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Swennen, Anja

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Anja Swennen

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It is our responsibility to teach (the teachers) - and improve education

More than ten years ago I obtained my PhD with a dissertation on the development of the identity of teacher educators in the changing context of teacher education for primary education. A small part of the study was devoted to teacher education during the Second World War. From the literature I read, including commemorative books, it appeared that few teacher educators (and teachers and school principals) had actively participated in the resistance, nor were there many who actively collaborated with the nazi’s, the national socialists. It was striking that educators continued to teach and educate teachers until it became really impossible.

Towards the end of the war in 1945 many school buildings had been destroyed or requisitioned and food ran out. The stories of educators who ‘kept on teaching’ in parts of schools still standing, in private homes and in rural farms are not uncommon. At first I was disappointed that teachers had not en masse embraced the resistance, but as I delved into their stories, I began to understand that active resistance was a difficult and dangerous road and one that on few teachers and others alike took in those days. I gradually came to feel some admiration the people who continued their work with younger and older children and future teachers under harsh conditions. They believed it was their responsibility to ‘keep on teaching’ in order to support young people to build a future that was almost unimaginable at the time and continue teaching, no matter what.

It will not come as a surprise that I had to think of these events when I, like everybody else, witnessed the horrors of the war in Ukraine. A war that destroys cities and lives and in which chases the future to be shrouded in clouds But, as could be witnessed all over the world, in the midst of the physical and psychological suffering teachers (and others) ‘keep on teaching’, giving every prospect of a brighter future, no matter how dark it may seem in the present to young people.

Although the war in Ukraine affects the rest of Europe, and the world, it is clear that not all students and educators suffer from it like the teachers and student in Ukraine do. For these educators (myself included) ‘keep on teaching’ is the normal routine. However, educators in peacetime cannot rest on their laurels as there are more than enough social issues to solve. I do not believe that education is the key to every social disease, but I do think as educators it is our moral obligation to improve education in times of peace and to put as much work, effort and inspiration as the Ukraine educators. Each project, study, collaboration with its variety of themes, pedagogies and methodologies contributes to the step by step improvement of education, and in our case, teacher education. The articles in this issue reflect this diversity, but also this main aim. He contribution show how teachers and teacher educators are dedicated to innovative pedagogies in teaching and teacher education, the empowerment of teachers and the reformation of systems. It also shows that research can be innovative too, showing respect of the voices of teachers and students and using challenging research methodologies.
The first article by R. Durán-Martínez, Fernando Beltrán-Llavador and Fernando Martínez-Abad titled *Education priorities in primary education bilingual programmes in Spain* deals with an issue that gains much attention lately: bilingual education. A mutual language is way for (young) people to communicate in a globalised world. Bilingual education currently faces the challenge of improving teacher education to meet the linguistic and didactic demands of a content and language integrated approach. In their papers, the authors analyse what Spanish in-service primary school teachers consider the key education priorities for their involvement in bilingual programmes. Using content data analysis, they detected the most frequently used terms in the teachers’ answers to an open-ended question. 2,830 words were examined, and the net of relations among the education priorities emerging from their discourse was established. The results confirm that teachers prioritise the need to be proficient in English over methodological issues, which prevail once language proficiency has been achieved. Teacher highlight investment as being crucial both to implement school bilingual programmes and to provide education opportunities for their professional development. The study concludes that only concerted personal and administrative efforts will bridge the gap between global educational agendas and classroom performance.

Unfortunately, professional development of teacher and teacher educators is a personal process which is not well integrated in the school’s strategy – as the contribution of Minna Körkkö, Marja-Riitta Kotilainen, Sanna Toljamo and Tuija Turunen shows. In their article with the title *Developing teacher in-service education through a professional development plan: modelling the process* they present their study of the process of implementing professional development plans (professional development plans) as a tool for teachers’ continuing professional learning in Finnish Lapland. The results showed that factors affecting the professional development plan process related mainly to structural and strategical work in schools. The lack of clear guidelines and support from principals and colleagues, as well as the absence of discussions on school strategy and its meaning for teachers’ professional development, negatively affected the professional development plan process. As a result, schools’ strategic planning only vaguely guided individual professional development plan processes. The results suggest that, for the successful implementation of a professional development plan process, schools’ strategic planning should be more clearly integrated with teachers’ professional development plans in order to enhance their personal professional development in meaningful ways.

Xin-qiang Wang, Jun-cheng Zhu, Jun-yu Huo, Ming-fan Liu and Bao-juan Ye present their study about *Implicit professional identity: Assessment and relation with explicit professional identity and well-being of pre-service teachers*. The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of implicit professional identity and its relationship with explicit professional identity and well-being of pre-service teachers. The results indicated that (a) pre-service teachers had positive implicit professional identity; (b) the correlation between the measures of pre-service teachers’ explicit professional identity and implicit professional identity was not significant; (c) implicit professional identity significantly predicted well-being negatively, while explicit professional identity positively predicted well-being; and (d) implicit professional identity moderated the relationship between explicit professional identity and well-being. In the weak implicit professional identity
group, explicit professional identity did not significantly predict well-being; however, in the strong implicit professional identity group, explicit professional identity significantly predicted well-being positively.

In their article *Exploring student teachers’ motivations and sources of confidence: the case of outdoor learning* Alexia Barrable, Anna Touloumakos and Linda Lapere explore the more pedagogical theme of outdoor learning. Outdoor learning has become an important part of policy and practice across several European contexts. While research indicates that outdoor experiences can enhance learning and mental health outcomes, studies have also identified a number of barriers to providing such experiences the most prevalent being that of teachers’ confidence. Acknowledging the role of Initial Teacher Education in preparing teachers for the demands and complexities of providing meaningful, safe and relevant outdoor learning experiences, this article explored teachers’ experiences both in general, and within a one-year Initial Teacher Education course in Scotland. Results revealed mastery experiences as being preferred, while vicarious experiences were also seen as useful. In addition, previous experiences in adulthood and childhood impact on the motivation of student teachers to teach outdoors. Implications for Initial Teacher Education programmes are presented.

In the next article Orna Levin and Heidi Flavian present their study into a pedagogy for teacher educators is presented in an article with the title *Simulation-based learning in the context of peer learning from the perspective of preservice teachers: a case study*. Simulation-based learning has become an inseparable part of teacher-education. This case study examined the learning processes that preservice teachers experienced while participating in simulation-based learning. The main goal of the study was to identify the aspects of peer learning inherent to simulation-based learning that are beneficial for the teacher-education process, to facilitate the development of effective teacher-education modules. Preservice teachers identified the following four benefits related to the implementation of simulation-based learning in the context of peer learning: Readiness to provide and accept feedback; The observers’ reflective analysis of the experience; Expanding one’s view of the situation; Collegial bonding. These findings are relevant to teachers around the world and provide evidence of the importance of simulation-based learning in the framework of teacher education and especially in the context of peer learning.

Specific cultural and political context influence the above studies, but the next study in this issue explicitly ideas with this theme. Oliver McGarr and Anne Berit Emstad’s article is about *Comparing discourses on reflective practice in teacher education policy in Ireland and Norway: Critical reflection or performance management?* They analysed policy documents relating to teacher education in Ireland and Norway from 2008 to 2016, representing periods of change in teacher education in both jurisdictions to explore the discursive construction of reflective practice. The study found that, while reflective practice was seen as important in both countries, they differed in terms of why it should be used. Overall, reflective practice was presented as primarily a competency required by teachers to evaluate and improve their practice, however the rationale for this improvement appeared to differ in the two contexts. In Ireland reflective practice was presented primarily as a tool for self-improvement. A similar focus was evident in the Norwegian documents. However they also emphasised the teachers’ contribution to the school
community. The paper discusses the encroachment of performativity discourses on conceptualisations of reflective practice and discusses implications of this narrowing policy discourse on teacher education.

In their article Juana M. Sancho-Gil and Maria Domingo-Coscollola challenge traditional conceptions of learning. In their paper Expanding perspectives on secondary education teachers’ learning ecosystems: implications for teachers’ professional development they introduce the notion of learning ecosystems where intra-action is at the core of learning. The article builds on APREN-DO research project, which explores how secondary school teachers learn, using an inclusive research approach and visual and narrative methods. It considers the (dis)continuous, non-linear, fragmented and fractal dimensions of learning made up of intra-actions between living beings, culture, and matter. It provides results on the learning characteristics of teachers, and the peculiarities of their significant ecosystems (professional, familial, and educational). It shows that teachers’ learning takes place everywhere, in every space, at every moment of their lives, with different people and the surrounding resources.

The last contribution Moral imagination in student teachers’ written stories on an ethical dilemma written by Eeva Kaisa Hyry-Beijhammer, Erkki T. Lassila, Eila Estola and Minna Uitto explores how student teachers use moral imagination when writing about an ethical dilemma. Moral imagination refers to the ability to consider a situation from a distance and to understand different perspectives through imagination. An ethical dilemma was presented in the form of a framing story, which the participating Austrian and Finnish student teachers continued writing as they chose. Through positioning and narrative analyses, we uncovered how the students’ moral imagination on the ethical dilemma centred on one or more of the following foci: (1) the pupil, (2) themselves as teachers or (3) other actors. This moral imagination manifested through different storylines. The implications of these results and the relevance of the method for teacher education are discussed.

Anja Swennen

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

j.m.h.swennen@vu.nl