# Australian Journal of Teacher Education

2019

# Teacher Education, Teachers' Work, and Justice in Education: Third Space and Mediation Epistemology

Fátima Pereira
*Centre for Research and Intervention in Education (CIIE), Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Porto,*
fpereira@fpce.up.pt

# Teacher Education, Teachers' Work, and Justice in Education: Third Space and Mediation Epistemology

Fátima Pereira
Centre for Research and Intervention in Education - CIIE
Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of Porto University
Portugal

*Abstract: A theoretical essay, based on the results of research projects on teacher education, teachers' work, and justice in education developed by the author, is presented. It reflects on teacher education and the epistemology of teachers' work, and proposes a mediational and a narrative perspective towards a third space in Teacher education. An alternative mediation epistemological approach to justice in education and the epistemology of teachers' work is presented, aiming towards an understanding of the ways in which teachers' education has the possibility of making a difference in the construction of a more just public school.*

## Introduction

The essay builds on the assumption that we are living in a time of crisis in modern institutions, with a particular focus on public school education and the institutions that are involved with it (see Dubet, 2002). The crisis in modern institutions is referred to by Dubet (2002) as a loss of social legitimacy of the conventions and the corresponding rules about the social relation that supports the socialisation work of those institutions. This crisis has several impacts on school education, teachers' work and teacher education, which will be discussed in this essay. The discussion will be based on the research conducted by the author, in the last decade, on teacher education, teachers' work, and justice in education in Portugal[1] (see Pereira, 2009, 2011, 2013a, 2013b, 2015, 2016; Pereira, Lopes, & Marta, 2015; Pereira et al., 2016). The field of teacher education is deeply complex, multi-referential, and kaleidoscopic, and has played a key role in the production processes of the teaching profession, professional socialisation, and the construction of public education (Nóvoa, 1995). In Portugal, teacher education has faced difficulties in contributing to the constitution of the professional attitudes of teachers that would facilitate the establishment of a democratic public school system, as well as educational activity that is sensitive to heterogeneity and difference (see Pereira, 2013a). The teacher is at the core of an "ethical circle"[2] of great complexity and interactivity, which requires the mastery of various skills (such as discursive and relational competence), the mastery of various types of professional knowledge (i.e., scientific, educational, and experiential), and a critical awareness of the factors of injustice in school and in the social world. Therefore, teacher education is currently facing great challenges in contributing to the construction of professional identities and to the production of the teaching profession, in the context of a more democratic and fair school. However, given the complexity of the concept

---

[1] Information on the research projects can be consulted at http://www.fpce.up.pt/ciie/.

[2] "Attestation de soi, sollicitude pour autrui et reconnaissance mutuelle forment alors la trilogie du cercle éthique qui permet d'expliquer l'émergence du sujet éthique (…)" (Kerlan & Simard, 2011, p. 105).

of social justice and the difficulties in operationalising it in school policies and practices, the main is the improvement of life opportunities for students, challenging inequalities in school and society (Cochran-Smith, Gleeson, & Mitchell, 2010). In this sense, the essay addresses conceptual perspectives and practices in teacher education through the rehabilitation of a critical epistemology of teaching work. The argument which is presented in the essay configures a third space in teacher education that is believed to be a way of making teacher education more meaningful to the construction of a more just School.

The essay is organized in five reflexive and theoretical dimensions which refer to: the characterization of the socio-educational context nowadays; the relations between ethical and just conditions of the public education and the dilemmas experienced by teacher in their work; the main role of the epistemology of teacher's work in the context of teacher education; and the importance of a mediational and narrative approach in a construction of a third space in teacher education. The essay finishes with an identification of a set of educational issues revealing the relevance of a third space in teacher education which is meaningful to a just and ethical public education.

## The Socio-Educational Context: Late Modernity and the Crisis in Public Education and Teachers' Work

Over the last few decades, the *crisis in public education* has become evident as an unavoidable perspective in the reflection on school and teachers' work, which is associated with the idea of a *decline in the modern institutional program* (Dubet, 2002). The increasing instability of the social conventions that have built modern institutions, reflecting what Giddens (1992) calls late modernity, has originated new discourses and narratives that call into question not only the commonplaces of educational modernity, but also the institutional framework of public education per se. These new narratives create tensions and ruptures that have affected teachers' work. Public education has become subject to public scrutiny (Boltanski & Thevenot, 1991), as have other modern institutions. The growing instability of modern institutional forms, as well as the unpredictability, complexity, and uncertainty that characterise formal educational settings today, create "corridors of freedom" that allow the expression of new rationalities, new forms and types of knowledge, and sociabilities that contradict the institutional matrix (Pereira, 2009). Thus, new educational dynamics, as well as social and emotional relationships, are generated at school, the social and ethical meanings of which are largely to be determined.

The crisis in school as a modern institution confronts teachers with new social mandates, and the unity of principles and values that characterised the scholarly institution has been replaced by a variety of cognitive and pragmatic frameworks for action, as well as norms of justice, thus creating deep tensions and conflicts (Pereira et al., 2016; Derouet, 2010). This forces teachers to continuously produce meaning and justification for their own work, which interferes in the relationship they develop with students and in the ethical dimension of public education. This dimension translates into new ways of socialisation and school subjectivation that affect the lives of children and young people—and about which there has been no clarification regarding the social organisation to which they relate (*ibid*.). The concept of a mobilised crisis refers to the inability to solve the problems that affect School and the work of teachers nowadays through the institutional arrangements that traditionally regulated them. It is a perspective that highlights the opportunities for innovation that this crisis may provide.

The fractures in the socio-ethical and political consensus on the work of teachers are enhanced by a crisis in the representations and meanings that teachers use to understand and

manage their work (Pereira, 2015). According to Correia, Matos, and Canário (2002), there is fundamentally a cognitive crisis that results from the confrontation with a constantly changing reality, in the face of the inability of scientific discourses to produce ways of understanding and giving meaning to social and educational action. The devaluation of the experiential knowledge of teachers as a constituent of legitimate knowledge in education, as well as the lack of mediation devices between this knowledge and scientific knowledge, is at the focus of the problem. Due to this, the complexity of the phenomenology that characterises school life and educational action has yet to be determined and recognised.

**Ethics and Justice in Public Education and Teachers' Work**

The discrediting of public education in promoting equity in the distribution of symbolic and material goods, as well as socio-economic development, is at the origin of a crisis of legitimacy that affects the educational institution and the work of teachers (Canário, 2006). Such disparagement is largely related to the consolidation, in recent decades, of a complex relationship characterised by circular causal links between school exclusion and social exclusion (Canário, 2006; Bonal, 2009). The crisis in the legitimacy of school calls into question the meaning of schooling, and its relation to knowledge, and to the social and economic world. It also affects the attributes of the profession that are configured in teacher education (see Pereira et al., 2015; Kelly & Brandes, 2010). On the other hand, school rationality tends to extend to dimensions of social life that go beyond the boundaries of school; schooling is involved in the shaping of social and individual identities, with unavoidable impact on the current and future lives of children and young people (Pereira et al., 2016). Therefore, the educational debate is deeply ethical and cannot be done without reflecting on the effects of teachers' work on social and educational justices, and on the articulations between initial and continuous teachers' education.

Understood as deeply involved in the world of school life, ethics in education relates to phenomena of interaction, intersubjectivity, and cognitive mediation, in the context of a communicative action that can interpret this life and translate it into discursive forms of ethical understanding. Such ethical understanding (which should be temporary and subject to public judgement) refers to both purposes and means in education, and should clarify the personal and social identities that thus develop.

School and its associated forms of life, both inside and outside the institutional environment, are characterised by difference, and by socio-cultural and subjective heterogeneity; they are also characterised by divergent rationales and interests, and by a cognitive and ethical historicity that causes communicative action and cooperative ethical reflection to become complex (Pereira, 2011). However, it is also this complexity that enables a *praxis* of conscientisation and views that do not comply with subjugation to contingent interests and strategic rationales (Pereira, 2011). This is not to regard these views as potentially universal propositions that may be generalised to different school contexts, but rather that the process of addressing these views is universal. Such a process entails establishing a communicative action that allows for commitments based on the principle of otherness, and an intersubjective and rational institutional motivation.

The constitution of narrative identities in school is an integral part of the ethical reflection on education, which is associated with the discussion of the meaning of institutional justice and the affections that are created in school life, namely within the educational relationship. In the narration of oneself, the subject assumes the authorship of his or her own actions and produces a judgement about it. This underlines the ethical dimension (Kerlan & Simard, 2011). As I have already said, the teacher is at the core of this "ethical

circle" of great complexity and interactivity, which requires the mastery of various skills (such as discursive and relational competence), the mastery of various types of professional knowledge (i.e., scientific, educational, and experiential), and a critical awareness of the factors of injustice in school and in the social world. Teacher education can have a determining role in the development of these skills.

The ideals of social and educational justice, as well as equal opportunities, have legitimised many of the transformations that public education has been through over the 20th century in Western societies (see Derouet, 2010); although grounded in distinctive political and socio-economic ideologies with diverse implications for the organisation of school education. Therefore, it may be said that those ideals are inscribed in the construction of the teaching profession itself and in the configuration of teachers' work, even if not always in a conscious way. This is a very important issue for teacher education that has not been considered in a desirable way (see Cochran-Smith, Villegas, Abrams, Chavez-Moreno, Mils, & Stern, 2016).

The late 20th century revealed the complexity and intrinsic contradiction of the principle of equal opportunities – which had been the foundation of the rhetoric justifying public education – as well as its paradoxical and difficult implementation in school as an institution. The legitimising principle of the democratisation of public education would be revealed as the main focus of its criticism. The increase in the complexity of interests and conceptions of justice in education brings into evidence other principles, such as equity, respect for differences, inclusion, and accountability, which have the potential to legitimise educational action. The critical perspectives based on distributive justice(s) and justice(s) of recognition (see Fraser, 2002; Young, 2006) are appropriated and re-signified by neoliberal discourses to justify the politics of accountability and the educational rationales that call public education into question (see Bonal, 2009).

The importance of the local dimension – reflected in a growing intervention in school policies and educational decisions, not only by families but also by local bodies, such as local authorities, civil institutions, and companies – creates new meanings for, and ways to understand, the issue of inequality. As postulated by Derouet:

> *Many of those inequalities are the result of multiple adjustments that are traded daily between teachers and students (...) and the main problem may not be the retreat of public service in the face of the market, but a weakening of the imperative of justification among the actors. (2002, p. 9)*

According to Dubet (2010), the ideal of equal opportunities has ignored other definitions of justice, notably those related to gender, family, ethnic group, or community. The ideal of equal opportunities was grounded in a compromise between the principle of civic demand for equality and the need for selective training for the division of labour.

From the 1960s onwards, the fact that this ideal and its real impact on social organisation were questioned favoured the visibility of a plurality and the complexity of principles of justice in the context of public education. This increase in complexity has contributed to the creation of an educational context in which teachers have faced difficulty finding cognitive, ethical, and institutional frameworks to justify their work, which has been a factor in their suffering (Derouet, 2002). Also for this reason, "It has become impossible to make the sociology of inequality without making its epistemology at the same time, that is, without relating the data to the systems within which they were built" (*ibid*., p. 13).

Knowledge in educational sciences needs to take into consideration the importance of understanding the social and educational day-to-day, and of identifying new principles of justice that are produced as a result of it or that constrain it (Pereira, 2013a). However, this knowledge cannot be produced in a relationship that is external to teachers' knowledge, but must consider it as an integral part. The epistemology of teachers' work is essential to

understanding everyday life, as well as the visible or invisible forms and principles of justice that characterise it.

## Teacher Education and the Epistemology of Teachers' Work

According to Tardif (2000) and Lessard (2009), from an epistemological and ecological perspective, teachers' professional knowledge may be seen as temporal, heterogeneous, customised, and located. However, professional knowledge is just one of the dimensions of the type of knowledge required for the teaching profession. Gauthier, Desbiens, Malo, Martineu, and Simard (1997) emphasise that such knowledge must also integrate disciplinary and curricular knowledge, as well as knowledge of educational sciences, of pedagogical tradition, of experience, and of pedagogical action. Knowledge of pedagogical action corresponds to teachers' knowledge of experience made public and subjected to the research "proof" that is developed in classes. Thus, the judgement of teachers and their foundations can be evaluated and compared, leading to the formulation of rules of action that are disclosed and reused by other teachers (Gauthier et al., 1997).

The dimension of public validation and social reuse of the experiential knowledge of teachers is fundamental to the legitimacy of this knowledge, and to its recognition as the heritage of the knowledge of the teaching profession (Day, 2017). This dimension contributes to the political assertion of the profession and its emancipation in the context of professions (Pereira, 2011). The contribution of experiential knowledge to teachers' work can also be seen and analysed according to an epistemology of practice (Raelin, 2007) – that is, taking into consideration the contribution of practice to the production of professional knowledge. Indeed, experiential knowledge is the vital nucleus of teachers' knowledge. According to Tardif (2002, p. 54), it allows teachers to "transform their relations of externality with knowledge into relationships of interiority with their own practice." For this reason, experiential knowledge represents a recontextualisation and resignification of all professional knowledge, in the sense that it results from confrontation with the "certainties built in practice and through experience" (Tardif, 2002, p. 54).

Professional practice and educational activities are intrinsically related through socio-cognitive mediation processes. These processes constitute frameworks of interpretation of the educational situation, of the formulation of problems, and of the responses that occur in daily school life. Therefore, to talk about the epistemology of practice is also to talk about the epistemology of both educational activities and professional experience. Educational activity is at the core of the epistemology of teachers' work. The dynamics of formativeness intend to not only elucidate the factors of justice and injustice that are created there, but also produce relevant knowledge for the transformation of those factors. These dynamics are constituted from the reflection, analysis, and production of knowledge related to educational action (see Pereira, 2011, 2013a). The reflective distance made possible by these dynamics is responsible for a shift in representation concerning the symbolic mediations inherent in action. This shift is verified in both the individual and collective dimensions of actions, only with different contours. In the individual dimension, the distancing of the agent relative to the reasons for acting leads him or her to coordinate them in a symbolic representation that is independent of the action. In the collective dimension, the shift is more pronounced and evident, as the representations that are produced constitute "systems of justification and legitimacy", both of the established order and of another order able to replace it (see Pereira, 2011, 2013a).

The problems of educational action, of which I emphasise the production of social, cultural, and ontological injustice(s) and the forms of their justification, are not presented as well-organised structures; nor are they presented as problems (see Pereira, 2013a). Rather, in

accordance with Schön (1992, p. 18), they are seen as "poorly defined and disorderly situations", and the problem that arises is precisely that of the definition of the problem. This is an ontological process, a way of building the world. The uncertainty, the uniqueness, and the conflict of values are indeterminate areas in the work of teachers, which escape the cognitive-instrumental rationalities of knowledge concerning educational activities and the problems that arise. Teachers manage the unpredictability of educational situations in a way that is not scientifically well known or even well reported by them. But when perceived as complex and plural, and as entailing subjective and intersubjective intelligibility, educational action constitutes a web of times and places, with communicative action that can be experienced at school through teachers' educational devices. This can facilitate, in the words of Hameline (1991, p. 56), "a conversation where sense is devised", and in which action and organisation are reconstructed (see Pereira, 2011). The dynamics of teachers' initial and continuous education that implement devices of analysis of individual and collective educational action can produce professional knowledge (see Pereira, 2013a). This knowledge can unveil and clarify inequality phenomena and can also be integrated into the ethical debate that needs to be conducted in schools and in teachers' education. I refer, as an example, diverse activities of reflection about educational action, individual and collectively done, and their impact on the construction of the educational relationship and of the projects in school. I argue that the social construction of school must be substantiated in the professional knowledge that teachers and teacher educators produce about the educational problems and challenges that affect teacher' s work and school education. This production must also take into account practical and theoretical perspectives, as well as the perspectives of different social actors.

**Mediation and Narrative in Education: Toward a Third Space in Teacher Education**

Actor-network theory, of which Latour (1989) is one of the main representatives, in its relations with the rhizome model proposed by Deleuze and Guattari (1980)[3], provides an epistemological framework capable of enabling the unsettling of knowledge on the work of teachers; a different knowledge, a knowledge produced from new epistemological assumptions. From the perspective of actor-network theory itself, this is not considered to be prescriptive of the dynamic of research; rather, it is seen as a possibility that is subject to the scrutiny of the actors and contexts and is, therefore, reconfigurable by its own epistemological plasticity.

In Portugal, teacher education has faced difficulties in contributing to the constitution of the professional attitudes of teachers that would facilitate the establishment of a democratic public school system, as well as educational activity that is sensitive to heterogeneity and difference (see Pereira, 2013a), as I have already referred. These difficulties are largely to be found in the forms and content of the representation of educational reality, and of the problems it poses for the work of teachers and the principles of justice that inform it (Pereira, 2013a). Initial and continuous teacher education have been under the hegemony of a school epistemology that has focused on the cognitive-instrumental dimension, as well as on disciplinary and didactic knowledge, according to an *applicationist* perspective. Although research on education gives an account of various realities in which initial or continuous teacher education have subverted this epistemological rationality, the effects of this research have not been able to significantly change the hegemonic tendency of

---

[3] The rhizome model represents a nonlinear way of thinking which enables to present concepts and theories, simultaneously, in an image and conceptual form, evidencing non-hierarchical and networked relations between concepts and ideas, promoting the identification of new concepts.

the technical and cognitive-instrumental rationality (see Pereira, 2013b). The type of knowledge to which this rationality gives rise has not eased knowledge and interpretation of the phenomenology of educational processes that are the source of the reconfiguration of old forms, or the production of new forms of injustice in public education (Pereira, 2013b). The epistemological rhizome model allows the creation of new possibilities for the production of "a prudent knowledge for a decent School" (see Pereira, 2016). It is about refusing the hierarchy of the forms of knowledge or defining certain principles of its legitimacy as fundamental and, in contrast, constructing representations of the educational realities that provide different types of knowledge, discourses, and experiences in a rhizomatic manner. As a rhizome, this epistemological model allows to establish mediations, relations, and associations between various contents and forms of representation that give rise to new and more complex ramifications, which in turn will constitute new representations. In convergence with the rhizome model, the notion of "network" in actor-network theory allows the integration of this epistemological model within a perspective concerning the construction of the social world. In this approach, the network implies a prior task of equating heterogeneous resources, making them measurable, and allowing them to work together. The networks are simultaneously real like nature, narrated like discourse, and collective like society. The actor is any individual, organisation, or object with agency – producing an effect on the world and on itself, but agency that is delegated to it and legitimised by the associations that take place in the network. According to Latour (2012, p. 312), actor-network theory constitutes what is "induced to act by a vast star-shaped network of mediators who come and go". This theory assumes that it is impossible to understand society without reintroducing in the analysis of its manufacturing the facts produced by the natural and social sciences, and the artefacts conceived by art and culture.

Not imposing the choice between a local or global vision, actor-network theory allows us to think in terms of a – highly connected – global entity, which always remains local no matter what. Escaping the dichotomies of macro/micro, individual/collective, and structure/agency, this perspective represents a mediational way to configure the epistemology of teaching in teacher education. The concept of translation is central to this perspective, as it considers that individuals, groups, and objects hold a steady task of inter-translation; they translate their languages, identity, interests, and problems into those of others, constructing and deconstructing, stabilising and destabilising the symbolic world of human action. Translation induces two mediators to coexist, and these translations between mediators are the ones that can generate trackable associations. The theoretical or empirical statements that circulate in the network are understood as a result of a chain of translation. Another central conception in this approach concerns the importance of setting up a cartography of controversies that allows to understand the associations to which they gave origin and the type of actor-network they legitimise (see Latour, 2012).

To understand the multiple phenomena that can lead to forms of educational and social injustice in school, this perspective constitutes one further possibility for identifying and interpreting factors that transform difference into inequality. It also makes it possible to establish networks of associations, clarifying their rationality and impact on the work of teachers, on the constitution of forms of life that are instituted in the school, and on social relationships in public education.

Fig. 1 represents the conceptualisation of actor-network theory and the epistemology of teaching for which I am arguing.
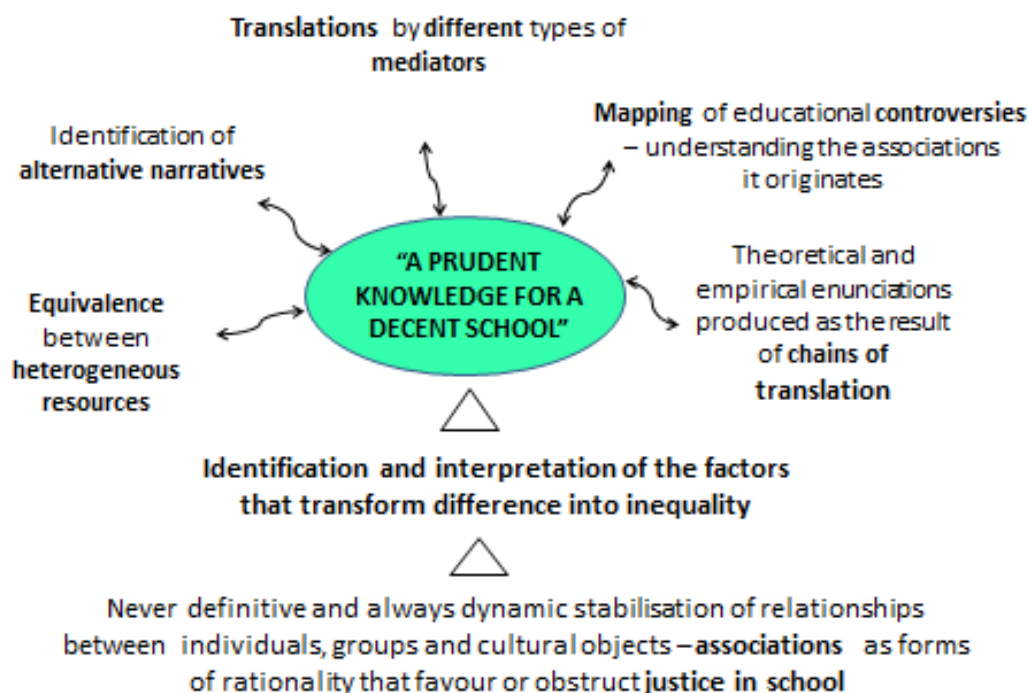
**Figure 1: Actor-network theory and epistemology of teaching**

In this essay, mediation is regarded as a social practice capable of producing new narratives on public education by highlighting their communicational possibilities of social transformation and reconstruction of the socio-educational relationship (see Correia, 2000; Shailor, 1999; Torremorell, 2008). In teachers' initial and continuous education, mediation is still considered to provide a possibility for rehabilitating an epistemology of implication and listening according to Berger (1992); i.e., an epistemology that considers the importance of the identity of the teacher educator in the type of knowledge produced and mobilised in the training processes, and that also considers the professional perspectives of the teachers and the student teachers as fundamental in those processes. In addition, mediation can rehabilitate an epistemology of agents and of missing knowledge in accordance with Santos' (2000) ideas; i.e., it can give relevance to subjects and knowledge traditionally lacking from the conceptualisation of teacher education. Mediation involves the work of translation: a narrative production that transcends our individuality and that of others, and therefore cannot be accurate or establish a mere correspondence between linguistic codes. As Habermas (1987) argues, such translation focuses on a whole that is the language and the social practices associated with it: this is about the ways of life and its meaning.

From the perspective of culture theory (see Bhabha, 2006), the concept of translation can also be understood as representation and cultural reproduction, as a process of the objectification of meanings. In this regard, translation is both a work of cognitive mediation – of reframing the representations of the world and the life forms that constitute it – and a work of reconstruction of the social relationship that is based on communication and language. In the context of this theory, the concept of third space simultaneously represents the general conditions of language and the specific implications of its enunciation in the performative and institutional strategy, but of which it cannot in itself be aware (Bhabha, 2006). In the case of public education, this lack of awareness introduces such ambivalence into the act of interpretation that it favours the examination of representations and hegemonic cognitions; it may also provide the configuration of new enunciations and representations, which are more sensitive to the genealogy of difference, and are greatly informed by an ethics of social and educational justice.

Fig. 2 represents the conceptualisation that I elaborate, focused on the third space approach and its articulation with the concept of mediation, keeping in mind the field of teacher education.
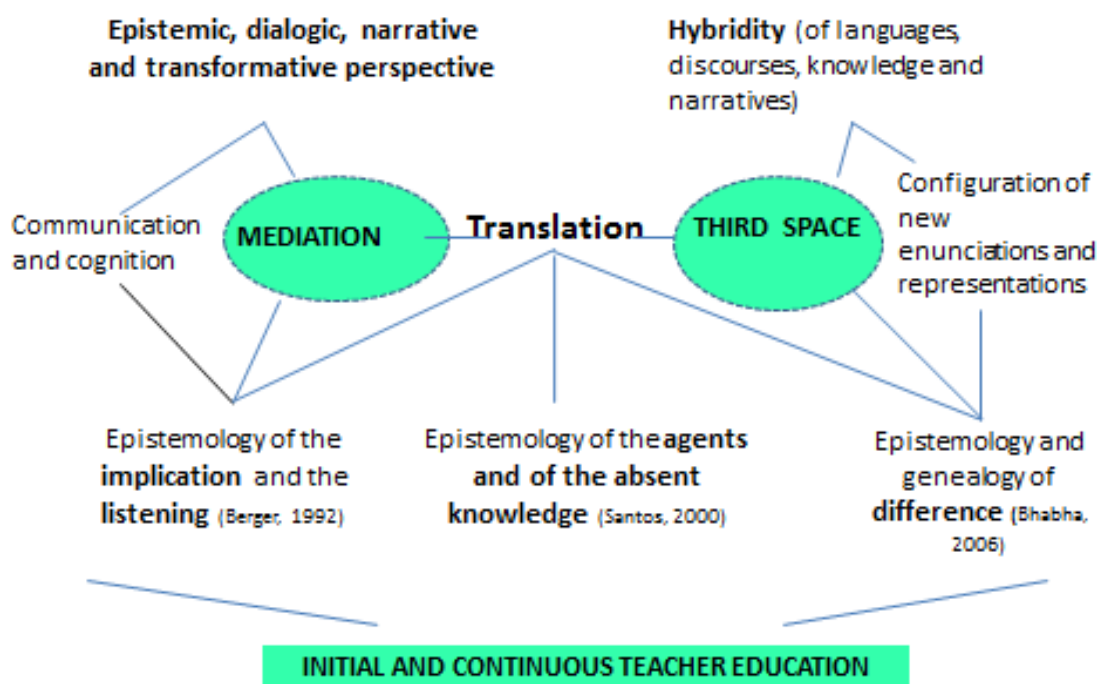


**Figure 2: Mediation and third space**

Taking into consideration that the meaning and significance we attach to the world are constructed from different types of discourse on this same world, the concept of hybridity itself is constitutive of the concept of third space. According to Bhabha (cited in Rutherford, 1990, p. 211) "the importance of hybridity is that it brings the traces of those feelings and practices that inform it, such as in a translation, and thus puts together the traces of some other meanings or discourses".

Zeichner (2010) also speaks about hybridity and third space. This author proposes the creation of hybrid spaces in initial education programs for teachers. These spaces bring together university professors and school teachers, so the practical knowledge and academic knowledge are combined to improve the education of future teachers. Zeichner identifies some types of hybrid spaces that are being created in initial teacher education: the integration of school teachers and their knowledge of subjects and internships dynamics; the integration of school teachers' representations of practice in the programs of some academic subjects; the development of academic subjects mediated by practical experiences; and the existence of hybrid teacher educators (either because they were school teachers before entering an academic career or because they conduct their professional activity in both contexts).

However, as stated by Tardif (2000, p. 20), this is an epistemological field of collaboration that is not without its pitfalls. Therefore, "The task of building a repertoire of knowledge based on the study of the professional knowledge of teachers implies the critical examination of the assumptions underlying the beliefs of one and another regarding the nature of professional knowledge" (*ibid*.).

Other authors also refer to the possibilities of a third space in teacher education. Steele (2017) proposes some third-space collaborative partnership models between university-based and school-based teachers, who share responsibility for student teachers' learning. Specifically, the author studied a supervision model for developing partnerships and mutual

understanding of research-based knowledge between universities and schools, with respect to student teachers' professional development: "the school-based teacher welcomed the opportunity provided by the joint supervision model to give supervision in the "same language" and to supervise from one's own experience and stated that the school-based teacher and university-based teacher complemented each other, which could indicate a non-hierarchical partnership." (*ibid.*, p. 595).

Taylor Wallace (2016), focusing his situation as a hybrid educator, tried to conceptualise the roles hybrid educators play and their impact on educational improvement at a variety of levels. The concept of third space was also meaningful for the study and revealed a promising approach to teacher education because enabled to establish a network of empirical meanings and teaching knowledge to be considered in teacher education activities..

Fig. 3 represents the conceptualisation that I elaborate considering the possibilities of the production of third spaces in teacher education.
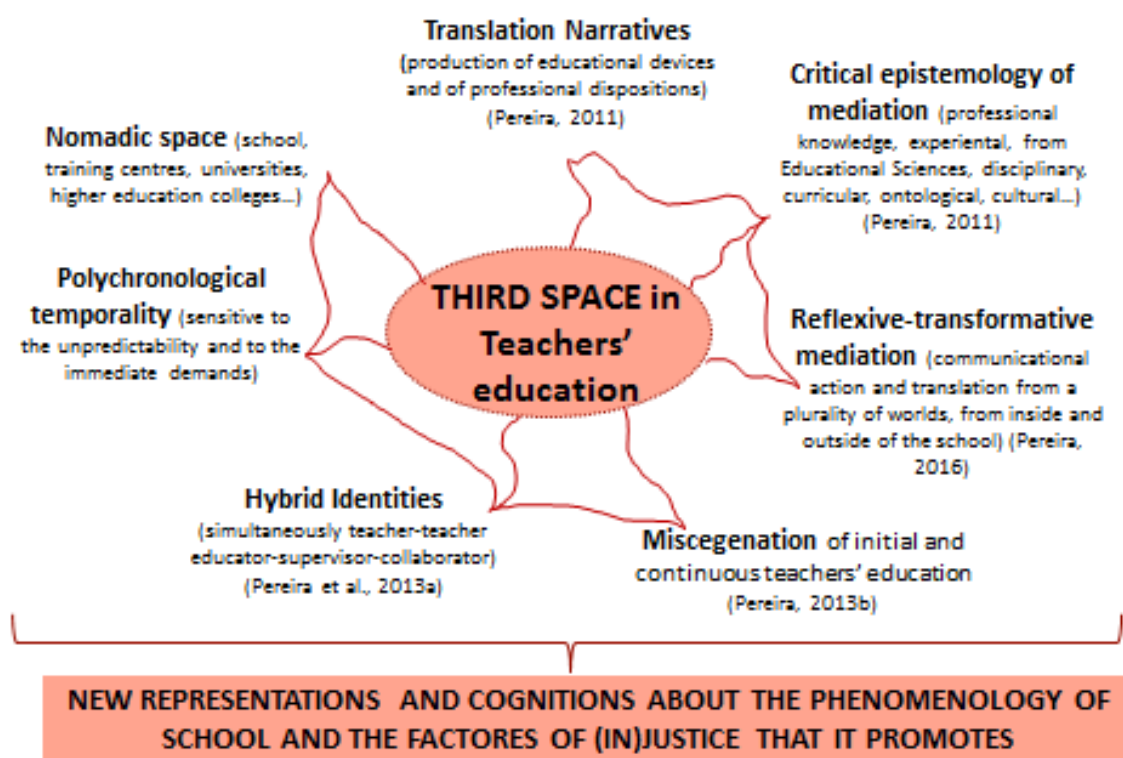


**Figure 3: Third space in teachers' education**

## By Way of Conclusion: Toward understanding the Possibility that Teacher Education Might Make a Difference

As I have already mentioned, the field of teacher education is deeply complex, multi-referential, and kaleidoscopic, and has played a key role in the production processes of the teaching profession, professional socialisation, and the construction of public education (Nóvoa, 1995). Currently, in Portugal, teacher education faces great challenges in contributing to the construction of professional identities and the production of the teaching profession (see Pereira, 2015). In the new millennium, educational and training policies have not been able to potentiate a more democratic and just public school education, and the intensification of the neoliberal ideology in education has worsened the discontent of many educational actors (Pereira, 2015). This has consequences for teachers' work, for the

construction of subjectivities and citizenships, for the life of schools, and for the lives of children and young people above all. Indeed, the biggest challenge to teacher education today is being able to contribute to the training of professionals ethically committed to a more democratic and just public school system, as well as being professionally competent for this purpose. As I have already referred, in line with Cochran-Smith, Gleeson, and Mitchell (2010), it is believed that the main social mandate currently required from the work of teachers is to improve the life chances of students, while challenging the inequalities in school and in society.

Teacher education may open up the possibility of producing new representations and cognitions about the phenomenology of school, and the conditions of inequality and injustice it produces. It is important to consider, in this production, both the most obvious factors of educational and social injustice related to students' failure and dropout, and the more subtle factors of ontological and cultural injustice that are, therefore, the most humanly harmful due to their invisibility. I refer to discriminatory forms of educational relationships or subjective forms of exclusion as examples.

Creating a culture of reflexive-transformative mediation and creating hybrid entities that make it possible to articulate the work of teachers, as well as teachers' initial and continuous education, may offer promising possibilities for the development of more meaningful relationships between teacher education and public education. As an example, I refer to training devices that can be implemented both in schools and in teacher education institutions, and that are constituted by the dialectical interaction between different theoretical and practical perspectives, problems, types of knowledge, and educational ideologies, narrated by different educational actors: teachers, teacher educators, student educators, and school students. This dialectical interaction can reconfigure those narratives in terms and forms of professional knowledge, capable of simultaneously informing and transforming the educational systems of action in schools and in teacher education institutions. I refer, as example, action-research activities developed both in schools and universities, and in a collaborative design; narrative devices to produce professional knowledge and its reconfiguration, both in school and university places and activities; internships supervised in a collaborative perspective and without theoretical hegemony, by school teachers and teacher educators.

The relations between training and public education may unveil both the obstacles to and factors favouring a more socially, culturally, and ontologically just education. To promote communicational action and the translation of a plurality of worlds, inside and outside the school, reflexive-transformative mediation can enable both new narratives on public education and the transformation of that reality. This entails creating entities, as well as communication and cognition devices, between the world of school and the world of training, in order to induce the transformation of these two worlds simultaneously.

The aforementioned processes require the creation of a third space in teacher education that articulates, in a rhizomatic way, different discourses, cognitions, devices, and forms of representation of the work of teachers. This third space may take different configurations, which are sensitive to the context in which they are established. These configurations must be created according to an instituting rationality and the promotion of a critical epistemology of mediation; an epistemology for identifying and assigning equivalence to different types of knowledge that make up public education, the work of teachers, and life in school by linking them in a network. I refer to knowledge such as pedagogical knowledge, disciplinary knowledge, and the knowledge of educational sciences, but also to the knowledge of unlikely cognizant actors, such as children and young people; knowledge which is produced in the "corridors of freedom" and at the margins of the institution. I am arguing for an epistemology that examines such knowledge as a whole from

a critical perspective that produces narratives of translation. These narratives may support the construction of new educational devices and professional attitudes that are more aware of their ethical and social responsibilities. I refer to an epistemology that grounds the arbitration between "contradictory requirements" and enables the constitution of school as a political small town, "a school that is justified on different registers" (Derouet 1992, p. 239); by reference to the place, but without losing sight of the democratic general interest. In other words, such an epistemology not only equates the relationship between theory and practice – which has been the focus of conceptual queries in the field of teacher education – but also takes into consideration the different representations, discourses, narratives, cognitions, and objects (such as teaching materials, textbooks, and new information and communication technologies). All those dimensions and materials are constituents of social relations in education and, therefore, involved in the justice and injustice factors that are produced within it.

The third space should be a nomadic space inhabiting different institutional spaces, such as schools, training centres, universities, and higher education colleges, but without being captive to the rules and rationality that constrain these institutions. Therefore, the professional identities that may introduce this space are necessarily hybrid identities that are constituted by reference to the lived experience in educational and training contexts of various kinds, but also identities that are able to recreate themselves from a cognitive, affective, and communicational perspective (for a deeper understanding of the concept of hybrid identities, see Pereira et al., 2015). This perspective pays attention to and is aware of the cultural and human differences of students and their families, as well as of the requirements of education for equity and social justice. Thus, the temporality that characterises the third space is both diachronic and synchronic, i.e., it is sensitive to the day-by-day educational conditions, but also to the biographical story of the subjects, cultures, and institutions. Considering the complexity of social relations in education and taking into account that the work of teachers is developed within the paradigm of urgency, the temporality of this third space is also multi-chronological and, therefore, sensitive to the unpredictability, uncertainty, and requirements of each immediate moment.

As mentioned in the introduction, emerging as just another possibility, this perspective is based on empirical and conceptual convictions that result from research dynamics developed by the author. However, this perspective is not assumed as a "normative epistemology" that establishes a model *a priori* to be complied with. On the contrary, as Stengers (1995, p. 10) argues concerning nomadic concepts, this perspective can only adapt to one "shaky, unstable field, worked by actors that is defined critically, [that is] constantly redefined by the operations that are tried with success or failure," engaging us and imposing decision making.

## References

Berger, G. (1992). A investigação em educação: Modelos sócio-epistemológicos e inserção institucional [Research in education: Socio-epistemological models and institutional insertion]. *Revista de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação*, *3/4*, 23-26.

Bhabha, H. (2006). Cultural diversity and cultural differences. In B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths & H. Tiffin (Eds.), *The post-colonial studies reader* (pp. 155-157). New York: Routledge.

Boltanski, L., & Thévenot, L. (1991). *De la justification: Les économies de la grandeur* [Justification: Savings of greatness]. Paris: Gallimard.

Bonal, X. (2009). La educación en tempos de globalización: Quién se beneficia? [Education in times of globalisation: Who benefits?]. *Educação e Sociedade*, *30*(108), 653-671. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0101-73302009000300002

Canário, R. (2006). *A escola tem futuro? Das promessas às incertezas* [Does the school have a future? From promises to uncertainties]. Porto Alegre: Artmed.

Cochran-Smith, M., Gleeson, A. M., & Mitchell, K. (2010). Teacher education for social justice: What's pupil learning got to do with it?. *Berkeley Review of Education*, *1*(1), 35-61. Retrieved from: https://doi.org/10.5070/B81110022

Cochran-Smith, M., Villegas, A., Abrams, L., Chavez-Moreno, L., Mils, T., & Stern, R. (2016). Research on teacher preparation. Charting the landscape of a sprawling field. In D. Gitomer & Courtney Bell (Eds). *Handbook of Research on Teaching*. Washington DC: AERA.

Correia, J. A. (2000). Formation et travaille: Contribution pour une epistemologie de la mediation [Training and work: Contribution for an epistemology of mediation]. *Education Permanent, Apprentissages et Evaluation*, *143*, 65-77.

Correia, J. A., Matos, M., & Canário, R. (2002). La souffrance professionnelle des enseignants et les dispositifs de compensation identitaire [The professional suffering of teachers and the mechanisms of identity compensation]. *L'Année de la Recherche en Sciences de l'Éducation*, 281-302.

Day, Ch. (2017). *Teachers' worlds and work. Understanding Complexity, Building quality*. Oxon: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315170091

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1980). *Capitalisme et schizophrenie: Mille Plateux*. Paris: Minuit.

Derouet, J.-L. (1992). *École et justice: De l'égalité des chances aux compromis locaux?* [School and justice: From equal opportunities to local compromises?]. Paris: Métailié. https://doi.org/10.3917/meta.derou.1992.01

Derouet, J.-L. (2002). A sociologia das desigualdades em educação posta à prova pela segunda explosão escolar: Deslocamento dos questionamentos e reinício da crítica. *Revista Brasileira de Educação*, *21*, 5-16. https://doi.org/10.1590/S1413-24782002000300002

Derouet, J.-L. (2010). Crise do projeto de democratização da educação e da formação ou crise de um modelo de democratização? Algumas reflexões a partir do caso francês (1980-2010) [Crisis of the project of democratisation of education and training or crisis of a model of democratisation? Some reflections from the French case (1980-2010)]. *Educação e Sociedade*, *31*(112), 1001-1027. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0101-73302010000300018

Dubet, F. (2002). *Le déclin de l'institution* [The decline of the institution]. Paris: SEUIL.

Dubet, F. (2010). *Les places et les chances: Repenser la justice sociale* [Places and opportunities: Rethinking social justice]. Paris: SEUIL.

Fraser, N. (2002). A justiça social na globalização: Redistribuição, reconhecimento e participação [Social justice in globalisation: Redistribution, recognition and participation]. *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, *63*, 7-20. doi:10.4000/rccs.1250 https://doi.org/10.4000/rccs.1250

Gauthier, C. (Ed.), Desbiens, J.-F., Malo, A., Martineau, S., & Simard, D. (1997). *Pour une théorie de la pédagogie: Recherches contemporaines sur le savoir des enseignants* [For a theory of pedagogy: Contemporary research on teacher knowledge]. Belgium: Les Presses de l'Université Laval.

Giddens, A. (1992). *As consequências da modernidade* [The consequences of modernity]. Oeiras: Celta.

Habermas, J. (1987). *Théorie de l'agir communicationnel (I et II)* [Theory of communicative action (I and II)]. Paris: Fayard.

Hameline, D. (1991). O educador e a acção sensata [The educator and sensible action]. In A. Nóvoa (Org.), *Profissão professor* [Occupation professor] (pp. 33-60). Porto: Porto Editora.

Kelly, D. M., & Brandes, G. M. (2010). Social justice needs to be everywhere: Imagining the future of antioppression education in teacher preparation. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 56*(4)*,* 388-402.

Kerlan, A., & Simard, D. (2011). *Paul Ricoeur et la question éducative* [Paul Ricoeur and the educational question]. Lyon: Presses de l'Université Laval.

Latour, B. (1989). *La science en action: Introduction à la sociologie des sciences* [Science in action: Introduction to the sociology of science]. Paris: Gallimard.

Latour, B. (2012). *Reagregando o social: Uma introdução à teoria do ator-rede* [Reaggregating the social: An introduction to actor-network theory]. Salvador: EDUFBA.

Lessard, C. (2009). O trabalho docente, a análise da actividade e o papel dos sujeitos [The teaching work, the analysis of the activity and the role of the subjects]. *Sísifo: Revista de Ciências da Educação*, *9*, 119-127.

Nóvoa, A. (1995). O passado e o presente dos professores [The past and present of teachers]. In A. Nóvoa (Org.), *Profissão professor* [Occupation professor] (pp. 13-34)*.* Porto: Porto Editora.

Pereira, F. (2009). Conceptions and knowledge about childhood in initial teacher training: Changes in recent decades and their impact on teacher professionality and on schooling in childhood. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *25*(8), 1009-1017. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.03.014

Pereira, F. (2011). In-service teacher education and scholar innovation: The semantics of action and reflection on action as a mediation device. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *36*(11), 33-50. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2011v36n11.6

Pereira, F. (2013a). Initial teacher education for social justice and teaching work in urban schools: An (im)pertinent reflection. Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 59(2), 162-180.

Pereira, F. (2013b). Concepts, policies and practices of teacher education: an analysis of studies on teacher education in Portugal. Journal of Education for Teaching: International Research and Pedagogy, 39(5), 474-491. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2013.844957

Pereira, F. (2015). Critical theory(ies) and teacher education in Portugal: For new understandings of the possibilities of teacher education to make the difference. In A. Darder, P. Mayo, & J. Paraskeva, *International critical pedagogy reader* (pp. 243-252). New York: Routledge.

Pereira, F., Lopes, A., & Marta, M. (2015). Being a teacher educator: Professional identities and conceptions of professional education. *Educational Research*, *57*(4), 451-469. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2015.1078142

Pereira, F. (2016). *Educação pública, formação de professores e epistemologia do trabalho docente. relatório da unidade curricular.* Porto: Repositório da Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto.

Pereira, F., Magalhães, D., Mouraz, A., Santos, C., Sousa, S., & Rodrigues, Th. (2016). Students' voices about school effects in their lives. In A. Montgomery & I. Kehoe (Eds.), Reimagining the purpose of schools and educational organisations developing critical thinking, agency, beliefs in schools and educational organisations (pp. 145-160). London: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-24699-4_11

Raelin, J. (2007). Toward an epistemology of practice. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *6*(4), 495-519. https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2007.27694950

Rutherford, J. (1990). The third space: Interview with Homi Bhabha. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: Community, culture, difference* (pp. 207-221). London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Tardif, M. (2000). Saberes profissionais dos professores e conhecimentos universitários: Elementos para uma epistemologia da prática profissional dos professores e suas consequências em relação à formação para o magistério [Professional knowledge of teachers and university knowledge: Elements for an epistemology of teachers' professional practice and its consequences in relation to teacher training]. *Revista Brasileira de Educação*, *13*, 5-24. Retrieved from http://anped.tempsite.ws/novo_portal/rbe/rbedigital/RBDE13/RBDE13_05_MAURIC E_TARDIF.pdf

Tardif, M. (2002). *Saberes docentes: Formação profissional* [Teaching skills: Vocational training]. Petrópolis: Vozes.

Torremorell, M. C. (2008). *Cultura de mediação e mudança social* [Culture of mediation and social change]. Porto: Porto Editora.

Santos, B. S. (2000). *A crítica da razão indolente: Contra o desperdício da experiência* [The Critique of Indolent Reason: Against the Waste of Experience]. Porto: Afrontamento.

Schön, D. (1992). *La formación de profesionales reflexivos: Hacia um nuevo diseño de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje en las profesiones* [The training of reflective professionals: Towards a new design of teaching and learning in the professions]. Barcelona: Paidós.

Shailor, J. (1999). Desenvolvendo uma abordagem transformacional à prática da mediação: considerações teóricas e práticas [Developing a transformational approach to mediation practice: theoretical and practical considerations]. In F. Schnitman & S. Littlejohn (Eds.), *Novos paradigmas em mediação* (pp. 71-84). São Paulo: ARTMED.

Steele, A. R. (2017). An alternative collaborative supervision practice between university-based teachers and school-based teachers. *Educational research, vol. 27, issue 3,* 582-599.

Stengers, I. (Dir.). (1995). *D'une science à l'autre: Des concepts nomads* [From one science to another: Nomadic concepts]. Paris: Editions du Seuil.

Wallace, T. M. (2016). A hybrid educator's approach to improving education from the third space.  In H. Brown, R. Sawyer, & J. Norris. *Forms of Practitioner Reflexivity. Critical, Conversational, and Arts-Based Approaches* (pp. 153-167). London: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-52712-7_8

Young, I. (2006). Education in the context of structural injustice: A symposium response. *Education Philosophy and Theory*, *38*(1), 93-103. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2006.00177.x

Zeichner, K. (1010). Nuevas epistemologias en formación del professorado: Repensando las conexiones entre las asignaturas del campus y las experiencias de prácticas en la formación del profesorado en la Universidad [New epistemologies in teacher education: Rethinking the connections between the subjects of the campus and the experiences of practices in the training of the teaching staff in the University]. *Revista Interuniversitaria de Formación de Profesorado*, *24*(2), 123-149. Retrieved from http://aufop.com/aufop/uploaded_files/articulos/1279237815.pdf

**Acknowledgements**