

Editorial

Dear readers, this year's autumn issue of the Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies brings another wide and varied selection of scientific and expert articles whose authors address current pedagogical issues and problems.

The issue begins with **Tibor Rutar's** article *Dystopian future of education in the knowledge society*, in which the author critically presents and analyzes the concept of the knowledge society, which has been transferred from the United States (where it was developed in the 1960s) to Europe in the last two decades. The author's critique is predominantly focused on two aspects: (1) the statements boasted by the ideologies of the knowledge society are misleading; and (2) the implementation mechanisms of such a society have harmful consequences for the functioning and position of higher education and knowledge. The author's analysis and critical argumentation demonstrates that what may initially seem to be a positive and widely accepted idea actually turns out to be both a direct and indirect subordination of educational and research activities for the requirements of the labor market. These requirements include becoming more flexible and serving as competitive coercion of the global market. Rutar shows that the assumptions of the knowledge society require the real subordination of science (education and research) to capital. This is evident indirectly by favoring the kinds of science that produce technological innovations and by giving priority to education that creates a workforce suitable for the flexible labor market. Additionally, the process is evident directly in the privatization of educational and research institutions, which are becoming market-oriented by profiting from selling their services.

The next article, *Restrictions at German universities before the Nazi seizure of power and during the National Socialist consolidation* by **Taja Kramberger**, examines the situation at German universities under National Socialism, when their autonomy and mission were threatened to such a degree that some university staff, according to Kramberger, spoke even about the end of university. The author analyzes events at German universities in the 1930s, that is, during the establishment of the National Socialist regime in the country. Based on certain aspects of the development of German universities from the eighteenth century onward, she pinpoints the reasons that caused the abolishment of university autonomy at the time of National Socialism (the so-called Führeprinzip and Selbst-Gleichschaltung). At the time, university reform, at least in its early stages of the ideological transformation of the university environment, was supported by some of the most eminent names in German philosophy and university intelligence, such as Martin Heidegger and Hans Georg Gadamer. However, they may not have been entirely devoted to the ideas of National Socialism, but more because they saw it as "a suitable device" to "overcome academic Marxism and psychoanalysis." Kramberger also emphasizes that we should not uncritically accept the assumption that the National Socialist transformation of universities was a unique and irrational act of ideological fanatics, which disabled the possibilities for the continuity of historical influences or their revival.

In their article *Information competencies of using the Internet in education: A child's right in schools in a networked society*, **Tamara Pribiše**v Beleslin and **Tatjana Duronjić Tapavički** address the issue of information literacy as the metaliteracy of the twenty-first century. The authors emphasize that one of the most important roles of educational institutions is equipping children with the symbolic tools they need to live and function in the digital age. The authors approach information literacy as a theoretical construct that encompasses a range of different skills and knowledge that is closely related to the development of technology, especially the World Wide Web and its impact on socialization. The results of their empirical research study, which was carried out on the population of 822 primary- and secondary-school students in the capital of Republika Srpska, shows that schools should develop a wider range of skills that would encourage the use of the Internet in teaching and learning. Similar to numerous other studies, the authors conclude that the majority of the time students spend on the Internet is used to satisfy their own personal needs, while only a small amount of time is used to research information related to school and learning. Despite that fact, the authors believe schools are below average in regards to introducing new technologies.

The always-topical issue is investigated by **Majda Hafner** in her contribution *Slovenian teachers and their professionalism*. The author presents the results of her qualitative research study, which reveals the opinions of nine primary-school teachers during the course of their professional development. The interviewed teachers perceive professionalism as the most important characteristic for successful teaching, which the author believes demonstrates a traditional concept of the professional teacher. Following the teachers' responses, Hafner underlines the special importance that her interviewees attach to lifelong learning and professional development. This, however, is the point where they frequently run into external obstacles, such as limited financial means and school managements' unwillingness to encourage teachers to pursue additional professional training.

The next contribution in the journal is by **Tomi Martinjak** and it is based on the project of the same title, *Children's rights advocate – a child's voice*. The study was conducted between 2007 and 2008 as a pilot project in five locations throughout Slovenia under the patronage of the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia. The author introduces the role and importance that the children's rights advocate has in the procedures where children in distress find themselves. He stresses the basic distinction between the children's rights advocate and the authorized representative. According to Martinjak, the distinction predominantly lies in the children's rights advocate's ability to function completely independently and accomplish specific goals – hear the child's genuine voice, opinions, wishes, and demands and pass them on to the relevant people and institutions – while following the child from the beginning of procedures and throughout the entire process. In contrast, the representative is assigned to the child for a single procedure only. The author presents the case of a 12-year-old boy who found himself in a difficult family situation and acute distress as an example to outline the tasks and role of the children's rights advocate when problem-solving scenarios that involve institutions and parents.

This issue of the Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies also includes an *interview with researcher Dr. Leopoldina Plut Pregelj* by **Robi Kroflič**. L. Plut Pregelj has won recognition primarily as the author of numerous articles and books that address the fundamental topics of didactics and pedagogic psychology. In the interview, the interviewee focuses on her views on the theory of social constructivism and its effect on didactics. Primarily, she discusses the teaching method of dialogue that is closely related to the topic of her monograph on listening, which, according to L. Plut Pregelj, is the foundation for teaching and education as well as teacher's ethical positions in school.

The last contribution to this issue, *Professor Gustav Šilih, Worthy of Pedagogical Remembrance*, is dedicated to the memory of Professor Gustav Šilih on the 120th anniversary of his birth. Šilih's work and significance for Slovenian pedagogical thought is presented by **France Strmčnik**. He emphasizes that Šilih was not only the theoretician of the unity of primary school, but that he also worked on its content and didactic reform. He had a visionary sense and an ear to incorporate the most promising pedagogical endeavors of the school-reform movement, such as teachers' higher-degree education, school self-management, demystified sex education, democratic educational relationships, etc. The valuable work that Gustav Šilih accomplished characterized the period of Slovenian pedagogy between the world wars and after World War II when nothing pedagogically significant happened without his strong presence.

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