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EUROPEAN DOCTORATE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Researching Policy and Practice

EDITED BY:

Michael Schratz

Hana Červinková

Gábor Halász

Milan Pol

Luís Tinoca



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European Doctorate in Teacher Education – Researching Policy and Practice

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INTRODUCTION: EUROPEAN DOCTORATE IN TEACHER EDUCATION – SETTING THE SCENE

**Michael Schratz, Hana Červinková,
Gábor Halász, Milan Pol, Luís Tinoca**

European Doctorate in Teacher Education (EDiTE) is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Network supported by the European Union's flagship initiative Horizon 2020. Based on the transnational collaboration of five partner universities, namely Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) Budapest, University of Lower Silesia (ULS), University of Lisbon (ULisboa), University of Innsbruck (UIBK) and Masaryk University (MU), EDiTE formed an innovative network for the academic professional development of emerging researchers through the exchange of knowledge across conventional boundaries. In response to the current challenges of the complex transformation processes in societies, the programme provided training opportunities related to the development of transferable skills and competences, and tried to forge a closer link among the research area, teacher education and teaching and learning in the field of tensions between policy and practice. The third-cycle research collaboration of the five academic institutions offered a unique possibility to bring together emerging researchers for working cross-culturally under an overarching European research perspective at the nexus of theory and practice. At the heart of the joint research activities lay the improvement of knowledge transfer and exchange between universities and schools or other non-academic institutions in the field of teacher education, with intensive transnational research opportunities that facilitated the development of professional knowledge and scholarly thinking.

In their collaborative work, the consortium of the five universities decided to focus on the theme of “Transformative Teacher Learning for Better Student Learning in an Emerging European Context,” in the belief that

- the transformation of teacher learning has the strongest impact on
- student learning, which needs improvement in many directions, particularly in view of
- the relationship among policy, research and practice, affecting the changing European area

Under this thematic umbrella, fifteen Early Stage Researchers (ESRs) from eleven countries (Bhutan, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Nepal, Poland, Serbia, Syria and the US) undertook intensive educational research work under the guidance and supervision of senior researchers from the five partner universities.

Accordingly, one of the main focus areas of EDiTE was embedded in the attempt to explore and shed light on the interconnectedness of educational research and practice and the implications thereof, through gathering diverse evidence on teacher transformative learning, as well as on its relation to student learning and to the

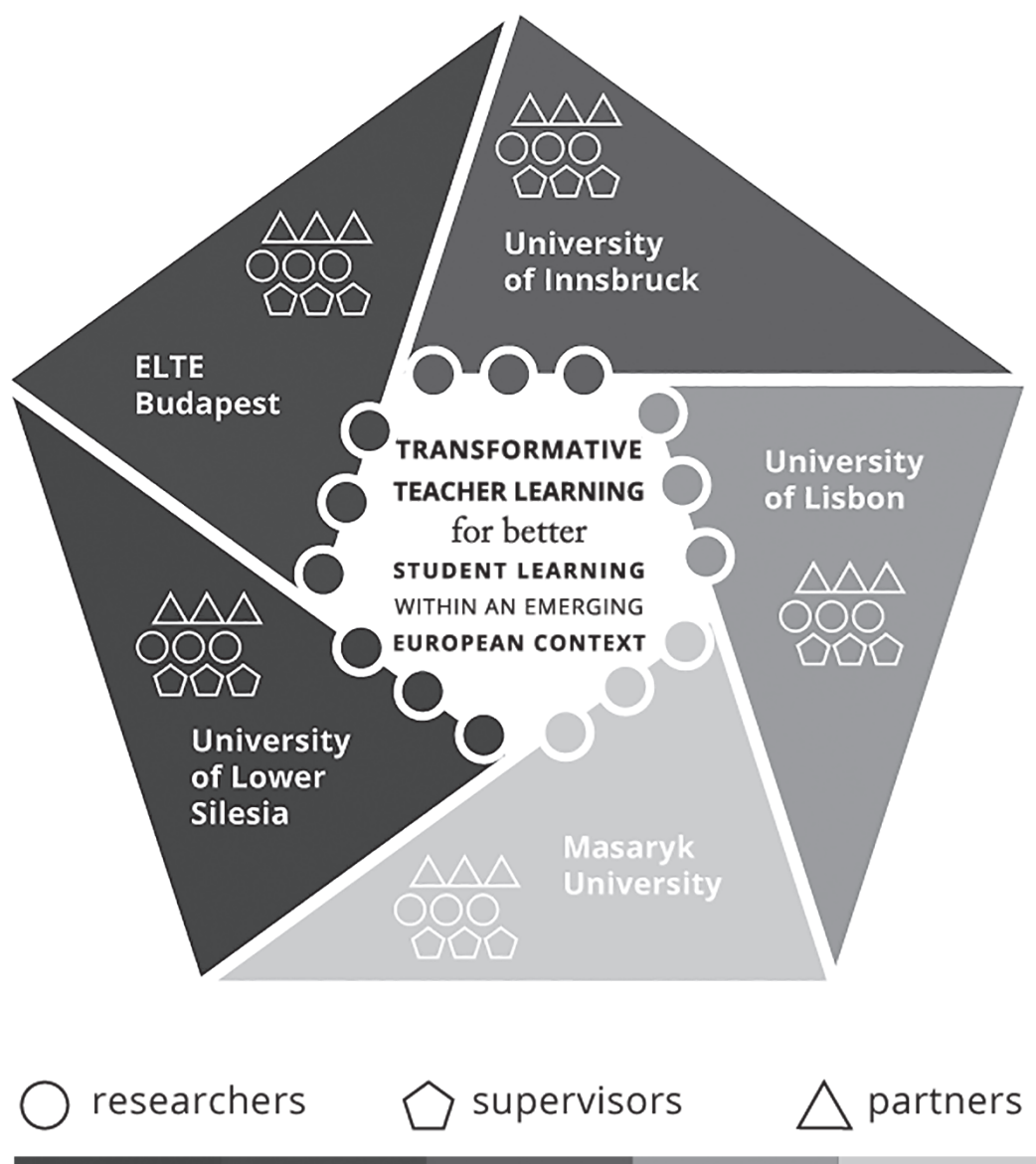
ever-changing European context (Rasinski, Tóth, & Wagner, 2017). This opportunity encouraged authors to submit parts of their research, vividly illustrating how their findings impact the future of educational practice. These practical implications may be oriented to an array of notions, ranging from how research is correlated with to the future of policy-making, to what kind of value research can produce for school organisation and functioning, to what data analyses mean for specific classroom practices, groups of teachers and educational issues.

EDiTE was designed to offer a transnational space for communication, exchanges and joint academic training to researchers and practitioners with an active role in building the future for the next generation of European and global citizens. As activists from various socio-cultural backgrounds with their heterogeneous capital, they collaborated in the field transformative teacher learning for better student learning in Europe. The common framework of EDiTE research activities fostered the development of professional knowledge and scholarly thinking of researchers and contributed to transnational knowledge acquisition, which can be used for the benefit of the education sector in particular and society in general

The EDiTE research community was formed by fifteen ESRs with their supervisors and other academic staff at the five partner universities (MU, ELTE, UIBK, ULisboa, ULS). As part of one of the research strands at their respective home universities (Figure 1), their research contributed to the overall theme of “Transformative Teacher Learning for Better Student Learning in an Emerging European Context.” They were expected to apply a comparative perspective in order to explore research questions on teachers’ and students’ learning within an emerging European context. To facilitate this comparative experience, they were supposed to do research at one of the partner universities for at least six months and take part in summer and winter schools. Regular communication about progress among peers at their home university and the other researchers of the community formed the basis for robust research results, which they regularly presented at national and international conferences and jointly published in peer-reviewed journals.

Figure 1 shows that each ESR was part of multi-level communities: as one of the three ESRs at each partner university, as a contributor to a particular strand within the overall project, as a member of the community of researchers at the home university with the supervisors/staff, and as one of the 15 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Early Stage Researchers forming the core researchers of EDiTE. Within each of these communities, the ESRs played a particular role which was determined by the research structure of each partner university.

Figure 1. The set-up of the EDiTE early stage researcher community



EDiTE Partner Universities

Partner organisations (e.g. schools, educational agencies, non-governmental organisations, etc.) that were chosen as innovation hubs in each country of the five universities offered ample stimulation for professional growth, the generation of knowledge about educational change and research work. In the following, the individual universities' work in and contributions to EDiTE are presented by each partner.

ELTE, Hungary

Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) joined the EDiTE network with a plan and in an attempt to internationalise its Doctoral School of Education. Through this process of internationalisation, ELTE was also determined to strengthen the work of the existing research groups by including enhanced research perspectives and analyses of young top-class foreign researchers. With this purpose in mind, ELTE devised a research programme that spanned across three research groups, namely

- the Centre for Organisation, Teacher and Teacher Education Research (COTTER),
- the Centre for Higher Education and Innovation Research (CHEIR),
- the Institute for Research on Adult Education (CALE).

The research programme united three individual research projects and invited the selected early stage researchers to address overall research objectives of three parallel and interlinked research frameworks, starting from the EDiTE umbrella theme of “Transformative Teacher Learning for Better Student Learning within an Emerging European Context,” contributing to the ELTE joint research framework called “The Learning Teacher” and also supporting the research structures of their respective research groups. In this way, the ELTE framework of “The Learning Teacher” intended not only to build a bridge connecting the three individual doctoral research projects, but also to establish a link between the EDiTE overall thematic scope and the work of the three ELTE research groups.

The three individual research themes were devised as following:

- The evaluation of teacher education programmes in different countries with a special focus on the role of practicum in developing teacher competences in teacher education programmes;
- Teacher learning in schools as innovative learning environments, in the context of curriculum reforms and educational development interventions;
- Educating the reflective professional in teacher education – professional learning in teaching and in other professions.

Given the institutional determination to address the research needs and aims, the early stage researchers were selected based on the relevance and quality of their academic and professional backgrounds. Planning doctoral research in such a structured way substantially supported the implementation of an intensive doctoral programme at ELTE. As many higher education institutions in Europe and worldwide, ELTE has a tradition of doctoral programmes which take longer than three years to complete, and the process of developing a research proposal and applying for approval was rather lengthy under the previous doctoral procedure at ELTE. Therefore, having a research framework ready for researchers, made it possible to avoid several administrative steps

at the institutional level, and it also provided a much clearer idea of the research position and responsibilities of the young researchers. For the researchers, it outlined a rather explicit direction to follow and the foundation to build upon; and for ELTE as an institution, it provided an idea of what kind of young professionals the individual research groups sought as their team members.

Given these factors, the three selected early-stage researchers were Csilla Pesti, Helena Kovacs and Deisi Yunga.

Csilla Pesti was appointed to join the COTTER team and investigate the evaluation of teacher education programmes in different countries with a special focus on the role of practicum in developing teacher competences in teacher education programmes. She held an MA in teaching, specialising in Teacher Engineering, and in her MA programme she had focused on the study of secondary school students' logical thinking with the use of Raven's Standard and Progressive Matrices. She did her doctoral research in collaboration with the University of Innsbruck, Austria.

Helena Kovacs was appointed to do her research on teacher learning in innovative learning environments, in the context of curriculum reforms and educational development intervention. She did her work with CHEIR and in collaboration with the University of Lisbon. Prior to joining ELTE, Helena had been a consultant at the Technopolis group in Brighton (UK), and a trainee at the Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture. Helena had years of experience in facilitating non-formal training in the field of youth education across the Balkans. Helena obtained her Master's degree within the Erasmus Mundus Master's Programme in Lifelong Learning: Policy and Management at Aarhus University (Denmark) and at Deusto University (Spain). She was also awarded a full scholarship for her Bachelor in Community Youth Work at Jönköping University in Sweden.

Deisi Yunga was awarded a full scholarship by the Erasmus Mundus Master's Programme Mundusfor and held an MEd degree in Teacher Education, specialising in vocational education and training, from the University of Granada (Spain) and the Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (Norway). Deisi had worked as an international project director in Ecuador and Peru, served as a junior lecturer at the Faculty of Law of the Technical University of Loja (Ecuador) and then worked as a research assistant in a project dedicated to improving the higher education system in Ecuador. She was appointed to do her research on "Educating the reflective professional in teacher education: Professional learning in teaching and in other professions" with ELTE's CALE research group, and in close collaboration with Masaryk University in the Czech Republic.

University of Lisbon, Portugal

The EDiTE project was seen at the University of Lisbon's Institute of Education as a critical opportunity to review our existing Doctoral Programme in Teacher Education by sharing experiences with our project partners, while at the same time expanding its scope through the development of an English language programme (the first at this level at our institution), enhancing international cooperation and furthering exchange in doctoral education. This opportunity was seen as particularly relevant, given the prospects it opened for bringing in three highly qualified international researchers who could significantly contribute to our research programme, while at the same time propelling our institution to move forward and answer the challenge of fostering an international degree with international students. This experience was initially prompted by our need to design and implement an international programme in English with our three ESRs and also with three other, self-funded researchers who joined them in 2016. A further thrust came during the highly rich exchange periods, when we had a chance to host five other ESRs during their mobility periods in Lisbon.

Our EDiTE research community was closely supported by a group of specialists in teacher education who served as supervisors (Luís Tinoca, Maria João Mogarro, Ana Sofia Pinho, Ana Paula Caetano and Maria Leonor Santos) and by our local technical secretariat (Inês Alves, Catarina Sobral and Maria Alexandra Ramos). During our doctoral seminars, valuable contributions were made to the programme by a host of other research professors, including João Pedro da Ponte, Cecília Galvão, João Filipe Matos, Isabel Freire, Pedro Reis, Jorge Ramos do Ó, Mónica Baptista, Ana Paz and Cláudia Faria.

Also, an important part of our EDiTE community was composed of our local partners: the National Education Council, the Alvalade School Cluster and the Azeitão School Cluster. Furthermore, many other schools which were not formalised as official partners but which our researchers had an opportunity to visit and explore during their fieldwork should also be recognised as crucial contributors to the success of this programme.

The main actors involved in this experience at the IE-ULisboa were our three ESRs: Nikolett Szelei, Wiktor Bernad and András Fehérvári; and three self-funded researchers who joined them from the beginning of the project: Sofia Sá, Wanderson Oliveira and Ezra Howard (who would later be hired as an ESR by Masaryk University).

Nikolett Szelei was an Early Stage Researcher from Hungary who had trained as a primary school teacher and completed her MA studies in Finland, where she had also worked as a preschool teacher. Her research interests included multicultural/intercultural education, preschool and primary school education, communities of practice,

professional learning communities, mentoring, comparative education, leadership, internationalisation and music education. Within the EDiTE programme, she developed an article based her dissertation entitled *Unpacking Cultural Diversity through a Critical Perspective Lens: Conceptualisations, Practices and Professional Development*. Her dissertation, was supervised by Luís Tinoca (main supervisor), Christian Kraler (co-supervisor) and Ana Sofia Pinho (co-supervisor), and was completed in a co-tutelle arrangement between the IE-ULisboa and the University of Innsbruck (Austria).

Wiktor Bernad was an Early Stage Researcher from Poland who held an MA in the Pedagogy of Care from the University of Wroclaw. His main focus during his PhD studies was pedagogical supervision and supervision-based school projects in Portugal and Poland. Previously, he had worked for an NGO in Poland as a youth worker, a project coordinator, a volunteer trainer, a summer and winter camp coordinator, an instructor and a sailing coach. He had also spent seven months in Brazil working with kids in an orphanage and teaching basic English in primary schools and computer science to the local community. Before moving to Portugal, he had worked in a primary school as a teacher in the afterschool club. Privately, he is an avid photographer, a bike rider and a guitar player. Within the EDiTE programme, he developed a dissertation entitled *Pedagogical Supervision in Poland and Portugal: A Qualitative Study of Discourses and Practices in Teacher Development*. His dissertation was supervised by Maria João Mogarro (main supervisor) and Hana Červinková (co-supervisor), and was completed in a co-tutelle arrangement between the IE-ULisboa and the University of Lower Silesia (Poland).

András Fehérvári was an Early Stage Researcher from Hungary. He held an MA in Educational Science, majoring in higher education, and a Philologist in Pedagogy degree, both from ELTE PPK. He taught IT in Eötvös József Elementary School, English to prison inmates and Jewish studies in Budapest's Lauder Yavne Jewish Community School. He volunteered for numerous Jewish education initiatives, including youth clubs, social foundations and the JDC-Lauder International Jewish summer camp in Szarvas, Hungary, where he was a senior staff member responsible for pedagogic programming and youth leader training. He is interested in all education-related matters, and primarily in higher education, social justice and equality in education, minorities, the underprivileged and Roma in education, and the potential benefits of positive psychology in education. Within the EDiTE programme, he developed a dissertation entitled *Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of Their Initial Teacher Education*. His dissertation was supervised by Luís Tinoca (main supervisor) and Judit Szivak (co-supervisor), and was completed in a co-tutelle arrangement between the IE-ULisboa and ELTE (Hungary).

Sofia Sá is a Portuguese educational psychologist, passionate about training. She holds an MsC in Educational Psychology (ISPA) and is a certified trainer (Portuguese Certificate of Pedagogical Competence) with qualifications from the Scientific and Pedagogic Portuguese Council for Continuous Training. Since 2003, she has been engaged in multiple training programmes, especially in the area of communication and advanced Microsoft Office Excel skills. She also served as an external consultant for the private sector and in state institutions. When her son Gabriel was born in 2010, she decided to pursue her dream of working in the area of education. Currently, she is collaborating with the Instituto Superior Técnico (Engineering Faculty) at the University of Lisbon, where she is a guest lecturer. Within the EDiTE programme, she developed a dissertation entitled *Activating Lecturers: A Coaching Case Study*. Her dissertation was supervised by Luís Tinoca (main supervisor) and Maria João Mogarro (co-supervisor).

Wanderson Aleksander Oliveira is a mathematics instructor at a public university in Brazil and is currently working on his PhD project focused on the relations between mathematics and didactics in teacher training courses. He is also interested in curriculum development and professional identity within mathematics teacher training courses. Wanderson did research into connections between mathematics and games and worked as a special teacher with high-achieving middle and high school students. Within the EDiTE programme, he developed a dissertation entitled *Initial Teacher Education of Mathematics Teachers: A Case Study of a Public University in Brazil*. His dissertation was supervised by Maria Leonor Santos.

Masaryk University, Czech Republic

The EDiTE project was perceived at Masaryk University's Faculty of Arts as a significant part of the portfolio of internationally-anchored research activities. The project was supported by the Faculty, and its actors were located at the Department of Educational Sciences.

The team consisted of three parts. A group of experts served as supervisors (Klára Šedová, Roman Švaříček and Jiří Zounek) or co-supervisor (Petr Novotný), and they also participated in doctoral seminars and other relevant activities throughout the project. The technical secretariat was represented by Ondřej Bárta and Zuzana Baričová Šmideková. The main external partners were schools, the Czech School Inspectorate and the National Institute for Further Education. The trio of ESRs was composed of Dev Raj Paneru, Kinley Seden and Ezra Howard. Also, Deisi Yunga (an ESR mainly involved with ELTE) did some of her research at Masaryk University during her secondment, and Beata Zwierzyńska (affiliated with the University of Lower Silesia)

spent some study time with us during the project period, too. The main coordinator of the participation of the Masaryk University team in the EDiTE project was Milan Pol.

No doubt, our three “internal” ESRs were the core of the project.

Dev Raj Paneru entered the project as one of the leaders of the Global College of Management (Kathmandu, Nepal). During his previous studies and in his professional career he had engaged in the use of digital technologies in the teaching of English. Therefore, during his doctoral studies and, in particular, in his doctoral dissertation, he explored the use of information and communication technologies in English classes, focusing on teachers of English in the Czech Republic. Although this is a very up-to-date topic, and it is extensively researched internationally, there has been a dearth of relevant studies in the Czech Republic so far.

Dev was a diligent and hardworking student who presented the results of his research at international conferences and published a number of papers, including a chapter in a specialist volume. He gradually gained an in-depth insight in the field and his work generated a variety of interesting findings and incentives for more research and reflection on the use of ICT in English language teaching. The results of his research thus augmented knowledge about a range of issues involved in teaching English with the use of digital technologies in the Czech Republic as well as the international discourse on the options of and limits to the implementation of digital technologies in education.

Ezra Howard for most of his career worked with language learners, first as an after-school programme coordinator catering for recent immigrants to the USA and then as a teacher of English as a second language with Shelby County Schools. His research focused primarily on the professional development and the development of professional identities of people who come to Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) through alternative routes. His research interests concerned migrant teachers and students, professional career cycles, alternative certification and the self-development of teachers through their profession. Following his research, Ezra was interested in turning knowledge into practice and returning it to school systems, working directly with teachers and students in the role of an instructional coach or in similar supervisory roles.

Kinley Seden joined the EDiTE project after fourteen years of experience at the Samtse College of Education, one of Bhutan’s best teacher education colleges. Therefore, she entered the project with a professional focus, which for her was on feedback, evaluation and the thinking of teachers. After a profound study of the foreign specialist literature, she succeeded in relating these three matters of interest to teaching English as a foreign language, a strong topic on an international scale. Her dissertation project obtained a tangible outline when a research gap was discovered: one topic that had not been thoroughly covered in an empirical manner before was how teachers created

their subjective theories of assessment. Kinley Seden set out to conduct her empirical research with a lot of dedication, which helped her collect abundant data on Czech teachers, their procedures, thinking and acting. Besides the dissertation, which was highly appraised, her results were published in four articles in international journals. Kinley Seden now uses the experience she has gained from the European project on teacher education at the Royal University of Bhutan, employing her valuable knowledge to further the education of prospective teachers.

University of Innsbruck, Austria

The Austrian partner was the University of Innsbruck, where EDiTE was hosted by its School of Education, a young and dynamic faculty committed to the professionalisation of teachers and teacher educators, with a particular interest in linking theory and practice. Its Department of Teacher Education and School Research invited ESRs to become members of its research and teaching community, who are dedicated to improving schooling at different system levels, from policy to practice. The Department is home to two national initiatives (the Leadership Academy and the Centre for Learning Schools) which are engaged in school reform. The ESRs were invited to join a research group working either in the area of teacher education or in the area of school-based research. Learning is considered to be an overarching theme which lies at the heart of educative experiences. Within these areas, the ESRs tried to find a topic of their choice and negotiated it with the supervisors of their respective research groups. They also had an opportunity to cooperate with a number of partner institutions supporting fieldwork (schools, national agencies and initiatives).

The core research topics at the Department of Teacher Education and School Research are

- Transformation and change through collaborative classroom research;
- Professional learning in teacher education: An experience-based approach;
- Being mindful of learning: Student engagement as a research focus.

Since German is the main language spoken at most faculties, it was necessary for the ESRs to acquire some competence in the German language in order to become fully integrated. Another challenge was that the German tradition in educational research is influenced by the *Bildungsidee*, which makes it difficult to compare it with the Anglo-American tradition.¹

¹ See D. Shirley, *The new imperatives of educational change: Achievement with integrity* (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 56ff.

On the other hand, the presence of the EDiTE researchers contributed to the internationalisation of the community at the Department, not only for the supervisors in their relation to the other partner universities, but also in the corporate life of the Faculty. For example, the ESRs shared their research with a wider audience at the university or presented jointly with the Department members at conferences abroad. Other opportunities offered themselves when special events were organised for the ESRs, such as an EDiTE hub meeting following the live session of u.lab! by Claus Otto Scharmer, a MIT (US) researcher who works on a theory of change, based on Theory U,² which is used in the Austrian Leadership Academy,³ directed by Professor Michael Schratz on behalf of the Austrian Ministry of Education. The EDiTE community at the UIBK built on Theory U as a framework for developing and raising awareness with regard to social justice, embodiment and change in teacher learning. The UIBK started a lecture series dedicated to EDiTE, called “EdiTE Lectures,” which was not restricted to the members of EDiTE, but was open to all members of the faculty and beyond. Three lectures took place during the project:

- “Migration and multilinguality in Austrian schools: Counteracting stereotypes through statistics” by Prof. Barbara Herzog-Punzenberger (University of Linz, Austria)
- “How to improve teacher education: Experiences from the ‘Qualitätsoffensive Lehrer-Innenbildung’” by Prof. Manfred Prenzel (Technical University of Munich, Germany)
- “Learning from contrasts & contradictions: South African educational challenges within the global context” by Prof. Irma Eloff (University of Pretoria, South Africa)

The following three Marie Skłodowska-Curie Early Stage Researchers were based at the UIBK:

Malte Gregorzewski grew up in Hamburg, Germany, earned his MA in Economics and then worked in a secondary school in Berlin as a Fellow of the inaugural cohort of Teach First Deutschland. Prior to joining the EDiTE programme, he gained further work experience, for example in the Tokyo-based EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Co-operation and as a Program Officer at the Robert Bosch Stiftung in Stuttgart, Germany, where he was responsible for the German School Award. His dissertation, entitled *Leadership for Learning: Personal Mastery and Student-focussed School Leadership across Three European Countries*, was developed under the guidance of Michael Schratz (main supervisor) and Luís Tinoca (co-supervisor) in a co-tutelle arrangement between the University of Innsbruck, Austria, and the University of Lisbon, Portugal.

² C. O. Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the future as it emerges: the social technology of presencing* (Cambridge, MA: Society for Organizational Learning, 2017).

³ www.leadershipacademy.at

Shaima Muhammad was an Early Stage Researcher from Syria. Having completed a BA in English and International Studies in the US, an MA in Applied Linguistics in Australia and an Erasmus Mundus in Lifelong Learning in Europe, as well as having been a teacher in her home country for over five years, she enjoyed many rewarding opportunities to experience and learn from various educational paradigms and approaches. Under the supervision of Michael Schratz (main supervisor) and Ana Paula Caetano (co-supervisor), she has been exploring teachers' understandings of, conceptions of and experiences with education for citizenship in Austria and Portugal. She is currently in her writing stage and expected to submit her dissertation entitled *Teaching the Good Citizen? Teachers' Views and Experiences with Citizenship Education in Austria and Portugal* by the end of September 2019.

Prior to joining the EDiTE programme, Vasileios Symeonidis had obtained an MSc degree in International and Comparative Education from Stockholm University and a degree in Primary School Education from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Following his undergraduate studies, Vasileios worked as a school teacher in international school environments in Greece and Sweden, and as the project coordinator of the Future Schools Project for eduACT, an NGO based in Greece. Vasileios also worked as a research assistant in the Education International's Research Unit, where he was in charge of a global-scale research project on "The status of teachers and the teaching profession: A study of education unions' perspectives." He undertook a traineeship at CEDEFOP, mapping the main developments in apprenticeships in European countries and researching the potential of integrating refugees in the labour market through apprenticeships and work placements. Within the EDiTE project, Vasileios produced a dissertation entitled *Europeanisation in Teacher Education: Comparative Case Studies of Teacher Education Policies and Practices in Austria, Greece and Hungary*. The supervisors of his project were Christian Kraler (University of Innsbruck) and Gábor Halász (ELTE University). On January 2019, Vasileios passed his doctoral exams with honours. After the end of his EDiTE contract, Vasileios successfully applied for a three-year postdoctoral position at the University of Innsbruck. He is currently working on turning his PhD dissertation into a book to be published by Routledge.

University of Lower Silesia, Poland

The Polish partner was the University of Lower Silesia (ULS), a non-public university in Wrocław where EDiTE was located at the International Institute for the Study of Culture and Education (IISCE) at the Faculty of Education and managed by Hana Červinková and Urszula Kłobuszewska. At the content level, the EDiTE project reflected the IISCE's

interdisciplinary character as the researchers' projects were supervised by specialists in teacher education, anthropology, philosophy, sociology, international education and adult education (Hana Červinková, Maria Czerepaniak-Walczak, Lotar Rasiński, Ewa Kurantowicz, Anna Babicka-Wirkus and Juliet Golden). From the beginning, we conceptualised EDiTE as a community endeavour, encouraging researchers to develop their projects in conversation with each other, with their supervisors and also with members of the larger international academic community. For this purpose, we set up a framework of the EDiTE Doctoral Research Seminar, which took place regularly throughout the project and offered a platform for sustained research discussion, exchange and development.

In addition to the immediate circle of supervisors, the seminar hosted the following academics from Europe and the United States, whose perspectives left a permanent imprint on the EDiTE researchers' work: Richard C. Anderson (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Wiesław Antosz (ULS), Orysa Bila (Ukrainian Catholic University), Katarzyna Bogdanowicz (Secondary Comprehensive School of Individual Knowledge Acquisition), Teresa Bruś (University of Wrocław), Amrita Chaturvedi (Saint Louis University), Adam Chmielewski (University of Wrocław), Katarzyna Gawlicz (ULS), Dave Hill (Middlesex University London), Richard Howard (Stony Brook University), Dariusz Jemielniak (Kozminski University), Jonathan Larson (Grinnell College), Magdalena Lejzerowicz (Maria Grzegorzewska University), Rozalia Ligus (University of Wrocław), Jerzy Kochanowicz (ULS), Leszek Koczanowicz (SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities), Agnieszka Kossowska (Opole University of Technology), Robert Kwaśnica (ULS), Timothy Mahoney (Millersville University), Elżbieta Matynia (New School for Social Research), Maria Mendel (University of Gdańsk), Deborah Michaels (Grinnell College), David Ost (Hobart and William Smith Colleges), Diane Painter (Saint Louis University), Leena Robertson (Middlesex University London), Mario Rodriguez Polo (Palacký University Olomouc), Małgorzata Sekułowicz (ULS), Graciela Slesaransky-Poe (Arcadia University), Jaroslav Sotola (Palacký University Olomouc), Marcin Starnawski (ULS), Tomasz Szkudlarek (University of Gdańsk), Agnieszka Szplit (Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce), Bogusław Śliwerski (University of Łódź), Thomas Wallgren (University of Helsinki) and Julia White (Syracuse University). Tamás Tóth, one of the ULS's ESRs, commented on the community-building character of EDiTE at the ULS:

The ULS team tried to put the ethics of inclusion and democracy at the centre of how we understand a community, and most importantly we tried to emphasise as much as we could the aspect of justice and emancipation in the concept of transformation.

[We] tried to build a research/practice community based on strong ethical concerns, directing our activities toward transformation, which was supported and fostered to a large extent by our distinguished professors, a professional management team and the high professional standards that formed the core institutional culture of the International Institute for the Study of Culture and Education. For me EDiTE, was important in becoming a researcher and a part of a transnational community, and also in becoming (transforming into) public: becoming someone, who is ready to commit himself on a long-term basis to a form of solidarity with different social groups, and who is able to pay particular attention to the consequences of his practice, especially because it is concerned with transformative education.

The group of EDiTE researchers at the ULS included eight scholars: three Marie Curie-Skłodowska Early Stage Researchers and six EDiTE Researchers from Poland. The researchers participated in all activities together, including seminars and all joint EDiTE pursuits. While the financial support for the participation of the three MCS ESRs came from the EDiTE project, the Polish researchers used the funding from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

Lucie Bucharová was an Early Stage Researcher from the Czech Republic. Prior to joining EDiTE, she had obtained an MA in Elementary School Education and been a teacher in Czech elementary schools. In her research project, *Grammars of Schooling in the Post-Authoritarian Context. A Comparative Study of Changing Teaching Practices in Elementary Education in Czech, Polish and Portuguese Schools*, she focused on the changing teaching practices in Poland, the Czech Republic and Portugal. Her dissertation, which she successfully submitted in December 2018, was supervised by Maria Czerepaniak-Walczak (main supervisor), Maria João Mogarro (co-supervisor) and Anna Babicka-Wirkus (assistant supervisor) and was completed in a co-tutelle arrangement between the ULS and the University of Lisbon (Portugal).

Tamás Tóth was an Early Stage Researcher from Hungary. Prior to receiving his doctorate, he had earned an MA in Educational Studies and worked as an educator-activist with Roma communities and in social and political movements in Hungary. In his dissertation entitled *Crossing the Threshold in the Margins: From the Critique of Ideology toward Emancipatory Pedagogical Praxis*, he concentrated on the critique of ideology with a particular focus on education in Poland and Hungary, two post-socialist, semi-peripheral countries embedded in the context of neoliberal capitalism. He passed his doctoral exam with honours in March 2019. His dissertation was supervised by Lotar Rasiński (main supervisor) and György Mészáros (co-supervisor), and was completed in a co-tutelle agreement between the ULS and ELTE (Hungary).

Josefine Wagner was an Early Stage Researcher from Germany who held an MA in Educational Studies and had been a secondary school teacher of English, History and Politics in Berlin prior to coming to ULS. Her experiences with inclusive school settings inspired her to start a research project exploring the effects that the implementation of the UN-CRPD had on educational landscapes across Europe. She wrote her dissertation entitled *Struggling for Educational Justice in Disabling Societies: A Multi-sited School-based Ethnography of Inclusive Policies and Practices in Poland, Austria, and Germany* under the guidance of Hana Červinková (main supervisor), Michael Schratz (co-supervisor) and Juliet Golden (assistant supervisor), in a co-tutelle arrangement between the ULS and the University of Innsbruck. She passed her doctoral exam with honours in March 2019.

Agnieszka Licznarska was a Polish EDiTE Researcher who held an MA in English Studies from the University of Wrocław. She had also received training in special education and worked as an English as a Foreign Language academic teacher at the Wrocław University of Science and Technology. In her doctoral research project entitled *Language Games with the Other in an Inclusive Special Classroom*, which was supervised by Lotar Rasinski (main supervisor) and Sébastien Pesce (co-supervisor), she focused on inclusion at the intersection of mainstream education and special education.

Monika Rusnak was a Polish EDiTE Researcher at the ULS who held an MA in English Studies from the University of Wrocław. She had fifteen years of experience as an English teacher in various types of schools, including inclusive educational settings. In March 2019, she submitted her dissertation entitled *Learning to Trust: Teacher Research on Democratic Collaboration between Parents and Teachers*, which was supervised by Hana Červinková (main supervisor), Luís Tinoca (co-supervisor) and Anna Babicka-Wirkus (assistant supervisor).

Ewa Stoecker was a Polish EDiTE Researcher at the ULS. She held an MA in Applied Psychology from the Jagiellonian University in Cracow and was a certified anti-discrimination trainer, an educator and a researcher, mostly working in the non-governmental sector for the last fifteen years. In her PhD project, Ewa focused on anti-discrimination education in teachers' pre-service training.

Beata Telatyńska was a Polish EDiTE Researcher at the ULS who held an MA in Polish Studies from the University of Wrocław and worked as a teacher in a vocational school. Her research project entitled *Negotiating Learning in Places of Intersecting Inequalities: The Youth with Learning Disabilities in Polish Technical High School* is supervised by Maria Czerepaniak Walczak.

Beata Zwierzyńska was a Polish EDiTE Researcher at the ULS. She held an MA in English Linguistics and Literature and had additional training in ICT, EFL and

educational management. Prior to joining the doctoral studies, she had worked as an EFL teacher in Polish public schools and in private language schools. Her dissertation project entitled *Teachers in School Communities: A Case Study of the Polish Round Table Talks*, which was supervised by Ewa Kurantowicz (main supervisor) and Jiri Zounek (co-supervisor), was carried out in a co-tutelle arrangement between the ULS and Masaryk University (Czech Republic).

The Partner Organisation Network

In order to bridge the world of academia and the world of practice, the EJD-EDiTE project builds on and develops institutional links, engaging non-academic partner organisations from the education sector and schools in its research pursuits.

Each consortium partner established a circle of partner organisations (POs) under the Work Package “Building Institutional Links.” The partner organisations included basic and secondary schools, both public and private ones, educational think tanks, national research organisations and NGOs. The selection of partner organisations was based on previous collaborations and on the organisations’ innovativeness and openness to cooperation at the institutional level. Formal written Institutional Agreements were concluded with a circle of partner organisations by each partner university. In total, twenty-five official partner organisations were involved in the project at the consortium level.

As the leader of the Work Package, ELTE developed Guidelines for Building Institutional Links, which were widely discussed among the consortium partners and the partner organisations. Three forms of cooperation were envisaged in the Guidelines, ranging from a simple model, to a more structured model, to an intensive cooperation model. In addition, ELTE developed guidelines in order to structure the cooperation of the academic partners and the partner organisations. For each partner university, three national meetings and one national workshop were planned with the involvement of partner organisations at the national level.

The first meetings with the POs were held at an early stage of the project in order to familiarise them with the project’s aims, the individual research projects of the ESRs and the profiles and activities of all POs. The second round of the national meetings aimed to examine the progress made, to find room for improvement and to set further goals. The third and last round of meetings looked to evaluate the co-operations, to present the outcomes and to discuss sustainability. The national workshops were larger events, open to external stakeholders and focusing on one special topic of interest, such as educational standards, pedagogical supervision or complex instructional methods.

In addition to the national context, during the five-day intensive summer schools, organised annually in rotation by the partner universities, the consortium partners could obtain a deeper insight into the work of one of the local partner organisations.

Seizing the opportunity provided by the mid-term review connected to the 2018 summer school and afforded by the massive presence of the POs, the consortium partners decided to organise a special event for the POs. That laid the ground for gathering and exploring the ideas of the partner organisations on the evolution of school-university partnership collaborations and possible cooperation among them at the transnational level. At the transnational level, a joint research project was implemented with the partner organisations of the IE-ULisboa and the ULS.

Working toward the sustainability of these partnerships, ELTE also launched research devoted to the school-university partnership within the project with a view to identifying bottlenecks, exploring the added values and generating ideas for future stakeholder collaboration. These research pursuits contributed to the outcomes of the EDiTE research programme through employing the resources generated by Work Package 5 (“Building Institutional Links”). The nature of this Work Package made it possible not only to establish institutional frameworks for supporting the implementation of the EDiTE research programme and the utilisation of its outcomes, but also to produce relevant new partnership-related knowledge.

RESEARCHING POLICY AND PRACTICE

Contributions by ESRs

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Pedagogical Supervision in Poland and Portugal: A Qualitative Study of Discourses and Practices in Teacher Development

Abstract

Pedagogical supervision in a school context is not a new phenomenon; however, we are still experiencing a wide range of problems with its implementation. The lack of a common understanding of what pedagogical supervision is and a multiplicity of its definitions, forms, and approaches cause confusion and difficulties, especially in the emerging European context. To address this issue, I conducted research in Polish and Portuguese schools, where I participated in the schools' everyday life, and conducted interviews and observations in the context of pedagogical supervision projects. In the resulting case studies, I present the current state of knowledge about pedagogical supervision, discuss national and European policies, and presents my research outcomes.

Keywords:

pedagogical supervision, teacher development, lifelong learning, educational policies

PEDAGOGICAL SUPERVISION IN POLAND AND PORTUGAL: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF DISCOURSES AND PRACTICES IN TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The rapid transformation of today's world requires new forms of adaptability, including in educational systems and realities (Angheluță, Alpopi, & Antonescu, 2014).¹ Educators must keep up to date with new data from research, but attendance at traditional seminars and workshops is not sufficient to respond to individual teachers' situations or needs (Butcher & McDonald, 2007). In light of these facts, lifelong learning, and sustained self-development seem to be an increasingly urgent need, especially in the emerging European context, in which pedagogical supervision may serve as a useful tool of teacher professional growth (Dudney, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

The research project "Pedagogical supervision in Poland and Portugal: Discourses, projects and teacher development" grew out of my personal need as a teacher to understand pedagogical supervision as a phenomenon in a school context. My goal was to comprehend the school culture, the system of work in general, and the impact that pedagogical supervision could have on individual teachers. In current times, especially in the emerging European context in education, many stakeholders call for the implementation and development of the idea of lifelong learning, self-development, and widely understood collaboration between teachers and other educational partners (Schratz, 2005). Regrettably, even though these goals are recognized as positive, during my research I found that in practice teachers were often not as willing to implement them in their everyday practice as I had expected. In addition, my policy analysis revealed that in Poland not much had been done to incorporate these ideas

¹ This article describes an ongoing investigation conducted as part of the EDiTE project. While some parts of it have already appeared in print (see L. Rasiński, T. Tóth, & J. Wagner [Eds.], *European Perspectives in Transformative Education* [Wrocław Wydawnictwo Naukowe DSW, 2017]), this is paper is a substantial extension and revision of the previous publication.

into the country's legal systems. This is a key problem since educational law has a significant influence on school systems and on the ways in which teachers, principals, and all other stakeholders work, perform, and perceive the school reality (Mogarro, 2001). Documents issued by the European Council, indeed, feature notions such as self-development, lifelong education and professionalism, and set them as desirable standards, but they do not provide any concrete systemic solutions that could ensure the implementation of these standards (European Parliament and the Council, 2001). This reduces their potential impact on national laws and, consequently, on everyday school life in each European country. A similar problem is also visible at the level of national legislation: insufficiently addressed in the law, the implementation of pedagogical supervision is left to individual bottom-up initiatives undertaken by teachers and school heads.

Research Aims

Drawing on the literature review and an analysis of the current state of knowledge, I defined several research goals. Firstly, I aimed to comprehend and describe the ways in which legal recommendations of the European Council become translated into national legal regulations in Portugal and Poland. From the perspective of my research project, it was crucial to understand a possible impact of legal frameworks on ongoing and future Pedagogical Supervision Projects. Secondly, I sought to clarify and systematize the existing notions related to Pedagogical Supervision. Thirdly, I wanted to bring the results of my research to bear on the comprehension of the processes occurring in the schools involved in projects of pedagogical supervision. That required doing research at three levels. The first level concerned fundamental educational policies that played a key role in shaping the way that the schools operated. The second level referred to general school performance, the level of teaching and students' performance. The third level of research encompassed individual changes in teacher professionalism and relations among teachers. All the three levels were studied in the context of concepts such as life-long learning, teachers' professional development, leadership, and professional identity. Based on my research goals, my research questions included:

- How is the practice of pedagogical supervision defined in educational law in Poland, Portugal and the EU policy documents?
- How is pedagogical supervision understood by stakeholders in the European Union?
- How do teachers in primary schools understand the idea of supervision, its variations and its possible implications for their work?

- What are teachers' perspectives on the main causes of and the external and internal factors in the supervision process that contribute to its failure or success?

Research Scope and Results

The Background and Significance of the Study

According to Jeffrey Glanz (1995), the importance of comprehending the history of supervision is often underestimated. He claims that in order to fully understand problems and issues related to supervision, it is not enough to describe the most important changes or moments that shaped supervision in the past and have channeled it into its current form. Instead, he believes that supervision should be described and explored in socio-cultural contexts with deep analyses of other historical factors or events that have shaped educational reality, including economy, politics, and philosophy. This kind of background knowledge is a necessary starting point for further and more complex debate on supervision, its strengths, weaknesses, and potentials. Over time, the general model of supervision has changed from a vertical one, wherein more experienced and usually older teachers mentored and supervised their younger colleagues, into a more horizontal one, wherein the two teacher groups help each other in a collaborative way. The expected outcomes and goals of the supervision process have also changed, and the current notion of pedagogical supervision has emerged (Alarcão & Canha, 2013).

Pedagogical supervision by no means exists as separate phenomenon; it should thus be discussed in a broader context. It is for instance closely connected with continuing teacher development and learning, which are also key issues in contemporary teacher education. The fact that teacher development and learning processes are always submerged in a culture and depend on historical determinants is also crucial and should be taken into account when educational issues are being discussed. One example of such historical determinants is the rule of the communist regime in Poland. From my own experience as a teacher, I know that the atmosphere of mistrust among teachers, caused by uncertainty about their colleagues' loyalty under communism, sometimes lingers on and still influences relationships within the teaching community, with teachers unwilling to share their difficulties with their colleagues or to try and solve them together.

Pedagogical supervision is a relevant element of school culture, which plays a considerable role in the process of stimulating teachers to improve instruction and

the quality of their work (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011). School culture is however a very complex phenomenon and requires substantial efforts to be properly shaped. As Zepeda claims,

Principals will be able to shape the school culture only when they understand the existing culture in their school and community. A healthy culture does not magically occur. Strong cultures emerge, in part, by the efforts of the principal to support and nurture the conditions that teachers need to collaborate. (Zepeda, 2012, p. 8)

Importantly, a specific shift in conceptualizations of teaching has taken place away from content-focused teaching to much more skills-focused teaching, which gives students an opportunity to accomplish their full potential. This changed reality provokes questions, such as: “What kind of intentional learning opportunities help teachers acquire and develop their vision, knowledge, practices, frameworks, and dispositions which they need to promote student learning?” (Cochran-Smith, et al., 2008, p. 697). Marilyn Cochran Smith points to the collective character of teacher learning: “It also includes studies of what teachers learn from the daily experiment of teaching and from informal interactions with colleagues. Ultimately, research on teacher learning must consider how the outcomes of teacher learning contribute to student learning” (Cochran-Smith et al., 2008, p. 697). Given this intrinsic collective character of teacher learning, pedagogical supervision, which is by definition based on one or another form of interaction between or among teaching professionals, is certainly a factor to examine, as well. Finally, it is important to consider and comprehend the political context of modern schools at a macro level (Lima, 2008). In my research, the question of how teachers and principals implement the above-mentioned visions and demands in practice was of particular interest to me.

To sum up, characterized by ongoing changes, which require teachers, principals, and even department chairs to “be instructional leaders, capable of working with teachers in fundamentally different ways” (Zepeda, 2012, p. 4), the current realities compel all stakeholders in the educational field to search for new solutions and tools that could help tackle the emerging challenges. Pedagogical supervision understood as an act of collaboration between teachers who consciously and constantly seek professional development, may be an excellent tool for achieving this goal. Emphatically, due to constant changes and new challenges, pedagogical supervision requires a thorough investigation to adjust it to contemporary circumstances in the field of education.

Key Concepts and Theory

To avoid confusion, it is important to properly define and correctly understand the notion of pedagogical supervision in a broader context. The Cambridge Dictionary Online defines supervision as “the act of watching a person or activity and making certain that everything is done correctly, safely, etc.,” which frames supervision as a process of controlling, overseeing, or guiding someone’s activity. This is the way that supervision was understood in education when the experienced older teachers were to lead their less-experienced colleagues to professionalism. The hierarchical relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee was taken for granted and deemed indispensable (Wilkerson, 2006). However, as Wilkerson points out, with time, a number of new approaches were developed. Since then, the definition of supervision has been more unclear and fluid. This ambiguity and confusion are exacerbated by the fact that supervision is practiced not only in education, but also in an array of other fields, ranging from industry to psychotherapy, and, therefore, must be adjusted to the needs of particular stakeholders, all of whom understand it slightly differently. In the late 1980s, *peer supervision* appeared in some of these fields, e.g., in counselling, and was described (for school counsellors, specifically) as “a process through which counselor trainees (or counselors) use their professional and relationship skills to help each other become more effective and skillful helpers” (Wilkerson, 2006, p. 3). Wilkerson also cites a definition coined in 2001 which says that “peer supervision is a learning method involving pairs or small groups of colleagues supervising each other” (2006, p. 3). Moreover, Wilkerson notices further problems, claiming that other notions – such as *supervisory consultation* or *peer consultation* – were used interchangeably to describe similar processes. He also proposes his own definition:

Peer supervision is a structured, supportive process in which counselor colleagues (or trainees), in pairs or in groups, use their professional knowledge and relationship expertise to monitor practice and effectiveness on a regular basis for the purpose of improving specific counseling, conceptualization, and theoretical skills. (Wilkerson, 2006, p. 4)

The definition shows the evolution of and the direction in which supervision has developed. However, it is still not exactly the way that supervision is understood by experts in the field of education. Over the last decade, supervision has frequently been referred to as a complex phenomenon:

SuperVision, a term that denotes a common vision of what teaching and learning can and should be, developed collaboratively by formally designated

supervisors, teachers, and other members of the school community. The word also implies that these same persons will work together to make their vision a reality – to build a democratic community of learning based on moral principles calling for all students to be educated in a manner enabling them to lead fulfilling lives and be contributing members of a democratic society. (Glickman et al., 2004, p. 8)

This explanation indicates that supervision is no longer seen as a situation in which two people interact to improve the practice of only one of them; rather, it is viewed as a complex, long-term process that involves many people and should directly affect not only teachers, but also students. Here, in fact, supervision consists of various processes that occur in schools. It should be included into the school's day-to-day reality and workflow as an important factor that should help the school achieve its goals. Interestingly, these goals not only concern the students' outcomes and the level of knowledge that they should reach through the educational process, but also comprise far-reaching visions, for example the building of modern, democratic society. Other authors go even further. In *No Caleidoscópio da Supervisão: Imagens da Formação e da Pedagogia*, the authors (Vieira et al., 2010) link pedagogical supervision to such categories as *critical inquiry*, *critical intervention*, *democratization*, *dialogicity*, *participation*, and *emancipation*. Ascribing these categories to pedagogical supervision reflects the high expectations of the authors, who believe that it should pursue the following goals:

- Interaction of personal and public contexts, the sharing of theoretical and practical knowledge;
- The personal and social construction of theoretical and practical knowledge;
- Transformative and emancipatory orientation of school education and pedagogy;
- Values of a democratic society: freedom and social responsibility;
- The student: a critical consumer and a creative producer of knowledge;
- The teacher: a facilitator of the student-knowledge-learning relation;
- Knowledge: a dynamic, transitory and differentiated construction;
- Focus on the learning process: reflection, experimentation, regulation, and negotiation;
- Progressive autonomization of a student/citizen;
- Democratic and informal environment;
- Critical position toward pedagogy, school, and society (Vieira et al., 2010).

The comparison of pedagogical supervision with dictionary definitions which is drawn by Vieira and co-authors reveals significant differences and changes. In brief, pedagogical supervision is now seen as a very complex process, not necessarily connected with typical practices of assessment. Additionally, in recent decades, many authors

have developed their own ways of understanding pedagogical supervision, its forms, approaches, and methods. Various models have been proposed that are based on or include practices of supervision in education, including Shön's model (Shön, 1987), Borton's model (Borton, 1970), Kolb's model (Kolb, 1984), and 360° Supervision (Kalule & Bouchamma, 2014).

The most popular form of pedagogical supervision involves peer observation: "In this approach, observations are always announced. They last for the duration of the teaching hour & constitute one link in a three-part observation cycle, which consists of a pre-observation session with the teacher, an observation, and a post-observation conference" (Dudney, 2002, p. 4). The purpose of the pre-observation meeting is to establish the main focus and the rules of the planned observation. The participants discuss what is important from their perspectives and define the main issues with which the observed teacher struggles. They may be connected with students' behavior, their concentration, the methodology of lessons, the distribution of time, the use of new teaching strategies, active learning, or any other area. The observation process lasts for one lesson, after which the supervisor and the supervisee meet again to share conclusions and build strategies that will help the supervisee improve his/her practice in the future. In the next step, they exchange their roles and repeat the entire process (Alarcão & Canha, 2013). It is important to understand that through pedagogical supervision both teachers learn and gain new experiences. During my empirical research, I even came across a situation in which a teacher observed a lesson given by another teacher to the students for whom he was primarily responsible as their form-teacher. That gave the form-teacher a possibility to watch his own students in a new situation, see how they behaved when taught by someone else, and reflect on his own practices from a different perspective.

Teachers need support in their everyday work, and pedagogical supervision seems to be a good solution. Nevertheless, pedagogical supervision has also its weaknesses, and not all teachers are willing to be supervised or are convinced of the usefulness of the approach. It is mainly caused by their past experiences and/or prejudices. If performed badly, pedagogical supervision may represent a threat to teachers' professional status and even make them lose their self-esteem. Another factor that may add to the negative perception of supervision is the fact that in the past it actually served as an assessment tool used by external officials (Kalule & Bouchamma, 2014). Pedagogical supervision is also fraught with other problems. For instance:

It is virtually impossible to capture the essence of the instruction in an objective manner unless the observer & the teacher share at least part of the instructional

context that determines the teacher's long term objectives & day-to-day teaching decisions. Without that context the observer is limited to the "what" & "how" of the observed lesson but is unable to access the "why" without a high degree of speculation and subjective interpretation. (Dudney, 2002, p. 3)

Despite the aforementioned challenges, pedagogical supervision is predominantly beneficial to those who participate in it: "It communicates the high value of professional development and by focusing on reflection, communication, and professional inquiry, it allows both the teacher and supervisor to become not only better at what they are doing but also to enjoy it more" (Dudney, 2002, p. 7). Moreover, it is also beneficial for the entire school. It is important for the teaching staff, as it delivers a lot of information about students and helps teachers share this information with each other more efficiently than when such information is passed during breaks or official meetings with no time to deliberate on the situation of individual students. Pedagogical supervision also promotes the building of the school community, strengthens the teaching team, fosters open, trust-based communication, and creates a space for collective reflection on difficulties, challenges, and successes (Nowicka & Wzorek, 2016). As research shows, supervision programs are developed in many countries and are usually regarded as beneficial: "Studies conducted in several African countries (Uganda, Ethiopia, Ghana, Tanzania, Guinea and Madagascar) have shown that in-class teacher supervision is an excellent way to improve the quality of both teaching and learning" (Kalule & Bouchamma, 2014). The benefits of supervision for students include: better response to their educational needs in the educational process, improving relationship with the teacher, encouraging positive changes in the lives of students, recognizing their developmental needs, and tailoring teachers' work to the specificity of the class group (Nowicka & Wzorek, 2016).

Research Methods

Formal and informal meetings are very important examples of activities in everyday school life. They can serve as significant sources of both direct and indirect information about teachers, their work, staff members, principals, other stakeholders, and their mutual relationships in their work environment. Therefore, I observed and participated in a number of meetings to gather as much information as possible, taking notes or making recordings when permitted. I observed both general formal meetings of principals with teachers, as well as more intimate ones in the teachers' room during breaks between lessons. The "meetings observation" technique on which I relied also includes

active participation, which is understood as joining the discussions, asking and clarifying points if necessary, and contributing the researcher's own ideas, commitment, or experiences (Amado, 2014, pp. 150–162). This technique helped me objectively evaluate the answers that the teachers gave me during formal interviews. Having my own observations of and conclusions about such issues as relationships among teachers, I could compare them with the teachers' statements in the interviews. In case of any discrepancy, I could look for possible reasons, ask additional questions, or try and revise my own observations.

As my empirical research was conducted in the school context, the class observation technique also appeared to be naturally appropriate and adequate. The main goal to achieve through class observation was to develop a better understanding and acquire a deeper knowledge of the teachers and their natural work environment in particular places. This knowledge, together with the data collected using other techniques, should be broad enough to present a fair portrait of the teacher as a worker, a co-worker, and a person. In my observations and their analysis, I used conceptual categories, such as learning climate, lesson clarity, classroom management, instructional variety, teacher's task orientation or student success, to describe events, processes, and interactions that occurred during the lessons (Borich, 2011, pp. 21–28).

Due to the qualitative nature of my case studies, fieldnotes served as one of the main methods of data collection, as they “help researchers document research activities and position themselves in the field, invariably constructing the research, the researcher and the knowledge produced” (Thompson, 2014, p. 1). For the purposes of this study I used the following categories: description of events, facts, relations with people and objects, accompanying emotions, suggestions, and questions for further investigation. In keeping my fieldnotes, I made sure to proceed so as to understand them even after a long time and also to separate my own emotions and judgements from pure facts (Thompson, 2014). For ethical reasons, field notes should not contain anything that may cause harm to the described participants or reveal confidential information. Therefore, it is recommended to avoid real names of places and participants (AERA Code of Ethics, 2011). In my research, I strictly followed this rule.

The data collected during the interviews with teachers and principals were an important source of information for my analysis. The interviews allowed me not only to gather a specific material, but also to gain broad knowledge about the interviewees, their professional experiences, and their perspectives on pedagogical supervision and related issues. Campbell claims that “[i]n-depth semi-structured interview data constitute the empirical backbone of much qualitative research in the social sciences” (Campbell, 2013, p. 2), and this was how I used the data collected through the interviews

in my study. Using sociocultural skills and knowledge, the researcher should predict whether any question can potentially harm the interviewee, reveal fragile information, or jeopardize the interviewee's emotional well-being. It is also important to consider interview questions in terms of the interviewee's status, race, culture, and gender, and to take these categories into account during data analysis and triangulation (Creswell, 2007). All interviews were conducted one-on-one, not only to achieve the maximum depth, but also to create the atmosphere of trust. I also made sure that the interviews took place in an environment free of distractions, such as interruptions caused by other people, outside noise, or unpleasant temperature. The time assigned was long enough to avoid rushing through the interview. In conformity to ethical standards, all participants were informed that the interviews were to be recorded, and they expressed their consent on all occasions. Additionally, each participant was informed about possible topics of the conversation and questions he or she was going to be asked. In many cases I asked additional questions in order to help the interviewee understand the main question, clarify the previous question, and deepen or gain additional knowledge (Creswell, 2007).

I spent nine months conducting research in two schools in a Portuguese school cluster and nine months in a Polish primary school. Altogether, I spent around 250 hours doing participant observation – in classrooms and outside classrooms, during various activities. I conducted twelve interviews in Poland and Portugal (on average 35 minutes long) with teachers, headteachers, a school coordinator (Portugal), and project coordinators. In Portugal, I also recorded fourteen pre- and post-observational meetings and a school description given by the school coordinator. In Poland, I recorded a short interview with a deputy head and a teacher about their experience from the study visit which I organized for them in Portugal. My school-based empirical research also included many informal conversations with teachers and students, with whom I spent time playing and socializing during breaks between lessons. I took part in informal and formal school events, such as school trips, theatre shows, and competitions. I actively participated in many of them, taking care of the students, recording the events for the schools, and making myself useful in other ways. In addition to direct contact with the research participants, I also studied internal school documents. In my study, I used pseudonyms for all locations and people in order to protect their identity.

Research Results

I conducted my research in two different schools² and in two different countries. Although the general workflow in both schools was similar, there were also significant differences. The most conspicuous ones concerned teachers' attitudes, their perceptions of their work, their stress levels, and their self-confidence. While teachers in the Portuguese school had no problem receiving me in their classrooms (only one of over twenty teachers whom I approached refused to receive me), in the Polish school the idea of an external observer being present in their classrooms was very inconvenient for most of the teachers. It took a lot of time and effort to create an atmosphere of trust which was necessary for me to truly enter into the school's life and climb over the wall of socio-cultural and political correctness. Nonetheless, this situation was caused not so much by the cultural differences between the teacher populations from two different countries, as rather by specific circumstances in the schools. In the Portuguese school, the teachers were already familiar with the idea of "open doors," and the presence of other teachers or external visitors during lessons was a normal thing, while in the Polish school neither was the case. Additionally, as many teachers mentioned, at the time when I conducted my research the entire Polish educational system was undergoing massive changes which caused considerable confusion and stress. Teachers were overwhelmed by their workload, bureaucracy, and uncertainty. From the beginning, my work and effort to implement a pedagogical supervision project stumbled over many obstacles. Despite the fact that I did a well-prepared workshop for the Polish teachers, explaining the idea and technicalities of the project, I could not overcome the teachers' prejudices, fears, and conviction that the project was "just another pointless amount of work, imposed by someone from above." Interestingly, showing possible benefits of the project, such as professional development, cooperation among teachers, an exchange of good practices, or assistance in resolving various problems, was not helpful and did not convince the teachers. In their minds, the idea of supervision was so strongly linked to such notions as assessment, inspection, or judgement that they could not believe that, in this particular project, supervision really meant cooperation between two peers who seek mutual guidance and share good practices. The Polish teachers exclusively agreed to participate when it was announced that every teacher participating in the project would avoid a regular inspection performed by the headmaster. Moreover, I discovered that values such as leadership and self-development were not perceived as positive by

² In Portugal, schools are joined in clusters. As a researcher, I worked in one of such clusters. Firstly I was invited to the main school, where the headmaster worked, and then I was delegated to the satellite school. Although located in different buildings, the schools are treated as one; thus in the article I write about two schools in general – one in Portugal and one in Poland

many teachers. For some, being a leader simply meant having extra work to do without being rewarded. While understandable in the larger socio-political and historical context, this situation seems to be alarming and requires serious consideration.

Despite these problems, I claim that the project in the Polish school can be regarded as a success. After nine months of observations, I received feedback that clearly showed the project's benefits for the teachers. Many of them reported concrete situations in which the project had proved helpful. One teacher said:

(...) but what made me feel good was when a few people even came to me and said: "I attended this person's lesson and that person's lesson, and she really did have a problem with that child, but I pointed out to her how he was sitting, or that they complained about him and they were right," and then during the next supervision the girls had a discussion about the same thing and saw for themselves that progress had been made, thanks to the feedback, because this was not a tip, but due to that feedback later, "yeah, in fact there is no problem with that boy now, I did what Kathrine [name changed] or someone or other told me, and the problem was solved."

Furthermore, the teachers claimed that their fears had been excessive and the project did not cause as many problems as they had thought it would. They also agreed that it had a real potential to be useful and beneficial:

While it is true that it was an extra hour that I had to organize in order to go to a colleague's lesson, but I can tell you looking back that it was one of the easiest projects in which our school has been involved, and one that did some good, for me personally, because we do quite a lot of projects of various kinds, and often they are projects just for the sake of documenting that we've done them.

The project had its weaknesses in both countries. First of all, even in Portugal, where supervision has been practiced for several years, there are still teachers who are not willing to participate in supervision. There are teachers who mostly perform mandatory activities connected with the ongoing supervision project just to fulfill requirements, but they do not necessarily believe that the project is beneficial to them. Moreover, when the supervision process is completed and conclusions are drawn, some teachers do not implement them into their daily workflow. I have identified three major reasons that could explain this situation. Firstly, there are teachers who consider themselves professionals with no need for improvement. Secondly, there are teachers who know

that they have problems, but they are afraid to reveal them as it may jeopardize their position as professionals. They are afraid of being judged or considered incompetent in their work. Thirdly, there are teachers – and this is the biggest group – who are simply overwhelmed by their workload, bureaucracy and/or other projects, and they do not have time or strength, or both, to engage in pedagogical supervision projects. Additionally, even if in the course of mutual observations they could develop some useful conclusions and concrete solutions to implement, they are very often limited by time, space and resources, which makes the implementation difficult, if not entirely impossible, to perform. Moreover, although valuable notions such as cooperation or self-development are addressed in educational law, systemic solutions equipping teachers with resources for their implementation are difficult to find in actual school realities.

Discussion and Conclusions

In my qualitative research, I focused on pedagogical supervision in Portugal and Poland, two European countries which have different historical and sociocultural contexts, including school policies and cultures. In Portugal, pedagogical supervision is well-established, while in Poland it is a rather new approach to teacher professional development. Due to historical experiences, Polish teachers often view supervision as a tool of control and are hesitant to undertake supervision projects. However, my project, which implemented pedagogical peer-supervision in a Polish school, yielded positive outcomes, and teachers appreciated its impact. My research, therefore, indicates that when sensibly implemented, pedagogical supervision can be a valuable and empowering instrument in new national contexts, such as Poland. In Portugal, pedagogical supervision is well-described in legal documents, and school principals have the backbone of law to support its implementation. My research in Portugal also demonstrates the importance of larger school culture for the implementation of pedagogical supervision. Portuguese teachers are used to peer-collaboration on a daily basis and have a tradition of open-door policy. This makes the implementation of pedagogical supervision easier.

In both country contexts, my research confirms that pedagogical supervision can serve as a means of teacher professional development. However, the results also point to the need of clear legal frameworks to regulate pedagogical supervision – from the European down to the national levels. It also shows the importance of solid preparation before the implementation and long-term duration of pedagogical supervision programs. Most importantly, pedagogical supervision as a peer-based collaborative undertaking requires that teachers should be “on board” for its implementation, i.e.,

that they should voluntarily enter the project, consciously building partnerships based on mutual trust and willingness to participate. Research findings from both countries do not support the policy of making pedagogical supervision immediately obligatory for all teachers. Instead, it is better to launch pedagogical supervision on a small scale: in individual schools with teachers who volunteer and who can later (after two to three years) serve as project leaders, ready to introduce the project to the rest of the teachers. The technicalities of supervision programs should also be well negotiated and adjusted to the needs of individual schools. Most importantly, my research confirms that pedagogical supervision is not just a set of technical instruments that can be easily implemented across the board. Rather, based on a particular vision of being a teacher, pedagogical supervision is a way of being a professional, specifically, a collaborating and collaborative professional investing in continuous professional development through collective practice and critical reflection. It is also a vision – a way of seeing and imaging oneself as a professional – which must take into consideration specific local conditions in the emerging European context.

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Title:

Grammars of Schooling in the Post-Authoritarian Context: A Comparative Study of Changing Teaching Practices in Elementary Education in Czech, Polish and Portuguese Schools

Abstract

This paper reports on my dissertation research, which was a phenomenographic analysis of how elementary teachers in three countries did or did not change their teaching practices in response to the transformations of their cultures and societies. Data come from in-depth interviews with 28 elementary teachers from Poland, the Czech Republic and Portugal. The concept of the “Grammar of Schooling” proposed by Tyack and Tobin in 1994 was used to understand and explain how outdated conceptions of the aims and functions of school can exert a durable influence on teaching practices.

Keywords:

elementary school teachers, “Grammar of Schooling,” post-authoritarian countries, critical consciousness, educational change

GRAMMARS OF SCHOOLING IN THE POST-AUTHORITARIAN CONTEXT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHANGING TEACHING PRACTICES IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN CZECH, POLISH AND PORTUGUESE SCHOOLS

Introduction

As a veteran teacher in early childhood education who experienced the democratic transition in what once was the Communist Czechoslovakia, I was interested in exploring the possibilities of educational change in the aftermath of political transformation.¹ For my research, I selected three countries which had recent experiences with authoritarian regimes, whose fall had created an opportunity to remodel their societies and adapt the schooling system to the changed social conditions by installing new democratic principles in education.

Statement of the Problem

After three years of research, I know that putting transformative democratic education into practice is not an easy thing to do. While education and schooling are social microcosms in and of themselves, as well as mirroring the larger social body, teachers are expected to respond to changing social and political conditions by transforming their professional practices. Teachers are crucial players in creating school cultures, with considerable influence on students and other participants in children's learning process. In my research, I drew on critical pedagogy to understand and describe how teachers responded to sociopolitical change in their professional practice. In attempting to grasp teachers' attitudes and reactions to change, my main research question was: What kind of "Grammar of Schooling" (GoS) is internalized and practiced by teachers in Polish, Portuguese and Czech schools?

¹ This chapter first appeared in *Forum Oświatowe*, Vol 31, No 1 (61), 2019.

As my research focused on teachers' consciousness of change at the elementary level of education, I formulated more specific questions: To what extent do teachers carry the post-authoritarian burden? How do teachers relate to tradition and innovation? Are teachers willing to apply new teaching approaches in their daily practice, and if so, in what ways do they do so? I divided the potential changes in education into two groups. One of them included policy-driven top-down changes influenced by general developments observable across the EU member states. The other one comprised changes which teachers could implement on their own within the existing school system, building both on the primary (policy-driven) changes and their own practical insights and experience.

Research Aims

My research project had two major goals. First, I wanted to identify and explore the content and structures of the "Grammar of Schooling" (Tyack & Tobin 1994) in the awareness of early-education teachers. With this purpose in mind, I established a range of phenomenographic categories which I used to capture teachers' prevailing opinions and perceptions of changes, and the different practices of teachers' involvement in these processes. Second, I wanted to understand why and how the "Grammar of Schooling" stimulated or inhibited teachers' openness to the democratization of relationships among the various subjects and participants of education.

Research Scope and Results

The Background and Significance of the Study

I carried out my research in Poland, the Czech Republic and Portugal, three countries which have coped in recent years with the consequences of decades-long authoritarian rules². These consequences have been acutely felt in education, which had been used by the authoritarian regimes to promote uniform political allegiances to the political systems and loyalty among their subjects. The political ideologies strongly affected people's morality and civic attitudes. In these social and political orders, teachers found their

² Linz (2000, p. 159) defines authoritarian regimes as "political systems with limited political pluralism, without sophisticated and leading ideology, but with a typical mentality, without extensions or intense political mobilization (except for some stages of their development), in which the leader or his a small group applies power within formally poorly defined but predictable borders."

options and choices severely limited: they were pressured into obedience to rigorously defined curricular demands, which severely constrained their autonomy. Given these historical conditions, studying teachers' awareness of and attitude to changes at schools and their preparedness to re-invent their own teaching practices in the post-authoritarian context can relevantly contribute to our knowledge of the mechanisms of the "Grammar of Schooling" and educational change as such.

Key Concepts and Theory

The conceptual framework of my project was inspired by the "Grammar of Schooling" metaphor proposed in 1994 by David Tyack and William Tobin. Tyack and Tobin (1994, p. 454) defined the "Grammar of Schooling" as "the regular structure and rules that organize the work of instruction," including standardized organizational practices, such as "dividing time and space, classifying students and allocating them to classrooms (grading) and splintering knowledge into 'subjects.'" While all these features and arrangements come to be taken for granted and viewed as natural by children, teachers, and parents, it is legitimate to inquire whether they are appropriate and relevant to today's world, or whether they should and can be replaced. Tyack and Tobin attempted to explain why some educational reforms took strong hold, whereas other efforts to change the "Grammar of Schooling," i.e., the ways in which the schooling process is organized and proceeds, remained unsuccessful.

The challenges of change for teachers seem enormous. While some teachers adapt readily to altered sociopolitical circumstances and ways in which these impact their professional practice, other teachers feel more comfortable sticking to teaching and schooling practices to which they are accustomed, despite the changed context. The tension between the comfort of the customary and the challenge of innovation is one of the sources from which the "Grammar of Schooling" derives its power and efficacy. In my work, I chose to expand the framework with the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire, namely his concept of teachers' consciousness, which refers to teachers' ability to recognize and reflect on the established and traditional paradigms of schooling and education. According to Freire (2005), teachers often endorse myths and stereotypes about school education, and they do not necessarily realize that they find themselves in the situation of oppression, serving the existing system. I combined Freire's critical theory with phenomenography as my research approach, because phenomenography is specifically designed to investigate the content of consciousness, i.e., the ways in which subjects think of, conceptualize, and represent particular phenomena.

Research Methods

As a qualitative research method, phenomenography relies on interviews and observations. The phenomenographic interview focuses on how interviewees understand the concept under exploration and they are encouraged to reveal their qualitative understanding of the phenomena under study. In phenomenographic research, the processes of conducting and reading interviews are important, and the quality of research depends on the initial acquisition of the interviews and their transcripts. Transcription is a transformative process that links interview and analysis across data. As explained by Dortins (20002, p. 207), “[t]he critical aspects of interviews as living conversations can be identified, namely that they are productive interactions in which the data is constituted, that the interviewee and interviewer negotiate on several levels to produce a shared meaning, and that meaning production in interviews is achieved through language.”

According to Bowden and Walsh (2000), researchers can use two common kinds of questions in phenomenographic interviews. One type includes open-ended and diagnostic questions through which different ways of understanding the phenomenon under study are revealed. The other type consists of what the authors refer to as the “What is X?” questions (Bowden & Walsh, 2000, p. 8), which elicit responses about the researched topic but do not address it specifically. The successful application of the phenomenographic approach hinges on the characteristics of both the researcher and the interviewee. The researcher’s skill to ask right questions at the right time is pivotal. In this, phenomenographic interview somewhat resembles the ethnographic process, asking such questions as “Could you explain that further?” or “What do you mean by that?” and “Is there anything else you would like to say about this problem?” (Bowden & Walsh, 2000). At the same time, the respondent’s personality, in the sense of openness to interviewing and readiness to offer candid responses, is crucial.

In my research, teachers were briefed on what they would be asked about and asked whether they were willing to continue with the interview, making sure that they were not pressured to participate. I conducted 28 semi-structured interviews: 10 in Poland, 4 in Portugal, and 14 in the Czech Republic. I asking them to describe important changes in their practice, e.g., how they adapted to top-down changes (implemented by the system, the Ministry, ad/or the school administration), and what changes they made in their own practice, in their approach to work, and their teaching. In the process, I was hoping to learn of early-education teachers’ prevailing opinions concerning changes and their involvement in them.

I analyzed my data manually. I prepared special charts for every interview in which I searched for codes and subsequently created subcategories – pools of meanings. In my

coding procedure, I always started by creating a range of codes based on the first interview (36 in my first interview in the Czech Republic), and then I moved on to the next interview. I added the codes to the table and assigned them to the pool of meaning – collecting 50 codes after the first reading of interviews conducted in the Czech Republic. Subsequently, after going through all the codes, pools of meanings from first and second readings, and charts which I had drawn up in my analysis, I selected central issues and created categories and subcategories common to all three countries. Figure 1 below lists examples of my pools of meaning, on which I drew to create the descriptive categories and subcategories.

Figure 1. Pools of meanings

**Emerging main categories
and subcategories**

Pools of meanings

**1. MAIN FEATURES OF THE
COMMON GRADED SCHOOL
– CHANGES WITHIN GoS**

A. Space

Hidden space in the classroom
Small collective – advantages
Shifts in Poland
Changing classroom
Changing teachers in the class
Group and project work, individualization
Changing the school as a workplace

B. Time

Children at school – all day
Obstacles to changing time units
Time for teachers – meetings
Extracurricular activities

C. Evaluation

Grading, unfair evaluations
Parents' meetings
Only positive grades
Testing, selection of students
Physical education, music, weak students and evaluation
Homework – influence on assessment
Individualization or democratic rules
Written assessment, low-achieving students
Negative evaluation
Teacher evaluation
Purpose of evaluation
Grading – strong tradition

D. Relations with parents	Finding out about and meeting the families Creating community – teachers' efforts Parents' help for school Parents' meetings Problems with parents Homework Examples from teachers' own lives Parents' competitiveness Divorced parents Teachers' responsibility – for what
2. RELATIONS IN THE SCHOOLS	Pools of meanings
A. Among students	Collective, tolerance Parents' influence Strong lifelong friendships Family-related influences Conflicts in the classroom
B. Teacher-student	Influences from teachers' childhoods Better and worse classes Elementary teacher as the next authority figure Teacher's decision – why elementary teaching An individual approach to children
C. Relations with the administration and among colleagues	Teachers help one another Bad relations Head teacher Improving relations Large schools Psychological or other assistance Number of teachers in classroom Sabbatical
3. THE TEACHER'S PERSONALITY	Pools of meanings
Self-criticism authority, self-confidence versus authorities'	Self-esteem "Reflective practitioner" Personality and professionalism Authority, self-confidence
B. Curriculum	Overloaded or inadequate curriculum Missing knowledge in curriculum Changed curriculum Individualization

C. Hidden curriculum	Relations with parents Relation to evaluation, grading Selection for gymnasium Insincere communication
4. INCLUSION	Pools of meanings Dividing teachers' time among able-bodied students and students with disabilities Mainstream school or special school "Problem children" – is it inclusion? Assistant teacher Repeating the school year
5. CHANGE, YES OR NO	Pools of meanings
A. Tradition	Inherited teaching methods The teacher's authority Town or village school Old tools
B. Innovation = new tradition	Training and self-education opportunities Individual innovation Headmaster's autonomy Examples from abroad Too many changes

Side by side with interviews, I also relied on narratives which I requested my respondents to produce in writing at their own time. My research participants actively responded to my requests, and I appreciated McEwan's and Egan's insight that sharing stories may make the participants feel that their lives are important and that they are heard. At the same time, when people tell a story, it helps them spot and understand themes they need to process (McEwan & Egan, 1995). Another advantage of narrative research is that giving opinions is a natural part of life because all individuals have stories they want to share or tell others. In this way, narrative research is familiar to individuals because it generates data through a common, everyday activity (Creswell, 2012).

At the center of my narrative research was the concept of "change" as it was reflected in individual teachers' careers. The written assignments contained only two questions in which teachers were urged to assess whether they had reacted positively or negatively to the changes they had undergone in their careers. Teachers could describe their "personal" changes in either the approach to or the perception of specific pedagogical situations and cases. In this section, teachers very often described the problems at hand in their country or at their school.

Research Results

The major finding of my research is that the “Grammar of Schooling,” i.e. the traditions which are internalized in the consciousness of and practices of Polish, Portuguese, and Czech teachers, are mainly influenced by educational policy, teachers’ personal experiences and roles, and their relationships with parents, who are very often perceived as obstacles to change. On the whole, teachers are willing to make many changes in the areas which I coded as my categories of description (space, time, evaluation, parenting, in-school relationships, authority, self-criticism, curriculum, hidden curriculum, inclusion). Nonetheless, teachers often follow traditional approaches or only adopt changes temporarily. They admit that they often do not receive clear signals from the school leadership which would indicate that they are encouraged and allowed to make changes and alter their teaching practices. Consequently, teachers either do not believe that they have a free hand or indeed lack the autonomy or the conditions to launch teaching innovations in their classrooms, perceiving educational policies as forcing them to abide by overloaded curricula.

In all three countries, the reasons why teachers’ adopt negative or passive attitudes toward change are similar. The frequent explanation of why teachers are passive is that they are tired. In Poland, for example, teachers are tired of frequent changes in fundamental rules. In the Czech Republic, they are tired because of low income, ongoing social criticism, and the general underappreciation of the teaching profession. In Portugal, they are tired of increasing bureaucracy and competitiveness within the profession, which is engendered by the system and which exacerbates relationships in the workplace. In their responses, teachers reported that their working conditions were not improving as fast or as decisively as in other professions, and they perceived the prestige of their profession as low. They believed that their work was often questioned and criticized, and at the same time they were “expected to perform miracles.” While undoubtedly involving personal bias, many of these complaints are certainly attributable to the systemic conditions in which teachers work. In my dissertation analysis, I described and assessed teachers’ attitudes to and engagement with changes through the lens of Freire’s theory, and highlighted how critical consciousness among teachers promoted the democratization of education. At the same time, naïve consciousness was also to be found among teachers who for various reasons adhered to old methods of teaching. They cherished a nostalgia for the past or did not believe in the emergent possibilities to teach differently, disaffected as they were with the plethora of top-down changes the implementation of which consumed their time and resources.

In my research, I also sought to grasp how the new features of mainstream schooling in the three countries differed from post-socialist (Poland and the Czech Republic)

or post-authoritarian (Portugal) education models. I compared traditional and innovative methods and approaches used in schooling. In doing this, I relied on the features enumerated by Tyack and Tobin (1994), especially on the characteristics of the graded school (some of which are included in my first category of description: space, time, **evaluation**, parent relations), and added other aspects to explain what changes teachers were willing to make or accept. Figure 2 below contains relevant examples.

Figure 2. Grammar of Schooling: Evaluation – examples from research

Traditional	Innovative
Teachers have clear rules for assessment/grading. They evaluate students based on their knowledge, most often using standardized tests. They compare them to one another. A child who does not succeed – cannot handle the curricular demands for a given grade – repeats the class.	Teachers try to individualize teaching because children have different personalities and abilities, which teachers should take into account. Teacher professionalism is measured by how the teacher balances the interests of the individual and the interests of the entire class, abiding democratic rules. Elementary schools need not only to evaluate and measure knowledge but also to motivate children to get involved in different activities. Many teachers succeed in doing that. In this respect, the aim of evaluation is different than in regular school subjects, where performance is most often supported and evaluated by grades.
Some teachers and parents regard grading necessary as a form of motivation. Standardized tests also serve this purpose. Their results offer guidelines for parents who need to monitor and compare their child’s results; teachers need them to establish what their students have learned and where they need to work more; and they are useful to head-teachers and administrators for different comparative purposes.	CR: Formative assessment is often applied only to children with disabilities, and exceptionally to other children upon parents’ request. PL: Formative assessment is applied across the board in elementary schools, grading is no longer used. POR: Descriptive written assessment was introduced. Until recently, children’s results and grades had been posted publicly on the walls and boards in schools. While this practice still persists in some places, in other schools and school clusters it is slowly being phased out.

Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of my research was to identify the content of the “Grammar of Schooling” as internalized by teachers in the Czech Republic, Portugal and Poland, and to explore how it influenced the generation of practice-relevant ideas about teaching in different cultures under systemic change. I addressed and raised questions about country-specific transformations relevant to the educational sector, pointing to the shortcomings and strengths in the educational systems of the respective national sites. Through my work, I sought to contribute to the debate on educational policy and possibilities of

implementing change toward innovative and transformative teaching for better student learning in the emerging European context.

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Title:

A Phenomenologically Based Approach to Organizational Learning: Anecdotes in School Leadership Research

Abstract

Research evidence suggests that successful school leadership not only improves school and teaching quality, and therefore plays a role in successful school development, but also positively impacts student outcomes. In this paper, we argue for a phenomenologically oriented approach for better understanding the interrelatedness between leadership and learning. To do so, we introduce anecdotes as a conceptual tool that can enrich school leadership research. By way of example, we discuss the potential of anecdotes for leadership research with a view to organizational transformation in schools. The process of communicating and sharing experiences through anecdotes can be understood as a process of enacting structures and, therefore, of organizational learning. We argue in this methodological paper that anecdotes have a potential for analyzing leadership experiences in processes of organizational transformations in schools.

Keywords:

school leadership, leadership for learning, anecdotes in school leadership research, phenomenology, German school award.

A PHENOMENOLOGICALLY BASED APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING: ANECDOTES IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

Introduction: Leading and Learning – a Phenomenological Perspective

Arguably, “[d]ifferent approaches have been developed to assess leadership [...] from different theoretical and practical perspectives” (Gregorzewski, Schratz, & Wiesner, 2018, p. 62). Research evidence suggests that successful school leadership, amongst others, improves school and teaching quality, and therefore plays a role in successful school development (e.g., Lohmann, 2013). Moreover, school leadership has also been shown to have an impact on student outcomes (e.g., Hattie, 2008; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Empirical findings (e.g., Robinson, 2007) show that specific leadership practices (e.g., articulating a vision for the school) have a potential to improve student learning (Day & Sammons, 2013). Nevertheless, these findings are not detailed and nuanced enough to improve the learning of students and foster system-wide improvements (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Van der Mescht (2004, p. 3) insists that “to develop a clearer picture of what it is that some leaders possess (or do, or *are*) that makes their leadership effective has perhaps never been more urgent.” McNeil (2015, p. 102) argues that “[r]esearch into the subthemes of practical on-the-job experiences and formal leadership development programs may be of interest to leaders considering developmental needs of and opportunities for” school leaders. Emphatically, these issues “[deserve] further study and research, for the benefit of leaders themselves as well as for the organizations in which they lead” (McNeil, 2015, p. 106).

This paper addresses this desideratum from a qualitative perspective and argues for a phenomenological concept of learning by presenting the anecdote as a tool for doing research into on-the-job experiences of school leaders and various people who are led in schools, for “[l]eadership for learning, and therefore also learning itself, is characterised by the experiences of various school participants (principals, teachers, students)” (Ammann, 2018, p. 2).

Until now only few projects (e.g., Ammann 2018; Gilstrap, 2007; Souba, 2014) have addressed the topic of leadership from the phenomenological perspective. Selvi (2008, p. 39) emphasizes, that “[t]he phenomenological approach should be applied in the education system as a tool for learning.” In general, experiences can be effectively researched in two ways. Specifically, experience-oriented research relies either on daily observations of school life, as proposed by Ammann (2018), or on using data from interviews in the form of anecdotes as a tool for capturing the remembered experiences (Rathgeb, Krenn, & Schratz 2017). Given this, this contribution will be guided by the following central research question:

- How can the remembered experiences of being led be empirically researched by using anecdotes as a tool for capturing experiences?

We argue for a phenomenologically oriented approach for better understanding the interrelatedness between leadership and learning, and introduce anecdotes as a conceptual tool to enrich leadership research (cf. Baker, 2015). Phenomenologically underpinned research into leadership can have a “rich potential in informing the praxis of educational leadership” (Starr, 2014, p. 78). As Meyer-Drawe (2008, p. 98, in Schwarz, 2017a, p. 69*pass*) states, “[t]he exploration of the richness of events, as well as the true description of fields of experience, first and foremost legitimizes a scientific investigation of a problem.” On the whole, “[a]s a philosophy of experience, phenomenology is an attempt to sharpen one’s senses for the appeal of things. Things are not only objects; they also participate in our perception. They do not literally speak to us but they nonetheless have an appealing character. They appear under particular conditions and therefore tell conditions” (Meyer-Drawe, 2017, p. 19). Following Gehring (2011, p. 44), Schwarz (2017a) argues that pedagogy and phenomenology can profit a lot from each other if their interrelatedness is carefully studied.

In this paper, we use a broad conception of (educational) leadership: “Leadership for Learning as Experience’ is defined as negotiating experiential spaces against the background of structuring conditions while respecting the mutually agreed pedagogical concept and enduring leaders’ own experiences and those of the people they lead, which can be joyful but also painful” (Ammann, 2018, p. 2). We believe this concept is applicable, for “at the very center of the educational work [where educational leadership belongs to] lies a comprehensive understanding of common learning” (Gregorzewski, 2018, p. 151).

The Link between Leadership and Learning as Experience: On the Potential of Experiences for Studying Practices of Leadership

While many scholars have applied the concept of “Leadership for Learning” to empirical research projects and to theoretical research (cf. Macbeath & Cheng, 2008; Townsend & MacBeath, 2011), the term “learning” (partly in contrast to “leadership”) has only rarely been clearly defined in these studies (Ammann, 2018). Time and again, “learning” is substituted by student *outcomes*, as measured by comparing test results, e.g., “the growth [...] in math scores of longitudinal student cohort during the study” (Heck & Hallinger, 2010, p. 4), because *learning* as such is not only very hard to frame, but also extremely difficult to capture and almost impossible to assess.

We argue for a phenomenological approach to better understand the link between leadership and learning, where learning is understood as experience. Conceived in this way, the different experiences of students or teachers are possible results of leading, too: “Learning in this sense depends not only on our initiative. We cannot just resolve to learn. The entire reliable order can reach a deadlock. The old reliable knowledge and ability mismatch, while we do not yet have any new possibility” (Meyer-Drawe, 2010, p. 6). From this perspective, leadership and being led can be regarded as experience (e.g., Starr, 2014), which makes it possible to coherently link the two notions: “leadership” and “learning.”

However, as the requirements for leaders are subject to change over time, so are the understandings of their roles, which are moving away from “authority-centered” conceptions towards ones that foreground supportive, ancillary, or transformative roles. Wiesner, George, Kemethofer, and Schratz (2015) have identified four distinct phases in the discourse on requirements for principals since the 1980s: (1) quality management with a focus on optimizing quality and establishing different leadership styles (from the 1980s onwards); (2) (new) data-based governance approaches with an output orientation (from the 1990s onwards); (3) school improvement characterized by a competence orientation and changes in patterns (from the mid-2000s onwards; cf. Kraler & Schratz, 2012); and (4) transformation characterized by a focus on emergence and value (from the early 2010s onwards). These changing requirements and conceptions of principals’ roles have also affected how students are seen and how their continuous development is addressed. While in the first phase students were viewed as mere recipients of information, in the fourth phase they are understood as co-respondents, who respond to stimuli in

school settings with experiences of resonance as conceived in resonance pedagogy (cf. Rosa & Endres, 2016). Experiences can result from both intended and unintended processes of leading (such as school and teaching improvement) brought about by, for example, educational leadership and instructional practices, and they may occur when school participants respond to these processes. These spaces of resonance offer all parties involved an opportunity for gaining experiences with leaders or teachers. In other words, the gaining of experiences which are related to leaders takes place in the in the company of leaders, teachers and/or students as well as other parties. That may happen when the expectations of the involved parties are no longer fulfilled, but unforeseen and therefore unexpected events create a *Widerfahrnis*. Experiences cannot be pre-planned or predicted, and they can be painful (Bollnow, 2013), since they occur unexpectedly and may upset the *status quo*: “Experiences happen when the expectations are not fulfilled anymore” (Ammann, 2018, p. 4). While investigating experiences researchers extrapolate “what reveals itself, through how it reveals itself” (Waldenfels, 1992, p. 30). On the one hand, at the moment of the experience, “one cannot ignore or dismiss one’s own experiences. They elude all planning and prediction and can be characterised as starting points for learning processes” (Ammann, 2018, p. 4). On the other hand, the person’s experiences at the moment of the incident can be central for understanding learning (Ammann, Westfall-Greiter, & Schratz, 2017b). Such moments of uncertainty and helplessness, but also of joyful surprises, can be passed on to others through interviews and written down in the form of anecdotes, since they are the origin of leadership practices.

Anecdotes as Narratives of Remembered Experiences: Theoretical Positions

Recently, Schwarz has argued for the potential of anecdotes (as well as vignettes) in educational research as an “instrument to capture narrated and remembered lived experience” (Schwarz, 2017b, p. 114). In this sense, anecdotes “are not the construction of the research subjects alone but *co-created* by the researcher” (Schwarz, 2017b, p. 116). In everyday discourse, we understand anecdotes as re-occurring narratives which people share over time; through them one can “grasp of the very nature of the thing” (van Manen, 1990, p. 177). Here, we follow Van Manen and restrict the term “anecdote” to a narrative text which researchers compose after an interview, in which the interview partner(s) recall(s) past experiences. Van Manen (2008, p. 2)

reminds us that an anecdote “is a very short and simple story. An anecdote usually relates one incident, begins close to the central idea, includes important concrete details, often contains several quotes, closes quickly after the climax [and] requires punctum for punch line.” An anecdote “speaks to us much in the same way as a good novel or a beautiful poem does. It evokes feelings of recognition, points to experiential possibilities that we have never encountered before, or leads to thoughts whose possibility we were not earlier aware of” (Henriksson & Saevi, 2009, p. 38). Van Manen (1990, p. 54) points out, that “[i]n drawing up personal descriptions of lived experience, the phenomenologist knows that one’s own experiences are also the possible experiences of others.”

Anecdotes as conceptualized in the Innsbruck vignette and anecdote research (e.g., Schratz, Schwarz, & Westfall-Greiter, 2012a) are memorable, striking stories about the remembered experience, in which the *πάθος* (pathos) accompanying the telling of an anecdote is supplemented by the researcher through “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1991) that articulate “anecdotes of lived experience” (van Manen, 1990) in words.

Generally, through passing on narratives, the recipient – the person who is told an anecdote based on the lived experience – remembers the experiences or the anecdotes shared in the organization, which as such are no longer the experiences that actually took place. Thus, the experience as remembered by a person – the recalled experience – is not what exactly happened since “[e]very narrative [...] becomes something new in every narrative, and the ‘fossilization’ of narratives does not follow from the short-sightedness of the researchers, but from the fact that the narrators work intensively on their solidification. Long-lived narratives are sediments of norms and practices and deserve great attention as such” (Czarniawska, 2015, p. 87). Phenomenologically based research (with and through anecdotes) about school leadership can be “a potentially powerful way of making sense of education practitioners’ (and learners’) sense-making, and can lead to startling new insights into the uniquely complex processes of learning, teaching and educational managing and leading” (Van der Mescht, 2004, p. 1), whereas “leadership theorising usually falls short of capturing the real complexities and subtleties of leadership” (Van der Mescht, 2004, p. 12).

Below, this potential of anecdotes for transformative school leadership research will be educed so that “it becomes clear what potential there is in anecdotes on [as] the linguistic compression of remembered experience” (Ammann, Westfall-Greiter, & Schratz, 2017a, p. 9).

Writing Anecdotes: An Example

The anecdote which serves as an example in this paper originates from the Innsbruck-based research project¹ devoted to Leadership for Learning (Townsend & MacBeath, 2011) in schools awarded with the German School Award (cf. Schratz et al., 2019). Under this study, the final versions of anecdotes are written by the researcher based on the interview transcript. If the interviewee talks about special moments and the experiences he or she had at such moments, the researcher has to assemble parts of the interview into an anecdote. An anecdote in this sense has the following four characteristics: a topic, an experience, a punch line and a focus (Rathgeb et al., 2017, p. 130). The pathos-marking moments could be considered central to the idea of phenomenological research as “[t]alking about experiences is embedded in our bodily existence. Our body nourishes our thinking which in turn happens in a quasi secret way. We are used to transforming our world into thoughts, ourselves into thinkers and others into those whom we can never reach via thinking” (Meyer-Drawe, 2017, p. 14).

The anecdote below was written by the researcher, based on a focus group discussion with teachers in a small elementary school in northern Germany. In 2017, about 350 students (thereof 10% with special needs) attended the school, but when the then principal started his tenure ten years before, the school had only had about 230 students. With this increase in the student population, the school employed the educational staff of about 40 people (teachers, teachers for special needs students, and social workers).

¹ In this research project referred, 28 schools which had been awarded with the German School Award from its commencement up to 2015 were visited by the project researchers. The German School Award is “a unique and highly innovative approach to tackling the overall issue of school development and improvement in Germany” (Gregorzewski & Kovacs, 2017, p. 209). The 28 schools can be characterized as ideal-typical cases (Lamnek, 2005, p. 314), since they are successful schools that have achieved demonstrably high standards in the quality areas of the German school award (e.g., Schratz, 2017). The methods which were applied in this research project were document analysis (application documents of the schools for the German School Award, reports of the jury teams about school visits, evaluations of the jury according to six quality areas, and school-specific documents concerning the school visits of the research team), focus group discussions with teachers and students (Lamnek 2005), the researchers’ participant-observation field notes, vignettes and anecdotes (Schratz et al., 2012a; Ammann et al., 2017). The research project follows an “empirical track of a *phenomenological* orientation to explore learning [and leadership] as experience” (Schwarz, 2017, p. 110), which means that it conceptualizes “anecdotes as ‘narratives of [...] memories [...] that are worth remembering, that encapsulate crucial moments’ (Schwarz, 2017b, p. 114) when school leadership was enacted (cf. Gregorzewski, 2018).

Anecdote: “He’s a real manager.”

Mrs. Weber proudly says that 150 children from other school districts are enrolled at her school. “And without the concept that he developed, which is not that typical of school, these 150 children would not be here at all, for example, this is his main responsibility, namely to get them to us,” says Mrs. Weber. As newspapers had already written about him and his work, Mr. Taylor – the principal – had been known to the teachers long before they started working at that school. Mrs. Miller laughs: “Yes, that’s simply the way he is.” The principal regularly makes sure that their school is present in the public sphere, and that the various school-related events are publicized in newspapers. “He’s a real manager, one has to say, he has got amazing skills and abilities, that’s his great strength,” says Mrs. Weber, fixing her eyes on a point in the distance. The children are then in the hands of the teachers and “... within the framework of conditions he no longer interferes,” concludes Mrs. Weber in a satisfied voice.

What we find in this anecdote are the co-experienced experiences of the researcher during the focus group discussion, where the teachers described their views on the principal. The reason for writing down this anecdote (rather than any other one) was what is called an affecting moment (i.e., a memorable, disturbing or curious situation) during the conversation with the teachers. It is the moment when the researcher is stirred by the remembered experiences so that he or she starts thinking and reflecting (Peterlini, 2017; Ammann, 2018). Because we can never access the experience of others, “researchers in the field attempt to stay open and particularly attentive to pathic elements such as atmosphere, facial and bodily expressions and tone of voice” (Agostini 2015, p. 2496). This is exemplified, for instance, in capturing Mrs. Miller’s laughter when she remembers that she had known the principal from the newspaper before she met him.

One of the main challenges for the researcher operating within a phenomenological framework may be to record the co-experienced experiences in the way they were perceived by the researcher: “The question of how to transform the experience into words remains a basic dilemma of this research approach. Although linguistic articulation transforms the co-experienced, it is at the same time necessary to make it accessible for exploration and analysis” (Schratz, Schwarz, & Westfall-Greiter, 2012b, p. 65). Finding experiences which can perform a variety of functions seems central to understanding a learning organization and therefore experiences of leadership as “[t]he dialogues that processually constitute organizations contribute to ongoing processes

of narrative construction and refinement. The stories that are authored through dialogue are one symbolic means by which meaning is variously negotiated, shared and contested” (Humphreys & Brown, 2002, p. 422).

We assume that in such anecdotes, the actors’ experiences from different phases of organizational change, especially those of how the principal acted in those situations, have meanings retrospectively ascribed to them. Anecdotes, such as the one cited above, which capture experiences, show the teachers’ perceptions of the principal as a manager and therefore convey the way they experience leadership in their school. Arguably, “[t]he interaction of experience, meaning ascription and action in processes designed to reduce equivocality, and to attribute plausible sense in ways which make the world seem stable and enduring is fundamental to human sociality” (Brown, Colville, & Pye, 2015, p. 273).

There is a wide body of literature on the competences and responsibilities of principals, but little is known about the activities which they do day by day. Obtaining access to the shared experiences of school actors via anecdotes can help researchers learn more about the daily activities of principals and about how teachers, students and parents assess, perceive, and appreciate them. The tighter the narration of the respective experience becomes, the more it takes on the form of a story; the narration is a specific representation, but not the story itself. One can portray one and the same story in different ways. What matters is the dynamics between what is being told and how it is told. The narration is “fundamental to the organization, transformation and communication of experience” (Stierle, 1979, p. 92).

Limitations to Anecdote-Based Research

Remembering as an action and therefore also remembering specific experiences are not only processes of recalling particular information about a situation. While the memory of a machine, e.g., a computer, is reliable, the memory of human beings can be characterized by its unfaithfulness (Meyer-Drawe, 2007, p. 152). A remembered experience is no longer what it was at the moment of experiencing. It changes over time as new experiences are added to and combined with the old ones. The forgotten is not just gone; rather, it is just inaccessible at a certain point, but it leaves its marks on the recalled experiences. Some things are forgotten, and new elements are added. Therefore the remembered experience has to be viewed from the here and now, too (Rathgeb et al., 2017, p. 133).

A limitation in the work with anecdotes is – especially from a non-phenomenological perspective – that one can never approach the experience itself. Especially in a

conversation, a researcher co-experiences the remembered experience. Therefore, we could argue that, to a certain degree, the experiences narrated through anecdotes are the experiences of the researcher in the situation of the conversation.

Following Moustakas (1994, p. 41), we must be aware, that [p]henomenology is the first method of knowledge because it begins with “things themselves”; it is also the final court of appeal. Phenomenology, step by step, attempts to eliminate everything that represents a prejudgment, setting aside presuppositions, and reaching a transcendental state of freshness and openness, a readiness to see in an unfettered way, not threatened by customs, beliefs, and prejudices of normal science, by the habits of the natural world, or by knowledge based on unreflected everyday experience.

In this sense, it is argued that an anecdote does not just lead to the history of experience; it also reveals the life-world as its basis. Yet, as working with anecdotes represents a qualitative approach to leadership research, one cannot draw generalizable conclusions from anecdote-based studies. The experiences captured in anecdotes exemplify a highly individual process of remembering and to a certain degree result from the process of researchers’ co-experiencing. Because anecdotes are not intended to be generalized, they cannot be regarded as objective or provide the basis for valid theories. If they are written soon after the remembered experience, anecdotes offer an opportunity to identify the substratum and patterns of principals’ leadership behavior, which can contribute to a better understanding of what principals do to enhance student learning.

Further Work with Anecdotes and Final Conclusions

The starting point for this paper is the phenomenological understanding of learning through and as experiences, which calls for a special research approach. Arguably, Leadership for Learnings shows itself in the experiences of leading and being led and can be captured in the form of anecdotes. The work with anecdotes offers a variety of opportunities to add new insights into leadership behavior in schools and into how leadership may influence learning (e.g., through the students’ lived experiences generated by the practical approach based on the concept of *challenges*, cf. Gregorowski, 2018). Hence, it can be argued with Giddens (2004) that people in organizations produce and reproduce structures through communication, beside actions of power and actions of sanction. The process of constructing sense (Weick, 1995, p. 190) takes place retrospectively and, as such, contributes to the production of structures

in organizations. The attribution of meaning and thus also the interpretation of the newly created guiding structures takes the form of passing on organizational histories (cf. Fahrenwald, 2013, p. 86).

If we understand this process of communicating and sharing experiences as a process of producing structures in the sense of organizational learning, the experiences captured in, with and through anecdotes have a potential for analyzing leadership experiences in processes of organizational transformations in schools. Anecdotes can be read against the background of different phenomena: “A reading is a form of phenomenological data interpretation that deliberately refrains from using existing theories to analyse the scene and instead attempts to ascertain what the scene reveals about a particular phenomenon” (Ammann, 2018, p. 9). By using anecdotes as reading resources, researchers, teachers and teacher educators can learn more about different leadership behaviors in schools and different – e.g., constructive, but also irritating – experiences with them. Finally, they can be applied in university classes and in advanced training for principals and teachers.

For academic research, anecdotes offer a chance to obtain new and varied insights into the daily life at school, especially by using them in mixed-methods studies as an additional tool for illustrating and discussing different actions and the experiences people have in schools. By doing so, we do not aim to “show and tell” [but] to ‘observe and ask’” (Westfall-Greiter & Diendorfer, 2017, p. 81) for innovative approaches to school leadership research. Anecdotes can be understood as starting points for asking questions and finding answers where other methods, such as questionnaires, reach their limits.

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² Learning from the best: Leadership for Learning in German School Award-winning schools (cf. Schratz et al., 2019).

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The Alternatively Certified TEFL Teacher: One-Month TEFL Training Programs and Independent Providers of Alternative Certification, Two Sides of the Same Coin

Abstract

The one-month training course popular in the TEFL industry bears a striking resemblance to some independent provider models of alternative certification. Both arose as fast-track approaches to teacher training to alleviate teacher shortages in an era of reform. As truncated teacher training programs, they both favor a skills-based approach to teacher preparation, which results in inevitable gaps in teachers' understanding of theory and practice. Finally, there is little evidence that such programs have assuaged teacher shortages and, instead, they may actually contribute to attrition by creating "a revolving door" of teachers entering and exiting the field. But no attention has been given to the parallels of the one-month TEFL training course and alternative certifications yet. This research attempts to highlight these similarities in order to better understand both fields.

Keywords

alternative certification, independent providers, teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), teacher training, initial teacher training (ITT)

THE ALTERNATIVELY CERTIFIED TEFL TEACHER: ONE-MONTH TEFL TRAINING PROGRAMS AND INDEPENDENT PROVIDERS OF ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION, TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

Introduction

Alternative certification (alt cert) in teacher education is a relatively new concept in the world of educational policy. The concept as such has its roots in education reforms in the United States but has since grown internationally. Despite its new place in policy, alternative routes into teaching are not exactly a novelty in practice. In his seminal work *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*, Dan Lortie (1975) outlines that in colonial America teaching was often seen as a stepping stone into the clergy: “It appears that some young men aiming toward the ministry took on teaching duties along the way. For such persons, teaching can be seen as an apprenticeship to be discarded after one acquires credentials for a more significant position” (p. 147). In that era, the procedural certification process typical of modern educational bureaucracies was completely absent, but it bears strong resemblance to certain aspects characteristic of alternative certification programs of today, such as: 1) recruitment is largely aimed at college-educated young people; 2) oversight is conducted by bodies largely independent from the state; 3) the aim is to meet an immediate recruitment need; and 4) teaching can be used as a means to an end. While these traits are not always found in every alternative certification program or in every individual that goes through the process, there are similar trends within modern alternative certification. Another example of alternative certification, one that has been given little to no research attention so far, is Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

Statement of the Problem

As with the other papers in this volume, this study is part of the European Doctorate in Teacher Education (EDiTE) project. Unlike many of the other articles, however, this one does not serve as a summary of the researcher’s work, but highlights an aspect

of the final doctoral dissertation. Generally, my dissertation's fundamental concern is teacher attrition. However, while the public can access reliably produced data on teacher attrition and retention in traditional public education from independent research reports and statistics provided by the state (e.g., the US Department of Education) or by third-parties (e.g., intergovernmental organizations, such as the OECD), the corresponding figures reported in the largely private TEFL industry will be seen as much more unreliable than the numbers published by state bodies and outside researchers. That being said, it is clear that the TEFL industry sees attrition as a selling point, with one agency stating: "Turnover each year = A revolving door of job openings: Because nearly half of all English teachers abroad will leave their position and return to their home country each year, more than 100,000 positions for English teachers abroad open each year" ("How large is the job market for English teachers abroad?" n.d.). Arguably, while the conventional view is that attrition is a negative consequence, the TEFL industry views it as a positive feature.

In examining the issue of attrition, this research aims to improve our understanding of teacher retention, specifically within the context of TEFL teachers working and living in the Czech Republic. Two influential factors in teacher retention were examined: the process of professional development and the professional identity development of teachers who had taught for two or more years in the TEFL industry. Given this, the research questions developed for the larger project were: (1) How do certified EFL teachers construct their professional identity?; and (2) How do certified EFL teachers construct their professional development? However, as research progressed, it became clear that another fundamental issue needed to be addressed before these research questions, specifically the unique nature of the teacher population in this study and the training and certification process through which they go.

TEFL training and certification in the private industry are unlike those of traditionally trained teachers, and it would be inaccurate for researchers to conflate them with the general terms of "TEFL" or "TESOL." This became clear following a presentation of this research at the 2017 EDiTE conference, where the author was rightly questioned on the terminological unclarity. Not all EFL teachers follow the same professional path, and thus relevant distinctions must be made. First and foremost is the distinction between traditional teacher education programs and alternative certification programs, the latter deserving much further discussion in English Language Teaching (ELT). Traditionally trained TEFL teachers tend to matriculate in either four-year undergraduate programs or five-year undergraduate and graduate programs, depending on the requirements of the accrediting body. However, outside of the higher education sector, there is a multi-billion-dollar private TEFL industry, which provides

typically 100 to 120-hour training programs to people interested in teaching English abroad (Global Silicon Valley Advisors, 2012). These programs deserve further scholarly exploration, as previous studies have either failed to properly define this unique teaching population (Johnston, 1997; Waites, 1999) or focused on specific training and certification programs (O'Connor, 2011). As such, the research question at hand is a fundamental one: What is the alternatively certified TEFL teacher?

Research Aims

As mentioned above, this research aims to achieve fundamental clarity about a woefully under-researched population of teachers. One of the common refrains in ELT research is the plethora of terms and acronyms: English Language Teaching (ELT), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), English as a Second Language (ESL), etc. And while such terminology provides nuance and clarity on the differing goals of various learning contexts, little attention seems to be given to who is doing the teaching. It is the aim of this paper to provide such clarity by revealing fundamental differences between two unique populations of teachers (and how they came to be teachers) and the similarities between the TEFL teachers certified through a one-month training course and the alternatively certified teachers working in traditional educational spaces. To do so, this research should give definition to the alternatively certified TEFL teacher. The very term “Teaching English as a Foreign Language teacher” may seem redundant, but it is in fact quite appropriate here, as it is common parlance within the industry (e.g., Peace Corps, n.d.; English First, 2017; I-to-I, n.d.).

Research Scope and Results

The Background and Significance of the Study

As mentioned above, there is a dearth of research on the alt cert TEFL population. A handful of articles have critiqued the TEFL teacher training and the industry as a whole (e.g., Maley, 1992; Roger, 2010), while a few studies have tried to understand the field, the craft, and its practicing teachers (e.g., Hobbs, 2013; Howatt & Smith, 2014; Johnston, 1997). However, the most extensive research appears to have been done through Ph.D. projects and/or publications based thereon, mostly within the

last two decades (Waites, 1999; O’Conner, 2011; Stanley, 2013). Still, there has been little discussion on the defining aspects of the modern TEFL training and certification programs that make it so unique.

For as long as there has been language and immigration, which is to say as long as there have been people, there has been language education. In the history of the modern science of language education, Howatt and Smith (2014) outline four major epochs dating back to the 1700s. The most recent of them is the Communicative Period, which began in the 1970s, originally aimed for “real-life communication,” and brought about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-based Language Teaching, which are still very much dominant today. It was during the earliest years of this period that we began to see the rise of private language schools, which can be found around the world today. One of the earliest, if not the prototypical model for such language schools, is John Haycraft’s International House (IH).

John Haycraft was a British national who after graduation moved to the European continent with his wife in the 1960s to teach English. Settling down in Cordoba, Spain, the Haycrafts founded their own English language school. At the time, recruiting qualified English teachers with traditional degrees in education to teach abroad was a problem. As Haycraft stated in his autobiography, “[e]ven in London, it was difficult to find teachers able to teach students of eight different nationalities all together in one class, necessarily using only English, with dramatic expression, pictures and objects brought into the classroom” (1998, p. 2). In response to such challenges, he designed his own teacher training program which became vastly popular and swiftly recognized over the following decades. While the training was provided by IH, the Royal Society of the Arts (RSA) and then Cambridge University became the accrediting and certifying body. Today, the program is known as the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA), and it is estimated that there are 286 sites in 45 countries with a total of 900 courses training and certifying 10,000 teachers every year (Green, 2005).

Alt cert has a similar history in both origin and expansion. Alternative certification programs are fast-track training and certification routes which arose in response to wide-spread teacher shortages and which, in theory, should not sacrifice quality (Dill, 1994; Feistritzer, 1994; Feistritzer & Chester, 2003; Kopp, 1989; Adcock & Mahlios, 2005). One of key factor in teacher shortages is attrition. An often-cited example of attrition comes from Ingersoll and Smith (2003), who estimated that 30% of teachers exited the profession within three years and up to 50% after five years. More recent numbers stand at 12% and 17% respectively, but it is clear that more teachers are leaving the field today than in the past (Hackman and Morath, 2018). As a result, alternative certification routes became increasingly popular in the U.S. in the 1980s and 1990s.

By 2002, alternative certification routes proliferated in 45 states, 20 of which had only started five years prior (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Today, it appears there are alternative certification programs in every state as well as Washington, DC.

Generally, alternative certification is an extraordinarily broad notion as it covers any route to becoming a licensed and certified teacher outside of the traditional teacher education programs in colleges and universities (Feistritzer, 1994; Feistritzer & Chester, 2003). The first modern programs appeared in the United States: in Virginia in 1982, California in 1983, and then New Jersey and Texas in 1984 (Zeichner & Schulte, 2001). One particularly popular model includes independent teacher preparation programs that operate outside state-run or university-run programs. One such program is Teach For America, an arguably the most well-known independent alt cert program, which has seen exponential growth since its inception in the 1990s. Furthermore, it has expanded internationally with its Teach For All initiative, “a growing network of 48 independent partner organizations and a global organization that works to accelerate the network’s progress” (teachforall.org; n.d.). In both their aims and their trajectories, alt cert programs in traditional teaching contexts mirror those of the TEFL world. However, it remains to be seen if the training programs are similar in structure, substance, and effects. To do this, we proceed to the section on concepts and theory.

Key Concepts and Theory

In 1994, Vicky Dill studied Texas’s experiments with alternative certification and described three models of certification: the local school district model, the course-work-based model, and the intermediate education services center (IESC) model. The latter stands out as a relevant model of alternative certification for this research. In it, an IESC provides training and certification through contact hours with in-house specialists or independent consultants. In their book *Teaching Teachers: Changing Paths and Enduring Debates*, Fraser and Lefty (2018) described the same phenomenon, relying on the notion of “independent providers” of teacher preparation programs. Though these programs may have formal working relationships with a district or a university, they are not managed by such agencies. They are independent organizations which provide their own training and certification recognized by the state. These programs include the aforementioned Teach for All which, much like CELTA, has served as a model replicated by many other independent providers.

The one-month TEFL training and certification programs are also independent providers. While they, too, may have professional relationships with state or university bodies, they operate independently of such institutions. They provide in-house

training led by their own teacher trainers and have their own certification process. In the case of the CELTA, the accrediting body is Cambridge University. The training primarily adopts a skill-based approach to teacher preparation, lasts typically one to three months (depending on whether it is taken on a full-time or a part-time schedule), consists of 100 to 120 training hours, has at least six hours of teaching practice, and typically limits its approach to CLT (Ferguson & Donno, 2003; Horne, 2003; O'Conner, 2011; Waits, 1999). Independent providers of alternative certification routes (e.g., TFA and TNTP) also provide a skill-based training course, an average of 145 training hours, and up to 18 hours of teaching practice, and ostensibly tailor instruction to the prospective teacher's subject area (Birkeland & Peske, 2004; Brewer, 2014; Brewer & DeMarrais, 2015; Heilig & Jez, 2010; Suell & Piotrowski, 2007). Some independent providers do offer extended on-the-job training throughout a teacher's first school year. However, the structures of the initial training of both the alternative certification and the one-month TEFL course are so similar that it is hard to believe that it is a result of parallel thinking.

Research results on alternative certification supplying qualified teachers are mixed. As TFA has received a significant amount of media attention, a few studies have argued that the program results in increased student achievement vis-à-vis standardized test scores (Glazerman et al., 2006; Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2008; Xu, Hannaway & Taylor, 2011), though they have been contested by other research and critiqued for their methodological choices (Heilig, 2010; Kovacs, 2011). Broader research on alternative certification and student achievement has produced similarly conflicting results (e.g., Miller, McKenna, & McKenna, 1998; Shen 1997; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000), but there seems to be a dearth of research exclusively devoted to teacher quality, as most studies conflate it with student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). However, when analyzing administrative observations of teachers, researchers found lower results for alt cert teachers, as compared with their traditionally trained counterparts, and also revealed that the former required more additional support (Jelmberg, 1996; Ovando & Trubel, 2000). Some research using teacher surveys and self-reflection have addressed quality as well, wherein alt cert teachers reported that there were significant gaps in their preparation (Brewer & DeMarrais, 2015; Miller, McKenna, & McKenna, 1998).

There is even less evidence on the quality of teaching and learning for alternatively certified EFL teachers. Most of the critical academic work focuses on the structure, the substance, and the oversight of such programs (e.g., Ferguson & Donno, 2003; Maley, 1992; Rogers, 2010). There appears to be no empirical research on either student achievement or teacher quality in the field. However, as an alternative, there have been publications from practitioners themselves. In her regularly republished work

Teaching English Abroad, Susan Griffith (2006) candidly talks about the quality of EFL teachers who are being produced now, calling them “*cowboy teachers*, who have no feel for language, no interest in their pupils and no qualms about ripping them off” (p. 15). The core issue is that, at the industry level, TEFL is sold as and thus perceived to be a means to an end. The focus is not necessarily on quality teaching, but on the benefits ELT provides.

It seems clear that in structure, substance, and results, alternative certification for both TEFL and traditional teaching contexts is very similar if not the same. It is also abundantly clear that there has been more research in the latter field than in the former. Thus, in the following section this paper will focus on the analysis of the experiences of alt cert TEFL teachers.

Research Methods

As mentioned in the opening, this paper is a product of a larger dissertation project within the EDiTE program. As the researcher was new to the Czech Republic, access was a pivotal concern. Contacts with individual teachers were established in Prague and Brno, and through them subsequent participants were found. In total, twelve individuals were included in the final study. The sampling criteria conformed with the research aim of focusing on the retention factors of the teaching staff with an alternative TEFL certification who moved abroad to teach English. First, the respondents were from native-speaking contexts, though not necessarily from native-speaking countries. Second, they had been trained in a recognized TEFL certification course outside of traditional teacher education. Third, they had surpassed the two-year mark where most TEFL teachers leave the field. While the participants were mostly American, effort was made to diversify the participant pool regarding nationality, gender, and age.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Teacher	Gender	Nationality	ELT Experience (years)	ELT Experience in the Czech Republic (years)
Scott	Male	American	7	2
Bernard	Male	American	5	2
Kurt	Male	American	2.5	2.5
Joyah	Female	Malaysian	2.5	2.5

Teacher	Gender	Nationality	ELT Experience (years)	ELT Experience in the Czech Republic (years)
Beau	Male	American	12	12
Julianne	Female	Japanese	12	10
Liam	Male	Canadian	4	4
Ben	Male	American	5	5
Duncan	Male	American	4	4
Gina	Female	American	5	5
Cathy	Female	American	4	4
Sophia	Female	British	19	16

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed, a particularly useful tool for developing researchers (Charmaz, 2006). The protocol included 45 questions aligned with the research questions and inquiring about the factors that had brought the participants into ELT generally and to the Czech Republic specifically, the various aspects of their initial training experience, the experiences that had shaped their conception of the profession, their self-perceptions as teachers, and the evolution of their teaching. The most appropriate section for exploration in this paper is the one focused on the respondents' experiences with initial teacher training and their earliest experiences in their career development.

The analysis was based on the constructivist approach to grounded theory, proposed by Kathy Charmaz (2006), which was considered appropriate for the study as it rested on the assumption that researchers' background, experience, ideology, etc. could influence the results of research to a degree. In the analysis, it differed from Charmaz's approach to the constructivist grounded theory in one particular way. Charmaz argues that a line-by-line approach to initial coding makes for more thorough work, an assertion which is not argued against *per se* here. However, an incident-by-incident approach to coding was chosen for this study, as it was more flexible in allowing inductive and in-vivo coding.

Research Results

The sample generally included three "types" of people who had entered the TEFL industry: 1) young people looking to work and travel after college; 2) career changers looking to move abroad; and 3) those entering TEFL to continue a relationship

with a local. These were not necessarily distinct types, and they might overlap, which was particularly the case for the third type. None of the participants necessarily had intended to teach English for the rest of their careers at the outset, but some stayed in the field for a long time because they either had begun to enjoy teaching as a profession or because it was the most effective way to sustain their experience abroad. Very few of the respondents appeared to have chosen ELT for the teaching aspect, but many seem to have grown into it and enjoyed the career that they had taken up. However, a major theme for these participants was that English was a means to an end. For instance, Bernard decided to pursue TEFL following an encounter with some English teachers while studying abroad. He then taught for several years in Asia before moving to the Czech Republic. When asked about his decision to continue in the teaching profession, he stated:

Teaching? Well, I would say that when I came here to the Czech Republic, I thought I would do two more years. I told myself I would do two more years, and then I would do something else. I basically was teaching because it afforded me the opportunity to travel, and I love going to other cultures and studying about other cultures. It's kind of my passion. I would say that's more my passion than teaching itself. But I love teaching too. I really do enjoy teaching.¹

Bernard's reasoning was not unique. Ten of the twelve participants explicitly cited travel as a major reason to pursue TEFL, though there were some slight differences in their reasoning. Bernard cited a passion for experiencing other cultures, but some other respondents chose to travel in order to live in a specific location (e.g., Julieanne), or to learn another language in a native setting (e.g., Scott), but all respondents became involved in ELT as a travel ticket for one reason or another. Working in order to travel abroad is not a new concept, particularly in the field of anthropology of tourism (Uriely, 2001); Griffith (2006) calls the TEFL certification "a potential passport to a worthwhile profession in many different countries" (p. 18), and other practitioners tend to agree with such framing (English Teacher X, 2015; Jenkins, 2010). This does not necessarily mean that these teachers do not enjoy their craft; in fact, the opposite is true. However, an important theme to note is that ELT is not their primary passion; travel is. For many respondents, ELT is a means to an end, a theme we will see with career changers and those aiming to maintain a relationship as well.

¹ The passages from the interviews are quoted verbatim, retaining the respondents' original grammatical, lexical, and stylistic choices.

For those that change careers, boredom with or burnout in their previous career appeared to be the two main impetuses to take up TEFL. Joyah, Julianne, and Liam relatively early on discovered that the career trajectory they had chosen simply was not for them. They did not enjoy the work or, at times, the lives they were living as a part of it. As Joyah recounts,

I was originally trained to be a lawyer. I studied law in university, and decided it wasn't for me after working as a paralegal for about a year. I had figured it wasn't just the right... It wasn't my calling. It wasn't what I was supposed to do. And I decided to take a gamble on a teaching career, see if I liked it because I basically just heard from my sister that was the best thing that she ever did.

People such as Joyah found their previous careers unfulfilling. They chose a career path in college, and after entering the field they begin to question the route they are currently following. TEFL offers a unique alternative. Joyah had a reference point in her sister's career as a teacher and the experiences her sister shared, and she thought she would "take a gamble." Her decision appears all the more understandable as TEFL is a particularly non-committal field and markets itself as such. One can enter it with a modicum of investment of time and money, teach in a new country for a few years, and exit without much hassle (or, at least, with as little hassle as it takes to enter the field).

The third reason for becoming a TEFL teacher is related to a romantic relationship, though this often overlaps with the two previous themes. Ben and Duncan were both working in different fields in their home countries, and each of them was drawn to TEFL after beginning a relationship with a Czech national. Changing careers and moving abroad enabled their significant other to be closer to home, while also providing a relatively stable income. Conversely, relationships with Czech nationals can serve as a reason to continue working in the TEFL industry. Beau and Cathy had taught English abroad before starting relationships with their respective Czech partners. Beau simply continued to teach after starting a family in the Czech Republic, but Cathy had moved back to the U.S., started dating her boyfriend, and was able to use ELT to accompany him while he completed his graduate degree in the Czech Republic. With those looking to travel, change careers, or maintain a relationship, ELT was not necessarily their initial career choice, but it allowed them to pursue some other goals.

In choosing a pre-service training program, the dominant theme for all the respondents was finding a course that provided a path of least resistance for entering the TEFL field. For many, this meant assistance with bureaucratic matters that come with

the dramatic choice of moving abroad to live and work there. Julieanne outlines her decision-making process in choosing a language school:

I think that was... if a school, if in their information, they specifically stated they would help by sponsoring the teacher, a non-EU teacher, and that they actually had somebody specifically there to help with the VISA process. That was the first attraction. And the second was... because I needed... wanted this TEFL certificate. The schools that I was looking at, a lot of them offered this training, but they didn't guarantee that you could work for them. Basically, it was: "Come, we will train you, and then there are plenty of jobs out there." And some of the schools offer, I should say, help and guiding new teachers to find work with other schools. They were very straightforward and would say, "No, we don't have anything. We just train you and that's it." And then there was some schools that I went to that said "We train you. If you pass your training program, you could work for us. You have a job." So, for me that was the main attraction.

Julieanne succinctly describes multiple factors that many other participants cited as well. First, there are the governmental hurdles in moving abroad, particularly for people from non-EU countries that cannot immediately reap the benefits of EU citizens working and traveling abroad. Many, but not all, TEFL training and certification programs help with such matters. Second, she points to the fact that many language schools act as recruitment programs for themselves as well as for other language houses, something that Griffith (2006) also notes. The quality of the TEFL training is a tertiary concern to prospective teachers. The first two issues the participants cite are what Herzberg, Mansour and Snyder (1959) called "hygiene factors" or "dissatisfactors." Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, teachers may be drawn to the craft because of the work-related factors (e.g., love of a subject area, working with children or adults, recognition, etc.), but the extrinsic factors (e.g., job security, salary, benefits, etc.) must be met if those related to the work itself are to be properly appreciated. It is one reason why both Duncan and Cathy chose part-time training, which allowed them to work as English teachers at a reduced rate in the language schools while they were receiving training. Similar concerns were shared by Bernard and Sophia, who chose to participate in programs in their native countries before moving abroad. Ultimately, if one is too busy focusing on one's visa process and job applications, or on sustaining oneself for a month without pay, focusing on the training becomes difficult.

TEFL training programs appear to share a fairly standardized structure. Duncan describes a typical day:

It was different every day, but usually in the morning you learn with a teacher from the book, the grammar, and then you would go to a lesson and observe, and it was usually about the same lesson, just the lessons that they have, and then you take a quiz or something and then check class and this was 3 or 4 days a week.

Duncan describes the two basic methods of initial training. One of them relies on input lessons of direct instruction on pedagogical content knowledge along with written assessments. The other involves teaching practice coupled with mentorship and observation. Direct instruction focuses on the fundamentals of ELT and is followed by teaching practice to turn the learned lessons into immediate practice. When designing his training, Haycraft described this structure as the “most novel feature,” with “Tuesday’s lesson structure becoming Wednesday’s teaching practice, with real students.” Today, however, features can vary.

Interestingly, Duncan stated that the input lessons were “different ever day” and later provided more details. Essentially, teaching practice in the afternoon was shaped by the content covered in the morning. He described three books used in the training:

We had three books. One book was with grammar because in the US that you don’t really learn titles for grammar, you just learn. It’s different. Everyone knows noun, verb, this and that, but they don’t know why we say the things we do. So, this book told you how. So that was that. And every week we would do a chapter or something like that. And the other book was methods in teaching, different styles... And the third book... lessons. Typical lessons that you could use. And I think the third book was most helpful because usually I tried to avoid the question “why?” You know, in teaching. I really try, but if I know that they’re going to ask why something is the way it is. I always prepare myself.

The three books used in Duncan’s program covered three different types of pedagogical content knowledge. In the 1980s, Shulman argued that teachers needed to master both the subject matter as well as the pedagogical theory and practice in order to teach this subject matter. “The special amalgam of content and pedagogy” (Shulman, 1987) consists of three major forms of pedagogical content knowledge. First, there is content knowledge, or the subject matter taught. Second, there is pedagogical content knowledge proper, or the approaches, methods, and techniques applied in order to teach the subject matter. Third, there is curricular knowledge or the materials used in

teaching the subject matter. Duncan's three books correspond to these three forms of pedagogical content knowledge.

While Duncan was quite content with the quality of his training, this sentiment was not shared by all the participants. As in so many other teacher training programs, the quality of a TEFL program depends on the quality of the trainers themselves, as Julianne demonstrates:

It [the initial teacher training] just depended on the instructor. We had two or three instructors who had a lot of experience of doing actual teaching. They had taught in different countries and one in particular was really good, especially in grammar. He really explains the grammar very well. But there was another instructor who was actually the head of the TEFL program at the time, who had had no experience teaching at all. We didn't know this of course until the day came when he had to do it. And it wasn't just that, but some of the suggestions that he was making about how to teach were complete nonsense.

Julianne valued the knowledge and experience of several of her trainers, as she highlighted their varied teaching experience and knowledge of grammar. However, one trainer in particular, the head of the TEFL program, appeared to lack practical experience, which seemed to impact the program's quality, or at the least the perception of its quality.

Grammar is a particular point of concern for many prospective teachers when enrolling in a TEFL training program. As Julianne stated,

I had good grounding of the mechanics because I went to international school in Japan and I had very good teachers, but you know, I've sort of forgotten some of the rules and stuff. Grammar. So, it was really nice to take this TEFL course and sort of relearn kind of how to teach.

Julianne was concerned about grammar because she had forgotten much of her lessons on the subject, and TEFL training was a way for her to relearn them and prepare for the English language classroom. However, such a grade-school experience is not the norm for many native speakers. As Duncan stated earlier, "in the US that you don't really learn titles for grammar you just learn. It's different." Grammar is not often explicitly taught in compulsory education in English-speaking countries. John Haycraft (1978) made a similar point in his *An Introduction to English Language Teaching*:

There are many different attitudes towards the teaching of grammar. There are doubts about whether it should be taught explicitly at all, whether the selection of structures to teach should be based on simplicity, leading to a carefully graded sequence of increasing difficulty, or whether selection should be on the grounds of frequency of occurrence in the language, or usefulness to the pupil. Whatever the theory, the fact remains that there are patterns in English that the student needs to master. Most nationalities are more conditioned to the grammatical analysis of their own language than we are. (p. 9)

The formal structures of English are not a particularly strong suit for Anglophone education systems and, as a result, learning the formal structures of English is often a concern for prospective teachers who pursue TEFL certifications and choose a particular training program. As Griffith (2006) states:

A perpetual problem which a TEFL course solves is the general level of ignorance of grammar among native speakers. Native-speaker teachers often find that their pupils, who are much better informed on English grammar than they are, can easily catch them out with questions about verb tenses and subjunctives, causing embarrassment all round. (p. 19)

While it may be true that other cultures are better at teaching and learning the formal structures of their native tongues than much of the English-speaking world is, it does not appear true that a TEFL course “solves” the problem of ignorance regarding English, as many teachers still walk away from their initial training ignorant and anxious about teaching grammar.

Some participants (e.g., Julieanne, Duncan, and Kurt) spoke highly of the instruction they had received on the formal system of the English language. However, other teachers still had concerns. Scott spoke about his experience with learning grammar in his initial training program:

I think my program did really well. They knew that we were native speakers, so they didn't have to go over that. I really wish they had gone over more grammatical terms, but that makes me sense as a teacher that we should know these grammatical terms. You should know what a subordinate or subjective is or a dependent clause versus an independent clause. Just knowing some of these grammatical terms so you can read a book on grammar and go “Alright cool, I understand this. I know what they are talking about.” So, I think they

did a really good job explaining the grammar to us. Granted, it was bam, bam, bam, bam. It only happened in an hour, one particular tense or one grammar point. Sometimes they only spent thirty minutes on it. But the teachers that we had, they were knowledgeable. They had their own experience, and that was good, and I really enjoyed that. Was it enough? I think so. It was certainly enough to get started into it. Of course, there in my first few weeks, starting off there..., yeah, I had some trouble, but I at least had a solid foundation that I could branch off of and build upon. So, there was that. That was a good aspect.

There is a lot to discuss in this passage. First, Scott expresses great appreciation for the training which he received, and views his trainers as both knowledgeable and experienced. However, he also wishes there had been more coverage of grammar and the teaching thereof. This lack of instruction can be seen as resulting, partly at least, from the truncated nature of the training, for there are obvious constraints on the content input in a four week, 120-hour course which balances input lessons and teaching practice. As a result, the grammar is covered in quick succession. The key lesson for Scott and others is the importance of teaching and learning grammar for instruction. Both Haycraft (1986) and Griffith (2006) observe that EFL students may expect a certain level of grammar instruction simply from their own experiences of learning their own native language at school. For TEFL teachers, as Scott points out, this entails a need for continuous self-study. For Scott, the initial training was a starting point that necessitated extensive study.

The participants generally viewed their training and the trainers positively, though many saw the training as a good start for TEFL, but as ultimately insufficient. One common observation was that the 120-hour length of the program demanded tradeoffs. For some respondents, e.g., Scott and Gina, the training focused more on teaching techniques and less on the content, particularly grammar. For others, e.g., Duncan, Kurt, Liam, and Cathy, there was more focus on the content, but less so on teaching methods and techniques. This was a sticking point for Cathy, whose training appears to have completely skipped over certain industry-wide standards in TEFL:

I don't want to speak ill about them [the trainers], but they kind of took into account that I taught for years and I was smart from my degree, and maybe I feel like they might have slacked off a little bit. For example, after I graduated from the course, I went to my first big interview and I bombed it. They told me no. They gave me a test and they told me to do this, that, and the other, and every other TEFL course had trained every other student to specifically pass

this test, and whenever I saw it, it was brand new. It was like I didn't know any of it. It was questions that I just wasn't prepared for....

Cathy, like other trainees in alt cert programs (Brewer & DeMarrais, 2015; Miller, McKenna, & McKenna, 1998), found that there were gaps in her training. She attributed it to her previous experience as an educator, but hers is not a unique experience. Alternative certification is essentially an abridged form of training, which means that there will be inevitable gaps in the knowledge of both theory and practice. Indeed, many participants noted the need for self-study both during and after their initial training. After all, initial training is only the first step in a long continuum of development and is by its very nature incomplete (European Commission, 2010; Caena, 2011). However, Cathy's expectation is in line with Steven Mann's (2005) description of training, which "is to introduce the methodological choices available and to familiarize trainees with the range of terms and concepts that are common currency for language teachers" (p. 104). Cathy and many of her peers are actually left unacquainted with several common "terms and concepts."

The truncated nature of alternative certification means that a sizeable portion of teacher development that would traditionally be addressed in the pre-service period is shifted to induction. However, the decentralized and unregulated character of the TEFL industry means that in-service training is varied and inconsistent. Similarly to independent providers of alternative certification in traditional spaces, some alt cert English teachers describe fairly robust in-service training provided both in-house and with consulting specialists, others had a stock set of training typically aimed at new teachers provided to them, and some received no in-service training of any kind. Induction is really left up to either the school or the individual and, as such, is very different for different teachers.

Discussion and Conclusions

The similarities between alternative certification programs and the month-long TEFL training programs appear undeniable. First, both program types arose in the time of reform, when teacher training evolved to meet the demands of a swiftly changing market and to rectify the teacher shortage. As a result, there are definite similarities in substance and structure between one-month TEFL training and certification programs and fast-track alternative certification teacher training programs. Second, as these teacher training programs are based on the market demand, myriad programs compete, especially that there are definite financial incentives. Alternative certification

often receives money from either the teachers being trained or the districts being served (Brewer et al., 2016; Expense Details, n.d.). For alternative certification in the TEFL industry, the language schools are incentivized by the training fees as well as by means of recruitment. While there are programs that have evolved over time based on research and need, there is little incentive to change the structure or focus on quality (Ferguson & Donno, 2003; Horne, 2003). There are real material incentives for an industry when there are profits to be made from training and certification to maintain a revolving door of teachers entering and exiting the field. Lastly, much like the TEFL industry, alternative certification in traditional teaching contexts is spreading internationally (Teach For All, n.d.). While there are some differences, they appear narrow and the gap is closing.

Systematic research should be launched to explore the one-month TEFL training programs as a form of alternative certification for which there are many implications. For one, we can begin to recognize the unique nature of the one-month training and move away from conflating this teacher population with the teachers traditionally trained in the broad field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language. For another, we can obtain valuable insights into how a globalized, decentralized, and increasingly deregulated field of alternative certification can evolve by observing the older and more wide-spread TEFL industry. By exploring the two as manifestations of the same phenomenon, we can better understand both.

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Title:

Teacher Learning in Innovative Learning Environments in the Context of Educational Reforms and Developmental Interventions

Abstract

This study focuses on understanding the characteristics of teacher learning in innovative learning environments and explores what external factors stimulate and support teacher learning. Following the idea that learning and environment are inseparable, as well as that certain conditions inspire learning at different conceptual levels, a research study was carried out to explore the benefits of educational innovations for teacher transformative and expansive learning. The research was designed as an exploratory qualitative study combining perspectives from two national contexts, Hungarian and Portuguese. Some of the main results indicate that well-purposed innovative school environments indeed support teachers in developing higher cognitive and practical skills and promote learning that is beyond reproductive. Such findings lead to a better understanding of the knowledge of practice at the professional level and encourage reflecting on and re-imagining the aims of education for the future generations.

Keywords:

teacher learning, innovation, change, schools, leadership

TEACHER LEARNING IN INNOVATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL REFORMS AND DEVELOPMENTAL INTERVENTIONS

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

A teacher's main professional concern is to enable, facilitate and amplify students' learning. Nevertheless, as masters of student learning, teachers also need to take care of their own professional learning and development, and while they dedicate most of their professional efforts to student learning, there is always a pending question whether and how much they invest in their own learning. This question is certainly a complex one as it interrogates not only whether an individual does something or not, but also how the context, whose multiple layers range from the immediate teacher community to national and transnational policies, contributes to learning.

Through exploring how a certain working environment affects teachers' professional development, this study provides an in-depth examination of teacher learning in innovative schools. The most basic questions asked in this research are how teachers learn when they work in non-routine and highly stimulating conditions and why this is relevant to today's education.

Research Aims

The main aim of this study was to understand teacher learning in innovative learning environments and the factors that effectively foster it. To this purpose, three research questions were developed to guide the research process, with the first question below being the main one:

1. What are the characteristics of teacher learning in innovative learning environments?
2. In what ways do innovative learning environments stimulate and support teacher learning?

3. What elements are necessary in order for developmental reforms and interventions to promote teacher learning in innovative learning environments?

Research Scope and Results

Key Concepts and Theory

In this research, the phenomenon of teacher learning was scrutinised from the perspectives of adult transformative learning as proposed by Illeris (2009, 2014), Jarvis (2006, 2009) and Mezirow (2009), and from the intersectional perspective of workplace, professional and organisational learning. Illeris approaches learning as an extensive and complicated set of processes that depend on several factors, including biological predisposition, internal conditions and external factors and influences. For Jarvis (2006), learning is similarly located within a combination of processes that influence a person as a whole. Furthermore, learning is conceived as a social experience which, being an activity of social participation, produces four various outcomes for the learner: meaning, identity, community and practice (Wenger, 2009). When problematic frames of reference, such as mindsets, habits of mind and meaning perspectives, are transformed through the sequence of learning, this process is called transformative learning (Mezirow, 2009). For Mezirow (2009), the frame of reference lies at the core of human cognition and gives meaning to one's existence.

As far as workplace learning is concerned, one of the most influential theoretical concepts related to teacher learning in innovative learning environments is Ellström's (2001) work-learning taxonomy of four complementary learning types. The main distinction of the two developmental types (productive type II and creative learning), as compared with reproductive learning, is that the former tend to occur when learners "encounter novel or unfamiliar situations for which no rules or procedural knowledge (know-how) are available from previous experience" (Ellström, 2001, p. 424). Work-related professional learning is linked to the notion of professional knowledge. This type of knowledge is largely tacit and implicit (Eraut, 2007), is based on action and reflection (Schön, 1992) and is constructed through engaging in problem-solving activities (Høyrup, 2006). Looking at professional learning from the perspective of teacher learning, Bakkenes and colleagues (2010) propose six categories of learning activities and four categories of learning outcomes, which are further subdivided into changes in knowledge and beliefs, intentions for practice, changes in practice and changes in emotions. Two of the most common categories

are *reflecting on one's own practice* and *experimenting*. Additionally, the classics of workplace learning scholarship, Lave and Wenger (1991), are often cited for their concepts of communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation as essential factors in learning. Notions of teacher learning are commonly associated with teacher knowledge, which has been influentially theorised by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) and their framework of three types of teacher knowledge. In combination with Engeström's (2015) idea of expansive learning that appears in both workplace and organisational learning, these insights build a theoretical bridge towards conceptualising teacher learning. Espousing the view that teacher learning is not a purely individual acquisition of learning, this study is underpinned by theoretical positions which take into consideration the contextual elements of schools as learning organisations, as proposed by Peter Senge (2012).

Furthermore, school leadership and school development are brought into equation as important factors that propel teacher learning and support innovations (Gregorowski & Kovacs, 2017). Innovative learning environments are examined in terms of the OECD's seven principles embedded in the framework of three core dimensions (OECD, 2016), while innovation is addressed from the perspective of educational change and the development of next practice (Hannon, 2007). At a more structural level and in relation to curriculum reforms, this study draws on the work of Snyder et al. (1992) in order to explore what happens to teacher learning when innovations are implemented, and uses Akker and colleagues' (2005) typology of curriculum representation at different levels, as well as McLaughlin's (1990) work on absorbing educational reforms. The theoretical framework of the study is rounded up by linking teacher learning to innovation, mainly through the idea of adaptive expertise (Bransford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness, & Beckett, 2007; Hammerness et al., 2007) and the recognition of the importance of self-learning (Bakkenes et al., 2010), motivation, professional morality and fulfilment (Kwo, 2010).

Research Methods

The research project was developed as an exploratory qualitative study of two European contexts, Hungarian and Portuguese. Case studies were regarded as the most appropriate approach to capture the complexity of the contextual elements and the studied components. Teacher learning as the unit of analysis was conceptualised as a multi-layered transversal construct comprised of three important factors: personal, situational and political.

Case study research has a level of flexibility that is not readily offered by other qualitative approaches, as this approach is designed to suit the case and the research question and to demonstrate a wide diversity in study design (Yazan, 2015). Following the exclusively qualitative approach of Stake's (1995) and Merriam's (1998) case study method, the research on Hungarian and Portuguese schools and teachers used individual semi-structured interviews, small focus groups, document reviews and unstructured observations. Semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were selected as a tool for data collection primarily because they encourage people to tell stories and "stories are a way of knowing" (Seidman, 2006, p. 7). The focus-group approach was used as a qualitative technique that provides valuable insights from a group of individuals with the focus on a specific topic, and as such helps obtain a plurality of answers even in the most homogenous group (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). In order to gain a more comprehensive view, the researcher opted for a nested case study approach (Pei Wen Chong & Graham, 2013), using a scaled line by traversing the macro, meso and micro levels.

The collection of data was spread between April 2017 and May 2018, and the number of the participants totalled at 63 professionals. School-based data collection was conducted on the basis of two day visits, the first of which was mainly informative. The visits offered opportunities for unstructured observations, gathering data in the form of field notes and establishing better interview relationships. Table 1 presents the overall composition of the research sample.

Table 1. Overall composition of the research sample

Participant type	Number of interviewees	Hungary	Portugal
Educational experts and decision-makers	8	3	5
School leaders (principals and deputies)	14	9	5
School teachers	41	23	18
Total	63	34	28

All interviewees were given detailed information on the purpose of the study, its scope and overview, the researcher's background and ethical details, such as confidentiality and procedures.

The data from the interviews and focus groups was first handled manually, and subsequently, it was thoroughly analysed using the MaxQDA qualitative data analysis software. Qualitative content analysis was performed following a hybrid inductive-deductive pattern which included the ascription of codes and the creation of categories. The final analysis relied on a tripartite structure, combining single units at the individual, organisational and national levels. This permitted a more reliable analysis of the phenomenon of teacher learning (Jasso, 2004).

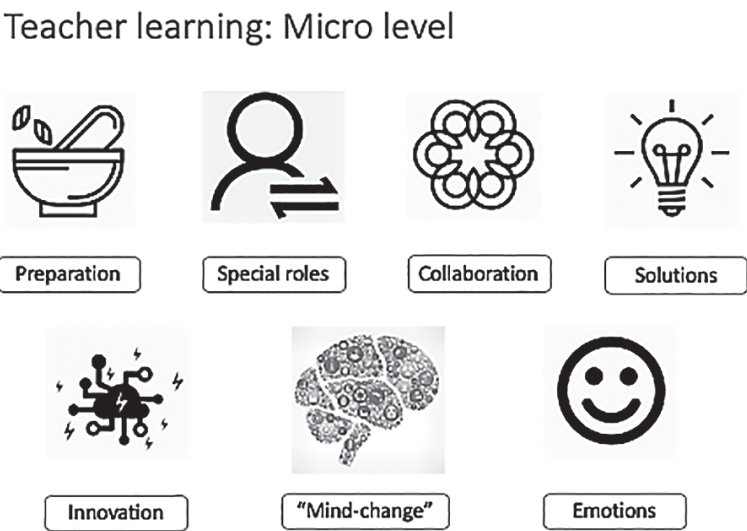
Research Results

The results of the study indicate that teachers achieve an advanced level of learning when they find themselves in innovative learning environments. Even though teachers reported that furthering their knowledge through innovative approaches took more time, most of their experiences were described as rewarding in terms of the effect they had on their students and their own professional satisfaction.

The analysis of teacher learning characteristics at the micro level in the two study contexts shows significant similarities, suggesting that individual professional learning of teachers in innovative schools follows a similar pattern and occurs in similar situations, despite the differences in particular pedagogical or organisational innovations, and in general national frameworks.

At the micro level, the research results suggest that teachers experience a steep learning curve in their daily work, considering its different tasks and aspects. Figure 1 captures seven such dimensions that emerged from the study.

Figure 1. Teacher learning at the individual professional level



In more detail, teachers in both countries reported that when it came to preparation for classes and also preparation for the upcoming academic year, teachers seldom relied on pre-set pedagogical formulas and invested great efforts in developing and getting familiar with novel methods that supported the specific educational needs of their students. A deep understanding of students and their learning was elemental; therefore, on some occasions, teachers adopted special roles which helped them connect better with their students. For instance, in one school in Portugal, parallel to their roles as subject and class teachers, the teachers engaged with students as mentors. Mentoring was described as a unique individual opportunity which helped teachers and students truly focus on the learning process and personal development. Such reflections on students' learning process were reported as highly beneficial to teachers' conceptualisations of both students' and their own learning, as well as to the achievement of educational goals as such.

Another type of special roles, which were identified in several Hungarian schools among teachers who taught other colleagues about innovative methods and approaches, exemplified an extremely valuable notion of professional learning at the meta level. In these particular roles, the teachers developed and facilitated learning sessions for their colleagues, often by visiting other schools and working with peers whom they had never met before. Apart from being a great tool for sharing knowledge among colleagues and elevating the profession through discussing issues and solutions, the notion of teachers teaching teachers is a valuable tool for establishing horizontal school networks.

Other special roles, such as participation in project application writing, community development and/or collaborative community projects, also significantly diversified teachers' everyday work and expanded their understanding of the aims of the school and the roles of education. Collaboration among teachers was seen as the backbone of a successful school collective, even though quite often it was implemented through informal interactions. The interviewees in all schools were highly aware of this significant element and were actively working towards creating close bonds with others. Similarly, developing new solutions was seen as an imperative as through working closely with students and understanding their specific learning needs, the "old methods" had come to be seen as not effective enough. Nevertheless, many of the innovative solutions were difficult to handle, especially at the early stages of the implementation, and working with innovations involved significant individual and collaborative learning.

The most significant element of teacher learning which was reported by all the interviewees was the idea of mind-change, a phenomenon in which exposure to a

new idea, an innovative pedagogy or an organisational novelty makes a teacher change her/his perceptions of students, of the purpose of education, of school organisation, of the teaching profession and/or of the general value and role of learning. Emotions were a significant factor, as teachers reported being satisfied with their work and the impact it had on students. This satisfaction was closely connected to the specific school, the community and the innovative pedagogical approach which the teachers had adopted.

The notions of developmental and transformative learning at the individual level were congruent with the idea that the school as an organisation must be a place of continuous learning opportunities for all staff. The innovative schools which were part of this study were significantly contributing to teacher learning; the school leadership actively fostered situations for knowledge sharing and reflection, making the teachers' work more meaningful and better adjusted to the school as a community. Promoting individual ownership of processes and outcomes was also an effective way for principals to get teachers involved and to appreciate their various capacities as educational professionals.

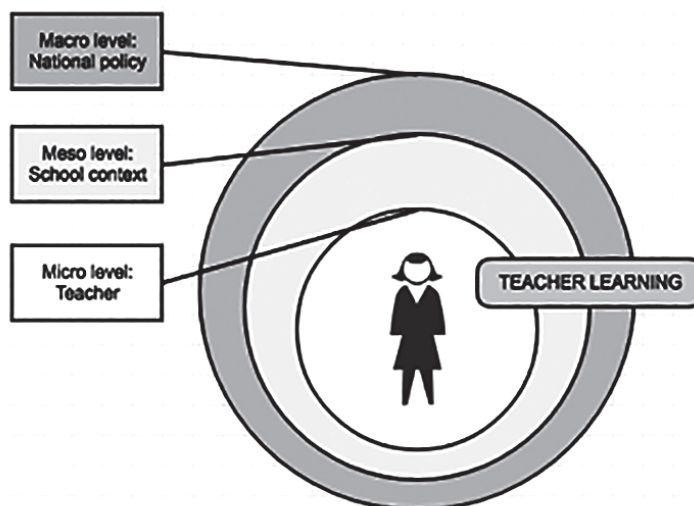
Finally, the perspective of wider national frameworks and educational policies was seen as highly consequential to teacher learning and innovations. The two national cases offer ample input on several elements that both engage and interfere with advanced teacher learning through the ways in which educational innovation is devised, implemented and evaluated at the macro level. Specifically, measures that recognised teachers' large implicit knowledge and were capable of harnessing it for creating a balanced national system were found alongside measures that supported teacher learning and innovation. Teachers need to be informed and included in the development of educational measures as only in such a way can the measures have an impact on their professional growth.

Discussion and Conclusions

The theoretical and empirical components of this study supported the construction of an analytical framework which revealed teacher learning as a transversal phenomenon located at the intersection of three levels: the individual professional level, the school community level and the national policy level.

Figure 2. *A comprehensive perspective on teacher learning*

Teacher learning: a comprehensive perspective



While a number of valuable conclusions were generated from this study for each of these levels, it is a sound and tight interconnectedness among these layers that arguably creates the most effective and advantageous situations for innovations to thrive at schools, as well as for enhancing the possibilities of advanced teacher learning. As this study shows, teacher learning in innovative schools is both developmental (Ellström, 2006) and transformative (Jarvis, 2009; Mezirow, 2009). Involvement in innovations is likely to cause teachers to engage in developmental types of learning and experience learning as a transformative experience. The exposure to the innovative learning environment(s) substantially promotes mind-change, and “how people ‘do’ their knowing” (Laursen, 2006, p. 73) is deeply reflective of their environments, technologies, relations, routines and changes. At the most elevated level of creative developmental learning where the “task is not given” (Ellström, 2006), teachers recreate the curriculum and re-think the learning goals of students as well as the ways in which learning is assessed. This arguably transforms not only learning related to the subject but also learning related to the profession and oneself as a professional (Kovacs, 2018). In such situations, the entire framework of education is modified, not only a method or a pedagogical approach.

The findings of this study also provide valuable insights into the “knowledge of practice” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), which serves teachers to teach well and cannot be taught through conventional linear ways, but emerges through practice and through reflection on practice. Nevertheless, committing to learn and sometimes

re-learn a pedagogical method or an application of a new technology does position the teacher in the situation of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Learning that is embedded in a workplace is bound up with all of the functions and activities of this workplace, and these include performance (Elkjaer & Wahlgren, 2006). Job performance in the teaching profession bears a heavy weight because it is connected to students' learning outcomes. While learning a new pedagogical skill, teachers may become less effective, and this may impact both their performance and their self-image. Going through this drop of effectiveness is difficult and emotionally painful (Hammerness et al., 2007). Gaining confidence is an important factor in continuous workplace learning (Eraut, 2000) and it is often related to the teacher's ability to adapt to the uncertainty and believe in the effectiveness of learning (Hammerness et al., 2007), which best unfolds in and through a balanced interaction between new knowledge and established expertise (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Such moments and processes embody the gold standard for becoming a professional, which is conveyed in the notion of "teachers as adaptive experts" (Hammerness et al., 2007). Optimal teaching is neither completely routinised nor completely innovative, but a corridor between the two extremes. Ownership and autonomy to prepare and develop parts of the curriculum encourage teachers to fully engage as professionals and make them feel that they are appreciated for their professional knowledge (Biesta, 2012).

Innovative learning environments and teacher learning are essentially bonded to each other. Innovative schools indeed stimulate and support teacher learning, and the reverse is true as well. For innovative environments to continue and thrive, teacher learning must be present and, as evidence shows, not only in its simple reproductive format. Innovative learning environments need an expansive, developmental type of learning that provides opportunities for changes and improvement. Hence, it is of utmost importance to explore practices that enhance such types of teacher learning at the school level.

Some of the recommendations and implications of this research suggest an overall need for a better understanding of a wide range of elements that support school development as well as the development of localised innovative educational solutions and systems that actively engage teachers and principals in the creation and re-thinking of national education. The significance of this study lies in a substantial amount of new information on teachers' active learning and their keen engagement in school life and in the education of students in the context of innovation in two European countries. The knowledge generated in this study can valuably contribute to devising a sound multi-layered and synchronised framework oriented towards advancing teacher learning and innovations at schools.

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Citizenship Education in Austria: Teachers' Views and Experiences

Abstract

While numerous studies have investigated how students understand and respond to citizenship education, little research has been conducted on teachers. This study is informed by the need to critically understand the perspectives and experiences of educators when teaching for citizenship in schools in Austria. Inspired by Critical Pedagogy, the study looks into teachers' views and experiences when teaching for citizenship. Data collected from in-depth semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and classroom observation reveal the essential role of teachers' own personal beliefs and dispositions in ensuring a critical and "thick" approach to citizenship education. An overall confusion between political education and party political education is revealed as well as a tendency toward a personally responsible conceptualization of citizenship education, which undermines the citizen-in-context and overemphasizes the rational and linear approach to citizenship. The study also uncovers teachers' various and ambivalent approaches to sensitive topics in a diverse classroom and highlights the relation between teaching for democracy and the schooling tracking system.

Keywords:

citizenship education, critical pedagogy, teacher education, democracy

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN AUSTRIA: TEACHERS' VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

This study deals with an area of education whose goals are included in almost every school curriculum worldwide. Democratic citizenship education is one of the central aims of public schools in general and of the social studies curriculum in particular (Fischman & Hass, 2014). The current discourse on citizenship education is characterized by a lack of research on teachers' perspectives and experiences. While numerous studies have investigated how students understand and respond to citizenship education, little research has been conducted on teachers (Zyngier, 2013; Willemse et al., 2015). This study is informed by the need to critically understand the perspectives and experiences of educators when teaching for citizenship (Carr, 2007; 2011). The prevalent approaches to citizenship education in schools are described as limited, instrumental, artificial, test-driven, and nationally-oriented (Wilkins, 2018; Fischman & Hass, 2014; Biesta & Lawy, 2006). Research has also shown a discrepancy between the official discourse on citizenship education and its role in addressing social issues and the reality of school curricula and teaching practices which superficially treat issues of social justice, diversity and equality, and fail to engage with issues of power (Westheimer & Kahn, 2004). Central to this discussion are global processes, which have defined and redefined education and the role of schooling worldwide. Globalization, migration, the Internet, communication, and economic and cultural interdependence have challenged the traditional and nationally oriented approaches to citizenship education. Teaching citizenship in a time of diversity, multiple and fluid identities, and intersectionality poses many questions, challenges and opportunities for educators.

Research Aims

The study generally aims to explore the ways in which a sample of school teachers understand and practice citizenship education in Austria. This overall aim subsumes the following specific objectives:

- to identify the preferred goals which the teachers try to achieve in their teaching for citizenship;
- to identify the preferred practices used by the teachers when teaching for citizenship;
- to identify any (personal, political, cultural) factors which restrain or promote teachers' efforts to foster a "thick" and critical approach to citizenship education.

The Research Questions: Given such aims, the study is guided by the following main questions:

1. How do teachers view teaching for democratic citizenship? What goals do they try to achieve in their classes when teaching for citizenship, and how?
2. How and to what extent do teachers promote critical approaches to citizenship education?

Research Scope and Results

The Background and Significance of the Study

Although the world seems to be more interconnected than ever before, local and international divisions and unrests persist, threatening democracy and peace in many societies. International and national public rhetoric and policy documents have championed citizenship education as the one area of education that would effectively uphold democracy and address societal challenges. However, the reality of school curriculum and of what goes on in the citizenship education classroom is still unclear and understudied. Being a value-laden area of education, citizenship education produces many difficult questions about what is considered to be a good curriculum, a good teaching aim, or a good teaching practice. Realizing the key role of teachers, educational systems are acknowledging the need to prepare teachers for an effective provision of citizenship education. Zyngier (2013) argues that studying the experiences and perceptions of educators and the ways in which they understand democracy within their educational experience is key to achieving a more empowered and engaged citizenry that cultivates democratic ideals. Westheimer & Kahne (2004) maintain that defining the relation between education and democracy at the teacher's level is important, as it may have crucial implications for the delivery of teaching and learning that influences how students relate to, and do, democracy in and outside school. This study, therefore, aims to critically understand the perspectives and experiences of educators in relation to democracy in education.

The study investigates how a sample of school teachers (teaching at lower and upper secondary levels) in Austria¹ view “the good citizen” and “effective” teaching for democratic citizenship, what civic features they value the most, and how that reflects on their practices in the classroom. The study attempts to highlight the vital role of the teachers as agents of change and transformation. It also provides an overview of citizenship education, its goals and implementation, and highlights some of the tensions and gaps in citizenship education in general and in its current context in particular. The study attempts to go beyond conventional understandings of citizenship and to provide a framework for an active and critical citizenship education that is key to education for peace, social justice, active participation, empowerment, human rights, and democracy. This research proposes a “thick” approach to understanding democracy. It rejects the belief that only the ability to vote is essential to democracy and seeks a more critical and thicker understanding of what democracy is, what teaching for democracy implies, and what it should achieve. Teachers have the choice of promoting and doing thicker democracy that is reflective, critical, participatory, tolerant, and non-hierarchical, or of opting for a thinner, authoritarian democracy that is based on uncritical knowledge, standards and competencies that serve to measure of the “good citizen” (Zyngier, 2013).

After WW2, Austria attempted to highlight the importance of education for “democratic thinking” and to edit the subjects that had been used as political propaganda during the war. However, citizenship education, based on the “General Ordinance on Civic Education,”² continued to prioritize attachment to the “native homeland, including one knowing its culture, respecting its symbols, etc.” (Haupt & Turek, 2015, p. 2). Continued discussions, which were influenced by the Frankfurt School in the 1960s, resulted in a series of reforms. In 1978, citizenship education officially started with the issuing of the General Ordinance on the Cross-curricular Educational Principle of Citizenship Education³ (*Grundsatzterlass Politische Bildung*). Citizenship education was also offered in 2008 as part of a new integrated school subject called “history, social studies, and citizenship education.” Due to the lowering of the voting age to 16 and the rise and re-emergence of international challenges, such as violent extremism, populism and xenophobia, the latest reforms of 2015–2016 updated the General Ordinance and

¹ This contribution is part of a larger EDiTE research project on citizenship education in Austria and Portugal.

² The word “Staatsbürgerkunde,” which focuses on educating loyal “state residents/citizens,” is translated as “civic education,” whereas the word “Politische Bildung,” which puts emphasis on “learning democracy,” is translated as “citizenship education” (Haupt & Turek, 2015, p. 2).

³ The Ordinance stipulates that all teachers are encouraged to teach citizenship education regardless of what subject they are teaching (Haupt & Turek, 2015).

assigned compulsory modules that exclusively deal with citizenship education in the integrated school subject, with a pronounced focus on human rights and a European and global outlook (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017).

Teachers in Austria have the possibility to be educated to become semi-specialists in citizenship education, which is integrated within initial teacher education courses for specialists in History, Geography, Philosophy, Ethics/Religion, Social Studies, and Economics. In-service teacher training is offered (often on a voluntary basis) via workshops and training courses organized by colleges, universities, and other educational institutions, as well as by non-governmental organizations (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017).

Key Concepts and Theory

This research relies on the critical pedagogy framework, which calls for dialogue, critical consciousness, transformation, and agency, and highlights “the responsibility of the present for a democratic future” (Giroux, 2007, p. 1), which lies at the core of genuine citizenship education and is to be fostered in the young generation. The research seeks “a more robust, critical, thicker interpretation of what democracy is, what it should be, and how it can be beneficial to all people” (Carr, 2011, p. 4). This research is also informed by the need to link democracy to social justice (Freire, 1973; Westheimer & Kahn, 2004; Carr, 2008). Believing in the importance of praxis, this study attempts to show the downside of prioritizing the knowledge transfer of citizenship issues and to stress the importance of problematizing and deconstructing this knowledge, as well as of taking meaningful transformative actions. Dewey, who was interested in a “humanistic, progressive education, in which authoritarian models of knowledge transmission could be problematized and replaced by experiential efforts” (Carr, 2011, p. 6), linked education to democracy and thought that education should be the primary means of social progress, rather than just a means to develop the intellect for its own sake. Dewey (1961) maintained that educational institutions should acknowledge their important role in shaping responsible and engaged individuals, and in transforming the learning process, the lives of learners, and the communities. With all of that in mind, the study highlights the problematic side of some notions, such as “success,” “effective education,” and “achievement” in citizenship education, and insists on the need to view citizenship as an ongoing, changing, and transformative practice.

Critical pedagogy, which acknowledges that education is a political enterprise and is never neutral, aims to provide the learner with the tools not just to be governed but also to be able to govern. While education and curriculum are tools to indoctrinate

the youth in many countries with non-existent, weak, and fragile democracy, it can be argued that, even in liberal democracies, public education has been influenced by hegemonic values and pressures (Carr, 2011). Schools are a site where cultural reproduction happens and dominant social ideologies are transmitted through the hidden curriculum (Apple, 2000). Carr and Thésée (2017) argue that in order to “confront and reconcile hegemonic forms of dominance, privilege, neoliberalism, and inequitable power relations, education has to be considered a central educational and political focus” (p. 251).

Critical pedagogy is also centered on the notion that teachers are researchers who teach students to produce their own knowledge. To fulfil this role, teachers must also study their students, their backgrounds, and the forces that shape them. In this respect, critical pedagogy is committed to appreciating the context in which educational activity takes place (Kinchloe, 2007).

Research Methods

In order to obtain a rich and thorough description of citizenship education in schools, the study employed a qualitative approach (Yin, 2011) to deal with the data collected from seventeen in-depth semi-structured interviews with teachers, teacher educators, and policy experts, as well as from document analysis and classroom observations. The study employed the framework of thematic analysis, which is “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006. p. 79) to identify main themes in the qualitative data. Such an analysis goes beyond a purely semantic analysis and attempts a latent analysis, where the researcher goes further than the mere description of the data “to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies – that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006. p. 84). A thick-thin guide (adopted from Carr, 2011) was used to assist in the coding and categorization of data. The guide is a qualitative index and is not to be understood as assuming fixed binary judgments. This research collected data from only two school types: the New Middle Schools (*Neue Mittelschule*, NMS) and the Academic Secondary Schools (AHS).⁴

⁴ Having completed four years of primary education, and based on their grades, 10 year-old students are separated and directed either to a four-year New Middle School (NMS; a lower “practical” secondary school) or to an eight-year Gymnasium (AHS; a traditional “academic” secondary school) (Fellner, Altrichter, & Herzog-Punzenberger, 2017). The system has provoked political discussion and invited ample criticism for reinforcing disparities and social inequities.

Research Results

The main findings developed from the data collected in the Austrian context are summarized below.

1. Teachers' own personal attitudes and democratic dispositions: The data indicate that although training and resources are important for citizenship education, the status of citizenship education in schools and ensuring that students are exposed to a critical and thick understanding of democracy are mainly connected to teachers' own beliefs, passion, and commitment to democratic culture.
2. A tendency toward a personally responsible conceptualization of citizenship education as opposed to a social justice outlook.
3. An overall public confusion about political education and political party education: The term "political" and the concept of political education are severely limited to discussions about political parties and elections.
4. Citizenship education and "the pedagogy of discomfort": Teachers strongly believe that citizenship education should address past and current controversial issues. However, the majority exhibits discomfort and uncertainty regarding the approach. Controversial issues are also often avoided, especially in classrooms where student backgrounds might trigger debates or conflicts.
5. Teaching citizenship education in a multicultural society and teachers' experiences with the unity vs. diversity debate, identity, belonging and inclusion.
6. Citizenship education and the different school types in Austria: In general, citizenship education enjoys a different status and addresses different topics in different school types. Although having the same curriculum and textbooks, the two school types involved in the study exemplify the influence of the selective system on the possibility of delivering a thick approach to citizenship education. One facet of the argument is related to teacher education programs and teacher training for different school types,⁵ in which the two types of teachers have historically had dissimilar roles, capacities, and aspirations attributed to them. Another facet of the discussion has to do with the student population characteristic of each school type that impacts the possibilities and opportunities of citizenship education. The data indicate that the different structures and the different student populations in these schools contribute to further disparities and obstacles. Most of the time, gymnasium teachers have more time and opportunity to engage in deep and critical political discussions, which are often missing in overpopulated NMS classrooms

⁵ The 2015/2016 reform of New Teacher Education was launched to address issues of differences and divisions in teacher education (Symeonidis, 2018).

with many students from lower socio-economic and educational backgrounds, including a high percentage of migrant-background students, who still struggle to acquire basic skills and competences, therein language skills.

7. Citizenship education remains a subject which is replete with complexities and challenges to teachers. The main challenges include:
 - a. Limited time: This complaint was stressed by all the interviewees.
 - b. The test and outcome-oriented approach to schooling: It remains an obstacle to implementing meaningful and thick approaches to citizenship education. This is part of a tension that persists between the goals of citizenship education in promoting active citizens who can respond to societal challenges, and the prevailing neoliberal instrumental approach to schooling, which views education as an achievement and as a way to prepare the generation for the competitive marketplace. This has reduced the importance of social studies in general in the school curriculum.
 - c. An ongoing debate between facts/content and competences, which has left many teachers unprepared for the new competence-oriented curriculum.
 - d. Insufficient teacher education: Initial-teacher education is limited, and as in-service teacher education is often voluntary, many teachers, specially the older ones, do not choose to undertake it.
 - e. The lack of coherent and consistent discourse on citizenship education, therein of definitions or understandings of what counts as citizenship education, its aims, and its implementation (at the level of both policy and practice): Although it could be argued that it is part and parcel of living in a democracy and embracing multiple and fluid perspectives, this inconsistency has rendered citizenship education a confusing subject, especially within the cross-curricular framework.
 - f. Citizenship education and dilemma of assessment: Teachers find it difficult and problematic to assess students in the citizenship education classroom, particularly when values and attitudes are involved.
 - g. Citizenship education is often considered as unimportant area of education that any teacher with free hours can teach.

Discussion and Conclusions

The study highlights the key position of teachers in the implementation of citizenship education, which is often ignored by research on citizenship. It also confirms that teachers are not only “central to effective implementation of a national policy or

normative frame, but they are agents in their own right, transmitting their own specific conceptions of citizenship” (McCrowan, 2009, p. 35).

The research shows examples of teachers who promote a thick understanding of democracy in that they are prepared to take into the account the social context, problematize basic and taken-for-granted knowledge about the world, unravel the implications of power, and commit themselves to constructing more equitable educational social environments. However, there are factors to be considered which may hinder teacher’s agency, such as political, cultural, and institutional constraints, limited resources and time, students’ backgrounds, motivation and literacy skills, and others. Therefore, presenting a thick-thin tension in the understanding and practice of citizenship education is not intended to categorize views and practices in an artificial and strict binary way, but rather it is meant to highlight areas where change and transformation are possible and needed.

While it can be argued that promoting a socially responsible citizen can be a positive trait of citizenship education, the same facet can represent a “thin” apolitical approach to democracy, as it “distracts attention from analysis of the causes of social problems and from systematic solutions” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 243). This approach also runs the risk of undermining the citizen-in-context and leads to “a domestication of the citizen” (Biesta, 2011, p. 142) by expecting students to embody predefined “good” traits. Biesta and Lawy (2006) link this approach to the individualistic trend that emerged in Britain in the 1980s and aimed to prepare young people for democracy. They argue that although citizenship education was characterized by an apparent need for shared community values, it has become more concerned with the individual as an autonomous chooser and consumer. This approach has blamed individuals for society’s problems, without taking into account the context that has shaped their conditions, and thus, active citizenship ironically illustrates “a depoliticisation and privatisation of the very idea of citizenship” (p. 11). The individualistic approach also tends to focus on the rational and linear approaches to citizenship, which Fischman and Hass (2014) refer to as the “‘fantastic discourses,’ [which] overemphasize the notion of rationality related to the Cartesian tradition of ‘cogito ergo sum’ – and of human actors as purely conscious beings – that results in an overly idealistic and educationally impractical model of citizenship education” (p. 387). They continue to argue that

the consolidation of any given identity – be it “personal,” “national,” or “communitarian” – is always an “educationally” unfinished project, an unsolvable tension that cannot be learned and understood through conscious rationality alone. Citizens’ identities cannot be created only through explicit instruction on what democracy is and how a good citizen should act. (p. 390)

Relevant to the questioning and problematizing of explicit instruction on democracy and citizenship is addressing the nature of learning that happens in citizenship education and the applicability of conventional assessment to it. Biesta and Lawy (2006) insist that learning implies an ongoing engagement in multiple ranges of experiences and are critical of terms such as “success” and “effective” education when it comes to learning. For them, there is even no guarantee that what young people learn is identical to what is being taught. Schratz and Westfall-Greiter (2014) propose an understanding of learning that would be relevant to this discussion: “the phenomenon of learning is beyond the reach of teaching and [...this] must be recognized and addressed if education research is to have a meaningful impact on policy and practice” (p. 7). The proposed and intended meaning of citizenship education in this study is that it refers to a never-ending process of learning, rather than to predefined outcomes. This proposed meaning is intended to promote teaching *through* democracy, instead of teaching *for* democracy (Biesta, 2006), which characterizes the majority of citizenship programs which are based on limited and uncontested views of citizenship, rational instruction, and rigid evaluation procedures. The argument here is that education, as distinguished from socialization, “entails a responsibility for the coming into the world of unique, singular beings. This is not something that can be understood in a technical manner because there is no technology that will produce unique, singular beings” (Biesta, 2006, p. 115). Teachers’ responsibility here lies in a

concern for the paradoxical – or deconstructive – combination of *education and its undoing* [...]. Educators and teachers should be aware that what disrupts the smooth operation of the rational community is not necessarily a disturbance of the educational process, but might well be the very point at which students begin to find their own unique, responsive, and responsible voice. (Biesta, 2006, pp. 115–116)

While concerns continue about the early tracking and selection practiced in the Austrian school system and while research has established its impact on reproducing injustice and inequality, no comprehensive solution or change seems to be likely in the near future (Schratz, 2012). This research highlights the need to consider that the ability or inability of schools, teachers, and students to engage in critical and transformative citizenship education should be dealt with within this context of a highly selective system. The available data reveal a belief that teachers at AHSs deliver a thicker approach to citizenship education than teachers at NMSs. However, this conclusion

should be addressed in relation to the structure of the system and its operations, the type of teacher education, and the different student populations in these schools. This research, emphasizing the need to link democracy to equality, argues that a system that may impede equality is undemocratic, and that this should be considered when teaching about democratic citizenship.

The diverse definitions and understandings of citizenship education, as well as its value-laden goals and prospects, have made the field a contested area of education, associated with different ideologies and influenced by different contexts, values, agendas, and practices which do not always promote a progressive and critical orientation. One of the arguments against political education is the potential indoctrination involved (McCowan, 2009). Some of the requirements for teachers in relation to teaching citizenship which are stipulated in the Austrian General Ordinance are “controversy imperative, prohibition of indoctrination and supporting students in forming independent judgements” (Haupt & Turek, 2015, p. 4). In many cases, teachers’ fear of indoctrination and their uncertainty whether to be neutral or not have led to either superficial discussions or the avoidance of critical analysis of some pressing issues. Because of the anti-political aspect of citizenship education and the tendency to view the “political” as something undesired or connected to political parties in Austria, some important issues have been left only superficially addressed. While teacher education programs provide crucial input and training on the ways to teach controversially, teachers still find some areas or topics problematic and discomforting. Key to this research is the need to acknowledge the subjectivity and value-laden aspects of citizenship education, teaching approaches, and beliefs about what makes a good citizen and the need for teachers to constantly reflect on their decisions and practices as educators. Critical pedagogy acknowledges that education and teachers can never be neutral:

Teachers can make a claim to being fair, but not to being either neutral or impartial. Teacher authority can never be neutral, nor can it be assessed in terms that are narrowly ideological. It is always broadly political and interventionist in terms of the knowledge-effects it produces, the classroom experiences it organises, and the future it presupposes in the countless ways in which it addresses the world. Teacher authority, at its best, means taking a stand without standing still. It suggests that as educators we make a sincere effort to be self-reflective about the value-laden nature of our authority while taking on the fundamental task of educating students to take responsibility for the direction of society. (Giroux, 2007, p. 2)

In conclusion, citizenship education continues to provoke ongoing debates and arguments regarding its aims and practices. These arguments are bound to continue and prevail since “the stakes are so high [and] conceptions of ‘good citizenship’ imply conceptions of the good society” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 238).

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Information Communication Technology in Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Teacher Perspective

Abstract

This study explores the status of information communication technology integration in teaching English as a foreign language in Czech elementary schools from a teacher perspective. Technologies are significant educational components in European schools, yet there are several inconsistencies between educational perspectives and teacher practices. Also, little is known about how technologies affect the teaching-learning process and how teachers actually apply ICT in classroom to enhance communication skills as the goal of English instruction. Studies using the phenomenological framework, which recognizes the role of subjectivity in (social) construction, offer some comprehensive ideas about teacher competence as the main force in integrating technologies in teaching English so as to foster communication skills. However, studies which explore ICT integration by addressing teachers' qualitative pedagogical approaches and skills of using technologies are still very few in the European setting. To fill this gap, this paper, which reports on a research project based on the phenomenological case study design, explores how technologies are part of the exemplary English teachers' everyday teaching in selected Czech elementary schools. The study found exemplary teacher practitioners similar in that they were significantly interactive in their perceptions, practices, and reflections involving their skills in using ICT in EFL classrooms with a view to enhancing communication skills. However, differences in the stimuli and barriers to the use of technologies as encountered by respective teachers were individually contextualized.

Keywords:

information communication technology, English as a foreign language, exemplary teacher, communicative approach, educational significance

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A TEACHER PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

The qualitative phenomenological case study reported in this paper explored the status of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) integration in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in selected Czech elementary schools from a teacher perspective. The objective was to explore and describe how technologies are part of selected English teachers'¹ practices in their everyday classroom teaching encounters. To this end, the study explored ICT integration by analyzing the studied teachers' qualitative perceptions, practices, and reflections concerning technology integration in teaching English and its effect on constructing learning. The exemplary² teachers' unique pedagogical perceptions, approaches, skills, and practices involving the use of technology in classroom teaching, as analyzed within this phenomenological case study design, can serve as inspiration for other teachers in global and European school contexts.

Statement of the Problem

In 21st-century European schools, therein in the Czech school context, new teaching technologies enter English education settings at teachers' workplaces, channeled by rapidly digitalizing global educational cultures (Voogt & Knezek, 2008). These developments variously affect the process of teaching and learning English, whereby teachers' daily classroom practices are accordingly influenced (Tour, 2015). For example, European school systems are largely supported by computers, laptops, mobile phones, etc., based on convergent and ubiquitous technologies, which offer easy access to global knowledge of educational significance (Furber, 2012; Voogt & Knezek, 2008). However, as digital technologies appear and are applied in school education,

¹ English in this paper stands for EFL.

² Throughout this paper "exemplary teacher" is a shorthand for the teachers who were studied in this research, referencing both the fact that they were the "studied examples" and the fact that they were selected for their exemplary practices of ICT integration in EFL teaching at school.

they trigger mixed educational perspectives and experiences (Selwyn, 2012). Besides, while admittedly the educational potential of using technologies in teaching English as a subject in European schools is widely acknowledged, multiple inconsistencies still persist (Lund, 2003). Whereas research findings on teachers' classroom practices of ICT integration are considerably divergent, I find Angers' (2005) insights illuminating and helpful. Angers argues that teachers must provide digital technology-enhanced learning experiences in the 21st-century English classroom. This can be accomplished through teachers' innovative pedagogical approaches and/or the skills and practices of ICT integration in EFL classrooms (Godwin, 2015).

Part of the problem with ICT integration in EFL teaching lies in the educational policy and research as such, which, as the literature attests, abound in inconsistent perspectives and, hence, propose varying approaches and divergent conclusions. For example, some studies in line with Rahimi and Samaneh (2011) adopt an instrumental approach to technology integration in teaching English, simply focusing on teachers' increasing use of digital devices, irrespective of how such devices are employed in classrooms. Other authors in various ways espouse educational digital policy perspectives, epitomized in the OECD (2010) documents on the project of technology integration. In such studies, major discussions are devoted to indicating priorities, e.g., either developing school digital systems or training teachers to operate digital devices or systems. However, frameworks such as these do not explore comprehensively how technologies affect the process of teaching and learning and/or what particular teacher practices could realistically be regarded as key determinants of the effects of technology integration in teaching English on learning processes (Warschauer, 2000).

Besides, as there are several divergent notions of the potential of technologies, different educational policy discourses, and varying expectations concerning educationally significant teachers' skills, many issues related to ICT integration remain uncharted and unaddressed. Czech educational research, slim in volume as it generally is, does not address them either.

Research Aims

Against the inconsistent educational policy research perspectives and practices that reductively define technology integration solely in terms of the increasing use of digital devices (Davis, 1989), the aim of this study was to explore ICT integration in EFL teaching from the exemplary teachers' qualitative pedagogical perspectives, focusing on how the skillful use of technology in classroom contributed to constructing learning (Aydı & Yildiz, 2014). As such, the study aimed to build on the phenomenologically

underpinned concepts and research experience (Lier, 1996). The study also took into account that, following the common European framework of reference for languages (North, 2007), several educational discourses and research findings seem to regard the application of technologies in EFL teaching as instrumental to enhancing the skills of intercultural communication. Mindful of these ideas, the research employed the phenomenological case study design in order to collect and analyze data on the exemplary teachers' qualitative pedagogical practices and cultural themes concerning the impact of the use of technology in the EFL classroom on constructing learning. Driven by this aim, the study anticipated to explore and describe how technologies formed a part of exemplary teachers' English classroom routines and contributed to advancing the learning process.

Research Scope and Results

Background and Significance

This paper presents a case study of teachers' exemplary practices in using technologies in the English classroom and their impact on constructing learning as defined in terms of communication skills within the intercultural framework. In presenting the findings, I articulate the significance of this study at three levels, specifically: theoretical, methodological, and empirical levels, keeping in mind three primary groups that can benefit from my research as well as other general readers.

At the theoretical level, this phenomenological case study contributes to the phenomenological (social) constructivist concept by presenting an interactive learning framework to study technology integration in the English classroom from a teacher perspective. It focuses on teachers' interactive didactic approaches, skills, and practices of technology use in classroom as combining teachers' phenomenological perceptions, practices, and reflections on developing learning. With this comprehensive concept, it was found that a knowledge triangle as composed of three main intersecting components (i.e., EFL, ICT, and didactics) is developed by teachers in their practice of teaching English based on skills of collaboration. In this model, the teacher enables the students to use technologies as enriching social and cultural media for developing creative language skills in transformative learning practices. From this perspective, teaching practices in which the use of technologies is limited to textual transmission are argued to yield only mechanical outcomes. Viewed through the phenomenological lens, technology integration in the English classroom amounts

to an interactive learning process; and research on technology integration from the EFL teacher's perspective is still insufficient (Warschauer, 2000). To fill this gap, my phenomenologically-underpinned research project, designed as a qualitative case study, drew on notions of (social) construction to explore ICT integration in EFL teaching in all its complexity.

At the methodological level, my research explored the potential of the qualitative phenomenological case-study design (Cohen et al., 2013). In this design, dynamic methods of inquiry, researcher and participant roles, tools and techniques and skills of analysis are coherently brought together to illuminate the studied phenomenon in all its complexity. This method works as an interactive inquiry process delving into a selected educational issue. Several research projects in education have actually relied on this paradigm. However, phenomenological case studies addressing technology integration in ELF teaching from the exemplary teacher perspective are still rather scarce since the predominant model of research has been and still is limited to quantitative analyses within the cognitivist paradigm. While quantitative studies admittedly undertake to explore the educational potential of technologies that modernize EFL teaching and learning geared to the improvement of communication skills, quantitative research as a rule reduces the multifaceted integration of technology in classrooms to teachers' purely mechanistic practices. As an alternative, my project based on the phenomenological case-study design highlights the significance of qualitative research as a model of producing comprehensive knowledge and explores ICT integration through an examination of exemplary teachers' interactive pedagogical behaviors, skills, and cultural themes related to the use of technologies in constructing learning.

At the empirical level, this study draws on the lived experiences of exemplary practitioners to expand our knowledge of English didactics and the effects of ICT integration on the development of learning processes. Practically, this study offers implications for integrating technologies in EFL classrooms both globally and in the Czech school context. In this respect, in contrast to the limited and inadequate technology-involving practices of transmitting English from the native linguistic system to non-native global citizens, my study draws on the exemplary teachers' uses of technology for enhancing classroom practices which foster communication skills. The selected exemplary teachers from Czech elementary schools build their teaching upon the communicative approach and apply the blended-learning model. Discussing the exemplary teachers' practices, my study argues that teachers' qualitative pedagogical perceptions, approaches, and skills involving the use of technologies are significantly related to advancing technology integration in EFL teaching for promoting change-responsive learning which develops intercultural communication skills as required by the agenda of global citizenship.

More specifically, this study offers benefits to three groups of actors. One of them includes school-level teachers of English who encounter technologies in their daily classroom practices. This group of professionals can grasp and utilize the complexity of ICT integration examining exemplary teachers' unique perceptions, principles, practices (skills), and reflections concerning the impact of the use of technology in the EFL classroom on developing learning process. Instead of replicating the usual concepts in which technology integration is limited to building mechanical educational practices (Dcokstader, 1999), school teachers should implement innovative pedagogical approaches in which the use of technology in ELF teaching hinges on and augments the skills of intercultural communication (Byram, 2008). Another group of beneficiaries of this study is comprised of English teacher educators interested in exploring how educational approaches, skills, and techniques involving technology integration can be used to develop teacher competences (Grečnerová, 2015). Exemplary teacher practices embody and bolster the idea of developing teacher competences and skills beyond the mere operation of digital devices and focus on increasing learning interactions in the EFL classroom. The third group to whom this study can be useful includes policy makers and discourse producers, whose growing digital priorities generate high expectations toward English, but who nevertheless continue to define achievements in terms of teachers' knowledge of technologies, rather than in terms of how technologies are actually used in teaching and to what extent their educational potential is realized in actual school realities.

Key Concepts and Theory

This research study investigated technology integration in teaching English from a teacher perspective, and explored teacher's science of didactics, which determines classroom practices using technology in order to construct learning (Lund, 2003). Teacher's science of practice as a developmental phenomenon has been variously captured, and relevant research findings have rarely been conclusive. For example, according to the conventional paradigm, teachers' practices are limited to implementing the approach in which the aims of technology integration are reduced to fulfilling the curricular demands (Arnesen, 2010). In contrast, phenomenological thought inquires into teachers' practice by taking into account teachers' qualitative pedagogical approaches, skills, and cultural themes involving the use of technology (Angers, 2005). Thereby technology and EFL are viewed as intersecting educational subjects which are integrated by teachers into a knowledge-constructing model in order to develop teaching and learning (Lund, 2003). In this study, technologies, English as a Foreign Language, and

teacher practice were defined as the principal categories from the phenomenological perspective and were approached as transformative knowledge phenomena constructed and developed within teachers' qualitative actions of integration.

Building on the phenomenological framework, ICT was comprehended not merely as computer-based structural devices which serve as sources or transmitters of information; rather, following Selwyn (2012), ICT was understood as ubiquitous innovative digital and sociocultural contexts, concepts, knowledge tools, media, and skills and, hence, as educational technologies making their way into European schools in the digital age. The discussion also drew on the European educational digital strategy perspectives (e.g., European Commission, 2013; Grečnerová, 2015) which tie technologies to key educational purposes. One of such purposes is the modernization of teaching and learning school subjects, such as English, by addressing and fostering 21st-century skills (Tour, 2015). In this regard, digital strategy perspectives (Commission, 2013; Carstens & Pelgrum, 2009; OECD, 2014; Tondeur, Braak, & Valcke, 2006; Net, 2013; Kamylylis et al., 2015; Grečnerová, 2015, p. 7) give precedence to developing digital teaching infrastructure at schools and promoting teachers' digital competence as the key elements in integrating technology to enhance learning processes. However, I also found that despite the growing digital priority (Grečnerová, 2015), the European education policy reductively framed technology integration in almost purely instrumental terms. Though such an approach can bolster the use of technologies in subject teaching, it certainly does not tap into the educational potential of ICT (Dcokstader, 1999). At that point, I ascertained that technology integration in European schools was based on different paradigmatic models (Harasim, 2012), though in some cases technology integration practices extended beyond such constraints (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). A good exemplification was provided by computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) models (Warschauer, 1997), in which subject teachers (here, English teachers) were engaged in interactive practices of technology use that virtually promoted innovation in teaching and learning process (Godwin-Jones, 2010).

My study conceptualized English as a global subject (Kachru, 2006) within the European framework (Knechtelsdorfer, 2013; Council of Europe, 2000) and linked it to the Czech educational context, focusing on the construction of learning through the skills of intercultural communication (European Commission, 2006; Nekvapil & Sherman, 2009). Within this thematic scope, I highlighted the fact that the use of technologies in teaching English in European schools, therein in Czech schools, principally aimed to enhance classroom practices serving to construct learning and foster intercultural communicative competence as a necessary skill of global citizenship (Klimova, 2015).

Defining EFL teacher practices, I theorized technology integration in the EFL classroom in line with Van Lier (2000), Johnson (2008), and others. Consistently with their insights, technology integration was understood as a complex practice which involved teachers' qualitative pedagogical approaches, skills, and cultural themes concerning the use of technologies in EFL teaching for the enhancement of communication skills. While the learning of skills was generally at the core of classroom practices of technology use (Tondeur et al., 2017; Angers, 2005), in EFL teaching the focus was specifically on interculturally conceived communication skills (Byram, 2008).

In theoretical, methodological, and empirical terms, my study represented the category of phenomenological (social) constructivist (Scott & Palincsar, 2014) case study. Designed in this way, it examined exemplary skills and actions of exemplary teachers in their innovative learning encounters in order to explore technology integration in the English classroom as a comprehensive learning process (Warschauer, 2010). In doing this, I investigated the exemplary teachers' interactive didactic and media-based approaches and practices of integrating technologies and English as intersecting subjects into a knowledge constructing model (Lund, 2003). Within this framework, teachers not only collaborate with learners but also engage with technologies as enriching social and cultural knowledge systems of educational significance (Murphy, 2007). With such perceptions and practices, technology integration builds upon skills of communication (Lier, 1996) as defined in intercultural terms (Byram, 2008). Although research into technologies in teaching English is abundant, I agreed with Warschauer's (2000) claim about the scarcity of focused, phenomenologically underpinned studies on ICT integration. Given this, the study was designed to contribute to the phenomenological (social) constructivist paradigm (Warschauer, 2010) supported by the phenomenological case study methodology (Cohen et al., 2013).

My research using the qualitative, phenomenological case-study design explored technology integration in teaching English through active interactions between the researchers and the participants in order to illuminate ICT integration in all its complexity (Cohen, et al., 2013). To this end, I explored the exemplary teachers' perceptions, practices, and reflections expressive of their pedagogical approaches to and skills of using technologies in EFL teaching so as to construct learning (Lund & Lund, 2006). These variables involved in ICT integration in the English classroom were analyzed in relation to the basic research questions formulated in the research project.

Research Methods

The main objective of the research was to explore and describe how technologies formed part of English teachers' daily classroom teaching practices and how they impacted the construction of learning. In addressing this overarching objective, the research was designed as a phenomenological case study design guided by the central research question and related sub-questions:

Research Question

1. How do the exemplary EFL teachers use ICT in their EFL classrooms?

This question helped explore teachers' decisions on the use of technologies in the classroom, particular applications of technologies, their functions and teachers' related reflections. Tying in with the phenomenological stance, the second sub-question was:

2. How do exemplary teachers' individual factors contribute to the use of ICT in their EFL classrooms?

Answers to these open questions were expected to illuminate exemplary teachers' motivations to use technologies in constructing learning as well as the barriers they faced in these pursuits.

Design, Participants and Data Procedures

Informed by phenomenological concepts which gave it an open analytical approach, this research used the case-study design to analyze ICT integration in EFL teaching (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013). Within this design, four exemplary teachers of English from selected Czech elementary schools were studied for data as voluntary participants. The data were qualitatively analyzed using the variable oriented method (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Applying the qualitative procedures, I explored how ICT formed a part of the exemplary teachers' practices of EFL classroom teaching used to develop learning. This was meant to produce a better understanding of how technology integration in teaching English in Czech schools had been developing as a learning process.

Findings, Discussion and Conclusion

My study on teachers' practices of technology integration in EFL classrooms in Czech elementary schools involved four exemplary teachers and delved into their decision to use (or not) technologies, their practices, reflections and individual

factors associated with teachers' practices in real classroom situations. I related the exemplary teachers' use of technology to the blended-learning model within the common framework of teaching English. Despite common representations, the teachers' individual differences were identified in perceptions, practices, reflections, and individual factors. In this regard, each participant claimed that her/his practice of technology integration was based on an individual approach, skills, purposes and functions, and thereby on individual principles of learning. Given this, I identified the exemplary teachers' technology-involving practices as founded on such principles, characteristic of communicative approaches, therein learning by doing, learning by inquiry, learning by collaborative action, and learning by game on the trial and error method.

I discussed my empirical findings in triangulation with the existing research focused on the effects of technology integration in EFL didactics on constructing learning. By presenting the practices of the exemplary Czech elementary school teachers, my study offers a contribution to the discussion on the limited and inadequate ways in which teachers integrate technology in English classrooms in the global setting (Qian, 2016) by linking the Czech context to the transmission of English in the native linguistic system (Kramsch, 2008). I argue for the significance of teachers' pedagogical skills in using technologies to enhance classroom practices which stimulate innovative learning process (Tondeur et al., 2017) involving interculturally defined communication skills (Byram, 2008). Based on the exemplary teachers' interactive practices of technology integration in English classrooms, I propose that it is possible to change patterns of English instruction by enhancing intercultural communication skills for global citizenship. To accomplish this goal, I advocate the idea of blended approaches, such as CALL, based not only on cognitive frameworks but also on phenomenological social construction models (Warschauer, 2000). I finally argue for technology integration in the English classroom with a view to constructing learning based on meta-cognitive skills. Such educational environments and practices are undoubtedly conducive to transformative teacher learning for better student learning within the emerging European context.

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Title:

The Evolution of Teacher Education Programmes in Different Countries with a Special Focus on the Role of Practicum in Developing Teacher Competences

Abstract

Educational stakeholders should work in collaboration for achieving quality and effectiveness in education. However, there is a gap among practitioners, researchers and policy-makers. The literature insists that practitioners should be at the centre of knowledge production. Given this, initial teacher education (ITE) has an acknowledgeable role in preparing future teachers for such endeavours by empowering them to conduct research. On the basis of ITE programmes at two universities in Hungary and Austria, this study aims to explore the role of practicum in developing student teachers' competences and preparing them for conducting practice-oriented research. Data were collected through document analysis and interviews and group interviews with student teachers.

Keywords:

initial teacher education, research-based teacher education, teachers as researchers, Hungary, Austria

THE EVOLUTION OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE ROLE OF PRACTICUM IN DEVELOPING TEACHER COMPETENCES

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Studies argue that the quality and effectiveness of an education system cannot possibly exceed the quality of the teacher labour force (McKinsey Report, 2007); therefore, relevant educational stakeholders, including practitioners, in-service teachers, researchers and policymakers, should focus on improving the quality of the profession (Eötvös Loránd University EDiTE Team, 2014). Although stakeholders should implement such improvement measures in collaboration and mutual recognition, in reality, there is a gap among educational research, educational practice and educational policy making (Commission of the European Communities, 2007; Snoek, 2011). There are numerous reasons behind this gap, including the following: (1) the traditional model of expert-led, peer-reviewed educational research, where dissemination is a top-down process, still dominates; (2) from the practitioners' point of view, educational research fails to provide useful results for their everyday practice; and (3) the stakeholders are not ready to collaborate in an interdisciplinary and interprofessional manner. Hargreaves (1999) argues that a new model of research should be promoted, in which practitioners are at the heart of knowledge production processes.

Policies in the European Union have also shifted towards encouraging cooperation between researchers and practitioners in the form of building bridges between the worlds of academia and practice (Eötvös Loránd University EDiTE Team, 2014; Pesti et al., 2018). Numerous studies highlight the importance of teacher educators' engagement in research (e.g. Cochran-Smith, 2005), and although there are also endeavours to engage student teachers in such pursuits (Smith & Sela, 2005; Ulvik, 2014), they are less systematic at the level of initial teacher education (henceforth ITE) programmes, and the issue as such is less thoroughly researched (Smith, 2015; Pesti et al., 2018).

Research Aims

The overall aim of my research was to explore the role that practicum as part of ITE programmes at two universities in Hungary and Austria played in developing student teachers' competences and preparing them for conducting practice-oriented research. My project was driven by the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of pedagogical-psychological courses and practicum in ITE programmes?
2. How does practicum in ITE programmes contribute to the development of competences required for conducting practice-oriented research in the participating countries?
3. What are the experiences of student teachers regarding practice-oriented research?

Research Scope and Results

The Background and Significance of the Study

The way in which the teaching profession in general and teacher professionalism in particular are conceptualised is always closely related to the current socio-economic situation. Durkheim's claim that 'education is only the image and reflection of society' (Durkheim, 1897/1952, pp. 372–373 in Pezone & Singer, 2003) is to some extent a valid notion of teacher professionalism as well. Teacher professionalism of yesterday may not be adequate to face the social challenges of tomorrow (Gay, 2010). The literature suggests that teacher quality is of crucial importance to the quality of an educational system and student learning (e.g. McKinsey Report, 2007). Teacher quality may also be differently interpreted in different times and contexts; therefore, the role of ITE in preparing quality teachers is also subject to change. International discourse urges the strengthening of the relationship between theory and practice within ITE programmes as an opportunity for quality improvement. However, in the actual realities of programme development and implementation, such appeals are open not only to different national but even to different institutional interpretations.

Although Hungary and Austria are neighbours and share some common historical roots, the trends of changes in the systems of teacher education in the two countries exhibit major differences. These systems of teacher education have lately faced significant changes as a result of the recent reforms in both countries. While the two countries share a common historical background, and education was a common issue under the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867–1918), in our times Hungary and Austria

have stepped on different paths when it comes to teacher education. In Hungary, two major reforms have taken place in recent years. First, with the introduction of the Bologna process, teacher education was assigned to the Master level, but in 2013 it was restored to the undivided system, the way it had been before the Bologna-type system was launched. In Austria, the opposite process can be observed: until recently teacher education was implemented in an undivided, long-cycle system, but since 2015 it has been structured as stipulated in the Bologna process.

Further analysis of ITE programmes, especially of those components that describe the educational preparation of future teachers, may reveal how teacher professionalism or, more specifically, the *role of practice in preparing student teachers to conduct practice-oriented research* is interpreted by programme developers.

Key Concepts and Theory

Although international discourse commonly refers to teacher education as being research-based, which results in many teacher education programmes being tagged as research-based, there is an urgent need to use more differentiated ‘tags’ that are more informative about the manners in which research is integrated into teaching. To explore the extent of integration of research into teaching more thoroughly, we shall take a step away from teacher education and have a look at this issue in the context of higher education in general. The relationship of research and teaching in this general higher education context is a fiercely debated issue. While some authors claim that university research is conducted at the expense of teaching quality (e.g. Figlio & Schapiro), others argue for the opposite view, contending that research enriches the quality of teaching (Healey, 2005; Pesti et al., 2018). Moreover, another strand of research evidence on the relationship of research and teaching further strengthens this divisive effect: while Hattie and Marsh (1996) did not find any significant relationship between teaching effectiveness and research productivity, Jenkins, Breen, Lindsay and Brew (2003) insist that there is evidence that students prefer learning in a research-based environment (Pesti et al., 2018).

Numerous studies have proved that the field of discipline – or, as Healey (2005) refers to it, the disciplinary space – significantly defines the nature of the relationship between research and teaching (e.g. Moses, 1990; Donald, 2002). In the context of teacher education, this raises the question of dominance: is the disciplinary space more influenced by the chosen subjects of student teachers, or by educational science represented by education, pedagogy and/or psychology departments? According to Healey (2005), ‘departments and individuals vary in the way that they construct the

linkage between research and teaching' (p. 3). Healey describes the following three dimensions of the research-teaching nexus for curricula design:

1. Emphasising the research content or the research processes and problems;
2. Treating students as the audience or participants;
3. Teaching is teacher-focused or student-focused.

Drawing on the work of Griffiths (2004) and based on these three dimensions, Healey's model of curriculum design and the research-teaching nexus identifies four quadrants (Figure 1): research-led, research-tutored, research-oriented and research-based.

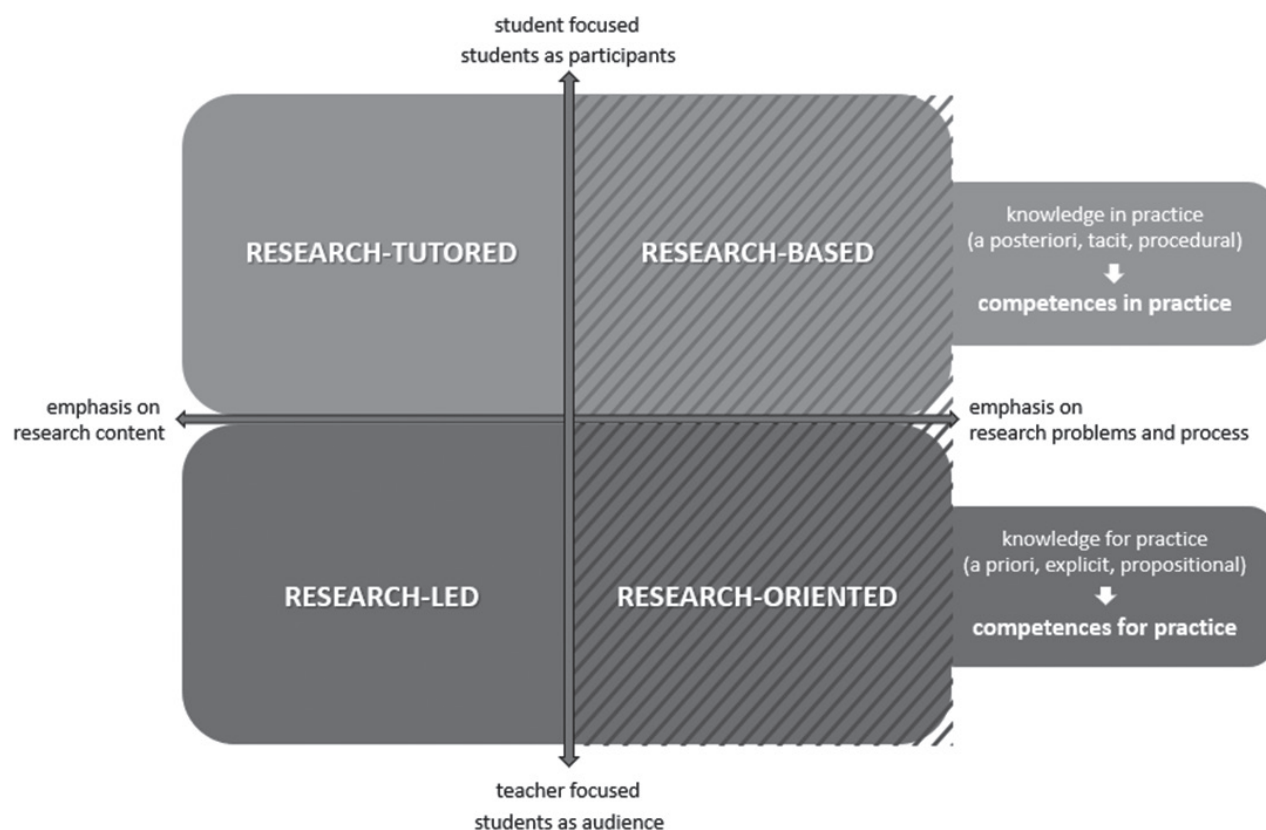


Figure 1. Adaptation of the research-teaching nexus to the context of ITE (based on Healey & Jenkins, 2009)

If we take into consideration the role of students (active or passive) and the differentiation between knowledge for and knowledge in practice proposed by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), research-led and research-oriented quadrants contribute to student teachers' competences for practice (the a priori/explicit/propositional type of knowledge acquisition), while research-tutored and research-based quadrants contribute to student teachers' competences in practice (the a posteriori/tacit/procedural type of knowledge acquisition).

Research Methods

I embarked on a pragmatic research journey to explore the role of practicum in developing student teachers' competences and preparing them for conducting practice-oriented research, as exemplified in ITE programmes at two universities in Hungary and Austria. I followed a mixed-method approach which combined the methods of document analysis, interviews and group interviews (Creswell, 2014).

In my research, I relied on the case-study design, where four ITE programmes offered by universities of two countries (Hungary and Austria) represented the two cases to be studied. As already stated in the outline of the current state of research, little is known about the researched issue from student teachers' point of view (especially in the national context of the two cases); therefore, according to Yin's differentiation of case study types (1984, 2014), this study can be considered to be mostly exploratory. However, the research extends beyond a pure exploration of the phenomena and leans towards the category of a descriptive case study. Moreover, it has an embedded multiple case design (Yin, 1984), because it involves two cases, using multiple sources of data (course descriptions, interviews and group interviews with student teachers) in each of them, as illustrated in Figure 2.

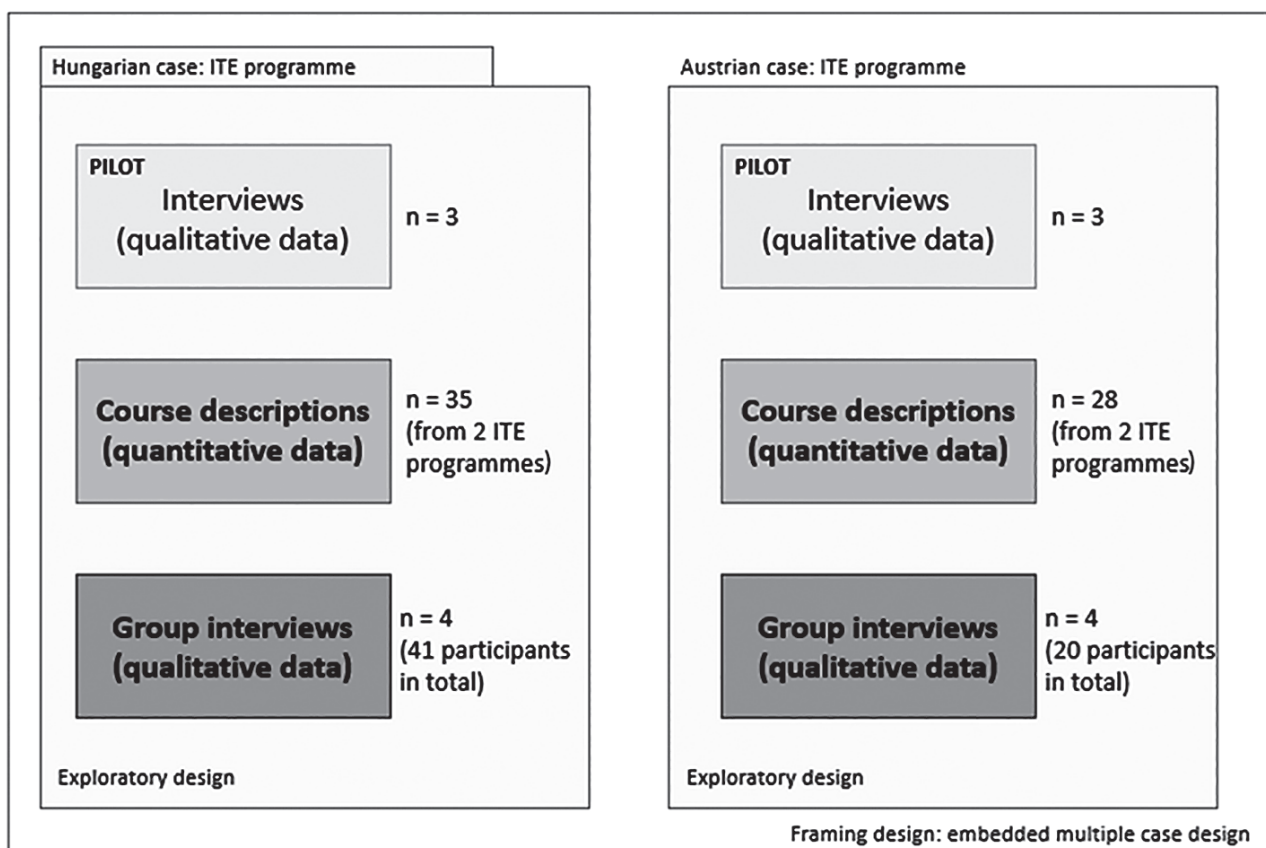


Figure 2. Research design

Research Results

In Hungary, the presence of research-related competences in course descriptions is more pronounced in the undivided programme than it was before. Moreover, the undivided programme stipulates that courses should be evidence-based. However, this evidence-based approach is less visible in other elements of the course descriptions, such as activities or contents. In the Austrian programmes, the course descriptions are thoroughly structured, but not as detailed as in the Hungarian ones. In the latest Austrian teacher education programme, there is a unique research methodology course that is based on student teachers' research projects. The competences that student teachers are supposed to acquire are defined at module levels, so it is not immediately visible on which particular competences individual courses focus and how they are developed.

In both countries, a shift towards research-based ITE underpinned by the findings is observable. The literature suggests that the four quadrants of the teaching-research integration (Healey & Jenkins, 2009) can be arranged in a linear way to track the shift towards research-based education. Given this, my findings have revealed that the characteristics of research-led and research-tutored quadrants are easy to grasp, and that there is evidence of a shift towards the research-based quadrant. However, the research-oriented quadrant seems to be a missing link, and if we realise that this quadrant is where student teachers are supposed to be empowered methodology-wise to conduct research, it is questionable if research-based teacher education can be achieved without paying more attention to the research-oriented quadrant.

The collected data also show that the two cases are similar in this respect, only differing in the distribution of emphasis across various aspects. All the interviewees conducted some research-related activities during their practicum at schools, but in many instances, they did not consider these activities to be research or inquiry, as for a lot of them such activities were just one task among many, and they failed to channel the results or the lessons learnt back to their learning. One reason for this may be that students are not prepared to conduct research, and that they do not see the big picture or the relevance of educational research. In Austria, it became evident how powerfully the departments influenced student teachers' attitude towards educational research. Students who trained to be teachers of one or two natural sciences-related subjects were strongly attached to the respective natural-science departments, and by the time they began their educational studies, they had developed an extreme and mostly rejective attitude towards educational research.

In general, it can be concluded that student teachers learn about their teacher educators' research, but it is difficult for them to connect it to their practice. Student teachers in both countries reported the lack of preparation to conduct research, and

judging by the methods or the participants they chose for their small-scale research projects, we may indeed conclude that the research-oriented quadrant is the missing link. Consequently, besides the hackneyed things, such as ‘let’s do a questionnaire with pupils at the beginning of my practicum and at the end of it,’ or ‘let’s do an interview with another teacher at the school,’ student teachers do not seem to have the methodological repertoire to conduct inquiries into their practice.

Discussion and Conclusions

Austria and Hungary are of special interest in respect to recent reforms in their teacher education systems. Although the countries share a common historical background as former parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, currently the general trends in their teacher education systems at the structural level are the opposites of each other. Besides exploring these structural changes and the characteristics of teacher education programmes through document analysis, this study involved student teachers of these programmes in interviews and group interviews in order to explore their experiences related to the teaching-research integration. Even though the concept of ‘teachers as researchers’ and its importance regarding student teachers’ learning have already been investigated, little known is about whether the use of inquiry across teacher education programmes is systematic (Munthe & Rogne, 2015); moreover, the perspective of student teachers on this issue is still underexamined.

A recent study on teacher quality has identified supporting teachers as high-level professionals as a top-level long-term policy strategy that can contribute to teacher professionalism (European Commission, 2018). At this level of strategy development, the primary aim is to create bridges among various measures in order to consider teacher professionalism as an advanced concept. With a view to this aim, innovation and knowledge creation and dissemination are promoted, and the support for the concept of teachers as researchers is advocated at the policy level. Also, the importance of collaboration among various educational stakeholders is highlighted, such as schools, teacher educators, educational authorities, researchers, social and private sector actors, etc.

One manifestation of promoting the concept of teachers as researchers by supporting teachers’ learning and integration of research into their practice involves a reinvention of the lesson study genre through introducing the so-called learning study as a means of curriculum development (Halász, 2018). The present study has revealed that the research-related methodological repertoire of student teachers is mostly restricted to lesson observations, interviews and questionnaires, and that there is a lack

of research into their practice. This raises the question whether ITE provides a reliable foundation for student teachers to integrate research into their everyday practice in order to improve their practice and/or the profession in general, to become curriculum developers and/or to contribute to school development, all these with the aim of fostering better student (pupil) learning.

Another – anthropologically inflected – concept of teachers as researchers is brought into focus when one considers the growing importance of multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching. The point is that, primarily due to technological advances and a variety of other factors, classrooms are becoming increasingly heterogeneous, and teachers need to find ways to interact with multicultural student groups in multicultural environments (Stottlemeyer, 2018; Boreczky, 2014). The advocates of culturally responsive teaching argue that if school practitioners are not familiar with the pupils' and students' cultures and their pedagogical notions, the achievement gap and/or the opportunity gap cannot be closed (Boreczky, 2014). Teacher knowledge that is indispensable for culturally responsive teaching can be acquired through fieldwork, where teachers conduct interviews with their pupils' and students' families and observe the interactions, communication, habits, etc., with the family. Moreover, research forms based on narrative methods (including teachers' and teacher students' narratives as well as narratives collected during fieldwork) (Sleeter & McLaren, 1995; Gay, 2000; Boreczky, 2014) also contribute to the professional socialisation of teachers and the development of their cultural competences. Therefore, such approaches are highly relevant to ITE.

The student teachers interviewed in this study reported that they only had a limited set of data collection methods at their disposal. This finding invites reflection and encourages recommending some solutions. For instance, the genre of lesson study, which originated in Japan but is becoming increasingly recognised worldwide, is a method that could easily be integrated into ITE programmes as a tool for transforming student teachers' experiential knowledge into explicit knowledge. Providing student teachers with opportunities to conduct lesson studies and empowering them to use this method in their career would not only benefit their professional development, but also contribute to schools becoming learning organisations (Gordon Győri, Halász, & Endrődy-Nagy, 2017).

My findings show that reflection is the principal activity for both case-study settings, and the student teachers included in my study mentioned numerous instances of reflection-related activities. Although there is some evidence for the integration of research into teaching, the student teachers rather seem to represent the paradigm of the teaching profession that Menter et al. (2010) identified as the paradigm of reflective teachers.

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Title:

Developing Teacher Subjective Theories of Assessment

Abstract

Teachers' subjective theories about the purposes of assessment are relevant to how assessment is planned and implemented in classroom settings. Using a range of data sources, this interpretive qualitative study examined how ten teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Czech lower secondary schools perceived their subjective theories and how these beliefs influenced their assessment practices within the classroom. The findings show that teachers' construction of subjective theories was influenced by policy, practice and beliefs. However, the teachers' practice of classroom assessment in relation to student learning remained traditional. Furthermore, the results reveal how teachers confronted conflicting situations in which the purpose of assessment was at stake.

Keywords:

subjective theories, assessment planning and implementation, EFL teachers, lower secondary schools

DEVELOPING TEACHER SUBJECTIVE THEORIES OF ASSESSMENT

Introduction

The interest in assessment has significantly increased in recent years. Assessment has multiple purposes that range from providing information about student learning and progress, to improving teaching and learning, to upholding institutional accountability. The study of teacher subjective theories is critical in understanding and explaining assessment issues. This study in general aims to explore teachers' subjective theories of assessment as a method for understanding and explaining assessment practices and purposes. As teachers are crucial in the lives of students, examining teachers' subjective theories of assessment can contribute to improving teaching and learning processes.

Statement of the Problem

For some time now, education policy has placed increasing emphasis on assessment and drawn policy attention toward the consolidation of assessment for and as learning in the classroom (OECD, 2013). However, there is a much-discussed problem with assessment and with how teachers relate to determining learning in a lower secondary school settings. This problem, specifically, is a misalignment between the methods and the intended uses and purposes of various assessment approaches (Antoniou & James, 2014; DeLuca, Luu, Sun, & Klinger, 2012; Scheerens et al., 2012). The problem is further aggravated by teachers' incapacity to implement rigorous programs of assessment for and as learning in their classrooms. Currently, research repeatedly reports the prevalence of ineffective assessment practices in many classrooms (Hattie, 2009; Hill, 2011; Strakova & Simonová, 2013). If the purpose of assessment is to determine learning, it is essential to understand teachers' subjectivity regarding the role of assessment.

While the purpose and practice of assessment continue to be hot topics of discussion, the availability of data on teachers' subjectivity regarding assessment is critical to understanding their assessment practices. Prior studies have shown that the focus on teacher subjectivity is an effective way to study educational issues, including instruction and assessment (Barnes, Fives, & Dacey, 2015; Brown, 2008; Brown & Remesal, 2017; Diaz, Martinez, Roa, & Sanhueza, 2010; Fives & Buehl, 2012; Remesal, 2011). What is not known in the Czech context, however, is what

impact teachers' subjectivity has on teaching and learning, and whether assessment planning and practices are affected by teachers' subjectivity.

Research Aims

The purpose of this interpretive qualitative research was to explore and understand lower secondary teachers' subjective theories of assessment in order to grasp how these teachers planned and implemented assessment tasks to support teaching and learning with the overall purpose of overcoming classroom assessment challenges. One-on-one interviews were conducted, followed by classroom observations and producing the researcher's notes on the observations. Additionally, key student documents were reviewed within the study, and a thematic analysis was carried out in order to understand and to interpret assessment practices utilised within the lower secondary classrooms. The use of various sources of qualitative data made it possible to examine the teachers' construction of subjective theories of assessment in greater depth.

The study was guided by the following overall research aim:

To explore teachers' thought processes regarding the planning and implementation of assessment practices that support learning.

Research Scope and Results

The Background and Significance of the Study

The study of lower-secondary EFL teachers' subjective theories of assessment was situated in the Czech Republic. The teachers who participated in the study taught English as Foreign Language to Grades 7–9. EFL teachers were chosen for the study because English as a school subject is a recent item in the Czech curriculum, and understanding how ELF teachers planned and implemented assessment tasks to develop students' language skills was crucial in understanding how effectively these assessment tasks supported and enhanced learning. There are several reasons why this study is important for the Czech Republic's emerging emphasis on teacher education. These reasons are discussed below.

The study findings are intended to more clearly define teachers' subjective theories of assessment with regard to the purpose of assessment. These results will then serve

as information resources for a variety of stakeholders who play a significant role in the education of children in order to help them make informed decisions about assessment practices through taking into account how teachers' subjective theories can improve overall classroom assessment practices. The study can also be useful for the general improvement of assessment practices by promoting positive outcomes in producing knowledgeable and skilled teachers.

Key Concepts and Theory

Subjective theory: Subjective theories denote the ways in which people explain events that affect how they behave in the future (Groebe, 1990). Subjective theories influence how professionals understand, plan, and perform their actions (Keyserlingk, Casro, & Carrasco, 2013). Hence, in this study, subjective theories are understood as teachers' explanations of events and their impact on their classroom practices

Assessment: 'Assessment' describes the processes of evaluating the effectiveness of what has been learnt (Black & William, 1998).

Research Methods

In order to answer the research questions, the study adopted an interpretive qualitative research design to understand the lower secondary teachers' current perceptions of and conceptions about assessment and assessment practices. This research design was found appropriate as it enabled the researcher to study the participants in a natural setting, at the same time attempting to make sense of their actual experiences and interpreting the studied phenomenon in terms of the meanings that they attributed to it (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Mishler (1990) claims that a study need not conform to an exact methodological standard, but rather every researcher can bend the methodology to the peculiarities of the setting. Agreeing with this, Miles & Huberman (1994) assert that the researcher can look beyond apparent formalities to discover useful data for a study.

The data were collected from interviews, lesson observations, the researcher's notes and document analysis of student work. The lesson observations were not recorded; however, the observer kept a diary of observations. The observations were conducted prior to the interviews to learn more about the EFL teachers' constructs of subjective theories of assessment. Subsequently, during the interviews, explanations and clarifications concerning the classroom observations and students' work were elicited from the teachers.

The interviews were held in late fall 2017 and early spring 2018. An interview guide was used and the interviews were semi-structured (Kvale, 2007). The interviews lasted 60 to 90 minutes and were tape-recorded.

Research Results

This section deals with teachers' articulation of their subjective theories of assessment since such subjective theories are useful in understanding and explaining classroom assessment issues. For the purposes of this study, a subjective theory is understood as a teacher's understanding and explanation of assessment processes and practices. What emerges is a collective belief that teachers' subjective theories of assessment are constructed and influenced mostly by policy, practice and their own individual beliefs. The teachers' feelings, beliefs and understandings about assessment in relation to cognition and practice combine to reveal what these teachers consider to be essential, realistic and desirable in the EFL context. The data suggest that there are similar general patterns in the ten interviewed teachers' notions of assessment, and that these are associated with certain features of policy, practice and beliefs. The analysis has shown, for instance, that these ten teachers view assessment as an important tool to enhance learning. However, it has also been found that assessment is mostly focused on testing and grading. The teachers' idea about such assessment form is that it does not help in the process of learning. Despite such notions, teachers explained that they conducted such assessment tasks so as to collect grades throughout the course, as they ultimately needed a point average to give students their final grades. Such attitudes may at least in part be related to the conventional classroom practices employed by most of the teachers in their EFL teaching, learning and assessment practices. All of the lower secondary teachers in the sample adopted an 'established' approach to EFL assessment, following the customary 'test-discussion-grading' pattern. Typically, their style of test discussion is brief, and their practice of test activities is mostly summative. The teachers stated that their assessment was guided by the educational and institutional policy. In particular, the interview data revealed that the grading and testing methods they used were motivated by the educational policy. As far as the institutional policy is concerned, the teachers reflected that they used a common format of assessment within the language department with the purpose of standardising the assessment framework. Therefore, the teachers claimed that policy enormously contributed to and controlled teachers' formation of subjective theories of assessment.

Additionally, the teachers also said that although they might not agree with some of the assessment practices suggested by the policy in place, they nevertheless implemented them, as they believed that students were more motivated by grades than by any formative assessment of learning. Adding to this assertion, the teachers explained that culture and society reinforced this belief, as grades were the way in which the learner's performance was evaluated. Furthermore, the accountability of teachers and the school was also perceived through the lens of grading. All this reveals that some features of the traditional approach to assessment seem to have been absorbed into current pedagogical practice, if not necessarily into the teachers' belief system. All these contextual factors make the teachers give prominence to summative assessment as rigid policy implications, a tightly controlled environment and social demands compel them to abide by the entrenched pattern.

On the other hand, the teachers were also aware of the formative function of assessment. The general perception was that it was useful in enhancing learning. Moreover, research confirms the benefits of such assessment. Hence, the teachers also developed their subjective theories of assessment in regard to improving learning. They were guided by their own beliefs, and their motivations regarding these practices were mostly geared to supporting learning. One specific example of such dynamics, as revealed by the observations and observation notes, was the carrying out of three rounds of assessment to meet the desired learning goals. The teachers practiced self-, peer, and teacher assessment which, in their view, meant that students had gone through three levels of reworking their assignments before the final versions were submitted to the teacher. Accordingly, practice led to the formation of subjective theories of assessment, wherein teachers strongly held that for assessment to enhance learning, it should be formative; therefore, they modified their instruction according to the needs of the students in order to further their learning.

Besides, the teachers' own beliefs also influenced the formation of their subjective theories of assessment. One specific example of such an impact was the use of dots, colours and verbal feedback for assessing students. The black dots and colours were used to mark offenses which students had committed in class as well as to visualise learning differentiation. This was done to express something negative and to discourage learners from engaging in undesirable activities. Additionally, such methods were also adjusted to students' learning needs, based on their abilities. Regarding verbal feedback, the teachers said such assessment offered them an opportunity to explain things clearly and on a timely basis. Hence, they used it, driven by their own beliefs, as expressed in the following statement:

I have to conform to the law, so, I have to use the marks. I am also trying to use verbal assessment as my own belief. (**Tom**)

This is how the teachers' beliefs shaped their practice of assessment. However, on the whole, the teachers admitted that most of their assessment practices were carried out for the purposes of certifying learner performance since, as mentioned earlier, all accomplishments must be graded, as asserted in the utterance below:

Well, actually, policy does not influence my beliefs, but it influences the practice of assessment, because when everything has to be graded, so, regardless of what you tell your students or write them, you have to come up with these grades. (**Carla**)

Hence, the analysis of the teachers' interviews implies that the teachers' construction of subjective theories and their practice and application were simultaneously influenced and shaped chiefly by policy and partly by their own individual beliefs. Furthermore, the teachers indicated that although they preferred formative assessment, they anyway needed to comply with summative assessment procedures because of policy requirements. This situation reveals that teachers attach importance to both forms of assessment; however, in practice, the focus seems to be more on the summative formats. What is more, this finding further brings to attention teachers' mixed experiences and ambivalences in their thinking while processing and implementing assessment, as they are trapped between policy implementation and their own beliefs about these two forms of assessment. Summative assessment, which is largely numerical and judgemental, does not support learning. Despite the conservative nature of summative assessment, teachers continue to use it as they are obligated to do so. On the other hand, formative assessment focuses more on progress, and feedback is considered to be instrumental for supporting learning. However, this medium was found to be less frequently used, which was attributed to various factors, including institutional policy, heavy workloads, overcrowded classrooms and time constraints. In addition, the teachers also associated this practice with marks and indicated that students were actually more motivated by marks and grades than by other forms of assessment.

Within such an inconsistent environment, teachers also understand, for instance, that they need assessment for both evaluating and learning purposes, and that such assessment practices should embrace both forms of assessment. Teachers need to consistently adhere to the functions of both forms of assessment. In doing this, as

observed from the empirical data, teachers endorse the following interventions to mitigate the conflicting situations involved in assessment.

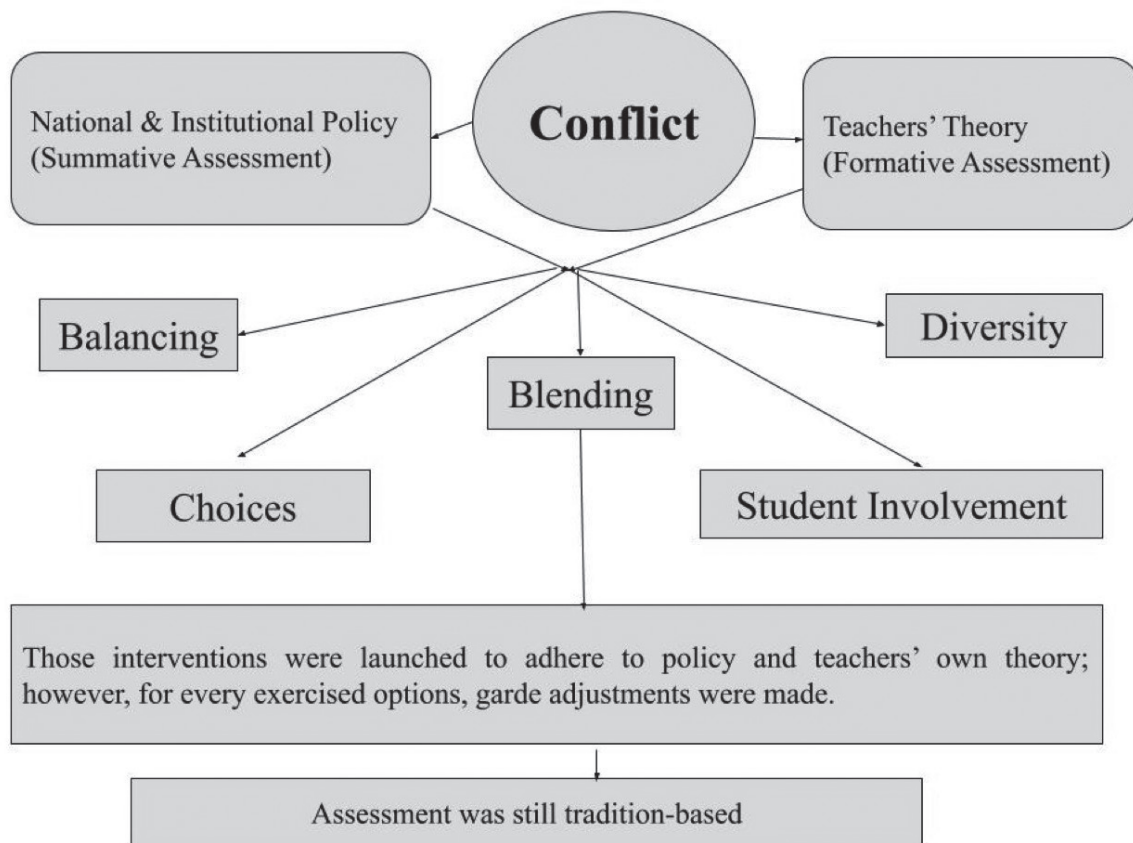


Figure 1. Interventions to resolve teachers' assessment conflicts

Balancing

To make sure that the purposes of both forms of assessment are met, one of teachers' crucial responsibilities is to find a balanced combination of summative and formative assessment forms. In doing so, the teachers from the sample used both forms in equal proportions to strike and maintain a balance between summative and formative aspects, as well as concentrating on their goals. In this regard, the teachers stated that this option allowed them to picture students' progress, anticipate students' learning outcomes and adjust assessment practices accordingly. This approach was adopted to satisfy the policy requirements and their beliefs.

Blending

Apart from this balancing act, the teachers also felt the necessity to use a blended approach to assessment in order to fulfil the aims of summative and formative assessment. Therefore, the teachers used and merged various forms of differentiated assessment, such as the use of colours, targeted tasks within similar ability groups, differentiated tests, and the like. In terms of practice, the teachers justified such techniques by claiming that they were useful in enhancing learning, as well as for certification purposes. For example, the teachers insisted that the use of colours and small marks was helpful in motivating learners as it enabled teachers to attend to students' individual needs. Additionally, it helped the teachers make grade adjustments based on students' levels of learning, in this way meeting policy demands as well as learning requirements. Drawing on their blended approach, the teachers stressed that this method ensured that each student's unique needs and characteristics were recognised. Furthermore, the teachers also changed their subjective theories of assessment depending on student types. The teachers identified three groups of students whose learning differed in terms of learning styles. Categorised on the basis of the activities that students undertook, these groups were: (1) an experienced or explorative group, who engaged in extra activities in addition to the mandatory ones given in the classroom; (2) an obligation-meeting group who fulfilled the demands of the teacher; and (3) the least engaged group, who did not practise English either inside or outside the classroom. In this way, the teachers held an idea that students learned differently, and they performed their teaching, learning and assessment roles accordingly, adapting their practice to the student types. This process also helped the teachers conform to the formalities of policy and their own beliefs about assessment.

Diversity

Allowing learners to make their own choices in their learning is viewed as one of the most engaging strategies a teacher can use, as it provides students with an opportunity to voice their decisions. Hence, in order to comply with the requirement of summative and formative assessment, the teachers endorsed this procedure by creating diverse assessment options in the form of projects, portfolios, essays, role plays and presentations, for diversity motivates students to learn. As indicated by the teachers, due to such diversity, students could take ownership of their learning and represent their work in the ways of their choice. Besides, it also enabled students to explore, express and exhibit ideas about the subjects of their interest. Building on

this, teachers could also make grade adjustments, based on students' representations of their work. As they were encouraged and motivated, the learners were found to exhibit more effort, hard work, dedication and commitment. In this way, their performance improved.

Choices

Giving students a choice is regarded as crucial to keeping them engaged. Drawing on the theory of engagement, the teachers in this study explicitly expressed the value of assessment-related choice-giving, as this strategy was hugely successful in keeping students involved in their learning. The teachers' general perceptions were that such an assessment approach encouraged students to be more open, amiable and interested, as they were given options to choose from and, based on their personal preferences, they could pick what they liked to do.

Choice is a big thing, especially with ninth-graders being able to have opportunities to choose the kind of presentations and projects they want to show their knowledge. They are very open and friendly and very interested in this kind of activity. (Debra)

Such practices and the availability of options encouraged students and further motivated them to work hard. In this way, students were kept engaged in their learning and, at the same time, provided teachers with avenues to award grades for certification purposes, based on students' interests and learning styles. Furthermore, most teachers stated in the interviews that optionality was well received by their students. Thus, the teachers regarded choice-giving as important and beneficial to student learning.

Student involvement

Involving students in the assessment process was viewed by the teachers as key to achieving the purposes of both summative and formative types of assessment. As seen from the observations and the observation notes, the teachers involved students in the process of self-, peer-, and teacher assessment by relying on a set of writing rubrics. The view of such a practice as reported by the teachers during the interviews was that it served the purposes of both summative and formative assessment. In regard to summative purposes, the teachers explained that students were required

to evaluate their writing based on the writing rubrics and accordingly, they had to justify their scoring process to the teacher. Based on such discussions, the teachers then determined the students' grades, depending on the soundness of the justification. With respect to formative assessment, the teachers claimed that when students were involved in the assessment process, they were spurred to take ownership of their learning. However, the teachers held mixed perceptions regarding student involvement in assessment. Although on the whole the teachers acknowledged the benefit of it, they generally tended to assert that such practices did not always work because they heavily depended on students' individual characteristics. The reason, as explained by the teachers, was students' inability to assess accurately and consistently. The teachers affirmed that involving the student in the assessment activity required expertise in cognition, application and processing of assessment skills; however, most students lacked these skills. As a result, reliable assessment was beyond their capacity.

Self-assessment means they should evaluate their work on the basis of what they know. However, self/peer-assessment simply doesn't work because they are sometimes not able to recognise the mistakes of their peers. So, this is a problem. (**Terry and John**)

Briefly, the teachers recognised the benefits of formative assessment in enhancing learning, but their classroom assessment practices were generally revealed to be rather traditional. Such a predominance of summative assessment was caused by policy, social and cultural factors. As concluded from the empirical data, for every exercised assessment option, the teachers acknowledged that they made grade adjustments for the purpose of certification, as, ultimately, the grade awarded represented the teacher's, the school's and the student's performance. Thus, the teachers insisted that they carried out all these assessment tasks solely to accumulate grades, which indicated the prevalence of traditional ways of assessing within the teachers' classrooms, despite their theories prioritising formative assessment as enhancing effective teaching and learning. This is reflected in the excerpt below:

With the class, after each unit I give them two tests, one is based on grammar and reading skills, listening comprehension or use of English. And the other test is based on vocabulary, and they get 2 marks for these tests. Then, they are usually given written assignments for each unit. And they get another mark as well. They also do a kind of presentation on the assignments they have written. And if they do well, I grade them because they want to get good marks. (**Carla**)

The passage above and the insights compiled in this section indicate that an undue emphasis is given to certification as a result of policy, cultural and social priorities.

Discussion

The teachers' constructs of assessment with regard to the purpose of assessment were largely shaped by educational policies and social and cultural norms, whereas some of their components were underpinned by the teachers' own theories. One such example is that in the parental and social culture children's performance is defined through the grades they achieve. This finding is consistent with Goldstein's (2017) claim that constructs reflect social and cultural norms, meaning that different societies and cultures will generally produce different constructs and therefore use different assessments. In conformity with Goldstein's (2017) view, the participants of this study were observed to give grades for every exercised assessment option in order to fulfil the requirements of policy, culture and society. This result further supported Harris and Brown's (2009) findings, which posit that teachers shape their subjective theories of assessment practices based on the policies in place and the social and cultural norms. The continuing influence of policy on assessment may prevent teachers from planning effective assessment practices, which may result in insufficient learning on the part of students. Research also shows that teachers' assessment practices are influenced by their principles related to their professional tasks (e.g. instruction, assessment) (Barnes, Fives, & Dacey, 2015; Fives & Buehl, 2012) and/or by their conceptions of what constitutes proper classroom assessment (Brown & Remesal, 2017; Remesal, 2011). This was evident in this study, as the results found that the teachers' assessment-planning and implementing practices were aligned with their beliefs regarding the purpose of assessment. This highlights the need for teachers to reflect on their own theory as they implement assessment for the benefit of students. The findings explicitly revealed that the teachers' construction of subjective theories of assessment was simultaneously moulded by policy, practice and beliefs. A similar finding was reported by Breen and colleagues (2001). In their analysis of teachers' principles and classroom practices, they found that a principle might be implemented through a varied range of practices, while a common practice might be justified by a multiplicity of principles (Breen, et al., 2001).

The challenge then is to strike a balance between assessments to meet the requirements of policy as well the teacher's own theory. The findings of this study show that teachers use various techniques to fulfil the policy requirements and at the same time to remain true to their own theories with regard to the purposes of assessment. Below, some of the intervention options applied by the teachers are highlighted. The

findings reveal that the teachers balance their assessment practices to fulfil the purposes of summative and formative assessment, which corroborates the findings of Garrison and Ehringhaus (2007). Garrison and Ehringhaus (2007) also reported that teachers collected information about student learning to effectively retain the functions of both summative and formative assessments. Garrison, Chandler, and Ehringhaus (2009) claim that when teachers efficiently use formative and summative assessment practices, it helps students who typically perform at the lower level of achievement obtain the greatest benefit in learning. Also, in such circumstances, enthusiastic students take ownership of their learning and become the centre of their own success. This study substantiates their findings, whereby the results show that the teachers applied differentiated methods and choice-based assessment to support learning, while taking into account the students' language level. Also, learners were involved in learning, and this fact further reflects the findings of Burke (2010), who observed that when students were unable to understand the standards, teachers must use corrective interventions and differentiated learning strategies to meet their students' diverse needs.

Studies have shown that involving students in assessment may help them develop long-term competencies and skills. Broadfoot (2000) claims that students should be involved in assessment with a view to developing their own reflective skills. Keith's (1996, in Falchikov, 2005) study suggests that such assessment can have a positive influence on changing students' learning focus from 'what' to 'how.' This reflects the very essence of the connection between formative and summative assessment. Falchikov (2004) and Bourke (2016) describe student involvement as crucial to learning. Falchikov states that student participation in assessment enhances learning. The idea has been developed by authors such as Bourke, who claims that involving students in assessment fundamentally contributes to their self-understanding and learning. In this study, the teachers involved students in the assessment process to make good on their own theories and on the policy demands, which in turn validated Boud's finding (2002) that in addition to assessment serving the policy mandates, it should also promote learning. The teachers explained that involving students in assessment provided them with more learning benefits. A large proportion of the teachers observed that such a process built students' capacity to differentiate between learning strengths and problems. Given that this was supposed to benefit their learning, students were involved in assessment through the process of self- and peer assessment. In this regard, studies report that self- and peer assessment can be used summatively and formatively. In connection to this fact, the data showed that the teachers engaged the students in assessment to achieve the summative and formative purposes. However, the teachers also acknowledge the challenges inherent in such an idea, one of which

was students' incompetence to assess learning. Bourke (2016) claims that teachers' policy-vs.-theory dilemma can be mitigated by applying self-assessment. Since the challenges of the policy-and-theory conundrum can be reduced by involving students in assessment, teachers should exercise more self- and peer assessment with their students.

Assessment as a learning domain involves serving students and helping students learn. Trasler (2002) argues that flexibility, variety and adaptability are key factors in attracting, retaining and motivating learners. In line with this notion, the teachers created diverse assessment choices. Although this approach offered long-term benefits, the teachers pointed out that such a diversity entailed difficulties. One of the teachers said: 'Although I create diversity in homework, one of the costs that comes with diversity is that students don't take homework seriously.' However, other than such inconveniences, diversity fostered more long-term benefits. One of the teachers stated: 'Diversity and choices make students friendly, open and interested in learning.' Another teacher said: 'Diversity and choices enable students to explore learning within their capacity.' Hence, teachers created various forms of diversity to meet their students' needs, to vindicate their own theories and to satisfy the policy mandates. This finding dovetails with Patall, Cooper, and Robinson's (2008) finding that choices enhance students' motivation, persistence, performance and production. This kind of approach will also help overcome learning barriers that students face in the traditional classroom.

Although the teachers described evident clashes between their theories and the policy requirements, they also offered solutions to overcome these challenges. Moreover, such conflicts made the teachers think carefully about how to combine their own theories of assessment with the formalities of summative and formative assessment as well as the policy mandates.

Conclusion

This study explored the formation of teachers' subjective theories of assessment with regard to the purpose of assessment. The analysis of the findings indicates that although conflicting situations prevailed, the teachers relied on various mediations to handle such situations. The findings also revealed that grade adjustments were made on every implemented assessment option. This implies how important assessment for certification and the traditional practice of assessment were to the teachers. Briefly, their assessment practices were found to be largely outdated, which stirs doubts about the validity, credibility and reliability of their practices.

In conclusion, the study has furthered our understanding of how teachers' subjective theories of assessment are related to student learning, as well as how their assessment practices may influence these subjective theories and vice versa. This offers valuable insights into and recommendations about how teachers can reform their own assessment practices and their classroom teaching and learning processes.

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Title:

Europeanisation in Teacher Education: Comparing Teacher Education Policies and Practices in Austria, Greece and Hungary

Abstract

This paper brings together the main findings of a doctoral dissertation that explored the process of Europeanisation in teacher education from an international and comparative perspective. The aim is to analyse how and to what extent teacher education policies and practices in three European countries, specifically Austria, Greece and Hungary, have been influenced by European developments. Through a comparative case study design, policies and practices related to the following aspects are examined across scales, systems and time: the continuum of teacher education, the development of teacher competence frameworks and the support for teacher educators. Data are collected through document review and expert interviews with policymakers and teacher educators, and they are analysed through process tracing and qualitative content analysis. Findings suggest that, in their different ways, the countries have moved closer to the direction of European developments in teacher education, but that there has been no transformative change as a result of Europeanisation.

Keywords:

Europeanisation, teacher education, comparative case study, policy change

EUROPEANISATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION: COMPARING TEACHER EDUCATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN AUSTRIA, GREECE AND HUNGARY

Introduction

Over the last twenty years, teachers and teacher education have received growing attention in Europe, with national governments seeking to reform their teacher education systems. This is because international evidence increasingly shows that there is a positive correlation between teacher quality and student in-school performance (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Hattie, 2009; OECD, 2005). The need to improve teacher education is also supported by policy initiatives undertaken by the European Union (EU) under the objectives of a knowledge society (Domović & Čuk, 2014) and human capital development (Moutsios, 2007).

Since the launch of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, an accelerating process of Europeanisation of national policies related to teachers and teacher education has been witnessed (EDiTE, 2014), so that researchers have started to talk about the emergence of a “European teacher” (Schratz, 2014) and a “European teacher education area” (Gassner, Kerger, & Schratz, 2010). Although teacher education systems in Europe are firmly rooted in national histories and conditions (Kotthoff & Denk, 2007), there are a number of European teacher-related norms, values and ideas which are diffused across countries through various key agents and mechanisms of Europeanisation (Symeonidis, 2018).

This paper was developed within the framework of the European Doctorate in Teacher Education in order to summarise the findings of a doctoral dissertation exploring the topic of Europeanisation in teacher education from an international and comparative perspective. Specifically, the aim of the paper is to present how and to what extent teacher education policies and practices in three EU countries, namely Austria, Greece and Hungary, have been influenced by contemporary European developments. Considering the different levels at which teacher education policies and practices are devised and implemented, the study first looked into how teacher education was defined at the European policy level. Afterwards, the study analysed the development of teacher education policies and practices in the respective countries, with the focus on relevant developments since the year 2000. The micro-level was also explored by

analysing the way policy actors involved in teacher education enacted specific policies within the context of their institutions.

Below, the concept of teacher education is examined more broadly, encompassing the entire continuum of teacher learning, i.e. initial teacher education (ITE), induction and continuing professional development (CPD). The paper begins by conceptualising Europeanisation and its application in researching teacher education policy and practice. It then explains the research methods adopted for this study. The following section presents the research results for the European context analysis and each case study, while the final part discusses the findings and provides some major conclusions.

Research Scope and Results

Conceptualising Europeanisation in the Context of Teacher Education

Many theories have been proposed to explain the process and outcomes of integration in Europe, attempting to clarify how and why the EU came about and what the EU may be like in the future. Europeanisation emerged as a term in European integration studies in the late 1990s and has since developed into a body of scholarly research on the effect of the EU on its Member States (Ladrech, 2010). During that time, a significant turn in the study of European integration has led to the development of a comparative politics approach to the study of the EU itself and helped to identify a linkage between changes in domestic political structures and policies on the one hand and the decision-making process and policy output of the EU on the other (Ibid.).

For the purposes of this study, Europeanisation is understood as a process of construction, diffusion and institutionalisation of both formal and informal rules that are first defined at the EU level and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourses (Radaelli, 2004). Moving beyond a narrow, top-down notion of the EU's impact on the Member States, the proposed definition conceptualises Europeanisation as an interactive process which entails mutual adaptation and co-construction of policies (Alexiadou, 2007; Radaelli, 2004, 2008). Especially in the areas of EU soft legal competences, such as education in general and teacher education in particular, countries are not obligated to comply with European recommendations. Therefore, Europeanisation in (teacher) education may be better manifested as policy learning, occurring mainly through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), whereby countries learn from one another and a common direction is jointly decided by the European Commission and the Member States (Alexiadou, 2014).

The concept of policy learning points towards a more reflective and developmental approach than the concept of policy transfer, because the former implies that policy actors learn from past mistakes, “understanding one’s particularities of institutional arrangements, histories, economies and local contexts” (Alexiadou, 2014, p. 131). Policy learning is a possible source of policy change (Heclo, 1974), and in order to trace the influences of Europe on recent reforms in teacher education in the countries under study, a stages matrix for analysing policy change in the context of Europeanisation was developed. Drawing on the work of Hall (1993), policy change is categorised as first-, second – or third-order change, depending on the kind of learning that took place. First-order change in policy occurs when instrument settings are changed whereas the overall goals and instruments of policy remain the same. Second-order change occurs when the instruments of policy and their settings are altered, even though the overall goals of policy remain the same. Finally, third-order change, which rarely occurs, is when a thorough remodelling takes place, meaning that the instrument settings, the instruments themselves and the goals of policy are changed.

To identify changes in the specific field of teacher education, the perspective of a policy ecosystem was adopted. Teacher education is a field with a strong institutional character and the most politicised area in education (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Snoek & Zogla, 2009). This institutional nature of teacher education and its dependence on government control make teacher education more vulnerable to global influences, despite resistance coming from the local level (Caena, 2017; Tatto, 2007). According to Trippstad, Swennen and Werler (2017), teacher education has evolved as an institution in three consecutive waves of teacher education reforms, with the current third wave being global and fostering standardisation.

The systemic perspective on teacher education as a policy ecosystem seems to be particularly useful, because it embraces complexity and facilitates multi-level analysis across scales and countries. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological system theory understands the relationship between humans and environments as a layered system. Applied to teacher education, such layers can include the European, the national and the institutional contexts. The layers are in constant interaction and change in parallel with each other, as well as with other policy ecosystems. Tensions between the different ecosystem layers can lead to global developments, while boundary spanners and boundary objects moving across space can mediate collaboration and policy learning across the layers (Caena, 2017). Moving away from the top-down and bottom-up notions of implementation, the study understands policy as both an object and a process that is enacted in complex and unpredictable ways (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012).

Research Methods

To study Europeanisation in teacher education, the comparative case study approach (Barlett & Vavrus, 2017) was adopted. This specific approach attends simultaneously to macro-, meso- and micro-dimensions of case study research and involves two logics of comparison: first, the common compare-and-contrast logic; and, second, a tracing across sites or scales (Ibid.). As such, it fits with the policy ecosystem perspective, which understands teacher education as a multi-layered system. The comparative case study approach fosters a processual and iterative rethinking of case studies in that it seeks to understand how processes unfold when influenced by actors and events over time in different locations and at different scales. According to Barlett and Vavrus (2017), this kind of multi-sited and multi-scalar approach implies the need for a comparison across scales (vertical comparison), a comparison across systems (horizontal comparison) and a comparison over time (transversal comparison).

Considering the study's research objectives, data were collected through document review and semi-structured expert interviews. The documents included both primary and secondary sources and can be subdivided in official EU policy documents, official governmental documents of the respective countries and official institutional documents of higher education institutions. Some data can be found in print or digital formats, while other information may often be accessible only via websites. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts, who were defined as those people "who are particularly competent as authorities on a certain matter of facts" (Beeke, qtd. in Flick, 2009, p. 165). In total, these included 13 European policy experts, 30 national policy experts and 31 teacher educators and teachers in Austria, Greece and Hungary.

For data analysis, the methods of "process tracing" (George & Bennett, 2005) and "qualitative content analysis" (Mayring, 2000, 2014) were employed, while the entire process of analysing documents and interviews was assisted by the MAXQDA software. Process tracing is a research method which is used by social scientists who conduct case studies to analytically access the descriptive dimension of the case study and detect causal processes which do not necessarily appear in a linear way (George & Bennett, 2005). In the present study, process tracing was employed to explore the relationship between teacher-educational policy changes in Austria, Greece and Hungary on the one hand and European developments in this respect on the other. Qualitative content analysis aimed to assist process tracing by scanning the collected empirical material through categories guided by theory and research questions. To do so, categories were developed in two phases, based on both inductive and deductive approaches, bearing in mind that categories needed to be carefully established and revised within the process of analysis (feedback loops) (Mayring, 2000).

Research Results

The analysis of data at the European policy level implies that a European teacher education area has indeed emerged. Specifically, the complex policy ecosystem of European teacher education is made up of a multitude of key agents and mechanisms of interaction which complement or compete with each other in shaping policies and practices of the specific field. These can be clustered as: policy coordination, cross-sectoral instruments, evidence-based management, the Bologna process, educational programmes and stakeholder pressure. By means of reciprocal interaction, the specific mechanisms, processes and key agents communicate and produce significant effects on policy formation and implementation, transforming the strictly nation-bound conception of teacher education and resulting in a number of common trends across Europe.

Before 1992, EU policy coordination in education was formally organised mainly through the establishment of various programmes fostering professional mobility and institutional partnerships. Between 1992 and 2000, the role of teachers in European policy discourse was evidently framed by the discovery of “knowledge” and the need to adapt in a new information era. The 2000 Lisbon Strategy heralded a “transformation” in EU policy cooperation, and the period until 2007 saw, on the one hand, the growing interest of European institutions to gain influence on teacher education in the Member States, and on the other hand, the growing interest of the Member States to use European institutions to modernise their teacher education systems. Between 2007 and 2010, teacher education received particular attention within European institutions, following international evidence which had proved a positive correlation between teacher quality and student in-school performance. Following the ET2020, teacher education came to be framed by the policy objectives of effectiveness and efficiency. Since 2015, socio-political circumstances have been pushing EU policy cooperation towards reinventing the European dimension in teacher education.

Among the abundance of European teacher-related policies, the study identifies three policy concepts as crucial for the European thinking in teacher education. These concepts are the continuum of teacher education, teacher competences and the role of teacher educators. Central to the understanding of teacher education is the continuum thinking, which implies that teacher education is a lifelong learning process consisting of different interconnected phases (Council of the European Union 2007, 2009, 2014; European Commission, 2015). The establishment of teacher competence frameworks, which are adapted to consecutive levels of teachers’ careers, aims to support teachers’ lifelong learning process, while the competence orientation can promote a more responsive and learning-oriented approach to teacher education (Council of the European Union 2007, 2009; European Commission, 2012, 2013a). Key agents in

supporting teacher learning across the continuum are teacher educators, whose professional identity is expanded to include all those responsible for teaching teachers, and who in this sense are present and can communicate across different phases of teachers' careers (European Commission, 2013b). Given the specific European policy developments, the following sub-sections analyse how teacher education has developed in Austria, Greece and Hungary since the year 2000.

Austria

Since 2009, Austria has gradually shifted from a two-track teacher education system based on school types towards a common teacher education scheme for secondary school teachers. Policy actors and local stakeholders have employed European resources, such as the Bologna process, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the OMC work and policy recommendations, to influence the development and implementation of reforms, particularly the Teacher Education New reform which converted the system into the form it has today.

Process tracing reveals that the development of the Teacher Education New was significantly influenced by European policy recommendations, particularly with regard to the continuum of teacher professional development and its different phases, as well as the competence orientation of ITE and the development of professional competence frameworks for teachers. While the Austrian teacher education system is oriented towards the continuum concept, the lack of policy provisions and the difficulties in organising the induction phase seem to disrupt the connection between the different phases. In addition, the turbulent organisation of CPD makes it difficult to predict, for the time being, whether a significant proportion of secondary school teachers will engage in meaningful professional development.

The introduction of professional competences into the teacher service code in 2013 and the competence orientation of ITE, which was actually adopted in Austria in the early 2000s, appear to be steps toward defining a common professional identity for secondary school teachers. Similarly, teacher competence models find widespread application in ITE and prove useful for the practice of teacher educators, although they are not officially institutionalised. As far as the role of teacher educators is concerned, pertinent discussions have evidently been rife among researchers and professionals since 2012, as a result of the prominence given by the EU to this issue. Although there is neither an official definition of the profession nor a common understanding among the different teacher education providers, it is becoming increasingly vital that a teacher educator should possess research competences, and relevant initiatives geared to this purpose have been launched at the local level.

Greece

Over the past ten years, Greece has been struggling with an economic crisis which has significantly affected its system of teacher education. Due to a hiring freeze and budget cuts in education, developments in teacher education have been halted, as induction and CPD basically have not been taking place since 2013. However, the reasons behind the inaction in teacher education for secondary school teachers can be traced back to long-standing policy issues, including some deeply rooted epistemological beliefs within universities, the discontinuity of education policy and reactions from pressure groups safeguarding their own interests.

In this context, political actors employed European policy instruments to promote the idea of modernising the Greek education system, therein teacher education, in a country that was open to European influences shortly after its accession to the EU. The role of operational programmes funded by the EU was crucial in establishing and implementing the induction period, as well as in organising large-scale teacher professional development programmes. New institutions responsible for the in-service training of teachers were established based on EU funding, but no comprehensive system of CPD has been developed so far. Process tracing has also shown that there have been sporadic initiatives to regulate the different phases of the teacher education continuum, but a comprehensive reform addressing the whole spectrum of teachers' professional career has not been launched yet.

Moreover, teacher competences are mainly being discussed within professional and scientific circles, and so far no policy initiatives have been undertaken to establish relevant professional frameworks. The development of the national qualifications framework has only recently contributed to the incorporation of competences and learning outcomes approach in ITE curricula. Finally, policy developments and practices concerning the role of teacher educators remain limited to the local level. Due to the overly diversified ways of delivering ITE and to the strong subject orientation of the teacher faculties, it proves challenging to develop a common understanding of the professional identity of teacher educators.

Hungary

Since the mid-2000s, the influx of the EU's structural funds and the Bologna process, as well as OMC policy handbooks and the implementation of the EQF, have been utilised by domestic actors in Hungary to reform teacher education, which currently reflects several European trends. My findings indicate that Hungary has adopted some of the structural elements related to the continuum concept, including measures to support ITE selection, formalise the induction phase and establish a model for teacher career

promotion with a lifelong learning perspective. However, my analysis has also revealed some challenges that impede the effective interconnection among the different phases of the continuum. For example, the lack of communication between ITE and induction is apparent, while CPD is not effectively linked to the newly established system for teacher career promotion.

The development of teacher competence frameworks for both ITE and career promotion represents an attempt at linking the different phases of the continuum, although this is hardly the outcome of policy learning by the government. In this respect, the role of development funds was catalytic in promoting competence-oriented teaching, and competence frameworks were the outcome of research and development work undertaken by national experts with European outreach. The competence frameworks developed for ITE and for career promotion prove to be quite similar, without provisions to differentiate among the different classification levels. The teacher competence frameworks are generally perceived as a progressive instrument, although teacher educators still view them with ambivalence.

Finally, the role of teacher educators in Hungary is actively promoted by a professional association, namely the Hungarian Association of Teacher Education. Although an official definition of teacher educators' professional role is missing, there seems to be a bottom-up profession-driven process that facilitates the self-understanding of teacher educators. Collaboration among teacher educators is promoted by the Association, but tensions among professionals specialising in different components of teacher education are evident.

Discussion and Conclusions

Drawing on the comparative case study approach of Barlett and Vavrus (2017), this section discusses the data and provides some main conclusions. The vertical comparison across the European, national and institutional scales reveals that the landscape of European teacher education is constituted by a multitude of mechanisms, processes and key agents of Europeanisation that circulate policies across different scales. These policies are the outcome of mutual adaptation and co-construction between the EU and the Member States, and their movement can lead to policy change. The three case studies showed that domestic actors utilised some of the European resources to influence change according to their preferences, although contextual factors, domestic traditions and resistance from stakeholders mitigated the impact of change. In Austria and Hungary, new policy instruments and settings appeared with regard to the continuum of teacher education and teacher competences, while in Greece change was

limited to policy settings. No transformative change was identified in any of the policy areas, while examples of higher education institutions showed that policy enactment could lead to heterogeneous outcomes.

The horizontal comparison across the teacher education systems of Austria, Greece and Hungary offers insights into convergences and divergences in teacher education policies and practices across the three case studies, concerning some central issues of the European teacher education agenda. Although convergences regarding the continuum of teacher education and the development of teacher competences can be noted, teacher education systems tend to preserve discernible national characteristics which originate from particular traditions, the socio-political contexts and the preferences of domestic actors. As Caena (2014) argues, different degrees of political commitment and implementation capacities determine the success and the speed of policy enactment. In each country, negotiations between European and national processes lead to the emergence of distinct “glocal” developments (Caena 2014; 2017) that have the potential either to resolve existing tensions within the system or to further exacerbate them. Teacher education systems have their own nationally and institutionally driven dynamics, and within this context European developments can stimulate policy learning by challenging domestic institutions, policies and processes (Börzel, 2005).

Finally, the transversal comparison over time shows that all three countries have moved at different paces from a strictly nationally bound and fragmented approach to teacher education towards a more internationally receptive and integrated approach. Teacher education is being Europeanised in the sense that there are some changes heading towards European developments, and for Radaelli (2008) changes that bring countries closer to the common EU goals suggest a manifestation of Europeanisation. Nevertheless, teacher education systems are characterised by historical traits linked to the national and institutional contexts, which still determine the negotiation between European and domestic processes, perhaps to a greater extent in some countries than in others.

Future research should include more cases to verify the role of the EU and the way in which Europeanisation is manifested in teacher education. For example, case studies targeting the EU’s core countries could enrich the picture which has been sketched in this study. Future analysis should also include other European policies in teacher education and their translations into national systems, so as to better understand the process of policy transfer and the interconnections among the different layers of the system. To this end, future analyses should also essentially address the global context as an important layer of teacher education ecosystems and, thus,

examine the influence of international organisations, such as the UNESCO, OECD and the World Bank, on European and national teacher education policies. Last but not least, the ideological underpinnings of both the Europeanisation process and specific European policies should be examined, in order to grasp the impact of new public management and neoliberalism on shaping the European policy discourse regarding teachers and teacher education.

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Title:

Unpacking Cultural Diversity through a Critical Perspective Lens: Conceptualisations, Practices and Professional Development in a Portuguese Case Study

Abstract

This paper provides an overview of a doctoral research project that aimed at understanding teachers' conceptualisations of, classroom practices of and learning opportunities for cultural diversity in a Portuguese school cluster. Applying critical multiculturalism, the study explored whether these mechanisms supported a justice-driven change for cultural diversity. Employed in the study, constructivist grounded theory helped reveal a variety of competing and complementary understandings and practices, thus showing that the school cluster was in a rather unsettled and fluid state. While school practitioners usually had an awareness of and good intentions to change for cultural diversity, there seemed to be misconceptions in the discursive space of the cluster and limitations in pedagogical enactments and professional development opportunities. Recommendations are given in order to support change for cultural diversity.

Keywords:

critical multiculturalism, cultural and linguistic diversity, social justice, case study, teachers, professional development

UNPACKING CULTURAL DIVERSITY THROUGH A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE LENS: CONCEPTUALISATIONS, PRACTICES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN A PORTUGUESE CASE STUDY

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Although policy initiatives usually integrate cultural diversity perspectives (e.g. Faas, Hajisoterou, & Angelides, 2014), it is unclear how ‘cultural diversity’ is enacted in schools and whether it stirs a justice-oriented change.¹ For example, it has been discussed how educational policies, including those of inter/multicultural education, may operationalise ‘cultural diversity’ in ways that still produce significant hierarchies in society and education (Aman, 2015; Araújo, 2018; Fylkesnes, 2018; Lahdesmaki & Wagener, 2015). It has also been noted that inclusive policies, when enacted under constrained circumstances, may manifest in unjust practices (Beach, 2017). Thus, it is not surprising that teachers grapple with understanding and responding to cultural diversity throughout Europe, therein in Portugal (Fine-Davis & Faas, 2014; Flores & Ferreira, 2016). Teachers are known to respond to cultural diversity in varying ways, even within the same school (Meetoo, 2018), depending on the conceptions, skills and learning opportunities they have. Therefore, it is crucial to untangle how teachers’ conceptualisations, practices and professional development (PD) are related to justice-driven school change. This study regards these three aspects of schooling as interwoven and examines them by applying critical multiculturalism (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2001; May & Sleeter, 2010).

¹ This paper is based on a doctoral dissertation that currently includes articles Szelei, Tinoca, & Pinho 2019a and Szelei, Tinoca, & Pinho 2019b, published in Open Access under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License CC BY 4.0.

Research Aims

This research study aimed at exploring teachers' conceptualisations of, responses to and learning for cultural diversity in a Portuguese school cluster. The conceptualisations were situated in the discursive space of schools, and special attention was devoted to how students, teachers and schooling were represented and positioned in the discourse on cultural diversity. In respect to practices, student voice as a pedagogical tool and its relation to the decision-making process on representation and participation were analysed. Furthermore, teachers' learning needs and their context-based PD system were mapped out. These three overarching aims were discussed in terms of whether and how they facilitated justice-driven school change for cultural diversity.

Research Scope and Results

The Background and Significance of the Study

Previous studies have dealt with teachers' understandings, practices and learning in the field of cultural diversity. There appears to be overwhelming evidence of teachers' simplistic understandings (e.g. Agirdag et al., 2016; Coronel & Gomez-Hurtado, 2015; Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010), but some studies have also revealed in-service teachers' more contextualised conceptions (Torrico et al. 2018), critical thinking and opposition to the prevailing deficit perspectives (Allard & Santoro, 2008; Keddie, 2011; Milner, 2008). However, cultural diversity seems to be constructed as a pedagogical 'problem,' even if it is generally recognised and valued (Dooly, 2007; Faneca et al., 2016; Torrico et al., 2018). While some schools develop a variety of strategies, for example, highlighting equality and inclusion, cultural pluralism, criticality and empowerment (Mansikka, Westwall, & Heimonen, 2018; Schachner, 2017; Walton et al., 2018), other ones may simply promote the majority culture (Civitillo et al., 2016). Depending on how these principles are implemented in pedagogy, they can lead either to othering, when cultural diversity is essentialised and systematically positioned as different from majority, building a division between 'us' and 'them' (Chinga-Ramirez, 2017; Riegel, 2012); or to difference-blindness, characterised by the avoidance of seeing 'difference' that explains students' identities and their positioning in society (Riegel, 2012; Walton et al., 2018). Although the ways in which cultural diversity is approached in schools have been studied, there has been less research into specific pedagogical tools implemented in classroom practices which could explain the connections and discrepancies between the multicultural ideal and classroom practice.

Given this, teachers need PD, a cornerstone of whole-school change for diversity (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Hajisoteriou et al., 2018). Studies highlight that teacher learning is optimal when it is connected to context-specific needs and practices in engaging ways (e.g. Caena, 2011). Recent trends promote teacher collaboration, coaching, mentoring, lesson studies and professional learning communities (Lofthouse & Thomas, 2017; Stoll et al., 2006). Collaborative programs which involve students, families and communities have also been found crucial in the field of diversity (Florian, 2012; Lees, 2016; Messiou & Ainscow, 2015; Mitra, 2007; Read et al., 2015).

Key Concepts and Theory

This study follows a critical framework (May & Sleeter, 2010; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2001) in approaching cultural diversity. Its core aspects are: dynamic conceptualisations of 'culture' which acknowledge difference while avoiding essentialism; addressing inequalities; critical reflexivity between thinking and practice; and the focus on justice (May & Sleeter, 2010; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2001). Cultural diversity is comprehended as a dynamic concept including intersections (Baumann, 1999; Hall, 1996) between various belongings to social groups and individual identities in a hybrid, context- and history-dependent manner (Bhabha, 1994). Recognising cultural diversity means the acknowledgement of the dialogical construction of all identities (Baumann, 1999) and working towards building a shared democratic culture (Turner, 1994). However, cultural diversity as an idea is inseparable from the ways students and communities are positioned in school. School practitioners actively construct students by perceiving, labelling, categorising and attributing various behavioural and learning profiles to them (Dooly, 2007), and not all constructions are shaped in just ways.² For example, othering, a historically perpetuated discourse to separate 'us' and 'them' (Hall, 1992; Hesse & Sayyid, 2006; Said, 1979) can still play a considerable role in forming understandings of 'cultural diversity' and students. Producing 'migrant,' 'foreigner' or 'stranger' profiles can lead to othering those who are defined as 'not belonging' to a place which is owned by the dominant group, even if diverse groups coexist (Ahmed, 2000; Bauman, 2015). Consequently, it is important to explore how school life contributes to or resists such ideas.

² For a more detailed discussion of cultural recognition and equality, see Hall, 2000; and Mo-dood, 2013.

Research Methods

The school cluster which was studied within this project was situated in an urban migratory region in Portugal. The school cluster had launched several programmes to address cultural diversity. Case study research was conducted (Stake, 1995) on a sample of four schools of the cluster: a secondary school (A) and three primary schools (B, C, D). The participants were 32 school practitioners from these schools: 23 teachers, 5 leadership members and 4 support staff members. The collected data included documents, interviews and observations of classroom practices and of school- and professional development events. The data were analysed using constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2011) and situational analysis (Clarke, 2005).

Research Results and Discussion

Conceptualising Cultural Diversity and Schooling

The study revealed a variety of understandings which differently positioned students, schooling and teachers. Teachers appreciated cultural diversity, but there was not a shared understanding of whom ‘cultural diversity’ involved and what kind of education was needed. There seemed to be a focus on ‘foreigners,’ mostly conceptualised as ‘non-native speakers’ or ‘non-Portuguese nationals.’ This tendency seemed to separate a homogeneous ‘native’ nation from others (Anderson, 1991), when assembling and labelling students’ profiles on the basis of their perceived language and migration status, nationality or ‘origin’ in contrast to ‘Portuguese’ students and schools. Furthermore, language learners were constructed as an extreme pedagogical challenge (Dooly, 2007; Fine-Davis & Faas, 2014; Torrico et al., 2018). At the same time, students were also referred to as ‘the same’ in social disadvantage and underachievement, which seemed to other the entire school cluster as compared with an imagined schooling norm. On the other hand, some school practitioners questioned stereotypical views on students and repudiated othering by hesitating to label, by identifying structural inequalities and by evoking teachers’ and schools’ moral responsibility to change practice.

Classroom Practices: From ‘Foods and Festivals’ to Empowerment

Consequently, teachers’ pedagogical actions were divergent. Although teachers agreed that change was necessary, they developed different strategies. Three major overarching categories of activities in which they engaged to address cultural diversity were

identified: activities that were based on cultural artefacts, activities that revolved around universal/individualised topics and activities that were designed to prevent stereotyping, discrimination and racism. However, the activities based on cultural artefacts that essentialised and exoticised students seemed to dominate (Hall, 1992), and student voice as a pedagogical tool seemed to be missing from these strategies, possibly leaving pupils misrepresented and disengaged. These findings show that teachers still grapple with responding to cultural diversity, and pedagogical enactments navigate among othering, differences-blindness and some degree of empowerment (Riegel, 2012; Allard, 2006; Walton et al., 2018), depending on how student voice is mobilised. While many teachers regarded the currently implemented ‘cultural activities’ as fruitful first steps towards ‘interculturality’ and welcomed them as making cultural diversity visible, a few teachers problematised tokenistic activities for not aiming at real change.³

Professional Development: Opportunities and Challenges

Several existing opportunities for teacher learning were identified, such as formal workshops, small collaborative projects and teachers’ informal learning activities. Teachers recognised the importance of PD and showed willingness to learn, but a rather fragmented PD system was found, both in terms of the cultural diversity-related content and of forms of learning. Conflicting agendas, scattered teacher collaboration and commitment and modest student and community involvement in planned PD were detected as well. There also seemed to be a mismatch between PD and teachers’ needs and circumstances; teachers wanted more specific information and pedagogical solutions, more collaboration and more organisational support in PD (Forte & Flores, 2014; Silva et al., 2017). Teachers requested very specific and prescriptive information on cultures, students and pedagogical solutions, but also desired more collaboration and professional autonomy.⁴

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings portray a school cluster in a rather unsettled state regarding cultural diversity. The studied school cluster appeared to be in a phase of fluidity in figuring out conceptions and actions, in which divergent individual responses emerged. These visions and practices did not seem to be unified, but rather in tension with each other.

³ For more details, see Szelei et al. 2019a.

⁴ For more details, see Szelei et al. 2019b.

Therefore, the school cluster can be conceptualised as undergoing a struggle for justice (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). These conflict points can be comprehended as vehicles for change when dialogue between equally participating partners is initiated. Some of the following opportunities are recommended:

1. There are several top-down policies related to cultural diversity, but they were not necessarily developed together with students, families, communities and school staff. This may misguide teachers' understandings and actions, making them pointless and/or incomprehensible to students. To prevent this, engage with all students and families in school for the sake of developing a local philosophy on the cultural diversity mission in meaningful ways. This local vision should be seen from an inclusive perspective: cultural diversity concerns all of us; it is a recognition of all our particularities and the entire school community, rather than reducing it down to a division into 'us' and 'them.'
2. Constantly monitor and reflect on practices concerning the ideals of equity and justice in education. Besides analysing test results, students and families should be consulted on what they think about schooling and involved in designing actions. Student voice as a pedagogical tool should be used both in micro-level classroom situations and in improving schools at the macro-level. It must be remembered that students have very different experiences and needs, for example, in respect to language learning or well-being at school. It is important to understand such individual and group factors when developing responsive practices.
3. It is vital to establish a PD system that 1) introduces a critical understanding of cultural diversity, pedagogies of empowerment, voice and multilingualism; 2) engages students and families in teacher learning as equal partners; and 3) provides a supportive environment for teachers which gives them time and space for reflection and collaboration.

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Title:

Crossing the Threshold in the Margins

Abstract

The central motivation of this research is to contribute to the understanding of transformative teacher learning by focusing on the educational contexts of extreme urban poverty. I develop a concept of “ideology” to use it as an analytical tool in my ethnographic research study. The critique of ideology helps me reveal how pedagogical practices are constrained by ideological illusions. Moreover, I understand transformative education as ideology criticism per se, the fostering of which has a significant potential in the context of urban poverty. Thus, besides trying to grasp the ideological fantasies characteristic of teachers’ pedagogical praxis, I also seek to outline an ideologico-critical gesture in teacher education by facilitating teachers’ engagement with the social and micro-institutional environment of their schools.

Keywords:

transformative education, ideology criticism, urban poverty, ghetto schools

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD IN THE MARGINS

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Education has undoubtedly become one of the omnipresent and omnipotent “megaspectacles” of our time. Grubb and Lazerson (2006) argue that education has taken on an almost religious character in the last decades. Due to the overestimated importance and potential of education, social problems are more and more frequently addressed by promoting more education. The third volume in the *Educational Research* series, *The Educationalization of Social Problems* (Smeyers & Depaepe, 2008) discusses these issues in depth, showing that the “schooling of social problems,” i.e., the transfer of social issues to the responsibility of the School, goes hand in hand with the “pedagogization of the society,” i.e., the Western state becoming primarily pedagogical in character. The state not only relocates social problems to the School (and thus de-politicizes them), while making teachers responsible for them, but at the same time pedagogizes social issues themselves (e.g., framing homelessness as “learned helplessness”). Education has become a remedy for almost any social problems (“ills”), while the language and the vocabulary of learning have gained a dominant position in problematizing the social as such. As Tomasz Szkudlarek put it,

[l]earning has become the solution to nearly anything. Joblessness, inadequate retirement provisions, environmental pollution, or poor health services are no longer seen “simply” in terms of public arrangements, but as problems demanding individual awareness, knowledge, proper attitudes, skills of rational choice, and self-management. To us as educators, it may sound nice and smell like money; but it inflates the responsibilities of education far beyond their conceivable limits [...]. (2013, p. 1)

This overwhelming overdetermination of education (i.e., the extreme multiplicity of demands placed on education in “policy discourses,” for instance) exposes teachers to an increasing cacophony of educational tasks, which *leaves teachers in limbo between the multitude of educational demands imposed on them and the proliferating social*

problems characteristic of postmodern global capitalism. Among these problems, there are two global trends which, while being dominant aspects of an emerging European context, appear even more concentrated in Central-Eastern European post-socialist, semiperipheral countries. In one of the trends, education is confronted with the emergence and proliferation of new antagonisms, among which far-right discourses are *advanced* in the sense that *they are ahead of us and constitute the very horizon of the becoming of contemporary societies.* In the other trend, education is confronted with the *globalization of extreme poverty* and the displacement of a growing underclass, which is emplaced and densely condensed in urban slums, shantytowns, settlements, and ghettos (cf. Davis, 2006). I understand these two dominant global trends as complementary dimensions of an emerging European context.

Given the density and the scale of these social problems (which are constitutive of and constituted by global capitalism), the transformative potential of education does not seem to be evident at all, especially in the case of schools which work at the margins of society. For such schools, the cacophony of educational demands (the education gospels of cooperation, child-centeredness, inclusion, democratic schooling, interactive classrooms, the promises of social mobility, etc.) falls short. The latest information technologies make no sense when the child has no electricity at home; the professional development of underpaid teachers who work in urban slums is a naïve dream; classroom cooperation is short-lived if the child starves and falls asleep on the desk; and democratic decision-making is not an option if the child is absent from class, either because she is begging for money in the city or because her mother is begging for a job in the factory. The question immediately arises whether teachers are able to (or, in the first place, whether they should) take the burden of responsibility of dealing with these social problems, and meet the demands that are being imposed on education.

Research Aims

The aims of the research are structured around the question: “How do teachers relate to and shape the ideologico-discursive landscapes of urban poverty, which are criss-crossed by a multiplicity of other apparatuses (the police, the Church, the welfare center, the NGO, etc.), social antagonisms, and hegemonic discourses?” Four main goals ensue from this initial question: (1) defining what a discursive landscape is, how meanings and subjects are constituted, and how ideological illusions function in it; (2) contextualizing the “schools of the ghetto” by (a) focusing on the transnational dynamics characteristic of the geopolitical position of two post-socialist semiperipheral countries (Hungary and Poland), and by (b) exploring the broad institutional

micro-environments of urban poverty, of which the school is a significant constituent; (3) interpreting how teachers relate to and shape such complex milieus of urban poverty; and (4) reactivating the pedagogical question regarding the *telos* of education and reclaiming the transformative potential of the School against the contemporary cacophony of educational demands.

Research Scope and Results

The Background and Significance of the Study

The question of ideology has gained a central significance recently, not only in the field of political philosophy, but in the social sciences as well (cf. Barrett, 1991; Eagleton, 1991; Laclau, 1996). The basic questions of ideology criticism have remained the same: What is “false” in ideology? How does ideology function? Does it “mask” or “hide” certain truths? Is it possible to resist ideology? But while the basic questions have not changed, the way in which they are addressed has radically transformed. The new conceptual directions of ideology are not only relevant to politics and to the political, but are also of utmost importance for education. If education is understood as a specific way of making meaning, constructing identities, and transforming “what is,” the new language of ideology criticism can be helpful in talking about “what is” and also about “what is not yet” in a different manner, but still educationally.

The interinstitutional micro-environments of urban poverty (of which the School is an inherent part) are of utmost importance for the mapping of ideological mechanisms, since these places are oversaturated with hegemonic discourses, social symptoms, and inconsistencies of the discursive landscape (cf. Wacquant, 2008, 2009). It is especially the case in post-socialist, semiperipheral countries (such as Hungary and Poland), where the hegemonic reactivation of far-right discourses (in alliance with the logic of Capital) has been radically rearranging the meaningful field recently. The hegemonic restructuring of the discursive landscapes leads to the expansion of the polysemy of interdiscourse (especially in the conflictual places of urban poverty) and also to the reactivation and intensification of the hegemonic struggles over the discourse of education.

On the one hand, a “populist” attack is levelled against education, in which education is portrayed as a one-dimensional, straightforward process which only needs to be managed by teachers according to scientific knowledge about “what works.” This populist imaginary is being hegemonized by far-right discourses (not only in

Hungary and Poland), based on what Hana Červinková (2016) called the “production of homogeneity.” On the other hand, there is an “idealist” attack on education, in which overwhelming expectations of what education should deliver are imposed: “Here education is linked up with projects such as democracy, solidarity, inclusion, tolerance, social justice and peace, even in societies marked by deep social conflict or war” (Biesta & Säfström, 2011, p. 540). To sum up, while the populist attack on education focuses on “what is” (of society, of the child, etc.), the idealist attack is concerned with “what is not yet” (radical plural democracy, socialism, global social justice, etc.). In both cases, however, “[e]ducation never seems to be able to live up to such expectations and is thus constantly being manoeuvred into a position of defence” (Ibid.).

Looking from below (from the margins of society) at the discourse of education (as it is exposed to the conflictual cacophony of such demands) and at the apparatus of education (the School, as it is deeply embedded in the interinstitutional micro-environments of urban poverty and their hegemonic landscapes) is a particular way to put ideological mystifications into perspective in education, in order to find a way out from the illusions which hold us captive (cf. Rasiński, 2018).

Key Concepts and Theory

I ground the theoretical framework of my research on the post-Marxist theory of hegemony as elaborated by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985), and I propose a return to Marx’s understanding of ideology within *post-Marxist theory*. By rejecting both the postmodern narratives of “the death of ideology” and the interchangeability of the concepts of “discourse” and “ideology,” I develop a *discursive account of ideology*, which I understand as the mystification of domination through hegemonic articulatory practices. I also argue for supplementing the discursive account of ideology with Žižek’s Lacanian-Marxist reading of ideology (1989), which promises a return to Marx’s central concepts of ideology (opium, fetish, manifest reality). I also engage with contemporary critiques of the political economy, and with *Lacanian ontology* in order to further challenge Laclau’s political theory and to advocate a theoretical and strategic return to class politics and to the analysis of class relations in global capitalism. I do so with a view to illuminating the epistemological and ontological reasons for choosing places of urban poverty as the “privileged” sites of research. I argue not only that such sites are of utmost relevance to ideology criticism, but also that they are *meaningful for teacher education*. Drawing on Loïc Wacquant’s concept of “*advanced marginality*” (2008) and Foucault’s concept of the “*dispositif*” (1980), I propose an analytical and methodological framework for studying the meaningful

totality of the landscapes of urban poverty, which are overdetermined by ideologico-hegemonic articulations. By charting a *via media* between the Althusserian (1971) and the Foucauldian critiques of the School (Deacon, 2004), I reject Wacquant's assumption that, in the "*dispositifs of advanced marginality*," the frontline apparatus is the "police." Drawing on Masschelein and Simons (2013), I argue that it is the School which holds the privileged position among the other apparatuses, due to its *transformative potential*.

Research Methods

My empirical research is grounded on ethnographic fieldwork, where I use and further develop the analytical tool of ideology criticism, with the central thrust to analyze and interpret the dispositifs of advanced marginality with a special focus on the School, and also to investigate how the places of urban poverty are meaningful for teacher education. I frame my research with four intersecting modalities of ethnographic work. First, the study is framed by the *discursive analysis of hegemony* (Thomassen, 2005), which is a contribution to recent methodological attempts at combining ethnography and discourse analysis by promoting long-term engagement with a specific micro-social context (discursive landscape) in order to "map" how meaning is constructed through articulatory practices (Dean, 2004). Second, the research is framed by the idea of *mapping the dispositif*, which is concerned with the investigation of the power structure of the *dispositif*, or what Rancière calls *the police*, i.e., "the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution" (Rancière, 1999, p. 28). The frame of mapping the dispositif is itself indirectly linked to *institutional ethnography* (cf. Smith, 2005) and to *multi-sited comparative ethnography* (cf. Marcus, 1995). Third, my ethnographic stance is also framed by the conceptualization of ethnography as a *pedagogical praxis* – as developed recently by György Mészáros (2017) – that is, understanding the *pedagogical* as that which refers to the very nature of the ethnographic research, or, in other words, recognizing "that the research itself is a pedagogical process" (Mészáros, 2015, p. 30, translation mine). And fourth, I place my ethnographic research in a specific field, which is best encapsulated in the notion of *therapeutic ethnography*. Against George Spindler's account of *cultural therapy* (1999), I attempt to frame my ethnographic research as therapeutic, drawing on the linguistic concept of therapy as understood by Jacques Lacan (e.g., 1998). In Lacan, therapy is a traumatic confrontation with the constitutive void around which reality is structured; it is an act of "hitting on"

the fantasies that hold our reality together, which is performed in order to reveal the inconsistencies and fissures of a meaningful totality.

Based on these methodological considerations, I conducted ethnographic research between 2016 and 2018 in Hungary, Poland, and Romania. The research consisted of 7 months of fieldwork in Poland, 6 months of fieldwork in Hungary, and 3 weeks of fieldwork in Romania, involving 22 institutions, therein 4 schools. I organized a total of 20 working group meetings with teachers in Hungary and Poland, and I produced around 300 photos and approximately 700 pages of transcriptions of audio recordings and field notes. My daily practice consisted of working in places of urban poverty, talking to locals in the neighborhood, visiting nearby institutions (police stations, hospitals, churches, NGOs, welfare centers, etc.), and organizing “working group meetings” with the teachers in the schools – in brief, listening closely to interdiscourse.

Research Results

After developing a *discursive account of ideology and ideology criticism*, and outlining the concept of the “*dispositif of advanced marginality*” (i.e., the arrangement of inter-institutional modalities and strategies characteristic of urban poverty), I use the two as analytical tools for the interpretation of my research material. I start with the ethnographic research that I conducted in Poland, and I discuss the *dispositif* of a Gypsy settlement. I argue that the distinctive modality of the settlement (and generally of the semiperipheral “hybrid ghetto”) is its strong omnipresent and omnipotent interinstitutional character (from the omnipresent police-and-penal apparatus to the strong presence of public institutions). Then, I locate the dominant ideological nodal points in the *dispositif* of the settlement (begging, air pollution), which are superimposed by legal and human rights discourses and mediated through the punishment of the poor (Wacquant, 2009), “NGOization” (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013) and “circusification.” By situating the two schools – where I organized working group meetings with the teachers of Gypsy children from the settlement – within the discursive landscape of the *dispositif*, I discuss the reasons for the teachers’ failure to organize household visits in the settlement. I argue that the possibility of enhancing transformative teacher learning *via* the teachers’ active and reflective engagement with the social environment was constrained both by how the educational apparatus was positioned in its respective *dispositif* and by the post-socialist struggles over the modalities of operations of the educational apparatus. I characterize these modalities by introducing three ideologico-critical concepts, specifically: the “neverland syndrome,” which refers to the parallax

between the glorification and infantilization, and the appreciation and degradation of teachers' work (e.g., Labaree, 1992); "the atrophy of the pedagogical," which refers to the learnification, instrumentalization, and scientification of education at the expense of the primordial pedagogical question of the *telos* of education (e.g., Biesta, 2015); and "cynical pedagogy," which addresses pedagogical practices structured against and conducted despite what the teacher knows.

In the research that I conducted in Hungary, I started to consider the *dispositif* of advanced marginality itself to be educationally meaningful for teachers' transformative learning. Focusing on a "hybrid ghetto," I locate the dominant ideological nodal points of its *dispositif* (drug market, environmental degradation, and the ethnicization of poverty), which are characterized by the "dissolution and detotalization of meaning," channeled through middle-class imaginaries, the psychopathologization of social problems, and the institutional merger between the apparatuses and the local political regime. Then, I discuss working group meetings with the teachers in the ghetto school, which were fully open to other institutional actors (politicians, researchers, social workers, artists, police officers, etc.), in order to confront the teachers with how the school is embedded in an interinstitutional setting. I argue that at least two promising aspects of this confrontation were subversive *in potentia*. I characterize these aspects by developing two ideologico-critical notions: "the gaze of the *dispositif*," which refers to how teachers come to realize that the school is "secretly" embedded in a broader micro-institutional context that shapes the daily aspects of their pedagogical practices; and "the courage of hopelessness," which refers to how teachers come to terms with the impotence of education in fulfilling the spectacular desires (e.g., populist and idealist demands) that contemporary education gospels project on it, which retroactively causes them to give up false, fetishistic hopes, so characteristic of pedagogical philosophies in general and of critical pedagogy in particular (e.g., Freire, 1994).

Discussion and Conclusions

By looking at hegemonic struggles over education from below (from the margins of society) through the lens of ideology criticism, I argue that teachers (especially in places of urban poverty) are exposed to unattainable fantasies and desires that circulate around the ideas of what education should be for (economic prosperity, rise of the nation, innovation, democracy, inclusion, multicultural society, social justice, socialism, to name but a few). Daily confrontations with the structural points of failure and impotence of education to "deliver" make teachers all the more deeply attached to ideological fantasies, which provide comforting explanations for the permanent

failure of the school in living up to the cacophony of demands so characteristic of postmodern global capitalism. I argue that as the dominant ideological mechanism in the political logic of hegemony is the *mystification of the lack* of an *a priori* formal structure, principle, or underlying “iron-necessity” of the social (i.e., masking the ontologically constitutive void around which the subject and the social is constituted), similarly, *the dominant ideological gesture of the pedagogical is the mystification of the lack* of any preceding necessity that would predetermine or limit education. *The pedagogical always thrives against an open political future.* This is what Biesta encapsulates in the title of his book *The Beautiful Risk of Education* (2013), where he argues against the contemporary strong expectations for a predictable and risk-free education, and promotes a weak conception of education which is unpredictable, uncertain, held open, and hence risky. The consequence of such a theorization of the educational is not simply the declaration that education cannot live up to the cacophony of demands, but more importantly *that it should not*: “To keep education away from pure utopia is not a question of pessimism but rather a matter of not saddling education with unattainable hopes that defer freedom rather than making it possible in the here and now” (Biesta & Säfström, 2011, p. 541). Biesta and Säfström argue that the theoretico-practical place which is proper for an *educational* conception is “in the tension between ‘what is’ and ‘what is not’ (...) rather than as an endless repetition of what already is or as a march towards a predetermined future that may never arrive” (Ibid., p. 542). I argue that the zero-level ideologico-critical moment of transformative teacher education is the liberating experience of confronting the points of education’s failure to fulfil the spectacular desires which “populist” and “idealist” attacks project on it; of giving up false, fetishistic hopes that should not be constitutive elements of the educational; and, finally, of coming to terms with that which is the negative founding gesture of the political and the pedagogical as well: namely, that there is no *a priori* formal structure of the social, that it is ontologically “out of joint” (i.e., that there is no big Other), which means both an encounter with our *irreducible incompleteness* and the realization that *we are completely alone*.

The working group meetings with teachers which I organized as part of my ethnographic research suggested a possibility of coming to terms with the fact *that schools, especially at the margins of society, are not capable of bringing about the desired and demanded society, either of yesterday or of tomorrow – and that this impossibility of education is its positive condition.* As education always hovers in limbo between “what is” and “what is not,” its positive condition is its intrusion into an unknown, unforeseen political future that is held open precisely by this act of intrusion. Confronting *the radical indetermination of the pedagogical* is not only a refusal of populist temptations,

of utopian idealism, and of the belief that there is someone or something in charge, but it is also a liberating experience for transformative teacher education. I assert that there is a profoundly liberating pedagogical moment in such a confrontation, which gives freedom back to the pedagogical: “School starts from the assumption there is no destination, no natural relation to future or that it is not given by ‘nature’ what we will become. The consequence is that school can question all social privileges or any so-called natural order or hierarchy [...]” (Masschelein & Simons, in Bernardo & Karwoski, 2017).

Still, such a theorization of the educational needs minimum anchoring in the *political*. For such a political anchoring that is intended to keep a political future open, I can hardly see any other feasible theoretico-political stance than Alain Badiou’s “*communist hypothesis*” (2008b, 2008a, 2010). Badiou understands “communism” as an affirmative hypothesis which is devoid of method, content, and utopian romanticism – it is merely a philosophical defense of an unknown-yet-possible future. It is only an affirmation that the logic of Capital, class domination, and any other forms of domination and exclusionary logic are not inevitable, but rather historical and contingent; that a different collective organization is possible; that overcoming the private ownership of the means of production is practicable; that putting an end to the prevailing relations of production is achievable; and that getting rid of the coercive state, its punitive and penal dispositifs, and the obsession with national identities is not constrained by any underlying logic of necessity. In this sense, *the communist hypothesis is nothing more – and nothing less – than the affirmation of the very prerequisite of the pedagogical; it stands precisely for the affirmation that there is a political future held open*. At the heart of the communist hypothesis is the declaration that “there is only one world.” The recognition that follows from this axiom is “that all belong to the same world as myself” (Badiou, 2008a, p. 39). Badiou’s assertion is quite well aligned with the argument of Masschelein that the *scholè* stands precisely for assuming this common world and the equality in it, both in the sense that we all belong to it, and in the sense that we are all capable. The *scholè* is the way “to communize and disclose world, and place students time and again in a position to begin (with the words, things): [it offers] the experience of being able, of potentiality in front of a thing in common” (Masschelein, 2011, pp. 532–533).

If there is any common responsibility of teachers, it is not only teaching, but also becoming educators, which means orienting one’s practice toward the communization of the world and keeping a political future open. I argue that the pedagogical “aspect change” from the role of the teacher to that of the educator is transformative teacher learning *par excellence*. It means becoming an educator who *pushes and disturbs the*

student into her ultimate freedom to do the impossible, i.e., “what appears impossible within the coordinates of the existing constellation – and today, this means something very precise: you can think beyond capitalism and liberal democracy as the ultimate framework of our lives” (Žižek, 2017, p. 211).

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Title:

Struggling for Educational Justice in Disabling Societies: A Multi-Sited School-Based Ethnography of Inclusive Policies and Practices in Poland, Austria, and Germany

Abstract

My doctoral dissertation project, which was designed as a multi-sited, school-based ethnographic study (Marcus, 1995), illuminates how school cultures in Poland, Austria, and Germany grapple with the implementation of inclusive policy and practices. Drawing on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD, 2006), the European Union (EU) envisions inclusive education as a broad agenda that also responds to the challenges of multiculturalism and migration, socioeconomic inequalities, and the experience of disability. To understand how the concept of inclusive education takes shape in European classrooms, to grasp the challenges of hyper-diverse school communities, and to comprehend how these are met by school faculty, I explored primary schools in three countries which were deeply affected by the Holocaust and the special pedagogical tradition.

Keywords:

inclusive education, diversity, multi-sited ethnography, qualitative school research

STRUGGLING FOR EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE IN DISABLING SOCIETIES: A MULTI-SITED SCHOOL-BASED ETHNOGRAPHY OF INCLUSIVE POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN POLAND, AUSTRIA, AND GERMANY¹

Introduction

Statement of the Research Problem

Drawing on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD, 2006), the European Union (EU) envisions inclusive education as a broad agenda that also responds to the challenges of multiculturalism and migration, socioeconomic inequalities, and the experience of disability. However, as a discipline with a long tradition, special pedagogy continues to hold a firm grip on the disabled body and successfully upholds segregated special-school facilities, which are *de facto* illegal under the UN-CRPD and the right to free, quality primary and secondary education for all students (Art. 24.2b). Committed to achieving social cohesion, the EU urges its member countries to implement inclusive education:

(16) Ensuring effective equal access to quality inclusive education for all learners, including those of migrant origins, those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, those with special needs and those with disabilities – in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [UN-CRPD] – is indispensable for achieving more cohesive societies. (Council Recommendation, 2018, p. C 195/3)

To understand how the concept of inclusive education takes shape in European classrooms, to grasp the challenges of hyper-diverse school communities, and to

¹ I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisors Prof. DSW Dr. Hab. Hana Cervinkova, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Mag. Michael Schratz, Dr Juliet Golden as well as Ula Klobuszezwska, M.A., whose tireless efforts and support enabled me to successfully complete my doctoral dissertation. Thank you.

comprehend how these are met by all members of the faculty, I explored primary schools in Poland, Austria, and Germany. In this endeavor, I applied the deeply qualitative approach of educational anthropology.

Research Aims

The aim of my research study was to provide a comparative understanding of how the concept of inclusive education was appropriated by the school contexts that I examined through policy analysis and through observations of school practice and culture. I sought to provide insights into the daily life in European schools and into the structural and local conditions in which these schools were embedded, as well as investigating how these conditions had evolved through policy and pedagogical trends over time.

Research Scope and Results

The Background and Significance of the Study

My study placed the researcher as a professional stranger in three fields (Agar, 2008). I was interested in the respective concepts of inclusive education that each school practiced, in particular in how inclusive principles and policies interplayed with schooling cultures embedded in the specific educational traditions of each national context; I also focused on how pedagogies complacently worked with or contested deficit notions of the disabled/the Other. The “inclusion turn” in education received legal impetus for serious implementation efforts through the ratification of the UN-CRPD by the European Union and by each of its member states on a bilateral basis (Austria in 2008, Germany in 2009, and Poland in 2012). However, grass-roots initiatives organized by parents and disability rights activists that had preceded this broader, international call for inclusion by many decades have long and consistently fought for educating students with and without challenges together. In all the three country contexts of my dissertation, the call for inclusion was spearheaded by parent initiatives that have advocated ending the containment of children with disabilities in segregated care facilities and special schools since the 1980s (See Molitor, 2008, for Austria; Kossowska, 2017, for Poland; and Wocken, 1987, for Germany). I considered the local contexts of my research sites which had a history of discrimination, sterilization, and even murder of people with disabilities as well as of the ethnic or cultural “Others.” This history created a sensitive background for the discussion on human rights and educational justice in the Central European

context, which could not be ignored or rendered neutral (Perl, 2005; Hayden, 1997). Therefore, my research was historically contextualized to illuminate the general and local complexities of implementing inclusive education. The shift from a segregating approach to an inclusive one must be examined both with attention to highly local and contextualized factors and in light of transnational and global developments (Carney, 2008, Appadurai, 1996; Rubin & Cervinkova, 2019). The methods of anthropology were suitable tools for me to “map the ways that macro processes unfold and are shaped and reshaped in the practices of everyday life” (Abu El-Haj, 2018).

Key Concepts and Theory

The framework of inclusive education that I introduced built on the work of and theories proposed by scholars from the fields of critical pedagogy, disability studies, critical race theory, and inclusive as well as special pedagogy. However, to outline the pillars of inclusive education, I did not draw only on the literature that explicitly labelled itself as contributory to the inclusive paradigm. I contextualized each schooling culture in a cross-cultural conversation on the production of differences and attempts at inclusion through webs of significance (Geertz, 1973). Therefore, I put more emphasis on inter-cultural learning in my German study, on local knowledge and neighborhood stigma in my Austrian study, and on homogenizing tendencies that promote performance drill at the cost of social learning in my Polish study.

From the literature which I consulted, I chose four overarching themes that I regarded as informative of inclusive pedagogy. These were not necessarily new themes, but I condensed and enriched them through my fieldwork experiences. First, building on Anthony Booth and Mel Ainscow’s work, I considered **inclusion to be a principled approach to education**. Here, I grasped inclusive education as a deeply ethical endeavor and observed aspects of school cultures that adhered to the commitment to respond to the needs of all students. Second, drawing on the “funds of knowledge” concept championed by Norma Gonzalez, Luis Moll et al. in the 1990s, I discussed the theme of **tackling and eventually abolishing the deficit-orientation**, which holds a tight grip over students with particular identity markers. The framework of DisCrit, i.e., disability studies and critical race theory in education developed by Beth A. Ferri, David J. Connor and Subini A. Annamma, was especially helpful in understanding the detrimental effects that *Ausländerpädagogik* (foreigners’ pedagogy) and *Sonderpädagogik* (special pedagogy) had on migrant students, who made up the largest population in segregated schooling facilities in Germany and Austria. The DisCrit literature also helped me illuminate how an attempt at including a student with severe emotional

challenges was sabotaged by the deficit-orientation prevalent in the Polish education system. Third, inclusion needed to be particularly sensitive to the **production of differences with regard to history, space, and politics**. In the German and the Austrian contexts, the literature on the impact of housing politics – i.e., the tipping-point theory, neighborhood stigma, and urban educational settings – illuminated the production of local myths and the perpetuation of disadvantage through “chosen segregation” in a multicultural school in Austria and an all-Muslim migrant school in Germany. Finally, I emphasized **social learning** in inclusive education. In the Polish context, dramatic historical and political changes have been affecting the educational landscape to this day. Performance drill instead of social learning foregrounds the differences which students with severe emotional challenges exhibit, as their behavior interferes with meeting the learning objectives of the whole class. At the same time, the brutal behavior of classmates punishing special needs students remains unaddressed.

My research has shown that, across the three national contexts, the discipline of special pedagogy continues to hold authority over the disabled student even in inclusive settings. As Andreas Hinz (2008) points out, “a similarity of inclusion and disability studies is the gradual dispossession of both approaches through special pedagogy: inclusion is becoming more and more a special pedagogical feature.” It is important to understand that inclusive pedagogy was not conceptualized as part of a special pedagogical spectrum, in which inclusion describes another step in the evolution of how disability is treated in education. I argue that the contentious character of inclusion stems from the exclusivity to which it is tied in theoretical accounts and in practice. The deficit perspective on students, the special educational needs statuses, and special schools continue to operate under the inclusive turn in education, thereby entirely undermining the concept as such and its mission (Wocken, 2018; Connor and Ferri, 2007). As Lani Florian (2015, p. 6) observes, “the starting point for inclusive pedagogy is an acknowledgement of the contested nature of inclusive education and the consequent variability in practice.”

A historical perspective helps illuminate the origins of the special pedagogical tradition in the education systems of Central Europe, as well as its impact on managing disability today. From the turn of the 19th century on, special pedagogy advanced in the German-speaking world as *Heilpädagogik* (healing pedagogy), developing from a splinter branch of the teaching profession into an academic discipline once it became allied with medical and psychological discourse, practices, and epistemological framework (Moser, 2012; Pfahl, 2011). Vera Moser (2012, p. 262) highlights the first professorship for *Heilpädagogik*, awarded to Heinrich Hanselmann at the University of Zürich in 1931, as the beginning of the establishment of special pedagogy. Hanselmann, who also received an honorary doctorate from the medical faculty in 1956 (Ibid., p. 271),

developed a definition of the lowest common denominator for all disabilities, which he called “weakness of the soul” and regarded as the connecting element of “imbecility, deaf-mutism, blindness, neglect, and idiocy” (Ibid., p. 256). This definition enshrined the deficit model inherent in the disability construct through which special pedagogy established itself as an academic discipline (Ibid., p. 272). Dagmar Hänsel (2012), in her historiographic research, draws attention to special pedagogy in the time of National Socialism. She highlights that teachers at special schools overproportionately contributed to the discourse on race hygiene (Hänsel, 2012, p. 244). Help-school pedagogy was founded on medical-psychological knowledge and argumentation through which pupils were defined as “innately idiotic” because of inherited imbecility. Hänsel argues how help-school reasoning was compatible with the race-hygiene paradigm of the National Socialists. She emphasizes that under National Socialism, help-school pedagogy transformed into *völkisch*, nationalist, special pedagogy, shifting from the category of “innate imbecility” to a broader concept of disability (Ibid.).

In the 1970s, just a few decades after World War Two, the terms “special pedagogy” and “healing pedagogy” were still used synonymously, expanding the sphere of the discipline through professionalization and institutionalization in Germany and across Europe (Pfahl, 2007; Waldschmidt, 2007; Tomlinson, 2017). Lisa Pfahl’s (2011) analysis of historical documents shows that in the process of professionalization, diagnostics played a significant role to establish modern, postwar special pedagogy. The medical examinations of former help-school students developed into a systematic diagnostic procedure based on medical, psychological, and pedagogical aspects that allowed recognizing, classifying, and comparing high-incident disabilities, such as learning disability (Pfahl, 2011, pp. 94ff). The “scientification of diagnostic measures” (Ibid., p. 95), as Pfahl puts it, served special pedagogy to legitimize special schools and segregated education. In turn, special pedagogy relied on the construct of the “socially, morally, and medically conspicuous student” as its area of intervention (p. 91). In conclusion, Pfahl highlights that special pedagogy considers deviation and deficit to be students’ individual attributes. She emphasizes that the discipline disregards other reasons for failing to achieve educational goals and frames schools as normative institutions that contribute to the production and evaluation of learning outcomes and learning disabilities (p. 96).

Research Methods

I collected data through ethnographic research methods and techniques, such as participant observation, keeping field notes, diary entries, and analytical memos, as well as conducting interviews with the research participants: teachers,

pedagogues, and principals (Emerson, Fretz and Schaw, 2011; Brantlinger, 2005). Outside the field, I completed an extensive policy analysis, modeled on Bowen's document analysis (2009), for each of the three country contexts, and interviewed local external experts from academia and administration (Meuser & Nagel, 1991). As an observing participant, I immersed myself in the school cultures of my research sites. At each school, I joined one class unit and followed it throughout the school day. In this way, I intended to create a routine for everyone involved in the research process. I experienced how schools conceptualized education for their pupils, how they organized education spatially and timewise, what was taught, what rules applied to classroom behavior, how teachers and students interacted, how breaks were distributed and spent. I paid attention to the languages that were spoken, the religions that were present, the special educational needs that were articulated and addressed, and those that were not. By joining one class unit, I adopted the pupils' perspective on the teaching situation in which they found themselves. I included the teachers' perspectives concerning my observations, which I elicited through the interviews I conducted with them and also through informal conversations during breaks or after lessons, which I noted in my research diary. Interviews were only roughly structured, since I chose to give space to the directions my research participants spontaneously decided to take in expressing their thoughts (Brantlinger, 2005). As activities within schools are closely connected to housing, health, resources, and the socio-economic status of neighborhoods and communities, I paid attention to urban settings in the respective country contexts (Erickson, 1984; Schultz, Jones-Walker, & Chikkatur, 2008). These observations helped me enter into reflective interviews with external experts, who were familiar with the country context but strangers to the specific school community where I conducted my research. Drawing on Meuser and Nagel, I conducted expert interviews with education scholars and school administrators. These semi-structured interviews structured the conversations, which lasted from 45 minutes to two hours. The interviews also provided valuable starting points for my policy analysis.

I carried out document analysis to understand the historical, political, and socio-cultural circumstances that underlay education policies on inclusion, disability, and diversity. It was important for my research to trace the development of inclusive education as a push for social justice, for which families and disability rights activists had struggled. Furthermore, I drew on government reports, monitoring reports, and European Union and OCED studies to grasp the education-political field in which the respective schools that were my research sites were situated.

Research Results

I have found that the enactment of inclusive education at all the three of my research sites is based on a very narrow and exclusionary concept of disability. For example, special-needs support in mainstream education, and hence in settings that claim to be inclusive, is regulated through special educational needs status in all of the primary schools. An intersectional and political analysis of differences shows that resources are granted only to children who can “demonstrate their own disability”² within the given special pedagogical framework of one to eight statuses (in Germany); children whose parents have the cultural, linguistic, and material capital to mobilize resources on behalf of their children (in Germany and Austria); and children whose teachers are not too overworked or burned out to notice that their students might be in need of extra support (in Poland, Austria, Germany). In my Austrian study, only three students received special pedagogical support in the school of over 200 children. In Poland, one student out of the entire grade level was considered too disabled for inclusive learning, and in Germany, the idea of special pedagogical needs status in mainstream education had mostly been abandoned as a useless intervention in an all-migrant school. Different differences mattered in different contexts.

Discussion and Conclusions

In all three studies, I showed how teachers were at the forefront of changes in education politics. Teachers worked in classrooms attended by refugee children from war-torn regions, who were traumatized and sometimes without their families (Germany). Teachers worked in multicultural classrooms in which “intimate enemies” were expected to collaborate and learn together (in Austria). Teachers encountered pupils with medical conditions and special needs who sometimes sparked violent, aggressive behavior (in Poland). As much as teachers may consider themselves subject specialists only, they are involved in a deep pedagogical and ethical relationship with their students. In my dissertation, I show how teachers’ bodies physically and mentally bear the marks of extreme situations, as well as of everyday problems, in which they stop violence, counter abuse and bullying, and give care and first aid. Returning to the theoretical underpinnings of my dissertation, I show in my three case studies that learning is in fact crucially social; education is political and, as such, always potentially transformative.

² Cf. “It is not the legality of the proof, its conformity to the law, that makes it a proof: it is its demonstrability. The demonstrability of evidence makes it admissible.” Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France 1974–1975* (London: Verso, 2016), p. 8.

While conducting my school-based research in three country contexts from September 2016 until the summer of 2018, I observed how the push for inclusive education started to take shape in everyday classroom situations. Though some teachers undoubtedly experienced certain challenges for the first time – such as racist bullying of students (in Austria), students on anti-depressant medications (in Poland), and interreligious quarrels (in Germany) – students with disabilities and migrant experiences were not new to these education systems. However, it was the space which these students and their families claimed at the center of society, within mainstream education, that had changed. The fact that more students from migrant backgrounds attended special schooling than mainstream education in Austria and Germany meant that differences had been neatly stored away from the mainstream in special schools, special classes, or special rooms. I argue that there is nothing new about diversity in education. What is new is the confident advocacy with which discriminatory practices, such as sorting into tracks and specialized institutions, are called out. Parents such as Agnieszka Kossowska and her husband protest when one school after another turns away their son or admits him only under the premise of using the funding which the Polish government has allotted to his support to pay for the school's rent or electricity bills. Teachers with migrant experiences (still a novelty, but also a growing percentage of faculty members in large German cities) turn to the neighborhoods where they want to be role models for children with similar identities. In Tyrol, Austria, an example stands out: two principals (of a special school and a mainstream school) formed an alliance to merge into one school community that was accessible to everyone, while elsewhere new special schools were being built and continued to recruit students with disabilities and special needs. In several interviews, educators expressed worries about the changing expectations of their profession, as well as about the lack of a common ground from which all faculty members, teachers, pedagogues, and special pedagogues could work together to implement the paradigm of inclusivity (in Austria and Poland). Where teachers or special pedagogues felt isolated from their colleagues because of dealing exclusively with special needs children, inclusion had not been fostered as a **principled approach** to education that enabled everyone to feel part of the school community. Instead, it was seen rather as a bureaucratic order from above.

Drawing on Thea R. Abu El-Haj's concept of a **relational view of differences**, in my Polish study I focused on describing how the school, daily classroom routines, and the perspectives of teachers and pedagogues contributed to the construction of a student who did not fit into mainstream education. Recognizing Sim's violent behavior toward classmates and faculty members, I showed how classroom practices and schooling structures geared toward performance and homogeneity perpetuated

Sim's deviance. Sim's needs could not be met through the afternoon shadow schedule of therapeutic classes that the school offered to students with special educational challenges. Sim and the fifth grade class unit to which the student belonged were in strong need of **social learning** techniques that could facilitate community-building. I concluded from my contextualized observations that the medical approach to students prevailed and that disability and its corresponding concept of inclusion were enacted *next to* regular mainstream schooling. Inclusion took place as a parallel concept, while regular education remained uncontested. I recommend deconstructing the perspective on students as a homogenous mass that can be brought to peak performance through subject drill and discipline. Students must engage in social learning activities to build empathy and mutual understanding. In addition, I consider it a severe violation of human rights to segregate students from their peers through individual lessons at home. In this way, students miss a significant number of classes, which disables them in their learning in addition to their bodily impairment. Individual teaching was meant to be applied in case of students who could not attend classes because of a broken leg or a severe illness. However, this "inclusive measure" has become a way to channel students out of mainstream education, delaying the imperative of schools coming up with new concepts and resources needed to build places where every child can learn.

Similarly, in my Austrian study, I paid attention to the special pedagogical support system which the primary school had built. I asked who profited from the special pedagogue's services and who went unnoticed and unsupported. In this highly multicultural school community, roughly six students in the class that I observed received German-language support. Special pedagogical lessons were given to exactly three children in the school attended by more than 200 students. In my analysis, I concluded that inclusive measures hinged on the cultural and financial capital that parents needed to be able to mobilize on behalf of their children; otherwise the children were not be able to profit from the support available at school. Looking at Ceren, a Kurdish girl with a hearing impairment, I argued that the **deficit perspective** on her identity as a student with migrant experiences stood in the way of recognizing her school failure on the grounds of a hearing impairment rather than of intellectual or cognitive weaknesses. I recommend finding flexible ways of access to the support systems which schools are starting to build. I also advise paying more attention to building strong ties between the neighborhood and the school itself to reduce the stigma that hovered over the students and affected the teachers' expectations of success and future aspirations for them.

Finally, in the German example, I focused on the question of how it was possible that the Tipping Point School turned into an almost all-Muslim migrant

community. I analyzed housing and district policies combined with racist pedagogical ideologies that had gradually contributed to a school that was completely segregated. Although some parents and their children enjoyed the familiarity which this school offered, for example, when nearly everyone fasted during Ramadan, the teachers unanimously understood that their students were actually attending school outside mainstream German society. In their school, native German-speakers were missing, so no intercultural friendships or bonds could be established. Considering statistics on education, such factors as poverty and migrant background can amount to up to two years of academic delay. At the Tipping Point School, two-thirds of the students received government support for school lunches and class trips; one-third had special pedagogical needs status. The intersection of race, class, and disability was strongly tangible in this community, where many students studied on grade-level material for class four instead of six. Nonetheless, the school built confidence in the students through social learning activities, and working hard on **abolishing the deficit perspective**. The collaboration between teachers and pedagogues was remarkable. Somehow, outside the mainstream, this school allowed glimpses into how an inclusive community could be built through mutual respect, plenty of time and space for working together, and talking things through. Nonetheless, it must be clearly stated that racial segregation cannot be tolerated, and that inclusive education is first and foremost a paradigm that stresses the encounter with each Other. At times, the accumulation of disadvantage at this school was overwhelming. Even though some children succeeded in receiving recommendations for the academic gymnasium, the Tipping Point School operated under strong systemic pressures and limited students' opportunities for academic growth and success (Gerald, 2018).

Returning to the framework of European teacher education, I would like to stress that the context within which schools operate deeply matters to teaching practice. As can be seen from my in-depth qualitative school research, the concept of inclusion has been appropriated by practitioners, in the sense that inclusion does not only address matters of disability as a medical condition, but speaks to an approach that responds to the challenges of diverse, urban classrooms, including issues of poverty, multiculturalism, gender diversity, etc. Hence, hyper-diverse Central European classrooms do not form the background of teacher practice but the foreground of it. Inclusion attempts to grapple with the conditions of teaching and learning, and constitutes an alternative approach to diversity that values the individual and reduces barriers to participation in education.

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Title:

**Educating the Reflective Professional in Teacher Education: Professional Learning
and in Teaching and in Other Professions**

Abstract

This research was conducted to create a better understanding of how professionals learn while performing daily work activities and what practices can be borrowed from them and implemented in the teaching profession. With “critical realism” as its underlying philosophy, this study viewed professional learning as an unintended result of interactions among three complex systems, i.e., the organization, the community of practice, and the individual. The division into these three levels was necessary in order to find a sound way of exploring professions with different goals and characters. This qualitative study was conducted with 25 professionals from five occupational groups: a) Architecture, b) Information Technology, c) Human Resources, d) Educational Researchers, and d) VET Teachers. In this research, data about the day-to-day challenges of the VET teaching profession was collected and possible solutions to these challenges were identified in the other four professions. The data was collected through semi-structure interviews and coded by means of the N-Vivo and Quirkos software. The findings identified various elements, structures, and practices that could be extrapolated onto the VET teaching profession, especially during the induction period of said professionals; however, this study leaves the door open for a deeper conversation on the effectiveness of practices specific to other professions in teaching.

Keywords:

professional learning, workplace learning, communities of practice, complexity theory

EDUCATING THE REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL IN TEACHER EDUCATION: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN TEACHING AND IN OTHER PROFESSIONS

Introduction

In the realm of professional learning, theoretical frameworks focus on the role of either the individual or the community/the organization. However, an interactionist approach takes into account both individual differences (e.g., general cognitive abilities) and social relationships (e.g., the teacher-student dynamic) within an environment, a community, or an organization. For example, organizational science has shown that the climate in the workplace is important because of the presence of conflict or cooperation, which can lead to organizational success or failure. Within individual learning, organizational learning characteristics and leadership styles can also influence employee learning and development. Consequently, in developing a framework for understanding professional learning, it is important to consider how the individual is shaped by both intrinsic motivation factors, such as self-determination and self-efficacy, and extrinsic motivation factors, such as the organizational climate and the leadership style, which influence workplace policies and practices. This study makes a contribution to such investigations through focusing on macro, meso and micro factors as components of a complex system. Previous research has not provided a broad interactional approach to professional learning.

Statement of the Problem

It is important to adopt a broad perspective in examining the complex phenomenon of professional learning. Although the micro context (individual characteristics of teachers or programs) is relevant, it is crucial to include the accounts of meso and macro contexts to grasp the complexity of professional learning (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Accordingly, this study provides a theoretical model that takes into account micro, meso and macro factors. The model is relevant to professional learning research across a wide range of professions.

This study has two objectives. First, it applies theories and practices from other professions and extrapolates the findings onto challenges faced in the teaching

profession, especially during the induction period. Second, it draws on organizational science and examines the professional learning phenomenon from the perspective of complexity theory. Complexity theory is useful since it conceptualizes professional learning as a complex system with multiple interacting parts (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014, p. 111)

Research Aims

Building on the social sciences and professional learning theory, this study aims to collect and analyze field data in order to explore the following question:

1. What innovations perceived in various professions could be applied to the teaching profession?
 - 1.1 What challenges are encountered in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) teaching daily practice?
 - 2.2 What solutions developed in other professions can answer to these challenges?
 - 3.3 How can such processes be adapted as innovations to the teaching profession?

This study contributes to the existing body of literature because it is one of the first studies to focus on professional learning using the complexity theory framework.

Research Scope and Results

The Background and Significance of the Study

Over the past twenty years, only a handful of studies have explored professional learning across different careers (Cheetham & Chivers, 2001; Daley, 2001; Safdar, 2012; Shulman, 2006). These studies have examined the core pillars of academic education by researching signature pedagogies in different professions (Shulman, 2006). Other authors have worked on inventories and similar quantitative tools to track various components of professional learning (Cheetham & Chivers, 2001; Daley, 1999). Several researchers have focused on the knowledge acquired from particular areas within specific professions and examined its applications in different occupational fields (Daley, 2001). In addition, other researchers have identified principles already found in different professions and applied these principles within other professions (Safdar, 2012). However, it is not known either whether or to what extent professional learning elements specific to other professions can be applied to the teaching profession, as there are no studies inquiring into this phenomenon. Professional learning must be

investigated in relation to the contextual factors and complexities of each profession, such as the social, legislative, and economic climate within each field, the meanings of workplace dynamics, the characteristics of the organization, product industry, and individual factors, such as personality and motivational characteristics.

Professional learning itself has conventionally been treated as an individual process, associated with personal experience, as well as with the acquisition of disciplinary and problem-solving competencies (Fenwick, 2012, p. 4). The problem with such person-centered views is that the complexity of the world around the professional is either ignored or bypassed, thereby missing out on the individual's social interactions within the professional environment. To expand this individualistic "acquisitional" metaphor, it is important to adopt an interactionist, sociocultural perspective that incorporates the individual and the role of the environment, rules, tools, and social relations that surround the professional.

This study explores the complexity of the workplace, its components, social interactions, and the context in order to assess factors that support professional learning. The research aim is to identify creative ways of approaching teachers' professional learning by drawing on experiences of other professions. Underpinned by social scientific research, the study intends to make a contribution to the literature on professional learning. The significance of this study lies in advancing relevant theory and practice.

Theory: Complexity Theory

Ball (2005) states that "[c]omplexity science is a science of collective behavior" (qtd. in Mason, 2008, p.1). Complexity theory provides an effective method of examining inner dynamics of complex systems. Complexity theory challenges the theory of complicated systems through examining complexity at the system level itself (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014, p.107). Complexity theory holds that breaking down a system into its components and studying them in isolation from one another leads to a significant loss in the understanding of the system. Specifically, non-linear interactions and feedback loops at both the intra-component and the inter-component levels are lost. Although inferences are possible when treating complex systems as complicated systems, such inferences can be misleading in the absence of any understanding of the dynamic interactions at the system level.

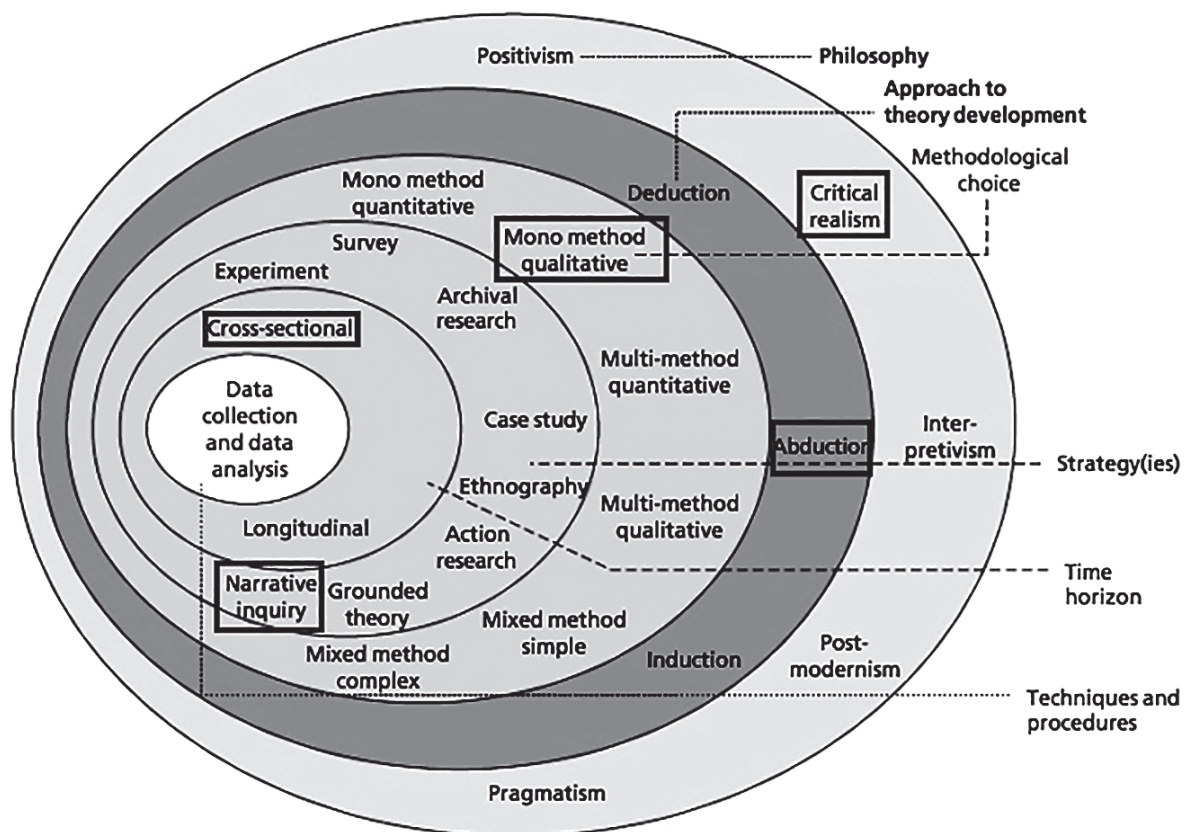
Consequently, complexity science provides a lens for analyzing dynamic social phenomena resulting from intentional and emergent processes (Lichtenstein, 1995). This methodological approach is appropriate for a study based on critical realism. The qualitative approach provides an overview of an active social system, while

incorporating nuances that influence actors within the system helps understand how the system and the individual components mutually affect each other's natures and actions in an holistic fashion.

Research Methods

This section provides thorough information about the methodological underpinnings of this study, ranging from its underlying philosophical framework, to its ontological and epistemological tenets, to the data collection and analysis techniques, as elucidated in the research “onion” below:

Figure 1. Research “onion” illustrating this study (Lewis & Thornhill, 2015)



It is important to note that, at every stage of any serious study, the researcher makes a number of decisions and assumptions that affect the entirety of the work, from the choice of the research subject and its subsequent design to the interpretation of the findings. These assumptions concern the available knowledge base, the perception of “reality,” and the questions arising from this perception regarding events or phenomena to be studied and applicable methods through which the said questions can be

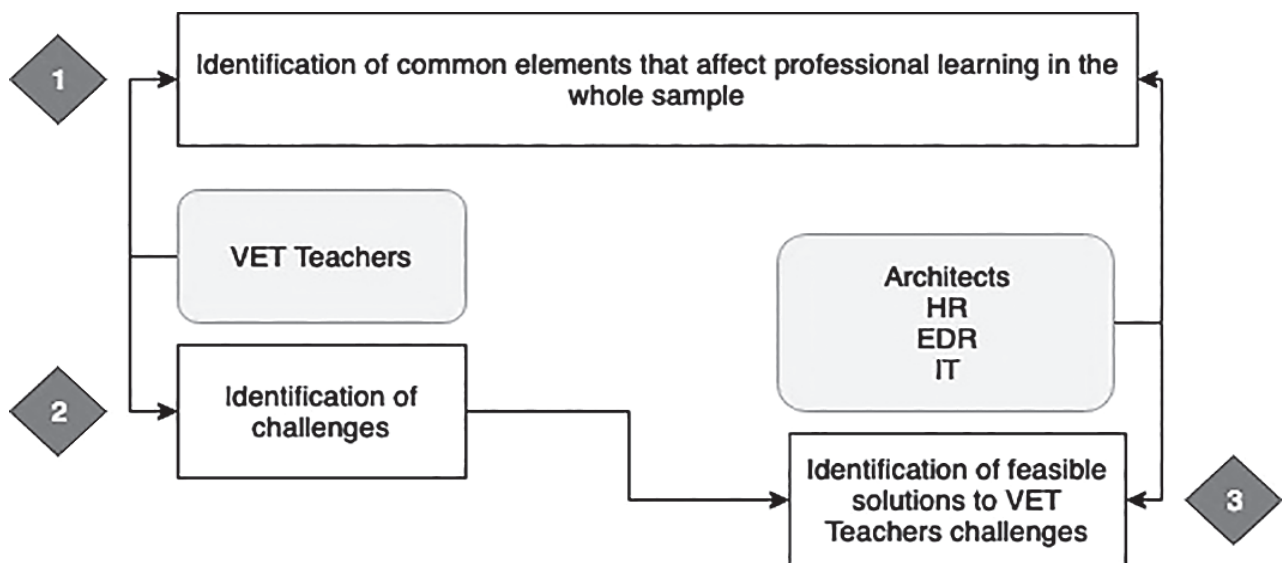
adequately explored, all of which are influenced by the researcher's own set of beliefs and value system.

Every study starts with a philosophical research framework, and its preparatory, planning stage ends in a decision on how to do the data collection and analysis (Saunders, 2015, p. 24). Below, I describe my project in terms of the “research onion” figure above. First of all, the philosophy chosen for this study was “critical realism,” the approach to theory development was abduction, the methodological choice was a mono qualitative study using the narrative inquiry strategy in a cross-sectional timeline, based on semi-structured interviews for data collection and open coding for data analysis.

Research Plan

The diagram below represents the layers of analysis embedded within this study:

Figure 2. Data collection plan



Participant Sampling Criteria & Recruitment

The study participants were highly-skilled professionals, whose work involved knowledge creation, as well as symbolic-analytical activities (Milligan, Littlejohn, & Margarian, 2013, p.1). The sample was drawn from five different key industries: Architects (A), Educational researchers (EDR), Vocational Education and Training (VET) teachers, Information Technology engineers (IT), and Human Resources officers (HR). These

industries were selected as a representative sample of primary professional groups as defined by the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO 8).

Each of the industries is classified as level 4, as assessed by the ISCO 8 standards. Typically, occupations rated as level 4 require higher education qualifications and complex problem-solving skills. Level 4 occupations also involve responsibilities which entail decision making and creativity, both of which are grounded on theoretical and factual knowledge (ILO, 2007, p.13). Finally, given the complex characteristics of and tasks specific to level 4 professions, these occupations offer meaningful elements of analysis. Such elements are, for example, involvement in communities of practice, higher levels of reflection, and leadership opportunities.

The complete sampling criteria were:

1. International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO 8);
2. Hard and soft sciences classification (Postareff, 2007);
3. Signature pedagogies (Shulman, 2005);
4. Relevance to the study;
5. At least two years of occupational experience;
6. Accessibility and convenience.

The study sample was drawn from European countries, with both EU and non-EU nationals working in Europe included in order for the study to faithfully reflect contemporary real-world complex organizational systems. Whereas this study was mainly conducted in Hungary, the participants were professionals residing in other EU countries (i.e., the Czech Republic, Slovakia, etc.)

The participants were recruited through the snowball sampling method, with subsequent participants recommended to the researcher by the current and past participants. This method of recruitment was well-suited for this study. Snowball sampling generally relies on the dynamics of natural and social organic networks (Noy, 2008, p. 329). Social networks play an important role in knowledge sharing, both at the intra-system level, as well as between distinct organizational systems. Social networks eliminate much uncertainty regarding knowledge accuracy, since the credibility of the individual(s) imparting information to others in the system is already established within the group. Shared norms within a social network provide sufficient levels of trust to ensure that the outcomes of knowledge and skill sharing are fair with respect to all the parties involved in that system of learning (Liebeskind, Oliver, Zucker, & Brewer, 1994).

Given the importance of such social interactions, the snowball method was selected for sampling in this project, since its purpose was to explore unique nuances that affected the learning experiences of individuals within a complex system.

*Table 1. Demographic data of the sample***Table 5. Demographic data of the sample**

Females	10
Males	15
Nationalities	9: Brazil, Bhutan, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Netherlands, Serbia, Slovakia, Peru, Poland
Participant countries	3: Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary
Minimum years of experience	3
Maximum years of experience	40
Median years of experience	9
Minimum number of jobs in the field	1
Maximum number of jobs in the field	18* ¹

Data Collection and Analysis Methods

Interviews are a direct method of gathering information pertaining to the research objectives. As such, they enable the researcher to test experimental hypotheses, to explain and identify factors and relationships, and to explore unexpected results (Kerlinger, 1970, qtd. in Cohen, Manion, & Francis, 2007, p. 351). In this study, interviews were regarded as the best approach to the collection of primary data since they made it possible to analyze relationships and interactions within a complex environment.

The Data Collection Protocol

The interviews were mainly conducted face-to-face, and the participants completed a consent form before the start of the interview. When there were logistical constraints, virtual interviews (Skype, hangouts, etc.) were conducted. In all interview formats, a voice recorder was used, or written notes were taken.

¹ Including freelancing jobs in some careers.

The General Procedure of Content Analysis

In this study, interviews with 25 individuals from five professions were analyzed. The selection of more than one profession gave the researcher an opportunity to delineate the variation of elements and circumstances enabling professional learning within different professions.

The analysis of the interview transcripts was conducted using the inductive content analysis approach, which included the reduction, grouping, and conceptualization of the data (Patton, 1990; Postareff, 2007; Flick, 2014).

Besides, abductive reasoning was applied to examine whether additional contextual details identified through the interviews revealed hypothetical causal relationships for future research. The generalizations arrived at through inductive reasoning served as a method to identify innovations or novel practices for the field of teaching.

The Analysis Procedure

Transcription. Following the interviews, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings made during the interviews. The interviews were typed into a text format, and the recordings were destroyed to maintain confidentiality. The textual information was transcribed into a consistent format to regularize the process of coding across all data input.

Coding. In this study, the transcripts were coded in order to recognize and compile thematic categories. The primary manual coding of the data was performed by the researcher to gain familiarity with the material. The secondary coding set was generated by the Quirkos and NVivo qualitative analysis software programs. These tools provided a computerized breakdown of the data into thematic sets, thus forestalling researcher bias. By running the primary data through multiple queries, this tool helped achieve a clear understanding of emergent thematic categories through groupings of similar word usages in responses. In addition, the researcher added contextual primary data collected during the interviews as memoranda to the thematic categorizations in order to ensure that the nuanced relationships being developed through the textual breakdown should provide deep insights.

An additional researcher coded a subset of the total data pool in order to provide an objective verification of the coding performed by the researcher. The secondary coder's work was utilized to evaluate Cohen's Kappa, i.e., the value of agreement between raters of data, in order to ascertain the utility and scientific value of

the collected information with respect to its integrity and capacity to answer the research questions.

Table 2. An example of the initial coding framework

Interview transcript	Initial coding framework
<i>Interviewer: What do you mean by the working culture and the environment?</i>	
Professional: The company culture is decisive. It is responsible for the quality of the colleagues and for the motivation. Whether you can identify yourself with the team, the project and the company. -So this is a big difference (to my last job) because before I knew there was knowledge that I couldn't reach anywhere and I needed to ask. And I didn't know where what type of knowledge is, and where is not. Here I know that everything is shared, everything is published somewhere, so I can just access it... So, it's always a very equal (knowledge sharing) position for everyone.	Open culture Institutional knowledge sharing
<i>Interviewer: What about the environment?</i>	
Professional: I am accepted by the colleagues, which is the key for efficient co-working. Whether you can identify yourself with the team, the project and the company... – to share your IT skills is important, that your colleagues accept you and appreciate you as an expert... – The personal qualities of the colleagues and your good relations with them.	Social recognition Relationships

The objective verification of the categorization. To provide an objective verification of the various categories coded, the interview analysis and categorization were inspected by both scientific advisors and by critical colleagues, and the categorizations were corrected and revised to the extent which was deemed necessary.

Thematic analysis. Once the open coding, the secondary coding, and the objective verification of the categorization were concluded, the data was compiled and analyzed in order to answer the two major research questions. Inductive processes were used to break the data into thematic categories. To analyze the data, both inductive and abductive processes were used. The generalized inferences produced in inductive processes offered insights into each participant's relationship to their respective organizational learning systems. Abductive processes were used in testing theories through N-Vivo and Quirkos.

Table 3. An example of the final coding framework after the reduction of categories in the initial coding framework

Final coding framework	Initial coding framework
Knowledge sharing	
Attractors	Open culture Open communication Positive feedback Social recognition Relationships Technical experience Self-confidence
Hindrances	Time Lack of records Power-distance Social features Undiscovered knowledge Isolation Confidentiality Lack of freedom Bureaucracy

Research Results

The results are described below by answering the research questions.

1.1. What challenges are encountered in the VET daily practice?

Some challenges related to the financial means of the workplace were identified, while challenges related to peer collaboration and leadership were reported as the most pressing ones. Specifically, the main challenge found in the vocational education and training profession was:

VET 1. The leaders' not having enough leadership skills to guide and their unwillingness to delegate.

1.2. Which solutions developed in other professions can answer to these challenges?

In order to identify practicable solutions for the challenges in the teaching profession, an analysis of how the learning process takes place in different professions was performed. The following professional approaches to learning were identified:

Architecture (ARC)

In the Architecture profession, two main characteristics were identified:

ARC 1. The mediating role of the project manager between the employee and the working knowledge needed to perform work-related activities

Although in the Architecture profession the community was horizontally structured and communication was open, the interviewees reported that they their chief architect or boss was their main source of knowledge. It is important to note that architects share their leadership, so the lead architect in one project may not be the leader in another project.

ARC 2. Cooperating with and learning from other professionals who work within the same project

This point is particularly interesting since the architects were aware of the importance of cooperating with other professionals; for instance, they openly looked for opportunities to work with them and learn from them. However, it is important to note that such opportunities were mainly available to senior architects. Also, the level of communication between an architect and an engineer working within the same project depended in several cases on the architect-in-chief, who could easily obstruct communication.

Educational Researchers (EDR)

EDR 1. A strong relationship with the leadership figure

Educational researchers seem to have a strong relationship with their leadership figures in terms of knowledge acquisition. This can be either a positive or a negative attribute, as less-than-ideal relationships of this kind may produce a negative effect on the researcher.

Figure 3. Architects' learning dynamics in terms of leadership involvement

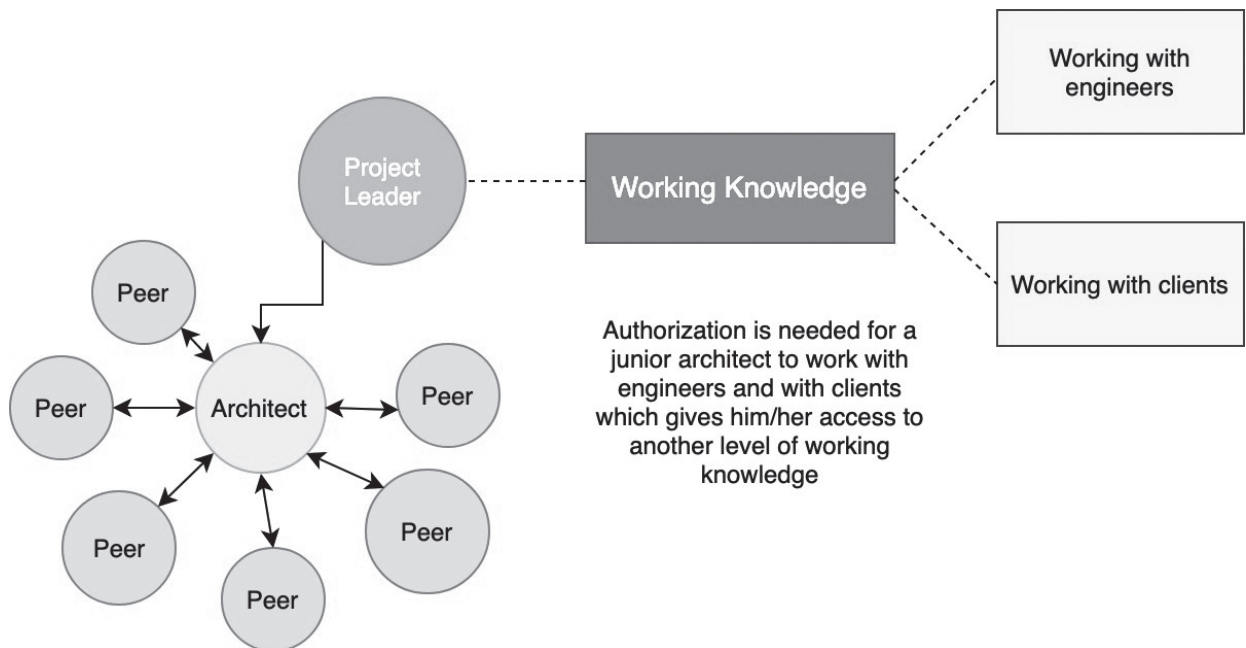
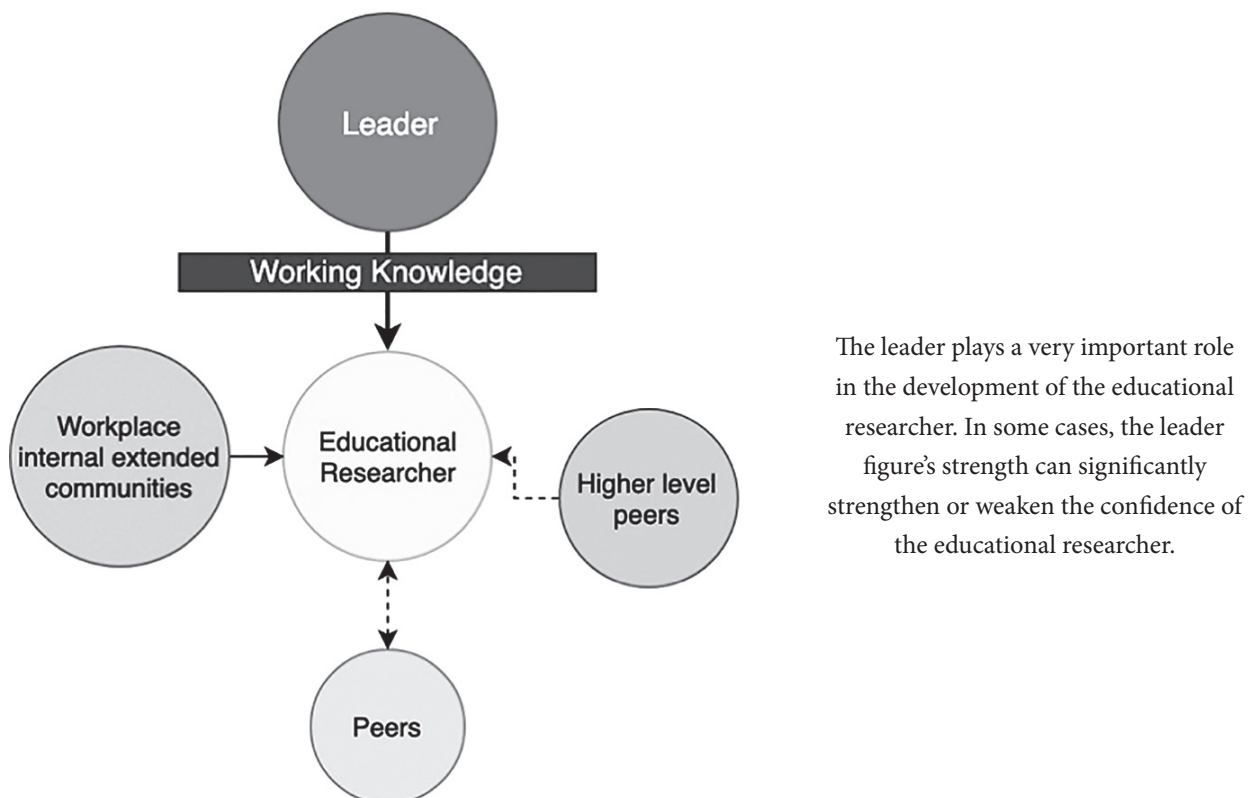


Figure 4. Educational researchers' learning dynamics in terms of leadership involvement



Human Resources (HR)

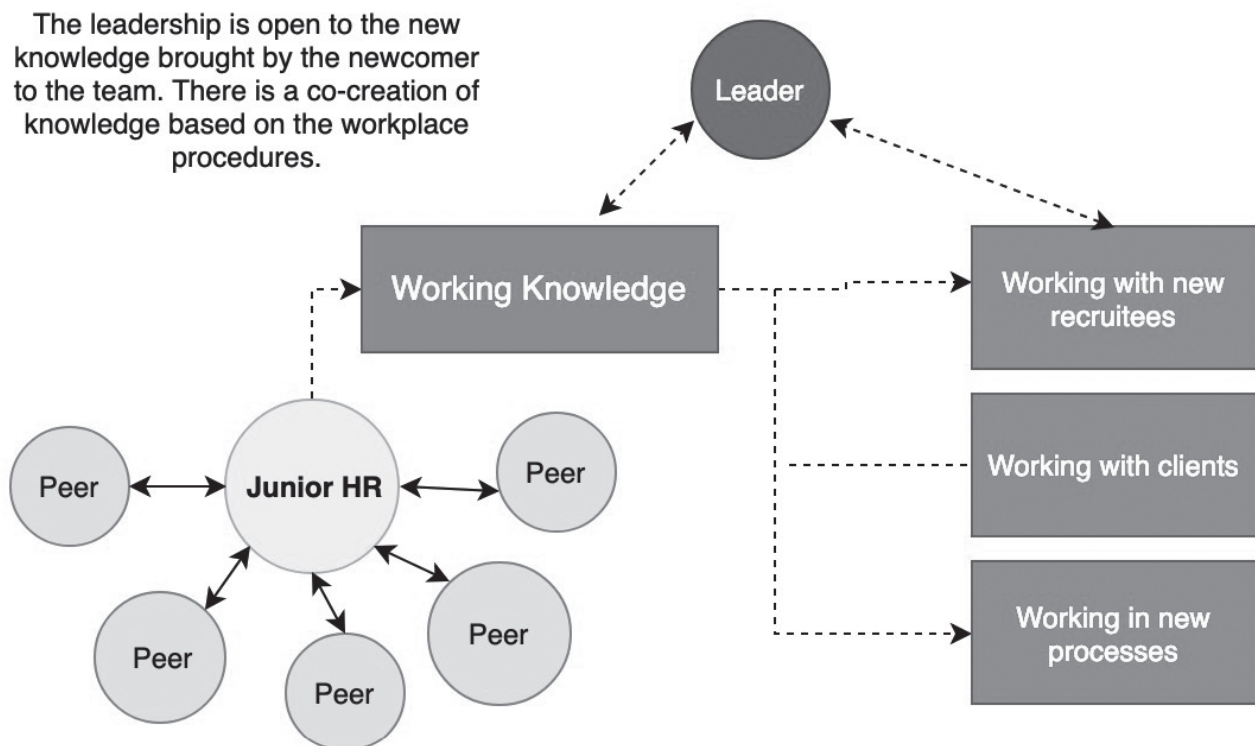
HR1. Openness to new knowledge from the group

HR professionals were receptive to feedback regarding not only the recruitment procedures, but also the specific roles of newcomers and flaws in the overall HR department processes.

HR 2. Delegation.

HR professionals were open to delegating important activities to new people in the position, having the HR leader as a mediator of new knowledge

Figure 5. HR officers' learning dynamics in terms of leadership involvement

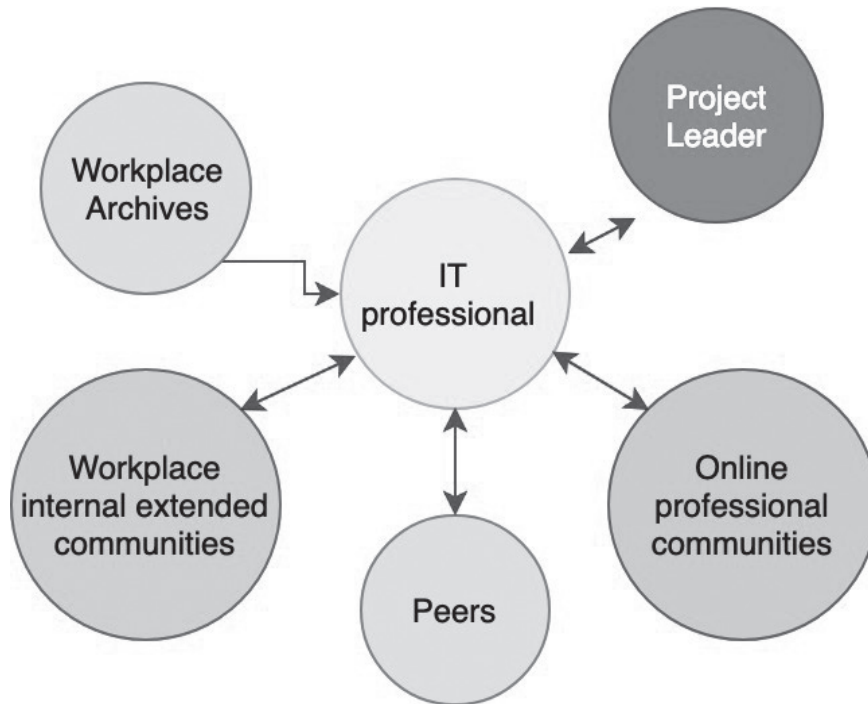


Information Technology (IT)

IT 1. Continuous sharing online and offline.

The IT individuals interviewed for this study had very open views about knowledge sharing, regarding online and offline knowledge sharing as equally important. Online knowledge includes sources such as online communities of practice, shared spaces, workplace digital archives, etc., while offline knowledge includes peer interaction, in-site project development, etc.

Figure 6. IT professionals' learning dynamics in terms of leadership involvement



The leader has a managing role and is not the main source of knowledge. Peer collaboration inside and outside the workplace, as well as self-learning, is strong.

IT 2. Continuous learning

The respondents from the IT subsample felt a strong need of constant learning and updating their knowledge.

1.3. How can such processes be adapted as innovations to the teaching profession?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to find out how the important components of learning dynamics identified in the VET profession are pertinent to other professions, in terms of leadership and the process implemented in the professionals' introductory period in the workplace. Below three components are identified for the entire sample:

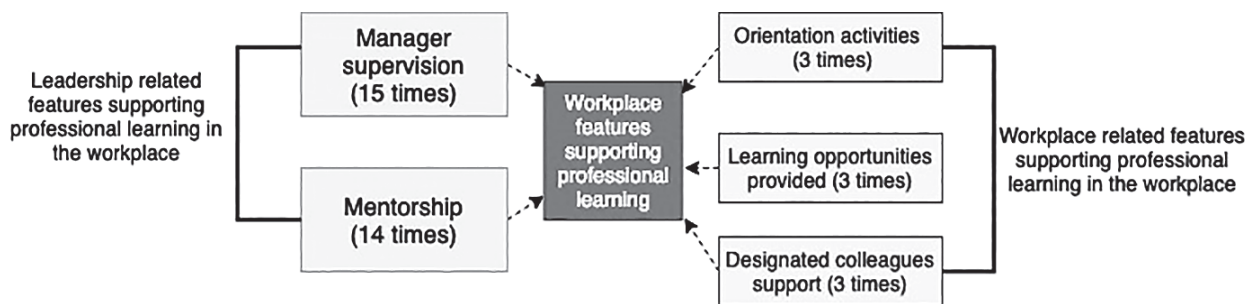
- Features of the workplace that support professional learning.
- The impact of participation in communities of practice on individual professional learning
- The impact of individual professional learning on communities of practice

Features of the workplace that support professional learning

When inquired about the workplace features that supported professional learning, most of the participants (15) stated that supervision by their managers or directors greatly supported their professional learning. Other professionals (14) stressed that, for them, formal or informal mentorship was the strongest promoter of professional learning. Some of the participants (3) said that they participated in “orientation activities” when starting their work, while a few mentioned that they were “socially integrated” in the workplace, which helped their professional learning. Finally, three of the participants added that “learning opportunities” provided by their workplaces were pivotal for to their professional learning.

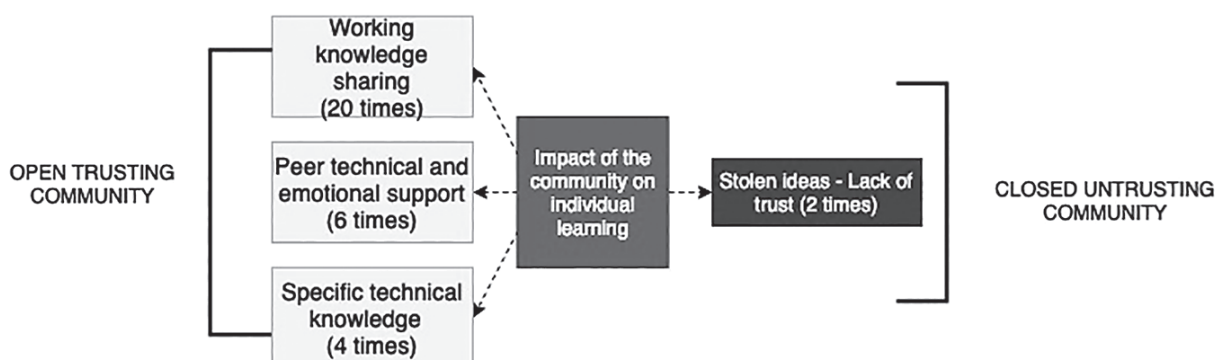
The above findings imply that during the induction period of the professionals included in this study, the leadership element was extremely valued as well as equally important across all the participant professions.

Figure 7. Workplace features supporting professional learning



The impact of participation in communities of practice on individual professional learning.

Figure 8. The impact of the community on individual learning



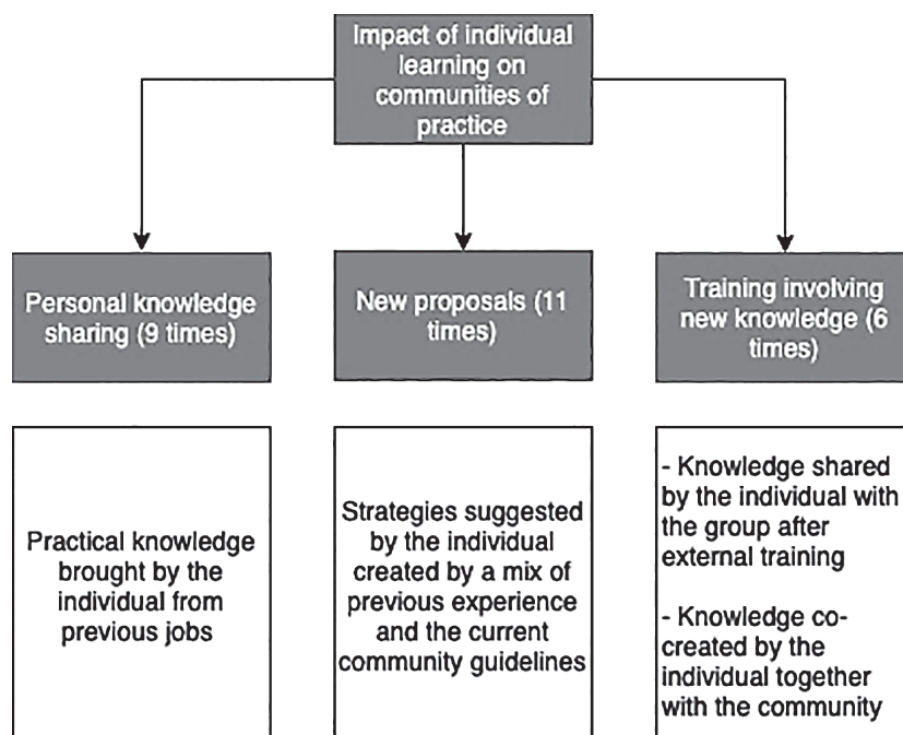
Regarding the impact of participation in communities of practice on individual professional learning, two types of communities were identified. One of them can be classified as an open and trusting community in which new members consult colleagues for advice and support. The other one can be identified as a closed and untrusting community in which knowledge and information are kept from the rest of the community.

As an overall finding, most of the participants (20) stated that community knowledge sharing helped them in their individual professional learning in the workplace, while some others (6) reported that one-on-one peer support was very effective in their individual professional learning. A few participants (4) said that they were supported by the community in the acquisition of technical knowledge for their individual professional learning, while a couple of them (2) said that they had had their ideas and projects stolen by their co-workers.

The impact of individual professional learning on the communities.

As can be seen in Figure 9, individual learning produced three different types of “impact” on the communities that were both commonly mentioned and found important for the entire sample.

Figure 9. Impact of individual learning on communities



As far as the impact of the individual professional learning on communities of practice is concerned, one third of the participants (9) said that they shared their professional knowledge to contribute to the community. They were, in particular, newcomers or people recently transferred to an area or a project. Other respondents (8) reported that they proposed or suggested ideas to cope with challenges that arose in projects. However, while the focus on solving problems sometimes brought the professionals closer to their communities, on some occasions it had an opposite effect. Some other participants (11) stated that they trained their colleagues once they had learnt something new through external training.

Discussion and Conclusions

This research was an attempt at studying professional learning from an innovative trans-professional perspective. Although the use of methods from other professions to improve the teaching profession may be something that has not been attempted before, it is expedient to search for original solutions to persistent challenges in the VET profession.

While the idea of looking at what other professions have to offer in terms of usable methods for the teaching profession may come as a surprise to some readers, statistics are actually in favor of this approach. Previous studies have shown that some professions have extrapolated and implemented working knowledge and methods used in other industries; such a transfer has taken place, for instance, from the aviation industry to the medical industry (Kapur et al. 2015). Clearly, the idea of extrapolation is by no means new, but it is certainly underexplored. How the teaching profession can benefit from the knowledge of other professions is what fueled the research curiosity of this study. In the past, the extrapolation was performed through the development of protocols from one profession, the development of interventions, training, etc. How exactly the findings of this study can be implemented remains yet to be further researched.

Implications

The results of this research were obtained after exploring the learning structures of four different professions in response to the needs reported by the VET teachers' group. In this investigation, four different patterns of work dynamics were identified. For example, the group of architects tended to be strongly influenced by their leader or project leader, who could either grant or deny their fellow architects access to the

project stakeholders from whom the fellow architects could learn. The features of the architect group included the following:

1. They work in a project-based manner;
2. Leadership is highly empowered and has proper delegation skills; and
3. The group has a rather horizontal structure in which knowledge is openly communicated.

If transferred to the VET profession, these features can produce positive outcomes.

First of all, while project-based initiatives are by no means new in the educational area, positive outcomes stemming from them involve broadening the sense of community and collaboration for VET teachers. Secondly, proper leadership empowerment is something deeply needed in the VET profession, as stated by some of the VET professionals interviewed in this study. This includes more effectively organized leadership transition periods in which all the information needed for the professional success of the new leader is passed by the previous one. Proper transition procedures implemented external support exemplify an element that can be helpfully borrowed from Architects and used in the VET teaching profession. Finally, having a more horizontal structure is important for knowledge sharing in the VET profession, since its middle management levels, though introduced to smoothen administrative procedures, in fact tend to inhibit knowledge sharing. These are but initial findings, and more research needs to be done, especially that it was quite obvious for the researcher that the lack of democratic principles in the highly bureaucratic structure in the VET profession had systemic roots.

As for the findings in the educational research group, the strong relationship between the educational researcher and the leader is very evident. However, this finding must be interpreted with caution since junior educational researchers' expectations toward their supervisors are so strong that the confidence to produce research can be undermined, as argued by five out of the seven interviewees who were early stage researchers and seem to be affected by their relationship with their leader or, in this case, supervisor.

Regarding the findings for the HR officers, it is important to note that the *openness to new knowledge*, which was mentioned by the entire group and not just by the leader, was a valuable finding in this research. In the VET teaching profession, the sample indicated that there was a strong sense of *deeply entrenched bureaucracy* in which new knowledge was not taken into consideration, unless exceptionally, for example, when personal relationships were established, and these relationships fostered closer professional collaboration. Also, the capacity of the leader to delegate tasks and responsibilities was a very important trait identified in this research that should be transplanted

from the HR profession to the teaching profession. This, however, requires training both for the leader and for the community.

Finally, in relation to the IT profession, the research findings indicate that the best possible and most advantageous solutions applicable to the VET teaching profession include strategies for knowledge sharing used in the IT community, such as *stand up meetings* in which all members of the community devote some time every day to talking about their current projects and challenges with the rest of the group. Having a short meeting with the closest colleagues to discuss current challenges to the community is likely to benefit the communication processes and to create a better environment for knowledge sharing.

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Title:

The Polish Round Table Talks on Education: An Attempt at School Democratization

Abstract

Internationally, there has been a sustained interest in school democratization. In Poland, an attempt was made to democratize schools during the 1989 round table talks on education (RTT). 30 years later, despite ongoing reforms and efforts from academics and practitioners, schools still fail to be fully democratic spaces for non-transmissive teaching, self-governance, and collaboration. This article presents historical contexts for the RTT to explore three main themes discussed at the education round table and the prevailing views on these themes articulated by the participants in the talks. The discussion of these themes and the basic mapping of the participants' thematic foci are based on the analysis of stenographic records (SR) of the talks and semi-structured or unstructured interviews with the witnesses of the events. Solidarity's focus on the struggle for freedom and the differences in awareness and openness to structural reforms within Solidarity stand in a stark contrast to the government-coalition's readiness for constructive systemic changes and building the new system upon the positive legacy. This contrast leads to a new understanding of the contexts and the (in) effectiveness of the later education reforms in democratizing schools and problematizes all governments' practices of undermining the education reforms launched by the predecessors after 1989.

Keywords:

school democratization, Polish Round Table, 1989

THE POLISH ROUND TABLE TALKS ON EDUCATION: AN ATTEMPT AT SCHOOL DEMOCRATIZATION

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The round table talks¹ took place in Poland in 1989 and brought a nonviolent transition from communism to democracy (Davies & Tabakowska, 2014; Dudek, 2014). The talks on education provided a chance to launch major reforms in the general education system, as well as reforms of law, the judiciary system, media, local governments, associations, higher education, youth organizations, housing, agriculture, mining, and healthcare (Osiatyński, 1996). At the time, the Polish education system was in need of immediate changes, in particular structural reforms and democratization (Kupisiewicz, 1989; Kwieciński, 2014).

The main actors of the talks on education were the communists, who had already started reforms, Solidarity trade unions, which had actively fought to liberate schools and teachers from the communist regime, OPZZ-ZNP² teacher trade unions, which usually voiced teachers' financial demands and dissatisfaction with the working conditions, and a number of smaller groups representing researchers, rural communities, and school initiatives. The talks on education ended in official agreements which included issues on which there was a complete consensus, discrepancies, and unilateral statements (*Ustalenia Podzespołu ds. Oświaty, Szkolnictwa Wyższego, Nauki i Postępu Technicznego*, 1989).

Research Aims

This article presents the first stage of a qualitative interpretive research project (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009; Flick, 2007) entitled "Teachers' Role in School Democratization: A Historical-Pedagogical Case Study." First, the article offers a historical

¹ Henceforth, the round table talks will be referred as the talks or the RTT.

² OPZZ is an acronym for the All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions, a pro-government umbrella organization associating trade unions from various industries, services and administration. ZNP stands for the Polish Teachers' Union, which was affiliated with the OPZZ and represented teachers at the education round table on behalf of the OPZZ alliance.

account of the Polish round table talks on education in 1989 against the historical backdrop of the 1980s. Subsequently, it explores the major themes tackled at the education round table and the prevailing positions adopted by the main parties to the talks: the government, the teachers' trade unions, and Solidarity. The study is based on library research, a thematic analysis of stenographic and audio records of the talks and semi-structured or unstructured interviews with the witnesses of the events.

Research Scope and Results

The Background and Significance of the Study

This study re-reads the historic conversations on education almost 30 years after Poland's democratic transition. When describing the beginnings of the education reform in 1989, authors (Przyszczykowski, 1999, p. 58; Śliwerski, 2009, p. 62) as a rule only refer to the final agreements of the RTT. However, the agreements alone do not convey the full meaning of the declarations made by the parties involved; nor do they capture the negotiation process itself, the ways in which the actors involved conceptualized various issues pertaining to educational democratization, and the extent to which they were (or, for that matter, were not) aware of those issues during the discussions.

Further, as the talks aspired to lay the foundation for the first school reform after 1989, the research outlines the first steps towards school democratization in post-communist Poland. Historically, the study provides the first account and analysis of the RTT. The scrutiny of pedagogical aspects reveals the difficulties encountered in school democratization and the later reforms launched by Ministers of Education³ after 1989.

Finally, the study is also embedded in the current debate on school reforms and education for democracy. Poland's right-wing government launched another education reform in 2015 and implemented it within merely 10 months. The school system returned to the structural solutions of the communist era, causing organizational chaos and teachers' strikes fueled by precarious working conditions and the ongoing politicization of education.

³ After the RTT and the election of 1989, some of the RTT participants became ministers, deputy ministers, and ministerial advisers.

Key Concepts and Theory

The debate on school democratization had been present in Polish educational discourse long before the democratic transition. Although Polish pedagogy did not have free access to the state-of-the-art educational trends, democratic practices at schools were developing despite unfavorable conditions. However, school democratization before 1989 was typically understood as a struggle for teachers' and students' freedom from the state's ideological influence and for their independence to engage in innovative initiatives. Such an understanding of school democratization was particularly conspicuous within the Solidarity movement, which initiated strikes, criticized the system in the underground press,⁴ and demanded autonomy and humanistic and emancipated education. The preoccupation with school democratization was also to some extent manifest in the establishment of experimental classrooms and in initiatives which offered room for partnership and collaboration among teachers, parents, and students.⁵

In the early 1980s, the academic circles were interested in what Kwieciński called the birth of "a social movement for the renewal of education" (Kwieciński, 2014, pp. 53–54). He stated that "the essence of this movement lies in its aspiration towards a democratically constituted education, which fosters people's power in society and emancipates the human being, conceived of as the highest value." In the 1980s, Kwieciński was an independent intellectual who cooperated with various actors, yet strongly opposed unsuccessful reforms and the communist government's educational policies, in particular those which were harmful to students from outside big cities.⁶

Another important aspect of the early 1980s was rivalry between the two main teachers' trade unions: the ZNP, which "resurrected" after decades of passivity and conformism, and teachers' Solidarity trade union, which was founded after workers'

⁴ Underground Solidarity "illegally published and distributed 1,300 periodicals to counter the massive propaganda campaign of the state-owned media" (Osiatyński, 1996, p. 24).

⁵ One of such initiatives was the founding in 1986 of the Leading Schools' Club, which assembled 171 schools.

⁶ Kwieciński recalls being invited to Magdalenka (a resort owned by the communists) for RTT preparatory meetings. The meeting on education was chaired by Andrzej Stelmachowski (Solidarity's advisor, a lawyer specializing in agricultural law, and the Minister of Education in 1991–1992). Kwieciński, an accomplished researcher on education in rural areas, stood up for village schools. He claimed that such schools were "deeply impaired" and underprivileged. A lecturer from the SGGW University exclaimed that she found Kwieciński's words insulting to her and to the rural population. Stelmachowski's strategy for selecting the RTT discussants involved eliminating the conflicting parties. Therefore, as Kwieciński recounts, the selected discussants were not necessarily experts, but those who "might have had a pedagogue's soul," "may have been "from the borderland of pedagogy," or "had some authority or a name to show for them."

strikes. Although the membership figures of the two unions were similar,⁷ Solidarity often refused to cooperate with the ZNP, accusing the union of communist sympathies (Mader, 1988, p. 31), while the ZNP wanted to retain its leading role as teachers' main representative.

Liberal intellectuals, who were mostly associated with the Workers' Defense Committee (KOR), one of the main groups of the democratic opposition to contribute to the rise of Solidarity, encouraged teachers to reflect and fight oppression. The fight was understood as self-education and disobedience (Bochwic, 2006, p. 198). The oppositionist Teresa Bochwic⁸ describes numerous teachers' strikes and the negotiations which Solidarity and the ZNP conducted with the communist government. However, when analyzing the collection of 148 Gdańsk demands which were resented to the state-and-party officials on 17 November 1980, the sad conclusion is that teachers formulated their demands chaotically, mixing unimportant details with few strategic demands. It was only later that more structured ideas for changes in schools were developed in the underground press and seminars.⁹

In 1980, Kwieciński described nineteen dilemmas of school democratization, among which he also directly addressed teachers and their condition:

8. [...] How could educators, who themselves are products of a system which made choice impossible, possibly be capable of shaping free people with an ability to carry out and embody alternative visions. (Kwieciński, 2014, pp. 67–68).

Kwieciński was concerned about teachers' empowerment in a hostile environment and their readiness for learning and critical thinking. He wondered whether they were capable of becoming autonomous and democratic individuals committed to creating conditions for education based on humanistic and democratic values.

The early 1980s democratization of education in Poland was conceptually coherent with the Freirean concepts of the oppressed and the oppressor (Freire, 2000). In Freire's framework, power relations trigger the awakening of critical consciousness (*conscientização*), thus effecting liberation, the exposure of ideologies, and a struggle for democratic and civil society. The understanding of school democratization which

⁷ The ZNP was established in 1905 and was respected by Solidarity for its pre-WW2 traditions. After the war, the ZNP joined the communist coalition. Until April 1981, the ZNP had 750,000 members, but later about 300,000 of them joined Solidarity (Mader, 1988).

⁸ She published under the masculine pseudonym Wit Mader.

⁹ The underground press and seminars were mostly available in Warsaw.

developed in the late 1980s can also be traced to the Deweyan concept of democratic education (Dewey, 2004). On this model, education creates an environment for self-development, independence, responsibility, and self-awareness. This shift from the confrontational engagement of the early 1980s to the reflective individual and group change is visible in two reformists attitudes: the Solidarity's wide societal change, and the academics' recommendations for a deep transformation of schools.

As communism was collapsing, Solidarity activists and intellectuals criticized the education system in the underground press, and engaged in conceptual preparations during thematic seminars which were initiated by Solidarity activists and intellectuals, such as Halina Bortnowska, Jarosław Dubiel, Andrzej Janowski, Jacek Kuroń, Barbara Malak, Edward Michalewski, Adam Stanowski, Krystyna Starczewska, and Stefan Starczewski. During one of these seminars,¹⁰ they discussed the problem of learned helplessness and, thus, the limited active engagement in and of society in 1987. They were working on developing the concept of (a Polish) Pedagogy of Liberation, which was based on "experiences of people working in independent groups which were dedicated to mutual help, service to others, and self-education" (*Pedagogika wyzwolenia*, 1988, Introduction).

At the same time, voices from academia and the ZNP focused on the deteriorating situation at schools. Between March 1987 and May 1989, researchers drafted a comprehensive report on *Education as a National Priority*, which was a gloomy diagnosis of the condition of the education system, but also an indication of desirable changes. Twenty-eight experts conducted or analyzed case studies and comparative studies of educational trends in developed countries, reports, socio-economic forecasts, legislation, demands, newspaper articles, raw data from an old research, letters from teachers and institutions, surveys, 400 consultations with 25,000 teachers, plenary conference sessions and thematic seminars (Kupisiewicz, 1989, pp. 7–8). The outcome was a sizeable report and a book based on 30 thematic reports. The conclusions were devastating for the Ministry of Education, but served Jacek Fisiak, then Minister of Education, as a starting point for the talks.

Research Methods

My historical account of the RTT is based on library and archive research carried out at Sejm, Senat, Warsaw, and Gdańsk's European Solidarity Centre. I also relied on face-to-face, telephone, and e-mail recommendations and consultations with educational

¹⁰ I learned about the seminars from Danuta Kuroń, who told me about them when interviewed about Solidarity's preparations for the RTT.

studies scholars and/or the witnesses of the historic events. The main reason for the extensive library research was the fact that the discussants in the talks on education referred to narrations, debates, and activities that took place in the socio-political reality of the 1980s. What is more, for methodological reasons, in any case-study investigation in the natural context, it is vital to understand the situational, cultural, historical, and contextual implications. The RTT, as a past event, cannot be physically accessed through participant observation, but only through a contextualization of the discussions which took place during the RTT of 1989.

Methodologically speaking, my case study includes three sets of data: (1) the audio records of the RTT on education in 1989, serving to correct the SR and to grasp the atmosphere of the discussions; (2) the SR; and (3) unstructured and semi-structured interviews with the informants.

The main method applied to analyze the data from the documents was thematic analysis. The purpose of the analysis of 4 stenographic and audio records was to explore the main general education-related topics discussed during the RTT and to map the participants' thematic foci, in particular in relation to school democratization. I analyzed over 1100 passages concerning general education using the MAXQDA software.

The interviews with the witnesses were semi-structured or unstructured. The sampling was based either on my knowledge of the names of the witnesses, on the mediation of other witnesses of the events (i.e., Danuta Kuroń and Janusz Morawski), or on personal contacts such as Danuta Sterna and Jacek Strzemieczny who helped me reach Krystyna Starczewska and Andrzej Janowski.

The first contact with the interviewees was intended to arrange a meeting or a call; however, my interviewees usually started extensive description of the events even as early on. I listened and asked relevant questions on the spot, mostly inquiring about the general historical context and, in a consultative mode, about recommendations and historical sources. The second round of interviews was semi-structured and conducted on the face-to-face basis. It included sets of questions on the educational reality of the 1980s, the RTT, and closing remarks.

Due to their poor health, I was not able interview Jacek Fisiak and Andrzej Janowski. A number of people were either already dead or out of reach. Some interviews could not be conducted for other reasons. For example, Henryk and Ludwika Wujec and Zofia Grzebisz-Nowicka, having heard about the objectives of the interview during the first encounter, explained that they did not remember or did not recollect anything related to education during the talks. Therefore, my analysis of the witnesses' historical accounts was based on the interviews with Zbigniew Kwieciński, Krystyna

Starczewska, Danuta Kuroń, Janusz Syrokowski, and Tadeusz Morawski. Due to the limits on article length, I present my data very selectively.

Research Results

The Beginning of the Talks on Education and Their Main Actors

An exacerbating economic crisis forced Poland's communist leaders to start reforming the country before the RTT. In his opening RTT speech on 22 February 1989, Jacek Fisiak,¹¹ the Minister of Education between 1988 and 1989, admitted that the situation of the education system was catastrophic, citing the 1989 report's findings:¹²

In view of the critical evaluation of the education system, the Prime Minister appointed the Expert Committee on national education in 1987 [...]. The lines along which the system will be rebuilt are supposed to be discussed this year, in particular by the teachers and academics. (...) But I also want to assert that even while the experts' work is in progress, we are making numerous provisional decisions which should help us create better conditions for children's and the youth's education today. (Rec 1, pp. 8–9)

Subsequently, Fisiak reported extensively on various systemic solutions that had already been implemented, such as experimental teacher education at universities, more openness to alternative programs, the decentralization of curricular and textbook-related decision, western languages instruction in primary schools, revising the roles of education boards and the Ministry, individualized teaching for talented students, school democratization, revoking legislation limiting school autonomy, administrative cuts in the Ministry, and more (Rec. 1, pp. 9–13).

¹¹ Jacek Fisiak was a Professor of English Studies at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. A graduate of Polish and Western universities, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II. He was an example of a communist party member who did not fit the stereotypical image of a loyal communist. Together with General Jaruzelski, he was criticized by the communist party's Central Committee for his quick reforms (Dudek, 2014).

¹² Tadeusz Morawski, a teacher and an official at the Ministry of Education from 1972 until mid-1992, asserted in his interview that he had briefed the Minister on the report findings because Fisiak was mostly a higher education expert.

Henryk Samsonowicz,¹³ a Solidarity representative, emphasized three issues: We need to assume that the condition of science and education in Poland is bad and deteriorating by the year. It corresponds to what the Minister has just said about the need to rebuild the education system. We believe, generally speaking, that the crisis has three causes: first, material and financial problems; second, the directorial forms of management in place, prioritizing political or ideological preferences, and, more generally speaking, depriving students and teachers of empowerment; third, the organizational structure is defective. (Rec 1, p. 19)

He elaborated on the material and financial issues connecting them to the low status of academics and teachers in society, negative professional selection, shortages in school equipment, and the lack of “foreign contacts.” He appealed for allocating 7% of budget spendings for education. Then, he outlined how managerial positions were determined based on the party ideology, membership, and/or activism. He also explained that the teachers were disempowered from being innovative due to the schools’ strategies of passivity or spurious activeness.

The third party, i.e., the ZNP Deputy President Jan Zaciura,¹⁴ co-chaired the sessions, despite Solidarity’s objections.¹⁵ Therefore, during the meetings the participants used the following names: the “Solidarity-opposition” party vs. the “government-coalition” party.¹⁶ What Zaciura highlighted was the low rate of kindergarten (50%) and secondary school (42%) scholarization,¹⁷ in particular in rural areas; the disastrous infrastructural situation which urgently called for the founding of 5,000 new schools and the renovation of 10,000 schools; shortages of the teaching staff and the

¹³ Henryk Samsonowicz was a Professor of History at the University of Warsaw and a communist party member (1956–1981). He was removed from the party during martial law. He became a Solidarity activist in 1980. He was a democratically elected Rector of the University of Warsaw in 1980 (In my first interview with Danuta Kuroń, she emphasized that it had been crucial for Solidarity’s choosing him to take part in the RTT), and the first Minister of Education after 1989.

¹⁴ He was a former teacher and school inspector, a communist party member (1961–1981), then Deputy Chairman of the ZNP. He held a PhD degree in the humanities and co-authored the 1989 report.

¹⁵ In 1989, Solidarity considered the ZNP to be an ally of the communist government, despite the fact that the ZNP emphasized its criticism of the communist government. The image of the ZNP became even worse when it allied for the RTT with the OPZZ, which was led by Alfred Miodowicz (a member of the Politburo).

¹⁶ Jan Rychlewski, Professor at the Space Research Institute, said: “I am not a government official, God forbid that I should be counted among the government party at this meeting. I represent the coalition” (Rec 1, p. 168).

¹⁷ Scholarization denotes a statistical measure which represents the total school enrollment as a proportion of the eligible population in order to inform policy about the population’s level of education.

pauperization and low qualifications of teachers; the low level of teachers' instrumental skills; and the ineffective management of the system (Rec 1, pp. 32–39).

The Main Issues Addressed during the Talks

Three main categories which were identified in the thematical analysis of the stenographic records indicate two main themes: “democratized school and teacher” and “legacy.” The third category covers organizational points involved in the RTT meetings, that is, rules for the participants, formal issues, and the structuring of the process of negotiation.

The Role of Teachers and the Democratized School

In this thematic category, the emphasis was on teachers' leading role in schools. This special role was acknowledged particularly by the government-coalition party. It was articulated in the government-coalition's general insistence that even in difficult times, with good teachers, the school could be good (Rec. 1, p. 110), or warning that if teachers were not competent, they might teach “unscientific beliefs” (Rec. 1, p. 167). Anna Przecławski¹⁸ ended: “We will not improve the condition of Polish education without the teacher” (Rec. 1, pp. 56–61). Janusz Syrokowski¹⁹ noticed that “democratized school can be done by democratized teachers” (Rec. 1, p. 111). He explained that teachers should be empowered and autonomous to develop syllabuses, to make organizational decisions, and to collaborate with parents. In connection to this, Jan Klamut²⁰ raised an alerting question whether the teachers were capable of using their autonomy:

We've all agreed that the condition of the Polish teacher is bad now. (...) Won't our enlightened plans to build a fully democratized system and a fully pluralistic model fail due to the condition of the Polish teacher? (Rec. 1, p. 127)

The government-coalition party's view of the situation was that school democratization could primarily be achieved through teachers, and, therefore, they advocated for better teacher education and for improving their financial status as the basis for teacher empowerment and school democratization. For its part, Solidarity, focused on

¹⁸ A Professor of Education and a member of the communist party's Central Committee, she participated in the RTT plenary sessions.

¹⁹ In my second interview, Janusz Syrokowski corrected his status from President to Secretary of the National Action for School Aid during the RTT.

²⁰ He was a Professor of Physics at the Institute of Low Temperature and Structure Research in Wrocław.

teachers' freedom from the communist ideology, and insisted that such freedom hinged on teachers' self-government, teacher-run disciplinary and ethics boards, freedom to express views, autonomy, and innovations. On behalf of Solidarity, Stefan Starczewski insisted that "[Solidarity] needs a blunt and clear statement that [teachers] can feel free at school. [...] There must be a concrete legislative change that will begin teachers' spiritual renewal, one that is anxiously desired in Poland" (Rec. 1, pp. 96). Solidarity's diagnosis was that without systemic and legislative solutions, democratized schools and teachers were not possible. Therefore, while the government-coalition party argued that educated and empowered teachers could change schools and, consequently, the education system, Solidarity claimed that it was the system and its legislation that could change teachers and schools into more democratic institutions. These were rather opposite claims.

Yet the government-coalition party was interested in both teachers' excellence and practical solutions. Hence, teachers' wages, empowerment in decision making, the assessment of teachers' work, criticism of curricular requirements, and gaining emancipatory competences, such as freedom of expression, were viewed as crucial.

Interestingly, although Solidarity called for education for democracy as the main goal of schooling in democracy, Janowski insisted that the school should only promote knowledge and civil society without ideologies (Rec. 1, pp. 64–65). Klamut demonstrated the faultiness of such a reasoning, arguing that no one could be neutral (Rec. 1, pp. 128–129). Yet Solidarity's reasoning can be explained as informed by its struggle for 400 teachers who suffered particular harassments (Rec. 1, pp. 116) for disobeying the communist ideology.

Lastly, the discussion on democratized school focused on values, structures, and organizational issues. The government-coalition wanted to define education for democracy as a general goal. Their representatives also valued the past legacy, society's engagement, and the creation of a wide forum and a lobby for the improvement of education. Solidarity was rather passive in discussions on values but agreed that making education for democracy a goal was indeed important, though it also considered human and citizen rights, school autonomy, and the empowerment of students to be central objectives.

The government-coalition party understood rebuilding the system structurally and organizationally as in-depth reforms in which finances, teacher education and the implementation of the 1989 report recommendations were fundamental issues. Solidarity, for its part, envisioned triggering initiatives and innovations through the establishment of non-state schools (Rec. 2, p. 31). The government-coalition opposed this idea, arguing that this would create elite schools inaccessible to average people and would require double financing (Rec. 2, pp. 54–55).

Legacy

“Legacy” represented two facets of the education system in Poland. On the one hand, there were dysfunctionalities, in particular decades of infrastructural neglect and underfunding; on the other hand, there were teacher “pearls” (as the government-coalition party called outstanding teachers who excelled in their profession despite unfavorable conditions), and society’s involvement in the improvement of school infrastructure. Fisiak tried to strike an optimistic note: “Not everything in the present school is to be thrown away” (Rec 1, p. 8). Syrokowski mentioned the 171 schools associated in the Leading Schools’ Club, and along with Fisiak, Morawski²¹ and Szczegielniak²² talked about the National Action for School Aid²³ and the Patriotic Movement for National Renewal,²⁴ experimental classrooms and high schools, and efforts for school democratization under communism (Rec 2, p. 17). Grzebisz-Nowicka²⁵ added to that her remarks about the 127 years of villages’ contribution and sacrifice, referring to the times when peasants had no public rights and their access to education was severely limited (Rec 1, p. 145).

Aleksander Łuczak’s²⁶ words resonated with Grzebisz-Nowicka’s as he insisted that rural educational movements were in practice a result of decades-long neglect of and discrimination against rural areas. They had always received less support from the state, which after all “depended on the muscles and the work of the rural population” (Rec 1, p. 139). Also, the system was unable to pay decent salaries to teachers at rural schools. As a consequence, many left the profession (Rec 1, p. 161). Samsonowicz reflected on the situation of villages during the second meeting (Rec. 2, p. 115), which implied that the problem was quite new to him.

The negative legacy was also connected to bad management. A vivid example was provided by vocational schooling: “No matter how much money we have, it will be absorbed by schools and the money will be badly spent,” Jan Kluczyński²⁷ said (Rec 1,

²¹ Solidarity did not include Tadeusz Morawski, who was Director of the Education Department, in its participant list of the RTT on education (Wnuk, Wujec, Mogielnicka, Domańska, & Adamiecki, 1989, p. 314).

²² A ZNP representative.

²³ A grassroots organization of parents which supported the construction and renovation of schools in rural areas.

²⁴ This pro-government organization was founded during martial law in Poland in 1982. It was an umbrella organization with a mission to show the unity of other pro-government organizations and their support for the communist party.

²⁵ A representative of the National Association of Farmers and Farmers’ Organizations.

²⁶ A Professor of History, a peasant party member, and Deputy Minister of Education between 1987 and 1988.

²⁷ A Professor and Director of Science Policies and Higher Education Institute; Deputy Chairman of the Expert Committee and the co-author of the 1989 report.

p. 134). During the second meeting, Samsonowicz argued that the authorities must realize that teachers did not trust them. Jerzy Malec²⁸ advocated for a new role of the authorities; specifically, they were supposed to support, rather than control (Rec 1, p. 161).

The positive legacy was emphatically foregrounded in the government-coalition's narratives, even though they also expressed their awareness of the negative legacy and agreed with Solidarity's judgement on the oppressiveness of the system. The Solidarity-party focused on the negative heritage and persistently voiced their criticism of and distrust toward the government's educational policies. They often did not refer to the educational initiatives which their opponents mentioned in their speeches and ostracized them with silence.

Discussion and Conclusions

One may question the need to study communism in the times of the crisis of democracy. Nevertheless, Poland was the first country to break the wall of communism in Eastern Europe, and the RTT on education set education for democracy as the central goal of the education system. With the present dismantling of democracy in Poland, rethinking the Polish transition, in particular the RTT on education, may be informative to both Eastern and Western liberal democracies in crisis, since democracy has become not only a political, but also an educational category.

Different focuses of the two parties involved. Solidarity's struggle for freedom, and the government-coalition's readiness for long-awaited reforms, differences in the awareness of and/or openness to the education legacy, distrust in the research findings and reform proposals of the 1989 report indicate that Solidarity was unprepared to launch education reform(s), which partly at least explains ineffectiveness of the later reformist policies for education. With Solidarity's unexpected ascent to power, the responsibility for changes in education shifted to the opposition, which mostly relied on a broad and incomplete concept of a "Pedagogy of Liberation" to change schools and society. Ideally, schools were to become self-organizing and self-governing communities with education for/in democracy. However, this was possible to achieve only in part, not only throughout the school spectrum but even in individually launched school initiatives, such as Starczewska's Bednarska High School.²⁹ Indeed, private and

²⁸ A school superintendent.

²⁹ Krystyna Starczewska is a distinguished Solidarity activist and intellectual, headteacher of the innovative Bednarska School. According to Danuta Kuroń, Starczewska was the closest associate of Jacek Kuroń. Starczewska admitted that she realized in 1990 that innovations in private schools were still blocked by the curricular requirements.

innovative schools were freely opened, but Solidarity's concept did not bring (and might not intended to) complete freedom and school democratization in mainstream education (Kwieciński, 2012; Mencil, 2009; Śliwerski, 2012).

What is more, the *rejection of the legacy of the communist times*, which was sometimes accompanied by radical gestures,³⁰ caused a discontinuity at the very beginning of the (re)building of a new system. It delayed urgent structural reforms during the transition and obstructed further school development. Śliwerski describes disruptive practices such as the post-1989 governments' destructive policies of undermining the predecessors: as one round of school reforms was designed and implemented by a party in power, it was immediately criticized and withdrawn by the subsequent administration (Śliwerski, 2012). In his analysis, Kwieciński ascertains that systemic changes were inhibited, interrupted, and frozen (Kwieciński, 2012, pp. 31–36). As a result, the school model has consistently gravitated from a democratic paradigm to an advocacy of a centralized system, with this shift being recently exemplified in the rapidity of the 2015 school reform (Szyndzielorz, 2017).

The roots of such practices can be traced back to the RTT on education, which means before what is claimed to have been a suppression of school democratization in 1993 by the SLD-PSL government³¹ (Śliwerski, 2009, pp. 100–109). Contrary to the popular belief that everything connected to communist times was bad, this study emphasizes an urgent need for re-reading the communist positive legacy in education in agreement with Muszyński's³² unpopular voice (Śliwerski, 2009, pp. 79–81). The black and white judgement of communist times is in fact being reconsidered in many Eastern European countries. Scholars admit that the communist period is

³⁰ In the interview, Zbigniew Kwieciński describes such a gesture: "The Polish academic pedagogical community created and promoted a report on the condition of the [Polish] education system which was inspired by another older research carried out by Professor Jan Szczepanski and his team. It was meant to be a reformist report. The report was published in 1989 with the title *Education as a National Priority* (...). In the article that I recommended to you, Professor Kozakiewicz wrote: 'the report was received very positively and then... thrown out.' And I was a witness of the report being thrown out [by professor Janowski, Deputy Minister of Education]." Janowski does not recollect such an event, but asked by his associate Jacek Strzemieczny on my behalf, he thinks that he might have been prejudiced against the report. It was a popular view that anything that was produced under communism was evil. Kupisiewicz, who was the director of the 1989 Expert Committee's project, also admits that the report was unpopular due to an assumption that it was drafted by the people of the regime (Kupisiewicz, 2013, p. 145). See also, Kozakiewicz, 1993, p. 91.

³¹ It was a coalition of the former communist and peasant parties.

³² After 1989, Muszyński has faced heavy criticism as a loyal communist pedagogue. However, it is sometimes acknowledged that, if purged of its communist ideological trappings, Muszyński's concepts could actually have made the Polish school under communism more progressive.

underexamined, education under communism is stigmatized (Zounek, Šimáně, & Knotová, 2017, 2018), show the complexity of the times (Balík, 2015; Calda, 1996), offer new insights on sexuality, gender, and women's emancipation (Haney, 2002; Healey, 2001; Herzog, 2008; Lišková, 2016; McCulloch, 2004), and fight stereotypes of queer history under communism (Jusová & Šiklová, 2016; Seidl, 2012; Takács, 2015). It is necessary to reconsider Poland's pre-1989 legacy and to break the vicious circle of undermining the predecessors by acknowledging the good heritage despite the difficult conditions under communism.

Index of documents

- Rec. 1 Stenogram z pierwszego posiedzenia Podzespołu do Spraw Nauki, Oświaty i Postępu Technicznego w dniu 22 lutego 1989 r. [Stenographic record of the proceedings of the first meeting of the Subgroup on Science, National Education and Development on 22 February 1989]. Warszawa: Biblioteka Sejmowa.
- Rec. 2 Stenogram z drugiego posiedzenia Podzespołu do Spraw Nauki, Oświaty i Postępu Technicznego w dniu 1 marca 1989 r. [Stenographic record of the proceedings of the second meeting of the Subgroup on Science, National Education and Development on 1 March 1989]. Warszawa: Biblioteka Sejmowa.
- Rec. 3 Stenogram z trzeciego posiedzenia Podzespołu do Spraw Nauki, Oświaty i Postępu Technicznego w dniu 3 marca 1989 r. [Stenographic record of the proceedings of the third meeting of the Subgroup on Science, National Education and Development on 3 March 1989]. Warszawa: Biblioteka Sejmowa.
- Rec. 4 Stenogram z czwartego posiedzenia Podzespołu do Spraw Nauki, Oświaty i Postępu Technicznego w dniu 10 marca 1989 r. [Stenographic record of the proceedings of the fourth meeting of the Subgroup on Science, National Education and Development on 10 March 1989]. Warszawa: Biblioteka Sejmowa.
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CONCLUSION: THE EDITE JOURNEY – INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT AND PERSONAL TRANSFORMATIONS

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EDiTE's Impact at ELTE

The EDiTE programme has significantly contributed to the modernisation of the Doctoral School of Education at ELTE (DSEE). It is on the basis of this project that the DSEE has developed its international programmes which now receive doctoral students from many countries, especially from Central and South-Eastern Asia. Prior to the EDiTE project no international doctoral programmes in the field of education were offered by ELTE. The institutional capacities needed to run such programmes were only produced by the EDiTE project.

The EDiTE project has served as an innovation platform for doctoral education at ELTE. A number of innovations were first tested in the EDiTE project, later spreading to other doctoral programmes as well. Examples of such major innovations include:

- Using programme designs based on the definition of intended learning outcomes;
- Designing coherent research agendas as the basis of the doctoral programmes of the DSEE (before the EDiTE experience, such research agendas were largely determined by the fragmented and isolated thematic preferences of individual supervisors);
- Regular (monthly) meetings of lecturers to share experiences and thus foster knowledge sharing and community building among doctoral-level lecturers;
- Building a learning and knowledge-sharing community of doctoral students enrolled in the international programmes of DSEE;
- Involving doctoral students in course design and delivery, introducing the practice of co-teaching;
- Using innovative learner-centred pedagogical approaches in the courses of the doctoral programmes;
- Systematic assessment of courses and lecturers by students at the doctoral level;
- Implementing a staff development strategy to improve the quality of supervision;
- Setting up and operating a student-mentoring scheme;
- Fostering the professional and inter-cultural mutual learning of international and domestic PhD students in the scope of teacher education, teacher research and teacher learning;
- Organising a network of partner institutions supporting doctoral-level education.

The ELTE component of the EDiTE research programme (“The Learning Teacher”) has significantly enhanced the research capacities of the ELTE Institute of Education. The research conducted within this framework by the three ESRs has contributed to the ELTE resources of general knowledge on teacher education. The implementation of the research programme resulted in three doctoral dissertations, which could be and have been used as important inputs for further research initiatives. It was partly

on this basis that a new research program, which is funded by the National Innovation Agency and focused on the professional development of teachers, was started in 2018.

In the framework of “The Learning Teacher,” ELTE organised several joint workshops and a conference devoted to school-university partnership, events in which EDiTE partner organisations and EDiTE researchers were actively involved. As part of the Work Package assigned to ELTE (“building institutional partnerships”), a research project on school-university partnership was launched, based on the studies and pursuits of the three ELTE-associated EDiTE ESRs. This project produced valuable new knowledge on how cooperation between universities and schools could enhance the quality of teacher education and the relevance of educational research.

EDiTE’s Impact at the University of Lisbon

The EDiTE project has undeniably influenced the Institute of Education, affecting in particular its systemic development. This impact has first and foremost been felt in the internationalisation of the Institute. The opportunity to closely collaborate with four partner universities from different countries across Europe and with Early Stage Researchers from across the globe has pushed us forward and further contributed to our own network development and international experience. In close connection to this, we must also emphasise that this opportunity contributed to the establishment of our first English language programme (at any level). This represented not only an extraordinary chance to recruit international researchers – and open our institutional doors to new students/researchers – but also an enriching opportunity for Portuguese-speaking students (from Portugal and its former colonies), who could now opt to enrol in an international English language programme, enhancing their prospects of international exposure and access to new job markets.

Another dimension where the EDiTE impact is clearly noticeable is the conceptual development of our doctoral curriculum. From its very onset, the EDiTE project carefully considered how to design, develop and implement an international, conceptually advanced doctoral curriculum in teacher education. Naturally, these efforts within the EDiTE programme extended onto our own “traditional” Portuguese Teacher Education Doctorate curriculum. These improvements have since been experienced in many ways, ranging from the revision of the content of our current doctoral seminars to the remodelling our teaching methods for doctoral education. In addition, the continuous quality assurance processes used within the EDiTE programme also provided internal knowledge for sustained improvement. Furthermore, the opportunity which our “local” doctoral students obtained to interact with the EDiTE community

and to participate in EDiTE open events and seminars at our Institute certainly was a significant addition to our students' experience. Finally, we must also emphasise that having the EDiTE researchers (both the local ESRs and the others whom we hosted during their secondment periods) as part of our institutional community compelled us to evolve as an institution and to consider how to better include them in our local events, often requiring us to develop new English language strands in what used to be Portuguese-language-only events, such as our annual Young Researchers Forum.

One other equally important, albeit less conspicuous, dimension where the EDiTE project impacted our institution involved its academic services and bureaucracies. This often-overlooked dimension of higher education is crucial to its success, and it was clear for us that new procedures had to be developed in order to efficiently include new international doctoral students who did not speak Portuguese. Moreover, entering into eight co-tutelle doctoral agreements for all the ESRs who came through Lisbon was also a considerable bureaucratic challenge, but one that we believe has contributed to the improvement and smoothing of such practices for the future.

Lastly, the community impact of the project must also be praised. The EDiTE project has reached and impacted our local institutional and research community in many ways, from more formal opportunities, such as open-to-all Seminars organised by the EDiTE researchers, to the establishment of our first English-language undergraduate course called "Educational Issues in Europe," in which the EDiTE researchers served as instructors and shared parts of their research with undergraduate students. Among these varied benefits to our local community, the course indeed stands out as it has received excellent feedback from all participants, who have praised it as an excellent chance not only to enrol in an English language course, but also to learn from a very diverse set of researchers from many countries. We must even more emphatically recognise the impact that the project has had on our local partners, such as the schools and other partners that the EDiTE researchers had a chance to visit and interact with, and the local research sites, where they also had an opportunity to give back and share some of their research results, directly contributing to the local school reform.

EDiTE's Impact at Masaryk University

EDiTE was the very first Horizon 2020 project in which our Faculty was involved. As such, it was a very important stimulus not only for the Department of Educational Sciences!

By its very nature, the project has largely contributed to the internationalisation of the department's culture. Our staff (mainly, but not only, the supervisors) were

learning from the opportunity to guide students/young researchers who often came from very diverse cultural contexts (Nepal, Bhutan, the US, Ecuador and Poland). Also, interactions of the ESRs with other PhD students were important for our institution's daily life.

The project has also effectively contributed to the strengthening of relations between the Faculty and the external partners, especially the basic schools where some of our ESRs collected their data and also acted in other roles (as cultural ambassadors of sorts). Numerous activities in the schools went beyond purely research-driven pursuits and were highly appreciated (e.g. a Nepali country/cuisine workshop, discussions with pupils and many more).

The project also helped us acquire more experience from co-operation with other partner universities involved in the project. This served as a mirror for us to look into and realise what we were doing, whether it made sense, what could be done better, etc.

Last but not least, the project brought some highly interesting and often eye-opening inputs from other experts, such as Kari Smith from Norway, who explained to us the organisation of PhD studies in her country.

EDiTE's Impact at the University of Innsbruck¹

The Department of Teacher Education and School Research (ILS), the Faculty of Teacher Education and the University of Innsbruck have benefited from the EDiTE project on various levels:

- *Internationally:* Staff members and researchers at the ILS became acquainted with researchers from the partner universities during regular meetings, summer/winter schools and conferences at different locations. These encounters fostered a mutual understanding of different cultures, structures and (methodological) approaches to the field of teacher education and thus deepened the individual knowledge of the European perspective (and beyond). The regular meetings also stimulated the building of a new inter-institutional network and cooperation between researchers from various institutions and the scientific advisory board (e.g. a joint conference by the ULS and the UIBK on "International Perspectives in Teacher Education" and ÖFEB-Conference on "Future Identities of Teacher Educators" in 2018).
- *University-wide:* EDiTE, as the very first Horizon2020 project in the field of education, had an enormous impact on the visibility and reputation of teacher education

¹ This section was prepared by Christian Kraler from the Department of Teacher Education and School Research, University of Innsbruck.

research within the UIBK, since it involved the Rector, the Vice Rector for research and relevant administrative entities (the Project Service Office and the International Relations Office). Dealing with technical details (e.g. co-tutelle agreements) required intensive contacts with the senior management of the university, which will help in establishing future projects.

- *Faculty-wide*: EDiTE became a driving force for implementing the newly established doctoral programme of the Faculty of Teacher Education. The ESRs were among the first doctoral students at the Faculty and Department levels (based on the co-tutelle agreement). In an external Faculty review, EDiTE as an international research and doctoral project in teacher education was a fundamental contribution to the positive feedback on the aspects of internationalisation and high-end research-oriented activities connecting teaching and research. In terms of funding and scope, EDiTE has been the biggest ever project implemented at the Faculty since its foundation.
- *Department-wide*: Since the EDiTE ESRs were temporary staff members at the Department, their participation in meetings, discussions and other activities led to a deeper mutual cultural and content-specific understanding. The exchanges broadened the viewpoints on teacher education on either side, and the secondments by the ESRs from the partner universities enriched discussions by bringing in the experience and perspectives from other countries and cultures. EDiTE's specific concept of combining supervision and co-supervision deepened the understanding of different cultures and approaches to the implementation and conduction of PhD programmes in different countries. The EDiTE Lectures, which were launched as an outreach activity at the Department, opened up a discursive space for people interested in the current topics of international teacher education. An already existing collaboration with the University of Pretoria (Prof. Irma Eloff) enriched EDiTE exchange experiences on doctoral networks in teacher education. Members of the ILS were invited to South Africa to lecture on various aspects of EDiTE in the context of DNTEA (Doctoral Network in Teacher Education in Africa). The ILS has benefited not only from international subject-specific knowledge and intercultural knowledge, but also at the administrative level by managing and coordinating a big international project (administrative procedures, communication to partners, EU, budgeting, etc.), which will help in applying for further projects at the European level. The "immediate" sustainability of the project is that a former ESR now holds a three-year post-doc position in the Teacher Education Research Group at the Department, and another former ESR is employed in a

transitional context as a post-doc worker. This position was founded based on the collaboration of two EDiTE Universities. Staff members are involved in the continuation of the EDiTE project idea to transform it into a sustainable structure at different levels. This fosters the international networking of researchers. All in all, EDiTE supported the opening of the Department from a primarily German-language-oriented research and teaching institution to a more European orientation. In hindsight, the most important factor in this context was the possibility of regular personal meetings at the partner institutions.

The following feedback by the three ESRs at the UIBK provides insights into their experiences.

Malte Gregorzewsky (Germany)

Even before EDiTE, I did understand myself as a true European citizen committed to the values of the European idea and its ideals, having promoted them in Europe and abroad. I was immediately hooked by EDiTE's very innovative approach which offered a unique opportunity. Through EDiTE, it seems that we were all able to contribute within the fields of comparative educational research for and as social and professional change, transposing theoretical and empirical insights onto the practical level as well.

Also thanks to EDiTE, I think of myself as a future agent of transformation with a vast expertise in educational "next practice," working at the interface between the policy level of school development and institutions committed to a practical approach to advanced teacher education in Europe.

Shaima Muhammad (Syria)

While writing my master's thesis in 2015, I thought I was having the most transformative and bravest experience of my life. Then EDiTE happened, and along came an even more dramatic, transformative and life-changing experience for me. Believing in the strengthening of the social aim of education and keeping in mind the "beautiful risk of education," I ventured into the fluid realm of democratic citizenship education, which promises a just and peaceful world for all. Working in the field and meeting teachers in different schools and settings in two different countries helped me to rethink my initial considerations and assumptions, which was vital for my growth as a researcher and a human being. Thank you, EDiTE, for the trust and the privilege. I am honoured to belong

to such a vigorous community of researchers and will work to keep the EDiTE legacy and spirit alive wherever I go.

Vasileios Symeonidis (Greece)

EDiTE has opened up a space for improving several aspects of my professional life, such as research competences, project management and leadership skills. Through the EDiTE journey, I have learnt new things about myself, about dealing with research, and about teacher education. During the project, I had a chance to work together with colleagues from other countries and produced several publications in peer-reviewed journals. As a student representative, I also got a chance to participate in decision-making processes, representing the voice of my colleagues, an invaluable experience for my future. Overall, it has been a privilege to conduct research through a MSCA fellowship. The opportunities to participate in a variety of international training schemes, network with researchers from around the world and spend a mobility period abroad provide great experiences for early stage researchers. After successfully graduating from EDiTE, I see myself as an ambassador of this great European initiative which I shall be referring to during my next academic steps.

EDiTE's Impact at the ULS

EDiTE has been truly transformational for the Faculty of Education at the ULS at many levels. Thanks to EDiTE, the ULS solidified its position in Poland and internationally as a progressive institution in educational studies and pedagogy. Thanks to EDiTE we were able to develop a new and lasting English language programme of study in Educational Studies (Pedagogy), which continues to recruit new students every year. EDiTE also provided a valuable impetus for the internationalisation of our internal administrative procedures. We now have English-language versions of all internal documents and regulations related to doctoral studies, and we have also successfully developed and implemented co-tutelle agreements with our international academic partners. Our Faculty Scientific Board is now experienced in handling dual degree doctoral procedures and also doctorates in the English language conducted in co-supervision arrangements. From this perspective, EDiTE can be seen as an important professionalising tool in the European context.

At the research and educational levels, EDiTE helped us concentrate our efforts on the training of doctoral researchers in a clearly articulated critical conceptual framework of teacher education. We were able to bring in leading international scholars to work with

our doctoral researchers and help them develop a clear theoretical and methodological positioning. We were able to finance the ESRs' participation in international seminars and conferences and help them hone their academic research and writing skills. Their work is now also deeply internationalised, as they can and do draw on the network of scholars they have met in developing their careers and research plans. Importantly, we were also able to open the programme to a cohort of Polish doctoral researchers, who were able to participate in the project thanks to the funding from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Their participation in the programme greatly expanded EDiTE's national and international impact. It also helped forge a larger community of excellent researchers associated with EDiTE as a transformative European teacher education framework.

EDiTE has had a transformational impact on the researchers themselves. For example, Tamás Tóth, an EDiTE ESR, commented on the community-building character of EDiTE and its commitment to transformative teacher education as both academically and practically oriented endeavours:

For me, EDiTE is a transnational framework/platform for those interested in teacher education (involving not only academic researchers, but also school teachers, students, and other institutions) with a particular focus on transformative teacher education (and transformative education in general). The initial idea of the EDiTE network/research community already makes it special among other doctoral programmes. EDiTE students were not only busy with their research and individual progress, but also – and maybe more importantly – with understanding and managing the transnational framework to which they belonged.

EDiTE Researchers also commented on the value of the international character of the project and its important focus on connecting research and practice. Agnieszka Licznarska said:

In fact, I have never really wanted to be a researcher, and EDiTE has showed me how captivating it may be. [...] For me, the ULS means excellence, opening new scopes and overcoming routines. It was sometimes hard, but I have been transformed into a person truly understanding what it means to cross the borders.

In his comments, Tamás Tóth also paid attention to the value of the mobility period:

The mobility period was of utmost importance for every researcher, since it extended their local communities, and contributed to the formation of new networks, knowledge, forms of collaboration, channels and bridges of dialogue. These

networks, both on the national level and on the international level, need to be taken care of in the future, because there is a tremendous mine of possibility and knowledge, which yet needs to be discovered.

Monika Rusnak commented on the transformational power of EDiTE for her teaching practice:

Being a student and a researcher was definitely a life-changing experience for me as a person, but most importantly as a teacher. After three years of involvement in the EDiTE program, I contend I would not have been able to develop professionally and intellectually without the great support of professors from the ULS, who equipped me with the theoretical knowledge to understand the tensions and dynamics within educational institutions. Additionally, my colleagues, who were always willing to offer their helping hands in achieving a balance between a full-time job and conducting the research. On top of that, the ULS offered me the space where I was encouraged to share my knowledge and disseminate the research findings in prestigious Polish and international peer-reviewed journals. Am I the same teacher that I was three years ago? Definitely not! I've changed. The transformative character of EDiTE is visible in the growth of my consciousness and approach to education.

It seems fitting to conclude with Josefine Wagner's powerful reflection on the meaning of EDiTE not only for the researchers' professional futures, but also for their European identity and the European project in general:

I have become a researcher, a thinker, an ethnographer, a critical pedagogue, an advocate with power through knowledge. Through EDiTE, I was allowed to travel the world and experience the academic landscape from North America to nearly all corners of Europe. EDiTE means to me an intellectual community in the making. It will be as successful as we want to make it. The ground has been prepared by the consortium, now us, graduates, need to bring reputation to it through our careers.

This European Union-funded programme was about strengthening the Union through our crucial field of education and pedagogy. I think I have never been a stronger and prouder European than when I heard you talk about the European dimension of EDiTE and the greater cause of our work. I will always carry this aspiration of working for the Union for the sake of peace and prosperity with me.



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