

Celebrating 140 years of the Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies

With the publication of its 140th volume, the *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies* celebrated an important anniversary in 2023. But that was not the only reason for celebration. On the occasion of the journal's anniversary and in recognition of its outstanding contribution to the development of pedagogy as a scientific discipline at home and internationally, the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr Nataša Pirc Musar, awarded the Order of Merit to our journal in December 2023.

The following justification accompanies the award of the Order of Merit: »The Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies has been the central scientific and professional journal in the field of education in Slovenia for 140 years«, and it »has made a significant contribution to the development of the methodology of pedagogical research and social science research in general. The journal has become a bridge between teachers (pedagogical practice) and the academic and research communities, since researchers as well as teachers and other educators publish their articles in the journal. Over the last forty years, the editors-in-chief and the editorial boards have transformed the journal into the leading Slovenian journal devoted to the development of pedagogy and related disciplines, such as andragogy, psychology and others. The editorial policy promotes pluralism of views and practices, and the journal informs readers about the latest developments in educational theory and practice. The contributors do not only pursue the narrow goal of publishing professional and scientific articles, but also want to maintain their role as promoters of development, critical and constructive voices in the creation of a better, inclusive and fair education system. The journal publishes a wide range of theoretical and empirical studies in the field of education, and its articles contribute to the development of scientific language and terminology in education. The Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies reaches beyond Slovenia's borders and contributes to the shared treasury of knowledge. It strikes a fine balance between tradition and an active stance towards internal pedagogical issues on the one hand, and engagement with the international environment on the other. The journal publishes both Slovenian and English-language articles; while the editorial boards give priority to Slovenian authors and the Slovenian language, they also give space to foreign authors with research findings from international contexts. The success of the journal in striking this delicate balance is demonstrated by its international editorial board and its inclusion in the most prominent international bibliographic databases. The role of the scientific Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies in Slovenian education is indispensable. With this State award, the Republic of Slovenia expresses its appreciation and gratitude.«

We are very proud to have been awarded this honour and, on the occasion of the journal's double celebration, let me look back to the beginning, to the first issue of its predecessor, the *Popotnik* (Traveller). The journal was wished »a very long journey with a clear mind and good health« (Žolgar 1880, p. 1). But, as we can read in the same editorial, like any »wise master, it he has made a plan and a programme to guide its course« (ibid, p. 2). We can only guess whether the first editor had any inkling of the extent of the journal's journey. Aware of his responsibility, he bravely wished himself a safe journey at the beginning. And the seed was planted. The seed of the journal, whose primary purpose was to accompany and support teachers on their professional (and life) journey. And this 140-year-long journey has been continued since 1950 by the *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies*, which has always maintained and built on the mission that had been set out. First and foremost, thanks are due to the generations of editors and members of the editorial board. The 140 volumes are the fruit of your work and dedication to educational sciences and to the high academic ethical standards that you have followed over the years and expected from our authors. Since the very first issue of the *Popotnik*, it has been you, the editors, who have set the vision, set the goals and made them happen with the support of the editorial boards. The journal paved the way for pedagogical research in Slovenia; therefore, the journey was not just a straight and wide road, and you often had to cross »bare deserts and steep mountains [...] great precipices and deep rivers« (ibid.). No one who has not stepped into your editorial shoes knows the path you have walked. You know the weight and joy of this work, and each and every one of you has left an indelible mark. And so, dear editors of the journal, on behalf of the Association of Slovenian Educators, the authors and readers of the *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies*, allow me to thank you for what you have given to the journal. Your work has made the journal one of the most respected and influential educational journals in our region, for which I give my sincere appreciation and heartfelt compliments.

Throughout the years, the editorial policy has endeavoured to ensure that the *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies* has always been a meeting point and an intersection of ideas, didactic guidance and a showcase of good practice.

Its 140 volumes represent just as many years of pedagogical perseverance as well as of the editors' and authors' stubbornness in the face of competing views and numerous controversies, which have provided readers with excellent scientific and professional articles thanks to the respectful attitude that the editors have always strived for.

The 140 volumes of the journal are just as many volumes of texts in which the ideas of various pedagogical concepts, research methodologies as well as national-awakening goals and ideas have been crystallised – sometimes loudly and sometimes more subtly.

The 140 volumes of the journal are as many years of tireless work and words – but also of silence when silence was the loudest message.

But despite the path it has travelled, the journal continues to face many challenges. There are questions about how to design the objectives of the jour-

nal to maintain its position as the leading pedagogical journal in Slovenia, and therefore bear the responsibility for publishing texts that are relevant to Slovenia and Slovenian readers, while at the same time meeting the increasingly difficult criteria for inclusion in international bibliographic databases. How can we keep the balance?

How can we survive under a rather unstable funding policy, which takes international recognition and inclusion in databases as a criterion, but at the same time demands open access to articles that are becoming less interesting for the domestic professional public? And how can we reach readers so that the concepts, ideas and research findings do not just remain words on paper, but instead find their way into educational practice?

These and many other challenges will remain, because they are an integral part of the journal's journey and can be a driving force for its development. But we should take time to celebrate our 140th anniversary, too. On behalf of the many generations of educators, teachers and researchers who have co-created the journal, let us be proud of the path we have travelled, and also of the fact that the *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies* has contributed to Slovenian national development, which has been recognised with the Order of Merit. There is no doubt that educational research deserves national prominence, even if, in our pedagogical modesty, we do not often say so out loud.

So, dear *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies*, congratulations on the path you have travelled, on your perseverance, your educational stamina and your enthusiasm, all of which have kept you youthful for 140 years! May all this put wind in your sails for many, many years to come!

*Dr Danijela Makovec Radovan,
The President of the Association of Slovenian Educators*



*Figure 1: Photograph of the Order of Merit
Photo by Tadej Bernik*

References

Žolgar, M. (1880). Rojakom. *Popotnik*, 1, issue 1, pp. 1–2.