

Towards a Gender Sensitive Teacher Education: a Research in Basic Education

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of current social and educational policies, guided by values of citizenship and equal opportunities, it is crucial that teacher education develops social and ethics dimensions in the future professionals. However, inequalities persist in society, like those related to gender. Education and teacher education are promising fields for changing. The Bologna process has put new challenges and created new opportunities to higher education in order to rethink Initial Teacher Education (ITE). Simultaneously, demands for improvement issues about equity and gender in curriculum of teacher's education have strengthened. This research represents an additional step in the interpretation of gender and its relation to ITE, once gender in teacher education is a relatively under research area (e.g. 1,2). The lack of knowledge regarding an analysis of gender issues in ITE is, therefore, one of the starting points for this research. Elementary school teachers need to understand gender policies and how they impact on their teaching before they can begin to challenge these.

OBJECTIVES

Within this context, the main purposes of this study are:

- (i) to analyze whether gender issues are addressed in the study plans and modules of the Master Degree Programs (MDP) in Pre-School Education and Primary Education in all public polytechnic institutes of Portugal;
- (ii) to know the student teachers perceptions about gender sensitive teaching practices.

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

To meet the main goals of this investigation, a qualitative methodological approach has been used. The study was carried on in a public polytechnic institute from the interior north of Portugal. Fourteen pre-service teachers (eleven women and three men) pursuing a master degree in Pre-School Education and Primary Education were interviewed. The interviews were submitted to an inductive analysis and interpretation. Additionally, we performed a documental analysis on syllabus of every master degree program in Pre-School Education and Primary Education in all portuguese public polytechnic institutes.

RESULTS

- Pre-service teachers carry with them beliefs which lead them to adapt the practice to gender;
- They also understand that a equal treatment to boys and girls will lead to equal oportunities;
- The expectations of the pre-service teachers tend to be inferior when it comes to the involvement of boys in the activities;
- They understand that the girls work more in the classes;

The issue of gender is seldom approached in teacher training courses and, with rare exceptions, it does not fit into a pedagogical and didactical approach.

- On the day of group tasks in the classroom, pre-servie teachers tend to organize groups according to performance levels of students, regardless of gender;
- It appears that primary education propogates a hegemonic masculinisation and an incresing feminisation.

Teachers perceptions ...

Documents analysis ...

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