



JSSE

[Journal of
Social
Science
Education](#)

2021, Vol. 20(3) I-VIII

Edited by:
Olga Bombardelli,
Reinhold Hedtke,
Birgit Weber

Editorial

Teacher training for social science education

Olga Bombardelli

University of Trento

Reinhold Hedtke

Bielefeld University

Birgit Weber

University of Cologne


Teachers have a vital role in education, they exert a significant influence on the learning success, and on the general development of their pupils. Knowledge about the ways in which teachers are prepared for their role in citizenship education in the different countries is relatively limited (Yemini, Tibbitts, Goren, 2019), and crucial questions require further research.

Social Science Education is an undefined teaching area, hardly any other subject puts so high demands of knowledge and skills on teachers; despite that many school systems do not offer a systematic training in this field (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Losito, Agrusti, Friedman, 2018; Eurydice 2017).

This JSSE issue explores a broad range of aspects regarding the teaching profession from the perspective of six different countries and continents: Turkey (Student teachers' implicit knowledge and cognitive complexity of perspectives on being a citizen), Netherlands (Time for citizenship in teacher training), Canada (A case study of preservice history teachers), Japan (Educating teachers as designers), Germany (Meta-reflexivity and epistemic cognition in social science teacher education; Implementing antisemitism studies in german teacher education), Norway (Teacher descriptions of social studies teaching for children in 1st-4th grade) and – rather close to the topic of this issue – again Germany (Consumer education as counselling? Teacher beliefs about consumption and (social science) education).

This issue is edited by Olga Bombardelli, former professor at the University of Trento (Italy), Reinhold Hedtke, professor emeritus at Bielefeld University (Germany), and Birgit Weber, professor at the University of Cologne (Germany).

The submitted papers for this issue deal with several questions and bring forward ways to better understand and address matters of teaching and teacher training, reporting significant work taking place in a variety of contexts and through diverse methodologies.

 **Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made.

Reading the published papers we can see how different authors' understandings of political and civic education in different parts of the world is and how different the teacher education programmes in different countries are. Nevertheless, although school systems vary from country to country, the quality of the professional development of teachers meets similar challenges all over the world.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PAPERS

The issue begins with a contribution on *Student teachers' implicit knowledge and cognitive complexity of perspectives on being a citizen*, written by Mukerrem Akbulut-Tas and İsmail Sanberk. Starting from the fact that a plurality of understandings of being a citizen exists in social science and society, the study analyzes the implicit understandings and their complexity of a group of social studies teachers in Turkey. The authors discuss the relationship of implicit and explicit knowledge and of teachers' cognition structure and teaching performance. They are interested in the development of the students' perspectives in terms of complexity and, therefore, compare a dozen of first-year and fourth-year students making use of structured interviews and repertory grid technique to map the cognitive structure of an interviewee by converting implicit into explicit knowledge.

Their findings show that most of the students adhere to the construct of the personally responsible citizen ("a good, moral person", emphasis on fulfilling duties and responsibilities, not on rights) whereas the older students tend more to the participatory understanding of citizenship. In addition, justice-oriented citizenship is supported. However, across both groups, the perspective of the responsible citizen dominates, which seems to reflect the socio-cultural and political socialisation and experience in the Turkish context and citizenship practices "from the Ottoman period to the present". The authors conclude that teacher training has to "improve participatory and justice-oriented citizen understanding" as well as the level of cognitive complexity towards multidimensional perspectives. They see their study as an impulse for further research on the interplay of implicit and explicit knowledge in social studies teacher training.

This concrete requirement for subject teacher education could be well accommodated in a general framework concept as presented in *Meta-reflexivity and epistemic cognition in social science teacher education*. In this conceptual paper, Marcus Kindlinger discusses the challenges of teaching school subjects characterised by uncertainty, multi-disciplinarity, multi-perspectivity, scientific and political controversiality which requests social science educators "to connect, compare, contrast, and eventually convey different systems of knowledge". The paper addresses "the problem of turning reflection-for-action and reflection-on-action [...] into an open and flexible foundation for reflection-in-action". The author presents a concept for advancing reflective thinking in teacher education based on a meta-reflexive, evaluativist approach of epistemic reflection on knowledge as a prerequisite for teacher action. Meta-reflexivity includes the principles of "stating reasons, being transparent about alternatives, maintaining distance" and aims at avoiding

the crude and context-free confrontation of the two dichotomous labels of naïve versus sophisticated cognitions. Kindlinger refers to models or frameworks like evaluativism, reflective practitioner and reflection on reflection, professional competence of (civic education) teachers and considers various models for an analysis of epistemic cognition and discusses two settings: the learning teacher and the teaching teacher. Teacher education should develop a reflective disposition of teachers enabling teaching “decisions that are informed by the reflective process of assisting others in attaining specific epistemic aims”. This reflexivity helps to “constitute an epistemically informed praxis”. The approach is exemplified by describing the course of studies of two fictitious teacher students.

In a similar vein, *Vincent Boutonnet* aims to describe a phenomenon rarely explored from a didactic perspective. In his paper *Linking theory and practice during a high school practicum: case study of preservice history teachers in Quebec* he presents a case study pertaining to the relationship between scientific knowledge and practical knowledge as part of a history didactics course and practicum field experience in history teaching. The case study can be considered exemplary for other subjects as well.

Successful preservice teacher training is hence not a simple matter of applying or juxtaposing disciplinary, pedagogical or didactic content within the practical training field, but rather of linking, integrating practical experience together with theoretical knowledge. The goal is therefore to promote student assignments or practical training opportunities that make it possible to articulate and reflect on the relationship between theory and practice.

The research presented here is concerned with the way student teachers connect theory and practice (Vansledright & Reddy, 2014) through a thematic analysis of the written assignments submitted during the practicum and of the conceptual maps designed as part of the didactics course. Even when practical knowledge seems to predominate in written assignment, the author observes a notable effort by participants to integrate scientific knowledge, nevertheless references to theory by the student teachers remain superficial and tend to illustrate practical experience rather than putting it into perspective, and definitely assume that neither the concepts maps nor the written assignments show signs of a clear critical stance. The small sample does not allow for the generalization of findings to other equivalent contexts; it is clear that rather than opposing theory and practice, it appears essential to strengthen the dialogue between different types of knowledge and experience.

The paper of *Gudrun Hentges, Marcus Meier and Georg Gläser, Implementing antisemitism studies in German teacher education*, first considers the status quo with regard to anti-Semitism in Germany, looking at the field of schools and analyzing the significant changes in the revised Social Science curricula of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, which explicitly mention contemporary anti-Semitism for the first time. Afterwards, the study examines the current situation regarding antisemitism in teacher

training in Germany and appoints perspectives for a sustainable implementation of education critical of antisemitism in teacher training via best practice examples.

Combining experience from university teacher training and the field of extracurricular political education in civil society educational institution, the authors evaluate the potentials of field trips, international study groups and networks between university and agents located in civil society.

Three examples are presented as best-practice suggestions that can serve as points of reference for offering comprehensive anti-Semitism-critical educational programs for students, trainee teachers, teachers, and student teachers. By discussing these best practice examples the authors open perspectives on a sustainable implementation of political education critical of anti-Semitism in teacher training.

In the next paper, *Political education of young children: teacher descriptions of social studies teaching for children in 1st-4th grade in Norwegian primary school*, Stine Johansen Utler reports an investigation on the political aspects of 1st- to 4th-grade social studies education conducted from autumn 2017 to spring 2018 at Norwegian primary schools through semi-structured qualitative interviews with 30 social studies teachers. The research examines how and to what extent politics is focused in initial social studies education using the pre-political perspective as a theoretical starting point.

The author interprets politics broadly and adopts a wide concept of political education, focusing on a pre-political perspective, intended as a state in which we are finding ourselves on the path to becoming a politically minded and acting person. In this respect, the pre-political perspective represents an analytical starting point to investigate teacher statements about initial social studies education.

The authors argue that by partaking in social activities, such as classroom dialogue and discussion which involve the exchange of opinions or insights into the perspectives of others, children develop pre-political thinking; the ability to take over the perspective of others and to regard oneself as part of a larger whole are thus presented as two essential pre-political assets, both of which build the foundation for political thinking.

The analysis shows that the teachers worked to develop a pre-political perspective in their pupils. This was achieved through the collective orientation of the pupils. The teachers are described as working to develop their pupils' perspective of the world and to instil in them a sense of community as well as an understanding of responsibility for others and of cooperation. This is considered as a process of political socialisation, of becoming a member of a political community, and of developing a political identity in the context of discussing different societal issues.

Hessel Nieuwelink, and Ron Oostdam in their paper *Time for citizenship in teacher training*, focus on the ways in which teachers are prepared to teach citizenship, taking the situation in their country, the Netherlands, as research field. They looked at the ways in which citizenship is addressed in all types of teacher training (at Bachelor and Master level) and, consequently, in what ways the training and the related school subjects can contribute to the development of citizenship.

The results of the study show that citizenship education is linked to both the pedagogical and didactic tasks of teachers. The task of teachers to stimulate the development of values in students is rarely addressed; the idea of democracy and rule of law as a framework for citizenship is not mentioned in most knowledge bases.

Starting from the premise that citizenship encompasses three domains: the social domain, the civic domain, and the political domain, the authors discover that the first two domains are discussed in many knowledge bases; the political domain, on the other hand, is hardly mentioned. They offer points for improvement, underlining that – if consensus indeed exists that an urgent task for teachers is to help students to be introduced to the political world – it seems to be obvious that teachers-in-training should learn more about how they can stimulate their students to learn about politics and be familiar with it and interested in it. Nieuwelink and Oostdam remind us that in order to make citizenship education more effective, learning about a pedagogical class climate should be addressed and the pedagogical role of teachers should receive more attention in training programs. More realism and less idealism could give a strong boost to citizenship education in the Netherlands and probably to citizenship education in other countries as well.

The next paper argues in favour of shifting the focus from teachers' teaching in the classroom toward their work as curriculum designers of their own classes: they critically assess textbooks and other learning material, analyse the concrete subject matter thoroughly, reflect on students' knowledge and ways of thinking and share experience with other teachers. *Jongsung Kim, Takumi Watanabe and Hiromi Kawaguchi* discuss the potential of doing curricular research work for the professional development of teachers, a practice in Japanese schools which can be understood as teacher education through a specific culture of planning for teaching within the known approach of lesson study (see JSSE 1-2004, Best Practice Lessons and Lesson Study <https://www.jsse.org/index.php/jsse/issue/view/32>). In *Teachers as designers – the potentials of Kyouzai Kenkyuu in social studies teacher education*, they present different types, strategies and practices of curriculum design and case studies of social science methods courses for Social Studies and for Living Environmental Studies in middle schools and high schools. The authors elaborate a constructivist understanding of Kyouzai Kenkyuu as a practice of teachers comprising the deconstruction of ready-made curricula and teaching material and the reconstruction of their own curriculum “by conducting in-depth inquiries of social science disciplines, students, and society”. This practice may foster the habitus of the reflective practitioner and teachers' culture of self-research, and it can be understood as a collective practice of mutual teacher self-education. Not least, thinking as a curriculum designer and doing curriculum design for Social Studies provides the opportunity to reflect on the tension between integration of disciplines and disciplinary division which may raise identity issues in teacher education.

The issue of teacher education can also be approached from the perspective of teachers' teaching practices. This is one conclusion from *Franziska Wittau's* paper *Consumer education as counselling? Teacher beliefs about consumption and (social science) education*.

Teachers of subjects in the social science domain are, of course and like all other teachers, embedded in society in general, in specific social milieus and they often draw on common knowledge and personal experience in the fields of knowledge they teach. The article presents research of everyday interpretation patterns which not only shape teachers' thinking on consumption but also foster a normative bias in their teaching of consumption issues and in their proposals for proper consumer behaviour. They tend to favour moralistic and paternalistic attitudes of teaching which entails the risk of overwhelming the students. The findings, however, also indicate a tense relationship between these teaching practices – as reported by the teachers themselves – and their professional ethos of restraining from onesidedness and indoctrination. Franziska Wittau refers to Bourdieu's habitus concept and highlights the latent impact of teachers' habitus on consumer education approaches and practices as well as their habitus as means of social distinction from the students and their parents. Most of the teachers interviewed perceive them as failing in delivering a proper consumer education at home and conclude that the school has to close this educational gap. In consequence, teaching concentrates on giving advice for correct consumption and functions as disciplining young people, instead of providing the means for analysing their own consumption routines, their involvement in capitalist consumer societies and for a distant, critical reflection which is informed by social sciences.

Based on her findings, the author proposes that formal teacher training should provide concepts and instruments for developing a professional habitus which includes a self-reflective position towards the influence of biography and experience on one's own practice and philosophy of teaching. It is emphasised that social science knowledge is a prerequisite for a reflective habitus and an appropriate preparation of lessons.

This issue is still enriched by a bookreview, delivered by *Anders Stig Christensen* on the book of *Tim Engartner, Reinhold Hedtke, Bettina Zurstrassen: Sozialwissenschaftliche Bildung (social science education)*, a text that, viewed from outside of Germany (in this case especially from a Scandinavian point of view), documents both a scientific debate and discourse as well as a tradition of teaching social sciences that is not well known outside the German-speaking area. The book makes clear that the point of departure is an understanding of the interplay between society, economy and politics, together with an integration of the disciplines of economics, political science and sociology in a social scientific education (*sozialwissenschaftliche Bildung*) that combines scientific knowledge with everyday knowledge. The authors explore the theoretical and social scientific foundations for the planning of social scientific teaching and present a serious approach to connect theory and the practical choices teachers have to make for teaching. The book can serve both as a source of knowledge on the state of the art of social science education, as an inspiration for the planning of teaching, and an inspiration for discussions and reflections on the form and content of social science education.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The significance of teachers for successful curriculum innovation is well recognized. Teachers are mentors and role models for young people, they offer orientation in an increasingly complex world. Some of the papers in the issue alert us to the fact that teaching in the field of civic and citizenship education is highly demanding. Qualifying teachers and future teachers go far beyond communicating and explaining specific topics in the various subjects.

In the call for papers, we were looking for contributions relevant for the teaching profession and for the teacher training in the field of social science education. We would especially like to foster reflection and to question whether a more systematic initial and continuing teacher training could serve to lay the foundation for a quality approach to the teaching and learning processes in this field at all school levels. National policies and regulations can contribute to enhance and support the teaching profession (European Commission, 2020).

We hope that this issue of JSSE contributes to clarify some of the relevant and current questions in the field of teaching social studies. The published papers bring forth several questions, but they do not cover, of course, all the main issues we were looking for. We believe future research should address some of them and clarify status, approaches and practices of teacher education in the domain of social science education. Researchers should discuss which competences and kind of knowledge social science teachers need and design a core curriculum for social science teacher education, considering the international best practices.

For now, one last and special word of gratitude to all the contributors to this issue. We are confident that this publication will be of great help for educators, education policy makers and other stakeholders at the national, European and international level to enhance the teaching quality and the students' learning in social science education.

REFERENCES

- European Commission (2020) Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions on achieving the European Education Area by 2025. Brussels : European Commission. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0625>
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2017). Citizenship Education at School in Europe -2017. Eurydice report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Schulz, W., Ainley, J., Fraillon, J., Losito, B., Agrusti, G., & Friedman, T. (2018). *Becoming citizens in a changing world: IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2016 international report*. Amsterdam, Cham: Springer Open. <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783319739625>
- Vansledright, B., & Reddy, K. (2014). Changing Epistemic Beliefs? An Exploratory Study of Cognition Among Prospective History Teachers. *Revista Tempo e Argumento*, 6(11), 28-68. <https://doi.org/10.5965/2175180306112014028>
- Yemini, M., Tibbitts, F., & Goren, H. (2019). Trends and caveats: Review of literature on global citizenship education in teacher training. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 77(1), 77-89.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Olga Bombardelli, is senior professor at the University of Trento (Italy), former holder of a Chair J.Monnet "Education for Citizenship and European Integration". Author of several books and articles in the field of education. Her research interests are teacher training, citizenship education, inclusion. Her current research project investigates citizenship education in the secondary school, and critical thinking across disciplinary boundaries.

Prof. Dr. **Reinhold Hedtke** is professor emeritus of economic sociology and social science education at the Faculty of Sociology, Bielefeld University, Germany. Until recently, he was a senior professor at Faculty of Social Sciences, Goethe University Frankfurt. His current research focuses on economics of convention in the field of citizenship education, innovative approaches of socio-economic education, critical participatory education, social

Prof. Dr. **Birgit Weber** is professor of social sciences with a focus on economic education at the University of Cologne, Faculty of Human Sciences, Department of Education and Social Sciences, Germany. Her main areas of work are economic/socio-economic education, curriculum analysis/-development, consumer education, education for sustainable development/global learning, culture of independence, student perceptions.