



SEÇÃO: LIVRE

## Teaching (History) in the 21st Century: new competencies with identical contents

*Ensinar (História) no século XXI: novas competências com conteúdos idênticos*

*Enseñar (Historia) en el siglo XXI: nuevas competencias con contenido idéntico*

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**Abstract:** Contemporary thinking in Education must go beyond what is already known and feed on a utopian vision. Regardless of the contents, the change needs to happen, within the pedagogical practice above anything else: listening more and talking less; embracing new perspectives and different readings from well-known authors; preparing our interlocutors (students) to face the unforeseen and the uncertainty with optimism. In Basic and Secondary Education, this circumstance assumes the characteristics of a historical thinking and a historical consciousness progressively more sophisticated and, therefore, coincident with a reading of the world desirably more complex and humanistic. In Higher Education, it is crucial that future teachers perceive the relevance of that attitude of change. Based on these contemporary educational potentialities and challenges, we intend to discuss possible paths to consider, today, a teaching of History that allows us to design new futures or other competencies.

**Keywords:** Competencies. Historical thinking. Curriculum. Portugal.

**Resumo:** O pensamento contemporâneo sobre Educação tem de ir além do já conhecido e alimentar-se de uma visão utópica. Independentemente dos conteúdos, é sobretudo na prática pedagógica que teremos de mudar: ouvindo mais e falando menos; acolhendo perspetivas novas e leituras diferentes de autores conhecidos; preparando os nossos interlocutores (alunos) para encararem com otimismo o imprevisto e a incerteza. Nos ensinamentos básico e secundário, esta circunstância assume contornos de um pensamento histórico e de uma consciência histórica progressivamente mais sofisticados e, por isso, coincidentes com uma leitura do mundo desejavelmente mais complexa e humanista. No ensino superior, a perceção da relevância dessa postura de mudança faz-se junto dos futuros docentes. Com base nestas potencialidades e desafios, pretendemos discutir caminhos possíveis para, hoje, se equacionar um ensino da História que nos permita desenhar novos futuros ou outras competências.

**Palavras-chave:** Competências. Pensamento histórico. Currículo. Portugal.

**Resumen:** El pensamiento contemporáneo en Educación debe ir más allá de lo que ya se conoce y alimentarse de una visión utópica. Independentemente de los contenidos, el cambio debe producirse, dentro de la práctica pedagógica por encima de todo: escuchar más y hablar menos; acoger nuevas perspectivas y lecturas diferentes de autores conocidos; preparar a nuestros interlocutores (alumnos) para afrontar lo imprevisto y la incertidumbre con optimismo. En la Educación Básica y Media, esta circunstancia asume las características de un pensamiento histórico y una conciencia histórica progresivamente más sofisticada y, por tanto, coincidente con una lectura del mundo deseablemente más compleja y humanista. En la Educación Superior, es fundamental que los futuros profesores perciban la relevancia de esa actitud de cambio. A partir de estas potencialidades y desafíos educativos contemporáneos, pretendemos discutir posibles caminos para considerar, hoy, una enseñanza de la Historia que permita



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diseñar nuevos futuros u otras competencias.

**Palabras clave:** Competencias. Pensamiento histórico. Currículum. Portugal.

## Introduction<sup>4</sup>

Reflecting upon the future is a risky and often futile exercise. But, despite the warnings, we are daily bombarded with visionaries of a future that only they can long for, presenting themselves with a convincing voice, with arguments 'pleasing to the ear', with certainties that only they have found in the profuse bibliography visible on the bookshelves behind their chairs (armchairs) and where some terms in English help to give consistency and intellectuality to the messages they want to sell us.

In front of such learned persons, naturally we need to have a broad view, a reasoning that does not close itself neither in the frontiers of the immediate, nor in the illusion of a more-than-perfect future. In the manner of Reinhart Koselleck (2006; 2012), it is important that we are able to understand how the past is inscribed in our present experience and how the future already insinuates itself into present history.

Edgar Morin (2010) suggests the concept of metamorphosis:

[...] when a system is unable to deal with its vital problems, it degrades or disintegrates/ or else it is unable to elicit a meta-system capable of dealing with its problems: it metamorphoses. What is a metamorphosis? [...] Everything starts again with an innovation, a new, deviant, marginal, small message, often invisible to contemporaries.

Teachers are very accustomed to making diagnoses, which are no longer exclusive to medical sciences, but have become part of the daily life of those professionals too. 'Vital problems' of education are identified by teachers, as a means (to access a more humanistic and social attitude), as content (multiple knowledge that coherently help to understand the World), as a system (marked by tensions between the exogenous and the endo-

genous, between the centre and the peripheries).

Morin (2015, p. 17) also alerts us that:

teaching to live is not just teaching to read, write, calculate, nor just teaching useful basic knowledge of history, geography, social sciences, natural sciences. Teaching is not concentrating on quantitative knowledge, nor privileging specialized training, it is to introduce a basic culture which implies knowledge of knowledge.

Even if it is true that futurists try to distract us, as we are accustomed to handling time and using memory, we know that already in the famous Faure Report of 1995 – *Enseigner et Apprendre vers la société cognitive* (also known as the White Paper on Education and Training<sup>5</sup>) –, faced with the factors of upheaval of the information society, globalization and scientific and technological civilization, the answer focused on general knowledge (as a way of knowing the meaning of things, of understanding and achieving creativity and of enabling consistent and relevant judgments or decisions). The ways stated there to achieve this goal were flexibility, interdisciplinarity, cooperation, collaboration and dialogue. There were also visible concerns with the acquisition of new knowledge, with the fight against exclusion, with the importance of finding a common language, which does not uniformize. Furthermore, the need to avoid 'getting into a crisis' was made clear!

Hannah Arendt (2019) argued that a crisis only becomes catastrophic if we respond to it with preconceived ideas, that is, with prejudices. We have to be bold and create new concepts, but above all create a different school culture. Contemporary thinking on education must go beyond the already known and feed on utopia which is expressed "by the ability not only to reflect upon the future in the present, but also to organize the present in such a way that it allows us to act on that future" (p. 7), as Pierre Furter stated in 1970.

It is in the balance between consistency/experience and risk/idealism that it will be necessary to build a path that, taking advantage of the

<sup>4</sup> This paper is financed by National Funds through the FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology, under the project UIDB/04059/2020.

<sup>5</sup> Full version available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d0a8aa7a-5311-4eee-904c-98fa541108d8/language-pt/format-PDF>. Accessed: 25 Oct. 2021.

disciplinary contents, builds with our addressees (students) competencies that guarantee irreversibility, preparing for the unknown, and the confidence to risk metamorphosis without inhibitory preconceptions.

History, as scientific knowledge used to dealing with time, is a privileged knowledge, as long as the agents (teachers) at the different levels of education know how to play this new role associated with the development of citizens capable of mobilizing their competencies in the face of the challenges of the 21st century.

### Considering History in compulsory education

In Portugal, school education includes Primary and Secondary Education, and attendance is compulsory until the end of the latter level or until the age of 18.

Although there are specific courses, namely specialized artistic courses, Basic Education is generally composed of three sequential cycles: 1st Cycle, of a globalizing nature, lasting 4 years (from 6 to 10 years old), which includes the curricular component of Study of Social Environment, in which historical subjects are approached; 2nd Cycle, consisting of year 5 and year 6, organized into subject areas, and the first cycle offers a specific History component – History and Geography of Portugal; 3rd Cycle, the last one, lasting 3 years, during which historical education is autonomous, with compulsory attendance of a History subject.

Secondary Education (from year 10 to year 12), even for scientific-humanistic courses, presents a more diverse curricular structure. With the exception of the matrix referring to Sciences and Technologies, the remaining courses include, in some way, specific components in History: Visual Arts includes the component of History of Culture and Arts; Socioeconomic Sciences includes the discipline of History B; Languages and Humanities corresponds to the course with higher preponderance in this domain with the compulsory component of History A.

In fact, the structure of the Portuguese school system presents a certain internal variety. There-

fore, the following lines will offer a more specific discussion on Primary Education and then on Secondary Education. This section ends with a reference to the (potential) pedagogical-curricular challenges associated with the teaching of History in this compulsory education in Portugal and regarding teacher education.

### Basic Education

Basic Education is the first stage of formal education for a Portuguese child. In this context, the teaching of History is expected to take place in different formats in an interdisciplinary way in the early cycles and as an autonomous subject in the 3rd cycle, adapting to the different ages of the students. In this sense, it is important to point out that the formative experience of a 6-year-old child will be substantially different from the pedagogical practices with 13-year-old students, for example.

Even so, it is relevant to identify some specific aspects of History teaching as a common and compulsory component for all Portuguese young people.

As Thomas (2013) identifies, there is, in school reality, a recurrent tension between the definition of a common curriculum and the need to diversify practices and even cultural options in each of the educational contexts. In fact, the need to establish a cultural canon to be taught to all students in a given country in a more or less uniform way has been widely criticized because it is an artefactual curriculum with little flexibility, reducing the autonomy and pedagogical involvement of the different local actors, which include teachers and students (STEINBERG, 2016). Within this framework of thought, the national curriculum (or similar) tends to be interpreted based on a certain mistrust, particularly when it is understood as an educational construction stemming from a normative vision that seeks to impose a particular cultural option, forgetting, or underestimating, any contextual particularities (GIMENO SACRISTÁN, 2011).

Despite the above, perhaps another thought can be outlined, especially when reflecting on

the levels of compulsory education in a given community. In this regard, Gimeno Sacristán (2015) provides a broad set of considerations on how a national educational text – a common curriculum – can have particular pedagogical and social relevance. Taking into consideration the specific theme of this paper, five ideas stand out in that scope. Thus, that national educational text:

a) should not correspond to a monocultural selection, but rather needs to incorporate the cultural plurality that frames the diversity of thoughts and knowledge. Mobilizing this idea for the teaching of history, the common curriculum can also contribute to a pedagogical approach based on multiperspective and evidence-based dialogue (BARCA, 2019; 2021).

b) does not have to integrate all the learning of all students in a given geographical context, but rather provide a common foundation and ensure curricular justice which is strengthened and expanded in each school organization and with each group of students. In the context of historical learning, this perspective can be seen when framing the common curriculum as the set of knowledge that, being transversal to the universe of students, can be enriched by valuing the previous knowledge of each one, local history, and heritage education, among others (BARTON; LEVSTIK, 2004; BARCA, 2021).

c) should provide each student with the "preparatory rudiments to understand the subjects" (GIMENO SACRISTÁN, 2015, p. 79), i.e. contribute to a more sustained understanding of the epistemic structures of each area of knowledge. In this sense, a common curriculum will have to enable students to understand what history is, how history is made, what the historian's job is, and therefore refuse reductive or manipulated visions of historical knowledge (WINEBURG, 2001).

d) needs to bring about the development of the ability, through valuable knowledge, to interpret the social and natural realities of the past, but without disregarding contemporary problems or challenges, positioning oneself as an enlightened citizen. In teaching History, this vision contributes to an approach which does not shy away from so-

*cially alive questions* (LEGARDEZ; SIMONNEAUX, 2006) and which does not forget the relevance of the development of historical consciousness from an early age (RÜSEN, 2021).

e) must pool the set of skills, knowledge, values and competencies that are shared and necessary in democratic societies. Therefore, it will challenge the conception of pedagogical practices, in the field of History, which contribute to students developing empathy, historical explanation or critical and humanist argumentation (SEIXAS; MORTON, 2013; SCHMIDT, 2021) implied in the intersubjectivity underlying the educational process and social participation.

Perhaps in a simplified way, it seems possible to assume that the Portuguese Basic Education, because it presupposes, for all students, the acquisition of knowledge and the improvement of competencies regarding History, promotes a learning that allows students to understand what brings them closer to the 'other' so similar to themselves and, equally, what separates them (REBOUL, 2017), but in a logic of acceptance and respect for the difference (SCHMIDT, 2021).

Therefore, one of the central challenges for the teaching of History, in these three initial cycles, converges with the need for every child to perceive history as a powerful and scientifically structured knowledge (YOUNG, 2010), namely promoter of a humanist and cosmopolitan education (NUSSBAUM, 2012). In other words, for Primary Education, History is an essential component, as it benefits the development of critical and ethical thinking in the youngest children, i.e., a more historically honest thinking, converging towards a more complex rationality and, simultaneously, more committed to the present time (ALVES, 2016; SANTOMÉ, 2017).

### *Secondary Education*

From the 10th year of schooling, at around 14/15 years of age, Portuguese students have to make choices regarding their educational pathway. The obligation to study remains, however, from now on, and for three years (until the 12th year of schooling), they choose paths, such as the

preferred scientific-humanistic course or a more vocational pathway and, also, some subjects to be attended.

This means that the teaching and learning of History may be thought of in a different perspective. The students are already in a different age group, they are young active citizens who have a wealth of prior knowledge derived not only from school experience but also from everyday life; they have made a choice, based on a certain predisposition to know more about history and, therefore, they will be willing to participate in pedagogical activities which require competencies such as the confrontation of perspectives, problem-solving and decision-making; they may continue their academic development in Higher Education and, as such, there is a set of knowledge that may be important to them in the structuring of increasingly intricate reasoning, namely in the Social Sciences and Humanities.

In fact, it should be noted here that, in Portugal, since 2019, students in year 12 (the last year of compulsory education) of the scientific-humanistic courses of Science and Technology, Socioeconomic Sciences and Visual Arts, therefore those who do not attend the subject of History A (only some of its 'variants'), may, depending on the school, opt for an annual subject entitled *History, Cultures and Democracy*. It is designed so that students who from the 9th year of schooling have followed a course which is more distant from that component and from the knowledge and competencies which it may promote can form "a historical consciousness which enables them to assume an informed, critical and participatory position in the construction of their individual and collective identity, within a humanist and democratic frame of reference". Indeed, based on certain substantive knowledge, which is not far from that worked on in the subject of History A, a set of skills "of critical, conscious and autonomous reflection on our contemporaneity" emerge (*Aprendizagens Essenciais*, 2018, p. 2).

In a vision that refers to the pedagogical action that can be carried out in a classroom with students learning History in the 21st century, it is

important to clearly consider some fundamental points. Apparently, these points are transversal to different educational contexts, since there are behaviors of intercultural and humanist dialogue, cooperation and solidarity, active intervention and citizenship which do not have to be accessible only to some. Starting from the document issued by the Council of Europe in 2018, *Quality teaching in the subject of History in the 21st century*, it will be essential to agree that History "provides answers to critically understand the present, teaching that any element of the past must be interpreted in its historical context and promoting the notion that historical interpretation is a matter of debate" (CE, 2018, p. 6).

Therefore, contact with diverse, sometimes dissonant, historical narratives becomes a crucial element for building a *multiperspectival* view of history (BARCA, 2019), *interperspectival* (GAGO, 2021) perhaps, able to highlight the need to make several interpretations based on different points of view (CHAPMAN, 2016), to imagine the other, his life and options in past times or to propose different ways of doing based on the knowledge developed about society and its way of functioning over time (MARTÍNEZ; CARRASCO, 2021).

In fact, the preponderance of reconciling substantive knowledge and methodological knowledge stands out, i.e., those skills proper of historical thinking (SEIXAS; MORTON, 2013; SCHMIDT, 2021), in a practice of history teaching which aims to clarify the provisionality of the explanations or explain the ways of understanding, selecting and using fundamental historical information. This allows young citizens a sort of "reading like a historian" (WINEBURG, 2001), to adopt an enlightened attitude towards the manipulation of information, to use an argument based on evidence to defend their points of view (CE, 2018; MARTÍNEZ; CARRASCO, 2021) and to make use of a critical reading of written, iconographic, digital or other sources in order to counter, with conviction, racist, xenophobic, misogynist or populist actions.

In addition to the above, this educational action, which takes into consideration the age level of the students, their formative choices and their future

intentions, tends to foster openness to otherness, in a logic of recognition and acceptance without prejudice or stereotypes. This is because there is no stronger, more capable or better 'us' than 'the others', rather there are real "cultural, and other, identities, [which] are not static or monolithic, but dynamic and multifaceted" (CE, 2018, p. 18).

It is in the sequence of valuing all those who made and make history, regardless of whether their actions trigger more or less positive feelings, that a teaching and learning process can be brought about which also allows a more enlightened knowledge of the present, an enlightened participation in the democratic dialogue which is desired to be real, an increasingly empathetic, tolerant and respectful vision of the world, of other identities, of the human being (BARTON; LEVSTIK, 2004; BARCA, 2004).

Without, of course, omitting or whitewashing the facts that have occurred, even when "there is some reluctance to consider events perceived as particularly painful, tragic, humiliating or divisive" (CE, 2018, p. 22). Indeed, knowing, thinking, dialoguing about these difficult, uncomfortable or sensitive stories (LEGARDEZ; SIMONNEAUX, 2006), in the classroom, with young people who have access to social networks where fake news abounds, who watch news reports in which the destruction of statues or the exaltation of certain historical myths is reported, who can position themselves socially and politically towards their peers, underlines such a need "[...] for interpretative overcoming, which can only be accomplished by genuine historical interpretation" (BARCA, 2019, p. 509) in the direction of developing one's historical and intercultural consciousness in a humanistic and honest logic (RÜSEN, 2021).

In a world that is increasingly uncertain and surprising – see the emergence, in 2020, of the pandemic caused by Covid-19, declared by the World Health Organization, which forced to adapt the whole process of teaching and learning "that would, now, be mainly adjectivized as 'technological', 'digital', 'at a distance' ..." (DUARTE; MOREIRA,

2021, p. 2) – curricular options and pedagogical-didactic practices need to be sufficiently flexible, interactive and adjustable to circumstances.

As for the History taught and learned in Secondary Education, the immediate celerity, the adaptability to the unpredictable, the answer to the needs of each one also has to happen, day after day, and regardless of the format followed. The greatest challenge lies, perhaps, in the strategies to make people *think historically* (WINEBURG, 2001; SEIXAS; MORTON, 2013), to educate *historically competent* citizens (BARCA, 2004; GAGO, 2021), to manage a national curricular text which does not change along with a pedagogical dynamic that must change. There is, therefore, an idea that can be the ever-present motto: promoting contact with diverse historical narratives, so often discordant, uncomfortable, complex, but transpiring the significance of "cultural values such as the search for truth, the substantiation of arguments and respect for sources" (CE, 2018, p. 10).

## Responsibilities of Higher Education: from 1st cycle to History teacher education

### *The concept of University*

Let us recall, first of all, the concept of university education<sup>6</sup> that is important to allocate to our reflection. Jorge Ramos do Ó (2019, p. 41-42) told us that:

the university we are in, in Portugal, has absorbed little of the practices of community life centered on awareness of the creative processes that have deepened in other domains of cultural and artistic reality. [...] The pattern of the modern university [...] postulates, beyond academic independence, coming from the Middle Ages, a practice of problematizing affirmation of all knowledge, of a search for truth without constraints or starting limits. At university, nothing should be outside questioning, discussion and re-elaboration.

For a long time, the University had difficulty in dealing with this need for dissidence, epistemological creativity, constructivism in the elaboration

<sup>6</sup> Although it refers to "university education", the ideas presented have the same relevance in the context of polytechnic higher education.

of shared knowledge between students and teachers, of predominant discussion and re-elaboration on more or less stabilized contents, and some even crystallized. It is not certain that this time is over in all university spaces, but it is certain that more and more dissidents are appearing in the panorama of university teaching. The ruptures, Kuhn (2005) or Alberoni (1990) remind us, do not happen in a short time, but in the ability of persistence and resilience in the face of the belief in novelty. It was in the combination of 'rupture', 'crisis' and 'preconceptions' that the Bologna reform gave a boost (and legitimacy) to innovation and difference.

The inclusion of Portugal in a European space of university education allowed, on the one hand, to open borders to students in terms of circulation and diversity in their training; however, on the other hand, it also implied the submission to European rules of standardization of degrees, course duration, content which shook the traditional autonomy claimed by national Higher Education institutions:

The Magna Carta of the European Universities, signed in September 1988 by the Rectors of the European Universities, gathered in Bologna for the celebrations of the 900th anniversary of the oldest University in the world, taking into account that the future of humankind depends to a large extent on the cultural, scientific and technical development that is forged in the centers of culture, knowledge and research that the real universities have become [...], proclaims that peoples and states should, more than ever, be aware of the role that universities will be called to play in a society in continuous search for transformation and internationalization (SIMÃO; SANTOS; COSTA, 2005, p. 25).

Following these principles, the Bologna Declaration was signed in June 1998, by the Ministers of Education of 29 European countries, to create "a cohesive, harmonious, competitive and attractive European Higher Education Area, with the general purpose of promoting the mobility of

students and other educational agents" (Preamble of Decree-Law n.º 79/2014)<sup>7</sup>.

In terms of curricula and academic degrees, the focus should be on a 1st cycle that is more oriented towards the general foundations of the various scientific areas and a 2nd cycle that is concordant with some specializations, leaving for the 3rd cycle of doctoral studies a specialization with an effective ability to innovate or 'invent' different solutions for the problems diagnosed at different levels and in different contexts.

### *A structuring and comprehensive 1st cycle (degree)*

As a result of the Bologna Declaration, already mentioned, and from the Decree-Law n.º 43/2007<sup>8</sup>, of 22nd February, it was established, in Portugal, a broad set of changes in the field of initial teacher education for the above mentioned levels of education.

For teachers associated to the 1st and 2nd Cycles of Basic Education, a degree, *Basic Education*, was created as an initial and compulsory course for access to the subsequent professional masters. This degree, reformulated with the Decree-Law n.º 79/2014, of 14 May, includes a wide range of components linked to the General Educational Area, to the Specific Didactics, including didactics associated with the Social Sciences and Humanities, to the Teaching Area that, along with others, includes the components of History and Geography of Portugal and also one of Initiation to Professional Practice.

The 1st cycle in History, taught by the Faculty of Arts of Porto, through its Department of History and Political and International Studies, aims to provide consistent education in the scientific area of History, based on four strands: History – Knowledge; History – Theory; History – Method; History – Applied Research. By this subdivision it is licit to expect a set of competencies acquired in contact with primary sources (nowadays with much easier access through digital archives), promoting, in a first phase, an awareness of the

<sup>7</sup> Decreto-Lei n.º 79/2014, de 14 de maio. *Diário da República* n.º 92/2014 – Série I. Lisboa: Ministério da Educação e Ciência.

<sup>8</sup> Decreto-Lei n.º 43/2007, de 22 de fevereiro. *Diário da República* n.º 38/2007 – Série I. Lisboa: Ministério da Educação.

epistemological foundations of the scientific area so that later, in the 3rd year, and in an annual curricular unit called *Seminar* (the student may choose the medieval, modern or contemporary period), it will be possible to build knowledge based on those sources. Although the three years of the degree seek to follow a chronological sequence, there is a gradual deconstruction of this diachronic perspective in favor of a more synchronic one. In this aspect, the possibilities coming from other scientific areas may facilitate sustained multiperspective and enrich the techniques and methodologies of research in the Social Sciences and Humanities, allowing for the elaboration of consistent and critical narratives. In fact, as can be read on the respective course page<sup>9</sup>,

the aim is for graduates in History to be able to teach and research, but also to intervene in the world of communication sciences, tourism, heritage management and preservation, public relations, publishing, political thinking, business or in the universe of local and central administration and management. To this end, knowledge, instruments and techniques are provided throughout the degree, conveying knowledge as well as skills that enable the graduate to intervene effectively and professionally in the cultural and social universes.

Bologna calls them 'broadband', favoring a focus on competencies over an abundance of knowledge.

### *A specialized and vocational 2nd cycle (degree)*

In a more academic and scientific sense, the great qualitative and quantitative leap forward made by the Sciences of Education, and in the specific case of History, evidenced by the currents of History Education, determine the creation, after a 3-year degree in History, of a second cycle, a master's degree, specialized in the education of teachers for the 3rd Cycle of Basic Education and Secondary Education, with the Polytechnic Institutes, through the Higher Schools of Education, or the Universities, through the Institutes of

Education, being responsible for the education of 1st and 2nd Cycles.

As explained in previous paragraphs, the Degree in Basic Education does not confer any teaching qualifications, so it is necessary that the students integrate the second cycle of studies, which assumes from the outset a vocational function. In order to teach in the 1st Cycle, in which the teaching of History also takes place (explained in a previous section of this text), there are four possible master's degrees: (i) Master's in Teaching in the 1st Cycle of Basic Education (90 ECTS); (ii) Master's in Pre-School Education and 1st Cycle of Basic Education (120 ECTS); (iii) Master's in Teaching in the 1st Cycle of Basic Education and Mathematics and Natural Sciences in the 2nd Cycle of Basic Education (120 ECTS); (iv) Master's in Teaching in the 1st Cycle of Basic Education and Portuguese and History and Geography of Portugal in the 2nd Cycle of Basic Education (120 ECTS). It is important to clarify that the last two masters appear, exclusively, with the changes resulting from the Decree-Law n.º 79/2014. Before this normative, the initial training of teachers for the 2nd Cycle of Basic Education, according to Decree-Law n.º 43/2007, assumed a generalist education, with an articulated training between the four components: Portuguese, Mathematics, Natural Sciences and History and Geography of Portugal.

Thus, at the present moment, the education of teachers of History (and Geography of Portugal) implies, compulsorily, the frequency of the Master's Degree in Teaching in the 1st Cycle of Basic Education and Portuguese and History and Geography of Portugal in the 2nd Cycle. In this course, students develop competencies in the areas of Teaching (27 ECTS), General Education (6 ECTS) and Specific Didactics (30 ECTS) and experience a period linked to the Supervised Teaching Practice (48 ECTS).

As for the education of History teachers for the 3rd Cycle of Basic Education and Secondary Education, against everything that seemed more

<sup>9</sup> Full version available at: [https://sigarra.up.pt/flup/pt/cur\\_geral.cur\\_view?pv\\_ano\\_lectivo=2021&pv\\_origem=CUR&pv\\_tipo\\_cur\\_sigla=L&pv\\_curso\\_id=342](https://sigarra.up.pt/flup/pt/cur_geral.cur_view?pv_ano_lectivo=2021&pv_origem=CUR&pv_tipo_cur_sigla=L&pv_curso_id=342). Accessed: 25 Oct. 2021.



normal, within the troubled Bologna process, the Minister of Education – Maria de Lurdes Rodrigues – and her Secretary of State – Valter Lemos – led a controversial decision that forced the creation of a second professionalizing cycle encompassing History and Geography. The Master's Degree in the Teaching of History and Geography, organized, for example, by the Faculty of Arts of the University of Porto (as in other Faculties), aimed at awarding professional qualifications for teaching in the subjects of History and Geography. This cycle of studies promoted the development of scientific and pedagogical competencies necessary for the exercise of the profession, articulating the teaching and learning process with the qualification requirements resulting from legal and social transformations, education, scientific and technological evolution. The final intention of the masters highlighted the development of a structuring conceptual framework and familiarization with various procedures that would allow for a progressive autonomy in teaching knowledge and development. To this end, the expansion and updating of knowledge in History and Geography was promoted, as well as contact with methodologies in the areas of Education and Didactics, the transposition of knowledge to school contexts, and the reflective and critical analysis of situations and school experiences, in general, and teaching, in particular.

The following areas were considered to constitute this course: General Educational Training; Specific Didactics of History and Geography; Initiation to Professional Practice, including supervised teaching practice; and (complementary) development in the area of teaching (History and Geography). The first two areas were privileged in the first year of the course, the others being

reserved mainly for the subsequent year. It was considered that General Educational subjects and Specific Didactics were structural areas of the Initiation to Professional Practice and should precede it. The latter was understood as an annual project, in order to provide the student with contact with the teaching and educational experience throughout the school year. Nevertheless, the possibility was envisaged that, still in the 1st year, students could observe, collaborate, analyse and reflect on concrete educational situations. The (complementary) Practice in the area of teaching should provide a deepening of the scientific knowledge acquired in the first cycle, in articulation with the syllabus contents of the area of professional practice, favouring a growing autonomy and updating capacity within the scope of continuous education. It was understood that it would be advantageous for this component to accompany the aforementioned Introduction to Professional Practice in order to better respond to scientific difficulties that students might face.

All the changes that teacher education in the area of History and Geography underwent were not consensual, neither with the Universities nor with the Associations of History and Geography Teachers. It is important to clarify that both showed clear arguments of resistance to this centrally defined proposal<sup>10</sup>.

According to different opinions, it presented several problems: reducing costs in training implied a lower scientific competence of the professionals in the specific disciplinary area (in the case of History and Geography); enhancing the union, in the same recruitment group, of History and Geography teachers, being able to 'use' them according to the needs of the schools; removing from the more traditional Faculties in the trai-

<sup>10</sup> The centrally defined legal framework included the following diplomas: Ordinance n.º 256/2005, of 16 March, which updates the "National Classification of Education and Training Areas"; Decree-Law n.º 74/2006, of 24 of March, with the "Technical norms for the presentation of school structures and higher education study plans and their publication"; Dispatch n.º 7287-C/2006 that explains the "Norms for the organization of processes related to the registration of study cycles adjustment", published on 31 of March 2006; Decree-Law n.º 43/2007, of 22 of February, which "approves the juridical regime of professional qualification for teaching in pre-school, basic and secondary education" (creating the bidisciplinary master's degree for teaching in pre-school, basic and secondary education). Decree-Law n.º 43/2007, of February 22nd, that "approves the juridical regime of professional qualification for teaching in pre-school education and in basic and secondary education" (creating the bidisciplinary master's degree for the qualification of History and Geography teachers in a single study cycle); and the Decree-Law n.º 79/2014, of 14 May, which reverses the situation by approving "the legal regime of professional qualification for teaching in pre-school education and in basic and secondary education", but now in different and monodisciplinary masters for the areas of History and Geography.

ning of teachers of the 3rd Cycle and Secondary Education the training monopoly in the face of some claims by the Polytechnics that considered themselves qualified to educate teachers for all levels. As a result of the experience in teacher education and in the spirit of cooperation between the various 'branches' of professional development, it was possible to draw some advantages from this process: bringing about coexistence, in the common area, between students from different scientific areas (in the aspect of general educational subjects); cooperating with other epistemological realities, trying to minimize the impact of differences on future professionals; guaranteeing, especially in the production of the Final Report, the interchange between Geographical Education and History Education, taking advantage of the synergies and virtualities of each one. Good reports of interdisciplinary reflection have resulted from this, and activities of cooperation between the Human and Social Sciences<sup>11</sup> have been stimulated in school contexts.

Following the Decree-Law n.º 79/2014 the Master's Degree in History Teaching (3rd Cycle of Basic Education and Secondary Education) was created and the preamble accepted the error made by the political power, in 2007, joining the History and Geography for the 3rd Cycle and Secondary Education in the same cycle of studies. The justification was clear and came to meet the many criticisms voiced when it was being implemented and verified in the field of initial education, linked to the deficiency of the pedagogical practices of the students obliged to the two scientific fields:

among the changes introduced [...] the splitting of the master's degree in History and Geography Teaching in the 3rd Cycle of Basic Education and Secondary Education is being carried out, a splitting that is adjusted to the recruitment groups and allows for the reinforcement of development in the area of teaching at the level of entry qualification (Preamble of Decree-Law n.º 79/2014).

As this is now a monodisciplinary master's degree there was clearly a concern to focus the whole process not only on the practice components – teaching area; general educational area; specific didactics; cultural, social and ethical area; and initiation to professional practice –, but above all to ensure that this second cycle could bring a complement to scientific education in accordance with the curricular guidelines of the subject of History in Primary and Secondary Education<sup>12</sup>. As a professional master's degree in History Teaching, currently in full operation, it educates future teachers for the teaching of History in the 3rd Cycle of Basic Education and Secondary Education. In the latter, given the possibility of teaching History A, History B, History of Culture and Arts, an attempt was made to structure a curriculum that would complement the contents and competencies developed in the degree. The enrolment of curricular units with a specifically economic scope is visible, with a view to History B of the Economics and Management courses, but also one of History of Culture and Arts, for that specific area of Secondary School. In other subject areas, for example in Didactics, conditions are created for future teachers to prepare specific resources for those aspects.

With the 'liberation' of Geography, didactics benefited from new boldness and favored a greater timeliness of resources for future teachers. If the two subjects of History Didactics (I and II) were geared towards planning, the production of resources and different types of assessment, the others allowed us to take a risk in a more forward-looking direction. Namely, the immediate future of the second year of the Master's Degree, where professional practice is a reality – and, to this end, the course unit *Didactic Implementations in History* enables the piloting of realistic situations in a methodological perspective of *learning by doing*, while the one called *Web and the Teaching of History* favors an eminently practical nature, orienting the students' learning towards the discovery, ex-

<sup>11</sup> In the Faculty of Arts of the University of Porto, 119 Final Reports of this Master's Degree in History and Geography Teaching were defended between 2007 and 2016.

<sup>12</sup> More details on the courses' outlines can be found at: <http://www.dge.mec.pt/cursos-cientifico-humanisticos>. Accessed: 25 Oct. 2021.

ploration and handling of the tools made available by the Web<sup>13</sup>. It also provides the production of digital portfolios matching all the pedagogical practice of the second year. Although taught in the 1st semester of the 2nd year, in this master there was the possibility of including another component, seen as fundamental both for a global view of didactics and as a scientific approach to the theoretical framework to be mobilized in the Final Report. This is *Perspectives in History Education*, designed to achieve the following objectives: to understand diversified educational paradigms for teaching History; to analyze the content and implications of the conceptual framework of History Education; to widen its field of vision to different perspectives of analysis of the teaching of History; to become acquainted with national and international research in the area of History Education; to assess the importance of research already carried out in widening the theoretical and conceptual framework; to outline a research project in the area of History Education. In this sense, a socio-constructivist strand emphasizes a teaching practice which privileges learning as the most important element, diluting the sometimes exclusive focus on teaching, creating epistemological conditions for a reflexive and more conscious action regarding the selection of the topic and the research methodology included in the final report of the Master's Degree. Here the conceptual and theoretical framework of History Education gains space and consistency. The report has one or more supervisors and encompasses a theoretical

component depending on the chosen theme and a practical component with the collection of elements in the school where the Initiation to Professional Practice takes place.

## Towards a discussion on teaching and Learning History

### *The role of History in culture for democracy*

This specialized education must naturally be in line with pedagogical and political concerns at European and world level, especially the structuring documents created by the Council of Europe<sup>14</sup>.

A specialist group has long been producing reports and proposals, the most recent being one entitled *Quality teaching in the subject of History in the 21st century – Guidelines*. It reads:

The teaching of History plays a key role in meeting the political, cultural and social challenges facing Europe today; in particular, the challenges posed by the diversification of societies, the integration of migrants and refugees in Europe, and attacks on democracy and democratic values. Thus, the overall aim of these principles and guidelines is to promote the specialized knowledge and competencies necessary for the teaching of history to adequately fulfill that role.<sup>15</sup>

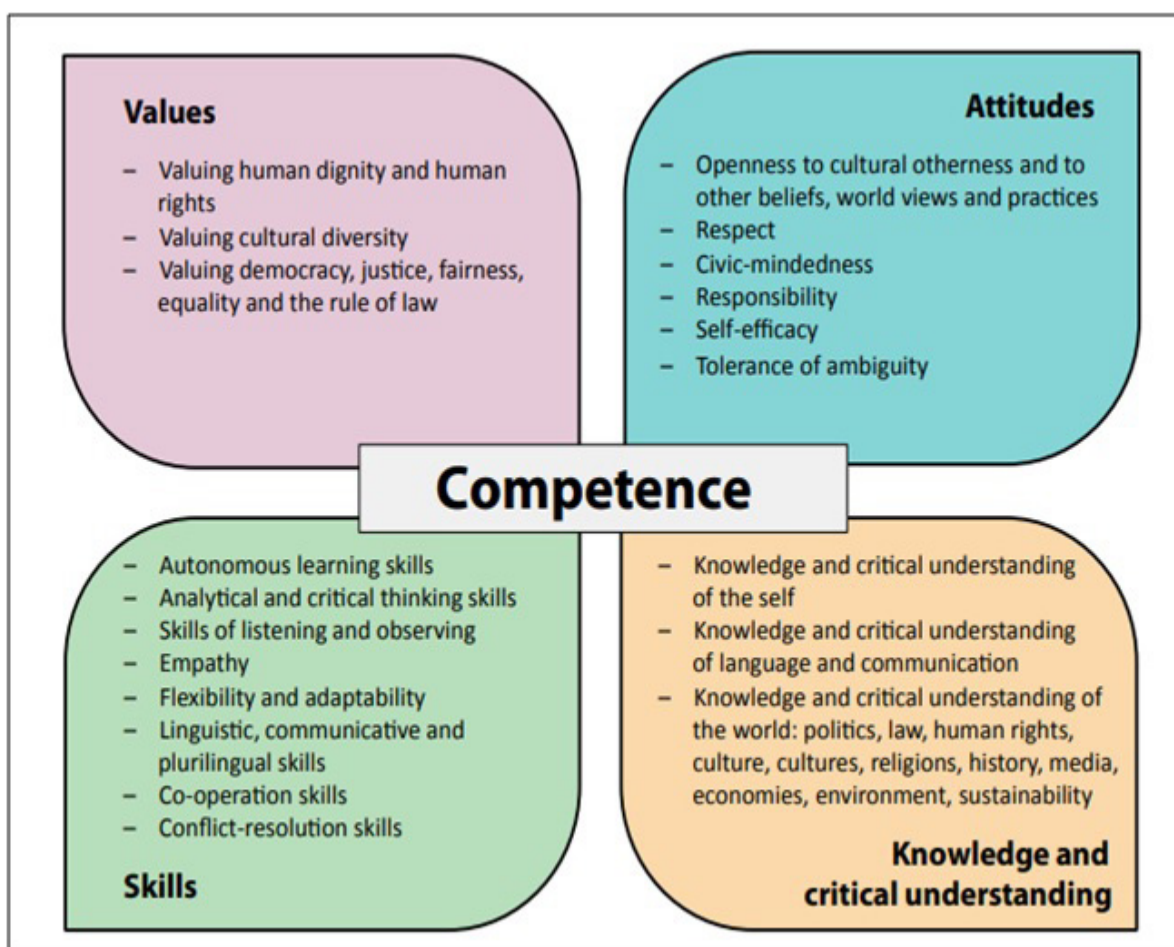
The already famous 'butterfly' of the synthesis (Figure 1), reproduced below, enlightens us on the desired point of arrival with a teaching of history at the service of broader objectives.

<sup>13</sup> These skills have become even more relevant in the face of the educational consequences of the pandemic. UNESCO (2020, p. 5-6) has identified, for this reason, nine ideas for public action: "[...] commit to strengthen education as a common good; expand the definition of the right to education so that it addresses the importance of connectivity and access to knowledge and information; value the teaching profession and teacher collaboration; promote student, youth and children's participation and rights; protect the social spaces provided by schools as we transform education; make free and open source technologies available to teachers and students; ensure scientific literacy within the curriculum; protect domestic and international financing of public education; advance global solidarity to end current levels of inequality".

<sup>14</sup> Intergovernmental projects *Education for diversity and democracy: teaching history in contemporary Europe* and *Shared Histories for a Europe without dividing lines*, implemented by the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice (CDPPE), illustrate the important role of History teaching and reflect the key concepts of democracy, diversity, multiperspective and inclusion. The results of the projects are embodied in two publications. The first one, *Quality History education in the 21st century – Principles and guidelines*, contains 8 principles followed by the respective *guidelines*. Although specific to the teaching and learning of History, they should be interpreted in the light of the wider commitments expressed by the Council of Europe, the European Commission and UNESCO. The second publication, *Shared histories for a Europe without dividing lines*, appears in four volumes and explores four themes: the impact of the Industrial Revolution; the development of Education; Human Rights as reflected in the History of Art and Europe and the World. The publications are available online at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/history-teaching>. Accessed: 25 Oct. 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Available at: <https://edoc.coe.int/en/teaching-history/7755-ensino-de-qualidade-na-disciplina-de-historia-no-seculo-xxi-linhas-orientadoras.html>. Accessed: 25 Oct. 2021.

Figure 1 – Purposes underlying the teaching of History



Source: Council of Europe (2018).

The centre of 'competence' refers us, from the outset, to a prospective vision of the way in which historical knowledge should be constructed in an educational context. Rather than systematically looking at the dimension of the contents and their nature, it is important to serve this 'futuristic vision' or, in another way and to use José Mattoso's designation (2006), to insist on the "social function of History". What can society expect from someone who has studied and learned History? What expectations does someone who produces analyses from the vision of history create? What makes a perspective through the 'lens of History' different from a more 'presentist' one? What help comes from someone who knows history to unmask populism and demagoguery, almost always based on a selective memory without the thickness of

historical knowledge?

To answer these and many other questions we should look at the different 'wings' of the butterfly. The knowledge will have to be worked on in a process that favors the multiperspective, the confrontation of sources, the dialogue guided by the teacher, the search for consensus, the respect for the other's opinion, empathy towards testimonies. Quantity is not important, but the quality of the construction of this knowledge, allowing a critical and unsubmissive understanding. With this attitude, and with the gradual fostering of autonomy while searching for information, the abilities listed above may be improved. However, the true social function of History, and above all the difference between the individual and social attitude of those who have learned History in

the described way and those who have not, is evident in the attitudes and values. It is in this 'social evidence' that lies the opportunity to overcome Arendt's challenge (2019), of not facing the future with preconceived ideas or prejudices or, in line with Morin (2010; 2015), the challenge of conceiving and leading a 'true metamorphosis' in the way we face the future.

It is along these lines that, regardless of the level of education, History needs to be taught or, even better, the time given by someone to the subject in each curricular matrix needs to be used this way, in the sense of everyone developing the competencies that the real world demands day after day. And if we want to be a little bolder, it will be necessary to create in the 'mass school' space for a challenge recently launched by an instigating and disturbing work – *L'école peut-elle sauver la démocratie?*, which reads:

in short, school massification has been very visible to the winners, much less to the losers. However, educational inequalities are not just an injustice; its effects threaten social cohesion and democracy itself. Equality of opportunity cannot be our only ideal of justice (DUBET; DURU-BELLAT, 2020, p. 14).

### *Pedagogical-curricular challenges in Primary and Secondary Education*

As for the educational practices carried out in Primary and Secondary Education, although for children and young people of various ages, but in a logic of compulsory attendance, the options are countless. Even when the focus is on a historical learning sustained by broader purposes and that already shuns the unfounded memorization of names and dates.

Among these various pedagogical-didactic possibilities, we highlight those which, with greater or lesser adaptations, may be tried out with students at different educational levels:

a) the mobilization of individual prior knowledge, as this knowledge is disorganized but fundamental for the meaning and significance that each one attributes to the history learned (BARCA, 2019). In an almost unequivocal way,

today we know that history has an assiduous presence in the daily lives of individuals, whether in a serious and enlightened way, or as false or falsified information for a certain interest. Therefore, perceiving conceptions about the world, cultural values, temporal meanings and change becomes an action required of the History teacher.

b) the use of cognitive challenges or problem-questions related to real situations involving human beings (emerging populisms, migrations and xenophobia, climate change, ...), in order to work on inference, argumentation, interpretation and the development of knowledge about History (ALVES, 2016; MARTÍNEZ; CARRASCO, 2021), as well as to enhance the curiosity-investigation of children and young people.

c) the experimentation of the "*aula-oficina*" (BARCA, 2004), more or less adjusted to the contextual circumstances, as a pedagogical approach that mobilizes the students' critical eye in formulating of historical answers. They can thus manipulate various, even contradictory, sources, formulate hypotheses based on the available evidence, confront interpretations, draw up individual narratives (BARTON; LEVSTIK, 2004; SEIXAS; MORTON, 2013), i.e. they can be initiated into the method of historical research.

d) the diversification of learning tasks, which do not have to be limited to the worksheets in the textbook. The debates, the contacts with oral sources, the dramatizations, the historical reconstitutions, the discovery of local history are examples of expression of historical ideas that allow plural interpretations and the problematization of individual and collective memories (WINEBURG, 2001).

e) the development of historical thinking and historical consciousness in young people, for they are capable of, and need, to learn more than the factual, static and chronological data transmitted by the teacher. They need to analyze available information with discernment, to contextualize it and consider its relevance in different places, to relate different times, to substantiate ethically any perspective (RÜSEN, 2021; SEIXAS; MORTON, 2013).

### *Pedagogical-curricular challenges in Higher Education (teacher education)*

In order to converge with the purposes underlying the Council of Europe's guidelines, among other elements that could be thought of in the field of initial teacher education, it seems important to highlight three:

a) a process which makes the awareness of teachers as public intellectuals easier, i.e., which promotes time and space for students to reflect on the social function of teaching and also on the social and democratic purposes of each of the subject areas, in this case History. It is not enough, therefore, for teacher education to provide the development of specific knowledge of each of the scientific areas, but it is essential that it promotes understanding of the unique importance of each of these areas for the growth of societies which are more committed to democratic values and human rights, and more welcoming of criticism and the plurality of thoughts and world views (NUSSBAUM, 2012). For this reason, future teachers need to recognize that teaching goes far beyond the more or less technical instruction of historical knowledge, since it is also involved in a social intervention which is public and a promoter of future histories, of hopeful looks which, without forgetting the past, do not remain prisoners of it.

b) a process that promotes the development of thought and research competencies, recognizing that the action of any teacher is not reduced to a technical intervention, but presupposes a wider, dialogical deliberation with aspects arising from pedagogy and didactics. Teachers can be thoughtful professionals, who have the ability to investigate their own practice, the aspects that condition it and also to discuss the repercussions of their decisions. Consequently, the initial education of (History) teachers must enhance, through its courses, enlightened learning in the field of research, both within the scope of praxeological research (because practice is framed in a certain organizational, cultural, social and political context), and within the scope of specific research of each disciplinary area (so that, as far as History is concerned, inside and outside the classroom,

the epistemological specificities of the subject are thought out).

c) a process sustained by a broad and plural cultural and scientific foundation. Today, the promotion of pedagogical practices that coincide with any cultural enclosure is not considered appropriate. In order to foster historically enriching formative experiences, it is structuring that teachers have the ability to assume themselves as agents of dialogues and cultural exchanges relevant for the development of a real historical thought. In fact, this dialogue between concepts and areas of knowledge, as Morin (2010, 2015) has explained, is fundamental for a more enlightened understanding of the realities, events and phenomena that today are recognized as truly complex.

Let's stay with the thought of Samuel Moyn, in a recent interview and answering the question – *what can History, as a discipline, bring afresh?*: "History constantly reminds us of what our world was and what could still be very different today. Other subjects are not as sensitive to change over time and risk being trapped in a kind of eternal present" (JERÓNIMO; MONTEIRO, 2020, p. 116).

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