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Editorial

Mending Vulnerabilities and Finding Creative Solutions in the Face of Increasing Fragility

This volume comprises the papers of articles from all over the globe: USA, Australia, South Africa, Turkey, Philippines, Finland, Sweden and Latvia. The joint theme of most of the articles of this volume is inclusive quality education, prioritizing of which has never been more important than it is today. Re-imagining the future of education in post-pandemic times of fragility, insecurity, war and inequality highlights the call for inclusive education. We live in the world where we face numerous obstacles in the way of sustainable and inclusive education: many groups of people are being discriminated against and excluded, regarding their specific needs of their social circumstances. Worldwide commitment towards an agenda of inclusion and willingness to overcome obstacles on our way requires us to undertake leadership and a capacity to strive towards a more inclusive education.

Some of the articles are focusing on educational issues, particularly how to make teaching practice more efficient, inclusive and sustainable. In line with seventeen SDG goals, particular attention has been paid to the sustainable developmental goal four, namely, how to ensure this inclusive quality education for all. One of the articles focuses on the environmental aspect of education thus bringing sustainability issues to the foreground. Energy literacy as taught in the elementary level is particularly important for training pre-service teachers. Another study with the qualitative design by Anssi Huoponen is focusing on expert teachers' perceptions of their students' environmental literacy and the practice of environmental education in Finland.

The study from the Philippines expands the context of sustainable education by adding a gender aspect, by focusing on the efforts of government with regard to primary and secondary schools in the City of Mati as a mainstreaming gender issue. Robie Catubigan expands the sustainability discourse by calling for action in promoting inclusive education through sustainable programs in the community. Another aspect of inclusive education is being discussed by Katja N. Andersen and Anette Bagger in relation to multilingualism in STEM teaching. Inclusive systems provide better quality education for all and therefore this does not allow any kind of discrimination and marginalization; it avoids binary opposites of good and bad, allows flexibility and fosters a sense of belonging.

Elina Apsite-Berina, Liga Daniela Robate, Maris Berzins, Zaiga Krisjane in their paper discuss internalization tendencies in higher education and how it is inclusive for international students as this requires leadership and inclusive frames of reference. Inclusive practice can occur only when diverse people feel valued and respected, when they have

access to opportunities and resources and when they can contribute to the common well-being of planet Earth.

The paper by Christine Schnittka from Auburn University describes an assessment of pre-service elementary teachers in a coal-producing region of the United States to determine how well they understood how coal is used to produce electricity. Only two of the 56 participants had a complete understanding of the process where coal is burned to boil water into steam, which then moves a turbine connected to a generator that contains magnets and coils of wire. The remaining 54 participants had a variety of incomplete and incorrect understandings, primarily around burning, melting, or grinding of coal. Twenty of these said that coal produces energy, creates energy, releases, generates, or collects energy, but had no further understanding. After a 90-minute constructivist lesson where participants explored a variety of energy transformation devices and toys, 82 % were able to explain exactly how coal is used to generate electricity. Several months later, the post-test was given again to a subset of participants. The participants who retained the lesson the best had, for the most part, discussed it with a friend or relative. Participants, most of whom grew up in the coal-producing region, mentioned shock, intrigue, pride, and shame in not knowing how coal was used to produce electricity. It is a tense place to be between these two worlds, the place one grew up in, and the university classroom where sustainability issues are brought to the foreground. The results of this study highlight the lack of energy literacy possessed by these pre-service elementary teachers. More work needs to be done to help teachers understand the basic science they need to make informed decisions on energy security and sustainability. To fully enact this goal, lessons must include the science of how coal "keeps the lights on."

The article by İsmail Gürler is focusing on determining the needs of pre-service English teachers. It shows some exclusive sides from different perspectives. Firstly, the needs are gathered under three titles as lacks, necessities and wants. Embracing the target needs of pre-service English teachers, the study shed light upon the unclear part of teacher education in detail, with the help of a qualitative research design. The sampling of the study is another aspect to be highlighted. Both insider and outsider evaluators in needs-analysis process are important to give more objective results. The third dimension is, of course, the results and findings. Determining the needs along with the sub-categories as lacks, necessities and lacks is an outstanding part of developing more learner-centred and up-to-date curriculum. The findings are also very contributive for those who are working as policy makers, curriculum and syllabus designers, and teacher trainers expected to train prospective English teachers. The last but not the least, the needs-analysis could be seen here as the first step for creating a more sustainable education.

Hilal Kazu and Serkan Pullu examine the relationship between pre-service teachers' cognitive flexibility levels and their teaching of self-efficacy perceptions in their articles. The research was carried out in the correlational survey model. The study group of the research consists of 'Computer and Instructional Technologies Education', 'Classroom Teaching', 'Art Teaching', 'Mathematics Teaching', 'Turkish Teaching', 'Social Studies Teaching', 'Preschool Teaching' and 'Science Education' departments of the Faculty of Education. They applied "Cognitive Flexibility Scale" and "Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale" to 4th grade students. The data were analysed using a computer-aided statistical program. As a result of the research, it was seen that both the cognitive flexibility levels and the teaching self-efficacy perception levels of the pre-service teachers were high. It

was determined that cognitive flexibility and teaching self-efficacy perception levels affected each other in a positive and meaningful way.

The study by Jhonnel P. Villegas, Mary Fil M. Bauyot and Jeralyn H. Sacro utilizes the Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation Framework (GMEF) to audit the efforts of government primary and secondary schools in the City of Mati, Davao Oriental, Philippines, in mainstreaming gender. Four key result areas were evaluated: people, policy, enabling mechanisms, and programs, projects, and activities (PPAs). The results revealed that the schools are in the initial stages of mainstreaming, so capacity-building efforts, especially for the GAD Focal Persons, need to be intensified. This study identified the learning needs and gaps in developing a contextualized learning module. Also, the procedures for developing the module were detailed, thus ensuring quality assurance. The module consists of three parts, encompassing the concepts of gender and development, gender-based violence in basic education, and gender planning and budgeting. Overall, this paper provides information on the use of gender audit as a basis for developing a GAD learning module.

The study by Robie Catubigan unfolds the experiences of Mansaka mothers on how they conceptualized Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) before and after diagnosis. Before diagnosis, Mansaka mothers had difficulty understanding their children's manifested symptoms since they were unaware of the nature and characteristics of ASD. Also, misconceptions arose as they observed behavioral red flags; Mansaka mothers attributed those behaviors to the unknown since there is no diagnosis yet. Mansaka mothers tried alternatives to address the needs of their children. This resulted in raising and rearing struggles that affected their work, family relationships, and personal lives. Through educated advice, Mansaka mothers have sufficient reasons to consult for help from experts to diagnose their children's condition. After the diagnosis, Mansaka mothers felt different reactions to their children's diagnosis. It gives them insightful realization about their children's condition and responsive action as advocacy for promoting inclusive education through sustainable programs in the community that would improve the lives of the family with disabilities.

Michael Buchanan's qualitative study considers the implications of policy reform on the sustainability of leaders in various Catholic schooling systems across Australia. His paper focuses specifically on issues pertaining to the sustainability of Religious Education Leaders, which is always a key senior leadership role in Catholic schools. He argues that the very nature of the role subjects these leaders to dual responsibilities both within education and the Catholic church. The bi-dimensional nature of the role creates excessive demands on the leader. These demands can cause confusion about what the role entails and compromise the sustainability of the role as indicated by the high employment turnover rates. To sustain the role as a key leadership position and to promote succession planning, a wave of diocesan policies across Australia is set to clarify the role and its status within Catholic schools. Michael Buchanan's research points out that while policies have the potential to reform, sustain, educate, and influence practice pertaining to religious education leadership, they also run the risk of being counterproductive. To enhance and sustain the employment of religious education leaders Buchanan suggests that policy makers should closely consider the perceptions of those who are likely to be affected by the decisions they enshrine in policy.

The paper by Katja N. Andersen and Anette Bagger focuses on the issue of inclusion, exclusion, and abjection in relation to multilingualism in STEM teaching. The article

analyzes policy documents on language and STEM from Sweden and Luxembourg and their implicit and explicit signs of in (ex)clusion by taking on Popkewitz's approach to the politics of schooling and fabrication of kinds of people. Similarities and differences are found between Sweden and Luxembourg, and findings shed light on how norms are (re-)produced, how that includes social groups while others are absent by omission. Sweden takes an essentially monolingual approach while Luxembourg adopts a multilingual approach to education. Findings are discussed against the backdrop of implications on inclusion, exclusion, or abjection in learning and teaching in STEM classes in the two national contexts. There is a risk of education positioning multilingual learners as disadvantaged, which is connected to a mismatch between systematic promises of inclusion on the one hand and the obstructions generated by educational language policies. In Sweden, this is especially challenged as inclusion as a concept is quite absent in the governing documents of education. Further research is needed on how the intersectionality of disabilities, inclusion, and language impact students' equal opportunities to learn and develop in the STEM subjects both in theory and practice.

The paper by Anssi Huoponen focuses on expert teachers' perceptions of their students' environmental literacy and the practice of environmental education. The data is collected from the World Summit of Students for the Climate event organized by the ENO Schoolnet Association. In this study, 48 educators were interviewed. They represent different nationalities from all around the world and at different school levels. However, they brought together the ENO network and shared an interest in environmental education. The data were gathered with group interviews and analyzed with content analysis. The analysis revealed that in most of this study, teachers prefer environmental education methods that promote cognitive or affective literacy, but at the same time, they long for methods that promote behavioral literacy. Teachers also clarified their students' environmental literacy. Most often, teachers mentioned their students to be only nominal literate. However, functional literacy and operational literacy were represented at almost even times. Varying literacy and below nominal literacy were added to the continuum based on teachers' responses. Barriers to effective environmental education were also identified. These are school-related barriers: strict curriculum, lack of resources, the pressure of grading, lack of time, and lack of support. And student-related barriers: lack of interest, lack of possibilities to act, parents, peer pressure, superficial knowledge, and society.

Elina Apsite-Berina, Liga Daniela Robate, Maris Berzins, Zaiga Krisjane in their paper discuss the issue of students' mobility and the internationalisation of higher education which are two issues that are frequently discussed in Latvia. Several higher education institutions have made internationalisation one of their strategic focuses. Thus, it is crucial to understand how comfortable international students are with their studies and living experiences in Latvia. The study analyses two major international student groups, representing Germany and India. Having an international job, international experience, a European certificate, and learning the English language were the most significant motivators for respondents to pursue an international course of study. Students from Germany ranked international career opportunities the highest, while students from India ranked a European diploma as important. The ability to study in English and the quality of their education were the main incentives for students to attend Latvian universities. In contrast to most German students, who solely link Latvia with their academic

paths and universities, students from India are more engaged and satisfied with obtained education and quality of life in Latvia.

The Lombaard and Laima Geikina paper on the situation of war in Ukraine offers theological consideration from two perspectives – political theology and practical theology. Based on a joint paper prepared for a Stellenbosch, South Africa, conference in January 2023 on the topic of war, these two theological perspectives are considered jointly too – as they always should. Political theology has always had a practical inclination. Practical theology always has a political inclination. The view that these two matters should be kept apart, is briefly described, but is indicated as non-valid. A broad theological framework for political theology is hence considered, very briefly indicating some key moments: on and from the Bible and church history. Central is the insight in the previous century by Carl Schmitt, that all important political concepts have theological parallels. The second part of the article provides a case study description from Riga, Latvia, of how political theology and practical theology meet in active practice, through pastoral intervention. Ukrainian refugees from the war are given practical care, through the cooperation of city politicians and churches. This demonstrates the implicit cooperation of political theology and practical theology in helping to alleviate some of the suffering caused by the war.

The paper by Fatıma Betül Demir and her college examines and determines the idea of recycling that affect the recycling attitudes of secondary school students. Explanatory design has been used among the mixed method research designs in which both quantitative and qualitative approaches are used together in the research. According to the results obtained from the research, students' attitudes towards recycling have been studied. There is no difference according to gender and education level of their mothers. It has been determined that there is a difference in the attitudes of the students towards recycling according to the grade level and educational status of their fathers. Students include such elements such as people, trees, garbage, factory, cloud and garbage boxes in the paintings related to recycling.

We express our gratitude to all the authors of articles and reviewers who contribute to this volume. It is to be noted in many parts of our research community that certain fragile indicators emerge as we address problems which highlight vulnerability. The need to apply creative thinking and accurate process seems to be an added key to the contribution researchers can bring to the international education scenario. As we identify elements needing solutions, we hark back to those millennial goals which inform so much of our work. We can highlight two interwoven issues that can address emerging vulnerabilities: testing our research projects with clarity and appropriateness; and testing how and when each project has relevance to the general work of our research communities. So, a certain transparency merges with familiar difficulties as we search for ways to find creative solutions at the same time as we identify such increasing fragility due to the process of uncovering hurdles, problems, dilemmas in the educational and perhaps also in both the political and theological scenarios. So much good quality is already apparent, even in the work of this edition of our journal, that we can be confident that implementation of the goals of sustainable education is not being forgotten.

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