

Presentation note

Teacher Education

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School education is presently an action field in constant change. Organisational, curricular, extra-curricular changes, among others set out in the context of successive reforms and educational policies, require from teachers new roles and new competences. Even initial teacher education legal framework has changed to address Bologna requirements, while the in-service teacher education centres have recently undergone considerable reformulation.

Whether it is true this situation challenges teachers in general, it is also true teacher education institutions, and obviously researchers as well, cannot be exempt from contributing to find the answers to these challenges.

Teacher education continues to be an important field of educational research. Much has, indeed, been published in this domain and no doubt we have been extending our knowledge on the way teachers build their own professional knowledge. However, besides having deepened our knowledge on local realities and confirmed the theoretical frameworks ruling research work, research is still too dependent on the great themes that have prevailed from the 80's onwards.

Investing in the quality of teacher education continues to be a central objective, both at the political level, and at the level of research and teacher education institutions or even at the level of schools and school districts, since teaching competence in a context of responsible and committed professional development is crucial to the improvement of educational quality and to teachers' motivation and professional fulfilment.

Nowadays, thinking of teacher education and teaching professionalism raises a wide range of questions which go much beyond common sense and teacher education stereotypes. They will not do without equating issues like teachers' professional development and professional identity building, without clarifying the concepts of skills and competence, and finally without reflecting on the diversified nature of the competences required by the different activities they must perform at school, particularly relational, ethical and aesthetical competences almost forgotten by teacher education and research.

In this number of the *Sísifo* journal, which elects Teacher Education as its central theme, a range of articles are brought to our attention, which we think might contribute to go further into these issues. With these texts we are also trying to account for some of the studies carried out in this field in the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of Lisbon (FPCE). Because research is openness to the world and to the others, so are we giving notice of the contributions of other researchers.

In the first text, Carlos Marcelo provides an updated overview of professional development and professional identity-building, articulating the personal dimension with the collective dimension involved in experiences lived in working contexts, either formally or informally. In the last case, the author particularly highlights the connection between the professional development of teachers with the organizational development of schools.

In the second text, José Alberto Gonçalves specifically analyses the concept of teaching career as a contextually-built relational itinerary. Then, relying on two studies carried out under his supervision in the University of the Algarve, he focuses on initial teacher education and characterizes some supervising practices relating them with their respective career stage.

In the text that follows, Manuela Esteves analyses in detail the polysemy of the concept of competence in different scientific fields and within the same field to come to the conclusion that a new acceptance should be built, which might be specific of education and teacher education. Then, she discusses the construction and development of teachers' competences in current Portuguese teacher education programmes, highlighting the importance of models and strategies rather than structures.

Ana Paula Caetano and Lurdes Silva deal with the issue of teacher professional ethics according to the outcomes of the first phase of a research study carried out in the context of the Project "Teachers' ethic-deontological thought and education", funded by FCT. Through content analysis of semi-directive interviews conducted to teachers of different teaching levels, these authors characterize teachers' ethic, personal and professional perceptions and their attitude towards the possible existence of a deontological code for teachers and they also devise some strategies of ethic education desired by the teachers.

In the fifth text of this thematic dossier, Ana Margarida Veiga Simão and other authors describe the project "Teacher Education in Collaborative Settings". This project is carried out in the context of a partnership involving the University of Lisbon (Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences — FPCE), the University of Minho and the New University of Lisbon and involves ten PhD students with their doctoral projects. Both teacher education in working contexts and education through action-research in collaborative settings constitute the main guidelines for this project.

Since teacher education has the pupils or students as its necessary referent — something put into brackets in written texts on teacher education and

training — the two next texts deal with the issue of the relational feature of teacher education, starting from research carried out on the relational attitudes of pupils. The first is signed by João Amado and other authors and is based on research studies on pupils' perceptions about affectivity in pedagogic relationships. Combining analyses of a qualitative and quantitative nature and cross-referencing them with the revision of literature on this theme, the authors discuss the research outcomes and draw some implications to teacher education

The text signed by José Espírito Santo analyses the results of two sets of studies in the light of two different approaches to indiscipline, one of them is inspired by the *classroom management* approach, the other is related to the creation of devices capable of promoting pupils' commitment to improve discipline. From experiments performed and from analyses of processes and results, the author outlines some considerations about teacher education in this field.

An article signed by Sara Bahia closes this set of texts and focuses on another dimension, which is presented as central to teachers' work though critical and therefore requiring teachers' reflection. At stake is knowledge generality and domain-specificity and the way teachers appropriate them in teacher education settings. This argumentative text is based on a survey conducted to Arts and Humanities teachers who had attended the on-the-job qualifying programme of the FPCE-UL.

The dossier also publishes the text of the Conference "Teacher Education and Supervision: A new scope" uttered by Isabel Alarcão, emeritus professor of the University of Aveiro, on the 3rd May 2007, one of the conferences of a Cycle organized by the Educational Sciences Research and Development Unit, which took place in the FPCE-UL. The author extends the concept of supervision to in-service teacher education, envisaged as school-based and linked to the concept of organisational development.

Finally, under the heading Book Reviews, Manuela Esteves presents the work *Handbook of research on teacher education. Enduring questions in changing contexts* (2008).