Cinema Integrated Learning in Higher Education – the Case of Viana do Castelo Polytechnic – Northern Portugal

Anabela Moura (PhD Art Education)
Higher School of Education
Viana do Castelo Polytechnic, Portugal

Manuela Cachadinha (Sociology)
Higher School of Education
Viana do Castelo Polytechnic, Portugal

Carlos Almeida (Music Education)
Higher School of Education
Viana do Castelo Polytechnic, Portugal

Abstract
Current theories suggest that education and visual culture are closely related to the development of cultural values and cinema can offer teachers a practical medium, through which teachers can empower students with complex ideas about their world. This article focuses on the use of images that encourages Higher Education students to consider multiple views and concepts, articulate their own understanding to be thoughtful citizens within the complexity of the present multicultural society. The findings provide useful information on cultural resources that encourage interdisciplinary discussions, with unique perspectives on cultural awareness, and social activism.

Keywords: cinema, cultural studies, visual culture, education

1. Background to education programmers
In Portugal change takes place slowly. The process of curriculum experimentation and reform in schools at all levels of education is a present concern of all those teachers that like to incorporate changes into their teaching, and strengthen social action through the use of media and information and communication technologies.

Visual culture approach (Boughton, 2005: 212) is considered by many educators as a very effective multicultural art education tool (Moura, 2000), but this strategy needs more experience of working with it and better resources. Boughton defines visual culture as ‘a broad concept that embraces all forms of cultural production’ (p. 213). Mason (1988) suggests that multiculturalism ought to be reflected in every lesson or project, and that art is a good way of increasing social understanding (Mason, 1988) and has the potential to stimulate emancipatory behaviour and increase conscientization of social problems. Previous research (Moura, 2000) shows that strategies and activities of critical studies, interdisciplinary and collaborative teaching were judged to be particularly helpful in extending students’ awareness of human rights, social and cultural values in dealing with culture, identity and citizenship education.

Assumptions underpinning this small scale research were that a very important aim of education is to develop critical competencies, and for this, according to Efland (1995) a curriculum is needed that has potential for exposing students to a greater number for overlapping and interconnected ideas (in Park, 1997: 115)“This theory of knowledge is essential for developing the kind of critical studies in art education, which Thistle wood (1989) define as: The sphere of education that brings works of art into informed, rather than casual perception by analyzing (i) their aesthetic presence, (ii) their formative processes, (iii) their spiritual, social, economic and political causes, and (iv) their cultural effects (p.2). Giroux (1994) defines cultural studies as focusing on critical analysis of culture, knowledge, and power and on the idea that teaching is a social practice that can only be understood through considerations of history, politics, power, and culture.
Nevertheless, we face a little interest by Portuguese art and non-art teachers in activities related to image analysis and we believe that this is a result of many of these teachers being unable to communicate to their students’ experiences which they themselves have not had.

The review of literature found that recent research in Portuguese education and documentary evidence in the mass media, confirmed that Portuguese schools need to undertake studies about critical activity involving students of all levels of education in various projects of looking at, talking about and responding to visual culture, and this type of study is urgently needed in Portugal, in order for the concept of critical activity to be understood and for strategies to be designed (Moura, 1993; 2000). Language and thought inevitably lead to a consideration of the relation between an human being and the society he/she belongs to, between the behaviour of the individual and the behaviour patterns regarded as ‘normal’ in the culture he/she is brought up to share.

The suggestion is made that cinematic art should be used as motivation for art and non-art lessons as cinema constitutes one of the cultural expressions of the current technological and globalized society. This relationship between cinema and education, whether in the context of formal education and/or non-formal-informal education, is a part of the cinematographic history and it has been consolidated in the educational sphere. From the very beginning of cinematographic productions that those involved with this form of art had the perception that it is a powerful tool to the social and cultural life representation, and also to the education. Likewise, the teachers of the different educational levels have been using the audiovisual media as an educational tool, and the necessary technical resources to the projection of movies are being generalized at schools. It is noteworthy that the relationship between cinema and knowledge exceeds the field of formal and technological education. Regarding the diversity of knowledge embodied in movies, it is possible to exceed the cinema conceptualization as a simple leisure instrument, an audiovisual stimulus, or a mere illustration, more or less fictionalized, of the reality. It will be important to examine how movies and images influence, socialize, acculturate and educate citizens. This way it is possible to start from a sociocultural analysis of the cinematographic contents to produce didacticism that identify and reflect social and anthropological questions that are contained and involve the film productions, as well as the artistic and cultural ones.

It is noteworthy that in the so-called era of computers and internet, referred by Fantin (2003) and Rivoltella (2002), the computers themselves and the Internet are resources vulgarly used by children, young people, and adults for the viewing of cinematographic works. We can even assure that in this era of expansion of computers and internet it is also enlarged the possibility of access to the cinema. Movies can now be viewed in the public and in the private sphere more easily thanks to this mentioned expansion. This situation allows us to think that the cinema and its educational potential weren’t cancelled in the era of expansion of computer networks and computers. In fact, it is verified a great diversification of supplies, whether educational or informative, and entertaining. The use of cinema as a didactical and pedagogical instrument makes it advisable to focus on the social aspects, pedagogical, artistic, cultural, political and historical generating a global perspective of cinema as an educational resource.

The introduction of innovative strategies in the teaching-learning processes is essential for the pedagogical change and for the adaptation to the social and cultural transformations of modern societies aiming to provide an integral formation of citizens and an education for citizenship. Thus, the cinema is, in our view and the perspective of several authors (Bergala, 2002; Duarte, 2002; Fantin, 2006, Napolitano, 2003; Rivoltella, 2002), an educational resource full of potentiality to establish itself as a mean which can contribute to the learning, reflection and change in social, cultural and educational practices. Within the context of the use of cinema as a mean and cultural training tool along with the discovery of visual culture, we have emphasized curriculum guidelines, in a critical perspective, which means, according to Hernandez (2000) evaluation and judgment resulting from different models of analysis (semiotic, structuralist, deconstructionist, intertextual, hermeneutic, discursive), preferring to use the terms representations and visual artifacts instead of images. The image analysis process comes as a reaction to the proliferation of virtual screens in a public space in the contemporary era, and there are several authors who teach working with visual culture. To Duncun (2003), visual culture is related to cultural studies, with the experiences of the people, with the dynamics of society, which includes social relationships, values, beliefs, representations and visual artifacts. To be acknowledged as an educational medium, the cinema becomes a part of the classroom in order to maximize the reflected and meaningful learning about visual culture and the social life itself.
In this context, the teacher must motivate and assist the student acting as a link of connection and reflection between what the cinema creates / provides in the student perspective and the set of knowledge to be built / acquired in the pedagogical situation (classroom). It is common to use the term "educational film" relating it to the movies on contents of certain formative programs, which are intended to support or replace the function traditionally performed by the teacher. The two situations previously referred constitute, in our perspective, a reductionism that limits the use of cinema as didactical and pedagogical resources. As an educational instrument the movies may or may not provide a high pedagogical potential since it is easier for either a child or an adult to capture conveyed information and messages using audiovisual stimuli. The film helps the teacher to break the traditional model of class based on theoretical and abstract exposition of contents, serving whether to display more or less detailed contents, as to illustrate concepts, demonstrate experience and reflect on them.

The use of cinematographic works with the pedagogic and sociological goals has been referenced in educational literature. Namely, Rosália Duarte (2002) instead of following the tendency to see the cinema as an additional teaching resource for education, she bases herself on the understanding that education and cinema are forms of socialization of individuals and cultural examples that produce knowledge, identities, worldviews and ways of being. Assuming that many of the conceptions conveyed by our culture have as reference meanings emerging from the relationships built among both teachers and students and between spectators and movies, Rosália Duarte (2002) highlights the markedly educational character of cinema. As she establishes relationships between the curriculum in the classroom and the contents in the cinema, the author poses relevant questions with regard to the cultural dimensions of the educational field, and the proper use of cinema in the higher education.

Rosália Duarte (2002) reports that Pierre Bourdieu (1979) defends that the experience of people with cinema allows them to develop what may be called the "competence to see", in the range of cultural skills. However, the development of such competence is not limited to the mere act of watching movies and has a relationship with other capabilities and with the social and cultural universe of individuals. Relative to the others referred capabilities, we can think of the development of the capacity / competence of critical reflection on what is seen and heard.

As Fantin (2006) and Rivoltella (2005) claim, along with the television and the new electronic / virtual media, cinema is also one of the constituent elements of the symbolic environment of the new generations. In Rosália Duarte’s view (2002), the cinema should also be understood as a social and cultural practice, because the meaning of a movie depends on the context in which it is viewed and / or produced. This way, the movies raise and / or consolidate a number of representations, conventions, stereotypes – of culture, education, age, masculinity, femininity, childhood, ethnicity, etc. - and of social standards, so that they make sense to their public. The author highlights that in the dominant cinema of today's society continues to stand the male perspective, white, western, heterosexual, in detriment of other more plural and multicultural performances.

Duarte (2002) states that in a society dominated by the audiovisual media, the knowledge of this language is a fundamental requirement to be able to circle in different social fields. In our culture we value the written language and the literary products, however the reading of images and the practice of viewing and analyzing films is increasingly becoming important with regard to our daily lives. The issue of audiovisual language is that it assumes a particularly important relevance for teachers and educators especially if we think of education as a socialization and acculturation process. The cinema constitutes itself as a space where several cultural practices are crossed, and, thus, it is a socialization agent that causes the most diverse natures meetings.

Following what was said above, it is important that the viewing of movies in an educational context and in the classroom is an object of reflection and critical analysis, in order to raise awareness among students of any eventual limitations and prejudices of ethnocentric nature underlie certain movie content. "To see and interpret movies implies, above all, to realize the significance they have in the social context in which they participate" (Duarte, 2002: 107).

2. Enhancing students’ learning: cinema and education

Over the past decades and during our teaching practice in a Teacher Training Higher School of Education, we have been using films as a pedagogical strategy, and it is from this backdrop that this article seeks to demonstrate how cinema can help to reflect and engage with conditions of contemporary society and students’ own worlds, and educate their emotions, cultural and aesthetic values and as a result enhance their individuals’ critical competencies.
To effect the kinds of changes in curricular aims, some teachers proposed that art education strategies and activities in some BA Courses, such as Basic Education, Arts and Cultural Management and Gerontology should involve critical analysis and interpretation of the cultural context of minority groups in the Portuguese context.

2.1. Experience with the use of three films in the classroom context

In the curricular units of the Cultural Sociology and Educational Sociology of Elementary Teachers Training and Educational we resorted to the movie *Dead Poets Society* (Weir, 1989) and * Dangerous Minds* (Smith, 1995). The strategy used consisted in dividing each class into groups of three students to whom we provided a set of questions to guide the movie viewing. These questions were connected to programmatic contents to the respective curricular units. Therefore, we proceeded to the movie projection.

The guiding questions of the movie *Dead Poets Society* viewing were:

- What is the culture that is transmitted by the school?
- How does the movie portrays the education?
- What kind of education is presented in the movie?
- Will there be other different types of education than the one presented in the movie?
- What are the effects that education can have in students?
- What kind of relationship can be established between the school and the family of the students?
- How does the movie presents the relationship between teachers and students?
- How is it treated cultural diversity in the film?
- What are the constraints that may exist in pedagogical innovation?
- How does the school contributes to the development of citizenship?

After the movie screening the students reunited to discuss in small groups to try to answer the placed questions. The answers were then presented to the class. Let us now consider some of the answers given by our students to the questions:

"The film portrays an education of a very traditionalist school. The changes are not well accepted. There is a lot of control of teachers in relation to students and also the teachers are very controlled by the school principal. There are many rituals. (..). even the clothes worn by students and teachers are very outdated. Most teachers are old men "(student, 21 years)."Yes, there are other different types of education than that that prevails in the school featured in the movie. The teacher himself represents a different kind of education than that that prevails in the school. Education can be more modern and innovative than the one in that school. Currently, in our schools, it is more valuable the creativity and initiative of the students. "It is not clear how the school contributes to the development of citizenship. In fact, the school should help students grow as people. It should help students to be participative and that is not always the case. In the movie we see that there is a lot of competition promoted by the school itself. There are also a lot of competition and a lot of betrayal among students themselves. The school wants students to be very obedient and well behaved and they don’t know what they like and what they want” (student, 23 years)

For the analysis and reflection on the movie *Dangerous Minds* we provided our students the following topics:

- The culture and cultures portrayed in the movie;
- The dominant education in school featured in the movie;
- The "minorities" portrayed in the film, and the new minorities (here in Portugal);
- The prejudgments that are discreetly present in our professional and social daily life (under the guise of "good education ..."));
- The new forms of social marginalization beyond the "biologism", the "sexism" and the "naturalism";
- The reviews of knowledge and behaviors as forms of discriminatory social control;
- What are the underlying values of the social practices in schools? (e.g. universalism versus particularism, equality versus difference, integration versus discrimination);
- Social, family, organizational and others constraints, and others present in the course of teaching activities;
- The implementation of alternative pedagogical practices (constraints and implications ...);
- The role of positive incentives and positive sanctions in educational practices and in promoting school success.
After the movie screening inside the classroom, each group of students gathered for an hour to discuss the movie content and associate it to the provided topics. At the end of the discussion each group should draw up a small text with the synthesis of the discussion made. After that each group presented to the class the appropriate text, generating a discussion between groups moderated by the teacher. After the discussion between groups and during the following classes the teacher worked with the students the concepts mentioned in the topics to introduce a greater scientific rigor and also provided literature to support the study of the program matters related with the movie viewing topics.

In the curricular units of Cultural Sociology and Antropology of the Cultural and Artistic Management degree and in the curricular unit of Aging Sociology of the Gerontologic Social Education (ESG) degree, we used the movie *Gran Torino* (Eastwood, 2009).

The strategy used also consisted in dividing each class into small groups to which was given a set of questions related to the movie that they would see. After the movie projection in the classroom each group would gather to discuss and prepare a small text with the conclusions drawn from the discussion and answers to the provided questions. Specifically, we also used topics / questions for the movie *Gran Torino* viewing by the students. The questions were as follows:

- What kinds of culture or cultures are presented in the movie?
- How aging is portrayed in the film?
- What is the relationship between the aging process and family contexts?
- What relationship exists between aging and social relations?
- Will there be relationships between aging and culture(s)?
- What are the relationships between aging and education?
- How the movie does depict the intergenerational relationships?
- How the movie does show the relationship between different cultures?
- Are there other forms of relationships between the different cultures then those presented in the movie?
- Will it be a relationship between the cultural group and / or age and citizenship?

After viewing the movie, the students met and discussed and each group produced its text, which they presented to the class, creating in this way a kind of debate between the groups, with the moderation of the teacher. This moderation eventually allowed starting a work of redesign and conceptual deepening whenever that was necessary. We now present an excerpt from one of the texts produced by the students of one of the groups on the film *Gran Torino* that we consider paradigmatic of the type of reflection raised by the movie: "The film portrays the culture of the North American society (...) where there are a lot of minorities who find it difficult to insert themselves in the dominant culture (...) some are marginal. Aging is presented as a stage of life full of difficulties, many of them created by the family (...). Neighbors in the movie are the great help of Walt although they didn’t get along in the beginning. The disagreement has to do with the differences in education and culture. When people get older they tend to be seen as diminished and senile (...), not all older people are so (...)

2.2. Experience "Look to the Real"

During the academic year of 2014/2015, the students of the 3rd year of the Arts and Cultural Management BA Degree were involved in the project "Look to the Real", taught by Alexandre Martins, who had a degree in Cinema and is a member of Ao Norte) since 2002.

In this context and in partnership with the Ao Norte’s Audiovisual Production and Animation Association, the 25 students of this degree developed during one semester 2 (from March till July) a practical filming workshop that resulted in eight short movies of 5 minutes about local characters. Sound capture and image in automatic mode was privileged, as well as the technical knowledge and structural concepts of visual and sound language, such as the use of specific terminology of cinema, through analysis of documentary films (e.g. *Defining the moment* by Peter Wintonick), which forced students to go beyond what they see and to establish relationships between the meanings of the historical-antropological production and the tradition that generated them.
The selection of films remounted to silent movies, leading students to reflect on the contradictions of the industrialized world work in the case, for example the film Modern Times (1936), written and directed by Charles Chaplin, as well as to prepare them for the development of small exercises on documentaries. The trainer reflected on the following topics: movies from the beginning of cinema till today, and the documentary cinema. It was spoken about aesthetic-artistic representation systems, clarifying that the Western European code is not the only valid for a critical understanding of the visual culture. Some of the documentaries analyzed showed a biographical trend that was featured by representations and artifacts that were related to identity processes, building values and beliefs and views about reality.

The perspective or critical-social trend was also analyzed from examples of representations and artifacts that privileges the politics of difference and the power relations. This sixteen-week training culminated on the production of documental exercises that revealed a critical and reflective awareness around the media, especially cinema and the contribution of audiovisual language to the construction of knowledge (Moura et al, 2013). Students realized that the image discovery can analyze non visible facts and progressively, over the sixteen weeks, they realized that cinema could motivate them to new forms of perception. During this semester, citizens from Viana saw a lot of young people, walking around, carrying their cameras and microphones, thereby training the art of film and the gift of capturing the cultural and human heritage. The themes were selected by the students. Later they contacted the characters of their eight films, according to the following criteria: "first because the story is important to be told and recorded, and second, because it will be helping in the training / awareness of these students to the world and people around them "(Alexandre Martins, 23.04.2015). This training resulted in eight movies lasting 10 to 12 minutes:

1. Elisabeth, by Joanna Jardim, José Lima and Paulo Passos. Participant(s): Elisabeth Lamche (ERASMUS Austrian student) and Herbert Lamche;
2. Irene, by Isabel Cruz, Margarida Neves and Vanessa Ribeiro. Participant(s): Irene Dehesa Díaz (ERASMUS Spanish student);
7. Uma rádio local no séc.XXI (a local radio in the 21st century), by: Ariana Mina, Joana Oliveira and Marisa Sá. Participant(s): Andreia Cruz, Celso Carvalhosa and Miguel Costa
8. Uma vida dedicada ao estuque (A life dedicated to the stucco [plaster]), by: André Ribeiro, Mafalda Verde and Ramiro Araújo. Participant(s): Domingos Fontainha.

In the post-production of all these films we had the collaboration of the Ao-Norte Audiovisual and Production Association. It is a practical workshop oriented to the documentary of creation, encouraging the students to develop a strong and authoritarian language. The evaluation consists in short films about a place or a character, which instigates the students to explore and find stories to tell. Acceptance and understanding of cultural differences and tolerance are the greatest asset in the difficult days that we are living today. These exercises illustrate critical exploration of the visual culture, where student have pushed their analysis of representation as a signifying practice. In the end the trainer concluded:

"... As a trainer I would like to give sincere CONGRATULATIONS to all the groups that have completed their work, because much of the material viewed post terminus of classes has a very good quality, especially highlighting the fact that many of you had never held a camera and microphone, nor had plunged this immense world of images and REAL Stories "(Alexandre Martins [the trainer] 29.05.15). Through the reported experiments it is concluded that cinematographic work may assume essential values as documents, as a means of acquiring general cultural knowledge, as contributions to research and repository of memories and students reactions have shown that this learning was an enriching experience with an enormous impact on their training, and interpreting it as a consciousness transformation space.
2.3. Experience "The Lumière in the classroom"

Within the curricular unit of Arts, Pedagogy and Critical Citizenship of the Elementary Education degree, it was provided to the students a different experience taking into account the excellent results obtained in similar projects developed in partnership with the Ao-Norte Association, through the implementation of the project "The Lumière in classroom" coordinated by Alexandre Martins in the academic year of 2015/2016. The main goals of this experiment were to promote the reflection on the importance of visual arts in the approach of concepts of citizenship and critical pedagogy, as well as to build capacity of use and production of didactic materials, taking into account concepts of values and of citizenship through artistic actions with a pedagogical intention, using images as social education tool.

The methodological process used consisted on: (i) an approach and reflection on the origin and evolution of "moving images"; (ii) brainstorming on the resource and potentiality and use of moving images to approach different issues and concerns of today's world; (iii) viewing of works produced in other contexts; (iv) class division into working groups to choose a theme to work with the preparation of the respective summary of the topics to be approached; (v) feedback and analysis of the themes, choices of props, space, testing and recording; and (vi) edition of films in studio, by technicians of the Ao-Norte Association.

Titles of the developed works:

- Short movie – Bullying (Hélder Figueiredo, Cátia Carvalho, Joana Ervalho, Margarida Fernandes, Patrícia Martins, Tânia Araújo);
- Masquerade (Joana Cardoso, Stefanie Pereira, Sara Pereira, Mónica Costa);
- Not everything is what it seems! (Andreia Figueiredo, Cátia Santos, Jéssica Araújo, Joana Gonçalves, Mariana Torre, Rita Cruz);
- The Alcohol (Ana Gregório, Ana Neiva, Mariana Silva, Vanessa Vilas Boas);
- Selfishness (Andreia Fernandes, Catarina Fernandes, Marta Azevedo, Marta Loureiro. Natália Martins, Rita Bento);
- To the conversation?! (Joana Vieira, Jacinta de Miguel, Daniela Caramalho, Sara Cunha);
- Strategies of a lazy (Ana Luísa Lopes, Fátima Lima, Carla Silva);
- Work stoppages (Ana Catarina Rebouço, Marisa Barbosa, Mathilde Barbosa, Rafaela Barbeitos);
- A bullshit novel (Andreia Alves, Carina Abreu, Valéria Lemos);
- (Bo)leado (Heldr Granjo, Catarina Couto, Catarina Vilaça, Marina Gonçalves).

The participation of students allowed the growth and the acknowledge of the enormous potential of the audiovisual resources in the context of the classroom at several levels. Through reflection on the concrete realities installed in our current society, the teacher provided discussion about different social / educational / artistic problems in our daily lives, in a way that facilitates the sharing, motivation and awareness of issues that are urgent to be raised and debated. With these experiences the students understood that the use of films helped to educate their senses and taught them to understand concepts such as visual culture, multiculturalism, interculturalism, aging, generation, intergenerational relationships, education, citizenship and minority. Such issues may be deepened in no traditionalist terms, starting by their knowledge, stimulated by the audiovisual, in a logic of constructivist pedagogy that promote a positive relationship of the media with their training.

The analysis of the contribution of audiovisual language facilitated the awareness of the students, in order to make them understand better, discuss and act consciously and critically in the world, in constant interaction with the media and the technology, contributing to a reading of what they watch on television, in advertisements and in the cinematographic environment.

3. Conclusion

It is important to emphasize the pedagogical work carried out with the use of film projections. When we set ourselves such a task, we knew the challenges we would face. The students understood that the language of cinema and the language of words are similar. Both languages represent people, actions, events, ideas, and express feelings. All of us are used to choosing words which express all those things. Everyone speaks but not everyone speak about the films. With these curricular experiences teachers and students could understand the power of such pedagogical strategy and it was clear that subjects which were previously seen as potentially "boring" and uninteresting, became the object of interest and committed discussion by a part of the students after viewing the films.
As for the reflection on the clues to new pedagogical and didactical explorations of films we can say that advance preparation for a set of ways of teaching in the classroom is fundamental, seeking to reach the goals proposed in the curriculum. It is also necessary to promote a better understanding by the students of the goals of the inclusion of such resources in the context of the classroom, as well as the tasks to be implemented after watching movies.

We are all aware that the objectives of education for the media and in this case for the cinema, imply a critical formation of students and it is a condition of education for citizenship and access to knowledge. The use of specialists has seemed to us to be a fundamental step in the pursuit of our objectives, and we count on partners such as the AOnorte Audiovisual Production and Animation Association and the Universidade Lusófona de Lisboa, who have been supporting us in the valorization of culture and reconstruction of academic space as a space for cultural formation. Regarding the experiments here described, we conclude that the adopted strategies have been very relevant, as they allow to the students a greater contact with the world of cinema and through it, the acquisition of transdisciplinary knowledge. In today's society where the media have a strong impact on the daily lives of citizens, a training of future artists, managers of art and culture, professionals of gerontology and basic education teachers, should promote the levels of concentration and attention to develop its critical sense sustained and not be limited simply to the enjoyment or pleasure that images can provide them. All these strategies need also to be studied, in order to activate protocols of collaboration between associations, schools, museums, art galleries or other cultural entities. Therefore we must continue to reflect on these issues.

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Filmography

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Authors Biographies

Anabela Moura is Senior Lecturer in Art Education at Viana do Castelo Polytechnic, Portugal. She studied Fine Arts, Painting at Porto University, and holds an MA at De Montfort University in Leicester (1993), PhD at the Univ. of Surrey, Roehampton (2000) in England and coordinates the Art and Cultural Management Course and Art and Technology Professional Course. She is member of the CIEC Research Centre at University of Minho, Braga-Portugal, and frequently collaborates with European and non-European art and non-art researchers in International funded research projects as Portuguese coordinator http://creativeconnexions.eu/pt/, http://www.image-identity.eu/ and co-edited a national journal at Viana do Castelo Polytechnic www.ese.ipvc.pt/revistadialogoscomaarte/. She is the author of numerous articles, and co-editor of books. amoura@ese.ipvc.pt

Manuela Cachadinha is Senior Lecturer at the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo/School of Education since 1985, where she has taught several subjects of Human and Social Sciences Area in Master's Courses and Ba Courses. She holds a PhD in “Education and Interculturalism”, at the Open University. Master's degree in Sociology and Portuguese Reality at Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, at Universidade Nova de Lisboa, and a degree in Sociology in the same university. She is member of the the CEMRI Research Centre (Centre for Studies of Migration and Intercultural Relations). She is concerned with the fields of Sociology, Education, Culture, Interculturalism, Ethnography and Aging and has publications in national and international journals mcachadinha@ese.ipvc.pt

Carlos Almeida, School of Education, Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo, Portugal. Coordinator of the Master Courses of Arts Education and Arts and Cultural Management. PhD in Teaching of Arts Education: Music Education, at University of Valladolid. His area of expertise is in art education, musical aptitude and teacher training. He collaborates with national and international researchers in International Conferences and in the Creative Connections Project http://creativeconnexions.eu/pt/ and has national and international publications. He co-edited a national journal at Viana do Castelo Polytechnic www.ese.ipvc.pt/revistadialogoscomaarte/. He is member of CIEC Research Centre, at Minho University. calmeida@ese.ipvc.pt