

Editorial

The third issue of volume fifteen of the CEPS Journal is not a focus issue. It is devoted to thematically diverse papers by 31 authors from six different countries: Indonesia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Croatia and Slovenia. The papers discuss various educational areas, including science education, arts education, preschool teacher education, educational psychology, pedagogy and educational leadership practices, reflecting the broad scope of research in education. The CEPSj issue concludes with a book review.

Recent research in education emphasises the complexity of learning, development and leadership across different educational levels and disciplines. Studies examining student goals suggest that choices made in upper secondary education have a strong influence on higher education goals, highlighting the importance of timely and well-informed guidance during critical transitions. Research on science literacy and scientific creativity in primary school students indicates gaps in procedural knowledge but also shows that integrating the arts into STEM curricula can promote problem solving and creative thinking. In arts and music education, experiential learning is proving to be key, and activities such as remodelling artworks, providing inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities, and engaging students in distance learning – especially during a pandemic – have been shown to promote deeper understanding and motivation, with digital tools and the home environment playing an important role. Teachers' beliefs and professional practices are critical to promoting developmentally appropriate teaching, while targeted professional development can improve the implementation of adequate teaching approaches. In higher education, distance education in emergencies raises ethical and practical challenges related to equity, quality and assessment. Finally, research on academic leadership shows that personality traits, particularly conscientiousness and openness, significantly predict effective leadership practices. Taken together, these studies underscore the interplay of student competencies, teacher beliefs, instructional design, learning environments and leadership in shaping educational outcomes, providing important evidence for policy, curriculum development and teacher education.

The first paper in this issue, *Examining the Dynamic Nature of Pupils' Educational Aspirations: A Longitudinal Mixed-Model Study* by Boris Jokić and Zrinka Ristić Dedić, describes the results of a fully integrated longitudinal mixed-model study examining the nature of changes in, and interaction between, the upper secondary and higher education aspirations of Croatian pupils. The results indicate significant changes in upper secondary aspirations and stable higher education aspirations over time. Qualitative analyses indicate five patterns of

upper secondary education aspirations and three patterns of higher education aspirations. Analysis of the interaction between aspirations at different educational levels suggests that upper secondary aspiration mediates students' aspiration for higher education. These results suggest that special effort is necessary in order to inform students about their educational options at both the upper secondary and higher education levels.

Written by Matija Purkat and Iztok Devetak and entitled *Fifth-Grade Students' Science Competencies: An Opportunity to Rethink Further Education for Science Competence*, the second paper deals with the science competences of fifth-grade students (ages 10 and 11 years) in Slovenia. The science content researched in this study comprises chemical concepts, such as aqueous solutions, states of matter and nutrition. In addition, there is an examination of attitudes towards science and their role in the construction of science competence. The results reveal that procedural knowledge is the least developed aspect among students, while it is also confirmed that attitude components play an important role in interpreting overall science competency test achievements. The authors suggest emphasising a holistic view of the development of science competencies: knowledge, skills and attitude.

The third paper, *Secondary School Students' Response to Learning the Concept of the Destruction and Transformation of an Artwork into Another Artwork in the Visual Arts Class* by Daša Bojc and Robert Potočnik, introduces the concept of destruction and transformation into secondary school art education as a potential way of incorporating conceptual and contemporary artistic practices. Following this aim, secondary school students created an initial artwork (ready-made) as a prerequisite for its subsequent destruction and transformation into a new artwork. The results showed that in-depth discussions of conceptual foundations led to a predominantly positive student attitude towards contemporary artworks. The students did not only understand but also internalised the essence of these artworks, as was vividly reflected in their practical artistic expressions.

The next paper is by Shanaia Marie Fernandez, Pauline Kaye Madelo, Ray Anne Lu Suico, Jas Felicisimo Cane, Joy Magsayo, Mae Capuyan, Nyet Moi Siew and Dharel Acut and is entitled *Thinking What No One Else Has Thought: Investigating the Scientific Creativity of Primary School Students in a Science Class*. It addresses the scientific creativity level of 23 primary school students. The results show that the students have an evenly distributed range of scientific creativity levels: eight have a low scientific creativity level, eight have an intermediate scientific creativity level, and seven have a high scientific creativity level. The students were the most scientifically creative in creative science problem solving. The authors recommend integrating the arts into the STEM curriculum in order to help

develop students' scientific creativity, thus supporting conclusions presented in the second paper of this issue.

Entitled *Primary School Students' Attitudes Towards Distance Music Learning* and authored by Jasna Šulentić Begić, Amir Begić and Daria Kurtić, the fifth paper aimed to determine primary school students' attitudes towards distance music learning. A total of 503 seventh- and eighth-grade students from general education primary schools completed an online survey. The results show that the majority of the students feel that they found suitable conditions for distance music learning, that their parents and school were supportive, that they were satisfied with the digital tools, and that they saw themselves as successful learners. The overwhelming majority of the students believe that they acquire the same knowledge through distance learning as they do at school, and that distance music learning does not require a lot of effort or cause stress.

The sixth paper in this issue is by Misahun Shumetu Taye, Fituma Yadasa Kana and Tesema Regassa Jekil and entitled *Preschool Teachers' Role and Beliefs about Developmentally Appropriate Practice: A Systematic Literature Review*. This review paper examines a total of 14 studies that match the inclusion criteria. The results indicate that preschool teachers play various roles in promoting developmentally appropriate practice: creating a safe and supportive learning environment, providing diverse learning experiences customised to the specific needs and interests of each child, working in collaboration with families to ensure that children receive the necessary support at home, and advocating for the needs of young children and their families. The beliefs of preschool teachers regarding developmentally appropriate practice are attributed to various factors, including their personal experiences as learners, their professional development, the culture of the preschool or school where they work, and the availability of resources and support to implement developmentally appropriate practice. The findings highlight the importance of preschool teachers having a strong understanding of developmentally appropriate practice and being able to implement it effectively in their classrooms. Moreover, it is crucial to provide preschool teachers with professional development opportunities that can enhance their beliefs about developmentally appropriate practice and help them learn how to implement it effectively in preschool settings.

The main goal of next paper, which is entitled *Distance Learning and Teaching in Group Settings at Primary Music Schools in Slovenia* and authored by Jerneja Žnidaršič and Matic Trčko, was to determine music teachers' self-assessment of ICT competences and their use of teaching methods, strategies, techniques and assessment methods. The participants reported no problems using most ICT tools and resources during the Covid-19 pandemic. In general, they

were most confident with videoconferencing tools and least confident when recording explanatory videos unaccompanied by oral explanation. In the planning and implementation of the teaching process, they least frequently used activities of music creation and playing Orff instruments. More specifically, lessons in Music Preparatory most frequently included listening activities, while classes in Music Theory and Solfeggio focused on the transmission of theoretical musical and formal knowledge. Overall, the teachers mainly resorted to synchronous and frontal instruction. In terms of the evaluation and assessment of students' musical abilities, skills and knowledge, they most frequently employed oral assessment, as well as student-produced recordings of rhythmic and melodic exercises.

The eighth paper also deals with aspects of Covid-19 distant learning, focusing on the teaching process in university education studies. Written by Tatjana Hodnik, Janez Vogrinc and Janez Krek and entitled *Are the Benefits of Emergency Remote Education Truly Benefits? Ethical Dilemmas and Research Results on Emergency Remote Education from the Perspective of Prospective Teachers and the Foundations of Pedagogical Study Programmes*, the study presents an analysis of changes in the implementation of the pedagogical process during emergency remote education from the students' perspective, and an examination of the extent to which emergency remote education provided equal opportunities for students. The results show that the success of students in their studies depends on the technical conditions and the environment; that rapid transitions from one type of studying to another (from emergency remote education to hybrid or entirely at the faculty) are not recommended; that the teaching process was based on the concept of face-to-face teaching, partly adapting to different conditions on this basis; and finally, that the "desire for comfort" entered into the assessment of the quality and fairness of the educational process.

The goal of the study presented in the next review paper, entitled *Arts Education for Children with Disabilities: A Systematic Literature Review* by Lia Mareza, Mumpuniarti, Suwarjo, Ali Mustadi and Dinar Sari Eka Dewi, is to provide a knowledge map of the intellectual framework in the field of arts education for students with disabilities. The results of the review indicate the existence of three themes in the research of arts education for children with disabilities, all of which are presented in the paper.

The last paper in this issue of the CEPSj is by Mohammed Ali Assiri and entitled *The Big Five Factors of Personality Traits and Leadership Practices of Academic Department Chairs: A Predictive Study*. As the title suggests, it deals with the big five factors of personality traits that can predict academic department chairs' leadership practices. The results show that different factors (described in the paper) predict different aspects of department chairs' leadership competences.

The study concludes that academic leaders are required to consider personality traits as an important dimension in selecting and assigning academic department chairs and other academic leaders at all levels of higher education institutions.

The present issue concludes with a book review by Nevenka Maras, who discusses the book *Učenci s posebnimi potrebami in medvrstniško nasilje* [Special Needs Students and Peer Violence], written by Milena Košak Babuder, Vesna Bilić, Nika Obed, Tanja Virant and Milena Valenčič Zuljan, published in 2024 by the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, (ISBN 978-961-253-322-9).

IZTOK DEVETAK