International Conference
Educational Change in the Global Context
Prague, 30th August – 4th September 2010

Call for Proposals

The conference is organized by **Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Education**, in collaboration with the **Czech Comparative Education Society** (CCES).

Conference theme: Educational Change in the Global Context

Educational landscapes around the world have changed recently. Particularly during the last two decades, after the world bipolarity was broken down into global processes which influenced educational transformation, not only in post-socialist countries. The impact of globalisation has challenged every level of education systems. The conference will focus on the key questions: How does globalisation influence education in world regions, states, and localities? Is the multi-polarity of the world reflected in education? How could we reconcile both, gaining knowledge and supporting humanity and social justice in a new paradigm and design of education?

The conference intends to identify and to compare key processes and approaches in changing education, ensuring the development of a knowledge-based society. How do changes affect national educational systems and educational policies around the world? Are changing social demands considered by educational institutions, particularly by schools? What models of schooling and education reflect the contemporary and future world? Does the school curriculum correspond to contemporary levels of knowledge, not avoiding human and cultural values in the social and personal identity development? What are effects of supranational political strategies and limits of actual national policies in education? Which new approaches and educational models have enabled overcoming the fragility of the contemporary world and global crises? Is education endangered by the present global economic recession? Are research methodologies sensitive enough to reflect real educational issues? Are educational theories and research findings helpful for educational policy and practice?

The twenty years anniversary of the collapse of totality in former socialist countries, including our country, offers an opportunity to reflect – together with scholars from the world regions and countries – changes and transforming processes in education. We invite scholars and researchers from whole world to propose presentation papers, posters, and symposia addressing the theme of the conference, and related to educational issues in international comparative or national perspectives.

Prague, situated in the heart of Europe and on the crossroads of historical pathways, has created a spiritual, cultural, and intellectual milieu for international discourse. Prague, with its rich educational tradition, represented not only by Charles University (established in 1348), but together with the recent development of education and research in the field, is a suitable place to review changing education in the global perspective. In 1992, Prague hosted 8th WCCES Congress under the sponsorship of the President, Václav Havel. The congress, first one after the "Velvet revolution", reopened communication among educationalists from all over the world. Further development of the dialogue and exchange of knowledge, ideas, and evidence of ongoing processes in education will continue in Prague again. See you in August 2010, maybe on the way from the CESE conference in Uppsala, or from ECER conference in Helsinki.

Welcome to Prague!

Thematic sessions: Unpacking the conference theme

The presentations will be assigned into one of the five thematic sections that further specify the conference theme and issues we wish to emphasize during the conference.

1. Responses of educational systems to global challenges, and the role of comparative education today
Current understanding of the world is often labelled as global. The civilized world is interconnected by numerous common issues, e.g. environmental, economical, political, or communicational. Globalisation intervenes in world regions, nations, and localities, not avoiding the lives of human beings. The transition of educational models, strategies of educational policies, supranational frameworks and standards, as well as trans-national networking of educators find common responses to global challenges. However, the real world is multi-polar. According to this reality, education reflects different perspectives, and is culturally relative, more than universal. Does the cultural plurality represent a threat to global goals and perspectives of social justice and equity in education, or do the homologisation processes treat cultural diversity, national, and human identity? How do, if at all, educational systems find a balance between global challenges and national or local perspectives? What is the role of comparative education in the globalized, culturally pluralistic world today?

2. Educational transformation after the collapse of totalitarian regimes
The end of the Cold War changed the world map dramatically. The restoration of democracy in countries of the former Eastern Block has influenced almost all societal life, including education. Education has been affected by extraordinarily large changes, reaching all levels of the educational system in each of its various dimensions – the legislation, structure of the system as a whole, management and quality control, financing, institutions, curriculum, and teacher professionalism. For many obstacles, the enthusiasm and exceptional speed of spontaneous changes fell after an early, short

transitional period. The vision of the broad and deep educational reform was affected by nostalgia, and trends of restoration or reactive steering, and ad-hoc decisions. In the context of radical societal and economic changes, education was never a priority of the government, nor a subject of public discussion. New impulses came from the global common space of education. Reforming processes intensified in the early 2000's, when development of the knowledge based society came onto the educational scene. Post-socialist countries, together with others, are finding new educational strategies in the transforming world. What have been the most significant educational changes in post-totalitarian countries? Which common trends and directions can be traced in the process of educational transformation? Are there comparable trends and directions in post-totalitarian young democracies, and in other democratic countries? Which specific experience of the former could be useful for education development in overall education transformation?

3. School change for real improvement

The role of school in civilized society is central. School is a pillar of the institutional construction of society. The traditionally recognized role of the school is to transmit cultural and social experience, introduce social norms, and patterns of citizenship to new coming generations. Contemporary school recognises that its role is not only to educate children, but also to provide a stimulating environment, a democratic community, and opportunities for interest activities. School today is multifunctional, according to changes in the socio-cultural environment, and for the increasing importance of education in lifelong learning. Unlimited access to information, openness, and plurality of society, erosion of ethical and spiritual values, and demands of certain social groups, global "mass culture", and other social phenomena made a pressure on school. At the same time, ties within the community weaken. An increasing number of children are deprived of the family decomposition, and the style of family life losing safety and care. Social pathologies, such as drugs, alcoholism, criminality, and violence penetrate schools. Personal development and socialisation are being stressed as a priority task of the school. The school has to cope with the diverse needs of a heterogeneous student population, to create a secure environment for learning and children's cultivation. Many schools extend opportunities for leisure and/or prolong the school day. The social/ethical function of the school, and support for inclusion and social justice, are extremely important. The school becomes a basic element of the infrastructure for lifelong education and the most accessible element of civil society. The management style has to be based on participation and partnerships in the school and community. What school models or alternatives could fit contemporary demands of society and individuals? How do support structures enable school improvement? Do different approaches, such as differentiation and personalization, co-operative learning, and others help the school improvement, especially improving students' learning?

4. Changing approaches to curriculum and curriculum policy

The curriculum of general compulsory education was based on the transmission of knowledge, selected from science disciplines, arts and humanities, and technology, combined with a little physical and practical training. Traditionally, the school (context independent) and non school (context dependent) knowledge were separated. Selected school knowledge was structured into teaching subjects. Change of orientation of the school from its traditional role of transmitting knowledge to learning skills and methods of how to process, interpret, and apply information is supposed to be essential. How to learn and develop knowledge, how to solve problems, how to live together and understand others, how to form one's own identity by personal and social development, it is newly framed curriculum conception encompassing aims, content, methods, means, and organisation of teaching processes and ways of evaluation. The curriculum is

focused on the development of key competencies (KC) not being neglected in necessary equipment for well-being in life. KC go beyond subject-related knowledge, and constitute forms of know-how, rather than of know-what. Competences should be regarded as a general ability, based on knowledge, experience, values, and dispositions which a person has developed through engagement with educational practices. KC are relevant to the whole of the population, and convenient with values and conventions of society. There are various explanations and settings of KC. The regard for key competencies is apparent in educational policy, e.g. in the European Union, where following a set of principal domains of KC was suggested to be included in the curriculum of general education: communication in the mother tongue; communication in foreign languages; ICT; numeracy and competences in mathematics, science and technology; entrepreneurship; interpersonal and civic competencies, learning to learn, and general culture. Two KC deserved greater attention – foreign languages and digital literacy. Theoretical discourse concerning curriculum conception and KC continues. How to develop a balanced curriculum of general education, not omitting basic knowledge, as well as KC development? Are boundaries among knowledge domains and between school and non-school knowledge critical for the development of key competencies? Can KC be taught, or is it the learner's matter? How to asses KC, and certify them? Could schools be autonomous, implementing CK into curricula, and developing their own setting of the content, according to local conditions and demands?

5. Interrelation of educational research and educational policy: The real partnership or hidden animosity?

The usefulness of educational research for educational policy, and on the contrary, the acceptance of the research findings by the policy-makers is an evergreen of discourses in both, research and policy communities. The lack of trust in political decisions on the side of researchers, and the criticism of the irrelevancy of educational research have not been omitted. Educational research defends itself by researching educational policy, and educational policy has the power to withdraw or to decrease the support of educational research. The asymmetry of the relation seems to be obvious. A specificity of the educational research lies in its interaction with educational policy and practice. The production of scientific knowledge in education could be user-inspired, and bringing evidences applied in priorities setting, strategies, plans of development, and practical measures of educational policy. Exploration and explanation of real educational issues has potential for intervention in educational reality, mediated by educational policy. Educational policy is usually more incremental and context dependent, rather than a rational quest for the most appropriate alternative and course of action. Some policy decisions are made arbitrarily and illogically. The policy is different in different contexts, composed by individuals, groups, and institutions. The interests and aims of actors of policy making are more often conflicting than consensual. The advantage is on the side of more powerful actors, equipped with stronger "voices", creating rules. Similarities between policy processes and games are visible. However, evidence based policy could establish communication with educational research, and accept objective arguments. How to establish a regular mechanism of communication and interaction between educational policy and educational research? What forms of interactions (councils, forums, networks, media discourse, etc.) are the most effective? How far can priorities and strategies of educational policy be influenced by research evidence? What kind of evidence would help to balance political decision, and a better course of action? How do supra-national or sub-national actors of educational policy contribute to the dialogue with educational research? Are contemporary political responses to present economic recession based on evidence from educational research?

Formats of presentation

Papers, posters, and symposia are welcomed for submission in the conference.

For presentation, we welcome:
a) Theoretical explanations and critical analyses of different concepts, related to the five main thematic sessions of the conference;
b) Papers presenting research findings addressing the topic of the conference. Research could be based on any type of methodology – be it quantitative, qualitative, or mixed approach. The research may be based on national or international data; comparative research would be particularly welcomed.

Individual paper
The paper is submitted by one person, and could have up to 3 co-authors named on it. The topic of the paper shall correspond to the topic of one of the five thematic sessions. Timing is normally 15–20 minutes for presentation, and 5–10 minutes for discussion and questions from the audience. Papers will be grouped in 90-minute sessions.
Papers shall be submitted through the conference website.

Poster
The poster is a graphical presentation which will be displayed at the conference. A poster is submitted by one author, plus up to three co-authors. Presenters will be asked to be available during the special Poster Session, to answer questions of conference participants.

Symposium
A Symposium consists of at least 3 linked papers, exploring the same issue from various perspectives, and in more detail. It normally lasts 90 minutes, but can be extended, depending on the number of papers. The Symposium needs to be handed in as one submission, with a description of the Symposium, and a list of all abstracts for all papers linked to it (200 word abstract per paper). A Chairperson and a Discussant, who can offer a critique of the symposium as a whole, also need to be named on the proposal.

All proposal abstracts should be submitted through the centralized submission system. The on-line submission system will open mid-November 2009, and may be accessed through the conference web site at **http://EdConf2010.pedf.cuni.cz**

Important dates

28 February 2010 – Deadline for the registration and submission of presentation proposals
31 March 2010 – Acceptance notification (decisions regarding proposals evaluation, sent by e-mail to registered participants)
30 April 2010 – deadline for payment of the conference fee.
30 May 2010 – final program of the conference posted on the website
30 August 2010 – beginning of the conference

For Further Information

Charles University, Faculty of Education, looks forward to your participation in the conference. For further information, please visit our website, or e-mail your inquiries to us.

web site: **http://EdConf2010.pedf.cuni.cz**
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