

ATEE 2018 Spring Conference

‘Designing Teacher Education and Professional Development for the 21st Century: Current Trends, Challenges and Directions for the Future’

Bialystok, 7-9 June 2018

1. Background

The reality of teachers’ work in the 21st century is changing rapidly. Bringing technology into schools, the increasing complexity of learning and teaching in diverse classrooms, the growing societal expectations of students’ higher achievements and the need for tailoring and implementing innovative teaching practices are just some of the factors driving this change. Another important factor is a strong movement towards ‘evidence-based teaching’. Thus, teacher education and professional development arise as a substantial means to prepare teachers to confront these and other challenges in the teaching profession. With this in mind, the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE), in cooperation with the University of Bialystok (UoB), organized the 2018 Spring Conference on ‘Designing Teacher Education and Professional Development for the 21st Century: Current Trends, Challenges and Directions for the Future’. The conference was held from 7 to 9 June 2018 at the University of Bialystok in Bialystok, Poland.

The main aims of the conference were to (1) address the major trends, challenges and strategies for 21st century-oriented teacher education and professional development; (2) provide valuable and fresh insights from research studies and examples of best practices from Europe and all over the world on the strengths and limitations of different models, strategies, approaches and policies related to teacher education and professional development in and for the changing times. The conference received the Patronage of the Ministry of National Education, the Committee on Education Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Rector of the University of Bialystok – Robert Ciborowski, and the President of Bialystok City – Tadeusz Truskolaski.

The conference was supported with the funds from the Polish Minister of Science and Higher Education for the dissemination of science (No. 550/P-DUN/2018).

The conference received a significant interest from researchers from all over the world. Over 150 delegates, in particular from Poland, the United Kingdom, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, Belarus, Serbia, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Portugal, Croatia, Hungary, Australia and Japan attended the event.

2. Conference overview

Opening session

Marta Kowalczyk-Walędziak, Chair of the Organizing Committee, officially welcomed the conference participants. The next speeches to welcome participants to the event were delivered by Mirosław

Sobecki – Dean of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology of the University of Bialystok, Izabela Świącicka – Vice-Rector of the University of Bialystok, and Åsa Morberg – the President of the ATEE.

The second part of the opening session included two presentations by the ATEE representatives (Åsa Morberg – the President of the ATEE; Ronny Smet – RDCs coordinator) on the aims, missions and main activities of the association.

Plenary sessions

The first plenary session was chaired by Marta Kowalczuk-Wałędziak, Davide Parmigiani and Gracienne Lauwers. The first keynote speech on ***Still Building a Better World? Research Reflections on Identity and Teacher Education*** was delivered by Professor Amélia Lopes from the University of Porto, Portugal. Professor Lopes presented research findings and reflections on the role of identities and the ecological system in educational change. She focused on three key issues: teacher education environments and main challenges of the teaching profession; collective identity in the teaching profession and CPD; research in the teaching profession and the identity of teacher educators.

The second plenary session was chaired by Marta Kowalczuk-Wałędziak and Davide Parmigiani and included a keynote lecture by Professor Gracienne Lauwers on ***Reshaping the Teacher Training Process to Get the Education System for a Knowledge Society***. Professor Lauwers described the new teacher training system introduced by the Flemish Community of Belgium by focusing on: logic of the reforms for teacher recruitment, development and support for teacher education, and the remaining challenges.

After this keynote speech, the main results of the Erasmus+ project ‘Introducing Modules on Law and Rights in Programmes of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences: a Contribution to Building Rights-Based Education Systems in Countries in Transition’ were presented by its main representatives. Then, the participants had the possibility to take part in a workshop ***A Teacher and a Researcher: What are the Possibilities and Challenges of Teacher Research?*** delivered by James Underwood from the University of Northampton, UK.

The third plenary session was chaired by Alicja Korzeniecka-Bondar and Ronny Smet and included a keynote lecture on ***Central European Teacher Education Amidst Global Flows*** by Professor Hana Cervinkova from the University of Lower Silesia (ULS) in Wrocław, Poland. With her presentation, Professor Cervinkova argued for the need to ground preservice teacher education in critical understanding of diversity and social justice in order to respond to the challenging conditions of globalization and its implications for schools and communities.

Parallel sessions

The conference theme was developed during paper presentations and discussions within 16 parallel sessions on: **01.** Teacher Education for Diversity; **02.** Teachers’ Digital Competences; **03.** Reforming

Teacher Education: Standards and Qualifications; **04.** Teacher Education: Policy and Law; **05.** Teacher Educators; **06-07.** New Strategies for Improving the Quality of Teachers and Teacher Education; **08.** Becoming a Teacher; **09.** Towards the Development of Teacher Identity; **10.** ICT and Digital Resources in Teacher Education; **11.** Dialogue, Collaboration and Teacher Learning Communities; **12.** Teacher Education Policies; **13.** Teachers' Professional Development Needs; **14.** Models and Strategies of In-service Teacher Education; **15.** Teachers' Everyday Work; **16.** Dealing with Challenging Students – Cyber bullying in Education.

Poster session, students' exhibition and social events

Throughout the conference, the participants also had an opportunity to take part in the poster session and students' exhibition, which presented students' interpretations of the main subthemes of the conference in graphic and spatial forms. The participants could also benefit from social events (e.g., a Chechen dance show, a Białowieża forest trip), which enabled them to discover the unique cultural and natural climate of Białystok and the whole region.

Closing remarks

The closing session included speeches by Wioleta Danilewicz, Vice-dean of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology of the University of Białystok, Åsa Morberg – the President of the ATEE and Marta Kowalczyk-Wałędziak, Chair of the Organizing Committee, which summarized the key messages of the conference and strongly called for the need to organize more international conferences on teacher education and professional development.

3. Conference evaluation

The participants were asked to fill out the evaluation questionnaire including 11 items related to the general organization of the conference, the conference venue, the programme, keynote speeches, the workshop, the time allocated to discussion, and conference materials. The participants were asked to evaluate each item by using a 5-point Likert scale. In addition, the participants were also asked to provide any other comments/suggestions for follow-up. Fifty one participants decided to deliver their feedback. The results of the evaluation are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Evaluation of the conference (n=51)

Item	Excellent		Very good		Good		Poor		Very poor		Not applicable		M*
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
The general organization of the conference	37	72.5	11	21.6	3	5.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.66
Conference venue and its facilities	33	64.7	17	33.3	1	2.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.62
Conference timing and duration	31	60.8	14	27.5	5	9.8	1	2.0	0	0	0	0	4.47
Conference programme	26	51.0	16	31.4	8	15.7	1	2.0	0	0	0	0	4.31

Conference Summary Report

First Keynote Speaker	19	37.3	20	39.2	5	9.8	3	5.9	0	0	4	8.8	4.17
Second Keynote Speaker	24	47.1	16	31.4	5	9.8	1	2.0	0	0	5	9.8	4.36
Third Keynote Speaker	29	56.9	12	23.5	4	7.8	1	2.0	1	2.0	4	8.8	4.42
Workshop facilitator	26	51.0	7	13.7	4	7.8	0	0	0	0	14	27.5	4.59
The time allocated to discussion	19	38.0	20	40.0	11	22.0	0	0	0	0	1	2.0	4.16
The conference materials	27	52.9	17	33.3	7	13.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.39
Contact with the conference organizers	37	72.5	11	21.6	2	3.9	1	2.0	0	0	0	0	4.65

*Those who indicated N/A were omitted when calculating the mean for each of the items.

Overall, the vast majority of the participants found the organization of the ATEE 2018 Spring Conference to be excellent or very good in all aspects. In addition, the participants were also invited to provide any other comments and suggestions on conference organization. Below are presented some of their comments:

- *Thank you for an excellent conference. I really learned a lot!*
- *One of the best organised conferences I have ever been to. Congratulations should be given to Marta Kowalczyk and the entire Bialystok team for the superb and engaging conference that they ran.*
- *Thank you very much for hospitality and chance to meet a lot of interesting people and talk to them.*
- *I am specially satisfied with the speed and content of the organiser's answers, the kindness of the organisers meeting in person, the national variegation of the professional society.*
- *Perfect organization!*
- *The new Faculty with this very comfortable and well-equipped rooms was excellent.*
- *It was an honour for me to take part in this conference! Thank you so much!*
- *It was the best conference I have ever been! Fantastic organization, amazing atmosphere, very strong quality of Keynote's presentations.*
- *The food was excellent, the programme of the conference was perfect, the organizers were very nice and available.*

However, there were also some participants who commented that the time allocated for Erasmus+ project was too long.