

Introductory chapter

Trends and Themes in Teacher Education Research, Policy and Practice

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Introduction

This monograph has been written and published as a result of the growing co-operation within Teacher Education Policy in Europe (TEPE) Network, which is an academic network that builds on previous European collaborative initiatives on teacher education policy, e.g. TNTEE and EUDORA. Today, TEPE Network central goals relate to:

- advancing research in and on Teacher Education;
- increasing mobility and extending the European Dimension in Teacher Education;
- enhancing quality through the renewal of evaluation cultures in Teacher Education.

The initiative to establish the TEPE Network was formally introduced at Umeå University (Sweden) in 2006. The first TEPE conference was held at the University of Tallin (Estonia) from 1 to 3 February 2007. The second TEPE conference was organised at the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) from 21 to 23 February 2008 and the third one took place at Umeå University (Sweden) from 18 to 20 May 2009. In 2010, two very significant TEPE academic events happened. The first one, was TEPE Colloquium and it was organised from 21 to 22 June by the School of Education at University College Dublin (Ireland), while the second one was the fourth Annual TEPE conference, which was held at the University of Tallinn from 31 September to 2 October. The fifth TEPE conference was hosted by the University of Vienna (Austria) from 13 to 15 May 2011. The sixth TEPE conference was organised by the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Lodz (Poland) in cooperation with the Foundation for the Development of Education System (Poland) and it gathered 120 participants from 26 countries from all over the world. TEPE 2012 conference showed that in seven years, the TEPE Network initiative has established firm roots and we can notice that number of TEPE supporters and contributors has continuously grown year by year. The seventh Annual TEPE Conference – TEPE 2013 has been announced to take place at the University of Helsinki (Finland) from 16 to 18 May 2013.

The theme of the 6th TEPE “Research, Policy, and Practice in Teacher Education in Europe” focused attention on a set of concerns that apply to efforts to close the gaps between research, policy and practice in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning at all levels of education. Closing the gaps between research, policy and practice demands that we should rethink our research priorities and practices, as well as the ways in which we develop and implement policy. There exists a pressing need to develop a pragmatic approach to dissemination based on what we know about how teachers actually do learn and develop. One of the aims of the conference was to support the culture for quality improvements in teacher education and professional development through promoting a *research interactive partnership* between universities, schools, centres for non-formal learning, mediators and policy makers, which can be a basis for knowledge creation and sharing.

The discussions during the conference focused on the barriers to teacher education improvement and identify the proven change levers and promote these. The conference’s participants tried to exam how to promote the sharing of knowledge and experience and collaboration between educational researchers, policy makers and practitioners in Europe and in other parts of the world. Attendees at TEPE 2012 conference discussed such themes as:

- The role of intermediaries in strengthening connections between research, practice and policy in teacher education.
- Development of quality culture in teacher education: recommendations for practice.
- Learning by comparing i.e. cross-national comparisons.
- Teacher education and responses to intensification of cross-national testing (e.g. PISA, TIMSS-R).

This book presents some highlights from the deliberations of TEPE 2012 conference in Warsaw. Part 1 presents one of the keynote address of the conference and selected papers related to the sub-theme: teacher education and professional learning and development, while Parts 2 and 3 present selected papers related to each of the two sub-themes: teacher and school development and educational research, policy and practice. This introductory chapter is designed to indicate some relationships among and between the chapters in each part of this monograph, and highlight some themes emerging from TEPE 2012 conference.

Teacher education and professional learning and development: perspectives and challenges

In part 1 of the presented book, authors highlight varied aspects of teacher education, teachers learning and development. The presented chapters help us to understand the complexity of teacher education and contribution that teacher education can make to the quality and effectiveness of the educational experience and wider personal development of students. This part of the monograph explore the relationships between teacher education and the enhancement of teacher professionalism using different perspectives and identifying different challenges. The authors suggests that there is a scope for a much more integrated approach to teacher education across the career course of teachers. This would incorporate more established partnerships between the stakeholders, including schools and universities.

In her chapter “Teachers as learners at the centre of system, culture and practice change”, Kay Livingston draws particularly on the impact of the implementation of a new curriculum in Scottish schools on teachers’ professional development and on examples of new approaches to teacher education in Scotland. In doing so, she emphasises the importance of coherent career-long development of teachers’ learning in a changing context. Teacher education is seen by Kay Livingston as a way to prepare teachers who are continuous learners themselves, able to engage actively with others in thinking about learners and transforming the learning process. She notes that this active engagement in learning requires thinking, questioning and knowledge-creating teachers who recognise the need to work in collaboration with others, valuing diversity of perspectives, sharing learning and teaching problems and seeking solutions through ongoing inquiry.

In “Improvement quality in higher education and development in professional competences of future pre-primary and primary school teachers”, Zlatica Hul’ová draws upon higher education, quality of teacher education and teacher professionalism. She stresses that these topics have been accelerated since the ministerial meetings in Paris (1988), in Bologna (1998) and in Lisbon (2000). Zlatica Hul’ová presents her own study, which shows the need for innovation in educational approach and methods of higher education, changes in acquisition and improvement of didactic competence of teachers in higher education, the need for continuous improvement of equipment of universities by the latest technologies and points to the need in acquisition of foreign language competence. She emphasizes the need for continuous improvement and enhancement of academic educational institutions systems and improvement of the work of teachers in higher education. She calls on quality and consistency in policy decisions, support of the Ministry in the redistribution of financial subsidies and

resolution of complicated problems which are increasingly appearing in higher education are essential.

“Teacher education for teaching students with disabilities in Balkan countries” is the title of Dragana Bjekić’s, Svetlana Obradović’s and Lidija Zlatić’s chapter. They draw on challenges of teachers education in the context of teaching students with disabilities. They stress that at the beginning of the 21st century inclusive education has expanded. Current trends emphasise the importance of the courses of students with disabilities in the curricula of school teachers’ education and university teachers’ preparation. Dragana Bjekić, Svetlana Obradović and Lidija Zlatić focus on cross-national review of the investigations of teachers’ educational needs in the education of students with disabilities, and cross-national review of the content in university curricula of school teachers’ and university teachers’ education. They show that teachers in Balkan countries recognise their educational needs in education of students with disabilities in the same way. According to scientific research in the field of education of persons with disabilities, there are generally new compulsory courses related to special educational needs at Balkan universities. Some of them are related to educating students with disabilities. The objectives of these courses for school teachers are to enable future teachers to have deeper insight into the broad field of special education and to develop basic skills to work with different types of special educational needs and individuals with disabilities. However, the differences between Balkan universities (especially between EU and non-EU universities) in the number of courses and contents are presented in the chapter. In their opinion, based on benchmarking of practice in Balkan countries, the transfer of good experience from some universities to others should be supported by international projects and networks.

In their chapter “Multicultural education of pre-service teachers: Australian and Ukrainian approaches”, Nataliya Avshenyuk and Larysa Golub draw on present situation of multicultural education of pre-service teachers in comparative perspective – in Ukraine and Australia. The review of Ukrainian and Australian social studies has revealed the low level of intercultural competence of teachers in both studied countries. As authors show, Australia has made considerable progress in the implementation of multicultural education with the determination of the criteria of intercultural competent teacher in the National Professional Standards for Teachers. The Standards provide a framework which makes clear the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required across teacher careers. In Australia the teacher multicultural competence is a measurable category due to the Teachers Professional Standards where the requirements to the cultural competence of a teacher are

determined clearly. The authors stress that the study of progressive Australian experience will be quite valuable for the Ukrainian educational space. In Ukraine, on the contrary, the requirements to the teacher intercultural competence has not yet been identified in any official document. This led to the absence of clear procedures of teacher multicultural competence measure. Although a lot of educators are developing their own multicultural education courses, the majority of which are not a compulsory part of the curricula. That is why in Ukraine there is no an integral system of teacher multicultural education as well as standard requirements to it. Nataliya Avshenyuk and Larysa Golub have found that the multicultural education of pre-service teachers is the national priority in both countries but the approaches to its implementation and standards development are different.

In the final chapter of this set, “Diversity and human right aspect in teacher education – chosen elements of Polish and Irish approach to the problem”, Marzanna Pogorzelska draws on the presence of issues related to diversity and human rights in different elements contributing to teacher education. She exams Polish research and policy in this area, concentrating on formal teacher training in the context of diversity-oriented and human rights education, pointing out its imperfections, like treating diversity in a very narrow way and focusing on the categories often absent in school reality (i.e. religious, national and ethnic minorities, omitting such groups as LGBT, non-religious people, women, the disabled, old people, or gender issues). She also shows that the gap left by formal system of teacher education is, to a great extent, filled by NGOs or European organizations, which provide teachers with multicultural knowledge and competencies. To compare the situation in Poland with Irish experience, Marzanna Pogorzelska present the attitude of Irish educational authorities towards diversity, including the legal acts, a teacher profile requirements or the institutional approach to the cooperation with NGOs.

Together these five chapters highlight challenges of contemporary teacher education. They focuses on teachers learning, openness to the world complexity and continuous development in order to become competent teacher who is able to tackle with different issues as critical features of creating the real fundamentals for the school quality. This major theme is developed in more detail in Part 2 and 3.

Teacher and school development: towards education quality and partnership

Societal and cultural changes, locally, nationally and globally, have impact on many ways upon teacher education and school quality. How do school teachers cope with these changes

in order to promote student learning and motivation? Part 2 highlights varied aspects of teacher and school development.

In the chapter “Who becomes a teacher – and why? Teacher recruitment in Denmark in a Nordic comparative perspective”, Hans Dorf, David Reimer and Jens Rasmussen, present results from two comparative studies of teacher education in the Nordic countries based on a combination of methodological strategies. The aim of the studies is to provide a descriptive overview of the structure and organization of Nordic teacher education programs, the social contexts and recruitment conditions of teacher education and the teaching profession, and the backgrounds, competences, aspirations and motives of potential and actual teacher students as well as their images of teacher education and the teaching profession. The authors mainly focus on characteristics and motivations of actual and potential teacher education students but with the aim of assessing how these agree with the realities and perceived qualities of teacher education in order to assess the potential for strengthening the recruitment of students for teacher education.

The chapter of Stefan T. Kwiatkowski, “Choosing the teaching profession – research results”, deals with the issue of determinants of choosing the teaching profession. The author presents his study on subjective and objective determinants of choosing the teaching profession. The first group (subjective determinants) includes: occupational personality, personality (the Big Five), hope for success, interests, passion and mission. The second group (objective determinants) consists of family background, school and outside school environment, pedagogical study conditions, conditions of work in the teaching profession, educational achievements and place of residence (place of origin). The study was conducted in 2011 and 2012 among the first-year licentiate students (first cycle) and second-year master’s students (second cycle). The results indicate the importance of personality traits (in terms of the Big Five) in the process of choosing the teaching profession. They also show that the intensity of three of these characteristics (extroversion, openness to experience and agreeableness) may change significantly, more or less, during the studies. There are also some interesting results concerning the objective determinants, such as the role of family tradition. The study provide data enabling the modification of career counseling, especially in the last classes of secondary schools ending with leaving examinations. The results can also be useful in enriching the content of teacher training in teacher training colleges.

The chapter of Snežana Marinković, Dragana Bjekić and Lidija Zlatić is called “Teacher's competencies as education quality indicator and condition”. In their work, the quality of education in Serbia is observed through two different approaches to education

quality evaluation: the economic approach and the humanistic-progressive approach. For both approaches, teachers' competences represent the key factor. The authors stress that comparison between the researches of the European documents and standards of teachers' professional activities in different countries confirms the scientific research community's awareness of the significance of studying and improvement of teacher's competence, as well as the growing belief among education policy creators that without reform of teachers' education no efficient reform of education is possible.

The chapter of Tina Vrsnik Perse, "Comparative Analysis of School Evaluation and Teacher Appraisal and Feedback and its Influence Based on TALIS Data" presents secondary analyses based on the data obtained in the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2008). Tina Vrsnik Perse focuses on the analyses of different aspects of school evaluation and teacher appraisal or feedback, she explores if and how evaluation and feedback influence further development of quality in education. The author draws on those results of data analyses that indicate new guidelines for the use of data obtained during evaluation, appraisal and feedback, with a view to faster development of more effective teaching and more efficient schools. Ultimately, the chapter provides stakeholders with further information on efficient tools for evaluating schools' and teachers' work and with the upgrading of effective evaluation methods.

The chapter of Monika Chmielecka, "Teachers evaluations and their professional development" also deals with the issue of teacher evaluation in the perspective of the school's principal pedagogical supervision. The background for the presented analysis is taken both from the current situation in Polish schools and the causes and results of the change that has occurred in this area 2,5 years ago. In the first part of the chapter the attention is paid on the internal teacher evaluation process with the particular emphasis on the principals' role and influences in the process, which is currently faced in Polish schools. In the second part of the chapter, research on the appraisal review process as a part of internal evaluation is presented. The author argues that the evaluation process is not necessarily only the assessment opportunity but it should also have an impact on creating the areas of changes in teachers' practice.

In her chapter "The Development of Social Competence in Primary School: In search of the Ingredients of a Powerful Learning Environment", Joanna Papiéska offers an important perspective on creating powerful learning environment in schools in the context of a growing interest in supporting social and emotional development at school. The chapter clarifies the concepts of social and emotional competence. It presents a holistic definition of social

competence rooted in the Experiential Education theory. Moreover, it strives to provide an answer to the question what role is played by teacher education in preparing teachers to support development of social competence in children. The chapter presents a socially competent teacher profile and suggests how to develop teachers' social competence during teacher education.

In the chapter "Teachers as proponents and opponents of education reforms – the case of Serbia", Jelena Radišić, Jelena Raković, Nataša Pantić, Jasminka Marković, Aleksandara Maksimović and Mirjana Marković draw on education reforms and teachers' approaches to them, on the example of the situation in Serbia. The authors analyse teachers' perceptions of the implications of reforms for their roles and competences, and related teacher development. The data has been collected in 20 focus groups with teachers and other school staff in different municipalities in Serbia within the project administered by the Centre for Education Policy from Belgrade, with teachers as the main designers and implementers of the study in collaboration with the researchers. The findings include teachers' perceptions of their changing roles and development needs in relation to the standards-based education, school autonomy, understanding of the system of education and contribution to its development. Implications for teacher education and development are discussed in the chapter.

In the chapter 'Collaborative Models of Partnership for Teaching Practice in Irish Primary Schools' Michael Ievers, Ken Wylie, Colette Gray, Bernadette Ní Áingléis and Brian Cummins offer an important perspective on role of the university tutor in the supervision of student teachers during school-based work. This chapter focuses upon the Irish context, where there has been little research. It involves a comparative study of the views and attitudes of university staff, student teachers and class teachers from the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland. Data collection methods comprised questionnaires to university tutors, class teachers and students ($n = 150$), focus groups and one-to-one interviews. This project reveals a reservoir of goodwill between tutors, teachers and students, along with a willingness to engage in dialogue and collaboration. Importantly, this study concludes that it is the university tutor who should have the lead role in collaborative models of school-based work partnership, with significant consultation and input from the class teacher, and consultation with the student in the evaluation process.

The chapters presented in this section of the book show us that in the life-long learning perspective the quality of teacher education and the quality of schools depends upon many factors such as: understanding of professionalism in teaching, recognition of teacher role dimensions and teacher competences, implementation of relevant knowledge on approaches to learning and teaching at different stages of teacher career development. Teaching is a complex and demanding work, which cannot be accomplished without an adequate preparation. Research shows that teacher education not only ensures that teachers are competent, but it also allows assuring that they stay motivated through time. The collected chapter show that the most effective way to raise educational quality is to modify teacher education and to develop the means to train teachers already in-service.

Educational research, policy and practice: towards collaboration

School and universities, teachers and teacher educators are facing various challenges in a rapidly changing world, which can be described by its complexity and multi-dimensions. In such circumstances, discussing and sharing concerns of mutual interest regarding policy, practice and research is crucial to creating more sophisticated understandings of these challenges as a first step in the improvement of education at different levels and in different areas. This section contains studies into the relationship between educational research, policy and practice. It is a complex relationship, unfolded in this section from different perspectives.

The chapter written by Vlatka Domović and Vlasta Vizek Vidović is called “Turning educational research into teacher education policy and practice: mission possible or impossible?” In this chapter Vlatka Domović and Vlasta Vizek Vidović explore the role of educational researchers, who can appear as key intermediaries between various stakeholders in teacher education – policy makers, teacher education institutions, state agencies, teacher unions, civil society organisations – in achieving common understanding and consensus upon definition of main goals, learning tasks and outcomes of teacher education. The authors stress that educational researches should have an important role in informing policy makers as well as providers in teacher education on concepts and models of teacher identity and teacher professionalism based on recent theoretical insights and empirical research results. The expertise of educational researchers might be also used as a resource for adjusting teaching approaches and strategies to the learning needs and capacities of learners at different levels of teacher education. Furthermore, educational researchers can contribute to the teacher's professional development by inviting teacher practitioners to participate in educational

research and empower them to use the research results in order to improve and innovate their own practice.

Pekka Räihä, Tiina Nikkola and Matti Rautiainen in the chapter called: "CITE (Critical Integrative Teacher Education). Breaking loose from empty theory and blinkered practice" examines the enquiry learning method implemented in CITE and some results on how CITE graduates experience the theory-practice relationship in their work. The authors show that in Finland qualification as a class teacher requires a Master's degree. As outcomes of this academic training programme, class teachers should have the ability to base practical teaching work on theory and approach its development from the perspective of a dialogue between theory and practice. Teachers themselves see only slight use for their scientific (i.e., research) studies when seeking employment and in teaching. In the CITE programme, theory and its significance in a teacher's professional development is seen in a way that differs from many training programmes. Theory – as the authors stress – is not something to be taught separately but it is constantly present in what happens. Instead of predetermined contents, the learning base is shaped by participants' personal experiences. The role of theory is to promote understanding of practice, i.e., initially of one's own experiences. The relationship to theory deriving from practice can thus be described as open. According to the study conducted by the authors, students graduating from CITE and working as class teachers share a common attitude to the problems encountered at work: enquiry. The reflective and critical attitude helps to unify theory and practice as well as improve job meaningfulness especially in the induction phase.

Joel Mittleman's chapter, "Enacting Teacher Policy: Using TALIS Data to Explore the Changing Experience of Teacher Education", addresses data from the OECD's first ever Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) to better understand the changing experience of teacher learning. Released in 2009, TALIS provides detailed responses from over 70,000 teachers and 4,000 principals in nationally representative samples of 24 different countries. Their responses cover the full range of experiences and beliefs. Despite the unprecedented richness of its data, as Joel Mittleman argues, TALIS has been surprisingly underutilised by researchers. This chapter builds upon existing reports by developing a series of original multivariate regression models. These models explore the teacher, principal and policy-level correlates of four different professional development outcomes. Key results highlight the central role of teacher evaluation policies and teacher attitudes. The models also suggest that principals impact teacher outcomes only indirectly and that direct support for

professional development has unclear effects. The chapter concludes suggesting future areas for research.

The chapter by Jon Berry, “Teachers’ professional autonomy in England – are neo-liberal approaches incontestable?” is informed by a longitudinal research project undertaken with 22 teachers, four head teachers and two other related education professionals in England between May, 2010 and April, 2011. Drawing on 50 semi-structured interviews and some related email correspondence, the project investigates this cohort’s view of teachers’ professional autonomy. It takes as its starting point the hegemony of neo-liberal policy and the adoption and reinforcement of this by UK political parties of all persuasions. The outcomes of the project demonstrate that notwithstanding the thrust of such policy – manifested most obviously by the current conversion of increasing numbers of schools to semi-privatised academy status – teachers acknowledge, explicitly or otherwise, the prevalence of performativity and survivalism yet often retain loyalty to the concept of education as a liberal humanist project as opposed to that of a provider of human capital. Jon Berry stresses that English teachers manage to cling to a notion of teaching that transcends the demands of the pursuit of measurable standards. They recognise the central paradox of the current policy ensemble embodied in the inconsistency of rhetoric from government about professional autonomy alongside strong central control and scrutiny. Jon Berry asks whether, given the expressed antipathy on the part of this government and its predecessors towards research informed policy in general, and to qualitative research in particular, it is possible that such voices will be heeded by power.

Maria Helena Pratas’s chapter “Promoting knowledge sharing across Europe and Beyond: Is there anything to learn from international educational organizations?” presents a study on the different programmes of international organisations on Teacher Education: for example, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UNESCO research and policies, the World Bank studies in developing countries across the globe on teacher policy issues, the IEA – International Association for the Evaluation on Education Achievement, the OECD projects and surveys, such as TALIS Survey on Teachers, Teaching and Learning and Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers. Maria Helena Pratas argues that narrowing the gap between research, policy and practice demands that we rethink our research priorities and practices, as well as the ways in which we develop and implement policy. She pointed out that it is true that there is a pressing need to develop a pragmatic approach to dissemination based on what we know about how teachers actually do learn and improve their practice but there is also a pressing need to know and implement policies.

In his chapter “Policy and practice for ensuring educational quality and equity through the integration of ICT in teacher education in Latin America”, Mario Brun reports on his research on the @LIS2 program implemented by the United Nations (through its Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC) and funded by the European Union, with the purpose of stimulate and support research on this field and cooperation between Latin America and Europe. The integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education in Latin America and the Caribbean, as the authors shows, is taking place in the context of the international trends in this field, but also due to the high expectations put on their potential for improving quality, efficiency and equity of education. The regional efforts made in terms of infrastructure and in-service teacher training (among other factors) have been mainly focused on primary and secondary education; however, ICT are been incorporated in Higher Education from a more autonomous rationale, with lower levels of coordination regarding the Ministries of Education. Mario Brun argues that in this context, Initial Teacher Education systems are expected to be the ‘incubators’ of those teachers who will teach to the next generations. The governments’ attention on this level (generally overlooked in the educational reforms implemented in Latin America during the last two decades) has been growing recently, shifting the focus of the regional political agenda. The presented in the chapter study aims to provide a starting point for reviewing the processes of design and implementation of public policies oriented to ensure quality in this education level, based on the integration of ICT. Its results might also contribute to formulate recommendations focused on supporting the improvement of learning outcomes based on digital technology integration in teacher education, as well as to diminish the regional educational gaps in terms of quality, efficiency and equity.

Together these chapters provide a view of supporting the culture for quality improvements in teacher education and professional development through a research interactive partnerships between universities, schools, organizations and policy makers. On the basis of these chapters one can raise the following questions: what are the implications of these for policy, practice and research? What are the challenges that teacher education and teacher education policy face in the contemporary societies? What is the role of universities, schools, teachers, teacher educators and other stakeholders in improving education for all in contexts of increasing diversity?

Conclusion

The chapters in this book provide an array of approaches to understanding the changes in educational policy, educational research and practice in teacher education worldwide. They also provide an important international perspective on the complex issues revolving around the relationships between these three areas: research, policy and practice. Relationships between educational research, educational policy and educational practice have implications for teacher education, including initial teachers preparation and their continuing professional development understood as a lifelong continuum.

Basically, the presented chapters show that networks and partnerships have been increasing in number and variety as a means of meeting new and emerging challenges not only to education professionals. In addressing these trends in contemporary societies, a sense of community and democracy emerges as possible responses to working in unknown terrain, and as a means of building capacity and creating some situated certainty. The book contributors try to find the answer for the questions: What are the challenges for schools, teachers' work and teachers' development? What is the potential of learning in initial teacher education and ongoing professional learning across the lifespan? What are the significant policies and trends in Higher Education nationally and internationally? What has been the impact of academic staff and students international mobility on educational practice and research? What is the role of teacher education in the new scenario? What kind of partnerships in education may be built amongst universities, schools and professional organizations? What kinds of relations may be developed amongst teachers, policy makers, researchers and other educational professionals? In what ways may these relations be created and nurtured?

We hope that the selection of the papers gives readers a helpful distillation of the insights made available by the research of active TEPE 2012 conference participants, presented and discussed at this conference in May 2012 in Warsaw.