

Editorial

This particular issue (the 8th) highlights the intense international concern regarding teacher's role in the contemporary educational system. Most articles focus on issues pertaining to the teacher as a professional and seek or demonstrate ways in which teachers themselves can be supported to intervene at school in the perspective of a reflective orientation in which educational action research contributes significantly through the forms it may take, of course, depending on the particular educational environment and the social and political conditions that determine it.

More specifically, first four articles focus on the professional teacher and the ways in which he/she can be empowered to get involved in procedures that could contribute to his/her professional development.

Maria Mamoura, in her article, *Re-negotiation of teachers' conceptions as a means of professional development in history teaching*, deals with the history teachers' perceptions of history as an academic and school subject, and the importance of these perceptions for their teaching choices and practices, decisions and the ways of addressing the subject in general. She thus explores the shifts in conceptions of history as an academic and teaching subject from the modern to postmodern thinking, which make today the importance of these perceptions more critical. The article examines whether and to what extent teachers are aware of and follow these shifts to have some new points of reference to renegotiate their perceptions. The basic conclusion is that history teachers renew their teaching practices and develop professionally when negotiating their initial perceptions comparing them with relative trends and shifts in order to transform them in whole or in part.

In his article *Transitional school-based program of teachers' professional development in Greece: the role of the Teachers' School Assembly and the School Advisor*, Nikolaos Graikos proposes alternative models for teachers' professional development in a transitional context, as the educational conditions in Greece are not mature for fully participatory teachers' training models. After highlighting the problems of current professional development and training programs, the author concludes that the key disadvantage of centrally planned programs (imposed in a top-down way) is that they do not take into account the real needs of teachers. These transitional models, which he suggests, for teachers' professional development, arise from the combination of international bibliographic standards and the realistic conditions of the Greek educational system.

An interesting networking perspective is presented by Chrysa Terezaki, the coordinator of the Scientific Network of Adult Education in Crete, in her article *The PARTICIPATORY DIALOGUE CAMPAIGN "We Say NO to What Pollutes and Dies Us ...we say YES to Life": An Action Plan for the Development of a Scientific Organization*. The author presents a community action plan based on the principles and practices of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. The article focuses on the processes through which

the Campaign evolved into a real "learning journey" for all participants and collaborators (individuals and social groups / structures), as its implementation was a learning process that was built on a very serious strategic community plan. In particular, we are following a community-based campaign, backed by the Scientific Network of Adult Education in Crete, and moving towards a critically liberating prospect, which allows all members and organizations that have participated to experience the ability to express themselves and take initiative along with partners - volunteers sharing a common vision, that of critical questioning of their assumptions that emerged when they began to co-create in the context of the Campaign. Finally, the essential value of this campaign is that it has enabled -along with the lived experience and testing of the personal boundaries of the participants - the realization of the necessity to activate inactive educational and cultural structures forgotten so far by the State.

The following two articles discuss the use of action research in teacher education (initial or continuing) and the benefits that can be derived from it.

The focus on research in initial teacher education and the benefits that can arise from this focus discuss the first article, entitled *Student Teachers' Conception of Research-based Knowledge and Experience of Coherence in a new Teacher Education Program*. Annfrid R. Steele, from the Department of Education, UiT-The Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø, refers to the perspectives offered by knowledge based on practical research to an initial teacher education program. The author focuses on the ways research-based knowledge is discussed amongst student teachers and on the ways student teachers describe coherency within coursework and practical placement periods, with regard to research-based knowledge. Finally, the author discusses prerequisites for the student teachers to carry out and use research in practice.

In the second article of this section, entitled *Professional development of university teacher trainers through organizational reconstruction: an action research study*, Rivka Glaubman, Ettie Ornan and Hananyah Glaubman present a training program for teacher educators at the Bar Ilan University in Israel that had as its basic aim to improve participating teacher educators' professionalism. This is a program that used action research. Program's evaluation was based on data discussed with all participants in a cooperative and reflective context and lasted three years -as the program was reconstructed- and contributed to its improvement. In the findings, the authors focus on the prospects for professional improvement that an action research-based training program provides to the participants.

The last three articles bring us to the school area, highlighting important parameters that determine their orientation, focusing on the leading role that can be taken not only by teachers but also by students themselves in a different organization of the educational process.

A team of teachers, Gkaras Georgios, Costaridis Panayiotis, Dimitris Yiatas, Vlassi Maria, Stamatia Pashaliori, in their article *Studying Complex Systems in School. An inquiry based method*

utilizing the multi-agent software NetLogo, present an action research program on the possibility of introducing the subject of Information Systems in combination with learning based on research at a junior high school in Athens. The authors, having analyzed the worksheets and questionnaires of the students, as well as the comments of the teachers who attended or participated in the lessons, present the dynamics developed in classrooms by the use of these models. They highlight the opportunities offered by NetLogo models to the students who have used them in the school's ICT lab to improve their understanding of complex systems but also to engage in scientific thinking by asking scientific questions, creating and running models, getting answers and presenting their experiments and their results in the classroom.

In her article *The Contribution of Action Research to the Introduction of Historical Education in Kindergarten*, Kyriaki Fardi refers to the relation between historical education and the modern kindergarten, to the details of this relationship and to "action research" as a scientific methodology and educational practice. Action Research processes important tools for observing and evaluating educational interventions with historical orientation, for enriching and refreshing educational content, and methods for approaching the past in kindergarten. The article raises questions about the identity of historical education in the modern kindergarten. It focuses on features of action research (such as its cooperative and participatory character and its formative and reflective nature) and on specific examples that link research to educational interventions. It concludes that action research contributes in many ways to the integration of history as a social science into the teaching process in kindergarten and facilitates teachers to explore and enrich their work.

Antiopi Fratzi, in her article *Boys v Girls. From antagonism to empathy – Researching and empowering students' voice*, presents a research she conducted as the Headmistress of a primary school in Athens. The main aim of her research was to explore the voice of pupils. Starting from various episodes that showed the tension between boys and girls in the school and using a questionnaire drawn up by the pupils who attended the D and E classes of the Primary School themselves (aged 9-11), she and the pupils gathered evidence that helped pupils to reflect on their stereotyped behaviors and to realize the need for change and greater empathy towards the other. The research also helped the participants to reflect on school policies and gave pupils the opportunity for active participation in the school community.