

Student's Profile vs. Teacher's Profile: Convergence and Divergence in the 1st Cycle of Basic Education

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Abstract

In Portugal, Compulsory Education is for all children and young people between the ages of six and eighteen, and it is hoped that at the end of this period they will reach a specific profile, recently determined by the Ministry of Education.

One of the main educational actors is undoubtedly the teacher who has a central role in the definition of strategies and methodologies which are directed towards the expected profile of the student. This means that the teacher's own profile, from the first years of schooling, should ensure that the teacher has characteristics which are conducive to the determination of a teaching-learning environment where students construct the multiple literacies that seem necessary to respond to the demands of our current society.

The article intends to present an analysis of content around the documents that regulate the profile of the teacher of the 1st Cycle of Basic Education, in articulation with the profile of students leaving compulsory education, so as to look for points of convergence and divergence that foster reflection on the contribution of these two poles to the success of students and the education system itself.

The results showed that it is necessary to rethink the teacher's profile in order to be more in accordance with the Profile of students leaving compulsory education.

Keywords: *Student's Profile, Teacher's Profile, Compulsory Education, 1st Cycle of Basic Education (CBE).*

Introduction

In Portugal, the Basic Law of the Educational System, published in 1986 [6], brought to discussion the need to ensure access to school and the extension of compulsory education, acknowledging the need to qualify educators and teachers, but it was omissive regarding the competences and functions foreseen for this professional class. It is known, however, that the teacher unequivocally influences quality education, and they must have specific characteristics that make them a mediator of the learnings and the holistic evolution of the students. For this reason, in 2001, the Ministry of Education considered that it was necessary to define a common profile for childhood educators and teachers [3].

In 2009, education became compulsory for students between the ages of six and eighteen, passing through three cycles corresponding to Basic Education and ending in Secondary Education.

Once the period in which the children and young people are included in school and the teacher's profile who accompany them in this process had been defined, it was also necessary to identify the 'Profile of students leaving compulsory education', and this document was approved in 2017 [5].

Given that the 1st Cycle of Basic Education - 1º CBE (1st to 4th years of schooling) is the first stage of compulsory education in Portugal, it is expected that this will serve as support for the profile construction that the student is expected to develop, recognizing that the teacher of this cycle has a central role in the definition of strategies and methodologies focused on what is expected of the student. This means that the teacher's own profile, from the first years of schooling, should ensure that the teacher has characteristics conducive to the determination of a teaching-learning environment where students construct the multiple literacies that seem necessary to respond to the demands of the current society.

The article aims to present an analysis about the general and specific profile of the 1st CBE teacher, in articulation with the profile of students leaving compulsory education, in the sense of looking for points of convergence and divergence that will enable a reflection regarding the contribution of these two poles for students' success and for the education system itself.

Profile of Teachers of the 1st Cycle of Basic Education

As previously mentioned, the Portuguese Ministry of Education defined, at the beginning of the 21st century, the common profile for the performance of teaching functions [3], regardless of the type of

educational institution or level of education in which they perform their functions. This profile recognizes that childhood educators and teachers must be "holders of diplomas that certify the specific professional training in which they are qualified" (p.5569). Therefore, the notion that this professional class needs a strong scientific base that allows the enrichment of curricular learning is subjacent to the profile.

The overall performance profile also includes four dimensions, namely:

- i) *Professional, social and ethical dimension (PSED)* - recognizes the knowledge of the profession; is an inclusion agent in order to ensure that the school is for all; fosters the development of autonomy; promotes the quality of the contexts; identifies and respects the cultural and personal differences of all members of the community; shows relational and communication capacity; assumes the civic and formative dimension of their functions;
- ii) *Teaching and learning development dimension (TLDD)* - promotes meaningful learning; uses specific and transversal / multidisciplinary knowledge; follows substantiated pedagogical and didactic options, resorting when possible to the experimental activity; correctly uses the Portuguese language; uses varied languages and supporting devices, promotes the students' intellectually active involvement; develops differentiated pedagogical strategies; ensures educational activities to support students with more difficulties; encourages the establishment of rules of coexistence; uses assessment as a regulatory element;
- iii) *Participation in school and relationship with the community dimension (PSRCD)* - sees the school and the community as an area of inclusive education and social intervention; participates in the elaboration, development and assessment of school projects and curricular projects; integrates community knowledge and social practices into the curricular project; collaborates with community members; promotes interactions with the family; values the school as a place for social and cultural development; cooperates in the elaboration and carrying out of studies and intervention projects;
- iv) *Professional Lifelong development dimension (PLDD)*: reflects on their practices; reflects on ethical and deontological aspects; privileges teamwork / sharing of knowledge and experience; invests in lifelong training; participates in projects and research.

This general profile was followed by the approval of the specific performance profile of the childhood educators and teachers of the 1st CBE, through Decree-Law no. 241/2001 of 30 August [4], in which this article only focuses on Annex 2 of the referred Decree that describes the profile of the professionals who work in the 1st CBE.

The legal norm establishes the role of this teacher in the *conception and development of the curriculum (CDC)* acknowledging that the teacher must cooperate in the development and assessment of the curricular project for the school and the class; develop learnings that articulates scientific knowledge with the individual and contextual constraints; organize, develop and assess the teaching process based on the analysis of each situation; use students' knowledge, obstacles and errors in the development of learnings; promote the integration and articulation of all the areas of the curriculum; encourage the acquisition of study methods and intellectual work; promote the students' autonomy; assess the learnings; develop the students' interest and respect for other people and cultures; promote the students' active participation in the elaboration and practice of rules of coexistence and to interact with children and adults in a positive way.

It is also hoped that the 1st CBE teacher, being a generalist teacher, can teach the various areas of the curriculum - CI (Portuguese Language, Mathematics, Social and Natural Sciences, Physical Education and Arts), where specific actions for each one are set out in the Decree-Law under analysis, in order to promote "the learning of socially relevant competences, with an active and responsible citizenship, included in the educational policy options present in the various curriculum dimensions" (I, p.5574).

Profile of Students leaving Compulsory Education

The document 'Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education', published in 2017, is considered a reference for the decisions to be adopted by the educational agents, and is intended to be the common matrix for all the educational establishments, "namely at a curricular level, in planning, in the carrying out and internal and external assessment of teaching and learning "[5, p. 15484].It is organized according to:



- i) Principles (Humanistic base, Knowledge, Learning, Inclusion, Coherence and flexibility, and Adaptability and boldness), which guide, justify and provide meaning to the profile” [8, p. 13];
- ii) Vision (Multiple literacies, Free, autonomous, responsible and aware of themselves and of the world; Dealing with change and uncertainty; Importance of the scientific areas for sustainability; Critical; autonomous, creative; Life-long learning; Respect for the society’s principles; Respect for human dignity; Reject discrimination and social exclusion), which “include plans that complement, link and reinforce each other in a model that aims to qualify the individual and the democratic citizenship” [8, p. 15];
- iii) Values (Responsibility and integrity, Excellence and demand; Curiosity, reflection and innovation; Citizenship and participation, Freedom), “on which the school culture should be based” [8, p. 17];
- iv) Competence Areas (Languages and Texts, Information and Communication; Reasoning and Problem-solving; Critical Thinking and Creative Thinking; Interpersonal Relations; Personal development and autonomy; Well-being, health and environment; Scientific, technical and technological knowledge and Awareness and control of the Body), as “complex combinations of knowledge, abilities and attitudes [...] essential to the profile of students in compulsory education” [8, p. 19].

Teacher’s Profile vs. Student’s Profile

It is known that to define the teacher’s identity there is a contribution of several dimensions which include training, associationism, the market, the State, as well as the students, who are a factor of achievement, risk and change of the teacher’s profile [7]. The teaching-learning process is therefore, to some extent, the result of teacher-student interaction, and it is expected that the Ministry of Education will take this dyad into account when formulating its legal norms and guiding documents.

When analyzing the general profile of the teacher and, specifically, the teacher of the 1st Cycle of Basic Education, and when compared to the profile of the students leaving compulsory education, elements that are interconnected and that complement each other are highlighted. On the other hand, we recognize factors whose discrepancy is notorious, which may have contributed to the temporary removal of the documents under analysis (Profiles of the Teacher - 2001, Profile of the student - 2017).

The comparison between the Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education and the Profile (general and specific) of the Teachers focused on the elements explicitly identified in the documents, and not on the ideology that may be perceived in the texts and whose complexity would not allow a content analysis focused on the objective of the work to be developed. This comparison is shown, schematically, in the grid below.

Student’s Profile		General Profile of the Teacher (dimensions)				Profile of the teacher of the 1st CBE	
		PSED	TLDD	PSRCD	PLDD	CDC	CI
Principles	Humanistic base	x		x			
	Knowledge	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Learning	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Inclusion	x		x			
	Coherence and flexibility		x			x	
	Adaptability and boldness						
Vision	Multiple literacies		x			x	x
	Free, autonomous, responsible and aware	x				x	x
	Dealing with change and uncertainty						
	Importance of the scientific areas for sustainability		x			x	x
	Critical, autonomous, creative		x		x		x
	Lifelong learning		x			x	x
	Respect for the society’s principles	x		x			
	Respect for human dignity	x		x		x	
	Reject discrimination and social exclusion	x		x		x	
Values	Responsibility and integrity	x	x				
	Excellence and demand		x				x
	Curiosity, reflection and innovation				x		x
	Citizenship and participation	x	x	x	x	x	
	Freedom	x				x	
Competence Areas	Languages and Texts		x			x	x
	Information and Communication		x			x	x
	Reasoning and Problem Solving		x			x	x
	Critical Thinking and Creative Thinking		x			x	x
	Interpersonal relations	x	x	x		x	x
	Personal development and autonomy			x		x	x

Well-being, health and environment					x	x
Scientific, technical and technological knowledge		x			x	x
Awareness and control of the Body					x	x

Figure 1 – Synthesis Grid of the analysis of comparative content between the Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education and the Profile (general and specific) of the Teacher of the 1st CBE

From the analysis of the grid we can perceive that the Portuguese Ministry of Education considers the principles 'Knowledge' and 'Learning' as the guideline for the 1st CBE teacher's actions and of what is expected that the students accomplish at the end of compulsory education, as they are only items that appear explicitly in the three documents analyzed. In the document of the Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education, it is also mentioned that "Knowledge is at the centre of the educational process" and that "Learnings are essential in the educational process" [8, p. 13].

Not disregarding this structuring factor, there have been political discussions around the principles that underpin a school of the future that generated the 21st Century Skills Movement, which seeks to define the set of competences that students are expected to achieve in order to be active citizens and prepared for life in a complex and unpredictable society. This idea does not question the importance of the contents but assumes that students are expected to develop skills ranging from knowledge (knowledge, skills), to skills (skills, dexterities, techniques, strategies) and to attitudes (motivation, attitudes, ethics, values, emotions, self-concept) [9]. These elements assume a multidimensionality (cognitive, sensorimotor, social / collective, situational, evaluative, affective and ethical), therefore, recognizing an integrated perspective of the notion of competence, its complex dimension, which is mobilizable and with the possibility of transferring to new situations.

The inclusion of these guiding principles is evident in the Student's Profile which meets the relevance that has been given at international level in the last decades, and in particular, identified from the references of the Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD) of the European Union and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills [10].

In the opposite sense, it is also possible to identify two topics of analysis ('Adaptability and boldness and 'Dealing with change and uncertainty'), which by being recognised in the Student's Profile do not appear explicitly in the Teacher's Profile. Despite this, it is known that society is in constant change, it is unstable and uncertain and it requires that the school, in general, and the teacher, in particular, be agents of human and social development, adopting a attitude of permanent openness, flexibility and reflection - "In the dynamics of the 21st century school, more than" teaching " it is describing and exposing the contents of curricular programs," teaching" is to develop action programs and research the processes, the variables and contingencies that influence the progress and results of the programs put into action." [1, p. 289].

From the analysis of the grid, we can also highlight that many elements which exist in the student's profile, in terms of the Principles, Vision, Values as well as Competence Areas, are not covered transversally in the legal regulations published in 2001, which shows that it is necessary to reconsider these documents which no longer respond to the recent political and societal debates and to the quality standards required from professionals who deal with children and young people in schools.

The Portuguese Ministry of Education itself, by defining the student's profile, acknowledges that it is necessary to change the "pedagogical and didactic practices in order to adapt the overall educational action to the purposes of the students' competences profile" [8, p. 31].

It is, therefore, unequivocal that the role of the teacher is no longer that of a transmitter and evaluator of knowledge and the student's role is also no longer that of someone who memorizes and reproduces, especially in moments of formal assessment. The knowledge and innovation society places us before challenges that require a new teacher conception that is more in agreement with the new Profile of students leaving compulsory education.

Final reflections

In Portugal, over the last decades, several reforms of school organizations and the educational system have been carried out, focusing on the definition of 'Knowledge' and 'Learnings', that is, the contents to be taught, namely through the publication of new Programs and Goals and Core Learning. However, there is a lack of documents that focus on the differentiated and flexible didactic approach of these contents, namely, the definition of procedures and strategies that the teacher must adopt to promote everyone's success and reduce school drop-out.

The 'Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education', however, foresees that when they are 18 or complete Secondary School, young people will be prepared to face the challenges of today's society, which implies that teachers, since Basic Education, are those who not only welcome the student, but who collaborate in the development of their potential, ensuring an integral training that is directed to the reality.

Therefore, the teacher's profile needs to be updated so as to include, even if in general terms, reference to more dynamic teaching methods that recognize the different learning profiles and the competences essential for a conscious citizen who is prepared for the real contexts.

This need does not invalidate the implementation, by the Ministry of Education, of concrete procedures in schools together with teachers and educational managers and the constant demand from the teachers for the improvement of their action, since it is recognized that the exclusive modification of guiding documents is generally ineffective in inducing significant changes in pedagogical practices [2].

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