

EDITORIAL

Transformation of Educational Policy, Theory and Practice in Post-Soviet Social Studies Education

More than half a century has passed since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 2001 that led not only to deep geopolitical, economic and social changes but also stimulated transformations in the educational sector of most post-Soviet states. Having common background and historical roots national educational systems of most of these countries were modifying their past experience under the influence of modernization strategies and internationalization processes after signing Bologna Agreements in the first half of the XXI century. Thus, this Special Issue is an attempt to trace retrospectively the changes that took place on the post-Soviet territory using social studies education as an example with a focus on educational policy, theory and practice. It seems reasonable and worthy as it provides multifaceted comparative perspective of the development within this field during the periods of transition, stabilization and potential growth. Under social studies education we understand integrated and systemic teaching and learning experience in such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, history, geography, philosophy, psychology, pedagogy, religion and sociology.

The eleven articles in this Special Issue focus on the topics within the following general strands:

- transformation of post-Soviet social studies education curriculum under the influence of modernization and internationalization processes;
- enhancing instruction in post-Soviet social studies education;
- emergence of new assessment methods and techniques in post-Soviet social Sstudies education;
- diversification of curriculum, instruction and assessment for various categories of learners in social studies education;
- professional development of new age social studies researchers from post-Soviet states.

The issue opens with the article entitled *“Improving student readiness to overcome IT-related obstacles during pedagogical interaction in post-Soviet education”* by *Dmitry Luchaninov, Ruslan Bazhenov, Yuliya Shtepa, Natalia Nikolaeva, Andrey Tcytcarev & Marina Kuimova* and aimed at identifying the concept of pedagogical interaction in the information and educational environment, showing how efficient pedagogical interaction may improve student readiness to overcome IT-related obstacles. The authors prove that integrating IT into educational process is useful and is vital for developing professional career in the future.

The second contribution *“Transformation of the system of bilingual education in the Republic of Tatarstan: crossover ethnolinguistic controversies”* by *Olga Maximova, Vladimir Belyaev & Olga Laukart-Gorbacheva* concentrates attention on bilingual education and practical implementation of its principles in polyethnic and polireligious regions of Russia taking the Republic of Tatarstan as an example. It is stated that implemented language policy as well as existing bilingual educational programs and their methodological support are of poor quality and need significant improvement in the nearest future.

The next article *“Knowledge management as an approach to learning and instructing sector university students in post-Soviet professional education”* by *Irina S. Volegzhanina, Svetlana V. Chusovlyanova, Vladimir A. Adolf, Ekaterina S. Bykadorova & Elena N. Belova* reveals the nature of knowledge management approach compared to the knowledge-based one that dominated in the Soviet system of education. The authors prove that ontological core of the knowledge-based approach is promising and didactically important especially for sector university students majoring in social sciences.

Ekaterina O. Akvazba, Lyudmila K. Gabysheva, Pavel S. Medvedev, Natalya I. Skok Tatyana E. Ukhabinina being the authors of the fourth article *“Transformation of approaches to organizing the students' university practical training in the area of social activity: a post-Soviet experience”* present the challenges that Russian social studies education has faced during the last years especially in the professional training of social sphere specialists. Detailed plan for overcoming these disadvantages is offered including the authors' practical training model for those involved in social work with regard to existing European experience.

In the fifth article “*Buddhist Religious Education in the Context of Modern Russian Policy of Multicultural Education: A Case of the Republic of Buryatia*” by *Oyuna Dorzhigushaeva, Bato Dondukov & Galina Dondukova*, the place and role of Buddhist religious education in the ethnoculturally and ethnoconfessionally specific educational environment of the Republic of Buryatia is analyzed. The authors provide multilateral analysis of the studied phenomenon and reveal its preventive educational potential for problematic multicultural regions.

The next article “*Social informatics: natural tools for students' information training in the conditions of embodied and mental approaches being employed*” authored by *Daria Barkhatova, Elmira Nigmatulina & Tatyana Stepanova* deals with a relatively new field of social studies education – social informatics. The importance of quality IT training is prioritized and the opportunities for applying the natural tools in IT training within school courses from the standpoints of embodied and mental approaches are offered.

In their article “*Teacher to Student Epistemological Interaction in the Contemporary Paradigm of University Education*” *Irina Charikova & Victor Zhadanov* state the necessity to reconceptualise the understanding of epistemological interaction and its essence as a result of epistemic content-related transformations between all the active parties of the educational process. It is obvious that cooperation and openness to new knowledge stimulate cognitive transformations of teachers and students as well as desire for innovation.

Yuliya S. Nikolaeva & Nikolay I. Pak present in their article “*Newest Web-Technologies for Studying and Diagnosing Individual Abilities of Learners*” research outcomes on the possibilities to use newest web and mobile applications in the educational process as well as for self-diagnostics of the main human cognitive abilities such as memory, attention, reading, information processing etc. The authors report on practical outcomes of their study, i.e. the website <http://self-test.ufoproger.ru> developed for new diagnostics and studies in the sphere of human individual and integrated abilities.

Article 9 “*Traditional and alternative approaches to the method of situational analysis in Russia: evidence from the case study “Istanbul in the life and works of Martiros Saryan”*” by the international group of authors, *Olga Fedotova, Pavel Ermakov, Vladimir Latun, Haykaz Hovhannisyan & Grant Avanesyan*, demonstrates the potential of case study as a methodical tool for developing cognitive and problem-solving abilities of students, stimulating them for

individual research work. Content peculiarities of cases in Soviet and post-Soviet times are analyzed through a comparative lens.

The next contribution “*Formation of Students’ Professional Self-Actualization in Modern Educational Environment*” by *Nadezhda A. Dmitrienko, Marina A. Gorbina, Natalya F. Porozhnyak, Tatyana V. Trusova & Tatyana G. Konovalenko* is devoted to the issue of professional self-actualisation in modern educational process. The authors discuss the advantages of the developed technology for raising students’ consciousness allowing to reach high levels of self-actualization, fast personal and professional growth.

The final article of the Special Issue “*Internationalization Impact on PhD Training Policy in Russia: Insights from the Comparative Document Analysis*” by *Oksana Chigisheva, Elena Soltovets & Anna Bondarenko* provides the findings from the comparative analysis of documents regulating training of PhD students (Education only) in Russia during the last two decades. Dramatical changes are fixed in educational policy due to the internationalization agenda. The authors conclude on the competitiveness of existing PhD training, its key role for global research career development and progress of the system of higher education in general.

I would like to thank JSSER editor-in-chief, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bulent Tarman for endless support and useful recommendations when working on this Special Issue as well as all the authors for their interesting contributions and strong commitment. I do believe that this Special Issue will help to extend the vision of transformation experiences in educational policy, theory and practice of post-Soviet social studies education from inner perspective and stimulate future discussions at the international level.

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