

## **The European Doctorate in Teacher Education: Transnational Perspectives of Teacher Learning in an Emerging Europe**

Chair: **Michael Schratz**

Discussant: **Gabor Halász**

Paper presentations:

**Paper 1:** Europeanisation in teacher education: Perspectives of international policy experts and the case of Hungary, by Vasileios Symeonidis, University of Innsbruck & ELTE Budapest

**Paper 2:** HundrED. The number that holds the potential for teacher learning, by Helena Kovacs, ELTE Budapest & University of Lisbon

**Paper 3:** Gazing Back: Accounts from of a Polish primary school on the state of Inclusive Education within the EU, by Josefine Wagner, University of Lower Silesia and University of Innsbruck

**Paper 4:** Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions About Their Initial Teacher Education – A Case Study from Portugal, by Andras Fehervari, University of Lisbon and ELTE Budapest

### **Symposium Abstract**

The European Doctorate in Teacher Education (EDiTE) is a project supported by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, Marie-Sklodowska-Curie grant agreement number 676452. The 4-year long project involves early stage and independent researchers, employed by five partner universities (ELTE Budapest, University of Innsbruck, University of Lisbon, Masaryk University, University of Lower Silesia) in conducting research on the theme of "transformative teacher learning for better student learning in an emerging European context". As its main focus, EDiTE investigates the interconnectedness of educational research, policy and practice; and how transformative teacher learning is related to change in Europe (EDiTE, 2014).

The proposed symposium brings together theoretical and empirical papers of the EDiTE researchers, focusing on issues related to teacher learning such as teacher education, innovation, and inclusion. The aim is to gather transnational research perspectives of teacher learning, reflecting on the dynamics in which future education in Europe is emerging. Drawing from research, policy and practice, EDiTE papers will examine the nature of teachers' professional knowledge, practice and learning process, quality inclusive education as well as teachers' initial education and continuous professional development. Furthermore, as teacher learning is situated in teachers' unique national systems, researchers will specifically focus on the context of four European countries, namely Hungary, Finland,

Poland and Portugal. Recognising the importance of national context for understanding the processes of teacher learning around Europe is essential and consists an integral part of the work of the EDiTE researchers. The inter-institutional and collaborative work of EDiTE enables collecting evidence from several national contexts, while at the same time leads to establishing a transnational, European space for understanding teacher learning on the academic level.

Specifically, the first paper explores the process of Europeanisation in the field of teacher education, drawing from policy analysis and interviews with international policy experts. To exemplify how European policies and ideas influence national education systems, the paper considers the case of Hungary by analysing relevant policy documents and interviews with national policy experts and practitioners. The second paper is built on the analysis of a unique Finnish platform HundrED, thus examines the notions and prospects of teacher learning and different approaches in knowledge development. On the basis of ethnographic descriptions of an exemplary multi-needs classroom in Poland, the third paper explores starting points for teacher learning in order to realise the EU goal of educational inclusion as a principal for achieving greater social justice within the union. The fourth paper provides an alternative method for assessing Initial Teacher Education programs through the perspective of pre-service students, and their observation of programme execution.

A key question underpinning the symposium's papers is how teacher learning translates into policy, research and practice in different European countries. Thus, the research findings will show how teacher learning is interpreted in Europe, raising awareness of what constitutes the "Europeanness" of teacher learning and what it means to be a "European teacher" (Schratz, 2014; EDiTE, 2014). We believe that the acquisition of theoretical and rational-empirical knowledge relies on the potential to conduct localised and comparative research and to relate the research process and results to one's own practice. This is a view "that disrupts the assumption that theory and practice can be kept separate and it assumes not just that the motivations for, commitment to and practice of research are central to the research enterprise, but that they are inextricably as much as they are scientific" (Schratz & Walker, 1995, p. 1f). Therefore, the methodological approaches of this symposium's papers will follow a European comparative perspective, applying a variety of research techniques, such as ethnography, case study research and secondary data analysis.

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## **Paper 1: Europeanisation in teacher education: Perspectives of international policy experts and the case of Hungary**

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Through the Lisbon strategy in 2000 and the “Education and Training 2010” work program in 2002, the EU initiated a process of policy coordination in education, which included as an objective for the education systems across Europe the goal of improving the quality of teacher education at all educational levels (European Commission, 2007). Following these developments, an accelerating process of Europeanisation of national education policies related to teachers and teacher education has been witnessed and teacher professionalism increasingly became a European issue (EDiTE, 2014). In her analysis of EU teacher-related policies and activities, Steiger (2014) describes a two-way interaction process of Europeanisation, implying that the European community influences the teacher policies of individual Member States, while at the same time Member States influence through complex mechanisms of interaction the policies of the community.

The specific paper aims at presenting the development of Europeanisation in the field of teacher education, drawing from relevant academic literature and analysis of policy documents, as well as interviews with international policy experts from the European Commission, the OECD, and Education International. To illustrate how the specific process influences the domestic policy making of member states, the case of teacher education in Hungary is explored. Interviews with a selected sample of national policy experts, teacher educators and teachers from Hungary are analysed to help us better understand how Hungary has interpreted the relevant European initiatives related to teachers and teacher education.

Preliminary findings indicate that although the principle of subsidiarity is still prevalent, various European resources (e.g. ideas, symbolic and peer pressures, development interventions, and financial resources) influenced the domestic policy-making process of member states in three main areas: (a) the continuum of teacher education (initial teacher education, continuous professional development, and induction); (b) the pedagogical knowledge and competences of teachers; and (c) the role of teacher educators. Hungary, a country that has actively pursued integration into the EU, including a constitutional amendment allowing accession (Batory, 2010), changed its initial teacher education programmes in 2006 introducing a consecutive 3+2 year model, which is followed by a two years period of induction and a regulated period of CPD which teachers need to undertake every seven years. Moreover, higher education institutions introduced a competency-based system for teacher education

programmes (Szilagyi & Szecsi, 2012), whereas support measures for teacher educators are still under development.

**Key words:** Europeanisation, teacher education continuum, teacher competencies, teacher educators, Hungary

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## Paper 2: HundrED. The number that holds the potential for teacher learning

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In today's digital era, technology has been noted to offer unprecedented possibilities, including those that support quality of teaching. The ability to learn anywhere and at any time and pace has significantly shifted how we conceptualise learning and organise education (European Commission, 2012). However, Darling-Hammond (2015) reminds us that not much of the existing evidence-based approaches is used in the realms of policy-making and school-based practices. Thus, bridging the gap between the three titans, research, policy and practice (Commission of the European Communities, 2007; Biesta, 2007), as well as developing models of joint knowledge creation (Gibbons et al, 1994; McLaughlin, 2004) has prompted the attention of educational researchers.

This paper examines a platform called HundrED, a project developed as part of celebrating a century of Finland. As part of a bigger framework organised by the government, HundrED gathers 100 opinions of educational experts, policy makers, principals and teachers, students and CEOs from Finland and elsewhere, along with 100 examples of innovative school practices, pedagogical approaches or extra-curricular activities. The culminating aspect, thought, is 100 experiments that will be implemented in Finnish schools under the auspices of this project, all with the aim of discovering what needs to change for the next 100 years of education.

The main objective of the study was to explore the potential the project holds in terms of teacher self-directed professional development, as well as in terms of informing policy and correlating with the research. Teacher learning has been placed as the cornerstone of effective schooling and developing innovative practices (EDiTE, 2014), thus has been illustrated by Kwo (2010) as the teacher's moral duty in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While experimentation and collaborative reflection have shown accelerated trends in teacher learning (Bakkens et al, 2010), the complex field of continuous professional development, especially when self-motivated and self-directed, has multiple complexities and dimensions (Opfer and Pedder, 2011).

Through content analysis and interviews the study shows how HundrED generates vast predispositions towards teacher learning as well as great potentials of alternative models of knowledge creation based on experimentation and mutual correspondence between practice, policy and research. Furthermore, the inherited practical aspect of HundrED informs of the successes and the bottlenecks in using digital means to reach better quality in education and benefit from the spectrum of evidence-based approaches. With its multiple features, this example opens up a possibility for an extensive inquiry and discussion.

**Key words:** teacher learning, online educational resources, 21st century education, Finland

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## **Paper 3: Gazing Back: Accounts from of a Polish primary school on the state of Inclusive Education within the EU**

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When the European Union signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UN-CRPD) in 2011, all member states agreed to follow the implementation of structures that will allow for “persons with disabilities [...] to access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live” (Article 24. 2). Seven years into the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, which lists education and training as one of the key areas for action (2010, p. 7), I explore educational inclusion in a Polish primary school. I argue that a medicalised view of children with special needs interferes with and frustrates all attempts made to include them in mainstream education. Theoretically, my claim is guided by the works of disability scholars Michael Oliver and Shelley Tremain who stress that medicalised research on people with disabilities has been one too many times about the manifestation of their biological limitedness in comparison to their able bodied counterparts and rarely about the individual’s emancipation and the critical gaze back onto disabling structures of society (Oliver, 1999; Tremain, 2001). Instead of following the dead-end-logic that regards impairment as a problem of the individual, they offer the social model of disability, evident also in the UN-CRPD, with which I critically review policies and practice that are geared towards including children with disabilities.

Methodologically, I am inspired by Paul Willis’s example of ethnographic research in schools (1977) which yet “patronising and condescending” (Willis, 1977, p. 194) in some ways, allows me to work with quotes and descriptions from a fifth grade class and their teachers, in order to nurture the reader’s engagement with “social existence” (Willis, 1977, p. 194) along the line of in-, respectively exclusion from education and at times society as a whole. I situate my work opposite to what Lorraine Code deems the terrain of positivist epistemologies in which the knower is detached, a neutral spectator whose cognitive efforts are replicable by any other individual knower in the same circumstances (2012, p. 87). On the contrary, I encourage engagement with the moments I witnessed and inevitably became involved in when judgements were passed on vulnerable individuals marked by categories of power/disempowerment in state-run, educational institutions. Ultimately then, this paper results in the recommendation of starting points for teacher learning that correspond with adequate concepts for teaching multi-needs classrooms.

**Key words:** Inclusion, UN-CRPD, social model of disability, teacher education

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#### **Paper 4: Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions About Their Initial Teacher Education – A Case Study From Portugal**

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All societies prioritize good education, and the single most important element in the quality of education is the teacher (Cochran-Smith, Zeichner, 2005). The teaching force can be improved in many ways, by better professional training, through higher selection standards, stronger retention of good candidates and beginner teachers, but also by better Initial Teacher Education (ITE) (Tinoca et al, 2013).

Quality of Higher Education is assessed by multiple agencies for different stakeholders and for different purposes. Prospective students, parents and business people along with government decision makers want easy to use and simplified tools, and so rankings provide just that. Even though most ranking indicators are superficial quantitative data, and they only rank 5% of institutions, they are very popular (Rauhvargers, 2011).

For certain stakeholders, like students and faculty, SERVQUAL and similar constructs measure service quality based on their satisfaction, established on data collected through surveys (Abidin, 2015). Despite the fact that satisfaction does not directly correspond to quality, these instruments are useful for the institutions.

National agencies on the other hand built quality standards and guidelines (Eurydice, 2006), and for unique programs like ITE, there are complex Quality Indicators and Control Instruments created. A perfect example is the Quality Indicators for Teacher Education developed by the responsible agencies of India and Canada with 6 key areas, 25 quality areas and 75 indicators and a precise system how to evaluate an ITE in all indicators and how to summarize the results (Menon et al, 2007). Critics to such

an evaluation points out, that all data is provided by the institution, and hence it is never clear how objective it can be.

This research presents an alternative framework for ITE assessment through observed program execution. Through literature review, best practices, general principles and philosophies are collected that are proven to help pre-service teachers in becoming the best teachers they can be. Research results of individual practices and meta-researches are both considered. Interviews, survey, and focus groups are conducted with pre-service teachers learning to become high school math and English teachers in one university in Lisbon, Portugal.

Findings show the difference between the practices proposed by the scientific community and the observed reality of the ITE program by the students. This alternative view into the quality of one program offers consequences for the institution, policy makers and further research.

**Key words:** Initial Teacher Education, Higher Education Assessment, Student Perception, Portugal

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