



International Perspectives in Education

CONFERENCE BOOKLET

Voices from the Classroom

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CONFERENCE BOOKLET ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS



Conference Theme

The International Perspectives in Education conference offers an international and interdisciplinary stage for presenters and participants from all around the world. We are delighted to welcome and host practitioners and researchers from diverse backgrounds and countries to the conference this year. The conference provides a space for debate, reflection and the exchange of experience and good practice in education through new developments, technologies and approaches. We aim to bring together worldwide researchers and professionals, encourage intellectual development and provide opportunities for networking and collaboration. We also provide an environment for the free exchange of ideas that will offer an improvement in the quality of teaching-learning processes and sustainability in education. The Organisation Committee of IPiE2026 welcomes all participants; researchers, academics, educators, teaching staff and post-graduates of universities, higher education institutions and related agents for teaching and training in professional skills. The conference offers participants to two days of insight and inspiration sharing thoughts and ideas from leading education pioneers, policy makers and education experts. We are pleased to offer the programme for 2026 which includes workshops, keynote speakers, research presentations and opportunities for learning at intercultural intersections.

Language of the Conference:

English

Conference Theme:

Sustainable Futures in Education: Teaching and Learning Beyond Borders

Conference Strands:

Student Voice and Participation

Inclusion and Diversity

Assessment, Feedback and Student Success

Teacher Training and Lifelong Learning

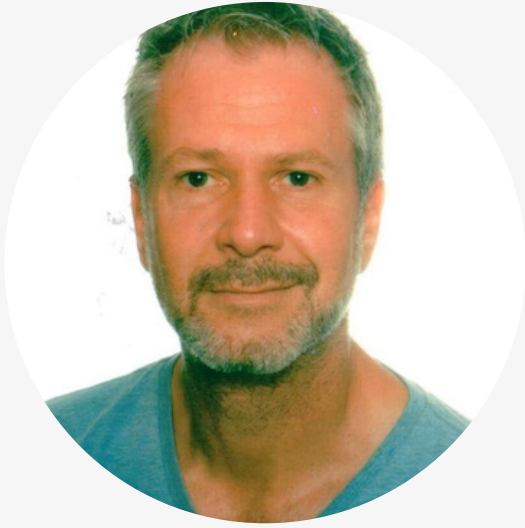
Internationalizing Education

Trends and Innovation in Education

Educational Technology, Digital Learning and AI

Education and Sustainability

Conference Committee



OLIVER HOLZ
KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN, BELGIUM



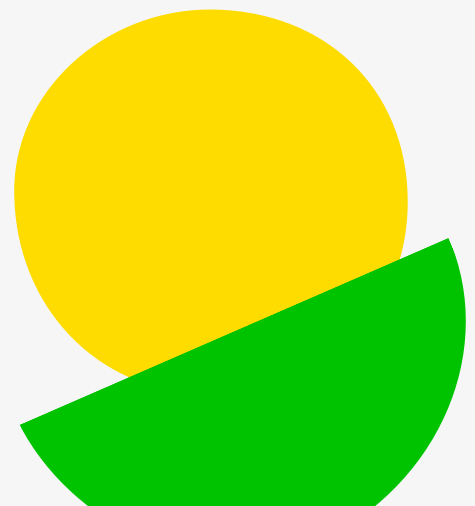
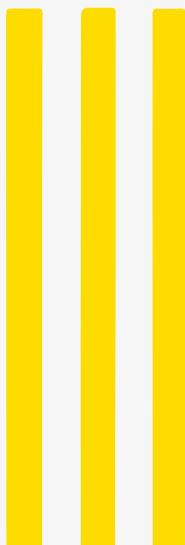
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ABSTRACTS: Plenary Sessions



Dagmar M. Benincasa works at the Centre for Teacher Education (CfTE) at the University of Cologne, Germany, and has been the project coordinator of the Erasmus+ Teacher Academy Teacher Education for a Future in Flux (teff) since 2023. A secondary school language teacher, trained in Germany, Spain and the UK, and university lecturer in teacher education, she is committed to bringing together actors from all phases of teacher education and from diverse international backgrounds to collaboratively advance the field. Her main areas of interest include teacher well-being, cross-phase collaboration in teacher education, digital learning and teaching, and the development of future-oriented learning opportunities for initial and continuing teacher education.



Bridging Institutions and Classrooms: The Role of Erasmus+ Teacher Academies in Rethinking Teacher Education

The Erasmus+ Teacher Academies have emerged as key platforms for innovation and collaboration in European teacher education. One of their central ambitions is to bridge the persistent gap between theory and practice by integrating diverse voices from the classroom – those of pupils, student teachers, practicing teachers, and teacher educators – into joint learning and development processes across national and institutional boundaries. Drawing on practical experiences and insights gained from established and newly launched Teacher Academies, this keynote will explore both the potentials and the challenges of these collaborations. It will highlight innovative learning opportunities that have successfully brought classroom perspectives into academic and transnational contexts, while also critically reflecting on structural and organizational barriers that may have limited deeper participation and sustainability. Focus will be placed on the dynamics and limitations of knowledge and experience transfer across boundaries – from universities to schools and from classroom practice back into academic discourse. It will further discuss the potential of Teacher Academies as “homes” for (future) teachers – as spaces of belonging and professional identity formation within the university context. By tracing how classroom voices have been heard, represented, and transformed within Teacher Academies, the keynote will propose ways forward for similar projects seeking to make teacher education more dialogic, inclusive, and responsive to the lived realities of schools.

Dagmar M. Benincasa

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Dr. Simon Brownhill is Senior Lecturer in Education (Teaching and Learning) at the School of Education, University of Bristol, England. Specialising in pedagogical innovation, he teaches on the MSc Education programme and supervises doctoral students (EdD and PhD). He is a founding co-director of the Research Centre for Teaching, Learning and Curriculum (TLC) in the School of Education and serves as a key English member of the Editorial Board for *Pedagogical Dialogue*, an information and methodical journal for educators in Kazakhstan. His varied research and writing interests include supporting and training adult learners, children's writing (fiction and non-fiction), self-reflection, effective behaviour management in the classroom (3-11), children's physical development, creative assessment, and men who work in the Early Years (0-8). He is the editor of *Creative Practice in Higher Education: Engaging Adult Learners through Theory and Pedagogy* (Routledge, 2025)

'A quiver full of arrows': stimulating evaluative thinking using Directional Reflection

The importance of reflection as a sustained human activity cannot be underestimated (Boud et al., 2005). Its influence in motivating personal 'learning and professional growth, transformation and empowerment' (Hilden & Tikkamäki, 2013, p.77) emphasises the significance of reflection for everyone, irrespective of age, role or ability. Despite being considered 'one of the so-called '21st century' or 'transversal' skills, or 'life competencies'' (Shaw et al., 2018, p.2), Philip (2006, p.37) argues that reflection, education-wise, is 'difficult to teach, difficult to encourage and not a process that [children/young people] and indeed some [adults] are entirely comfortable with'. In an effort to positively address these concerns, this interactive keynote presentation will introduce conference attendees to the notion of Directional Reflection (Brownhill, 2025*). Offered as a novel, creative and adaptable idea, conference attendees will develop a critical appreciation of select theoretical underpinnings which inspired the development of this pedagogical strategy. A collaborative exploration of the practical use of different arrows [think], both during and outside of the conference, will be facilitated, purposefully stimulating evaluative thinking (as part of the reflective process) to aid conference attendees, their work, and those that they support/engage with.

* BROWNHILL, S. (2025). DIRECTIONAL REFLECTION: STIMULATING THE EVALUATIVE THINKING OF STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL. PEDAGOGIES: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL, 1-10. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1080/1554480X.2025.2545207](https://doi.org/10.1080/1554480X.2025.2545207)

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Beyond Borders, Within Classrooms: Voices from Blended Mobilities in Teacher Education

In an era where classrooms are increasingly shaped by diversity, mobility has become central to how we prepare teachers for global citizenship and intercultural competence (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Wächter & Maiworm, 2014). Yet, traditional long-term international experiences often remain inaccessible to many due to financial, curricular, and personal constraints. The rise of short-term, hybrid and blended mobility formats—particularly through the Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs)—offers new avenues for internationalisation that are both inclusive and sustainable (European Commission, 2023).

This plenary draws on insights from the TEIMO project (Teacher Education across Europe: Innovative Mobility Opportunities, <https://teimo.eu/en/>), which pilots and evaluates innovative blended mobility models across Europe. Central to this work are the voices from the classroom—students, teacher educators, and institutional partners—who reflect on communication, collaboration, and belonging in digitally- and physically-shared spaces. These perspectives highlight both opportunities and challenges: from fostering genuine intercultural encounters and developing transversal skills, to navigating digital divides and supporting emotional wellbeing.

By bringing together narratives from TEIMO BIP courses with broader research in internationalisation, I argue for a redefinition of mobility—not as a privilege for the few, but as an embedded, flexible, and diverse experience within teacher education. This shift calls for listening to students’ and teachers’ voices in shaping mobility design, embedding intercultural learning across curricula, and leveraging technology to create scalable and inclusive opportunities for all. Ultimately, the plenary seeks to spark dialogue on how internationalisation and mobility can move from being an ‘add-on’ to becoming a core principle of equitable teacher education in Europe and beyond.

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ABSTRACTS: PARALLEL SESSIONS

Maria Aleksandrovich

Plastycinography Across Borders: A Multisensory Method for Fine-Motor and Creative Development

The objective of this presentation is to introduce the developmental method "Plastycinography for Kids and Adults" (a multisensory approach supporting fine-motor development, creativity and visual-motor integration) and to discuss its effectiveness, together with practical experiences drawn from its implementation in diverse educational contexts.

This study addressed three research questions:

1. Does regular participation in the Plastycinography programme improve fine-motor coordination and visual-motor integration in its participants?
2. How do children, teachers, and parents perceive the method's impact on engagement, creativity, and emotional regulation?
3. What practical insights emerge from applying the method across different cultural, institutional, and developmental contexts?

The methodology employed a mixed-methods design, combining structured observations, pre-post assessments of fine-motor skills, interviews with educators and parents, and an analysis of children's creative work. Practical implementation of the programme has been extensive. Plastycinography for Kids and Adults has been adopted in 21 educational institutions, including preschools, schools, therapeutic centres, universities, and refugee-support settings, in Poland, Slovenia, Austria, Greece, Germany, Ukraine, and Tatarstan, reaching more than 1,200 participants. The method proved particularly effective for children with motor delays, attention difficulties, or experiences of migration-related stress, offering a safe and tactile medium for expression, regulation, and integration.

Key findings demonstrate clear improvements in fine-motor coordination, creativity and visual-motor integration among participants. They also consistently exhibited high engagement and motivation throughout the programme. In conclusion, Plastycinography for Kids and Adults is an inclusive, scalable, and sustainable method that enhances fine-motor readiness and supports creative, emotionally grounded learning, making it a valuable tool for educators and psychologists across borders.

Christos Alpochoritis , Dimitrios Stafidas and Vana Chiou

Exploring the Pedagogical Value of Geo-Comics in Geography Education Across School Settings

The present study replicates a previous investigation conducted in a model Greek lower secondary school and re-examines the effectiveness of geographical comics as an instructional tool within a conventional secondary school. The study aimed to investigate whether geo-comics enhance students' learning outcomes compared to text-based material and whether the findings of the original study could be reproduced in a different educational setting. A repeated cross-sectional design was employed, using the same mixed-methods approach and the same inquiry-based teaching scenario on the Greek-speaking villages of Apulia in Southern Italy. The sample consisted of twenty-six second-grade lower secondary students, divided into an experimental group (geo-comic) and a control group (text-based material). Pre- and post-tests were used to assess learning outcomes, as well as qualitative data from classroom observations and teacher reflections to capture student engagement. The results were broadly consistent with those of the initial investigation. After the intervention, both groups improved their performance, with the experimental group once more achieving slightly higher, but not statistically significant, scores. According to qualitative data, geo-comics fostered greater enthusiasm, engagement, and participation compared to text-based material. Overall, the findings support the view that geographical comics constitute an engaging multimodal resource, capable of supporting geography instruction across different school environments.



Katherine Blair

International Broadcast Journalism Collaborations as Sustainable Models for Internationalizing Higher Education

The internationalization of higher education has become a central strategy for developing globally minded graduates capable of working across cultures and borders. In response to this objective, global virtual collaborations have emerged as a sustainable and inclusive pedagogical model that extends learning beyond physical and institutional boundaries. This paper explores the use of international broadcast journalism collaborations as a means of increasing student engagement, intercultural understanding, and authentic international learning experiences within higher education.

The primary objective is to examine how global virtual journalism collaborations contribute to curriculum internationalization while supporting sustainable teaching and learning practices. The research addresses the following questions: (1) How do international broadcast journalism collaborations enhance student engagement and intercultural competence? (2) What pedagogical and technological frameworks support effective and equitable virtual collaboration? (3) How can such models be adapted across disciplines?

The methodology draws on qualitative case studies featured in *Global Journalism Collaborations: Worldwide Storytelling Projects in Higher Education (2023)*, incorporating interviews with students, graduates, educators, and industry professionals from universities worldwide. Findings indicate that virtual journalism collaborations foster meaningful peer-to-peer learning, promote equal-footed international partnerships, and provide transformative professional and cultural learning experiences.

The paper concludes that global virtual collaborations represent a sustainable and scalable approach to internationalizing education, offering practical insights for educators seeking to embed global learning within their curricula while preparing students for participation in an interconnected world.

Marie-Louise Botha

Lived Experiences, Reflection, and Innovation in STEM Teacher Education: Insights from a Global Perspective

STEM aims to prepare educators for the challenges of the 21st century by extending learning beyond the boundaries of traditional classrooms, equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge needed in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world. Aligned with 2030 Sustainable Development Goal 4 on "Education for All", STEM promotes inclusive, equitable education and lifelong learning opportunities on a global scale. Achieving this vision requires stronger collaboration between higher education institutions (HEIs) globally, enabling educators to construct new knowledge, drive educational innovation, and reflect critically on their professional practice.

This paper adopts Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) as a conceptual lens, exploring how an educator's lived experiences influenced their capacity to question assumptions, reinterpret challenges, and develop innovative pedagogical strategies within Science [STEM] teacher education. Drawing on experiences from a North - South higher education mobility project, I present a reflective account that integrates global perspectives and aligns with the conference themes by addressing the question: How do educators construct new knowledge and drive educational innovation through their lived experiences?

A practical example demonstrates how new knowledge can develop in resource-constrained contexts, where hands-on experiments are often promoted using everyday materials to foster active learning and enhance equity in science education. These innovations stem from critical reflection, the initial stage of transformative learning, where educators question traditional pedagogies and reimagine more effective teaching practices. By engaging in this reflective and transformative process, professional expertise is not only deepened, but cross-border collaboration is also strengthened, contributing to the shaping of contextually responsive, future-oriented approaches to teaching and learning.



Efstratia Chatzi, Olga Roussou and Klonari Aikaterini

Geospatial Literacy and Disaster Resilience in Adult and Second-Chance Education: An Exploratory GIS Study with Case Analyses from Lesvos Island

This study examines how geospatial technologies can enhance disaster education for adults, focusing on two socially vulnerable learners in Greece: 15 unemployed adults and 15 students from a Second-Chance School (SCS). As natural hazards intensify, it is crucial for citizens to develop the competencies required to understand risk and make informed decisions. This project investigates whether introducing GIS tools and open environmental datasets can help adult learners strengthen disaster awareness, enhance digital confidence, and strengthen their sense of community resilience.

The research involves two educational interventions: GIS workshops delivered in the SCS context and a disaster preparedness training programme for unemployed adults. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining questionnaires, observational notes, learners' mapping outputs, and reflective discussions. Participants used freely available geospatial platforms such as QGIS, ArcGIS Online, Google Earth, and Copernicus open data. The workshops focused on recent disaster events on Lesvos Island, presented as place-based case studies: the 12 June 2017 Vrisa earthquake, the 23 July 2022 wildfire in Vatera, and the 11 November 2025 flood in Skala Kallonis. Learners mapped the extent of these events, analysed local vulnerabilities, and explored how risk intersects with their everyday environments.

The two groups demonstrated distinct learning patterns. Unemployed adults progressed more quickly, due to their higher educational backgrounds, whereas many SCS learners, often having only primary education, initially struggled with geospatial tools. Nevertheless, their lived experiences enriched discussions and peer learning. Primarily, participants had limited knowledge of natural hazards, but by the end, they demonstrated a clearer understanding of disaster management stages and the roles of citizens and authorities. Participants developed a new appreciation of how GIS, open data, and satellite imagery support hazard monitoring and informed decision-making. The Lesvos case studies proved particularly effective. Overall, the study illustrates that accessible GIS-based education can enhance disaster literacy and contribute to more resilient communities.

Efstratia Chatzi, Sofia Zafeirelli and Olga Roussou

Understanding the Needs of Individuals with Visual Impairments in Emergency Situations

This research examines the experiences and needs of individuals with visual impairments in Greece during emergency situations, with the aim of improving emergency preparedness, evacuation planning and the accessibility of emergency services. The study focuses on the challenges that people with visual impairments face in terms of mobility, communication and access to spatial information during emergencies such as fires and floods.

Data were collected through a combination of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with members of the visually impaired community in Greece. A total of 46 questionnaires and five interviews were conducted between January and June 2024. The questionnaire explored daily mobility, navigation strategies, access to emergency information, communication with emergency services and overall experiences during emergency situations.

Findings indicate that individuals with visual impairments face significant challenges during emergency situations, particularly in navigating unfamiliar environments and accessing reliable information. Most participants reported difficulties recognizing landmarks (60.9%) and accessing timely information (50%), while over half indicated challenges in understanding available emergency assistance (58.7%) and expressing their needs (52.2%). Communication with emergency services was predominantly conducted through phone calls, with limited use of text-based alternatives, highlighting accessibility gaps in communication systems. Additionally, navigation tools and applications were often perceived as unreliable, with inaccurate or insufficient spatial information.

The results further suggest that participants who experience more difficulties in daily mobility are also more likely to encounter increased challenges during emergencies, indicating a cumulative effect of accessibility barriers. Participants emphasized the importance of accessible spatial information, improved warning systems, accessible communication methods and better support during evacuation procedures.



Overall, the study contributes to inclusive emergency planning by highlighting the significance of accessible communication technologies and geographical information for visually impaired individuals, as well as the necessity of incorporating accessibility into emergency planning and evacuation procedures to improve safety, independence and effective response during emergency situations.

Myrto Chronaki

The Representation of Direct Experience: a Pedagogical Experiment

This course in Architectural Representation responds critically to the conditions of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, digital mediation, and increasingly virtual modes of interaction by re-centering architectural thinking on materiality, sensory perception, and lived experience. Its main objective is to explore how the immediate, multisensory experience of space can be meaningfully represented through both traditional and contemporary media. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's conceptual triad of the production of space—material space, spatial practices, and symbolic meanings—the course investigates representation not as a neutral technical operation, but as a creative, interpretive, and experiential process.

The central research questions are: How can the qualitative dimensions of habitation—such as atmosphere, memory, emotion, and sensory perception—be represented beyond conventional, visually centered architectural drawings? What are the differences between quantitative, metric representations of space and qualitative representations of lived experience? How can digital and mediated technologies be used not to distance us from material reality, but to translate and communicate embodied experience?

The methodology is practice-based and experimental, structured around three progressive exercises focused on the students' own homes. Students document and represent: (1) the material and spatial configuration of the dwelling through sketches, drawings, and models; (2) immaterial aspects of habitation such as sound, movement, and non-visual senses using diagrams, recordings, and sensory artifacts; and (3) emotions and memories through images, sound, music, and text. Traditional media are combined with digital tools such as audio recording, video, animation, and virtual environments, encouraging the development of a personal representational "language."

The key outcome of the course is a holistic approach to architectural representation that foregrounds atmosphere, perception, and embodied experience. The course concludes that expanding representational methods beyond precision and visual dominance sharpens perceptual awareness, enriches architectural thinking, and enables more inclusive, expressive, and meaningful interpretations of space.



Weronika Dębowska

The Construction of Relational Imaginaries in Young Adult Literature: An Analysis of content of the Language of Relationships

The presentation addresses the role of language through which contemporary young adult literature constructs young people's understandings of intimacy, agency, boundaries, and models of femininity and masculinity. This issue is of significant educational importance, as adolescence is a period marked by the intensive formation of ways of understanding oneself and others within social relationships.

The presentation focuses on the analysis of selected popular texts, aiming to identify recurring linguistic patterns used in the representation of characters' experiences. Particular attention is paid to how models of femininity and masculinity are constructed, as well as to the representation of relational dynamics such as domination, dependency, and control, including narrative patterns based on the "bad boy" figure. The study adopts a qualitative approach based on content analysis of selected popular young adult and new adult texts, widely promoted, among others, through social media. The units of analysis consist of narrative passages and dialogues concerning relationships between characters, interpreted through categories such as agency, boundaries, domination, control, consent, and gender representations. The analysis focuses on who speaks, what is communicated, and how relationships and experiences are constructed at the level of language. The analysis indicates recurring patterns in which domination, emotional ambivalence, and boundary-crossing are presented as elements of desirable intimacy. Masculinity is often associated with control, aggression, and dominance, while femininity is linked to adaptation, emotional dependency, and emotional labour within relationships. In the analysed texts, jealousy and boundary-crossing are at times represented as signs of care, desire, or intense love, contributing to the romanticisation of relationships based on inequality and emotional ambivalence. The presentation highlights the importance of critically analysing the language of popular culture within pedagogical reflection and emphasises the need to support the development of critical literacy among young people. The findings suggest that contemporary popular literature may co-construct relational imaginaries in which control, inequality, and the violation of boundaries are normalised as elements of intimacy. From a pedagogical perspective, this points to the need to foster reflection on consent, autonomy, responsibility, and partnership in relationships.

Mariana Dimitrova

Renewing of the Bulgarian national VET standards in the fields of economics, business administration and information sciences in line with the new professions in the future

The paper outlines the process of developing 11 new standards in the fields of economics, business administration and information sciences for vocational education and training in Bulgarian vocational high schools and vocational education and training centers by 2025. This project is part of a national program to update standards in all areas of vocational education. The main purpose is to present the results of a survey conducted regarding the development of new professions in the specified fields and the challenges involved in introducing innovations into the vocational education and training system. The main research question is how to develop new standards that not only reflect changes in occupations at the time of their development but also anticipate future trends that will influence vocational education and training for students and adults. A key challenge for vocational education and training programs is also how to train instructors to use professional standards and create a more dynamic environment for updating curriculum content.

The research methodology includes a review of the literature on the subject and an analysis of the existing requirements for professions in 2025, taking into account the Bulgarian labor market and international trends. A survey and study of changes in professions were conducted with respondents from the real business world who have practical experience related to the professions under study.

The main findings and conclusions relate to the need to integrate new technologies into the educational process and to train not narrowly specialized professionals, but professionals who develop a broader range of knowledge and skills to prepare them for future transformations in their professions.



Henrik Dindas

Social Presence as Relational Work: Co-Presence, Involvement, and Professional Design in Synchronous Online Higher Education

Social presence is widely regarded as a key quality dimension of online learning (Short et al., 1976), yet it often remains conceptually reduced to interactivity or technological affordances (Lowenthal & Snelson, 2017). This study aims to reconceptualize social presence in synchronous online higher education as a multidimensional and professionally designed pedagogical practice (Oh et al., 2018). Building on theoretical distinctions between co-presence, involvement, and interaction (Dindas & Schulte, 2024), the research investigates whether and how these dimensions contribute to students' perceptions of instructional quality and authentic learning experiences in digitally mediated teaching in higher education.

The study addresses three research questions: (1) To what extent do perceived co-presence, involvement, and interactivity predict students' perceptions of exchange quality and the sense of being in a "real" learning situation? (2) Do expectations regarding the proportion of virtual teaching within a study program influence these relationships? (3) How do university teachers conceptualize, intentionally design, and reflect upon social presence in synchronous online formats, particularly in light of emerging AI-based learning tools?

A mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 509 student representatives enrolled in bachelor's and master's programs across campus-based and fully synchronous online formats at FOM University of Applied Sciences. Multiple regression analyses examined the predictive power of co-presence, involvement, and interactivity on perceived exchange quality and perceived analogy to face-to-face teaching. In addition, 15 semi-structured interviews with professors and lecturers at FOM were analyzed using deductive-inductive qualitative content analysis. Results indicate that perceived co-presence and interactivity significantly predict both exchange quality and perceived authenticity of the learning situation, while involvement shows differentiated effects. Expectations regarding program format play a minor role. Qualitative findings underscore that social presence is not an automatic outcome of technology but a relational achievement requiring deliberate didactic design. In the context of AI integration, fostering social presence emerges as a central professional responsibility in contemporary online higher education.

Despoina Dionysiou and Antonis Lionarakis

The Diachronic Evolution of Distance Education (1960–2025): A Dynamic Bibliometric Mapping

This study investigates the evolution of research fields and trends in distance education from 1960 to 2025 through a longitudinal bibliometric analysis. The main objective is to map the development of the field over time and to identify how its structure has transformed in response to technological and social changes. To achieve this, the study explores how research themes in distance education have evolved across different historical periods, identifies the dominant and emerging thematic clusters over time, and examines how the conceptual structure of the field has transformed from its early stages to the present. The study is based on data retrieved from the Scopus database and applies bibliometric techniques, including keyword co-occurrence and network analysis, using VOSviewer. A temporal approach is adopted, dividing the dataset into six distinct periods in order to capture the dynamic evolution of the field. A systematic approach following PRISMA guidelines was employed to ensure methodological rigor. The findings reveal a progressive transformation of distance education research. The period 1960–1979 represents a pre-scientific phase focused on correspondence education and institutional practices. Between 1980 and 1999, the field becomes more structured, incorporating instructional design, collaborative learning, and early technological systems. The period 2000–2009 marks a major shift toward e-learning ecosystems, characterized by learning management systems, social learning, and learner-centered approaches. From 2010 onwards, the field evolves into networked and data-driven environments, with the emergence of MOOCs, learning analytics, and social media, followed by recent trends emphasizing artificial intelligence and personalized learning. In conclusion, distance education has evolved from a practical activity into a complex, interdisciplinary, and increasingly personalized digital learning environment. The focus has shifted from technology to the learner and networked knowledge, reflecting ongoing adaptation and future research directions.



Ondřej Duda, Alena Jůvová, Stavros Pitsikalis, Ilona-Eleftryja Lasica, Frauke Matz and Jure Purgaj

XR competence for educators: the PAX interdisciplinary perspective

This paper presents an interdisciplinary research of XR competence for educators, grounded in studies on extended reality (XR) in education and the outcomes of the Erasmus+ PAX project. The objective of the study is to conceptualise, operationalise, and empirically validate XR competence for educators as a multidimensional construct that integrates pedagogy, technology, ethics, and professional development, while providing a practical framework for teachers' use of XR in formal education. The paper responds to the persistent gap between the growing availability of XR tools in schools and their still-limited, uneven, and often superficial pedagogical adoption.

The study aims to answer these research questions:

- (1) How do educators conceptualise XR competence in relation to their teaching practice?
- (2) How is XR competence enacted through the adoption of the PAX XR-Compass in professional development and classroom contexts?
- (3) Which dimensions of XR competence emerge as critical across different national, institutional, and curricular settings?

To address the questions, teachers are introduced to the XR framework, which builds on established digital and professional competence models and extends them through the PAX XR-Compass. XR competence is defined as an integrated set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and reflective practices that enable educators to design, implement, and evaluate XR-enhanced learning activities in pedagogically meaningful, inclusive, and responsible ways. Methodologically, a mixed-methods approach is used, with data collected between February and May 2026 through coordinated research activities conducted by Czech, Greek, and Austrian teams. Data sources include XR implementation teacher reflections and selected qualitative and quantitative indicators gathered in schools. The data are analysed thematically and comparatively to capture both shared patterns and contextual differences in XR competence development. Key findings are expected to indicate that educators perceive XR competence primarily as a pedagogical rather than technological capability, emphasising instructional design, learner engagement, and classroom management over technical mastery.

Inna Enns, Katrin Kaiser and Jan Springob

Internships at Schools Abroad. Evaluating an International Mobility Programme in Teacher Education at the University of Cologne

Since 2013, the `internships@schoolsabroad` programme is jointly realized by the Division International Affairs - Department International Mobility and the Centre for Teacher Education of the University of Cologne, offering pre-service teachers the opportunity to complete school internships all over the world. Initially launched with only a small number of partner schools and students traveling, the programme has developed into a network of more than 100 schools and has facilitated over 1,000 internship placements. In this study, the results of a programme evaluation are presented.

The study is based on a quantitative survey (n:50) from multiple programme cohorts. The survey addresses, among other things, three research questions:

- (1) Which groups of students in teacher education are reached by the programme?
- (2) How satisfied are participants with their international school internship experiences and the accompanying institutional support structures?
- (3) Which aspects of the programme are perceived as particularly effective, and where do participants identify potential for improvement?

The findings indicate that participation in the programme varies depending on the study phase and subjects. Nearly one third of the students completed their internships based on personal motivation rather than curricular requirements. Overall satisfaction with the programme is high, although some areas for optimisation are identified. At the same time, the results show that some of the participants' improvement requests cannot be structurally implemented within the programme framework.

The paper discusses these findings in relation to current debates on sustainable internationalisation in teacher education. It highlights the value of long-term, cross-departmental collaboration in supporting students' international internship experiences and outlines evidence-based recommendations for further programme development. The study thus provides empirically grounded insights for higher education institutions seeking to strengthen international mobility formats in teacher education.



Evelien Flamez, Randy Samyn, Renske de Leeuw, Nesrin Oruç Ertürk, Chrischar Rock, Chidia Ari and Robin Schaeffer

Using the 'Tree of Belonging' to Foster Cross-Border Dialogue on Teacher Belonging

A sense of belonging is crucial for the wellbeing and professional development of (prospective) teachers, both during training and in their school jobs. However, belonging is a highly subjective, contextualised experience, and belonging gaps are widespread. Belonging uncertainty especially affects members of non-dominant groups (Walton & Cohen, 2007), leading not only to lower wellbeing and performance (e.g. Korpershoek et al., 2020) but also to epistemic and social injustice: their voices are silenced in defining belonging and the conditions that shape their experiences (e.g. Choules, 2007; Ponet et al., 2025).

In this workshop, we invite participants to engage in cross-border dialogues about belonging. Specifically, we explore if and how the 'Tree of Belonging' method – a drawing-based, semi-structured focus group protocol – creates safe, brave and meaningful conversations, and whether it helps to uncover silenced voices. The method was designed through international collaboration within the 'Sense of Belonging and Wellbeing' pillar of the Teacher Education Network (TEN). It draws on literature on belonging (e.g., Gilani & Thomas, 2025; Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021) and brave spaces (Arao & Clemens, 2013). We implemented the protocol with three groups of four student teachers from different international contexts at the 'Teacher Education for a Future in Flux' (TEFF) conference.

During the workshop, participants will experience the method in small groups, critically reflect on its possibilities and challenges, consider future developments, and discuss initial findings from TEFF.

Maria-Zoi Fountopoulou

Sustaining Humanistic Futures: Reframing Ancient Greek Teaching as a Model of Trans-Temporal Educational Design

The objective of this paper is to demonstrate how the teaching of Ancient Greek can function as a sustainable pedagogical model that integrates theoretical depth with practical effectiveness in contemporary classrooms. The study addresses two central research questions: (a) In what ways does systematic work in Ancient Greek enhance students' metalinguistic awareness and linguistic development in Modern Greek? (b) How can teacher professional development incorporate classical literacy into future-oriented and pedagogically sustainable practices?

The methodology combines curriculum analysis, systematic observation of more than two hundred demonstration lessons, and reflective material gathered from educators participating in nationwide training programmes during the implementation of the 2023 national curriculum. This triangulated dataset captures both the practical functioning of Ancient Greek lessons and their deeper humanistic dynamics: the cultivation of interpretive reasoning, linguistic reflection, and dialogical inquiry.

The key findings indicate that explicit and reflective engagement with Ancient Greek morphology and syntax leads to measurable improvements in Modern Greek: increased morphological sensitivity, clearer syntactic structures, and richer lexical choices. Teachers also report strengthened classroom dialogue, deeper ethical reflection, and heightened student participation in interpretive processes.

The conclusions argue that educational sustainability extends beyond environmental dimensions to encompass linguistic and cultural continuity. As a living pedagogical design, Ancient Greek teaching can connect past and future, tradition and innovation, fostering interpretive resilience and meaningful dialogue in 21st-century education.



Frances Maratos

Is mental-health provision making our children ill?

The past, the present, the future

Deficit-focused mental health provision has become a mainstay of many wellbeing and mental-health interventions used with children and adolescents world-wide. In addition, there is presently conflation between good quality social and emotional learning (SEL) and mental-health interventions (MHIs), as well as a serious lack of robust high-quality trials of both. Equally concerning is that SEL and MHI content may not have been developed by, nor in collaboration with, experts in these fields; nor are the materials or interventions always led by individuals with the relevant expertise. In this talk, I will overview some of these very serious issues which could be exacerbating problems of mental health within our youth through mechanisms of priming, misinterpretation and misattribution. I will then briefly present some of my teams current research in this field, including findings from three cluster-controlled trials of our wellbeing SEL lessons for children aged 9-12. These trials reveal that good quality expert informed SEL materials delivered at the class level can improve child emotional literacy and regulation, as well as have benefits for prosocial behaviour and wellbeing (e.g. decreasing and/or preventing increases in child anxiety). I will end by arguing that SEL materials need to be age-appropriate and regulated, i.e., designed and rigorously evaluated by relevant experts in those areas, before their universal widespread delivery by suitably trained teachers. In cases where MHIs are needed (i.e. a deficit-focused approach), these materials should be the domain of specialist clinical and/or educational psychologists and only delivered by appropriately qualified individuals at the one-to-one or small group (cf. universal) level. Going forward, adoption of these principles is essential in ensuring SEL and MHIs are helpful versus harmful.

Britney Soll, Dominic Petronzi and Thomas Hunt

A therapy dog intervention for math anxiety in early elementary school children

Math anxiety (MA) refers to negative feelings when thinking about and performing math. We tested a novel intervention to explore whether animal-assisted education can reduce MA and improve math performance using a math-targeted therapy dog approach. Our initial pilot study showed significant reductions in math trait anxiety, leading to a larger investigation. The sample included 201 students (57 intervention group) aged 6-9 years from two international schools in Mauritius. Across sessions, children in the intervention group showed consistent, significant reductions in both general state anxiety and math state anxiety from pre- to post-session, indicating immediate emotion regulation effects. Math state anxiety also decreased modestly from baseline to endpoint. Greater gains in math performance were observed in the intervention group compared to the control group. Math trait anxiety decreased over time, with larger descriptive reductions in the intervention group; however, baseline differences between groups mean that evidence for a specific effect on math trait anxiety remains inconclusive. This research offers a novel approach to addressing math anxiety in the classroom, with findings demonstrating that short, adaptable interventions can be effectively implemented to support emotion regulation and greater math engagement. Whilst the current intervention included therapy dogs, there is scope to consider the underlying principles behind their effectiveness to develop similar, pro-social interventions for addressing math anxiety in the classroom.



Caroline Harvey, Fiona Holland and Chris Barnes

A night under the stars: Assessing the impact of nature-based trips for young people

Children in the UK are spending less time playing outdoors in nature with those from lower income and ethnic minority backgrounds having less opportunity to access green spaces. Generation Green 2 aimed to address these inequalities by offering young people in schools and community groups the opportunity to spend time in nature in beautiful natural landscapes. Young people attended either multi-day residential experiences or single day trips. This research examined the impact these experiences had on young people's wellbeing and connection with the natural world, specifically examining their nature connectedness; importance of looking after nature; wellbeing; connection to the night sky; and inclusion of nature at night in self. Questionnaire data was collected from the young people at three time points: Pre- and post-trip and at 3 month follow up. Qualitative data was also collected from young people and staff who accompanied them on the trip. In total 941 young people completed pre and post questionnaires with 272 providing follow up data. 388 young people provided qualitative data, and 4 staff members participated in interviews. Significant short-term increases were seen in both the day trip and residential experiences for nature connectedness, importance of looking after nature, wellbeing, connection to the night sky and inclusion of nature at night in self. Significant increases in nature connectedness, wellbeing, connection to the night sky and inclusion of nature at night in self were maintained at 3 month follow up for the residential group only. Qualitative data showed support for a deeper connection with nature through the pathways to nature connectedness with further evidence demonstrating the far-reaching impact of these experiences. These overwhelmingly positive results highlight the importance of offering such experiences to young people which has implications for UK educational and wellbeing related policy.

Peter J. R. Macaulay and Michael J. Boulton

The Effectiveness and Social Validity of the CATZ Cross-age Teaching Zone Anti-Bullying Intervention

Bullying is a considerable problem among school students, and school-wide positive behaviour support interventions are regarded as helpful in addressing it. Given the positive but separate results for co-operative group work and cross-age teaching across such a wide variety of domains and variables, we developed an approach that combined them to target social outcomes, referred to here as the Cross-age Teaching Zone (CATZ) Anti-Bullying Intervention. In essence, CATZ invites older pupils (tutors) to design & deliver a lesson to younger pupils (tutees). The talk will first discuss the effectiveness of the CATZ anti-bullying intervention to promote anti-bullying beliefs. Specifically, we examined if the intervention would promote that (i) non-physical forms of bullying are unacceptable (Study 1), (ii) disclosing bullying to adults and getting the right kind of help have value and importance (Study 2), and (iii) victims can be assisted in safe ways (Study 3). We then tested for its effects on student tutors' thinking skills associated with (i) dealing pro-socially with peer provocations and (ii) avoiding hostile attribution bias (Study 4). Finally, the talk will then explore the social validity of the CATZ anti-bullying intervention among school students (Study 5). Across these studies, the CATZ anti-bullying intervention has been tested with over 1000 children, and approximately a similar number of age-matched controls. Results indicate significant positive effectiveness and social validity of the CATZ anti-bullying intervention across all studies. Our findings support the wider use of the CATZ anti-bullying intervention in schools, and suggestions for how this might be brought about are discussed. Future directions of the intervention will also be identified.



Katie Goeman and Wiebe Dijkstra

Designing Sustainable Blended Courses and Programmes Beyond Borders Using the European Maturity Model for Blended Education

Higher education plays a critical role in shaping sustainable futures by preparing learners to address complex challenges that transcend disciplinary, institutional, and national boundaries. In this context, blended courses and programmes have the potential to enable inclusive, flexible, and future-oriented learning. However, many institutions struggle to move beyond fragmented or technology-driven implementations towards sustainable, evidence-informed practices. This paper presents two key outcomes of the European Model for Blended Education Plus (EMBED+) project, an Erasmus+ cooperation involving partners from Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, and France, aimed at supporting higher education institutions in systematically developing and sustaining high-quality blended education across diverse contexts. Building on the original EMBED project (2017–2020), EMBED+ was intentionally designed as a transferable framework that can be applied across diverse national systems, institutional types, and cultural contexts within European higher education. The conceptual framework and accompanying matrix were updated and refined through use case assessments, complemented by a systematic review of contemporary literature and additional insights. The model conceptualizes the development of blended education as a trajectory across course, programme, and organisational levels, articulated through four progressive maturity stages: ad hoc, intentional, diagnostic, and sustainable. Maturity is defined through three interconnected developmental logics: (1) design and developmental thinking in blended education, (2) the systematic use of data and evidence for iterative improvement, and (3) adaptivity and context-awareness to support inclusive and personalized learning experiences. The paper further introduces the EMBED+Matrix as a practical instrument enabling educators, instructional designers, programme leaders, and institutional leaders to assess current practices, identify gaps, and plan coherent improvement pathways. The EMBED+Matrix functions as a boundary object, enabling cross-border dialogue by providing a shared, evidence-informed language through which staff and institutions can compare practices, reflect on maturity, and coordinate sustainable improvement pathways. The contribution demonstrates how maturity-oriented frameworks such as EMBED+ can bridge research, practice, and policy, thereby advancing sustainable futures in education beyond borders.

Katie Goeman and Lotte Geunis

From Framework to Action: Reimagining Blended Teaching Through EMBED+ and the Educathon

This paper presents a professional development initiative that integrates the European Maturity Model for Blended Education (EMBED) with the teff Educathon, a participatory learning format designed to address persistent challenges in education, including the sustainability of educational innovation. The initiative positions the Educathon as a structured, time-bound professional learning event in which educators and educational designers explore, critique, and extend EMBED+ through processes of co-creation and futures-oriented thinking. Rooted in principles of active learning and participatory design, the teff Educathon provides a space for diverse participants to engage in shared problem framing, ideation, and solution development. EMBED+ serves as the conceptual backbone of the event, offering a common language and evidence-informed framework for examining blended education practices at course and programme level. Participants are invited not only to apply the model but also to interrogate its relevance, usability, and contextual fit from multiple perspectives. The Educathon unfolds in three iterative phases. In the WHY? (Explore) phase, participants investigate core challenges related to blended education by gathering and synthesizing insights from student experiences using collaborative digital tools. The HOW? (Ideate) phase supports the generation and prioritization of innovative proposals for improving EMBED+ and its application in practice. In the WHAT? (Pitch) phase, teams translate their ideas into concise pitches or prototypes, which are shared for feedback and validation. An iterative feedback loop ensures that selected ideas are further tested and refined, strengthening the student-centred and evidence-informed character of EMBED+. By linking EMBED+ with the Educathon methodology, this contribution demonstrates how professional development can transcend traditional formats, foster cross-role collaboration, and support the sustainable evolution of blended education through participatory, future-oriented design.



Malwina Golik

Volunteering as a Response to a Sense of Helplessness – An Autoethnographic Reflection of a Student Volunteer in a Center for the Integration of Foreigners

This presentation explores the transformation of a sense of helplessness in the face of social phenomena into action, and its significance as a form of learning during emerging adulthood. The point of departure is the experience of volunteering at a migrant integration center, situated within the context of intensifying migration processes and growing social tensions, including the rise of hate speech. The study is guided by the following research questions: How does the experience of helplessness translate into social engagement? In what ways does volunteering become a space for learning through action? The analysis adopts an autoethnographic perspective and focuses on the processes of moving from passivity to engagement, as well as on the ways in which agency is constructed in situations marked by experienced helplessness. Particular attention is paid to how volunteering becomes a space for learning through action and a site where academic knowledge is confronted with lived social experience. The presentation examines personal experience using categories such as agency, engagement, non-formal learning, and social sensitivity. It demonstrates how volunteering can function as a mediating space between formal education and social reality, enabling the development of practical competencies and the formation of civic attitudes. The presentation contributes to broader reflections on the role of non-formal learning in education and highlights the role of students as active participants in social processes.

Gorik Hageman

From Learning Scenarios to AI-Mediated Dialogue: Designing Citizenship Education to Address Polarisation in Dutch Secondary Schools

In response to increasing societal polarisation, citizenship education in the Netherlands is tasked with fostering students' capacity for democratic dialogue and critical engagement with diverse perspectives. This study examines how curriculum-aligned learning scenarios, combined with AI-mediated dialogue, can contribute to these aims in secondary education. The objective is to design and evaluate an innovative pedagogical approach that integrates language learning, citizenship education, and emerging technologies to support constructive classroom discourse on controversial societal issues. The study is guided by three research questions: (1) How do learning scenarios addressing polarisation influence students' dialogic competences and attitudes towards societal differences? (2) To what extent can AI chatbots act as mediators that facilitate balanced, inclusive, and reflective dialogue in the classroom? (3) How do students perceive the role and added value of AI in supporting democratic discussion and consensus-building processes?

A mixed-methods research design will be employed with students aged 16–18 in Dutch secondary education. The intervention consists of a series of scenario-based lessons focusing on themes such as democracy, participation, and polarisation, enriched with AI-supported dialogue tools. Data collection includes pre- and post-intervention surveys measuring attitudinal change, structured classroom observations analysing interaction patterns, and focus group interviews capturing student perceptions and experiences.

As the study is currently in its design phase, expected findings point towards the potential of AI to scaffold dialogic processes by promoting perspective-taking, mitigating binary "us versus them" thinking, and supporting the co-construction of shared viewpoints. It is anticipated that the integration of AI-mediated dialogue within structured learning scenarios can strengthen students' democratic competences. The study concludes that such innovations are most effective when accompanied by explicit attention to ethical considerations, including transparency, agency, and critical AI literacy.



Oliver Holz and Vana Chiou

Exploring Teachers' and Students' Experiences in International Educational Mobility Programs

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of international educational mobility among secondary education students and teachers from Belgium (Flanders) and Greece. Four focus groups were conducted with secondary school teachers and students from both countries who had participated in international mobility activities. The data collected were analysed using thematic analysis. The results show both commonalities and differences among the participants' experiences from the two countries. Students from Belgium and Greece described their experiences of international educational mobility as transformative, which contributed to increased self-confidence, intercultural awareness, enhanced language skills, autonomy, and possible future educational and career opportunities abroad. However, Belgian students described their mobility as part of their school culture, while Greek participants highlighted the novelty and the emotional impact of these international experiences. Teachers from both countries recognised the professional benefits of observing different European education systems, exchanging practices, and building networks. At the same time, Greek teachers highlighted organisational and administrative challenges regarding international educational mobility, as well as their responsibility of accompanying students abroad. On the other hand, Belgian teachers paid more attention to sustainable internationalisation strategies and the importance of inclusive participation in mobility abroad. Overall, this study underscores the need for institutional support, inclusive policies, and sustainable strategies to support international educational mobility in secondary education across Europe.

Alena Jůvová and Ondřej Duda

Environmental and Outdoor Education in European Higher Education. Insights from the ECOSTYLE Project

Environmental education is increasingly recognised as a key domain for inclusive, transformative, and sustainability-oriented learning in higher education. In response to the educational imperatives of the European Green Deal and global sustainability agendas, the Erasmus+ project ECOSTYLE (Environmental and Outdoor Education Working Methods) aims to develop innovative approaches to environmental and outdoor education through transnational cooperation among European partner institutions.

The objective of this study is to analyse how environmental education is conceptualised and implemented within the ECOSTYLE project and to identify typical implementation scenarios for outdoor activities embedded in environmental education across diverse European contexts. The study addresses the following research questions:

(1) How is environmental education positioned in relation to outdoor and experiential learning within the ECOSTYLE framework?

(2) What types of implementation scenarios for outdoor activities can be identified across partner countries?

(3) How do national pedagogical traditions influence the integration of environmental and outdoor education in higher education?

The study adopts a qualitative review design grounded in the overall conceptual framework of the ECOSTYLE project. A comparative analysis was conducted of selected model approaches developed by partner institutions in Poland, the Czech Republic, Spain, and Italy. The analysis focused on the pedagogical role of environmental education, the function of outdoor and embodied learning methods, and their alignment with inclusivity and holistic learner development.

The findings reveal distinct nationally embedded pedagogical traditions shaping environmental and outdoor education: value-oriented and community-based approaches influenced by Christian educational philosophies in Poland; knowledge-oriented models linked to established outdoor education traditions in the Czech and Spanish contexts; and approaches grounded in embodied and situated learning in Italy. Across all contexts, strong connections between environmental education, non-formal learning, and the non-profit sector were identified.



Nia Khechikashvili and Oliver Holz

he study concludes that environmental education functions most effectively as an overarching pedagogical framework, while outdoor and experiential methods operate as enabling tools supporting cognitive, socio-emotional, embodied, and value-based dimensions of learning. The paper highlights the need for integrative, flexible, and culturally sensitive models of environmental and outdoor education that promote inclusivity, participation, and holistic development in higher education.

An Integrated Survival Kit for Academic Conference Organisers: Financial, Managerial and Marketing Frameworks for the IPIE conference

Running a small international academic conference is harder than it looks. The logistical complexity is obvious; less obvious is how quickly financial fragility, managerial improvisation, and underpowered marketing reinforce each other into a cycle that is difficult to break. This paper synthesises findings from three parallel bachelor's theses—each investigating one strategic domain of the International Perspectives in Education (IPIE) conference—into a single integrated framework. Drawing on 34 semi-structured interviews across the three studies, a survey of 50 students, and IPIE's actual 2024 financial accounts, we argue that financial sustainability, operational management, and marketing are not separate problems to be solved in sequence. They are interdependent, and that interdependence is where most of the practical leverage lies.

The headline findings: a €350 price-fairness ceiling holds across diverse attendee populations regardless of who pays the bill; the organisers' assumption that social media drives conference attendance is contradicted by what attendees actually report; and a single structural gap – the absence of a legal entity – is quietly blocking sponsorship acquisition, grant eligibility, and long-term financial planning all at once. A conceptual model and sequenced recommendations follow.



Ewa Arleta Kos

Teacher Burnout in a Systemic Educational Context: Emotional Strain in Teachers, Parents, and Students as an Interconnected Process

Teacher burnout is an increasingly significant challenge in contemporary education, affecting not only teachers' well-being but also the broader functioning of school communities. The objective of this paper is to explore the multidimensional nature of teacher burnout in early education and to consider its potential links with students' socio-emotional functioning and parental stress within a systemic perspective. The paper addresses the following research questions: (1) How can teacher burnout in early education be conceptualized within a socio-ecological framework? (2) What relationships may exist between teacher burnout and students' emotional and social functioning? (3) How might parental stress be connected to teacher burnout? (4) To what extent can burnout be understood as a systemic phenomenon involving teachers, students, and families? The methodology is based on a theoretical and analytical approach, supported by a review of current research literature and selected empirical indicators from educational practice. The paper integrates perspectives from psychology, pedagogy, and educational research to build a comprehensive conceptual model. The analysis suggests that teacher burnout should be understood not only as an individual condition but as part of a network of interrelated processes within the educational environment. The paper concludes by proposing directions for future empirical research and emphasizing the importance of systemic interventions that address the well-being of teachers, students, and parents simultaneously.

Labrini Siouli, Christos Parthenis and Paraskevi Eleftheriou

From underachievement to the acquisition of reading fluency: Critical interculturality for improving the literacy of students with an immigrant background

This study is grounded in critical interculturalism, which rejects one-dimensional explanations of students with migrant backgrounds and instead foregrounds inequalities and school practices that create unequal learning opportunities. The aim is to demonstrate that initial gaps in reading achievement do not reflect an individually attributed difficulty, but rather the effects of insufficient and unequal educational support—a condition that can be reversed when effective, equity-oriented interventions are implemented.

A quantitative design was employed with a sample of 400 fifth- and sixth-grade students attending Greek public primary schools. Reading skills were assessed through pre- and post-tests, while data on family context were collected (country/region of origin, parental educational level, and parental employment/occupational status). At baseline, performance differences were documented in favor of students without a migrant background, along with associations between reading outcomes and indicators of socio-economic vulnerability.

The instructional intervention (experimental group) was designed as an intercultural and inclusive literacy intervention, centered on cooperative learning and structured group work. In parallel, guided reading-comprehension strategies were implemented across three phases (pre-, during-, and post-reading), using higher-order questions and systematic evidence-based justification from the text. The intervention also integrated digital technologies and tools for information search and processing, idea organization, meaning-making and text production, and learning activities that enhanced participation and active engagement, whereas the control group followed regular instruction.



results showed that, after the intervention, students in the experimental group demonstrated statistically significant improvement in both reading fluency and reading comprehension compared with the control group. Additionally, students who attended supplementary (remedial) teaching also achieved significantly higher performance.

Overall, the findings support a critical-intercultural interpretation: “underachievement” is not the sole responsibility of learners but a product of conditions. When schools organize sustained, cooperative, technology-enhanced, and culturally responsive instruction, students who initially experience disadvantage can achieve substantial progress.

Donata Lisaitė

Still not sure what a task is? Why task design (still) matters for language teacher training and professionalisation

Defining, studying and assessing fluency in writing tasks remains a multi-dimensional and therefore commonly avoided challenge: writing fluency has been conceptualised as a process, a product or a combination of both (e.g., Abdel Latif, 2009; Chukharev-Hudilainen et al., 2019; Lintunen et al., 2020; Mutta, 2020). Another still even more complex issue is deciding on defining criteria of the construct task (Bruton, 2002; Piccardo and North, 2019; Van den Branden, 2022), with several available definitions of the concept (e.g., Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2003, 2009; Ellis & Shintani, 2014). The objective of the present paper is to propose an experimental research set-up on task design that can help (pre-/in-service) teachers decide which task design criteria are most effective in fostering writing fluency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) within a university setting. The research question underpinning the present article reads as follows: ‘What does the design of an experimental study into fluency in L2 writing tasks look like?’ To this end, I developed an experimental approach that involves an experimental and a control group (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 401). The intervention comprised a series of tests consisting of tasks which aim to satisfy Ellis and Shintani’s (2014) defining task criteria and non-tasks in which some of these criteria are excluded. I review and build on theoretical concepts pertaining to task-based language teaching (TBLT) and writing fluency to present key findings from the implementation of my task-design model in university course modules and stress the importance of the Gap criterion. The proposed model will help practitioners to create effective tasks, and ultimately advance language teacher training and lifelong learning.



Sinem Maden

Who Codes Our Aspirations?: AI, Symbolic Power, and the Making of 'Possible' Futures

This paper examines how AI-generated guidance participates in the coding of young people's aspirations within educational contexts. As artificial intelligence increasingly mediates career exploration and academic decision-making, it operates not merely as an informational tool but as a site of symbolic power. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework, the study conceptualizes aspiration as a socially structured horizon of possibility shaped by habitus and uneven distributions of economic, cultural, and social capital. From a Bourdieusian perspective, what students perceive as realistic, desirable, or attainable futures is never purely individual choice; it is conditioned by embodied dispositions and position within social fields. This paper argues that AI-generated advice—particularly in response to youth career inquiries—may encode and recirculate dominant middle-class dispositions such as rational planning, credential accumulation, managed risk-taking, and self-investment. Presented as neutral and universally applicable guidance, these norms function as subtle forms of symbolic power, naturalizing specific trajectories while marginalizing alternative life paths. Methodologically, the study employs qualitative discourse analysis of AI responses to education and career-related prompts. The analysis focuses on how "realism," "success" and "possibility" are constructed, and how responsibility for future-making is individualized while structural inequalities remain backgrounded. The findings suggest that AI both expands access to information and narrows the spectrum of legitimate aspiration by standardizing the language of ambition. In doing so, algorithmic systems contribute to the reproduction of socially stratified futures, shaping not only students' choices but the limits of what can be legitimately imagined as possible within education.

Anna Małolepszy

Asexual Perspectives on Domestic Partnerships in the Light of Educational and Family Experiences

At the intersection of family upbringing and identity formation lies a complex set of internalised values that fundamentally shape how individuals perceive interpersonal intimacy. This research, stemming from a study conducted for a Master's thesis, investigates the attitudes of asexual-identified individuals toward domestic partnerships, emphasizing the educational role of the family environment as a primary reference point. The study captures a nuanced understanding of relationships viewed primarily as spaces for emotional closeness (N=24). Within this framework, partnership is defined not by sexual attraction, but by a foundation of trust, honesty, equality, and mutual respect. Such findings reveal a significant discrepancy between traditional relational scripts and the actual needs of the asexual community, who prioritize safety and intellectual synergy. Consequently, the research highlights an urgent pedagogical necessity: the development of inclusive "equality education" capable of dismantling stereotypes and fostering respect for diverse identities. Creating such a supportive educational environment remains a pivotal challenge for contemporary social justice in Poland.

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative interpretive approach based on data collected during a broader Master's thesis project. The research sample consisted of 24 asexual-identified adults (N=24), ensuring gender diversity within the group (12 women, 7 men, and 5 individuals with non-binary or other gender identities). Data was gathered through structured individual online interviews. The research instrument was organized into five thematic sections:

1. Conceptualization and definition of one's own asexuality;
2. Lived experiences within domestic partnerships;
3. Hierarchy of preferred values in intimate relationships;
4. Retrospective analysis of the family upbringing process;
5. Specific values promoted within the primary family environment.



While the data collection followed a structured protocol to ensure comparability, the subsequent analysis was strictly qualitative, focusing on thematic coding to capture the subjective meanings participants attribute to their experiences.

The study demonstrates that for asexual individuals, the domestic partnership is defined by a shift from sexual intimacy to a foundation of equality, trust, and radical honesty. A key finding reveals the profound impact of familial socialization: while supportive upbringings allow for the replication of positive relational patterns, individuals from authoritarian or neglectful backgrounds often develop a compensatory need for relationships based on extreme openness and non-dominance. The research highlights a critical pedagogical gap: equality education must transcend the mere delivery of information about sexual diversity. It demands a systemic shift toward "education for equality"—a praxis-oriented approach where educators, counselors, and teachers move beyond theory to implement inclusive actions in both formal and informal settings. Ultimately, the study concludes that fostering social justice for asexual individuals requires dismantling hierarchical relational scripts and validating diverse emotional needs as equal to traditional norms.

Paul Marsden

Sensing, Seizing, Reconfiguring: Reframing graduate employability for a 4.0 economy

This paper introduces the Technology-driven Adaptive Capabilities (TDAC) framework, developed through PhD research at Leeds Trinity investigating how higher education can better prepare students for employment in rapidly evolving, technology-driven workplaces. The framework adapts Dynamic Capabilities Theory to an educational setting, reframing employability not as a fixed set of measurable competencies but as an ongoing, adaptive process. This challenges the static skills-gap models that currently dominate HE employability discourse and responds directly to the accelerating influence of technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, which are fundamentally reshaping expectations of graduate readiness and professional practice.

The study examines how employers define and prioritise adaptive capabilities and how a dynamic framework can provide graduates with a scaffold to help them build their careers effectively. It draws on employer surveys, semi-structured interviews with industry professionals and curriculum analysis to identify where provision can be improved in a regional 4.0 economy, at a moment of intense scrutiny over graduate employment outcomes.

Findings reveal a disconnect between employer expectations and educational provision, concentrated particularly around adaptive and transferable capabilities. Within a region facing structural skills challenges, this gap risks compounding existing inequalities in graduate outcomes.

The TDAC framework foregrounding three interrelated processes: sensing technological change, seizing emerging opportunities, and reconfiguring individual skillsets as organising principles for curriculum design. It offers a practical, theoretically grounded model for embedding adaptability within teaching and learning, with demonstrable potential to strengthen the alignment between higher education provision and the demands of a 4.0 economy.



Evan McCormick

Queer Activism for Children? Representations of Pride in LGBTQ+ Picturebooks

The potential of LGBTQ+ picturebooks to disrupt normative understandings of sexuality and gender is what leads to them being some of the most censored books globally. While all LGBTQ+ picturebooks can be assumed to have activist potential, an increasing number address queer activism more explicitly, with a direct focus on Pride parades and celebrations. This exploratory study aims to surface how these picturebooks navigate the activist and celebratory dimensions of Pride, addressing the question of 'How is Pride constructed and communicated in LGBTQ+ picturebooks, and with what implications for sharing queer activism with children?'. Through a queer theoretical lens, Critical Content Analysis is employed against a purposive sample of six Pride-centred picturebooks. A key finding is that, while the picturebooks offer opportunities to affirm and promote LGBTQ+ activist aims, there is inconsistency across the sample. In most books, Pride is depicted as a largely celebratory public parade or festive event, without explicit activist dimensions. Yet, those with a more celebratory focus may provide a departure from negative or traumatic representations of queer life often seen in LGBTQ+ picturebooks, a common critique across contemporary analyses. Moreover, how most books prioritise the child's experience of Pride is viewed as a strength, disrupting heteronormative discourses on childhood innocence. Nevertheless, some limitations are identified, including a lack of diversity in race, disability and class.

Antonios Mountouris and Andromachi Bouna Vaila

Educational Heterotopias: Special Education Structures in Provincial Greece – The Case of Volos

The present study aims to investigate the spatial and institutional organization of Special Education School Units (SMEAE in Greek) in Greece, conceptualizing the special school as a spatial phenomenon that produces social exclusions. The study examines how segregated educational structures function as 'educational heterotopias'. It further explores how their geographical positioning within the urban fabric reflects the biopolitical regulation of disability and the state's management of alterity. The methodology follows a qualitative theoretical synthesis and spatial analysis. The study utilizes the theoretical tools of Michel Foucault's "heterotopia" and Erving Goffman's "stigma" to analyze the institutional framework and urban mapping of the Nea Ionia district in Volos, drawing upon visual data and digital cartographic material derived from Google Maps. The analysis reveals a "geography of the margin," as special education structures in Volos are situated in direct proximity to sites of surveillance (military barracks, police headquarters) and social marginalization (a nearby Roma settlement). This spatial concentration of marginalized social groups and institutions at the city's periphery highlights the function of the special school as a "heterotopia of deviation" which, despite inclusive rhetoric, may ultimately reinforce the marginalization of students and the status of disability. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that institutional segregation perpetuates social stigma. Finally, it underscores the need for educational policies that consider not only the educational needs of students with disabilities but also the social and symbolic dimensions of their education.



Alfred Mutanga and Caroline Nyasha Mutanga

From Clickstream to Curriculum Intelligence: Advanced SQL and CTE-Driven Learning Analytics in Moodle LMS for Evidence-Informed Teaching and Learning

Learning Management Systems (LMS) generate large volumes of clickstream data, yet these data are frequently underexploited for informing sustainable teaching and learning practices. This study examines how advanced Structured Query Language (SQL) techniques, specifically Common Table Expressions (CTEs), can be leveraged to transform Moodle LMS interaction data into curriculum intelligence that supports evidence-informed and sustainable educational decision-making. The objective of the study is to demonstrate a transparent, scalable, and institutionally controlled learning analytics approach that reduces dependence on proprietary and opaque analytics solutions.

The study addresses three research questions: (1) How can advanced SQL and CTE-based queries be used to model longitudinal student engagement, assessment behaviour, and learning progression within Moodle LMS? (2) What pedagogically meaningful insights can be derived from query-driven analytics to support sustainable assessment design, feedback practices, and student success? (3) How can SQL-driven learning analytics contribute to sustainable futures in education by enabling explainable, cost-effective, and ethically grounded data practices?

A design-based case study methodology was adopted at a public university in Southern Africa. Moodle database tables capturing logs, activities, assessments, and grades were analysed using layered and recursive CTEs to construct engagement trajectories, assessment interaction sequences, and early-risk indicators. Analytical outputs were iteratively validated against course designs and instructional interventions.

The findings demonstrate that SQL-driven analytics can reliably identify at-risk learning patterns, assessment misalignment, and ineffective feedback timing, while maintaining full data transparency and institutional ownership. The study concludes that advanced SQL and CTE-based learning analytics provide a sustainable foundation for evidence-informed teaching and learning and offer a critical data architecture for future integration of explainable and ethical AI in education.



Neslihan Onder–Ozdemir and Anca Gâță

Guidelines and Best Practices in Neology in Educational and Pedagogical contexts for Innovation and Sustainability in Teaching and Learning Beyond Borders

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, language is a medium of communication and also an active driver of pedagogical transformation. Terms, such as AI literacy, hybrid pedagogy, microlearning, global citizenship, and inclusive learning, are linguistic innovations and educational neologisms that can help reflect new teaching practices, technological shifts, and cross-border learning realities. However, to our knowledge, there is currently no shared, multilingual, or interdisciplinary methodology for systematically capturing, analyzing, and tracking these emerging terms across linguistic, cultural, and educational contexts worldwide. By neology in educational and pedagogical contexts, we refer here to linguistic innovations in education (research), more or less recent educational terminology, i.e. terms and phrases recently used and coined in the field of education to point to practices, processes, actions, activities, etc., and not to the use of neologisms in teaching practices and education. This round table showcases neology in educational/pedagogical contexts as a lens for understanding and shaping educational innovation. Drawing on the ENEOLI (WG2 Task 3), supported and funded by the European Union within the framework of Horizon Europe, under the European Cooperation in Science and Technology Programme, we introduce guidelines and best practices for the extraction, description, analysis, and follow-up of educational neologisms. These guidelines bring together corpus linguistics, terminology studies, computational tools, and sociolinguistic insights. By establishing a shared methodology and a collaborative network that ensures valid, reliable, and methodologically consistent neology research, ENEOLI enables the development of sustainable multilingual resources, including terminology databases, digital corpora, educational lexicons, and open-access neology repositories.

This neology-based framework supports innovation in curriculum design, teacher training, policy development, and inclusive communication in multilingual learning environments across disciplines. It aims to foster borderless collaboration, enhance conceptual clarity, and contribute to sustainable futures in education, where language evolution is not only observed but also systematically understood, shared, and taught.



Judit Orgoványi-Gajdos

What do teachers say about students' attitude toward their subject?

Studies on students' attitudes towards the subjects have become increasingly popular worldwide since the 1970s. The results of attitude researches show a similar picture: humanities, computer science and foreign languages are typically at the top of the ranking, while mathematics and natural science subjects are in the second half of the list. (Csíkos 2012, Chrappán & Malmos 2016, Kurniawan et al. 2019, Czető 2022). Students' attitudes towards a subject are influenced by many factors. Researches primarily emphasises the teacher's personality, helpfulness and the way they organize their lessons. (Osborne et al. 2003, Chrappán 2017, Borsodi 2021). The main pedagogical methods of science education are still the classical methods (demonstration, explanation, questioning, modelling), which are more suitable for conveying academic knowledge (Schlachter & Teperics 2022). More innovative methods (group work, discussions, games, research-based learning) that allow for more holistic thinking, interdisciplinarity, and cooperative work are less common in these subjects (Falus et al. 2001). The presentation points out the main results of a teacher research (N=140) conducted in 2023 in Hungary (Heves County) with special attention to teachers' view of students' attitude towards their subject and its connection with their methodological culture. The research sample consisted of teachers grades 5-8 in four subsamples: biology teachers, chemistry teachers, physics teachers, and mathematics teachers. The main research question was: What is the relationship between mathematics and science teachers' views on students' attitude towards their subject and the type of teaching methods that are used? The main finding were that teachers who build the learning-teaching process on research-based or project-based methods that focus on student activity report a much more positive student attitude towards their subject.

Henny Oude Maatman

Redesigning Teaching for the 21st Century: The Next Education Workforce

Schools across Europe face increasing challenges, including teacher shortages, educator burnout, and a growing demand for personalized learning. The aim of this work is to present the Next Education Workforce (NEW) initiative developed by educators at Arizona State University's Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation. This model reimagines how teaching is organized by replacing the traditional "one teacher, one classroom" structure with collaborative, team-based staffing. The initiative aims to make the teaching profession more sustainable by reducing isolation, distributing workload, and offering new career development pathways without requiring educators to leave classroom practice. Such changes are particularly urgent as schools struggle with staffing shortages, increasing diversity in student learning needs, and limited opportunities for teacher collaboration within traditional systems. In the Netherlands, Saxion University of Applied Sciences collaborates with Arizona State University to introduce and adapt the NEW framework to the Dutch educational context. Several primary schools are currently piloting team-based staffing, supported by professional development, coaching, and research initiatives. Additionally, third-year Saxion education students can choose a 30-ECTS minor focused on innovative ways of organizing education based on NEW principles. Early results from schools implementing the NEW model in the United States indicate promising outcomes, including reduced teacher turnover, improved teacher support, higher student engagement, and increased academic progress. The model also provides more opportunities for professional specialization and career advancement. Overall, the Next Education Workforce represents a potentially transformative approach to educational staffing, emphasizing collaboration, specialization, and shared responsibility to better support both teachers and students.



Marina Pappa

Poetry and Songs in European Languages: Pedagogical Uses of Theodorakis, Hadjidakis, and the George Moustaki compositions in Language and History Teaching

This study explores the pedagogical use of poetry and songs within the framework of intercultural dialogue, focusing on emblematic works of modern Greek and French music. In particular, it examines Mikis Theodorakis', Georges Moustakis' and Manos Hadjidakis's songs, as a cross-cultural reference point. The research emphasizes song adaptations and transcriptions as educational tools for teaching foreign languages and history. The fact that songs and poems have rhythm and rhyme imposes specific approaches concerning the presentation in another language; it does not limit the foreign language version in word for word translation. For instance, the song *Ta pedia tou Pirea* by Manos Hadjidakis (*Les Enfants du Pirée* - in french) in the French version presents different phrases and words in certain verses. By presenting the initial song and the adaptations of the lyrics in other languages, we investigate the way there is a balanced approach between meaning, rhythm, rhyme and the way the original is perceived in comparison to the versions in other languages. In prose, there are fewer limitations in the presentation of meaning and there is no rhyme, so word for word translation is often possible, with no need to proceed to adaptation strategies, as it is often necessary and imperative in songs and poems. We highlight the contribution of songs in the educational framework and their role concerning the development of linguistic competencies and intercultural awareness. Special attention is given to Mediterranean identity as a shared cultural framework that facilitates dialogue between cultures.

The main question concerns the characteristics of the transcription and the most effective way to use the artistic material as source of information about modern history and pedagogical purposes. The identification of the transcriptions and adaptations of the songs through languages reveals the way the work is presented to speakers of different languages and the information that is highlighted each time, taking into consideration rhythm.

We present the versions that are widely known, analyse the way adaptations were made and the wealth in the information presented as source of intercultural awareness for educational purposes, as songs indicate historical milestones. Authentic artistic material is a preferential source for educational purposes especially in language teaching.



Sławomir Pasikowski

Conditions Of Academic Education In The Field Of Statistics And Research Methods: Assessing Students' Attitudes And Preferences

The objective of this presentation is to examine the conditions of academic education in statistics within the social sciences, with a particular focus on students' attitudes toward statistical learning and their implications for teaching practice. The study addresses the following research questions: (1) What profiles of attitudes toward statistics can be identified among university students? (2) How are these profiles related to students' fields of study and prior experiences? (3) To what extent can attitudes toward statistics be reliably measured using validated psychometric tools? The study draws on two complementary empirical investigations. The first involved 541 students from diverse academic programs and applied cluster analysis (k-means method) to identify distinct profiles of attitudes toward statistics. The second study validated the Polish version of the Survey of Attitudes Toward Statistics (SATS-36) using confirmatory factor analysis on a sample of 423 social sciences students, confirming its six-factor structure with minor modifications. Reliability and criterion validity were established through associations with mathematical achievement, self-assessed abilities, and prior experience with statistics. The findings reveal that students' attitudes toward statistics form differentiated profiles that are not strictly determined by disciplinary affiliation, mathematical competence, or declared interests. This challenges common assumptions about the determinants of statistical learning difficulties. The validated SATS-36 provides a robust tool for diagnosing these attitudes in the Polish context.

The conclusions highlight the need for more nuanced, student-centered approaches to teaching statistics, recognizing the complexity of attitudinal factors and their role in shaping learning processes and educational outcomes.



Justyna Ratkowska-Pasikowska

Beyond Learning: Education as an Initiatory Process of Biographical Transformation

This presentation proposes a reconfiguration of educational experience through the lens of initiation. Drawing on narrative-biographical interviews conducted within a broader research project on initiation in education (n=30), it explores how individuals retrospectively construct moments of transformation that exceed the boundaries of formal schooling. The study is guided by the following research questions: How do individuals narrate experiences they perceive as transformative? In what sense can these experiences be understood as educational? And what makes them initiatory in structure? Methodologically, the study is based on qualitative, narrative-biographical interviews analysed through an interpretative approach informed by grounded theory procedures, with a particular focus on processes of meaning-making emerging in the narratives. Rather than understanding education as the acquisition of knowledge or competencies, the analysis shifts attention toward experiences that disrupt continuity, destabilise prior meanings, and lead to a reorganisation of the self. These moments—often linked to loss, relational crisis, professional change, therapeutic processes, or existential questioning—emerge as initiatory in nature. The empirical material suggests that such experiences function as turning points in which individuals renegotiate their identities, values, and modes of being in the world. Importantly, these processes are not confined to institutional educational settings; instead, they unfold across diverse life contexts, pointing to education as a dispersed and deeply embodied process. The presentation outlines selected forms of initiatory experiences, including relational, crisis-induced, vocational, and spiritual transformations. Across these forms, a shared dynamic becomes visible: the passage from disruption through liminality toward the reconstitution of meaning.

By foregrounding initiation as a key analytical category, this perspective contributes to a broader rethinking of education—not as transmission, but as transformation. It invites a shift in focus from what education is to where it begins—and whether it might start precisely at the moment when continuity breaks.



Necdet Tuna Şahsuvarođlu

Examining Special Education Pre-service Teachers Self-Efficacy Perceptions Toward Differentiated Instruction

This study is planned to examine the self-efficacy perceptions of special education pre-service teachers regarding differentiated instruction in the spring semester of the 2025–2026 academic year. Differentiated instruction, which is based on the flexible organization of the instructional process according to students' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles, holds a significant place in inclusive and special education practices. In this context, identifying the self-efficacy perceptions of special education pre-service teachers related to this approach during their pre-service training period is considered important for evaluating the instructional adaptation and individualization components of teacher education programs. The research is designed based on the descriptive survey model within the quantitative research paradigm. The study group is planned to consist of pre-service teachers enrolled in a special education teacher education undergraduate program at a university. A Personal Information Form developed by the researcher will be used to determine participants' demographic and academic characteristics, and the Differentiated Instruction Self-Efficacy Scale, for which validity and reliability studies have been conducted, will be employed as the data collection tool to assess self-efficacy perceptions regarding differentiated instruction. During the data analysis process, in addition to descriptive statistics, comparative analyses are planned to examine whether self-efficacy perceptions differ according to variables such as grade level, practicum experience, and coursework related to inclusive education. The study is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to understanding special education pre-service teachers' professional readiness for differentiated instruction and to reviewing the content and practice components of teacher education programs.

Nektaria (Nora) Sakkoula and Antonis Lionarakis

Rethinking Openness in Distance Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: A Critical Pedagogy Approach

This article is part of doctoral research and aims to investigate the relationship between Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Openness in Distance Education, highlighting both the possibilities and contradictions that arise from its use. The study adopts the form of a narrative literature review with a qualitative orientation, utilizing a PRISMA-type process for identifying and selecting sources for transparency reasons, without comprising a typical systematic review. The theoretical framework is drawn mainly from Critical Pedagogy, while approaches from the Sociology of Education are also utilized. At the same time, institutional and policy material from international organizations such as UNESCO and the OECD, as well as contemporary scientific publications on AI and education, are incorporated in order to shed light on the social, value-based, and pedagogical dimensions of openness in relation to the exploitation of AI. The findings show that AI can act as a lever for enhancing openness, expanding access, personalization, and learning support, especially in distance learning environments. At the same time, however, it emerges as a field of obstacles and contradictions, as it is linked to inequalities, algorithmic biases, surveillance, commodification of knowledge, and restriction of pedagogical autonomy. Thus, AI appears capable of both expanding and limiting openness, depending on the social, institutional, and pedagogical context in which it is integrated. The study concludes that the exploration of AI in Distance Education requires critical, value-based, and sociological approach, with the aim of achieving a pedagogically grounded and socially just integration of AI that will strengthen—rather than weaken—openness in education.



Antonia Samara

Comparing communication and collaboration competences across Competence Frameworks

Since the beginning of the 21st century, international lifelong learning discourse has been closely connected with competences as sets of knowledge, skills and dispositions. EU and OECD as main agents have provided sets of competences mainly in the projects of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning and DeSeCo respectively. During the last decade, the development of elaborated competence frameworks that project aspects of the lifelong learning subject has become a highly expanded practice across international organizations. Furthermore, national agents have proceeded to form their own competence frameworks, as a response to the international trend.

Communication and collaboration competences intersect most of these frameworks as transversal competences. In our paper, we attempt to comparatively research how communication and collaboration competences appear and evolve across competence frameworks in order to highlight convergencies and divergencies, as well as investigate the evolution of the relative discourse. Our theoretical background is based on comparative education and international education governance, and especially focus in the transfer of discourse. We apply content analysis and use as texts the OECD DeSeCo and Global Competence framework, EU Key Competences and JRC produced Entrecomp, Lifecomp, Digcomp and Greencomp, as well the Life & Career Skills framework produced by the Greek National Organisation for the certification of qualification & vocational guidance.

Małgorzata Słowik

Trauma-Informed School – Experiences of Adoptive Parents and Foster Caregivers

Children in adoptive and foster care systems often experience relational trauma, disrupted attachment, neglect, and adverse childhood experiences that significantly affect their emotional regulation, behavior, and school functioning. In many cases, these experiences co-occur with neurodevelopmental difficulties, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). A trauma-informed school approach emphasizes understanding children's behaviors in the context of their experiences and developmental needs rather than through punishment or deficit-based interpretations.

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of adoptive parents and foster caregivers regarding school cooperation and schools' sensitivity to trauma-related needs. The study involved 38 adoptive parents and foster caregivers of children with FASD. Data were collected between February and March 2026 using an original online questionnaire combining quantitative and qualitative elements. The study focused on school-family collaboration, teachers' responses to challenging behaviors, perceived safety, and educational adaptations.

The findings reveal significant barriers, including limited teacher knowledge about trauma and FASD, insufficient educational adjustments, and punitive responses to children's behaviors. At the same time, respondents identified supportive practices such as calm de-escalation, individualized approaches, and effective cooperation with families. The results highlight the importance of emotional safety, predictability, and relationship-based educational practices in supporting children with trauma experiences.

The presentation discusses the need for trauma-informed education and stronger collaboration between schools and families in creating responsive and inclusive educational environments.



Tom Smits

Translanguaging in Task-Based Academic Writing: How International Students Use Multilingual Resources for Meaning-Making

The role of learners' first languages (L1s) in additional (second/foreign) language education has historically been viewed with scepticism and associated with linguistic and/or cognitive limitations (e.g., García & Li, 2014). However, recent research highlights the benefits of leveraging learners' L1 and other linguistic resources in the development of bilingual and multilingual competence (e.g., Gort & Sembiante, 2015; Lasagabaster & García; Li, 2018), with translanguaging emerging as a transformative approach to language teaching and challenging traditional monolingual norms (e.g., Van den Branden, 2022). Empirical studies examining how learners' multilingual resources are integrated into additional language education remain relatively limited. In particular, studies explicitly linking translanguaging practices with task-based language teaching are scarce (Lisaitė & Smits, 2022). Addressing the need to explore how multilingual writers draw on diverse linguistic repertoires in an academic context and how their linguistic backgrounds shape meaning-making strategies (e.g., Kaufhold, 2018), this presentation has the objective of examining natural translanguaging practices of international students by answering the RQ: How do international higher-education students with diverse linguistic backgrounds translanguage when producing written task outputs in English? From a methodological viewpoint, Moment Analysis (Li, 2011; Li, 2022) will be introduced as a framework for studying the translanguaging practices of international students (N= 9) at Kaunas University of Technology. By incorporating a dynamic perspective on language use, I will highlight how translanguaging can function as a communicative resource in academic writing of non-English speakers.

The findings focus on identifying which translanguaging strategies most effectively support meaning-making: next to idiosyncratic calques, these strategies appear to be approximation and code switching. By examining translanguaging practices within task-based contexts, this study contributes to current debates on inclusive and innovative language pedagogy in internationalized higher education. It also highlights the pedagogical potential of integrating multilingual resources into writing tasks.



Elpida Tamvaka and Vana Chiou

Representations of the Refugee Child in Preschool Children's Literature. A Critical Literature Review

In the context of the intensifying global refugee crisis, children's literature emerges as a significant field for shaping meanings around forced displacement, identity, and belonging. The present study aims to explore the representations of refugee children in preschool children's literature and to identify the dominant representational patterns as well as the emerging trends. A systematic literature review was conducted in the Scopus and Web of Science databases, covering the period from 2015 to 2026. Five studies meeting the inclusion criteria were analysed using thematic analysis within an interpretive qualitative framework. The findings indicate that representations focusing on victimization, vulnerability, and limited agency remain dominant, often simplifying the complexity of the refugee experiences. The experiences of children with a refugee background are frequently portrayed as homogeneous and detached from their historical and geographical contexts. Simultaneously, emerging representational approaches highlight children's resilience, agency, adaptability and more complex identities. However, these perspectives remain comparatively limited within the existing preschool children's literature. Overall, the findings underscore the need for more multidimensional and critically grounded representations that better reflect the complexity, socio-political context, and diverse identities of children with a refugee background in preschool literature.

Kyriaki Tasiou and Eleni N. Nikolaou

Parents' Experiences with Assessment and Support Services for Children with ADHD

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most prevalent neurodevelopmental conditions of childhood, affecting children's learning, emotional regulation, and social functioning. The assessment and support process for children with ADHD requires collaboration among families, schools, and mental health services; however, parents' experiences highlight substantial gaps and challenges within this system.

This study explores the experiences and perceptions of parents of children with ADHD regarding the assessment process, counseling guidance, and collaboration with institutional services and professionals. The data derive from qualitative interviews with eight parents of children who have been diagnosed with ADHD, conducted in Greece, which were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed a broad spectrum of experiences: from partial satisfaction and acknowledgment of professionals' efforts to a strong sense of insufficient institutional support, inconsistent information, and a need for more comprehensive and coordinated intervention. Additionally, parental self-advocacy emerged as a compensatory mechanism for systemic shortcomings, while the positive contribution of individual professionals and specific school structures was noted as beneficial in improving collaboration.

Overall, the results underscore the need for established and systematically organized parent-counseling support structures, as well as strengthened collaboration between schools, families, and mental health services. Parental empowerment and intersectoral cooperation constitute critical prerequisites for promoting the psychosocial well-being of children with ADHD.



Sanja Tatalović Vorkapić

Exploring structural and process quality of early childhood transitions

Children's transitions from home to nursery or kindergarten, along with subsequent adjustment in institutional settings, frequently constitute demanding phases in children's early development, shaped by a complex interplay of interpersonal and intrapersonal influences. Additionally, having in mind the importance of two key aspects of the quality in early care and education, i.e. structural and process quality, it is very important to explore the possibilities of ensuring the continuity of care based on this OECD ECEC quality framework. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to analyse the underlying mechanisms of structural and process quality of early childhood transitions and adjustment in kindergarten. A 37-item survey was administered to a sample of 77 early childhood educators, who did the self-ratings using a 5-point Likert scale. Descriptive findings reveal strong agreement with items highlighting educators' pivotal role in facilitating children's adjustment, particularly through organizing parent meetings, offering relevant information, and providing guidance during the initial transition period. In general, respondents expressed agreement with the majority of the items (N = 29), indicating the presence of relatively well-established structural supports and collaborative practices, and the same level of importance of these both quality aspects. Moderate agreement was observed in relation to collaboration between early childhood educators and professional support staff, preparatory transition activities prior to enrolment, and perceptions of governmental investment in early childhood education and parenting support. Correlational analyses further demonstrated statistically significant associations between transition and adjustment quality, socio-demographic characteristics, and the examined quality aspects.

The determined results are interpreted within the framework of the Ecological-Dynamic Model of Transitions and the broader national educational context. The study contributes evidence-based recommendations aimed at strengthening transition and adjustment practices in early childhood education focusing on structural and process quality, which are being further developed within the ongoing national project Adjust_Well.



Sanja Tatković, Martina Mavrinac and Sanja Smojver-Ažić

The Moderating Role of Digital Self-Efficacy in the Relationship between Digital Stress and Depressive Symptoms among Teachers

The integration of digital technology into educational settings has substantially affected teachers' work and increased the need for continuous development of digital skills to meet growing digital demands. Higher digital competence and stronger perceived digital self-efficacy may reduce the burden associated with demanding technologies and may play a protective role in the relationship between digital stress and psychological symptoms.

The aim of this study was to examine whether digital self-efficacy moderates the relationship between digital stress and depressive symptoms among teachers, while controlling for age, gender, and ICT education. More specifically, the question was whether the strength of the association between digital stress and depressive symptoms differs depending on teachers' level of digital self-efficacy.

The study included 870 teachers (78.4% women) aged 22 to 68 years ($M = 45.39$, $SD = 10.37$). Data were collected using the Short Digital Stressor Scale (Riedl et al., 2023), a self-report scale of digital self-efficacy, and the DASS-21 questionnaire for the assessment of depressive symptoms (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Moderation analysis was conducted using Model 1 in the PROCESS macro v5.0 for SPSS 26 (Hayes, 2022).

The results confirmed that overall digital stress is a significant predictor of depressive symptoms. A statistically significant interaction between digital stress and digital self-efficacy was also found. These findings support the assumption that digital self-efficacy moderates the relationship between overall digital stress and depressive symptoms. Teachers reporting higher digital stress and lower digital self-efficacy exhibited higher level of depressive symptoms.

Higher self-efficacy may help teachers appraise digital demands as challenges rather than threats. The findings highlight the importance of targeted professional development programmes to strengthen teachers' digital competencies and digital self-efficacy, in order to protect their mental health in increasingly digitalised educational environments.



Alexandra Theodorou and Dimosthenis Daskalakis

Teachers' Perceptions and Expectations in Secondary Education, Social Factors, and Student Achievement

This proposal examines how secondary education teachers form expectations for their students, focusing on the influence of social factors such as ethnic group, socio-economic status, and gender. The study aims to understand the mechanisms through which teachers shape their perceptions of students' abilities and potential, as well as how these perceptions are reflected into teaching practices. The hypothesis of the study is that teachers form their expectations according to stereotypes based on social factors, particularly ethnic background, socio-economic status, and gender. The research questions are the following: What are teachers' expectations regarding students from ethnic minority and low socio-economic backgrounds? Do teachers maintain different expectations for boys compared to girls? How do teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards these groups influence their educational practices, and how are these expectations reflected in everyday teacher-student interactions? A detailed analysis of the theoretical framework is being made, as of the expectation formation and similar studies that have explored the connection between expectations and social factors. The research follows a qualitative research method, combining data from interviews with teachers and observations of classroom teaching practices. Through this approach, it seeks to capture both the declared attitudes of teachers and the practices they implement in everyday teaching, with particular emphasis on the dynamics of teacher-student interactions.

The study found that while secondary teachers explicitly endorse equality and high expectations for all students, classroom observations reveal subtle but consistent micro-differences in interaction, feedback, attention, and participation linked to ethnic background, socio-economic status, and gender. These patterns indicate the presence of largely unconscious stereotypes and partial confirmation of the hypothesis, highlighting a gap between declared beliefs and enacted practices, with expectations shaped indirectly and contributing to educational inequalities through self-fulfilling mechanisms in everyday classroom interaction.



Eleni Tragoulia, Theodosia Michelakaki, Vasilios Strogilos and Maria Georgiadi

The use of student friendly adapted research tools to raise the voice of students with diverse needs to promote inclusive practices in schools

Student voice pedagogy increasingly recognises the need for methodological approaches that extend meaningful participation beyond verbally articulate and neurotypically confident learners. Yet, conventional consultation mechanisms such as written questionnaires, standard focus groups, and formal interviews routinely exclude students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and those from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This paper addresses this gap by presenting the design, implementation, and outcomes of Student-Friendly Adapted Tools (SFAT) within a participatory research project conducted across two mainstream primary schools in Greece. Drawing on frameworks of intercultural justice and participatory pedagogy, the study engaged 18 students from three groups, typically developing students, students with SEND, and students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds educated in 5th and 6th grade. Over a 20-month period, a purpose-designed interactive website enriched with symbols, images, and multimodal communication pathways enabled students to participate meaningfully in individual interviews and focus groups. Students were invited to describe their teaching experiences, evaluate the provision of human resources in their schools, and propose improvements to co-teaching, differentiated instruction, and collaborative learning practices. The findings demonstrate that SFAT, delivered through a symbol-enriched digital platform, effectively facilitated authentic student participation across all three groups, ensuring language comprehension and independent engagement.

Critically, the study reveals a significant absence of adapted, differentiated methodological tools in existing student voice research, underscoring the ethical imperative to align participation methods with students' communicative needs. The paper concludes with a practical guide for educators and researchers seeking to implement inclusive, student-centred research methodologies that can genuinely capture and amplify the voices of all learners.



Biljana Trajkovski and Sanja Tatalović Vorkapić

Analysing kinesiological play in toddlers: Implication for transition facilitation

Play is an integral and indispensable component of early childhood education. Children have an inherent need for continuous movement and play, which simultaneously represents the most effective means of supporting holistic development and learning. A wide variety of kinesiological play and activities enables children to develop motor skills, which directly contributes to their overall social and emotional well-being. Considering the challenges associated with promoting kinesiological activities in early childhood, arising from developmental characteristics and the separation from primary caregivers, it is essential to actively encourage and implement such activities. In this context, kinesiological activities may serve as a means of facilitating children's transition from the family home to nursery settings, as well as supporting their adjustment within these settings. Accordingly, the primary objective of this study was to analyse the development of motor skills in early childhood through fifteen motor tasks. The study was conducted on a sample of ten children aged two to three years in a single kindergarten. The children were assessed at the beginning of the program (initial measurement) and at the end of the program (final measurement) over a period of three months by three evaluators. During this period, the children participated in exercise sessions three times per week, each lasting 20 minutes. The results indicate statistically significant differences across all variables, thereby confirming the hypothesis that children would significantly improve their motor skills over the three-month period. A key implication of this research is that the children were fully engaged and readily accepted the kinesiological activities during the adaptation period. Furthermore, the proposed program provides a guideline for designing kinesiological activities aimed at facilitating adjustment to nursery environments.

Sofia Tsatsou–Nikolouli

The impact of artificial intelligence on creative writing: The case of the University of Western Macedonia in Greece

This paper explores the impact of artificial intelligence on creative writing and its teaching within the school setting. The research sample consisted of 93 students enrolled in the Master's Program in Creative Writing at the University of Western Macedonia, who completed an online evaluation questionnaire. This was a structured, ad hoc questionnaire consisting of 24 statements, which was created after studying the relevant literature with the aim of investigating perceptions about the use of artificial intelligence in creative writing. The results highlighted the mainly positive impact of artificial intelligence in various areas, such as enhancing imagination and originality, forming a different perspective, organizing text, creating content, language use, and improving expression. However, concerns were also raised, such as the possibility of perpetuating stereotypes, the loss of authorial authenticity, and excessive dependence on artificial intelligence. This research lays the groundwork for understanding views on the integration of artificial intelligence into creative writing, while highlighting areas that need further exploration, such as studying the views of school students, the design and implementation of teaching scenarios that utilize artificial intelligence, and the qualitative evaluation of texts produced with or without its use.



Assimina Tsibidaki, Aikaterini Vrachna and Ioanna Seiti

The benefits of utilizing soft skills for general and special education teachers, students, and the modern school

This study examines the benefits of utilizing soft skills for teachers, students, students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and the broader school environment. A qualitative research design was employed, using semi-structured interviews with 240 teachers working in diverse educational settings. The purpose of the study was to investigate how educators understand and value the contribution of soft skills to teaching, learning, and the overall school climate. Data was analyzed using a mixed approach that combined qualitative thematic analysis with descriptive quantitative analysis. The findings revealed a wide range of perceived benefits. For teachers, soft skills were found to support personal and professional development, enhance job satisfaction, facilitate more effective social interactions, and improve daily instructional practices. Teachers also identified multiple benefits for students, noting that soft skills promote personality development and socialization, strengthen school adjustment, prepare learners for active citizenship, boost self-esteem, and enrich the overall educational experience. For students with SEND, soft skills were associated with greater social inclusion, personal growth, more effective learning processes, increased confidence, and more active engagement in school life. At the school level, educators emphasized that soft skills contribute to overall school development, help foster a positive and supportive climate, and enhance the effectiveness of teaching practices. Overall, the findings underscore the multifaceted importance of soft skills in improving teaching quality, supporting student development, promoting inclusion, and strengthening the modern school environment.

Assimina Tsibidaki, Ioanna Seiti and Aikaterini Vrachna

Special educators' resilience in association with their professional and personal characteristics

Resilience has emerged as a critical construct in the social sciences, particularly in professions exposed to high emotional and organizational demands. This study explores the levels of resilience among special education teachers in preschool and primary school settings in the Dodecanese region of Greece and examines how resilience relates to their demographic, professional and personal characteristics. Quantitative research design was employed with a sample of 100 special educators. Data was collected through a self-report socio-demographic questionnaire and the Multidimensional Teacher Resilience Scale (MTRS), a validated tool measuring multiple dimensions of teacher resilience. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, reliability indicators, correlation analyses and non-parametric comparison tests. Findings show that special educators demonstrate high levels of resilience, supported by strong collegial networks, positive professional relationships and personal attributes such as self-confidence, self-efficacy and commitment to continuous learning. Moreover, age, familiarity with the concept of resilience and prior training were positively associated with higher resilience scores. Overall, the study highlights the pivotal role of both individual strengths and supportive school environments in sustaining resilience among special educators. The results underline the necessity of targeted professional development, ongoing training and institutional policies that foster teacher wellbeing, ultimately contributing to more stable, effective and inclusive educational settings.



Maria Tzotzou

Goal Setting in In-Service Teacher Training (INSET) within the Context of 21st-Century Challenges: A Mixed-Method Study

The aim of the present empirical study is to investigate teachers' perceptions and views regarding goal setting in in-service teacher training (INSET) within the context of 21st-century educational challenges, as reflected in international literature and official reports of supranational organizations. Specifically, it examines whether INSET goal setting (a) takes into account and responds to teachers' needs, (b) fosters the development of teachers' contemporary skills and competences, (c) addresses the challenges of modern public schooling, and (d) meets teachers' expectations or requires revision. To this end, a mixed-method research approach was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Quantitative data were collected via an online closed-ended questionnaire and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 26. Qualitative data were obtained through individual semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic content analysis. The target population consisted of in-service primary education teachers (PE70 specialization) working as permanent or substitute staff in public primary schools in the region of Aetolia-Acarnania, Western Greece. The quantitative sample included 290 teachers, while qualitative data were collected from 10 participants. The findings indicate convergence between quantitative and qualitative results, highlighting the need to revise and continuously update INSET goal setting. Key findings include the systematic identification of teachers' training needs, alignment of INSET goal setting with contemporary public school realities, the development of teachers' 21st-century skills, and the effective management of emerging challenges in public education. INSET goal-setting revision is essential to enhance teachers' professional empowerment and requires their active involvement in identifying and redefining training priorities within a decentralized framework.

Konstantinos Vagiatis and Anastasia Zissi

Loneliness and Academic Achievement in Adolescents: The Role of Sense of Community in the School

Loneliness in adolescence is an increasingly frequent phenomenon and is related to the way students experience their daily life at school. The sense of community in the school is used as a conceptual tool for understanding social experiences in the school environment and has been linked to students' psychosocial well-being and academic achievement. The primary aim of this study was to explore the associations between peer-related loneliness, the sense of school community and academic achievement and to further examining the potential mediating role of the sense of school community in the relationship between loneliness and academic achievement. The sample consisted of 503 lower secondary school students (aged 13 to 14) drawn from 20 public schools in Thessaloniki, Greece, through a process of stratified random sampling. Data analysis involved Pearson correlations, multiple linear regression and mediation analysis using structural equation modelling with cluster-robust standard errors at the school-unit level. The results showed a negative and statistically significant association between peer-related loneliness and both sense of school community and academic achievement. Sense of school community was positively and statistically significantly associated with academic achievement. In the multivariate model, loneliness did not show an independent effect on school achievement when sense of school community was included. Mediation analysis indicated full mediation, suggesting that the relationship between loneliness and academic achievement is explained through students' perceptions of the school environment as a community. Overall, the findings indicate that the school acts as a social context that influences the association between loneliness and academic achievement and point to the need for interventions that strengthen inclusion, participation and positive relationships in the school environment.



Muntaha Waseem

A Comparative Analysis of Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher's Knowledge, Attitude, and Self-Efficacy Towards Climate Change Education in Pakistan

Pakistan is among the world's most climate-vulnerable nations; despite growing international emphasis on Climate Change Education (CCE), empirical evidence on Pakistani educators' preparedness remains critically limited. This study examined and compared CCE knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy between pre-service and in-service teachers in Karachi, Sindh, and identified institutional and resource-related barriers to integration. The research employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, comparative design grounded in the positivist paradigm and informed by Social Cognitive Theory and Theory of Planned Behavior. A total of 800 participants were recruited via random sampling from six teacher training institutes and diverse schools across Karachi; data were collected through a validated five-section questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha of .70 or higher, pilot-tested with 50 educators, and analyzed via descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and multiple regression. Both groups demonstrated moderate CCE knowledge below proficiency thresholds; in-service teachers scored significantly higher on knowledge with means of 9.1 versus 8.2 out of 15 and self-efficacy with means of 48.9 versus 41.6 out of 75; pre-service teachers held more positive attitudes with means of 47.3 versus 44.8 out of 60. Limited professional development was the dominant barrier with only 23.5% having received prior CCE training; self-efficacy emerged as the strongest predictor of implementation intentions. Findings reveal a critical preparedness gap and highlight the need for systemic reform in pre-service curricula and in-service professional development; the study contributes context-specific evidence supporting Pakistan's National Climate Change Policy and the global Education for Sustainable Development agenda.

Marijana Županić Benić

Professional Competencies of Visual Arts Teachers: The Role of Additional Arts Education and Professional Development

Professional competencies of teachers in visual arts education encompass the integration of pedagogical, didactic, and artistic knowledge, as well as the ability to foster students' creativity and aesthetic development. Their development is closely related to continuous professional development and lifelong learning (European Commission, 2013). Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine the role of additional arts education and professional development in teachers' self-assessment of professional competencies in visual arts education. Professional competencies in this field include pedagogical and didactic skills, subject-specific knowledge in visual arts disciplines, communication skills, sensitivity to cultural and social contexts, and readiness for self-reflection and continuous professional growth. The study was conducted with a sample of 121 primary school teachers of varying age and professional status. Data were collected using a questionnaire, and descriptive statistics and the Mann-Whitney U test were employed for data analysis. The results indicate that teachers generally rate their professional competencies highly. Furthermore, teachers who participate in professional development demonstrate higher self-assessment scores across almost all competencies, while teachers with additional arts education report higher levels of self-assessment in specific competencies, particularly in the domain of subject-specific and artistic knowledge. The findings highlight the importance of continuous professional development and additional arts education as key factors in the development of teachers' professional competencies. Encouraging lifelong learning contributes to the quality of visual arts education, as well as to the development of students' creativity, aesthetic sensitivity, and overall development.





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