EERA: Policy, Governance and Quality in Teacher Education Systems: four cases

Author(s): Pavel Zgaga, Simone White (presenting), Katharine Burn (presenting), Ian Menter, Trevor Mutton, Kari Smith (presenting), Marilyn Cochran-Smith (presenting)

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Session Information

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Symposium

Time: 2015-09-11
11:00-12:30

Room: VII. El'adó [C]

Chair/Discussant: Ian Menter/ Pavel Zgaga

Contribution

Policy, Governance and Quality in Teacher Education Systems: four cases

Reform processes are under way in most teacher education systems around the world. We see teacher education going through major transitions (Darling-Hammond and Lieberman, 2012; Townsend, 2011).

This symposium will consider similarities and differences in four different geographical settings: Australia, England, Norway, the USA.

The overarching research question for the symposium is:

What are the relationships between forms of governance, policy processes and definitions of quality in teacher education systems around Europe and the wider world?

In each case, papers will address questions such as:

- what is the official rationale for the current reforms?
- how are the processes of reform being managed?
- how are issues of quality in teacher education being framed and discussed?
- what are the contributions of the various stakeholders in these processes?
- what evidence is there of external international influences in these processes?
- what contribution is teacher education research making to these processes?
The symposium discussant will be invited to comment on what common themes emerge from these cases and what might be the reasons for significant differences.

We know from earlier studies of teacher education reform in Europe (Harford et al 2012) and more widely that there are strong influences from multinational exercises such as the PISA system administered by the OECD. We also know that national politicians seek to identify and borrow policies from other parts of the world that they judge to have more successful systems than their own. In short, it appears that teacher education has become highly 'politicised' and that professional voices are sometimes struggling to be heard.

For example, we have seen the influence of Teach for America spreading around many parts of the world as well as some of the movement towards 'school-led' teacher education favoured by English governments being picked up by politicians in Australia. But there are parts of Europe (such as Norway) where research-led reforms still tend to prevail. The role of the university and of research in teacher education is a key critical question as has been demonstrated in the recent inquiry by the British Educational Research Association (BERA-RSA, 2014).

The papers will each adopt a policy studies approach to the questions and will use such techniques as discourse analysis and social network analysis to ensure that a systematic and rigorous approach is taken to the investigation of the questions at hand.

But in identifying similarities and differences between developments in these countries we will also seek to ensure 'context sensitivity' and will adopt a broadly cultural-historical approach to the analysis to ensure that this is the case.

References


Author Information

Pavel Zgaga

University of Ljubljana

Faculty of Education

Ljubljana

Simone White (presenting)

Monash University, Australia
Katharine Burn (presenting)
University of Oxford

Ian Menter
University of Oxford
Department of Education
Oxford

Trevor Mutton
University of Oxford
Bicester

Kari Smith (presenting)
Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Marilyn Cochran-Smith (presenting)
Boston College, USA