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Comparative Education and Teacher Training

Volume 4

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Contents

NIKOLAY POPOV, *Editor-in-Chief*

FOREWORD 9

NIKOLAY POPOV

HISTORY OF BULGARIAN COMPARATIVE EDUCATION 11

KAREN BIRAIMAH, *Invited Keynote Speaker*

**THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN “BEST PRACTICES”, EQUITY AND
QUALITY EDUCATION: THE U.S. CASE** 29

Part 1

Comparative Education as a Teacher Training Discipline: history, problems and approaches

CHARL WOLHUTER, *Editor of Part 1*

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION 35

CHARL WOLHUTER, SOFIJA VRCELJ, MARINELA MIHOVA, R. F. A.

MAARMAN

**STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCE OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION IN THREE
COUNTRIES** 37

ELIŠKA WALTEROVÁ

**COMPARATIVE EDUCATION FOR TEACHERS IN THE CZECH
REPUBLIC: AIMS, MODELS, PROBLEMS** 41

SOFIJA VRCELJ

**A COMPARATIVE EDUCATION COURSE: EXPERIENCE AND VIEWS
OF STUDENTS AT A FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY RIJEKA** 47

MINGCHANG WU, KUO-HUNG TSENG, WEITE LIU, CHIEN-FENG TAI

**A COMPARISON STUDY ON THE FACTORS OF STUDENTS’
MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT IN USA AND ASIAN COUNTRIES** 53

OLIVERA KNEZEVIC-FLORIC

THEORETICAL BASE IN COMPARATIVE STUDIES 59

LUDMILA SUPRUNOVA

**THE REGIONAL ASPECT OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION RESEARCH
IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION** 63

Part 2

Teacher Training: curricula, innovations and new strategies

CRAIG HELLER, *Editor of Part 2*

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION 69

CLAUDIO-RAFAEL VASQUEZ-MARTÍNEZ

**REPERCUSSIONS IN TEACHER TRAINING:
NON-COMPLETION IN DISTANCE EDUCATION IN HIGHER
EDUCATION** 71

JEFF ZWIERS

**TEACHER TRAINING TO IMPROVE GIRLS' EDUCATION IN SUB-
SAHARAN AFRICA** 79

JEFF ZWIERS

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN MACEDONIA: BASING TEACHER
TRAINING ON ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES** 85

JANA KALIN

**CHALLENGES OF IN-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION AND QUALITY
EDUCATION** 91

LANA YIU LAN KHONG

**TOMORROW'S TEACHERS IN A GLOBAL CITY: REFLECTIVE
PRACTICE IN SINGAPORE TEACHER EDUCATION** 101

MOHAMMAD REZA SARKAR ARANI & MASAMI MATOBA

**CHALLENGES IN JAPANESE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT: A FOCUS ON AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE** 107

MASAMI MATOBA & MOHAMMAD REZA SARKAR ARANI

**ETHNOGRAPHY FOR TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
JAPANESE APPROACH OF INVESTIGATION ON CLASSROOM
ACTIVITIES** 116

KATYA SIMEONOVA

PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' HANDS-ON RESEARCH LEARNING 126

ROBIN JUNG-CHENG, CHEN

**NEW CHALLENGE FOR TEACHER TRAINING: FACING THE TREND
OF BIOTECHNOLOGY** 131

DANIEL KIRK

**BERMUDIAN ENGLISH: AN ISOLATED LANGUAGE. HOW LANGUAGE
SHIFT IN THE CLASSROOM IS LEADING TO A RETHINKING OF
TEACHER PREPARATION AND TRAINING** 138

- DARJO ZULJAN & MILENA VALENČIČ ZULJAN
CONCEPTIONS OF LEARNING HELD BY TECHNICAL SCIENCE STUDENTS 147
- MILENA VALENČIČ ZULJAN & JANEZ VOGRINC
THE MENTOR'S TASKS WITH REGARD TO NOVICE TEACHERS 154
- NAGWA MEGAHED & MARK GINSBURG
TEACHER EDUCATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF WORKER-CITIZENS IN EGYPT: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF CURRICULAR GOALS IN NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMIC CONTEXT 161
- NAGWA M. MEGAHED
COLLABORATIVE ACTION AND DECISION-ORIENTED RESEARCH PROJECTS TOWARD PROMOTING SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS IN EGYPT 172
- MILAN KNEZ
RENEWAL OF SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM REGARDING PHYSICAL EDUCATION 180
- ROB PETERSON
ESTABLISHING AN INTERNET-BASED SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY IN BULGARIA: A SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND FUTURE STEPS 190
- ANNE CONVERY
STUDENT TEACHER ATTITUDES TO EUROPE: RESPONSES FROM POLICY AND PRACTICE 199
- ION AL. DUMITRU & CARMEN ȚÎRU
THE PROFILE OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY ROMANIAN TEACHER TRAINING DEPARTMENTS – TEACHERS PERSPECTIVE 207
- ZVIA MARKOVITS & JEONG SUK PANG
NUMBER SENSE: COMPARATIVE STUDY WITH STUDENTS FROM ISRAEL AND KOREA AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING 214
- SPELA GOLUBOVIC, TATJANA TUBIC, PRVOSLAV JANKOVIC
TEACHERS' CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – INCLUSIVE EDUCATION 221
- TATJANA TUBIĆ, ŠPELA GOLUBOVIĆ, PRVOSLAV JANKOVIĆ
SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING IN TEACHER TRAINING 227

Part 3

Education Policy: developments, insights and trends

MARCELLA KYSILKA, *Editor of Part 3*

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION 235

MARCELLA L. KYSILKA

TEACHER LICENSURE IN AN ERA OF TEACHER SHORTAGE 237

SUSAN C. BROWN

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND U.S. LAW 243

STEVEN HAWLEY

CHARTER SCHOOLS: AN EDUCATIONAL OPTION 249

CHEN-LI YAO

VIEWING TAIWAN'S EDUCATION REFORM AS A TURNING POINT IN EDUCATION ETHICS 255

EMMA LETICIA CANALES RODRÍGUEZ

SCHOLAR CULTURE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MEXICO IN THE STATES OF HIDALGO AND TLAXCALA 261

NATHALIE DE VOS

EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTS AT SCHOOL LEVEL IN THE FLEMISH COMMUNITY: JUDICIAL REMARKS 267

RJ (NICO) BOTHA

PARTNERSHIPS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AS AN EDUCATIONAL REFORM STRATEGY: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE 274

METOD ČERNETIČ & OLGA DEČMAN DOBRNJIČ

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN BOARDING SCHOOLS IN SLOVENIA 281

MARTA LUZ SISSON DE CASTRO

POLITICAL PARTY AND DEMOCRATIC SELECTION OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERS: A BRAZILIAN CASE STUDY 291

HORST FRIEDRICH ROLLY

PRIVATE EDUCATION IN BULGARIA 297

HORST FRIEDRICH ROLLY

COMPARATIVE EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS OF MINORITIES: THE SPECIAL CASE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN INDIA AND BULGARIA 306

CONTRIBUTORS 321

FOREWORD

The Conference

This volume contains papers submitted to the 4th International Conference on "Comparative Education and Teacher Training", organized by the Bulgarian Comparative Education Society, hosted by the Faculty of Primary and Preschool Education of Sofia University, and held in May 2006.

The overall goal of the conference is to focus academic discussions on the role of Comparative Education and new practices in teacher training.

The conference objectives are: (1) to examine different approaches to the role of Comparative Education as a science, research methodology, and academic discipline; (2) to develop linkages with colleagues who work in various teacher training programs at universities, colleges, and institutes around the world; (3) to outline prospects for the development of education policy at the institutional, regional, national and international level.

Organizing this Conference is our way of being an integral part of the international comparative education community. The Conference is also our modest attempt to contribute to a better understanding of the past, present and future of the field.

The Bulgarian Comparative Education Society

The Bulgarian Comparative Education Society (BCES) was founded in Sofia in October 1991. Since March 1992 it has been a constituent member-society of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES).

The BCES is very small. It is perhaps the smallest society in the WCCES. Yet despite its size, the BCES tries to play an active role in the Southeast European region and keeps close contacts with the WCCES Secretariat and many member-societies.

The Host

The Faculty of Primary and Preschool Education of Sofia University is the host of the conference.

Sofia University is the first institution of higher education in Bulgaria, established in 1888. Its history is an embodiment and a continuation of centuries of cultural and educational tradition in this country. Sofia University has always been the largest and most prestigious educational and scientific center in Bulgaria. Today it has 15 Faculties with 75 degree programs.

The Faculty of Primary and Preschool Education was founded in 1983. During the 23 years of its existence the Faculty has constantly updated curricula and programs to keep abreast of both developments in pedagogical scholarship and social demands. Since 1997/1998 there have been established 8 degree programs at the Faculty, as follows: Preschool and Primary School Education; Primary School Education and Foreign Language Teaching; Preschool Education and Foreign Language Teaching; Special Education; Social Education; Music Education; Fine Arts Education; Speech Therapy.

The book

The book consists of forty papers, written by fifty authors. In the beginning of the book there are a front paper and a keynote address. The other thirty-eight papers are grouped into three parts: (1) Comparative Education as a Teacher Training Discipline: history, problems and approaches; (2) Teacher Training: curricula, innovations and new strategies; (3) Education

Policy: developments, insights and trends. There are also editorial introductions to the three parts.

All papers in the book provide their own significant contributions to defining problems, clarifying concepts, discussing phenomena, and examining different approaches to the challenging topics of Comparative Education, Teacher Training and Education Policy.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to all participants in the 4th Conference for their collaboration. This publication would never have been possible in the absence of their high-quality papers. Special thanks are also due to Karen Biraimah and Mark Ginsburg, Past-Presidents of CIES, for their keynote addresses.

In the last years, Karen Biraimah has played a very special role in the development of the Bulgarian Comparative Education Society and the four Conferences on Comparative Education and Teacher Training we have so far organized. My colleagues and I myself, as President of BCES, are deeply grateful to K. Biraimah for her valuable help and support.

I would also like to thank the Workshop Chairs – Charl Wolhuter, Craig Heller and Marcella Kysilka – for their constructive cooperation in the conference organization and editorial work on the different parts of the book.