

## Educational dynamics and practices in diverse contexts: A comparative study between Brazil and Portugal

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Joel Augusto Moura Porto<sup>1</sup>, Ronaldo Santos Guedes<sup>2</sup>, Rita de Cássia Ramos Queiroz de Freitas<sup>3</sup>, Lília Raquel Fé da Silva<sup>4</sup>, Mateus Lima Coutinho<sup>5</sup> and Vivianne Cambuí Figueiredo Rocha<sup>6</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This chapter provides a comparative analysis of educational institutions in Brazil and Portugal, focusing on practical observations from on-site visits. Highlighting the transformative role of teaching internships, the study explores how these experiences enrich both interns and seasoned educators by fostering innovative teaching practices. In Portugal, we examined the Music Conservatory of Coimbra, Avelar Brotero Secondary School, and Infanta Dona Maria Secondary School. The Music Conservatory, founded in 1986, exemplifies inclusive music education with specialized teachers and facilities designed for optimal learning environments. Avelar Brotero Secondary School offers diverse courses and vocational training, emphasizing practical learning and international educational exchanges. Infanta Dona Maria Secondary School, established in 1918, stands out for its rigorous academic standards and comprehensive facilities, supporting students with diverse needs and promoting environmental awareness. In Brazil, we focused on the State Polyvalent School of Amaralina in Salvador, established in 1973 under the PREMEN program. Despite its location in a challenging neighborhood, the school provides a nurturing environment with modern facilities, practical workshops, and inclusive educational programs. This comparative exploration offers valuable insights into educational dynamics, infrastructure, and cultural impacts in Brazil and Portugal, contributing to a deeper understanding of effective educational practices within diverse global contexts.

**Keywords:** Education, Comparative analysis, School structures, Portugal, Brazil.

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<sup>1</sup> Master's in Genetics and Molecular Biology  
Institution: Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz  
E-mail: joelaugustomp@gmail.com  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0121-1403>

<sup>2</sup> Undergraduate in Agronomic Engineering  
Institution: Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia  
E-mail: ronaldosantos.guedes@gmail.com  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-5447-7266>

<sup>3</sup> Specialist in Chemistry Teaching  
Institution: Colégio Venda Nova Do Imigrante  
E-mail: ritarqfreitas@gmail.com  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3931-7975>

<sup>4</sup> Doctorate in Animal Science  
Institution: Universidade Federal do Piauí  
E-mail: liliaraquelf@gmail.com  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9831-833X>

<sup>5</sup> Specialist in Natural Sciences Education  
Institution: Federal University of Piauí – UFPI  
E-mail: teulimma@gmail.com  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3931-7975>

<sup>6</sup> Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine  
Institution: Universidade de São Paulo  
E-mail: salvavi@yahoo.com.br  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0509-0311>



## INTRODUCTION

The teaching internship plays a crucial role as a mediator between the university and the schools. The interaction between the intern and the full-time teacher benefits both: the intern gains from the experience of the veteran teacher, while the teacher has the opportunity to reassess their methods in light of the innovations brought by the intern.

Given the importance of this internship, an effective analysis tool is necessary to minimize possible errors. Especially in the cultural aspect, it is essential to distinguish between facts and personal inferences of the observer, ensuring that conclusions are based on accurate observations and not on cultural biases.

This work proposes to observe the functioning of educational institutions, collecting information from schools in Brazil and Portugal. The observation process is an analysis based on facts that lead to a pertinent conclusion. Thus, a very effective filter is necessary during the information capture, as this is the basis upon which the entire work can and should be built. If disconnected and/or without solid foundations, it is not possible to reach a common multiple among the data collected from the work.

The data presented in the report concern observations made at Portuguese schools located in the city of Coimbra: Music Conservatory of Coimbra, Avelar Brotero Secondary School, and Infanta Dona Maria Secondary School, and observations and interventions at the Brazilian educational institution: State Polyvalent School of Amaralina, Salvador, Bahia.

In light of the above, the objective of this work is to report the physical structure and the composition of the teaching staff of Brazilian and Portuguese schools based on on-site observations. Additionally, through the teaching internship at a Brazilian institution, it seeks to correlate the observations made in the classroom with the general aspects of the school.

## VISITS TO PORTUGUESE SCHOOLS

By closely monitoring an educational institution, it is possible to understand the mechanisms necessary for the proper functioning of a school. The main objective was to directly observe the educational structure of the school, including the admission processes for students and teachers, the quality of education, and the internal organization of the school (administration, secretariat, library, sports area, laboratories, canteens, etc.).

The Portuguese schools, located in the city of Coimbra, were visited from May to June 2014.

## MUSIC CONSERVATORY OF COIMBRA

The Music Conservatory of Coimbra is a public institution of Specialized Music Education. At the time of its creation, it integrated two private music schools existing in Coimbra, assuming the official continuation of these schools' pedagogical actions.

Figure 1. Facade of the Music Conservatory of Coimbra.



Source: Authors.

It began its educational activities in February 1986, in the Cerca de São Bernardo building on Ladeira do Carmo, provided by the Coimbra City Council. In October 1987, it moved to the building of the old Maternity Hospital, near Sé Velha, through the cession of the Coimbra District Board. During the school years 1996/97 to 2002/03, it also used the facilities of the Coimbra Institute on Rua da Ilha, following a protocol with the same Institute and the University of Coimbra.

Since the beginning of the 2003/04 school year, it has been temporarily occupying part of the facilities of Secondary School Dom Dinis on Rua Adriano Lucas, until the completion of the planned new building. Based in Coimbra but extending its influence throughout the Central Region — directly or through affiliated music schools — the Music Conservatory of Coimbra is guided by the following principles:

- To promote the learning, practice, and enjoyment of music in the city of Coimbra and the Central Region;
- To contribute to the integral formation of its students, both as citizens and musicians;
- To promote the professional dignity and training of its teaching and non-teaching staff.

The teaching staff of the Conservatory consists of 107 teachers and 135 generalist teachers. The latter are those who can teach more basic subjects, such as music history and music theory. The student-to-teacher ratio is around 11.



There is no strict separation among students in terms of knowledge. That is, students are not rigidly divided, and teachers can, if they see fit, place students in different environments, facilitating accelerated development. The Conservatory also accommodates 3 autistic students and one student with Down syndrome in its dance classes, showing the school's openness to society in various aspects and its commitment to teaching music to all.

The Music Conservatory of Coimbra comprises students from various social levels. The school has a teachers' room, individual offices, and a secretariat. It serves students from 30 different localities around Coimbra, accompanying them from primary through secondary education. There is also a section for professional courses funded by the European Union, which accepts students who join the conservatory at the ages of 15 or 16.

In Portugal, there are seven music schools, one of which is in Coimbra. At the entrance of the conservatory, there is a grand piano that students can use during breaks or free hours. It has needed repairs three times due to improper use, but the school insists on keeping the piano in the hall to promote an education where students learn to respect the instruments they work with. Additionally, the school aims to indirectly teach the concept of collective education, where students learn to share an object for the rational use of all.

Dance classes last 90 minutes per day. Teaching dance remains a challenging task for the conservatory, as it requires a more suitable infrastructure and a level of student commitment that is not yet part of the collective consciousness of the learners. According to the teacher, dance professionals at the Conservatory demand a lot from students, and the available hours for the curriculum units are still insufficient. During the visit, it was possible to visit two dance classrooms for the 6th and 7th grades.

In terms of structure, the Music Conservatory of Coimbra is highly committed to maintaining its quality standards in all aspects. The rooms are designed to manage the acoustic waves circulating in the environment. None of the walls in a room are parallel to each other; they are arranged so that sound is reflected and then directed to the floor. The flooring is made of appropriate material, with a lot of wood used throughout the music school to ensure proper acoustic insulation due to the large number of classes and noises from various sources.

The construction of a new structure for the conservatory cost the government around 27 million euros, the most expensive in Portugal. Recently, an auditorium was built for larger public performances, with 374 seats, of which 8 are for people with reduced mobility. Initially, due to the good structure of the environment, the school used it for any recitals, whether open to a large audience or not. After some time, they concluded it was not ideal to use it for small events, as it was unnecessary, and the environment would become too formal for some types of presentations.

There are 60 classrooms for various instruments and 15 larger classrooms for collective studies. Student evaluations are conducted through public presentations. Behavioral standards are not assessed, as students, according to the teacher, do not present any relationship difficulties. Therefore, the school has never had a disciplinary process in its history.

Figure 2. Auditorium of the Music Conservatory of Coimbra.



Source: Authors.

During his speech, the professor laments the lack of education for classical music in the school. In other words, he proposes a more open education to culture in general. "Coimbra does not live culture intensely," says the professor about the teaching of arts in the city. Next year, a course focused on listening to lyrical music will be created, with the aim of demonstrating new horizons to students in terms of music types.

Education is still very much centered on the European cultural cradle. The peculiarities of American, African, and/or Asian trends are still not presented to students as they should be. The professor discusses the possibility of replacing music history with art history. Showing students only the perspective of music would drastically reduce the contributions of other artistic languages and compromise the historical-cultural sense of the context from which such expressions emerge.

The school provides classes for instruments that are relatively expensive compared to the economic reality of many students. Since it is necessary for students to practice their instruments, the Conservatory makes instruments available for students to use daily. Those that are difficult to acquire, such as bassoons, can be rented. The cheaper ones cost around 2000 euros, reaching up to 18000 euros. To address this situation, the school sets a symbolic fee of 25 euros per month for the student to use the instrument.

The Conservatory has very relevant proposals for the study of performing arts in Coimbra. According to the professor, "There is no theater in Portugal. It is still not a properly schooled area." Based on this statement, he continues by saying that theater is one of the future projects for the



Conservatory, not necessarily for the near future, but it is a problem that the school intends to remedy, at least in the city of Coimbra.

### AVELAR BROTERO SECONDARY SCHOOL

Avelar Brotero Secondary School is one of the highest-quality secondary schools in the country. The practical component is a strong aspect of this educational institution. Here is a journey through the history of this great reference in Portuguese education. In 1997/98, the school lost its younger population, the dearly missed elementary level, much to the regret of many, as it was through this that it had acquired its specific character. Brotero School would thus become part of the group of educational establishments that would achieve the status of exclusively secondary schools. From then on, Brotero also saw a more entrenched recovery of its technical focus. Indeed, the trend of introducing technological/professional courses to facilitate immediate insertion or promotion of students in the workforce has been increasing.

Today, in addition to the scientific-humanistic courses, including Visual Arts, that Brotero offers within the scope of day Secondary Education and night recurrent Education (which has been in effect since the nineties and almost entirely converted to the so-called Adult Education and Training System), this educational institution offers an attractive range of Level 3 Professional Courses in sectors such as Electronics, Automation, Economy, Accounting and Management, Informatics, Multimedia, Electrotechnics, Metallurgy and Metal Mechanics, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning, Renewable Energies, Civil Construction, Fashion Design, Environmental Management, and Secretarial Studies.

In the workshops, traditional areas such as Auto Mechanics, Ceramics, Tapestry, Sculpture, Electrotechnics, Civil Construction/Woodwork are still in operation. Simultaneously, Brotero continues to promote its Center for New Opportunities, which, interestingly, has brought many of its former students back to school. Today, the school has 42 active staff members. The teaching staff consists of 138 teachers, having been around 280 teachers in previous years.

Starting the visit, at the entrance of the building, you can see works by the students created in their art classes. Many of these pieces fill the space of the front hall. Not far away is the students' bar, where they can have something to eat during their breaks, especially healthy options. There is intense care regarding what is sold in this space, as it is a very frequented environment by the students. Interestingly, there, for example, students can watch the Bar TV, whose quality has earned the 10th, 11th, and 12th-grade students awards in multimedia competitions.

The school has undergone many structural changes. Today, all the building spaces are welcoming to students, adhering to the highest quality standards. The Brotero structure has been very well thought out, and today the students can enjoy very good quality classrooms and laboratories.



Where the library is currently located, for example, was, six years ago, a volleyball court. From this, we can infer the amount of work involved in the school's investments.

As noted during the visit, this is an educational institution where dedication, especially from the teachers, is a significant characteristic concerning everything being developed there. During this visit, we met a total of three teachers who volunteered to continue their work even after retirement.

The library structure is very comfortable and welcoming for the students. The school's concern to keep students focused during important moments for acquiring and solidifying new knowledge is evident. The space is very well structured with a mezzanine, where students have an adequate space for free drawing. There are also some computers with internet access.

The school also engages in partnerships. For example, physical education classes, such as swimming, are held at the pool complex across the street from the school.

The school building also includes a space for psychological and vocational guidance, which is a very important component, especially in a school with a strong practical aspect. Regarding the school's links, many companies introduce their projects to these students. This makes the students more involved in their areas as they see their work being directly applied.

The school's laboratories are quite versatile; they are spaces where various types of technical work can be practiced, especially the electronics laboratories. These spaces are very well equipped with excellent devices and machines made by the students themselves. Brotero students also participate in various competitions, having even gone to the Netherlands as a reward for their excellent work. They have won first place twice with the electrotechnics award, showcasing the quality of the school, teachers, and students at a national level. Physics, electricity, and auto mechanics laboratories were visited, one of which was holding a class with the 7th Automatism and Command class of Avelar Brotero School, composed, not intentionally, solely of boys.

The teacher commented that some aspects of the school's infrastructure do not meet the expected standards. One example is the floor in some areas or the lighting in some classrooms. Some teachers complain that when they use the projector, they cannot dim the classroom lights.

The school also offers exchange programs with several countries, namely England, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain. Students, especially those who wish to learn other work techniques in their fields, thus have the opportunity to mix experiences, besides gaining a different cultural experience and an adventure associated with so many learnings.

## INFANTA DONA MARIA SECONDARY SCHOOL

Starting the visit, we went directly to the library to get acquainted with the collection of books, magazines, and educational films the school held. To our surprise, we found a collection of past exams, which was somewhat new to us, as, at least in the reality of the Brazilian education



system, this is not common in school culture. Brazilian students, in general, do not have access to tests and exams from previous years.

We also noticed that the students present were studying with great concentration, not getting too distracted by our visit. There were about eight computers available to the students for school research or other needs. Next, we visited the sports areas, which included a covered pavilion for various sports (futsal, basketball, rock climbing, etc.). There were also some mats on the floor, leading us to conclude that sports such as judo and karate might be offered in physical education classes. We also saw another sports area, located outdoors, where activities like volleyball and basketball could be practiced.

In addition to presenting the school's structure and its functioning, the director, Dr. Ernesto Paiva, explained the history of Infanta Dona Maria Secondary School. The school was founded on July 14, 1918, as Coimbra Women's High School, but it was only on February 19, 1919, that it began its teaching activities in building number 111 on Avenida Sá da Bandeira, a building that still exists today. In the same year, it was renamed Infanta Dona Maria National High School. In 1948, the High School moved to a building that it still occupies today, located next to the Municipal Stadium of Coimbra, an almost deserted area at that time. The building initially had amphitheaters, drawing rooms, laboratories, a gymnasium, a canteen, classrooms, offices, a teacher's room, the principal's office, a library, a playing field, and a bar.

Although it was a new building, it did not meet the needs of the High School, as there was a lack of rooms and space. In 1963/64, work began to expand the High School's space. These works provided eight more rooms, an amphitheater, four offices, and improved the conditions of the Physics, Chemistry, Natural Sciences rooms, and the canteen. Additionally, the building also had a chapel.

According to the teacher, the library for its time was notable due to the number of books. The laboratories initially had some material and, over time, became better equipped. The High School's subjects were the same as those of the male High School, but with adaptations in areas such as manual work, which was mainly domestic tasks. The existing subjects were: French, English, Moral, Family Government and Health, Economy and Art, Notions of Political Education, Common Law, Hygiene and Childcare, White Clothes, Embroidery and Techniques, Hats, Flowers and Applied Art, Cooking, Physical Education, and Choral Singing. In Physical Education, they covered basketball, volleyball, and dance. Besides these activities, students also engaged in extracurricular activities.

The school still has a place for selling school materials and a photocopier where students can make copies of their materials at affordable prices. We also visited the canteens. Due to the time we were there, the cafeteria had already closed its routine activities. However, according to the director,



the very well-maintained canteen offers a rich healthy menu, which reinforces the school's quality not only in terms of education and infrastructure.

By closely observing the school's structure, we verified that all classrooms are equipped with video and overhead projectors and individual desks for students. Among other rooms, there was a special one where educational lectures by school guests, usually university professors, especially from the University of Coimbra, are held. This is significant since the school's focus is on integrating students into higher education. Therefore, these lectures have a motivational background, maintaining the school-university connection, which is a primary reason for the high number of students interested in higher education.

A survey conducted at the school showed that about 83.5% of students go on to higher education, which is not entirely surprising. Generally, students from this school achieve a global average between 16.0 and 19.0. Proof of this is that one student received a full scholarship to study at the Catholic University of Lisbon, known for having one of the highest tuition fees in the country. The student was invited due to her brilliant academic performance, making her stand out among her peers.

Another case was a student, from 12<sup>o</sup> D, who won first place in the National Final of the Biotechnology Olympics, held at the School of Biotechnology in Porto on May 31, 2013. This confirms the quality of the school's educational system and the level of student learning.

To achieve this, the teachers are highly qualified, prepared to face the accelerated daily pace of classrooms. The school's rigorous education system requires teachers to stay on top of their activities, risking falling behind the fixed schedule imposed by the Portuguese Ministry of Education. The curriculum is easily accessible on the school's website, allowing students' families to stay informed throughout the school year.

Additionally, teachers need to be qualified not only in scientific content but also to address the needs of students with different learning paces or physical-visual limitations. We confirmed this by visiting the visual impairment room, which had appropriate equipment for students with low vision. There were several posters on the walls with phrases written by visually impaired students. The Infanta Dona Maria Secondary School is also a reference in accessibility for visually impaired students.

Teachers need to be prepared not only for visually impaired students but also for those whose learning pace is slower than the school's average. These students receive more attention, requiring teachers to adapt content to a language and timeframe that allows them to learn as effectively as others. Teachers are rigorously selected through competitions held by the Ministry of Education. They report initial difficulties adapting to the school's accelerated pace. Teachers must maintain a high level of discipline and continue to qualify due to the high level of classroom questioning.



Reinforcing the students' commitment to their studies, when a student leaves the classroom for a few minutes, they ask the teacher to repeat what was missed. Naturally, when teachers need to be absent, students demand makeup classes. This part of the school profile impressed us.

Describing the school's various environments, we must mention the excellent biology, physics, chemistry, and descriptive geometry laboratories. In the chemistry lab, we witnessed an extracurricular activity conducted voluntarily by the subject teachers to prepare students for the Chemistry Olympics that would take place later that year.

The teachers' willingness and the significant participation of students preparing for this event impressed us. The dedication and commitment from both sides (teachers and students) were evident in the students' focused attention in these classes, which could potentially win another medal for the school. The quality of the laboratory equipment and the well-spaced benches for pairs or trios, showing adherence to safety norms, reflects the school's concern not only for education but also for overall safety during practical classes.

The biology and geology labs had real-scale anatomical models, plant samples, and fragments of various rocks. Unfortunately, we couldn't visit the descriptive geometry lab, but given the school's standards, we expect that students, especially those with difficulty visualizing in three dimensions, have their needs met through hands-on contact with geometric solids.

Around the multipurpose laboratories, various objects from different fields of knowledge are displayed. Taxidermy animals, old electronic devices, and exhibits of artistic paintings fill the space of these so-called mini-museums of natural history, science and technology, and arts.

Continuing the visit, we had the opportunity to see the area where an outdoor library will be located, a proposal we found very interesting as it brings the world of books and knowledge to new environments. We also visited the Fernando Azeiteiro auditorium, named in honor of the late former director, a person of great importance to the school's work. It is said that he dedicated himself to school activities even when his health did not allow it. Without a doubt, he is an example of someone who strove to maintain the school's educational standards among the best in Portugal.

Concerned with maintaining the architectural aspect of the time when the school was founded, the management team avoids any changes to the facade that might alter it, which would make it lose all its originality and tradition. The most recent renovations included an expansion, with the construction of more classrooms, an IT laboratory, access to locker rooms and cafeterias, and a group room, where students generally go when they have no classes.

Like all educational institutions, the Infanta Dona Maria Secondary School has a teachers' room. The innovation this time is that there are specific rooms for research groups of educators. We had the opportunity to visit the Meeting Room of Excellence, where the entire school's pedagogical council meets. This space was created where the library used to be.



Curiously, along the corridors, we noticed several bulletin boards displaying many activities or occasional projects developed by students, which are frequently posted there for easy viewing. This shows that students are relatively consistently engaged in various types of tasks, demonstrating that the dynamism in regular classroom exercises ensures greater effectiveness in knowledge acquisition.

The school also presents an ecological consciousness that transcends the classroom limits. Students adopt a green policy through reeducation by engaging in recycling activities and follow a conduct of preservation not only of the space where they daily interact with their peers but also of the extracurricular environments.

Regarding humanistic aspects, the school is also prepared to attend to students who do not meet the school's behavioral standards. When something conflicting occurs in class, the student is directed to the Conflict Mediation Office, a room where a psychology professional attends to the students to express the reasons that led to their indiscipline during class. This way, it is possible to more directly clarify any difficulties that may arise in class.

Considering various socioeconomic aspects, the school has a special program for students whose families have low income. This means that financial difficulties are not an obstacle to dedication to school life. The benefits of this program include free daily meals in the cafeteria, the purchase of school materials with the school's own funds, and the possibility of making free photocopies within the school's premises. All this support is provided discreetly so as not to embarrass the benefiting students.

To enroll in the school, there are a series of prerequisites that must be strictly followed. One of them, for example, refers to the proximity of the candidate's residence to the school. Those who do not live far from the school's location are given priority. Those who have certain difficulties are also prioritized over others. Additionally, there is no distinction or preference for any nationality. At Infanta Dona Maria Secondary School, students from all over the world are welcome.

Besides other activities, the school also has a theater club, an adventure and tourism club, and a health project. Students frequently participate in Olympics and internal competitions, both nationally and even internationally, in various fields of knowledge.

To not overlook the negative points, the director emphasized that, even though the school stands out in Portuguese secondary education, some aspects need improvement, such as teachers' self-esteem and their replacement when they need to be absent. There are no substitute teachers for such situations, leading to an accumulation of extra classes and the inevitable deviation from the school's teaching plan. Another issue mentioned by the director was the reduction of class numbers (from four to three). This makes the study pace even more intense than usual, along with more rigor in content delivery.



Obviously, the negative points presented are common in the routine of almost all schools. Despite these details, we found an educational institution that impresses us by implementing its lesson plan and fulfilling the Ministry of Education's teaching proposal. In addition to engaging students in school life, it motivates them to pursue academic paths, encouraging the deepening and maturation of their knowledge. In summary, Infanta Dona Maria Secondary School is, indeed, a teaching reference for institutions that value educational quality and the appreciation of students as individuals.

## VISITS TO BRAZILIAN SCHOOL

The visit to the school allowed for direct contact with an educational institution, providing a practical insight into how the school operates. Understanding the infrastructure, as well as the faculty and staff of a school in general, is crucial for gaining a better understanding of a school building. This allows one to observe the atmosphere in various areas of the school, which is important for understanding the dynamics among the individuals who contribute to its functioning. Such observations replace any classroom instruction, as real-world contact occurs solely through practical experience. The reception by the school was excellent.

The State Polyvalent School of Amaralina is located in the Northeast neighborhood of Amaralina, in the city of Salvador. Known for drug trafficking and violence, there is a general tendency to create a prejudice (using the word here in its real sense) that all residents of this neighborhood share the same profile. However, the students we interacted with at the school were extremely friendly and eager to learn.

## STATE POLYVALENT SCHOOL OF AMARALINA

### History

The Polyvalent School of Amaralina was established by decree 23273 on February 28, 1973, as published in the Official Gazette of the same date. However, it was only inaugurated on May 14 of the same year. At that time, the P.S.A. (Polyvalent School of Amaralina) was under the direction of Professor Ana Carolina. The school unit was created under the PREMEN (Expansion and Improvement Program for Education, in Portuguese), and teachers were trained through intensive improvement courses provided by the federal government over a period of one year.

Figure 3. PSA school building facade.



Source: Authors.

At the end of the course, teachers were hired to work at the Polyvalent Schools spread throughout the national territory. In the state of Bahia, many polyvalent schools were established, including three schools of this size in Salvador: Polivalente do Cabula, Polivalente de San Diego (in the Lower City), and the mentioned school unit, Polivalente de Amaralina. These were small schools with 08 classrooms, science laboratories, a school cooperative, student council, library, reading room, sports courts, and most importantly, four workshops: Industrial Techniques, Commercial Techniques, Agricultural Techniques, and Home Economics, which prepared students for the job market.

The school operated in three shifts, with regular classes and schedules. In addition to the principal and vice-principals, the staff included professionals (qualified teachers) from the Educational Guidance Service (SOE), supervisors, area coordinators, shift coordinators, and support staff in each classroom. There was also a choir conducted by Professor Stella Dubois (who also composed the school anthem) and a school band.

When inaugurated, the school was neighbored by Carlos Sant'Anna School, Pedro Tenório de Albuquerque School (currently C.S.U.), and several residences in front of it. There was also a beautiful garden and a vegetable garden where herbs, spices, and legumes were cultivated for consumption by the school community.

Figure 4. Students during break time.



Source: Authors.

In a brief summary, it is worth highlighting some professionals who have been part of EPA since 1973, such as directors: Ana Carolina, Felicidade, and José de Lourdes (in memoriam), Maria de Assis, Célia Correia, Dairlene, Ozita, and Nilo José (current); vice-principals Cantídio, José Petronílio, Heloísia, Noélia, Suzele, Neuza, Florice, Maria das Mercês, Neyde, Arlete, Marilene, Cristina Pontes, Meire, Nadja, Cristina Prates, Zeneide, Regina, Juracema, Jeremias, Arailde Almeida, and Walkyria Azevedo.

The school also counts among its current and former staff: Adailton, Cremilda, Lucia, Lucidia, Ivete, Olegário, Alda, Wolfran, Beatriz, Marilena, Terezinha, and Jovino (in memoriam), Justina, Augusta, Maria do Nascimento, Maria de São Pedro, Rosa, Celina, Vanice, Hamilton (in memoriam), Laura, Hilda, Silvia, Marinalva, Zely, Iraildes, and Leonia.

In 2012, the EJA Formative Time III – Axes VI and VII – Youth and Adult Education Course for High School formation was implemented. Axis VI – subjects in Language, Humanities, Arts, and Occupational Activities. Axis VII – subjects in Exact Sciences, Biological Sciences, Arts, and Occupational Activities. On May 3, 2013, Authorization Act No. 022346/08/2013 for High School Education was published.

### PHYSICAL STRUCTURE AND STAFF

The State Polyvalent School of Amaralina is a high school institution physically comprised of 12 classrooms, a cafeteria, an administrative office, a library, an auditorium equipped with a projector and computer, and well-maintained bathrooms.

Figure 5. School courtyard.



Source: Authors.

There is also a teachers' lounge where each has their own locker, adjacent to a restroom specifically for them, along with shelves containing specific materials such as books used in Adult and Youth Education.

In the school courtyard, there is a very pleasant space for leisure. In total, there are two flower beds that bring a bit of nature into the school's internal space. Although not a large school, the available space is quite enjoyable for everyone.

The State Polyvalent School of Amaralina was recently renovated. Right at the entrance, it is evident that the structure is well-maintained, which gives a sense of comfort to those on the school premises. A notably significant aspect observed was the good relationship among the school staff across various departments. This is not trivial at all, as the dysfunction of many schools often stems from the lack of interaction among the school's own staff members.

Figure 6. Classroom at the school.

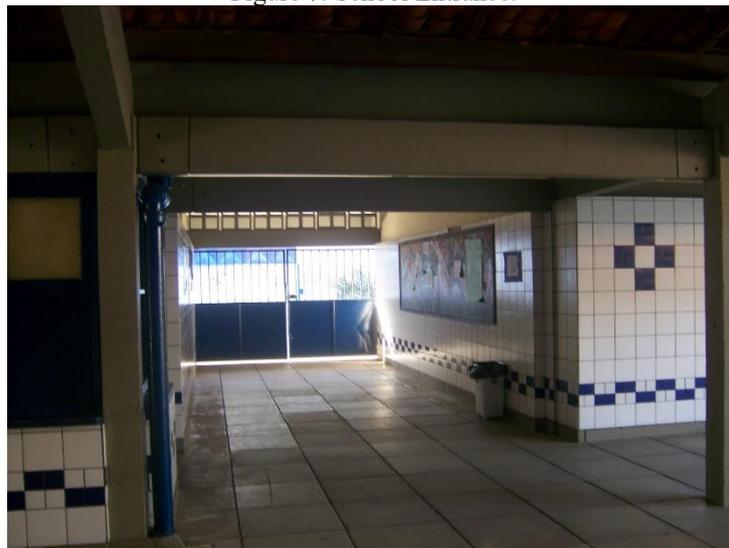


Source: Authors.

School Safety is also an important point to raise. The location of the school indicates a relatively risky environment. The student body, in turn, is not far behind, especially considering the evening class with students whose profiles are not the easiest to manage. Therefore, security guards are present, fulfilling their role adequately.

In general, it is a welcoming school where students indeed find foundational education and an ideal socialization space. The reduced number of students in the evening session also facilitates a familial atmosphere among the students themselves.

Figure 7. School Entrance.



Source: Authors.

In 2015, the school had 25 teachers, including 3 interns. The evening session consists of 16 teachers.

## FINAL REMARKS

This comparative study of educational institutions in Brazil and Portugal reveals valuable insights into the dynamics and practices of education in diverse contexts. The schools visited offer a wide range of physical structures and educational focuses that reflect their local realities and commitments to academic excellence.

In Brazil, the State Polyvalent School of Amaralina, located in Salvador, stands out for its dedication to providing quality education despite the surrounding socio-economic challenges. With modern facilities and diverse educational programs, the school demonstrates a clear commitment to the holistic development of its students.

In contrast, the schools visited in Coimbra, Portugal, such as the Music Conservatory of Coimbra, Avelar Brotero Secondary School, and Infanta Dona Maria Secondary School, emphasize academic excellence and the diversity of educational programs tailored to the varied needs of



students. These institutions have robust physical structures and specialized resources that support an enriching learning environment.

Teacher training emerges as a transformative element in both countries, facilitating an exchange of experiences between interns and seasoned educators. This interaction not only enriches the educational environment but also promotes innovations in teaching methodologies, preparing future educators for contemporary challenges.

Despite the successes observed, both contexts face distinct challenges. In Brazil, overcoming socio-economic barriers and ensuring school safety is crucial. In Portugal, the shortage of teachers and increased workload are current concerns that demand effective solutions. The recommendations arising from this study emphasize the importance of sharing best practices and experiences among educational institutions, promoting inclusive and equitable education. Continuous investments in educational resources, teacher training, and inclusive policies are essential to strengthen the educational systems in both countries and beyond.



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