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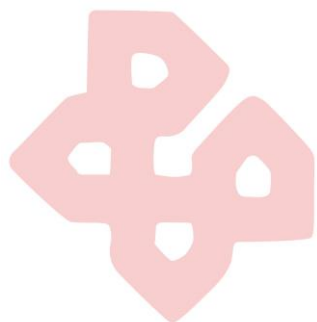
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## **POST-BOLOGNA POLICIES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION IN PORTUGAL: TENSIONS IN BUILDING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES**

*Políticas de formación inicial de profesores en Portugal en el marco del  
Proceso de Bolonia: tensiones en la construcción de la identidad  
profesional*

*Políticas de formação inicial de professores em Portugal no quadro do  
Processo de Bolonha: tensões na construção de identidades profissionais*



*Carlinda Leite, Preciosa Fernandes,  
Fátima Sousa-Pereira  
University of Porto  
E-mail: [carlinda@fpce.up.pt](mailto:carlinda@fpce.up.pt)*

### **Abstract:**

*The article analyses the model of initial basic education teacher training in Portugal resulting from the commitments made in the framework of the Bologna Process. This analysis focuses on the impact that the policy guidelines - that point to an improvement in education quality - have on the socialization with the teaching profession. The empirical study analyses policy guidelines for teacher training and the opinions of teachers responsible for initial teacher training courses obtained through a survey. Overall, the data show a moderate agreement with policies concerning teacher training and some tensions regarding the training model adopted. On the one hand, it is pointed out that this model offers reduced opportunities of professional socialization, but, on the other hand, it is considered that it allows greater flexibility in obtaining a degree to teach in different levels of the education system. From this point of view, it can be considered that this model resolves educative system problems related to teachers placement, currently facing an elevated number of teachers which is higher than necessary in some school levels.*

**Keywords:** *Initial teacher training policies, bologna process, construction of teachers' professional identity, agenda for educational quality.*

### Resumen:

*El artículo analiza el modelo de formación inicial de maestros de educación básica en Portugal, como resultado de los compromisos hechos en el marco del Proceso de Bolonia. Se centra en los efectos que las políticas -que apuntan a una mejora en la calidad de la educación- tienen en la socialización de la profesión docente. La investigación analiza documentos políticos que orientan la formación de maestros y las opiniones de los profesores encargados de los cursos de la formación inicial obtenidas por cuestionario. En general, los datos muestran un moderado acuerdo con las políticas de formación de maestros y algunas tensiones en relación con el modelo de formación adoptado. Por un lado, se señala que este modelo ofrece reducidas oportunidades de socialización profesional, pero, por otro lado, se considera que permite una mayor flexibilidad en la obtención de una habilitación para ejercer la profesión en diferentes niveles del sistema educativo. Desde este punto de vista, se puede suponer que este modelo puede resolver problemas relacionados a la ubicación de los maestros, que enfrenta situaciones de exceso de docentes en algunos niveles de Educación Básica.*

**Palabras clave:** Políticas de formación inicial de maestros, proceso de bolonia, construcción de la identidad profesional docente, programa de calidad educativa.

### Resumo:

*O artigo analisa o modelo de formação inicial de professores de Educação Básica em Portugal, resultante dos compromissos assumidos no quadro do Processo de Bolonha. Essa análise foca efeitos das políticas que apontam para uma melhoria na qualidade da educação na socialização com a profissão docente. O estudo empírico analisa documentos de orientação política para a formação de professores e opiniões de professores responsáveis por cursos de formação inicial de professores obtidas por questionário. Globalmente, os dados mostram um acordo moderado com as políticas relativas à formação de professores e algumas tensões em relação ao modelo de formação adotado. Por um lado, é apontado que este modelo oferece reduzidas oportunidades de socialização profissional, mas, por outro lado, é considerado que ele permite maior flexibilidade na obtenção de habilitação para que os futuros professores possam exercer a profissão em distintos níveis do sistema educativo. Deste ponto de vista, pode considerar-se que este modelo de formação poderá resolver problemas relacionados com a colocação de professores, que enfrenta situações de excesso de docentes para alguns dos níveis de escolaridade.*

**Palavras-Chave:** Políticas de formação inicial de professores, processo de bolonha, construção da identidade profissional docente, agenda para a qualidade educativa.

## 1. Introducción

Historically, educational policies were related to society's scientific and technological evolution, as well as to social and political changes, within a global educational agenda (Dale, 2000; Nóvoa & Dejong-Lambert, 2003; Townsend, 2011) that calls for quality (Author & Author, 2014). In Portugal, an example is the adaptation of higher education courses to the Bologna commitments (Author & Ramos, 2015). Before the Bologna Process (BP), introduced in Portugal in 2007, teachers were trained according to an integrated model in which the students were in contact with professional situations when they enrolled in the course, which Nóvoa (1992, 2009) called context training. In this manner, future teachers built their teacher identity (Day, 2001; Lopes, 2002, 2007, 2009; Hidalgo & Gallego, 2015, Montero, 2005, 2016) in a strong relationship with the profession. Once the Bologna Process was established, teacher education followed a model that takes place in two phases: the first (1st cycle - undergraduate degree) consists of general training and only on the second one (2<sup>nd</sup> cycle - masters) training is oriented towards the teaching

practice. The contact with professional situations only occurs at the end of the course (Almeida, Leite, & Santiago, 2013) following the logic of a conception in which students first must learn the theory in order to apply it in practice. These Bologna changes took place simultaneously with discourses and policies that called for the establishment of quality assurance within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and for the implementation of local quality assurance processes.

This background serves as a framework for the research presented in this article, which aimed to: i) characterize the model for early childhood, primary and lower secondary teacher education, resulting from the current policies derived from the Bologna commitments; ii) identify the perceptions of those responsible for early childhood, primary and lower secondary teacher education concerning the principles underlying these policies (at conceptual and operational levels) in the post-Bologna period; iii) foresee the impacts of this model on the establishment of a teaching identity.

The analysis focuses on both the relationship between the model and the quality principles underlying Portuguese and international policies for higher education, as well as effects that this model generates in establishing professional identities (Dubar, 1997; Castells, 2000; Lopes, 2007, 2009; Hidalgo & Gallego, 2015; Montero, 2005, 2016).

The article begins describing the discourses regarding higher education quality, within the international agenda, as a basis for analysing the teaching training model in the post-Bologna period for: primary school; lower secondary education; and early childhood teacher education. Data from an empirical study that allows for conclusions about the relationship between the adopted teacher training model and quality speech advertised in the political agenda is then presented.

## 2. The quality agenda for higher education and teacher training

In the document *Improving Teacher Quality: the EU agenda*<sup>1</sup>, the European Commission (2010) set priority actions for the Ministries of Education in member states, namely: 1) to promote professional values and attitudes in the teaching profession; 2) to improve teacher competencies; 3) to make recruitment and selection more effective, to improve the quality of teacher education; 4) to introduce orientation programs for all new teachers; 5) to provide mentoring support to all teachers; 6) to improve the quality and quantity of continuing professional development for teachers; 7) to improve school leadership; 8) to ensure the quality of teacher educators; 9) to improve teacher education systems (European Commission, 2010). This European recommendation reinforced the need to pay more attention to the quality of teacher's education and their actions.

<sup>1</sup> This document synthesizes the priorities outlined in the Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of Member State Governments, in November 2007 (Improving the quality of teacher education), 2008 (Preparing young people for the 21st century: an agenda for European cooperation in schools) and 2009 (Professional development of teachers and school leaders).

This idea was already conveyed in the *Future objectives for education and education systems* program held in Lisbon in March 2000 (“Estratégia de Lisboa”), which was assigned to the European Commission by the European Council. During this program, the need to improve the preparation and support of teachers and trainers in their role, which was subject to immense changes within the educational society, was acknowledged (European Commission, 2002).

The discussion on change, as a result of the search for educational quality, is consistent with debates on higher education from recent years, which validate external evaluation processes for higher education courses and quality assurance systems in higher education institutions. Recent comparative studies of European higher education systems demonstrate that there have been great developments within quality assurance due to the centrality that resulted from the Bologna Process (Santos, 2011; Eurydice, 2012; Author & Ramos, 2015). Nevertheless, significant differences can be observed in the models adopted by each European country. Most of these quality systems have a supervisory function while others do not follow a holistic vision (Eurydice, 2012).

Portugal, in what Ball (2001) refers to as “political convergence”, was not left out of this influence. The Portuguese government requested a set of evaluations from supranational organizations, such as the OCDE (2006) and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA, 2006). This action was meant to gather useful information for the needed reforms. The Portuguese government, in 2007, published a new regimen of quality evaluation in higher education (Law nº 38/2007) and established an Agency for Accreditation and Evaluation in Higher Education (A3ES), which was responsible for the evaluation and accreditation of higher education courses (Decree-law nº 369/2007) based on the European Framework for Quality Assurance System in Higher Education.

### **3. Early childhood, primary and lower secondary teacher training in post-bologna period: between an educational quality agenda and the contradictions of the model**

Regarding teacher education in Portugal, the 1990s were marked by several debates that focused on the education model followed or to be followed and on the responsibility assigned to these future teachers in promoting greater social justice (Connell, 1997, 2012; Nóvoa, 1992; Perrenoud, 1993; Torres Santomé, 2012; Mouraz, Leite, & Fernandes, 2013). These debates highlighted the need to open teacher education to aspects of social order and provide them with experiences able to enhance a professional identity adequate to the challenges of the profession (Dubar, 1997; Ball & Forzani, 2009; Lampert et al., 2013). Within this orientation, the need for teacher education was conveyed, to provide conditions for gradual and extended socialization into the teaching profession in order to enable a permanent search for improvement in the educational process based on Zeichner’s (1993, 2005, 2010) purpose “education-action-reflection”. The importance of following an integrated

model (Korthagen, 2001, 2010) able to contemplate the complexity of educational situations and to provide a strong relationship between theory and practice was also recognized.

It is important to stress that in the pre-Bologna period, there was an attempt to institutionalize a teacher training model based on the idea that ‘it is not enough to teach “professional knowledge” hoping that teachers and future teachers apply it, i.e., “transferring into professional practices is not as simple as making wisdom accessible” (Paquay, Altet, Charlier, & Perrenoud, 1996, p. 252). That is, it sustained the importance of training oriented towards change (Nóvoa, 1992, 2009; Author, 2009; Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Felow, 2002; Pereira, 2013; Pereira & Leite, 2016), which provided the development of competences for understanding school education in its social dimensions and cultural specificities (Stoer, 1994; Author, 2002; Aguiar & Pelandré, 2009; Goodwin et al., 2014).

In the 21st century, the commitments undertaken at the European level following the Bologna Process (Bolívar, 2007; Villa et al., 2015) demanded a restructuring of higher education and the organization of higher education courses into three educational cycles: undergraduate degree; master’s degree; doctoral degree. However, even though the Bologna Process made it possible to have comparable degrees in the Higher Education European Space (HEES), there is no specific teacher education model, nor is there an established timeframe for each cycle (Eurydice, 2012).

In Portugal, it is only in the master degree that the initial teacher training effectively begins. It is during this study cycle that students have real contact with situations related to the teaching practice. In the case of Childhood Educators and Primary and Lower secondary teacher training, i.e., from kindergarden to 6th grade, this training can occur oriented towards four qualification profiles: 1) Pre-school Education (3-5/6 years old); 2) Primary education (6/7-9/10 years old); 3) Pre-school Education + Primary education; 4) Primary education + Lower secondary education (10/11-11/12 years old). What can be highlighted here is the inadequacy of the teacher training model followed in Portugal with the Bologna Process. In this model students have general training in the undergraduate degree, which is not oriented to the teaching profession. Its orientation is not to train teachers, but rather technicians to perform functions in non-formal educational context. Nevertheless it is with this undergraduate degree that students can access teacher training courses, which take place in the master degree. In sum, the curricular structure arising from the Bologna Process broke through the integrated model of initial teacher training that created conditions for socializing students with the teaching profession (Author, 2014) since the beginning of the course, generating a professional identity related to specific school level (Lopes, 2007, 2009).

With regards to the legal framework within early childhood, primary and lower secondary teacher education in Portugal, there is a tension between the education quality agenda and the instituted practice, resulting in the following questions: Is it possible to increase the quality of an educational system with this

option for primary, lower secondary and early childhood teacher education? Does the amount of time allocated to teacher education, including opportunities to learn to teach “grounded in practice” (Hammerness, 2013; Nóvoa, 1992, 2009), favor the conditions for developing professional competences? Does this education model facilitate the achievement of dynamics based on the *education-action-reflection* (Zeichner, 1993, 2005, 2010) logic? Based on the fact that, currently, the teacher placement system, in Portugal, doesn’t have many openings for teachers, how does this teaching model designed to prepare teachers for various teaching levels benefit in any way? What impact does this teacher education model have on the construction of professional identity?

As it can be understood, the contradictions of this initial training model due to the BP require reflection and debate, namely because of the limitations that it places on the socialization with professional situations. In view of these tensions the question that remains to be answered is: *How to conciliate this teaching model with a quality educational agenda?*

#### 4. Methodology

The study used a survey to collect data from public Higher Education Institutions (HEI) from different regions in Portugal that ensure initial teacher education for early childhood, primary and lower secondary education within the four domains/profiles prior mentioned. Based on the study objectives, the survey was applied to higher education professors responsible for teacher education. The survey included closed-ended questions on a 4-point Likert scale<sup>2</sup> and a set of open-ended questions. The continuous 4-point Likert scale was meant to measure the respondents’ level of agreement with teacher education policies within the Bologna Process. For the open-ended questions, respondents were asked to explain their opinions about the education policies and the effects of such on the understanding of ‘being a teacher’ and achieving a professional identity, as well as the effects they attributed to the evaluation and accreditation process carried out by A3ES in relationship to quality promotion.

There are 20 public HEIs in Portugal involved in teacher education within the domains/profiles studied in this investigation. The data collected are from 11 of those HEIs, more precisely professors directly involved in initial teacher education courses in the areas defined for this analysis ( $n = 25$ ). The participants were part of an intentional sample (Sampieri, Collado, & Lucio, 2006) and were selected based on participation in a discussion and reflection forum<sup>3</sup> about the changes in teacher education resulting from the BP, as well as their consent to participate in the study. Of the 32 professors in the forum, 25 agreed to participate in the study.

<sup>2</sup> Where “1” means total disagreement and “4” means total agreement.

<sup>3</sup> The 1st Forum of reflection about teacher education in early childhood, primary and lower secondary education, held in a polytechnic institute of higher education in northern Portugal.

Several procedures were followed in order to verify the validity and reliability of the survey. Experts in the area of item content analyzed the first version of the survey in order to ensure *content validity* (Sampieri et al., 2006) and *logical validity* (Almeida & Freire, 2000). In addition to assessing if the items measured the respondents' level of agreement on several aspects inherent to policies and their achievement within the BP, the formulation of items was also analyzed to ensure its *facial validity* (Schweigert, 1994). Concerning the evaluation of reliability, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for the set of items in each dimension in order to analyze internal consistency. This process resulted in reviewing and improving the structure of the survey. The survey was organized in three thematic blocks (Table 1).

Table 1  
*Structure and organization of the questionnaire*

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Part I	Socio-demographic data Objective: to obtain personal, academic and professional information such as gender, age, educational background and professional experience as a teacher trainer
Part II	Teacher education Policies within the Bologna Process framework Objective: to ascertain the opinions of the respondents about higher education and initial teacher education policies in the Bologna Process framework. Specifically, participants views about their own positions were sought out: Set 1: 18 items regarding their <i>degree of agreement with teacher education policies</i> Set 2: 5 items that aim to attain the <i>degree of perceived compatibility between teacher education policies and practices</i> .
Part III	Open-ended questions Objective: To collect information about: Satisfaction with the processes of implementing and enacting teacher education policies within the Bologna Process framework; The generated effects on the vision of 'being a teacher' and on the building of a professional identity; The effects of the assessment/accreditation processes conducted by A3ES in relationship to quality promotion

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## 5. Data analysis

The data analysis involved quantitative methods (statistical analysis, using IBM-SPSS Statistics 20) applied to the closed-ended questions, and qualitative methods (content analysis [Bardin, 1994; Krippendorff, 2003]) applied to the open-ended questions. For the statistical analysis, the absolute frequency and the relative frequency were used as summary measures for categorical variables, and the average and standard deviation for ordinal and metric variables were calculated. The relationships between participant responses on different issues or in different areas of the questionnaire and the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants were also explored. This analysis included procedures such as the inferential statistical t-test and the Mann-Whitney test, according to the assumptions required by testing for the distribution of the variables and data. For all statistical procedures, the null hypothesis was rejected, limiting the type 1 error to 0.05.

The identification of items associated with each block and each question sub-group was statistically evaluated through the Cronbach's alpha fidelity test. To synthesize the answer tendency for each group of questions, a calculation was made of the average in the set of questions from each group. Additionally, since the variables did not follow a normal distribution, *Spearman's rs* correlation was calculated between the average of partial answers in each sub-group and the answer to the global question.

The open-ended questions from the survey were performed by content analysis, having been established *a priori* categories, based on the main idea of each question.

## 6. Results

Although the data were submitted to statistical analysis, given the number of participants, which represents and are representative of the number of institutions, we have chosen to present the results in terms of the tendency of responses and not percentages. The socio-demographic data are presented first, followed by the data concerning the dimension *Teacher Education Policies within the Bologna Process*.

Qualitative results from open-ended questions are presented in the final section, and include the aspects: *Satisfaction with teacher education policies resulting from processes of the BP; Effects generated in the understanding of 'being a teacher' and in the establishment of professional identity; Effects of the evaluation and accreditation process carried out by A3ES in relationship to quality promotion.*

### 6.1. Socio-demographic data

Of the 25 participants who completed the questionnaire, 19 were female and 6 were male. On average, participants were 44.7 years old ( $sd = 8.7$ ); the majority ( $n = 13$ ) were between the ages of 28 and 44, while all others were 45 years old or older.

On average, respondents had 17.4 years ( $sd = 8.57$ ) of experience in teacher education and 15.4 years ( $sd = 7.85$ ) of experience in their current institution. Thirteen respondents had between 5 and 14 years of experience in teacher education and 12 respondents had 15 or more years of experience. Of the 25 participants, 3 had 6 or fewer years of experience in teacher education, coinciding with the enforcement of the BP.

### 6.2. Teacher education policies within the bologna process framework

A global analysis of the average response in each category shows that the category with the highest level of agreement is the *Degree of agreement with Higher Education and Teacher Education Policies within the BP framework* ( $M = 2.9$ ,  $sd =$



0.45), compared to the category *Compatibility between changes and the institutional context* ( $M = 2.5$ ,  $sd = 0.43$ ), which had a relatively lower level of agreement.

In comparing the average of each category with the variable *Teaching experience in Teacher Education*, no significant differences were found in either group (5-14 vs. 15 or more).

The following is a detailed analysis of each category:

### 6.2.1. Category 1 - degree of agreement with higher education and teacher training policies within the bologna process

*The degree of agreement with higher education and teacher training policies evaluates* the correlation between the survey items regarding the change introduced by the BP framework in higher education in general and teacher training in particular, and specific aspects related to course evaluation and accreditation. As shown in Table 2, the average responses for the items within this category vary between 2.1 and 3.5. It is also evident that the item *student mobility* has the lowest level of agreement: 17 respondents partially or totally agree with the item about the inexistence of student mobility. It also highlights the aspects related to the *structure of cycles and academic degrees* and the *broadening of general teacher qualifications*. In both cases, the respondents' answers were well balanced ( $n = 13$  disagreement and  $n = 12$  agreement) with regard to the *structure of the cycles and academic degrees*, and were reversed ( $n = 13$  agreement and  $n = 12$  disagreement) related to the *broadening of general teacher qualifications*.

The *flexibility in student paths, the recognition of competences and the mobility within the EHEA*, and the *valuing of knowledge in teaching* had the highest levels of agreement, with scores of 3.5 and 3.4, respectively. Almost every respondent ( $n = 24$ ) partially or totally agreed with the higher education policies within the BP framework, and 22 respondents partially or totally agreed with the second item.

It is also important to stress the average response ( $M = 3.3$ ) regarding the items *change in the educational paradigm, adoption of a ECTS to base student work*, and the *establishment of the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES)*. The level of agreement for these items was almost unanimous ( $n = 24$ ;  $n = 23$ ;  $n = 24$ , respectively).

It is also significant to note that the average for the last item, regarding a general evaluation of the dimension in analysis, is 2.5, which is below the average in the category *Degree of agreement with Higher Education and Teacher Education policies within the BP framework* ( $M = 2.9$ ). As shown in Table 2, the respondents' answers expressed a tendency toward disagreement ( $n = 14$ ) regarding the adequacy of those policies.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of results for the items of *Degree of Agreement with Higher Education and Teacher Education Policies within Bologna Process Framework*

<i>Degree of agreement with Higher Education and Teacher Education Policies within the Bologna Process framework</i>	Totally disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Totally agree	M	dp	rs <sup>‡</sup>
	n	n	n	n			
1.1 The change in the <b>structure of cycles and academic degrees</b> introduced by the Bologna Process framework constitutes an improvement in the organizational model of higher education in general and Teacher Education in particular.	3	10	10	2	2.4	0.82	0.614**
1.2 The <b>flexibility in students' paths, the recognition of competences and the mobility within the European Higher Education Area</b> are positive aspects of the process of higher education reform.	0	1	11	13	3.5	0.59	0.521**
1.3 The focus on the <b>change in the educational paradigm</b> oriented towards competence-based learning is an asset in Higher Education.	0	1	15	9	3.3	0.56	0.38
1.4 The adoption of the <b>European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)</b> to base student work is useful to guide Higher education and training.	1	1	13	10	3.3	0.74	0.257
1.5 The Bologna Process has forced institutions to become <b>organize together</b> , which negatively affects the quality of Teacher education.	8	8	7	2	2.9	0.97	-0.396
1.6 <b>Students' mobility</b> is absent from Teacher education. <sup>†</sup>	4	3	9	8	2.1	1.08	-0.451*
1.7 The <b>European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)</b> is not being fulfilled within the education philosophy that it supports. <sup>†</sup>	5	7	11	1	2.7	0.87	-0.276
1.8 The establishment of the <b>2nd Cycle of Studies (Master's degree)</b> as a minimum professional qualification level for all teachers is a positive change in Teacher education.	1	6	7	11	3.1	0.93	0.2
1.9 The <b>broadening of general teacher qualifications</b> (Profile 1-4) is a positive change.	5	7	11	2	2.4	0.91	0.188
1.10 The definition of <b>training components</b> in cycles of study in order to be qualified to teach represents a breakthrough in Teacher education.	1	4	16	4	2.9	0.7	0.077
1.11 The <b>establishment of minimum and maximum percentages for each of the training components</b> of cycles of study in order to be qualified to teach represents a breakthrough in Teacher education.	3	2	16	4	2.8	0.85	0.588**
1.12 The <b>valuing of knowledge in teaching</b> is an asset for Teacher education. <sup>‡</sup>	0	1	13	9	3.4	0.57	0.440*
1.13 The legal framework in the current model of Teacher education has diminished the quality of <b>training</b> . <sup>‡</sup>	3	9	7	4	2.5	0.95	-0.671**
1.14 The establishment of the <b>Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES)</b> is useful for ensuring institutional practices that improve the quality of <b>training</b> in Higher Education.	0	1	16	8	3.3	0.54	0.09

1.15 The parameters considered in the assessment of quality established under the Bologna Process are relevant. †	0	3	17	3	3	0.52	0.487*
1.16 The prescribed procedures for the Assessment/Accreditation of Higher Education are suitable.	0	10	13	2	2.7	0.63	0.460*
1.17 The Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES) only serves to delay the process of organization and does not bring any positive consequence to the quality of Teacher education. †	5	14	5	0	3	0.66	-0.621**
1.18 Generally, Higher Education and Teacher education policies in the Bologna Process framework are adequate. †	1	13	8	2	2.5	0.72	1

Note: †  $n = 24$ ; ‡  $n = 23$ ; ¥ Spearman's correlation  $r_s$  between partial items and the global item (1.18); \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

### 6.2.2. Category 2 - compatibility between changes and the institutional context

The category *Compatibility between changes and the institutional context* assessed the participants' agreement concerning the impacts of this policy on the practices of higher education institution, as shown in Table 3.

This category has a global average of 2.5 ( $sd = 0.43$ ) and an item average varying between 2.4 and 2.8. The respondents demonstrated less agreement on the significant changes in the *educational paradigm* and the *monitoring and quality assurance processes*. In both cases, the answers were very well balanced, with 12 respondents in partial agreement and 11 respondents in partial or total disagreement. Concerning the item *monitoring and quality assurance processes*, an inverse tendency was found, with 14 respondents in partial or total disagreement, and 11 respondents in partial agreement.

On the last item, related to the *general evaluation in this dimension*, respondent answers reflected a lower level of agreement, with 13 participants partially or totally disagreeing, and 11 participants partially agreeing. The item with the highest level of agreement was the *consideration of a profile of competences* (profiles of teacher performance) when organizing the courses. With regards to this item, 20 respondents partially or totally agreed that this aspect was taken into consideration in their institutions when implementing the BP in teacher education.

Table 3  
Descriptive statistics of results for the items of *Compatibility between changes and the Institutional Context*

<i>Compatibility between changes and the institutional context</i>	Totally disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Totally agree	<i>M</i>	<i>Dp</i>	$r_s^¥$
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>			
2.1 The educational paradigm, oriented towards competence based learning, generated a significant change in current practices in my institution. †	2	9	12	0	2.4	0.66	0.361

2.2 The <b>accountability for all student work</b> (contact and independent study hours) caused a significant change in the teaching and learning processes. †	1	10	12	1	2.5	0.66	0.542**
2.3 The development of monitoring and quality assurance processes is different from the prevailing practices	2	12	11	0	2.4	0.64	0.584**
2.4 The <b>consideration of a profile of competences</b> in the process of organizing courses/cycles of study became an aspect that is considerably taken into account in my institution.	0	5	19	1	2.8	0.47	0.410*
2.5 <b>Generally</b> , Teachers Education policies imposed by the Bologna process constituted a rupture with the prevailing practices ‡	1	12	11	0	2.4	0.58	1.000

Note: †  $n = 23$ ; ‡  $n = 24$ ; ¥ Spearman's correlation  $r_s$  between partial items and the global item (2.5); \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$

### 6.3. Results of the open-ended questions

The analysis of the questionnaire's open-ended questions examined whether the respondents were satisfied with the implementation of teacher education policies derived from BP. It also reflected the effects that they identified as related to their perceptions of "being a teacher" and the establishment of a professional identity. Considering that these initial training courses are evaluated by A3ES, it was possible to collect the respondents' opinions about the impacts of this process in relationship to teacher education and quality promotion.

Concerning *Satisfaction with implementation of teacher education policies derived from the Bologna Process*, the respondents generally agreed with the basic principles of the BP. However, they expressed apprehension concerning its implementation within initial teacher education. They believed that including teacher education only in the master's degree is insufficient for developing the specific professional profile, especially considering the mix of profiles required for teaching at more than one education level. In particular, the respondents mentioned that starting teacher training just at the master degree was insufficient to develop the specific professional profile, especially considering the combination of profiles required for teaching in more than one school level. They also mentioned that a wide range teacher training model requires a lot of mobility in the profession which in turn contributes to a more hybrid professional identity. Furthermore, this model gives students the opportunity to continue their studies (masters) and make more informed decisions.

Considering the argument that this model results in insufficient training, because it is not structured from the beginning of the training to prepare teachers for performance in a specific education level, the respondents stated that:

This new structure coming from the Bologna Process is not working as planned in comparison with pre-Bologna teacher education, in which the students

established a parallel between theory and practice and had greater knowledge about each teaching level.

I believe it could be an advantage because it enables them... to make a more consistent choice for the level they will be teaching...

Concerning early childhood and primary education now compressed into a single course, I think it is worse. They are not pre-school teachers, nor primary education teachers. They think they can be anything and, in my opinion, this needs to change.

However, the profile of teachers in primary and lower secondary education is the one that is raising more issues. The general undergraduate level training (1st Bologna cycle) is understood as an added value, giving the future teachers an overview of the different levels of basic education. Furthermore, as it is expressed in the excerpt below, those responsible for initial teacher training in Portugal consider that this model provides students with the opportunity to continue their studies (in the masters) making more informed decisions about the profile of teaching school level that they identify themselves with. They mentioned that:

In my opinion, they will be able to run simultaneously and the school will benefit from hiring a teacher with this background [qualified to teach at different education levels], since they can alternate between different areas, especially when they are not able to provide full-time work hours to a teacher (...) But if you asked me if this professional will have the necessary skills?... I doubt it...

I think it is difficult for teachers because they must have specific, didactical and curricular knowledge. Regarding the specific content, future teachers must have knowledge of the Portuguese language, History, Geography and Sciences and this is not possible in such a short training time.

However, it is in relation to the profile that qualifies both the Primary education and Lower secondary education (between 6 and 12 years) that those responsible for the initial teacher training pose more questions. On the one hand they recognize that it adds value that could result in a professional who follows students in a more extended teaching (because the same teacher can cover all areas from the primary school and lower secondary in Portuguese Language and History and Geography or Mathematic and Nature Sciences). On the other hand, they question the quality of a teacher's preparation in so many teaching areas and how it is possible to learn so much in four semesters. The respondents stated:

I consider that a teacher must have good knowledge and here I'm talking about (...) the specific knowledge, didactic knowledge and curricular knowledge. If we are thinking about specific content knowledge, he/she needs to have good knowledge of Portuguese Language and History and Geography or Mathematic and Nature Sciences, as well as the knowledge related to Primary school.

Regarding *the effects on the perception of “being a teacher” and on the establishment of professional identity*, the respondents expressed some reservations concerning the development of the students’ professional profiles. They specifically focused on the consequences of the magnitude of functions for future teachers and the conditions that are provided for reflection and professional development during their training. For example, some participants stated:

I believe the best we can do for our students, future teachers, is to offer them the possibility to learn how to learn, so that they do not settle with what they already know and they can adapt to new things.

(...) upon their entry into this course, the students were asked about their professional future, and some didn’t know. There was a time when most were certain about the path they wanted to follow, but in recent years things started to change, and this non-identity with the education profiles impacted the students’ identification with their future profession. This lack of identity has consequences.

In respect to *the effects of the A3ES evaluation and accreditation process for teacher education quality promotion*, the participants were asked about their perceptions related to the effects of the A3ES evaluation and accreditation process on the function and organization of courses. They mentioned: “the usefulness of *creating the A3ES* for ensuring institutional improvement”; the “appropriateness of *standards* to be followed in the *evaluation of quality* within the BP framework”; the “adequacy of the *process for higher education evaluation and accreditation*”; and the “positive effects on the internal organization, quality mechanisms related to greater reflection on the education process, and the implementation of improvements and development of internal processes for quality education”.

In sum, those responsible for teacher education courses consider the evaluation of quality as useful to improve the current courses and to implement a more adequate professional training.

## 7. Conclusions

Considering that this article is focused on issues related with higher education policies and initial teacher training in the Bologna Process context, the study leads to conclude that, in general, there is an agreement with the discourses mentioned in the policies imposed. Aspects related to the flexibility that students have within the system, which allows them to change paths are valued. The training structured around competencies to be developed by students is also valued. This data corroborates the Bologna Process guidelines for a transversal and interdisciplinary education, which implies a priority in HEI (Santos, 2011). The results about the change of the educational paradigm broadcasted in the Bologna Process are also very positive, as well as the adoption of the ECTS based on students work.

It is interesting to note that when the respondents encounter issues related to their own institution, in general, they consider that the changes related to the educational paradigm ( $M = 2.4$ ) didn't make significant changes to the institutions prevalent practices, i.e., before the BP. That is, according to the respondents of this study there was continuity of previous institutional practices, though, with the BP, there has been a change in the discourse of educational policy.

Considering the quality assurance agenda, the statistical results demonstrate a high level of agreement with the evaluation performed by A3ES (responsible for the processes of assessment and accreditation of higher education courses). In this case, those responsible for teacher training, globally, recognized the usefulness of this Agency in ensuring institutional improvement and institutionalization of reflection mechanisms (Zeichner, 1993, 2005, 2010) for education quality (Author & Author, 2014).

The results also point toward the existence of ambiguities regarding the professional identities of future teachers (Dubar, 1997; Lopes, 2007, 2009; Hidalgo & Gallego, 2015; Montero, 2005, 2016). This ambiguity seems to be related to the consequences of the teacher's training courses organisation (in a non-integrated system), the various professional profiles that it allows to access and of the nature and extent of the specific roles that future teachers should play. As mentioned previously in this article, initial teacher training after the BP started being organized into two cycles: the undergraduate, of general training, and the master's degree, of professional training for teaching, which breaks from an integrated model (Korthagen, 2001, 2010; Almeida et al., 2013). In the case of basic education (early childhood, primary and lower secondary education), professional training may be provided simultaneously for teaching at different levels, which decreases the possibility of building a specific professional identity (Castells, 2000, Lopes, 2002, 2007, 2009; Montero 2005, 2016). In other words, the model resulting from the Bologna Process (Bolivar, 2007; Villa et al., 2015) has created a set of circumstances that appear to be contributing to the construction of what Boyd (2010) designated as "double identities", or what we call "hybrid professional identity". These are questions that allow questioning the possibilities that the initial teacher training system, adopted in Portugal as a result of the BP, has to ensure a quality education. Despite this doubt, it must be acknowledged that teacher training to ensure suitability to different levels of schooling can contribute to responding to the needs of the current educational system that is characterized by excess of teachers for some levels.

Summarizing, the opinions expressed by the respondents of this study it can be said that there is agreement with the speech delivered by initial teacher training policies, but also the expression of some resistance related to its implementation, particularly in regards to the training length. This training length is considered insufficient, particularly in the case of the professional profiles that prepare students to teach in two different school levels (Preschool Education + Primary school or Primary school + Lower secondary school). Returning to the initial questions (Is it

possible to increase the quality of an educational system with this option for primary, lower secondary and early childhood teacher education? Does the amount of time allocated to teacher education, including opportunities to learn to teach “grounded in practice”, favor the conditions for developing professional competences? Does this education model facilitate the achievement of dynamics based on the *education-action-reflection* logic?), the study leads to the conclusion that there is tension between the desire for a quality initial teacher training and the opportunities offered for professional socialization allowing the construction of a strong professional identity. The model adopted by the BP configures the construction of a *hybrid professional identity* that prepares students for mobility within different school levels (teaching in various school levels), but it is fragile when it comes to bringing real life situations into the training (Nóvoa, 2009). Therefore, the data reflects ambiguities and tensions concerning quality concessions behind the model as a result of the Bologna Process.

Taking these results into consideration, it will be important to invest in creating opportunities to promote initial teacher training in real contexts (Hammerness, 2013; Nóvoa, 1992, 2009) in order to generate a stronger and more systematic socialization with the teaching profession (Almeida, Leite, & Santiago, 2013). In our view this will be the condition for the development of professional identities adapted to the social challenges related to a teaching professional appropriate for the 21st century.

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