

Editorial Preface

The Annual International Conference of the Bulgarian Comparative Education Society is now running in its thirteenth year. From its modest beginnings thirteen years ago, to its impressive size today, a remarkable tradition has been the production of a conference book, consistently launched on the first day of the conference each year.

This year, Volume 13 of BCES Conference Books is published in 2 numbers. Number 1 of the volume contains papers submitted to the XIII Annual International Conference of the Bulgarian Comparative Education Society (BCES), held in Sofia, Bulgaria, 10 – 13 June 2015. Number 2 of the volume includes papers submitted to the III International Partner Conference of the International Research Centre (IRC) ‘Scientific cooperation’, Rostov-on-Don, Russia. Such a partner conference has been organized as part of the BCES Conferences for the past three years.

The XIII BCES Conference theme is *Quality, Social Justice and Accountability in Education Worldwide*.

The book consists of an introductory chapter by JP Rossouw and 58 papers written by 91 authors that are grouped into the following 6 parts:

- Part 1: Comparative Education & History of Education;
- Part 2: Pre-Service and In-service Teacher Training & Learning and Teaching Styles;
- Part 3: Education Policy, Reforms & School Leadership;
- Part 4: Higher Education, Lifelong Learning & Social Inclusion;
- Part 5: Law and Education: Legislation and Inclusive Education, Child Protection & Human Rights Education;
- Part 6: Research Education: Developing Globally Competent Researchers for International and Interdisciplinary Research.

In his introductory chapter “Quality, Social Justice and Accountability – Crucial Determinants of Excellence in Education” JP Rossouw discusses how “the quality of education, social justice and accountability can be regarded as key elements of successful school systems and societies”. The central claim of his piece is “that a categorically successful education system succeeds in providing an education of a quality higher than mere accessibility, in which social justice is achieved for the students, teachers and the society. These ideals can only be accomplished if a high level of accountability, as is expected by those stakeholders who expect an individual, department or institution to give account of own actions, prevails amongst all role-players” (Rossouw, p. 17).

Part 1 boasts 11 papers. The first paper, “The Crisis in World Education and Comparative Education” deals with a book with the same title, edited by the authors of the paper, Charl Wolhuter, Konstantinos Karras and Pella Calogiannakis. In the next paper Teodora Genova zooms in on a part of the life of Torsten Husén – one of the towering figures of Comparative Education, whose life and writings and work spans the entire twentieth century. Getting the world of work and the world of education in tandem, has been described as the Gordian knot of education and of

education planning, something Comparative Education is not anywhere near providing an answer. In an era of growing graduate unemployment in large parts of the world, Marco Aurelio Navarro Leal and Ruth Roux's paper on the remuneration of Law and Engineering graduates in Mexico must surely rate as highly topical. Despite lofty rhetoric about Human Rights, media reports regularly remind us that many schools are unsafe spaces. In his paper JL van der Walt offers a new perspective on safe schools, based on the Capabilities Approach philosophy of Martha Nussbaum. The wide range and adjustable borders of the field of Comparative Education is once again demonstrated in Ferdinand Potgieter's paper, invoking insights gleaned from Philosophy of Education, in enriching Comparative Education as it focuses on the issues of religious tolerance and education. In his paper, Jan Nieuwenhuis links to the paper presented by Ferdinand Potgieter in the same thematic section in 2014. Nieuwenhuis problematises the pedagogy of discernment, advanced by Potgieter in his paper in 2014.

Takehiro Hirayama turns to a topic and region both much neglected in Comparative Education scholarship, namely schools in Bhutan before the modern age. The History of Education subpart is given further substance with Regan Treewater-Lipes' paper which, located in Istanbul and Jerusalem, as the paper of Takehiro Hirayama, gives attention to parts of the world too often neglected in world education historiography. The final paper in the History of Education subpart is Arijana Kolak Bošnjak's on Gymnasium education in nineteenth century Croatia.

Hennie Steyn links to the issue of quality touched upon by Arijana Kolak Bošnjak, in his paper on benchmarking for teacher education programmes, and finally Ntlantla Sebele throws the spotlight on the vexing, but too often ignored, problem of formulated and implemented policy gaps. In sum, eleven papers making an interesting and memorable thematic unit for 2015.

Part 2 includes 10 papers dealing with the issue of teacher education and training at different levels of the educational system. In spite of the fact that the national contexts of the presented studies differ to a great extent, they all however reflect the fact that teachers today face many challenges brought about by both, student heterogeneity and by demanding social expectations.

The part opens with the presentation of the findings of a comparative qualitative study conducted at two universities in Slovenia and Serbia. The authors, Klara Skubic Ermenc and Nataša Vujisić-Živković discuss the controversial competence-based approach which has been introduced with the Bologna process in the pedagogy study programmes. In her second paper Klara Skubic Ermenc discusses the education of teachers for intercultural education, and proposes a model of teacher education for intercultural education. The model is based on a definition of interculturality as a pedagogical principle that guides education to enable recognition and empowerment of all minority groups.

Amanda S. Potgieter argues that the liminal experience of transition of students into academia is not primarily dependent on intelligence and effort, but on the provision of educative nurturing space in which the mentor-lecturer together with the students engage meaningfully with socially rich experiential learning.

Slavica Maksić's paper "Teachers' Perceptions of and Solutions for Student School Failure" reports the results of a qualitative study exploring the relationship

between primary school teachers' perceptions of student school failure and the solutions suggested for its overcoming.

Johannes A. Slabbert reflects on the effects of the publication of *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Education*, edited by Siegel in 2009. The publication evoked considerable discourse in the fields of philosophy and philosophy of education and prompted the question about the role of philosophy of education in the practice of education and teacher education.

Sandra Ozola and Inga Riemere discuss the impact of the rapidly changing world on education and on the teachers' professional role. A traditional approach to teaching which involves the directed flow of information from a teacher to students is no longer productive; the teachers need to enable people to become lifelong learners.

The initial and in-service teacher education play a vital role in strengthening competences necessary for implementing inclusive educational practice, claim Nataša Matović and Vera Spasenović. They analyze in-service training programs for educators in the field of inclusive education in Serbia.

Bekir Fatih Meral similarly discusses the issue of the integration of students with special needs into mainstream education. In Turkey regulations that guide the integration are in place, however, there is a huge gap between law and practice.

Milindra Kawinkamolroj, Charinee Triwaranyu and Sumlee Thongthaw present a research aimed to develop coaching processes based on transformative learning theory for changing the mindset about instruction of elementary school teachers.

This part closes with the paper by Nadrudee Chitrangsan, Wichai Sawekngam and Sumlee Thongthaw, in which the authors discuss a curriculum management process by applying Lean concept for waste elimination to enhance curriculum implementation for primary school teachers.

Part 3 includes 12 papers whose themes are related to the problems of leading and providing quality education and an examination of recent educational policy initiatives in various countries. Authors come from Mexico, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia, Turkey, England and South Africa.

Teodora Genova presents an overview of the current situation and reforms making way for future positive developments in the national education system of Bulgaria. Živka Krnjaja critiques the quality of the curriculum framework for early childhood education in Serbia, discussing the importance of preschool education worldwide and evaluating Serbia's preschool education curriculum framework, examining policy documents against internationally accepted quality criteria which shows discord between the preschool education curriculum framework in Serbia and the characteristics of high quality contemporary preschool education programmes. Dragana Pavlović Breneselović produces a comparative analysis of early years' education in the Republic of Ireland and Serbia, examining national documents against four different dimensions. The final conclusion is that in Ireland quality is seen as a building process whereas in Serbia it is seen as a way of measuring and controlling early years' education. Emina Hebib, Vera Spasenović and Zorica Šaljić discuss the ways in which evaluation is carried out on elementary, secondary and higher education levels in Serbia.

Fran Galetić presents an analysis of different governments' policies on education expenditure across the European Union by comparing the variation of education spending in relation to the percentage of each country's gross domestic product (GDP) allotted to education. The paper makes clear how varied are the amounts of GDP spent on education across the EU.

The theme of policies for improving social justice is presented by Snježana Dobrota, related to how a multi-cultural approach to music education can enhance social justice and by Ural Nadir and Mehmet Can Aktan who examine social justice in Turkish education via an exploration of how the welfare state, social justice and school social work interact in their country. From Mexico, José Luis Andrade, Amelia Molina and Christian Ponce present an overview of curriculum flexibility as a strategy for exercising social justice in public universities, taking into account the preparation of students for the job market in the context of globalisation. Claudio-Rafael Vasquez-Martinez et al. focus on education as an environmental tool.

Tebello Tlali and Lynette Jacobs have examined the quality of teaching in one South African university, where overcrowding, a deficit of equipment and a lack of lecturer training is resulting in teaching that does not inspire and motivate learners. They conclude that much more needs to be done to enhance the use of a more constructivist approach in university teaching so as to enhance student learning and improve assessment practice.

Gillian Hilton and Helen Tyler, examine a new policy and approach to the training of teachers in England, where school-led training has been introduced, lessening the involvement of universities. The causes for and the effects of this policy are examined showing danger of departmental closures, a lack of research input in teacher training and a possible recruitment crisis. Their second paper presents findings from research with trainees, mentors and tutors involved in training and assessing students on this new programme questioning the efficacy of this approach and the problems its introduction has posed, including a decline in subject and educational theory studied in the programmes and concerns over the training of and responsibilities on mentors.

Part 4 presents a collection of 16 papers comprising research work on lifelong learning, social inclusion and higher education.

Ogunleye et al.'s and Plavšić and Diković's papers respectively examine students' and teachers' perceptions of a 'successful' lifelong learning training intervention within the context of the policy on European Lifelong Learning, and students' plans for teaching and lifelong learning. Similarly, Lalović and Gvozdenović's discourse on lifelong long learning demonstrate why 'aging memory' should never be a barrier to or a limiting factor for lifelong learning.

Canales Rodriguez and García Robelo's comparative study of tutorship and school academic trajectories in two Mexican public universities, Burçer's assessment of the implementation of the ERASMUS programme in Turkey, Gravite's examination of the interactions between higher education and labour market, Dimitrijević's school teachers' perceptions of cultural differences, Borovac's voices of children in education research, and Gag and Schroeder's discourse on vocational and technical education all reflect the diversity of curriculum in higher education.

The third strand of Part 4 focuses on aspects of social inclusion – and it forms a significant proportion of the papers published in Part 4. Papers on social inclusion by Anczewski and Anczewska, Chrostek et al. and Nowak respectively examine how unemployment might pose a barrier to the social inclusion of mental health service users, how education might be used to combat the stigma of mental illness and how the role of training in mental health recovery is transformational.

Similarly, papers by Canen and Ivenicki, Stankovska et al., Stockton and McNeeley, and Romstein respectively explore topics as diverse as multiculturalism within the context of Brazil, the education of children with special educational needs, quality, social justice and accountability in a simulated educational context, and inclusive education – all of which explain the importance of the social inclusion sub theme of Part 4.

Part 5 devoted to law and education, has 4 papers which focus on different aspects of legislation, inclusive education, child protection, and human rights education. Two papers by Elizabeth Achinewhu-Nworgu et al. discuss the implications of UK immigration rules for non-EU students, and specifically some experiences of students from Nigeria, and doctoral students' understanding of legal and ethical obligations in conducting education research. Shade Babalola's study examines challenges faced by Eastern European students within a 16-19 education setting in the UK. Steve Greenfield presents and discusses a very interesting case on safeguarding children from sporting mismatches.

Part 6 on research education includes 5 papers. Individually and collectively, the papers represent important contributions to the field of research education and research practice. Consistent with the focus and scope of the Bulgarian Comparative Education Society, the papers prompt interdisciplinary dialogue and promote learning across borders.

The collection opens with the paper entitled “Developing research capacity through professional training”. Lynette Jacobs reports on a planned, professional, postgraduate diploma that aims to develop professionally educators and education officials towards policy making. The purpose of the discussed program is to prepare students for advanced leadership positions in the field of Education Policy and Law. The author argues the importance of providing students with necessary knowledge and skills to undertake research which will effectively address challenges within the South African context.

The importance of competent South African researchers able to solve national education challenges and to participate meaningfully in international interdisciplinary research is further explored within the paper entitled “Developing educationists as globally competent education law researchers for international interdisciplinary research: A South African perspective”. Johan Beckmann and Justus Prinsloo argue that there is a need to develop globally competent educationist education law researchers. Within the paper, the authors explore the hybrid field, internationally known as Education Law discipline. The authors make a point that although Education Law is recognized as an academic discipline and as a separate field, in many countries it is not taught and researched in higher education institutions.

The subsequent paper “Martini qualitative research: Shaken, not stirred” continues the exploration of researchers’ knowledge and skills to conduct quality research. FJ Nieuwenhuis brings attention to typical difficulties that particularly novice researchers may encounter when they ‘blend’ or ‘stir’ qualitative research methodologies and methods. As the author clarifies, the notion of ‘blended’ qualitative research is conceptually shaken in terms of its paradigmatic roots, methodological approaches and data analysis considerations. In the conclusion, the author reminds novice and experienced researchers that although there is a diversity of approaches, methodologies and methods in qualitative research “you *cannot blend methods and methodologies that do not blend*”.

The next paper “Understanding the nature of structures in education: Recent developments” written by Johannes L van der Walt documents how 21st century education researchers could, if not, should approach the scientific description of diverse elements (e.g., curriculum, support and management structures) within educational system that they might encounter. The author argues that although it is relatively easy to describe these different elements and show how they interconnect to form an education system as a total structure, such description could be perceived as simplistic and reductionistic thus scientifically indefensible. The paper is a thoughtful and informative exploration of three different approaches to research as well as theories and methods that could be considered for implementation in a post-foundationalist approach.

The final paper entitled “Enriching higher education training through values and social engagement” describes how development of a knowledge economy impacts universities, which are increasingly faced with demands to produce and commercialize ideas. Gustavo Gregorutti brings attention to the excessive emphasis on faculty research productivity in detriment of ethic and values training that is key for a successful professional development and an effective implementation of any project. The author urges universities to add an ethical and moral dimension when training students to become professionals and researchers.

Despite the valued contributions of these five papers, there is still much to understand about education of globally competent researchers for international and interdisciplinary research.

All papers in the book provide their own significant contributions to defining problems, clarifying concepts, discussing phenomena, and examining different approaches to the challenging topics the Conference focuses on.

The Editors

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