

Special Issue: Education for All

Special Issue Editor: Dr. Teresa O’Doherty

This special issue includes selected works from the Teacher Education Policy in Europe Network (TEPE) conference was held in Limerick, Ireland in May 2017. The Teacher Education Policy in Europe (TEPE) network is an academic network that builds on the previous European collaborative projects in the field of teacher education policy – TNTEE and EUDORA. The TEPE Network aims to advance research in and on teacher education, increase mobility, and enhance quality through the renewal of evaluation cultures in teacher education. TEPE annual conferences bring together educational researchers, policy makers, and educators from Europe, as well as many other countries around the world.

It is evident that global reform movement is having a significant impact on education systems across national boundaries and that these systems are now influenced by international data, agencies and policies. The purpose of education has been described as serving two broad functions – the first is to nurture and expand a nation’s intellectual and social capital, while the second is to initiate children and young people into the way of life of the community (Sahlberg et al, 2014, p.26). This international panel reviewing teacher education in Northern Ireland in 2014 further explained:

The second function of the educational system is to ensure that **all** young people acquire the knowledge, the skills and the dispositions that enable them, in their own interests, and in those of the community to which they belong, to be active citizens, to espouse the values of the community, to lead richly satisfying personal lives, and to contribute to the well-being of the community, and through various forms of social engagement to help to enrich the quality of life of the community (Sahlberg et al, 2014, p.26)¹.

The theme of the 2017 TEPE conference was ‘Education for All: Issues for Teacher Education’ and it examined the extent to which an education system can serve the needs of a diverse range of learners and the role of teacher education in the pursuit of this goal. This conference provided rich opportunities for teacher educators, academic researchers, educators and policy makers to interrogate the notion of ‘Education for All’ and in particular, the key role of teacher education and teacher educators therein.

Drawing on a range of international research perspectives, this Special Issue and the next capture some of the discussions and papers given at the Limerick conference in 2017, and will generate new insights into the challenges facing teachers and teacher education who wish to ensure that diversity in all its aspects, are core to their work. This issue enabled contributors to

¹ Sahlberg, P., Coolahan, J., Broadfoot, P., Furlong, J. and Kirk, G. (2014) *Aspiring to Excellence: Final Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education in Northern Ireland, Conducted for the Minister for Employment and Learning*. 2014. Belfast: Department of Education and Learning.

address the topic from a variety of perspectives, providing a vehicle for the publication of current research, which focuses on diversity in teaching and teacher education.

The opening paper, authored by Prof Áine Hyland examines the recent radical reforms of the content and structure of initial teacher education in Ireland, reforms which were deemed necessary to ensure that teacher education was research-based, and provided for in a reduced number of internationally comparable institutes of teacher education.

The second paper, by Ana Luis, examines the benefits of taking a teacher-as-researcher approach to continuous professional development with practicing teachers in Portugal. This paper underscores the impact of professional development which enables teachers to engage in research that addresses their daily concerns about student learning and motivation.

The third paper, co-authored by Miriam Hamilton and Anne O'Dwyer, looks at the relatively homogeneous teaching population in Ireland, and examines the experiences of mature students and typical entrants (students who enter initial teacher education following their second-level education), within an initial teacher education programme. The authors conclude that by structuring greater integration and opportunities for peer dialogue and collaboration between both cohorts of students, valuable opportunities for significant mutual learning and appreciation of difference could be created.

The next paper is also concerned with increasing diversity within the teaching force in Ireland and draws on data from an access project, which supports the participation of those from lower socio-economic groups in initial teacher education. The authors, Elaine Keane, Manuela Heinz, and Andrea Lynch, cite participants' frequently negative school experiences as a rationale for the lack of diversity in the teaching profession, but also connect these experiences with the candidates' motivation to become teachers.

The final paper in this issue, co-authored by Zdenka Gadusova and Lubica Predanocytova addresses the reform process being experienced in Slovakia. A decrease in the number of applicants for teacher education programs has meant that teaching is no longer attracting the most capable students, and efforts are being made to introduce a teacher competency matrix to ensure that teachers are reaching appropriate standards.

Each paper brings a distinctive and complementary perspective to the issue of ensuring that there is diversity within the teaching profession, and that teachers are well prepared and supported to create inclusive and effective learning environments for all their students. The papers add new insight and analysis to the issues of diversity and inclusion and will contribute to the growing international literature on this topic.



About the Special Issue Editor

Dr. Teresa O'Doherty was appointed President of the Marino Institute of Education, an Associate College of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, in Ireland in 2018, having been the Dean of Education at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, since 2003. She is a member of a wide range of academic and professional committees; she was appointed by the Government to the Board of the State Examinations Commission (2015-2019), she is Vice President of the Education Studies Association of Ireland, and is a member of the

Board and former Southern Co-Chair of the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South (SCoTENS). She was invited by the European Commission DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, to give the keynote address at the Policy Dialogue on Teacher Education with Southern Mediterranean Countries, Brussels, July, 2018. Teresa researches and publishes in the area of teacher education and the history of Irish education.

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