

History teacher education “within the profession”? Relationships between university and school in Lisbon

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Abstract

This article examines the links between universities and school education institutions in the initial preparation of History teachers, taking as a reference the Master's Degree in History Teaching at the University of Lisbon. It addresses the problem of understanding to what extent these connections foster integrated spaces of professional learning or reproduce the divide between theory and teaching practice. Theoretically, the study engages with authors who emphasize the centrality of everyday school life in the construction of professional knowledge. Methodologically, a qualitative approach is adopted, based on interviews with lecturers and students, combined with the observation of course activities. The findings indicate the development of school-based formative arrangements, such as communities of practice, networks of cooperating teachers, and *third spaces*, which reposition schools as privileged sites for the production of professional knowledge. However, institutional, cultural, and political tensions persist, limiting the consolidation of this model.

Keywords: Teacher education, History teaching, university-school relationship, professional knowledge.

Formação de professores de História “dentro da profissão”? Relações entre universidade e escola em Lisboa

Resumo

Este artigo examina os vínculos entre universidade e educação básica na preparação inicial de professores de História, tomando como referência o Mestrado em Ensino de História da Universidade de Lisboa. Parte-se do problema de compreender em que medida tais conexões produzem espaços articulados de aprendizagem profissional ou reiteram a separação entre teoria e exercício docente. No plano teórico, dialoga-se com autores que enfatizam a centralidade do cotidiano escolar na constituição dos saberes da docência. Metodologicamente, adota-se uma abordagem qualitativa, baseada em entrevistas com docentes e estudantes, articuladas à observação de atividades do curso. Os resultados indicam a constituição de dispositivos vinculados ao campo escolar, como comunidades de prática, redes de professores cooperantes e *terceiros espaços*, que reposicionam a escola como instância privilegiada de produção de conhecimentos profissionais. Persistem, contudo, tensões institucionais, culturais e políticas que limitam a consolidação desse modelo.

Palavras-chave: Formação docente, ensino de História, relação universidade-escola, saberes profissionais.

¿Formación de profesores de Historia “dentro de la profesión”? Relaciones entre universidad y escuela en Lisboa

Resumen

Este artículo examina los vínculos entre la universidad y la educación básica en la formación inicial de profesores de Historia, tomando como referencia el Máster en Enseñanza de la Historia de la Universidad de Lisboa. Se parte del problema de comprender en qué medida dichas conexiones producen espacios articulados de aprendizaje profesional o reiteran la separación entre teoría y ejercicio docente. En el plano teórico, se dialoga con autores que enfatizan la centralidad de la vida cotidiana escolar en la constitución de los saberes de la docencia. Metodológicamente, se adopta un enfoque cualitativo, basado en entrevistas con docentes y estudiantes, articuladas con la observación de actividades del curso. Los resultados indican la constitución de dispositivos vinculados al campo escolar, como comunidades de práctica, redes de profesores cooperantes y *terceros espacios*, que reposicionan la escuela como instancia privilegiada de producción de conocimientos profesionales. Persisten, sin embargo, obstáculos institucionales, culturales y políticos que limitan la consolidación de este modelo.

Palabras clave: Formación docente, enseñanza de la Historia, relación universidad-escuela, saberes profesionales.

Introduction

Teacher education takes place within the profession (Nóvoa, 2009).

The statement above, made by Professor António Nóvoa, has become highly significant in contemporary debates on teacher education. By arguing that teacher preparation should occur “within the profession”, the author emphasizes the central role of schools as privileged spaces for the production of professional knowledge and highlights the need for an organic partnership between universities and basic education schools. From this perspective, qualified teachers play a fundamental role in teacher education processes, while overly academic models – whose predominance has contributed to the weakening of teachers’ professional identity – are critically questioned.

It is within this theoretical framework that the present article, which constitutes part of a postdoctoral research project conducted at the University of Lisbon (UL), is situated. The broader study aimed to reflect on the Initial History Teacher Education through a comparative analysis of

teacher education practices in Brazil and Portugal. Within this broader context, the present article focuses specifically on examining the relationships between the university and basic education schools in the Master's Degree in History Teaching at the University of Lisbon. The theoretical foundations of both the research and this article draw upon studies on teacher education (Nóvoa, 1995, 2009; Nóvoa & Alvim, 2022; Tardif, 2014; Schön, 1983, 1987; Zeichner, 2010), which emphasize the importance of experience, reflection, and the relationship between theory and practice.

The study assumes that teacher education “within the profession” represents a desirable horizon, although one shaped by institutional, political, and cultural tensions. Accordingly, the central research question seeks to understand to what extent the relationships between the university and schools constitute interconnected spaces for teacher education or, at least partially, reproduce the traditional dichotomy between theory and practice.

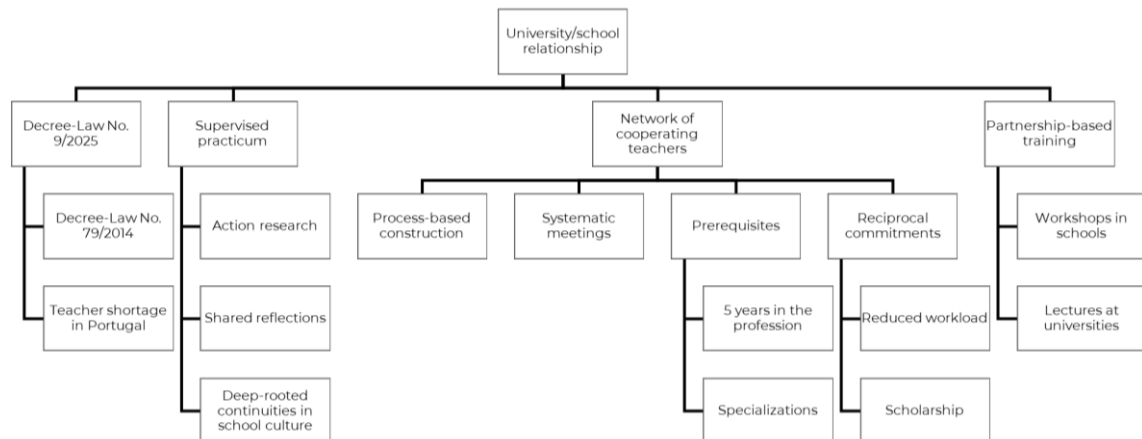
Methodologically, the research adopts a qualitative approach inspired by ethnography and was conducted during a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Lisbon between September and December 2025. Fieldwork included classroom and teacher education task observations, participation in academic events related to the Master's programme, audio recordings and field notes, as well as semi-structured interviews with students and faculty members of the Master's Degree in History Teaching. Ten first- and second-year students were interviewed, selected to ensure diversity in terms of educational background, age, interests, and participation in the observed activities. In addition, two lecturers responsible for History Didactics courses were interviewed.

The interview protocols were developed after an initial period of field immersion to identify recurring issues emerging from classes, teacher education discussions, and interactions between the university and basic education schools. The interviews addressed, among other topics, the

meanings students attributed to teacher education practices, the relationship between theory and practice, the presence of History Education within the programme, the connections between the university and basic education schools, and the ways in which academic preparation is articulated with professional practice. The interview data were analysed in conjunction with the observation records, serving as a strategy for data triangulation.

The analysis followed an interpretive approach aimed to identify recurring patterns, tensions, and the meanings attributed by participants to teacher education practices. Based on this procedure, four analytical markers were identified: the Portuguese curriculum reform, the supervised teaching practicum, the network of cooperating teachers, and University-school partnership initiatives. These markers were selected because of their recurrence in the interviews and field observations, as well as their capacity to reveal concrete forms of collaboration, negotiation, and tension between the university and schools within the Master's Degree in History Teaching at the University of Lisbon.

These analytical markers are examined in dialogue with the accounts of one student enrolled under the previous curricular framework (Jorge) and three students from the new curriculum (Sofia, Bárbara, and Juliana). Of the ten students interviewed, those whose responses most clearly illuminated the research questions were selected for discussion. Pseudonyms are used to ensure the privacy and anonymity of the research participants. Excerpts from interviews with two university lecturers, identified as P1 and P2, are also included. The interviews were conducted with the participants' informed consent, including authorization for audio recording and the academic use of their testimonies, while preserving the anonymity of the students, lecturers, and partner schools involved. Diagram 1, presented below, summarizes these analytical markers and the practices associated with them, which are examined in the following sections.

Diagram 1 – Markers and practices in the relationship between university and school in the Master's Degree in History Teaching at the University of Lisbon

Source: prepared by the authors.

The portuguese curriculum reform: the first analytical marker

The Portuguese curriculum reform, enacted through Decree-Law No. 9-A/2025, repealed the previous legislation (Decree-Law No. 79/2014) and came into force in the 2025/2026 academic year. It introduced significant changes, particularly to the supervised teaching practicum and, thus, to the relationship between the university and schools.

This reform arose in the context of a growing teacher shortage in Portuguese schools and sought to create new pathways into the teaching profession. One explanation for this shortage, raised by students during the interviews, concerns the difficulty of entering the profession, as Jorge explains:

[...] we are facing a serious teacher shortage here, and I think that if the undergraduate degree already included the pedagogical component, it would make access to the profession much easier. At the moment, becoming a teacher in Portugal is difficult [...] because a master's degree is required. The recruitment process is much more demanding than it would be if we already had those foundations during the undergraduate programme (Jorge, 2025).

Jorge's account refers to the changes introduced by the Bologna Process¹, which established the requirement that initial History teacher education in Portugal, as in other European Union countries, include a two-year specialized master's degree in teaching (Bologna, 1999).

Articulate with Jorge's account, other students also highlighted the obstacles to entering the master's programme, emphasizing that, following the Bologna Process, admission became “super difficult”, requiring both an entrance examination and an interview, while offering “very few places in the whole country” (Sofia, 2025). This restriction is further illustrated by Juliana's observation that approximately 100 applicants compete for around 30 places, a number that may be reduced to only 15 at some institutions, revealing the highly selective nature of the system despite the ongoing shortage of teachers (Juliana, 2025).

These accounts suggest that, from the students' perspective, the changes linked to the Bologna Process and broader teacher education reforms have had significant effects for Portuguese education. Within this context, lengthy, fragmented, and highly selective teacher education pathways tend to discourage young people from entering the profession, making teaching less accessible and increasingly disconnected from the realities of school life.

The teacher shortage in Portugal seems to be the outcome of a process that has distanced the profession from the schools' needs. To address this disparity, the new legislation introduced a financial allowance, which the interviewed students viewed with both skepticism and irony. According to Bárbara, during the second year of the professional master's programme, students receive an annual stipend of €3,000 in exchange for teaching between eight and twelve hours per week. After laughing briefly, she remarked, “The joke speaks for itself” (Bárbara, 2025).

For her, the irony lies in the fact that this amount is insufficient to cover the monthly expenses of an adult while simultaneously revealing the

implicit burden of the arrangement: “In theory, we are not supposed to teach on our own. We have a cooperating teacher, and their classes also become ours [...]. But in reality, students often end up teaching on their own” (Bárbara, 2025).

Bárbara's account challenges a more optimistic interpretation of the extended time student teachers spend in schools. Although longer placements may promote situated professional learning, they may also transform teacher education into an emergency response to teacher shortages by transferring responsibilities that properly belong to the education system onto teachers who are still in training.

Professor P1, in turn, sees positive outcomes in the new model, particularly regarding aspects of professional practice that are not typically addressed to the university, such as bureaucratic work, relationships with colleagues, and learning how to navigate the profession. In her own words:

[...] now, under the new master's programme, students will spend a full year in schools [...]. Before, they only taught around ten lessons. I think this will make a huge difference [...] for teaching practice [...] and for developing an awareness of what professional life is about [...]. These students will have time in schools not only to teach but also to do everything else. They will learn the bureaucratic side of the job, which is a huge part of teachers' work and something they often complain about. They will spend time in the staff room. We do not teach that here, do we? Learning how to survive in the profession – these are issues that are so important, and although there is no specific space for them within the master's programme, there is within the practicum, within professional practice [...]. This reform means they have many more classes in the first year than in the second. During the second year, they are fully dedicated to the school. They come to the university only one day a week, while spending the rest of the time in a school, working with several classes alongside a cooperating teacher who supervises them. I believe this is a huge advantage (Professor P1, 2025).

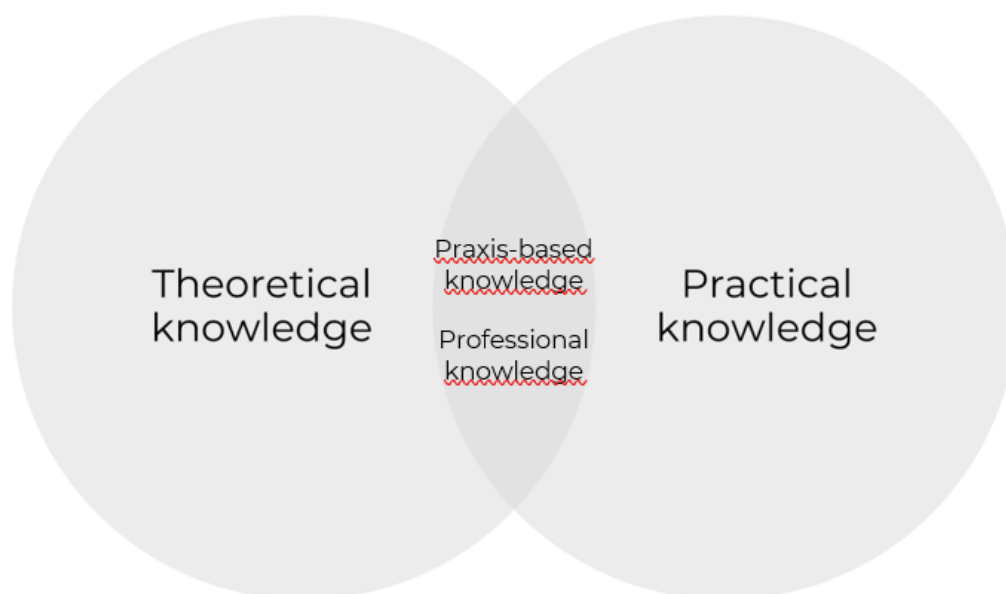
Professor P1's positive assessment, however, does not eliminate the ambiguities inherent in the reform. An extended practicum may broaden students' exposure to dimensions of teaching that are often invisible during university coursework, including school bureaucracy, collegial relationships,

and institutional organization. At the same time, when linked to policies aimed at mitigating teacher shortages, the same arrangement may assume an ambivalent character, simultaneously serving educational purposes and responding to the functional needs of the school system.

Professor P1's reflections resonate with what Nóvoa and Alvim (2022) describe as the “third genre of knowledge” – a form of professional knowledge that emerges through practice and is continually transformed by it. This knowledge is developed within various contexts, shaped by specific circumstances, and characterized by its contextual and contingent nature. It covers beyond disciplinary knowledge and teaching methods, taking shape within the daily school life.

Acknowledging the value of this professional knowledge highlights the understanding that teacher education is built through everyday praxis, combining multiple dimensions of teachers' work. Diagram 2 presents a synthesis of the different forms of teachers' knowledge, with particular emphasis on praxis-based knowledge and professional knowledge.

Diagram 2 – Teachers' knowledge



Source: prepared by the authors

Later in her interview, Professor P1 refers to the changes introduced by the new model, which concentrates the theoretical and practice-oriented courses in the first year while substantially broader the supervised teaching practicum in the second year, during which they are expected to teach between eight and twelve hours per week². Tables 1 and 2 illustrate how this new curricular structure is applied in the setting of the present study.

Table 1 – Curricular Units of the Institute of Education over the two years of the Master's Degree in History Teaching, based on Decree-Law No. 9-A/2025

Unidades Curriculares da Educação	
1st semester	Educational Psychology
	Curriculum and Assessment
2nd semester	History of Education
	Society and School
3rd semester	X
4th semester	X

Source: prepared by the authors.

Table 2 – Curricular Units of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities in the two years of the Master's Degree in History Teaching, based on Decree-Law No. 9-A/2025

Curricular Units in History Teaching	
1st semester	Topics in History
	Didactics of History I – Theories and Methods
	Didactics of History II – Theories and Methods
2nd semester	Didactics of History III – Communication in History: Strategies and Resources
	Didactics of History IV – Historical Thinking in the Digital Age
3rd semester	Seminar on Introduction to Professional Practice I
	Supervised Teaching Practice
4th semester	Seminar on Introduction to Professional Practice II
	Supervised Teaching Practice

Source: prepared by the authors.

Overall, the Portuguese curriculum reform reconfigures the relationship between the university and schools, particularly by increasing the time student teachers spend in professional settings. However, this expansion does not occur without tensions. On the one hand, it fosters immersion in professional practice and closer engagement with the knowledge of the profession. On the other hand, it reveals institutional strategies that shift part of the education system's responsibilities onto student teachers who are still in training. This ambivalence suggests that

the closer alignment between teacher education and professional practice may function both as a learning opportunity and as a response to structural needs, making it necessary to critically examine its implications.

The network of cooperating teachers: the second analytical marker

The master's degree in history teaching at the University of Lisbon includes a network of cooperating teachers, which constitutes the second analytical marker of this study. The work carried out within this network is organized through regular meetings: one at the beginning of the semester for planning purposes, another midway through the semester to review the progress of activities, and a third at the end of the semester dedicated to evaluation and the identification of possible adjustments. As Professor P2 explains, there is "one [meeting] to prepare the academic year" and another at the end of the semester to "listen" to the teachers and gather feedback on the work carried out by the student, in addition to collecting reports and holding additional meetings "whenever necessary", according to specific requests from the network (Professor P2, 2025).

The new legislation establishes requirements for cooperating teachers. As Professor P1 explains, these teachers are expected to have professional experience, to have worked at their school for more than five years, and, preferably, to hold postgraduate qualifications and specific preparation for teacher education (Professor P1, 2025).

This network was built over many years by the professor – now retired – who coordinated the programme for two decades. Its origins date back to the 1980s, and it has gradually been consolidated through the commitment of dedicated professionals whom students recognize as playing a central role in their professional development (Professor P2, 2025). The historical development of this community through time can be understood as a consolidated a professional group grounded in a shared institutional history,

shaped by accumulated experience and sustained relationships among its members rather than by isolated or fragmented training initiatives (Nóvoa, 1995).

This continuity is reflected in intergenerational relationships, evidenced by enduring mentoring connections across different generations. Professor P1, for example, referred to cases in which the same cooperating teacher supervised members of the same family at different moments in their teacher education routes (Professor P1, 2025). Beyond this temporal dimension, the community is also characterized by the professional dispositions and practices of its cooperating teachers, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

Teachers in the network are very open to the suggestions that students bring from the university [...] regarding activities they would like to try. They may adopt more traditional approaches in their own teaching, but they never tell students [...] that something cannot be done. They are all very open. Naturally, they may feel more comfortable working in a somewhat more conventional way, but [...] they never prevent our students, our master's students, our future teachers, from experimenting with new ideas (Professor P2, 2025).

This account suggests that cooperating teachers are receptive to dialogue, welcoming innovative practices introduced by the university while remaining open to learning themselves. This dynamic is built upon relationships of support and intergenerational exchange, as described by Professor P1:

There is tremendous generosity on the part of the teachers who welcome our students. Most of them are nearing the end of their careers; they are highly experienced professionals. [...] It is very interesting because [...] they learn a great deal from the students and from what they bring from the university – new methodologies, new approaches, new topics. At the same time, they bring the weight of experience [...]. I think they provide a support network, a sense of security that allows our student to experiment. That is part of the learning process [...]. They have someone with large

experience with whom they can discuss their plans and who supports them if things do not go as expected (Professor P1, 2025).

These accounts indicate that the network extends far beyond administrative or organizational functions. Rather, it constitutes a relational and educational space in which university lecturers, practising teachers, and students teachers engage in reciprocal learning. In this sense, the network of cooperating teachers can be understood as a privileged setting for shared teacher education, sustained by collaboration and professional exchange while integrating experiential, professional, and academic knowledge (Nóvoa, 1995).

Nevertheless, this model depends heavily on individual dispositions, particularly the voluntary commitment and professional engagement of experienced teachers. As highlighted by the interviewees, the limited institutional incentives available suggest that the long-term sustainability of the network is far from guaranteed, calling into question the idea of teacher education “within the profession” as a fully institutionalized policy. Although the network functions as a powerful teacher education mechanism, it remains dependent upon fragile arrangements, underscoring the need to institutionalize these practices so that they no longer rely exclusively on the goodwill and personal commitment of individual teachers.

Professor P2 further argues that teaching competence cannot be reduced to theoretical knowledge alone but is forged through professional praxis. While certain aspects of teacher education are addressed at the university, she emphasizes that it is in schools where student teachers actually implement the approaches they have learned and critically reflect on their own practice (Professor P2, 2025).

This argument highlights the centrality of situated teacher education by emphasizing that it is within professional practice that student teachers mobilize and reinterpret the knowledge acquired at the university. Such a perspective aligns with Nóvoa's (2009) critique of the separation between

academic preparation and professional practice, according to which teachers' professional knowledge is constructed through action, lived experience, and critical reflection in educational settings.

The interviews also reveal a strong appreciation for experiential knowledge, understood, according to Tardif (2014), as knowledge developed through professional practice and validated in the everyday school life, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

This is something I have discussed with many people. Because our teaching workforce is ageing, there is often less willingness to try new things [...]. Teachers in Portugal are very tired. They work many extra hours, teach many classes, and are responsible for large numbers of students, and this is noticeable. When this new generation arrives, [...] the dynamics change [...]. I think we need to send our students into schools while they can still learn from those who have experience [...], so that this practical knowledge is not lost (Professor P1, 2025).

Professor P1's remarks express concern about preserving this experiential knowledge considering the ageing teaching workforce and the risk that such professional expertise may disappear. At the same time, they highlight the importance of intergenerational knowledge sharing. As Tardif (2014) argues, experiential knowledge constitutes a form of professional heritage that remains alive through its circulation within school communities.

Despite its long history, this network has reached the point where it needs to expand, given the growing difficulty of recruiting new cooperating teachers. According to Professor P2, there are few institutional incentives, limited financial compensation and only a modest reduction in teaching workload. Therefore, teachers' participation depends mostly on their individual commitment to educating future generations of teachers (Professor P2, 2025).

This commitment to preparing future teachers is embedded within the historical development of the teaching profession, a history marked by persistent tensions in the relationship between universities and schools. The

gradual separation of these two institutions has weakened professional ties and reduced schools' sense of responsibility for teacher education (Nóvoa, 1995).

As a result, the absence of a well-established culture in which practicing teachers assume responsibility for educating future colleagues has hindered the development of a strong and institutionalized professional identity. From this perspective, teacher education cannot be conceived as an external activity but rather as an integral dimension of professional practice, like in fields such as medicine, engineering, and architecture (Nóvoa, 2009).

Furthermore, according to Nóvoa (1995, 2009), we argue that teacher education within the profession – with the active participation of experienced teachers – requires a structural reconfiguration of the school itself. Schools must cease to be viewed solely as places of teaching and instead become spaces for teacher education, professional socialization, and the production of professional knowledge.

Within this reconfigured institutional framework, teacher education is no longer understood as a peripheral activity external to the school's mission but becomes embedded in the everyday work of teachers and schools. From this perspective, the continuity of practicum partnerships over several decades reflects an ongoing process of institutional transformation, through which schools increasingly embrace the education of future teachers as a collective, historical, and continuous responsibility.

Hence, the community of cooperating teachers should not be understood merely as an expression of agreeable collaboration between universities and schools. It also reveals asymmetries, differing expectations, and ongoing negotiations concerning the respective roles of each institution in teacher education. Schools emerge as sites of professional knowledge production, although this position ultimately depends on institutional recognition, adequate working conditions, and the meaningful

participation of basic education teachers in shaping teacher education programmes.

The third analytical marker: the supervised teaching practicum

In the Master's Degree in History Teaching at the University of Lisbon, student teachers are assigned to practicum placements within the network of cooperating teachers according to previously established criteria, such as academic performance and proximity to their place of residence. Thus, students do not choose their placement schools. According to Professor P2, this arrangement is linked to institutional requirements, as the establishment of practicum placements depends on formal agreements and protocols with the Ministry of Education, while the Institute of Education is responsible for approving and monitoring these placement sites (Professor P2, 2025).

Within these practicum placements, student teachers undertake an action research project involving three key actors: university lecturers, cooperating teachers, and master's students. The research is designed at the university, implemented in schools, and subsequently evaluated in meetings involving all members of this triad. These action research arrangements foster teachers' appropriation of the various forms of knowledge mobilized in professional practice.

This teacher education pathway closely resembles the concept of *third spaces*, discussed by Nóvoa (2009) and further developed by Zeichner (2010). According to Zeichner (2010), the *third space* constitutes a hybrid environment in which university-based and school-based knowledge intersect, promoting a more collaborative and reflective model of teacher education that overcomes the traditional division between theory and practice.

Another practice that contributes to the creation of these *third spaces* occurs when university lecturers observe and assess student teachers' lessons in schools. Jorge highlights this process:

[...] our practicum supervisor is always there observing our lessons and giving us feedback: "You did this well, you could improve that, but overall it was very good." After the lesson, we have a meeting involving me, my practicum supervisor, and my research supervisor [...], where they discuss the strengths of the lesson, what could have been improved, and what could have been done differently [...]. Everything is discussed in that meeting. I explain why I made certain decisions, what I believe I did well, and what I think I could have done better. There is genuine space for dialogue, and I think that is a very positive aspect of the assessment process (Jorge, 2025).

This model illustrates a shared approach to assessment in which classroom observation extends beyond the assignment of a grade and becomes an opportunity for dialogue, reflection, and professional learning. Following the observed lesson, a meeting is held to discuss strengths, areas for improvement, and alternative approaches, enabling the student teacher to justify pedagogical decisions and critically reflect on their own practice.

This interactive setting transforms assessment into a reflective and formative process in which student teachers play an active role by supporting their pedagogical choices, recognizing areas for improvement, and developing their professional autonomy. Such a dynamic redefines traditional assessment practices centred on monitoring and measuring teaching performance, moving instead toward an understanding of assessment as a process that promotes reflection and learning.

This arrangement can be interpreted through Schön's (1987) framework of the threefold movement of knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action, and reflection-on-action and on reflection-in-action. Within the supervised teaching practicum, privileged spaces for collaborative teacher education are created, fostering the preparation of reflective practitioners capable of directing their own professional development.

Regarding the experience of being assessed, Jorge describes it as a natural component of teacher education rather than a punitive exercise:

[...] I teach exactly as I would under any other circumstances. I think that is what is expected when someone comes to watch a lesson. It is not as if I change what I do simply because my lecturer is there. In fact, I probably took a risk because I organized a cooperative group activity with the students during an experimental lesson. But, in a way, that is positive because that is precisely what the lecturer wants to witness – a real lesson (Jorge, 2025).

Jorge's understanding of classroom teaching moves beyond traditional instructional models and aligns with the pedagogical approaches promoted by the university lecturers. His perspective reflects a departure from the historically dominant paradigm of school culture, in which teachers occupy the central role in the educational process and lecture-based teaching is regarded as the leading teaching strategy.

However, this perspective is not shared by all student teachers. According to Jorge, some of his classmates become extremely anxious during experimental lessons, indicating that assessment keeps generating tensions (Jorge, 2025). Professor P1 similarly identifies a amount of resistance among student teachers during the practicum. Although they employ active learning methodologies in their everyday teaching, many still believe that an observed lesson should follow a more traditional format, centred on teacher exposition and content transmission. This reveals persistent ambiguities regarding what constitutes legitimate teaching practice (Professor P1, 2025).

Professor P1's account illustrates the persistence of traditional teaching paradigms throughout teacher education, even when student teachers demonstrate competence in implementing active learning methodologies during the practicum. A tension emerges between the pedagogical discourse promoted by the programme – which emphasizes inquiry, problem-solving, and collaborative learning – and the teaching

models that student teachers experienced and internalized throughout their own schooling.

Teaching continues to be associated with the transmission of knowledge; if students work independently, some still understand that this is not a genuine class. Consequently, despite sustained efforts to promote pedagogical innovation, moving beyond traditional teaching practices remains a complex challenge, as it requires transforming historically and culturally entrenched beliefs about teaching and learning.

Scholars such as Nóvoa (1995), Schön (1983), and Zeichner (2010) argue that teachers tend to reproduce the instructional models they themselves experienced as students. Lasting pedagogical change, therefore, depends on an ongoing process of critical reflection on professional practice.

Partnership-based teacher education: the final analytical marker

The final analytical marker concerns partnership-based teacher education. Professor P1 has invited basic education teachers to deliver seminars on aspects of the profession that are not typically addressed in university programmes, including school organization, management, and everyday school life. This initiative represents another effort to promote the reciprocal circulation of knowledge between the university and schools.

[...] Professor P1 has been very committed to strengthening this relationship [between schools and the university] by inviting teachers to speak about different topics, such as school organization, which is something our students know very little about. They do not really understand how schools function from a bureaucratic perspective, and this is something we cannot adequately cover at the university. Then, when they begin their practicum, they are so concerned with preparing lessons and mastering the content to answer students' questions that they barely notice the entire school ecosystem. [...] I believe it is essential for professionals to understand how their institution is organized (Professor P2, 2025).

Once again, the interviews – such as Professor P2's account – underscore the importance of incorporating into teacher education the knowledge of professional praxis that cannot be acquired at the university. While the university lacks certain forms of professional knowledge, the lecturers also argue that universities hold forms of academic knowledge that should, in turn, reach schools.

Professor P1 emphasizes, however, that such cooperation can only be effective when it responds to concrete school needs. She recalls an episode from her own experience as a schoolteacher, when a university-led initiative was disconnected from the school's real needs ultimately proved to be of little practical value:

[...] when I started teaching, in my first job [...] we were involved in a research project on the Atlantic islands in the fifteenth century [...] and we had support from master's students in computer science, who developed an huge database. This was about twenty-eight years ago. They would say, "With this program you can identify where a particular historical figure was born, and it will appear on the map." [...] And I kept thinking, "What is this actually useful for?" If I do not know where these historical figures were born, if it does not answer any of my research questions, and if I do not even have the documentation needed to populate the database [...] then it is useless to me. [...] Our idea, therefore, is to provide teachers with subject-specific professional development [...] while understanding what teachers need [...] and what will genuinely be useful to them (Professor P1, 2025).

Professor P1 further highlights the importance of strengthening teachers' subject knowledge. Although teachers in Portugal are required to undertake continuing professional development, these initiatives tend to focus primarily on pedagogical or technological issues, while many teachers – particularly those who completed their education several decades ago – continue to seek opportunities for disciplinary updating. According to Professor P1, there is considerable interest in new historical sources, perspectives, and teaching materials, reinforcing the importance of

establishing a more sustained dialogue between universities and schools (Professor P1, 2025).

Partnership-based teacher education therefore has the potential to move the university away from a predominantly transmissive role and bring it closer to schools' genuine needs. Nevertheless, Professor P1's account demonstrates that such collaboration may fail when university interventions are not grounded in problems recognized by basic education teachers themselves. In this sense, partnership is not defined simply by the university's presence in schools but by the collaborative construction of questions, needs, and responses.

Conclusions

The analyses presented in this study indicate that the Master's Degree in History Teaching at the University of Lisbon has made significant progress toward promoting teacher education “within the profession”, particularly by bringing together different actors and learning environments. At the same time, the findings suggest that this rapprochement develops amid structural, institutional, and cultural tensions that constrain its full realization. The coexistence of innovative practices alongside enduring traditional models, together with the increasing reliance on student teachers as an answer to teacher shortages, demonstrates that the relationship between universities and schools remains marked by important contradictions.

Furthermore, these initiatives face resistance stemming from European teacher education reform policies, deeply embedded school cultures and supervisory practices, the challenge of fostering a professional culture that embraces the preparation of future teachers, and the pressures created by teacher shortages in Portuguese schools. These shortages often

prompt short-term responses that do not necessarily support the broader goal of improving educational quality.

The study therefore contributes to ongoing debates by demonstrating that integrated professional learning requires not only curricular reform but also broader transformations in teachers' working conditions, school cultures, and educational policies. The Master's Degree in History Teaching at the University of Lisbon, like any curricular policy, reveals limitations inherent to its implementation. The relationship between the university and basic education schools is shaped through institutional agreements and continuously reconfigured by the complex social, political, and organizational influences surrounding it. Ultimately, the findings suggest that teacher education policies are continuously reinterpreted in practice, resulting in contextualized and historically situated arrangements.

It is within this context of tensions and negotiations that the findings of this study should be understood. They demonstrate that the practices developed within the Master's Degree in History Teaching at the University of Lisbon hold significant elements that relocate teacher education "within the profession" by fostering the establishment of communities of practice, valuing professional memory and accumulated professional knowledge, creating *third spaces*, reconfiguring schools as sites of teacher education, recognizing the value of professional knowledge, and challenging deeply rooted school cultures.

More specifically, this study contributes to the fields of History and, above all, History Education by demonstrating that initial History teacher education extends beyond the acquisition of historical knowledge and teaching techniques. The case examined here shows teacher education as a situated process, constructed through the interaction of the university, schools, professional culture, educational policies, and concrete teaching practices. By examining the Master's Degree in History Teaching at the University of Lisbon, this article provides a comparative framework for

reflecting on the challenges of initial teacher education in Brazil, particularly regarding the relationship between historical knowledge, History Didactics, the supervised teaching practicum, and the process of learning to teach.

In this sense, the Portuguese experience examined is not presented as a model to be replicated but rather as a case that sheds light on recurring challenges in the education of History teachers: the separation between theory and practice, the centrality traditionally attributed to universities, the still uneven participation of basic education schools in teacher education, and the difficulty of recognizing the professional knowledge generated through teaching practice. The study's principal contribution, therefore, lies in demonstrating that preparing History teachers within the profession requires the construction of genuine collaborative spaces between universities and schools, while acknowledging the institutional, political, and cultural contradictions that continue to shape this process.

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¹The Bologna Process reorganized European higher education through the adoption of a cycle-based degree structure, with direct impacts on teacher professional qualification in several countries, including Portugal (Bologna, 1999).

²At the University of Lisbon, the Master's Degree in History Teaching is offered through a partnership between the Institute of Education and the Faculty of Arts.