

## *Book Review*

# Contribution of Research to the Improvement of Adult Education Quality<sup>1</sup>

The collection of papers *The Contribution of Research to the Improvement of Adult Education Quality* is published by the Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy (Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade), University of Würzburg and Dublin City University. This collection of papers is a result of cooperation established within the ESRALE (European Studies and Research in Adult Learning and Education) project which, in the broadest sense, tends to foster cooperation between different parties in the study of adult learning and education on European level. The editors of this collection are Prof Aleksandra Pejatović, Department for Pedagogy and Andragogy, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia, Prof Regina Egetenmeyer, Institute for Education, Faculty of Human Sciences, University of Würzburg, Germany and Prof Maria Slowey, Higher Education Research Centre, Dublin City University, Ireland. This publication contains editors' introduction which gives us a valuable description of this collection, 23 papers which are dealing with different aspects and elements of adult learning and education, and short biographies of 38 authors.

The review of this publication can be accessed in at least two ways. First, by defining areas and issues which are treated in it, along with the perspectives from which it is done. Two, by reviewing the methodological settings presented in papers. These two possibilities in themselves hint at the wealth of this publication. When it comes to the areas of adult education, this publication covers a variety of areas and problems, such as adult illiteracy, elementary adult education, vocational adult education, career and professional development, career guidance, leisure education, educational policies, education for elderly, prison education, HRD etc. All these issues are viewed through the prism of quality improvement and research methodology. In the next few pages, a very short description of each paper can be found.

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<sup>1</sup> Pejatović, A., Egetenmeyer, R., & Slowey, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Contribution of Research to the Improvement of Adult Education Quality*. Belgrade, Würzburg, Dublin: Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy, Faculty of Philosophy University of Belgrade, University of Würzburg, Dublin City University.

First paper in the publication *Transitions to Work and Higher Education: Listening to What the Graduates Have to Say* by authors Vanna Boffo and Gaia Gioli places the question of the transition from education to work into three theoretical-conceptual giants: transitions, employability and social economy. Also, by focusing on a very sensitive group – young adults, authors provide a number of interesting perspectives on this topic, through the prism of improvement of the guidance measures offered by European Universities.

Next paper *Methodological and Conceptual Issues of Correlating Cognitive and Educational Variables: Example of Relation between Working Memory and Adult Illiteracy/Elementary Education* by author Aleksandar Bulajić explores a very specific topic-working memory with special emphasis on some methodological and conceptual issues in research on working memory. Paper is based on strong theoretical foundations, it considers some issues regarding working memory correlations with literacy and education in relevant research and it also highlights some questions regarding the current research performed by the author.

The paper entitled *Between the European Qualifications Framework and Professionalism in Adult Education: Three Examples Concerning a Problematic Relationship* by Regina Egetenmeyer deals with the issue of professionalization of adult educators in Europe, taking the European Qualification Framework as a starting point of analysis. By associating EQF with some other important approaches, the author questions its repercussion on the important issues of professionalization in adult education.

*Training in Organisation*, the paper by author Paolo Federigni gives us an interesting perspective on adult learning through the lens of learning organization and its perspective on knowledge and learning processes. The author raises a question of this wide area from a very inspirational points of view.

*Quality in Higher Education Career Guidance: Procedures and Processes for the Enhancement of Students' Employability* by Gaia Gioli, Nicoletta Tomei and Carlo Terzaroli deals with a very current topic – career guidance in higher education, and does so through the lens of higher education quality improvement. The authors give some very important proposals for the improvement of career guidance elements, with the aim of responding to the needs and demands of different parties and different needs of these parties.

Consideration of the phenomenon of online education can be found in the paper *New Perspectives in Research of Adults' On Line Learning* by authors Hajdana Glomazić and Vesna Fabian. Through theoretical review on this matter, the authors provide a reader with an insight on the theory/method of connectivism on some very important questions such as e.g. how to measure the effects of

such learning. Also, special attention is given to the question of methodological challenges in the study of adults' online learning.

Another paper about professionalization comes from the author Terez Kleisz. The paper *Current Perspectives for Studying Professions* deals with different theoretical – conceptual perspectives on profession and with European trends related to the professionalization in adult education. By placing this issue within the quality discourse it points to the mixed views on the profession and the conflict of expectations and relationships of factors that shape the profession.

The paper *Prison Education as Perceived by Recidivists* by Branislava Knežić and Maja Savić gives insight into prison education in Serbia. The paper presents the results of research carried out in Serbia on this group and on how they see and understand the prison education (participation in prison education, motivation for participation, etc.). Finally, proposals for the improvement of the quality of prison education and its potential regarding achievement of some wider benefits are given.

Consideration of Internet as a research tool can be found in the paper *Quality of Adult Education Research Conducted through the Global Computer Network* by author Bojan Ljujić. The author focuses on one aspect of the use of the Internet: Internet as a tool by which research in adult education is conducted. Based on theoretical concepts and through content analysis, the author considers a few specific elements of this aspect of Internet use, and based on the results, provides us with some conclusions regarding quality of adult educational research conducted through the Internet.

The issues of career development of teachers and research of career development of teachers can be found in the paper *Recent Studies of Teachers' Career Development – from Methodological Perspective* by author Milica Marušić. The author analyzes four empirical studies of teachers' career in terms of important research elements: methodology, paradigm, method and content. Based on this analysis, important insights from a methodological standpoint and some issues related to encouraging the professional development of teachers are outlined.

In the paper *Search for Differences in Learning and Education during the Aging Process*, authors Snežana Medić and Zorica Milošević analyze the issue of aging from an interesting research resource – by analyzing students' final research papers defended at the Chair of Andragogy in Belgrade, and by analyzing how the aging process is seen and explored in those papers. Double value can be found in this paper regarding the improvement of quality of education of elderly – one from the analysis of the methodological concept of research in these papers and the second – from the results of students' research papers.

Consideration of questions of educational policy comes with the paper *Diffusion of Adult Education Policies in the European Education Space* by Jovan Miljković and Šefika Alibabić. The paper is focused on identifying and analyzing issues of the transferable aspects of European adult education policy, and on identifying and analyzing active mechanisms of European adult education policy's diffusion on the level of individual countries. Also, methodological aspect offers a wealth of methods and techniques which are considered.

The paper *Research Tools and Their Impact on Our Understanding of Learning in Programs of Adult Education?* by author Mihaela Mitescu Manea directly associates different approaches to research and their relationship with understanding of quality in adult education programs. Special attention is given to socio-cultural perspective. The paper discusses the results gained in an interview-based study on students of bachelor degree programs related to perceived learning outcomes and satisfaction with learning.

*Challenges and Opportunities for Innovations in Learning City – Region Developments in Pécs, Hungary. New Perspectives for Community Development and Cooperative Learning* by author Balázs Németh deals with learning regions by providing readers with insight into their emergence and development, and by representing different impacts for the idea itself, placing this issue into the wider European and global context. The paper provides a detailed insight into the Pécs City Region Learning Forum through three different fields, and highlights the various challenges and opportunities of this approach.

The paper *How Do We Learn Leisure Meaning? – Leisure Education Research and Models* by author Tamara Nikolić Maksić focuses on key issues in leisure research from the perspective of leisure education of adults which is also raised with regard to some other important aspects and elements of education. Special attention is given to the question of leisure meaning. Author considers a model for encouragement of exploration, learning and creating the different leisure meanings, as a valuable model for improvement of the quality of leisure education in adults.

Improvement of the quality of education in the paper *Participatory Research and Learning in a Community: Two Sides of the Same Process?* by Violeta Orlović Lovren and Željko Bralić is viewed on the basis of consideration of advantages and challenges of participatory research and learning. Also, important resources on this topic are analysis of the literature and practical example from one project realized in Serbia.

*Empirical Research in the Human Resource Development – Quality Improvement of the Field* by Kristinka Ovesni and Nataša Matović is a paper from HRD field. Through content analysis of empirical research published in three journals, the authors focus on several questions: frequency and types of empirical research

in HRD, key research themes. and different methodological characteristics in these studies. Based on the results, the paper deals with research trends in this field, but also with some important proposals for further development of this area.

An interesting approach regarding the educational needs analysis comes with the paper *On Adult Learning and Education Via Research into Educational Needs* by Aleksandra Pejatović. The focus of the analysis are four approaches into adult educational needs, a very complex research phenomena. The value, especially informative value of such approaches to educational need analysis is being analyzed with a special focus on adult education quality.

The authors of the paper *Lifeline Method in Research of Adult Learning and Career: Towards the Quality* Kristina Pekeč, Dubravka Mihajlović, and Edisa Kecap are investigating the connection between learning and adult education and careers, and examining the possibility of using the method that was not much used in a scientific context – the lifeline method. The authors show the informative value of this method regarding the mentioned relationship and highlight advantages and disadvantages of using the lifeline method through the prism of improving the quality of education.

The paper *Critical Discourse Analysis in Adult Education. What We Mean When We Talk about Lifelong Learning?* by Katarina Popović and Maja Maksimović focuses on critical discourse analysis, with regard to the current dilemmas related to the critical discourse analysis and some important concepts and their multiple meanings – language, ideology, and discourse. Also, the authors provide us with the example of the use of critical discourse analysis on the example of lifelong learning.

An interesting comparative study can be found in the paper *Innovations and Opportunities for Vulnerable Population and Community Learning Centres in India: A Comparative Study* by author Rajesh. The paper puts in focus an Extension in Higher Education of University of Delhi, which is one of the important sites of lifelong learning activities. This paper compares Community Learning centers of Thailand, Bangladesh, Japan and those established in India within the Vistaar. The paper considers possibilities of life improvement of vulnerable population by educational activities.

Authors of the paper *Inner Quality of the Teaching – Learning Process – A Learners' Perspective on the Role of the Teacher in the Development of the Wider Benefits of Liberal Adult Education*, Simona Sava, Bettina Thöne-Geyer, Samantha Duncan, Jyri Manninen are dealing with the role of teachers in the development of wider benefits of liberal adult education. Special attention is given to some elements of the wider research within “Benefits of Lifelong Learning” study. The

paper indicates the steps taken in qualitative analysis of the answers to an open question from three countries: Romania, Germany and England.

The paper *Building Educational Synergies within Schools: A Revised Approach to Lifelong Learning in Europe* by authors George K. Zarifis and Achilleas Papadimitriou considers a new agenda for schools that involves some new roles for schools and promotes the idea of lifelong learning. The authors analyze studies and policy documents and literature and consider possibilities for establishment of learning partnerships within schools. Special attention is given to the determination of the purpose of the learning processes within schools as a crucial element for the idea of schooling as a space for building educational synergies.

Even a modest display of each article indicates the broad range of issues considered by the authors in the field of adult education. Connection between science and practice, quality of methodology and improvement of the quality of adult education found in this collection are a valuable resource of information and ideas and inspiration for further development of adult education. This publication should be considered by anyone interested in research of adult education on the international scene, especially by those interested in research trends and problems in this field and those concerned with the issues of quality of adult education.

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