HIGHER EDUCATION
AFTER BOLOGNA
Challenges and Perspectives
CHAPTER 1

BOLOGNA PROCESS AND THE RETHINKING OF THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION: teaching strategies focused on students’ skills achievement

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Emerging labour market training needs have foreseen a new educational paradigm, under the Bologna Process, based on skills development. This article aims to present the main results of a comparative case study on the impact of this process on a course taught in two Portuguese higher education institutions through the opinion of participants and analysis of institutional documents, highlighting, in particular, the valued skills in the current course.
Introduction

The reformulation of the aims of Higher Education in the countries of the European Union (EU) has emerged as one of the main intentions of the Bologna Process in the face of the challenges and opportunities that emerge in a context of increasing global economic integration. One of its objectives was therefore to make the European area attractive, compatible and competitive (Bologna Declaration, 1999) and it is therefore essential to ensure training in the face of the difficulties inherent in a globalized society.

It is considered that the Magna Carta, signed by the Rectors of the European Universities in 1988 in Bologna, was in the genesis of the Bologna Process. This document refers to the university as being the focus that generates cultural, scientific and technological knowledge of society, thus giving it an important responsibility with regard to the economic and social development of the countries. The Bologna Process can be understood as arising from the European conjuncture, above all by the interest of the Member States in defining a common strategy, both politically and socially, with the ultimate aim of achieving higher levels of competence, productivity and competitiveness Relative to other countries in the world, namely the United States of America and Japan.

The approximation of Higher Education to the world of work requires the formation of properly qualified human resources, endowed with skills that are considered necessary for the technological, economic and cultural development of the current society. The role of universities in the production of intellectual knowledge in academic freedom, particularly those defended by the Humboldtian model (Neave, 1998), was replaced by the professional functions with the implementation of the
Bologna Process (González & Wagenaar, 2008; European, EACEA, & Eurydice, 2015). In order for higher education institutions to adjust their training offer to market laws, the emergence of useful knowledge as a convergent support of the whole structuring and organization of knowledge and, consequently, of the respective training courses that, in this sense, are aligned with the compatibility of the educational dimensions with the demands of the labor market, giving shape to a new educational paradigm based on the development/acquisition of competences, as evidenced in one of the studies developed in the scope Tuning Project\(^1\) (González & Wagenaar, 2008).

The production of knowledge is no longer solely directed at the academic world, reconciling knowledge with its effective professional application, boosting productivity and competitiveness, highlighting the balance between the acquisition of specific and generic/transversal competences in the professional success of citizens. The higher order skills are considered, according to Lebrun (2008), essential in a quality training, since they will promote the acquisition of knowledge and key points in the Bologna Process, in learning to learn and in lifelong learning.

It is in this context that this research article is inserted, whose main objective is to reflect and disseminate the results obtained in a study on the impact of the Bologna Process on a master's degree course in teaching, taught at two Portuguese Higher Education institutions, patenting, in the first moment, the legal and historical framework of the challenges and opportunities brought about by the Bologna Process and the reflection on the

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\(^1\) It is an initiative working group of the European Commission within the framework of the Socrates and Tempus programs, which is of great relevance in assessing the impact of the Bologna Process on higher education institutions in the Member States.