

With higher education structured into three levels, professional qualification for all teachers has meant holding a Master's degree. To earn the professional qualification for generalist teaching on the pre-school, primary school and 2nd grade school teaching, a person must obtain a Bachelor's degree in Basic Education and a Master's in Teaching.

The new system for qualifying individuals for the teaching profession, from the position of the legislation, strives to place value on the dimensions of academic knowledge in the field, the substantiation of teaching practices founded on research, and professional development; in addition, it considers that mastery of oral and written Portuguese is a common dimension required for the qualification of future teachers.

The legal document further underscores that the exercise of the teaching profession demands that an individual possess mastery of the scientific, humanistic, technological or artistic knowledge of the relevant academic disciplines. The emphasis

on research methodologies in education clearly indicates the commitment to establishing solid training for educators and teachers able to adapt to complex situations and respond to the specific nature of the students and the given academic and social contexts (Decreto-lei n.º 43/2007, 2007c).

The new legal framework for professional qualification once again took on a general profile (Decreto-lei n.º 239/2001, 2001a) – defined for early-childhood educators and teachers on the primary and secondary level, and the specific profiles (Decreto-lei n.º 241/2001, 2001b) of both early-childhood educators and teachers in the primary school – in the proposal of the general principles for organising the curriculum of training for those pursuing higher education qualifications in the teaching profession. Thus, to address the defined profiles and underpinned by the existing research, the legislation defined the five components for the degree programmes: i) General Educational Training; ii) Specific Teaching Practices; iii) Professional Development; iv) Cultural, Social and Ethical Training; v) Educational Methodologies and Research Practices (Decreto-lei n.º 43/2007, 2007c).

The structure of the study cycle leading to the Bachelor's degree in Basic Education is a six semester programme. The 180 credits are distributed amongst the fields of General Educational Training, Specific Teaching Practices, and Professional Development, with 15 to 20 credits each, and they include classes on Cultural, Social and Ethical Components in Education and Educational Methodologies and Research Practices. The component of Training in teaching area requires from 120 to 135 credits, with a minimum of 30 credits each in the track of 'Studies of the Social Environment,' which includes the Natural Sciences and Social and Human Sciences, and Expression Skills, which encompasses Mathematics and Portuguese, as can be seen in Table 1 (Decreto-lei n.º 43/2007, 2007c).

Table 1. Breakdown of Credits by Study Cycle and Training Components (2007)

	ECTS	180	60	90	90 a 120
Training component	Study Cycle (SC)	Bachelor in basic education	Master's degree in preschool education or primary school training	Master's degree in preschool education and primary school training	Master's degree in primary school training and 2nd grade school teaching (b)
Specific Teaching Practices (STP)		15 a 20	15 a 20	25 a 30	20%
Cultural, Social and Ethical Training		(a)	0	0	0
General Educational Training (GET)		15 a 20	5 a 10	5 a 10	5%
Educational Methodologies and Research Practices		(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
Training in the Teaching Area (TTA)		120 a 135	0	0 a 5	25%
Introduction to Professional Practice (IPP)		15 a 20	0	0	0
Supervised Teaching Practice (STP)		0	30 a 35	40 a 45	45%

(a) ECTS included in SIP, GET and IPP components.

(b) Minimum percentage to be calculated according to ECTS.

The study cycles leading to the Master's degree (*Mestrado*) are divided into four areas of specialisation in the field of teaching, with the options being: early-childhood educator, teacher at the primary school, both an early-childhood educator and teacher in the primary school, and a teacher in both the primary school and 2nd grade school, with this last specialisation covering all the areas of the primary school teaching as well as the subjects of Natural Sciences, Portuguese History and Geography, and Mathematics and Portuguese Language Skills for the 2nd grade school teaching. Thus, the Master's degree is granted with specialisations in either Pre-school Education, Primary school, Pre-school Education together with Primary school, or Primary school and 2nd grade school teaching (Decreto-lei n.º 43/2007, 2007c).

The Master's programmes (2nd cycle) which offer a degree for a single level of teaching – either Pre-school Education or Primary school – are given over two semesters, corresponding to 60 ECTS credits (one academic year) and divided into the components of General Educational Training, Specific Teaching Practices, and Supervised Teaching Practice. The degree which comprises these two professional qualifications, that is, the Master's in both Pre-school Education and Primary School (Table 1) is organised over three semesters and corresponds to 90 ECTS credits and covers four components of academic study – Training in the Teaching Area, Specific Teaching Practices, General Educational Training, and Supervised Teaching Practice.

The Master's degree with a specialisation in Primary school and 2nd grade school teaching incorporates professional qualification in the areas of Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Portuguese Language, and Portuguese History and Geography for the 2nd grade school and is six to eight semesters in length, which would correspond roughly to 90 to 120 ECTS, respectively. Naturally, a

degree course which would confer a professional qualification of such scope would have to include different academic components, i.e. in the areas of Training in the Teaching Area, Specific Teaching Practices, the track of General Educational Training, and Supervised Teaching Practice. As explained in Table 1, given that the legislation establishes a range of ECTS credits, the legal norm establishes a percentage with respect to the number of ECTS credits in the degree course.

As a result of the modifications carried out, two aspects have emerged which have become the focus of analytical study in the literature: the degree of academic title of professional qualification and its attribution to all teachers, and the issue of the training model. With respect to the degree, there is, in effect, an elevation of the academic degree without this corresponding, however, to more time dedicated to “pedagogical-instructional training and contact with professional situations” (Mouraz, Leite, & Fernandes, 2012, p. 192). As for the granting of the same academic title of professional qualification to all non-higher education teachers, this option fell in line with the evolution of Portuguese education policy over the last two decades which has tended toward greater equality of status and title amongst teachers across the various levels of non-higher education.

As for the training model (Ferreira & Mota, 2013), its concept of two non-integrated study cycles is based on a sequential 2-cycle model, focusing first on academic training in the areas of Training in the Teaching Area, Specific Teaching Practices and General Educational Training, and later on Supervised Teaching Practice (Brito, 2012; Melo & Branco, 2013). However, careful observation enables one to examine this sequential nature of the components of the training more closely. Indeed, Table 1 shows that in the first cycle we note the integrated aspect of components in the syllabus areas of Training in the Teaching

Area, Specific Teaching Practices, General Educational Training, and Professional Development, which for certain institutions are distributed over three years of study, which points to a certain degree of integrated approach (Agência Avaliação e Acreditação Ensino Superior, 2014; Despacho n.º 4793/2015, 2015). This analysis may, generally speaking, be extended to the different degree courses in the 2nd cycle which tend to be organised in a more integrated fashion.

The Master's degree in primary education and 2nd grade school teaching was an attempt to create a generalist teacher profile (Table 1) for 2nd grade school. Such an option breaks with tradition in Portuguese education, which is immediately visible in the present educational system that now offers a specialised Master's in 2nd grade school and is organised according to academic subjects, not to mention the fact that up to the mid-1990s the counterparts to today's teachers would have been required to hold only a simple, non-specialist university degree. Due to either lack of political will or political capacity, the gap felt between basic teacher training and the reality of the educational system was an issue that was never fully resolved.

In 2011, the global financial crisis, combined with the country's sovereign debt crisis, profoundly altered Portugal's political and social fabric; as a result, the composition of the Portuguese Parliament was realigned and the government changed hands. Lack of consensus in terms of social policy, namely with regard to education, led to the issuance of a new legal framework for the initial training of teachers (Decreto-lei n.º 79/2014, 2014a).

It was in the name of initial training, one that is “more rigorous and which places greater value on the teaching profession,” that the legislation justified the new legal framework, that is, a need that is underpinned by “multiple international studies” and by “analyses and syntheses” disseminated in unidentified “scientific

publications” and by “independent organisations” such as the OECD and the Eurydice Network. According to the legislation, these studies give evidence that the overall level of quality of educator and teacher training “tends to have a measurable and very significant effect on the quality of the system of education” (Decreto-lei n.º 79/2014, 2014a, p. 2819). The National Education Council (CNE) considered that the project neither came with justification of its relevance and potential for opportunity nor with the information that might support a better understanding of the impact of its application (Despacho 4291/2014, 2014b, p. 7781).

The new legal framework – in addition to the Knowledge and Skills Assessment Test needed by teachers for admission to the selection and recruitment process, the changes made in continuing education and training for teachers, and the tighter requirements for admission to university degree courses in Primary Education – constituted a strengthening of instruments such that “in the medium and long term, we will have in our schools the best prepared, the best trained, the most skilled and most motivated to perform the noble and demanding task of teaching” (Decreto-lei n.º 79/2014, 2014a, p. 2820).

The 2-cycle structure (1st and 2nd cycle) and the integrated format of the training components in both cycles were kept. The 1st cycle diploma in Basic Education remained as an entry requirement of the Master’s programmes although they were reorganised with a change in the number of credit hours. Table 2 (Decreto-lei n.º 79/2014, 2014a) synthesises the new legal framework for initial training of educators and teachers, whose alterations the CNE viewed as “specific and coherent, with a position of clarification and improvement introduced into the diploma” (Despacho 4291/2014, 2014b, p. 7781).

Table 2. Breakdown of Credits by Study Cycle and Training Components (2014)

	ECTS	180	90	90	120	120	120
Componente de formação							
(b)							
Specific Teaching Practices (STP)	15	24	21	36	30	30	
Cultural, Social and Ethical Training	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
General Educational Training (GET)	15	6	6	6	6	6	6
Training in the Teaching Area (TTA)	125	6	18	18	18	27	27
Introduction to Professional Practice (IPP)	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supervised Teaching Practice (STP)	0	39	32	48	48	48	48

(a) ECTS included in STP, GET and IPP components.
(b) Minimum percentage to be calculated according to ECTS.

The legislation announced the changes considered relevant from the outset: the increase in the duration of the Master's programmes in Pre-school Education and in Teaching in Primary Education from two to three semesters, corresponding to 90 ECTS, and the joint Master's programme in Pre-School Education and Primary Education expanded from 90 to 120 ECTS credits with a duration of four semesters. The other Master's programmes were configured over four semesters, corresponding to 120 ECTS.

The reinforcement of qualification in the areas of Training in the Teaching Area, Specific Teaching Practices, and Supervised Teaching Practice took place when the study cycles were made longer and the relative weighting of these fields made greater. However, in the Bachelor's degree in Basic Education and in the Master's degree programmes which concentrate on teaching in the primary education and 2nd grade school, the relative weight of training in the Teaching Area has not increased. The same situation is observed for Supervised Teaching Practice for the Bachelor's in Basic Education and the Master's in Primary Education (Lopo, 2016). The CNE, adding to the small number of published comments reflecting on the new legal framework, considered these alterations to be "factors that can create the conditions for making the requirements more rigorous and raising the quality of training" (Despacho 4291/2014, 2014b, p. 7781).

The Master's degree in teaching in the primary education and 2nd grade school is divided into two, to reflect the subject areas taught in the 2nd grade school teaching – Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and Portuguese Language Skills and Portuguese History and Geography – and with recruitment groups from the 2nd grade school teaching. From the standpoint of the legislation, this alteration allowed for the reinforcement of training in the area of Training in the Teaching Area, but in fact, as a result of the 50% reduction in subject areas – from

four to two – it represented an increase in the time spent on the areas of Specific Teaching Practices and Supervised Teaching Practice. If the CNE viewed this division within the Master's degree programme as a positive option “in that it makes the supply and demand relationship clearer” (Despacho 4291/2014, 2014b, p. 7781), it also reflects the abandonment of an attempt to introduce the generalist teacher into the 2nd grade school teaching, resulting in a substantive difference from the previous legal frameworks which we have analysed.

The suppression of the component of Research Methods seems to point toward a more technically-oriented perspective on teaching activity (Esteves, Rodrigues, Silva, & Carita, 2015) in a posture that is directed more toward the efficiency of actions and student results, to the detriment of a more critical and reflective attitude on teaching and its practices. (Pacheco, 2011).

2. Final remarks

As can be deduced, the process of Europeanisation has made its contribution to a certain convergence of education policies, namely the concretisation of the European Space for Higher Education (ESHE). We have underscored how higher education in Portugal has been visibly impacted by the changes introduced in the 21st century (recognised and comparable academic degrees, a system of three study cycles for higher education, the ECTS credit system, external assessment and certification, etc.) with impact on the level of initial training of educators and teachers.

Within this scope, it was the policy changes that led to alterations in the legal framework of the initial training for

educators and teachers, thus illustrating the extent to which the Government remains the regulatory entity nationally, as opposed to transnational education regulation.

The change in legal framework in 2014, although lacking in empirical underpinnings, seems to substantiate the evolution of a perspective of the teacher as an autonomous professional endowed with a critical sense and able to assess his own performance, being one who is inquisitive and constructs his own professional knowledge in a reflective way for a keener technical vision of the tasks required of the teaching profession, and who is guided toward and by the results. However, it was via this new legal framework that the duration of the 2nd cycle degree courses were set at fewer than four semesters.

Training is based on a 2-cycle structure but with clear integration of the dimensions of the training. Nevertheless, and in line with Portuguese tradition, structural models prevail over conceptual ones, to the latter's detriment (Ferreira & Mota, 2013). It is precisely this 2-cycle structure, related to the adoption of the Anglo-Saxon model, which has contributed to the differentiation of the educational offer available, in contrast to its predecessor, and to the applicability envisioned for the second half of the 21st century.

In Portugal, the political context over the last six months has apparently changed in radical fashion. A wide variety of measures adopted in the last four years covering a broad range of fields, and most especially Education, have been reversed. Might this mean that the field of education's well-recognised susceptibility to changes in the political sphere on the national level will lead to a third legal framework for the initial training of educators and teachers in less than a decade?

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