

**ACADEMY - A Place for Teachers Learning Among Teachers?
An Exploratory Research through Life Histories of Higher Education Portuguese
Teachers.**

(488 words)

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In this paper, we work with the question: *Do higher education teachers have an active voice in their own professional construction?* Acknowledging that the process of improving and broadening the qualifications of the Portuguese population forced the education of educators and primary school teachers to expand and reinvent itself. In the end of 1980s, schools for the training of educators and primary teachers underwent a deep transformation: from High Schools to Higher Education (HE) Institutions. Under the Basic Law of the Education System (LBSE, 1986) and Decree-Law No. 344/89, these recently formed HE schools started to award bachelor degrees. The process of transformation of academic degrees currently ends in the implementation of the Bologna Process (2006), and, since then, the professional qualification of educators and primary teachers is conferred in two legally framed training cycles (Master Degree / Level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework, 14).

The LBSE has explicit requirements for the training of basic and secondary education teachers, however, these teachers' qualification is in latency mode. Within the principles and impositions foreseen in the Higher Education Teacher's career statute (Law No. 7/2010) the institutional and personal pathways are now valued by the HE evaluation and accreditation agencies, where the teaching professionalism is observed essentially in obtaining the academic degree and indicators of scientific productivity, decided by external actors and factors.

Within this scenario, the question of the professionalization pathways of the "Teacher of Teachers" arises, since they act aiming the professional qualification of their students, while their own qualification stays unclear.

The empirical data consisted in collecting exercises of life histories (Nóvoa, 1992), developed by participants - nine teachers working in three private polytechnic Higher Education Schools of Education in Lisbon. It aims to analyse the characteristics of the formative pathways (formal and non-formal contexts) of the participants.

In teaching we are not alone and, according to Lesne and Minvielle (in Canário, 1990, p. 18), "The idea that formation is an integral part of a more global process of socialisation makes

possible to understand training as “socialisation that result from everyday interactions in the means where professional and social life unfolds”.

We are built by stories and we act in conjunction with memory. What does the law oblige us and what do we build in Life to become and act as teachers of teachers? Do we fit Life Story with Teacher Life? What is within Teacher's Life that is grounded by the memory of History? Nóvoa (1992) said “...here we are. This is us and the profession. And the choices each of us has to make as a teacher that cross our way of being with our way of teaching. It is impossible to separate the professional self from the personal self ” (p. 17).

In this life histories’ collection we aim to make visible the links between personal and professional, political and technical, dimensions of HE teachers, working in the context of teacher education.

Question: Are academics just avoiding taking an activist stance?

Keywords: Activism, academy, life history, higher education, training teachers

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