



# PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

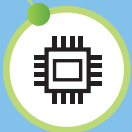


EDITORS

NIKOLETA  
GUTVAJN

JELENA  
STANIŠIĆ

VERA  
RADOVIĆ





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Nikoleta GUTVAJN

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# **PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION**

Editors

Nikoleta GUTVAJN

Jelena STANIŠIĆ

Vera RADOVIĆ

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INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH  
BELGRADE, SERBIA

FACULTY OF PHILOLOGY, PEOPLES' FRIENDSHIP UNIVERSITY OF RUSSIA  
(RUDN UNIVERSITY), MOSCOW, RUSSIA

FACULTY OF TEACHER EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE  
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Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, Bulgaria

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# BUILDING TEACHER COMPETENCE: THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS AND MENTOR TEACHERS

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Tina ŠTEMBERGER

Faculty of Education, University of Primorska, Koper, Slovenia

Sonja ČOTAR KONRAD

Faculty of Education, University of Primorska, Koper, Slovenia

## INTRODUCTION

In today's fast changing world, teachers' roles are constantly changing, as are the expectations of them. Teachers are faced with demands (European Trade Union Committee for Education—ETUCE, 2008) in terms of in-depth subject knowledge, advanced pedagogical skills, reflective practice and ability to adapt teaching to the needs of each individual, as well as to the needs of groups of learners as a whole. Furthermore, teachers need to help students acquire “the skills that are easiest to teach and easiest to test”, also named ‘hard skills’ (Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 2016). More importantly, “teachers must also guide students in acquiring ‘soft skills’, such as ways of thinking (creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making and persisting, self-regulated learning, etc.); ways of working (communication and collaboration); tools for working (including information and communications technologies); skills pertaining to citizenship, life and career; as well as personal and social responsibility for success in modern democracies” (OECD, 2011).

These and other demands require teachers to be highly educated and equipped with the ability to integrate knowledge and handle the complexity of various educational situations (ETUCE, 2008). Therefore, teachers need the competences to constantly innovate and adapt, including critical, evidence-based attitudes that enable them to respond to students' outcomes, new evidence from

inside and outside the classroom, and professional dialogue in order to adapt their own practices (European Commission, 2013a).

Teachers' professional learning is a "continuum starting in initial teacher education, carrying on through the induction phase and continuing throughout the rest of the career" (European Commission, 2013a). The range and complexity of competences required for teaching in the 21st century is so vast that any one individual is unlikely to possess them all (European Commission, 2013a). However, the systems of initial teacher education (ITE) and continuous professional development are considered important components of the acquisition and development of competences that teachers need in a world of rapid social, cultural, economic and technological change.

In this paper, we address the question of building teacher competence within the system of ITE in Slovenia. We first discuss the concept of teacher competence, mostly underpinning it with various European documents (e.g. European Commission, 2013a; OECD, 2011), and then turn to the system of ITE in Slovenia. We point out that the development of teacher competence within the system of ITE is significantly influenced by teacher educators. Teacher educators are a heterogeneous group; however, we focus on two main subgroups: university teachers (i.e. teachers who give lectures at universities) and mentor teachers (teachers who monitor and support student teachers during school placement and other pedagogical practice). We analyse how the two aforementioned groups of teacher educators equip or empower student teachers with the necessary competences.

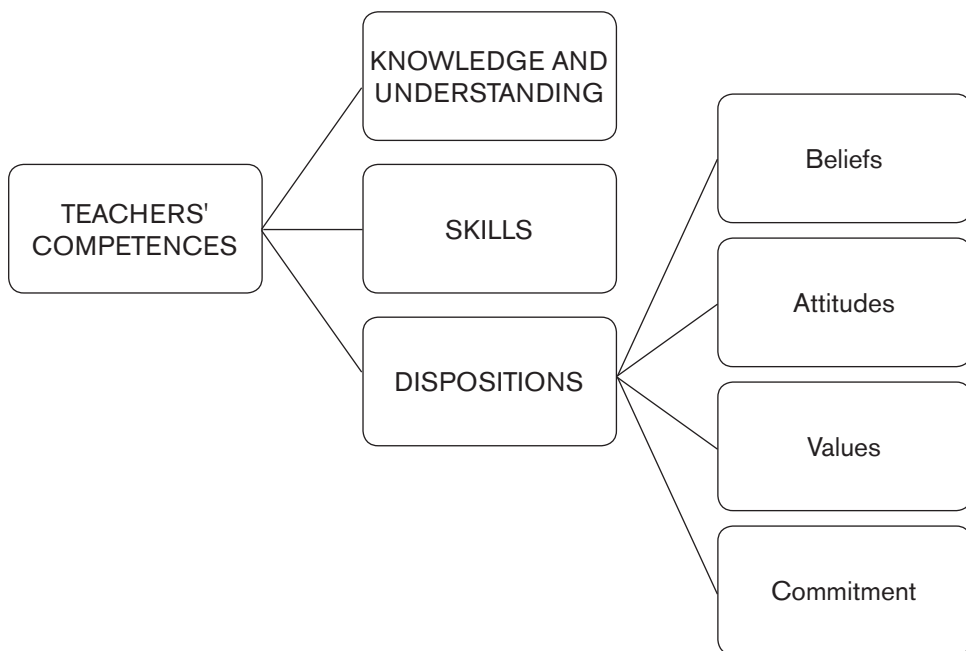
## TEACHER COMPETENCES

Teachers' competences (European Commission, 2013a) represent a complex combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes, leading to effective action in a certain situation. The acquisition and development of competences need to be understood as career-long endeavours (ibid.) Thus, besides ITE, teachers' continuous professional development is highly relevant both for improving educational performance and effectiveness and for enhancing teachers' commitment, identity and job satisfaction (OECD, 2011). In addition, the breaking down of teacher competences into knowledge, attitude, and skills only



serves the analytical purpose of understanding the implications and assumptions that underlie them. It needs to be perfectly clear that competences are essentially dynamic and holistic.

Based on meta-analyses, the European Commission (2013a) prepared a list of required competences for teachers and divided them into three areas: 1) knowledge and understanding, 2) skills and 3) dispositions (beliefs, attitudes, values and commitment).



**Figure 1.** Areas of required teachers' competences  
(adapted from the European Commission, 2013a)

In addition to the outlined areas of required competences, the European Commission (ibid.) also outlined the competences that teachers should possess. We present the proposed competences in Table 1.

**Table 1. Teachers' competences**

(adapted from the European Commission, 2013a, pp. 45-46, 2018)

<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>
Subject matter knowledge
Pedagogical content knowledge implying deep knowledge about the structure of subject matter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ knowledge of tasks, learning contexts, and objectives,</li> <li>▪ knowledge of students' prior knowledge and recurrent, subject-specific learning difficulties,</li> <li>▪ strategic knowledge of instructional methods and curricular materials.</li> </ul>
Pedagogical knowledge (knowledge of teaching and learning processes)
Curricular knowledge (knowledge of subject curricula – e.g. the planned and guided learning of subject-specific contents)
Educational sciences foundations (intercultural, historical, philosophical, psychological and sociological knowledge)
Contextual, institutional, and organisational aspects of educational policies
Issues of inclusion and diversity
Effective use of technologies and innovative use of ICT in learning and teaching (digital literacy, computational thinking, and computational science)
Developmental psychology
Group processes and dynamics, learning theories, and motivational issues
Evaluation and assessment processes and methods
<b>Skills</b>
Planning, managing, and coordinating teaching
Using teaching materials and technologies
Managing students and groups
Monitoring, adapting, and assessing teaching/learning objectives and processes
Collecting, analysing, and interpreting evidence and data (school learning outcomes, external assessments results) for professional decisions and teaching/learning improvement
Using, developing, and creating research knowledge to inform practices
Collaborating with colleagues, parents, and social services
Negotiation skills (social and political interaction with multiple educational stakeholders and actors in various contexts)
Reflective, metacognitive, and interpersonal skills for learning individually and in professional communities
Adapting to educational contexts characterised by multi-level dynamics with cross-influences (from the macro level of government policies to the meso level of school contexts and the micro level of classroom and student dynamics)

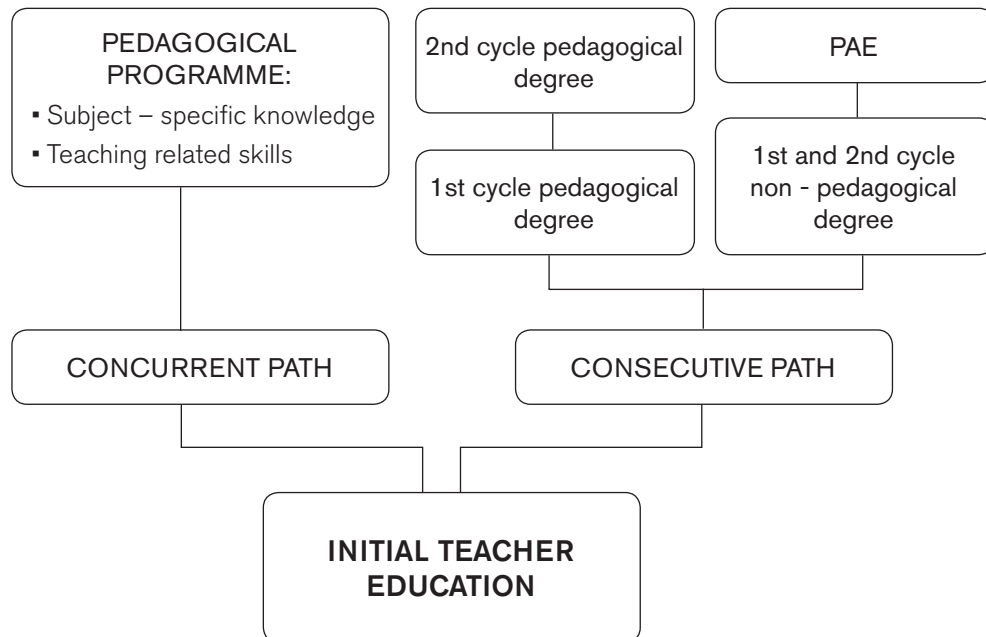
<b>Dispositions: beliefs, attitudes, values and commitment</b>
Epistemological awareness (issues concerning features and historical development of a subject area and its status, as related to other subject areas)
Teaching skills through content
Transferable skills
Dispositions to change, flexibility, ongoing learning and professional improvement, including study and research
Commitment to promoting the learning of all students
Disposition to promoting students' democratic attitudes and practices (including appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism)
Critical attitudes to one's own teaching (examining, discussing, and questioning practices)
Dispositions to teamwork, collaboration and networking
Sense of self-efficacy

As the focus of this paper is the development of teacher competences within the ITE programmes in Slovenia, we present possible routes to becoming a teacher in Slovenia.

## **INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN SLOVENIA**

Teachers in Slovenia need to obtain a master's level of formal education. In addition, according to the Rules on training teachers and other professionals in comprehensive education in Slovenia (2015) and the Rules on training teachers and other professionals in vocational education in Slovenia (2012), there are two main routes via which teachers can become qualified to work in education (see Figure 2): the concurrent (pedagogical programmes) route or the consecutive (alternative) route. Future teachers can engage in pedagogical programmes; these concurrent programmes are usually undertaken at faculties of education and certain other faculties (e.g. the Faculty of Art, the Faculty of Mathematics). By attending these programmes, teachers acquire specific subject knowledge, teaching-related skills and teaching experience (through the system of school placement). An alternative is consecutive programmes, where teacher candidates can first acquire a non-pedagogical bachelor's degree at one of any number of

faculties and then attend either the pedagogical master's programme or a one-year programme designed to provide candidates with pedagogical competences (called pedagogical andragogic education). The last route to teaching is rare in Europe (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013); Slovenia is one out of nine European countries that offer an alternative route in addition to the traditional model of ITE. The pedagogical andragogic education programme consists of 60 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System credits focusing on pedagogy, general didactics, subject-specific didactics, developmental and educational psychology, educational research and practical work with students. Candidates can take the course at faculties of education, the Faculty of Art or the Faculty of Mathematics. After completing one of these programmes, novice teachers have to pass the state professional examination (European Commission, 2018). Prior to taking the exam, they must have had at least 840 hours of teaching practice and must have completed at least five assessed lessons. The topics of the national exam are determined by the Ministry of Education.



**Figure 2.** Paths through initial teacher education in Slovenia

## TEACHER EDUCATORS WITHIN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION IN SLOVENIA

At the faculties, future teachers are trained by teacher educators: university teachers who give lectures at the faculty, and mentor teachers—school-based teachers who mentor students during school placement and are of great value for getting practical experience.

The teacher educator profession was in the past labelled “the hidden profession” (European Commission, 2010), but recently more attention has been paid to it and different alliances have exerted some effort in trying to define who teacher educators are. One of the first definitions was outlined by the Association of Teacher Educators (The Teacher Educator Standards, 2008, p. 5), which suggested that teacher educators can be:

- academic staff in higher education who are teachers of education,
- supervisors of practice in schools,
- school staff who provide continuous professional development for teachers,
- others who provide various in-service trainings for teachers.

Association of Teacher Educators (The Teacher Educator Standards, 2008,) also wanted to point out that not everyone educating (prospective) teachers is a teacher educator. The European Commission (2010, p. 3) accepted the working definition that teacher educators are “all those who actively facilitate the (formal) learning of student teachers and teachers, which includes those involved in the continuing professional development of teachers as well as those involved in initial teacher education”.

As noted by the European Commission (2013b), in most countries of the European Union there is little explicit policy provision either to define what quality means in the work of a teacher educator, or what the academic and professional development requirements are. Few countries have set standards for teacher educators or defined the competences required for someone to be allowed to work as a teacher educator. However, a coherent definition of the role and competences of quality teacher educators could have a huge impact on the quality of teachers' teaching, as well as on developing knowledge, research and innovation on how to achieve the shift to learning outcome-based systems and assess learning appropriately. The question of defining teacher educators was also addressed by researchers (e.g. Caena, 2012), who determined that teacher educators are higher

education academics responsible for teacher education, research, subject studies or didactics, teaching practice supervisors, school mentors, induction tutors, and those in charge of teaching staff's continuous professional development. Mc Mahon, Forde and Dickson (2015) proposed a broader definition which includes all teachers and all school leaders and emphasises the importance of experienced practitioners. ETUCE (2008, p. 3) outlined the various profiles of teacher educators as follows:

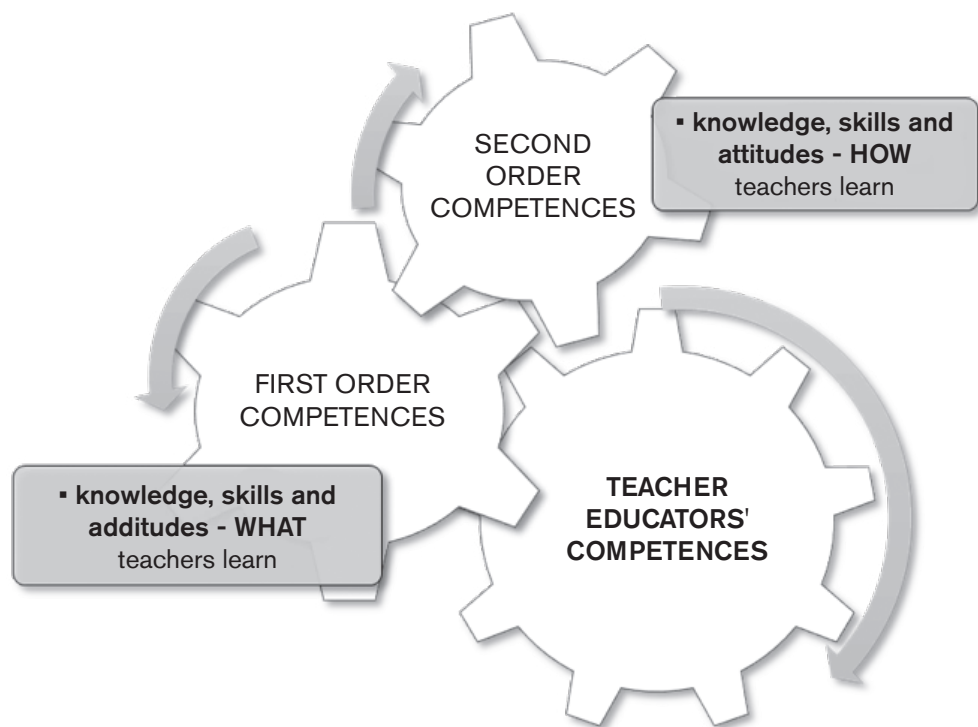
- supervisors of practice in schools linked to ITE institutions,
- trained and experienced teachers supervising practice in other schools,
- tutors (counsellors, coordinators, mentors, guides etc.) supervising prospective teachers during the qualifying phase in the workplace,
- networks of supporters in the qualifying phase in the workplace,
- higher education academic staff who teach education,
- higher education academic staff who teach school subjects,
- other higher education academic staff who teach didactics or general courses,
- education researchers.

Considering the above definition and the Slovenian educational context, we outline the profiles of teacher educators in Slovenia as follows:

- higher education academic staff who teach and research at faculties of education,
- higher education academic staff who teach and research at other faculties for the education of prospective teachers (e.g. Faculty of Arts),
- educational researchers,
- mentor teachers,
- professionals who lecture within formal in-service trainings.

According to the European Commission (2013b), in European countries there seems to be little explicit policy to define the formal education and professional development required of teacher educators. Swennen and van der Klink (2009) point out that teacher educators should act in such a way that other stakeholders, including policymakers and education authorities, recognise their professionalism. In order for them to act in this way their competences and roles should be defined. Murray (2008) stated that teacher educators should be able to deploy competences on two levels: *first-order* and *second-order* knowledge, skills and attitudes (Figure 2).

*First-order competences* concern the knowledge base about schooling and teaching which teacher educators convey to student teachers, as related to subjects or disciplines. *Second-order competences* concern the knowledge base about how teachers learn and how they become competent teachers. They focus on teachers as adult learners, the associated pedagogy, and organisational knowledge about the workplaces of students and teachers.



**Figure 3.** Levels of teacher educators' competences  
(adapted from Murray, 2008)

In addition, according to the European Commission (2013b), other key areas of competence can include:

- knowledge development, research, and critical thinking competences,
- system competences (managing the complexity of teacher education activities, roles and relationships),
- transversal competences (e.g. decision-making, initiative taking, entrepreneurship, and teamwork),

- leadership competences (inspiring teachers and colleagues, coping with ambiguity and uncertainty),
- competences in collaborating, communicating and making connections with other areas.

The above competences and areas of knowledge provide a general overview of professional qualities, as the requirements of individual teacher educators might vary according to their roles and working contexts (Smith, 2005). For instance, in certain countries, school-based teacher educators (e.g. mentors) might not be as involved in research as those employed at universities (European Commission, 2013b). Since teacher educators are a very diverse group (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013), different requirements of teacher educator subgroups could lead to different competence profiles for teacher educators working in different contexts. The diversity of teacher educators and their competences, roles and requirements are also the reason why we first focus on university-based teachers and then proceed to mentor teachers.

## UNIVERSITY-BASED TEACHERS

As noted by the European Commission (2013b), in most European countries there are no specific requirements for teacher educators; there are only general academic requirements for working in higher education contexts. In Slovenia teacher educators – higher academic staff – have to meet the same requirements as all the other academic staff, as they have no special status.

According to the Standards for Habilitation at the University of Primorska, Slovenia (2014), teacher educators need to:

- have the appropriate education,
- carry out research and publish the findings on a regular basis,
- have an educational qualification,
- be fluent in at least one world language.

As far as appropriate *education* is concerned, professors need to have a PhD and their assistants have to obtain a BA or an MA.

Carrying out *research and publishing the findings* in scientific journals or monographs is also an important requirement that teacher educators must fulfil. They are expected to produce knowledge about education and educating.



*Educational qualification* is measured through organisation of educational work, the clarity of lectures, seminars, exams (assessed via students' evaluation), development of laboratories or other units that support educational work, commitment and success in inducting students in scientific, artistic and professional work, mentoring BA, MA and PhD students, attitude towards students, inducting colleagues in scientific work and so on.

Cochran-Smith (2005) points out the different roles of university-based teacher educators as practitioners, researchers, policy analysts, editors, commentators, mentors, assessors, critics, debaters, lobbyists, lecturers, collaborators, and administrators. Similarly, Swennen et al. (2009) suggest that teacher educators, unlike members of other professions, have multiple professional identities: they may think of themselves primarily as school teachers, teachers in higher education, researchers or teachers of teachers – or they may identify themselves with several of these roles simultaneously. Many of those who teach teachers might not consider themselves to be teacher educators at all.

Consequently, teacher educators can have varying levels of commitment to teacher education. For example, teacher educators at a faculty of education may devote their entire working time to student teachers and to research on teaching or learning. However, it is possible that professors of chemistry in the same institution may spend much less working time with future teachers, and may not think of themselves as teacher educators, despite having an influence on future teachers by the example they set.

Teacher educators must also be aware of the fact that students today acquire knowledge differently from previous generations. They differ in their characteristics and modes of learning, the manner in which they receive and process information, the simultaneous performing of several tasks, the expression of their resistance to passive learning and so on (Cvetek, 2015), which should also be considered by educators of teachers. According to Marentič Požarnik and Lavrič (2011, p. 7), the latter should:

- encourage active participation – thoughtful involvement of students, their understanding of subject matter and their own learning process,
- establish a space for expressing, testing and linking ideas, with clearly visible objectives,
- consider individual differences in students,
- establish a positive emotional atmosphere and a relationship of trust,

- consider the social nature of learning and actively promote collaborative learning, dialogue, and interaction,
- motivate by asking clear questions and setting tasks on the limit of ability,
- in addition to the final exam also introduce ongoing assessment in the form of quality feedback,
- encourage the creation of structures and links between spheres of knowledge, subjects, and outside the lecture room.

Other important characteristics of good teaching by teacher educators are (ibid.):

- sharing their enthusiasm about the subject with students,
- the ability to prepare stimulating and interesting teaching materials,
- the ability to engage students at the appropriate level of understanding,
- the ability to interpret materials in a simple way,
- displaying care and respect toward students,
- the ability to improvise and adapt to new requirements,
- the use of teaching methods and academic tasks that require students to learn in a responsible, active and cooperative manner,
- the use of valid assessment methods,
- providing high-quality feedback to students about their work,
- the desire to learn from students and other sources about the effects of teaching and how it can be improved.

Cvetek (2015) developed 6 principles for effective teaching in higher education:

- interest and interpretation,
- care and respect for students and student learning,
- adequate evaluation and feedback,
- clear objectives and intellectual challenge,
- autonomy, control, and active engagement,
- learning from students.

Bain (2004, pp. 15-16) wrote that the best teachers are characterised by the fact that they:

- know the subject or field of their teaching very well,
- prepare for teaching with the same seriousness and intellectual effort as they do for their research work,
- have high expectations of students,

- create a naturally critical study environment in which students learn through coping with interesting or important problems and authentic tasks,
- have a fair attitude towards their students and are of the opinion that their students are both eager and capable of learning,
- check the effectiveness of their teaching and the achievement of students' learning goals, and change their approaches based on data.

When working with students or for students, feedback by the educators of teachers is also important. Slovenian authors (Cvetek, 2015; Marentič Požarnik & Lavrič, 2011) state that when the word 'feedback' is used we first think of student surveys, which receive much criticism, since the results are used primarily in deciding on promotions. In addition, despite initial good intentions, such surveys rarely provide useful information to a higher education teacher or peer, or an incentive for concrete improvements. An interested teacher can obtain feedback from students in various other ways: by observing the students (during lectures or in terms of attendance of lectures), by analysing exam results, products or the quality of answers to questions, by ascertaining the students' opinions (interviews, discussion, etc.) and also by obtaining the opinions of colleagues.

We present the results of some previous student surveys are presented in Table 4.

On the basis of the results presented (see Table 4), we can sum up that students expect in particular that university professors will have the required knowledge and pass it on in an appropriate manner and, as was particularly emphasised, that they will show enthusiasm and good organisation in their work. It is also important for students to have access to the teacher and for the latter to show interest in students' progress. We can also sum up the outcome of Jackson's (2005) study, which emphasises that from the students' point of view the most important feature of good teaching is the attitude of the teacher towards teaching and the students, followed by the capacity to adapt to the abilities and experiences of students.

**Table 4.** Authors, years of implementation and findings of surveys on student expectations of higher education teachers and peers

Author(s)	Students' expectations of higher education teachers and colleagues
Voss & Gruber (2006)	They have knowledge, are enthusiastic, accessible and friendly, have a sense of humour, and master different teaching methods.
Hill, Laurie, & MacGregor (2003)	They have knowledge, they are well organised, they stimulate, help and are sensitive to the needs of the individual.
Sander, Stevenson, King, & Coates (2000)	They teach well, are accessible, organised and enthusiastic.
Lammers & Murphy (2002)	They show enthusiasm for the subject that they teach, they inspire and they help.
Anderson (2000)	They care, they are enthusiastic and they are very interested in the progress of students.
Brown (2004)	They master their specific field, are ready to answer questions, are accessible, and have a sense of humour. They can explain the subject matter in different ways and treat students as individuals.
Pozo-Munoz, Reboloso-Pacheco, & Fernandez-Ramirez (2000)	They are competent, they have knowledge and they can pass it on.
Greiml-Fuhrmann and Geyer (2003)	They explain well, they answer questions, they use different teaching methods, they show interest in students and their progress, they have a sense of humour, they are friendly and patient and they mark fairly.
Hartman, Moskal, & Dziubani (2005)	They enable learning, effectively communicate ideas and information, exhibit a genuine interest in students, organise subjects in an effective way, show concern and respect for their students and assess progress in a fair and effective manner.
Dubovicki & Banjari (2014)	They are accessible, enthusiastic, and in a good mood.

## MENTOR TEACHERS

The Standards for Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs (2011) stipulate that pedagogical practice is a compulsory component of pedagogical training and must be evaluated with at least 15 credits. It is organised and

implemented according to the principle of reflective practice and it should enable students to integrate material-substantive and pedagogical-professional knowledge through gradual introduction to the teaching and profession of a teacher. The latter means that the practical training takes at least 225 hours; during this time the student engages in direct educational practice under the guidance and supervision of a mentor. From various perspectives, this significantly influences the formation of a future teacher.

Legislation (Rules on the Promotion of Employees in Education, 2010) also regulates the conditions that enable a teacher to become a mentor to students in practice, in other words, to obtain the title of a permanent mentor. The title of mentor is achieved by a professional worker who:

- has at least 4 years work experience,
- is successful in his/her work,
- has successfully completed further education and training programmes in education or acquired additional functional knowledge, with which, in accordance with these Rules, he/she has obtained at least 4 points,
- has performed various additional professional work and has collected at least 4 points in accordance with these Rules.

From the provisions it follows that a mentor needs to have work experience, receive additional education and, in addition to teaching, perform other professional tasks (which are more precisely defined by the same Rules). In this context, important results were gained in the *Partnership of Faculties and Schools 2004/05* project, which was carried out at the Faculty of Education of the University of Primorska. One of the basic outcomes was the fact that teachers do not need to prove or demonstrate specific professional skills and competences necessary for performing the role of a mentor to students in practice prior to gaining the title of mentor (Rutar, 2005). It is assumed that with the help of appropriate education and work experience, a teacher is able to successfully perform the role of a mentor to students in practice. The project mentioned above highlighted the need to clearly define the expected competences of mentor teachers' practice and the need to provide education to mentor teachers (ibid.).

A similar emphasis is also characteristic of other debates and findings of research on practice itself and on the role of mentors in the mentoring process. According to Govekar Okoliš and Kranjčec (2010, p. 13), a mentor of practical education should have appropriate competences, in other words, the knowledge,

skills, experience and capabilities for successful implementation of training in school. This means that professional and experiential knowledge or cognitive, emotional and motivational abilities are not enough; a mentor must also be able to properly apply and coordinate knowledge and abilities in different contexts and circumstances. The work of a mentor is a demanding task and a great responsibility, while his/her capabilities are multifaceted. S/he is supposed to be an experienced expert who is able to exercise the role of “master” in the professional field, while at the same time he/she needs to be educated, experienced, resourceful and trustful, and a good interlocutor, observer, leader and so on. The potential of a good mentor therefore extends to three key areas: cognitive, emotional-motivational, and behavioural fields. At the same time, he/she should be able, as a reflective practitioner, to continuously observe and evaluate his/her own work, thought processes, decisions, actions, and attitudes. A mentor teacher supports students in the immediate concrete experience within which they progressively develop (Magajna, 2007). Zabukovec (2016, p. 89) meaningfully notes that mentoring is a “learning partnership which, despite its diversity, always includes learning and personal growth and can be understood as a professional and psychosocial support to the person being mentored”. However, like any relationship, the mentoring relationship arises through a process of certain developmental stages of mentoring.

Awareness of the importance of practical training (and hence the role of the mentor) is also revealed through certain studies on the pedagogical training of students (e.g. Rutar, 2005; Marentič Požarnik, 2007; Javornik Krečič et al., 2011; Valenčič Zuljan & Vogrinc, 2012). Among other things, these studies emphasise the importance of mentors in practice as well as the cooperation (clear definition of mutual expectations, organisational coordination, and mutual information) between mentors and higher education teachers and colleagues who are in charge of the practice within the framework of higher education.

## CONCLUSION

The system of ITE is a complex interaction of numerous factors which are supposed to lead to an obvious outcome: a competent teacher – a teacher who, through the process of ITE (and later on the process of continuous professional

development), acquires the necessary competences. One could wrongly assume that, according to the analytical breakup of the concept of competence into the three areas of knowledge, attitude and skills, university-based teachers and mentor teachers are separately responsible for developing only one or two areas. Certainly, some segments of each area are more emphasised for university-based teachers and others for mentor teachers. However, it is undoubtedly necessary to define, comprehend and implement the understanding that the roles of university teachers and mentor teachers in developing student teachers' competences are complementary. Studies (e.g. Jackson, 2005) showed that students view teachers' attitudes as the most important feature of good teaching, followed by the competence of adapting the teaching and learning process to the abilities and experiences of students. Clearly, learning is not only a cognitive category, but also an emotional one. Accordingly, there are a few points that we wish to highlight: 1) future teachers can only develop the necessary competences and implement theoretical and practical models and models of effective teaching practices through working directly with learners; thus, it is of great importance to ensure constant contact between mentor teachers and university-based teachers. Mentor teachers and university-based teachers must jointly participate in the development of ITE programmes and models of educating future teachers. 2) Students' positive attitudes towards educational theory and practice can only be developed through teacher educators experiencing and living this attitude; ideally, this should be practised (lived) in the partnership between mentor teachers and university-based teachers. 3) Furthermore, educational policy and higher education institutions should address the question of planning, implementing, and evaluating in-service training that empowers (possible) mentor teachers. We believe that in-service training should be the result of close cooperation between key stakeholders (i.e. teacher mentors, university-based teachers and student teachers).

Finally, we strongly believe that the field of teacher educators, namely mentor teachers and university-based teachers (with special emphasis on their cooperation and partnership), remains an under-researched area which should be thoroughly addressed through including various elements and different stakeholders. Strong and relevant analysis of the present situation will enable key stakeholders, including policymakers, to improve elements of ITE programmes in order to develop the necessary teacher competences.

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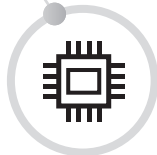
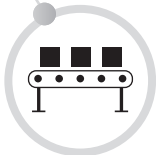


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# AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

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### **Karina AVAGYAN**

PhD, is a linguist, Russian language teacher and translator, Center for Russian Studies, Faculty of Political Science, Belgrade, Serbia. Her fields of research are: cognitive linguistics, ethnic stereotype, contrastive analysis, conceptualisation, associative experiment.

E-mail: karinka2576@mail.ru

### **Sanja BLAGDANIĆ**

PhD, associate Professor of natural and social sciences teaching methodology and vice-dean for Scientific research at the Teacher Education Faculty, University of Belgrade. Her fields of research are: science and history teaching in primary education, pupils' misconceptions, and science literacy.

E-mail: sanja.blagdanic@uf.bg.ac.rs.

### **Marija BOŠNJAK STEPANOVIĆ**

PhD in early science education, associate professor at the Faculty of Education in Sombor, Serbia. Her fields of research are: inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, and science concept development.

E-mail: 96marija.bosnjak@gmail.com

### **Lidija BUKVIĆ BRANKOVIĆ**

MA, is a defectologist, PhD student at the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation, Serbia. Her fields of research are: problem behaviour prevention, positive youth development, protective and risk factors in schools.

E-mail: lidija\_bukvic@yahoo.com

### **Ariunsanaa BYAMBAA**

PhD, is a microbiologist and a pedagogist, professor of the Department of Microbiology, School of Bio-Medicine, Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences, Ulaanbaatarm Mongolia. Her field of research is qualitative methodology in educational research.

E-mail: ariunsanaa.b@mnums.edu.mn.

### **Sonja ČOTAR KONRAD**

PhD, is a psychologist, associate professor of Psychology at the University of Primorska, Faculty of Education, Koper, Slovenia. Her fields of research are ICT in education, university teaching, teacher competence, and development of preschool children.

E-mail: sonja.cotarkonrad@upr.si

### **Ivana ĐERIĆ**

PhD, is a pedagogist, research associate at the Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade, Serbia. Her research interests are: reflexive practice in professional learning, project-based learning, student motivation and autonomy, and qualitative methodology in educational research.

E-mail: ivana.brestiv@gmail.com

### **Jelena ĐERMANOV**

PhD, associate professor of pedagogy, University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Pedagogy, Serbia. Her fields of research are General and School pedagogy, Pedagogical Axiology (evaluation in education, interactions, communication and interpersonal relations in education, hidden curriculum, class and school climate, school culture).

E-mail: jdjer@ff.uns.ac.rs

### **Rajka ĐEVIĆ**

PhD, is a pedagogist, research associate at the Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade, Serbia. Her fields of research are: inclusive education, social relationships of students with developmental disabilities, teacher professional development, teaching methods.

E-mail: rajkadjevic@gmail.com

### **Maia GELASHVILI**

is a PhD student and research assistant at the Centre for International Higher Education, Boston College, USA. Her fields of research are quality assurance of higher education, international and comparative education, college teaching and assessment.

E-mail: gelashvi@bc.edu

### **Batbaatar GUNCHIN**

Academician Member of Mongolian Academy of Medical Sciences, Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Medicine; Vice president for Academic Affairs at the Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences; President of Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. His fields of research are: education development, reference value of physiology, biochemistry, immunology in Mongols, improving medical service by advancing pre-graduate study for fundamental and medical microbiology for medical students and by updating residents and medical doctors in Mongolia.

E-mail: batbaatar@mnums.edu.mn

### **Nikoleta GUTVAJN**

PhD, senior research associate and director of the Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade, Serbia. Her fields of research are: identity, school underachievement, and qualitative methodology in educational research.

E-mail: gutvajnikoleta@gmail.com

### **Ljeposava ILIJIC**

PhD, is a special education teacher, research fellow at the Institute of Criminological and Sociological research. Her fields of interest are a focus on criminological and penological issues, the problems of execution of the prison sentence, treatment and convicts, education and professional training of prisoners, and social reintegration of ex-offenders.

Email: lelalela\_bgd@yahoo.com

### **Tijana JOKIC ZORKIC**

psychologist, is a PhD student and a researcher at the Centre for Education Policy, Belgrade, Serbia. Her fields of research are inclusion and diversity in education, appropriation of education policy, qualitative methodology in educational research.

E-mail: tijana.zjokic@gmail.com

### **Sergey KOKHAN**

Candidate of Medical Sciences, Associate Professor, director of the Regional Center for Inclusive Education, Transbaikal State University, Chita, Russia. His

fields of research are: inclusive education, psychological and pedagogical support of students with disabilities, the development of socio-cultural capabilities and adaptive sports, modern aspects of medical and social rehabilitation.

E-mail: ispsmed@mail.ru

### **Isidora KORAC**

PhD in Pedagogy and PhD in Teaching Methodology. Professor in the scientific field: Pedagogical and Didactic group of subjects at Preschool Teacher Training and Business Informatics College of Applied Studies Sirmium, Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia. Her fields of research are: school and preschool teacher's professional development, class/school and preschool climate, and aesthetic education.

E-mail: oisidora@gmail.com

### **Marina KOVAČEVIĆ LEPOJEVIĆ**

PhD, is a special education teacher, research associate at the Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade, Serbia. She participates in research projects related to students' behavioral problems, positive youth development, socioemotional learning, school, and family climate.

Email: marina.lepojevic@gmail.com

### **Witold KOWALSKI**

Professor WSG: The University of Economics in Bydgoszcz. The fields of his research are: the introduction of health-saving technologies among the younger generation and student youth, especially recreational opportunities that contribute to human longevity.

E-mail: wiciukow@interia.pl

### **Jason LAKER**

PhD, is a professor of counselor education at San José State University, California, USA; and Affiliated Research Faculty with the Center for Research and Education on Gender and Sexuality at San Francisco State University. His fields of research are: international and comparative higher education studies, counseling, student psychosocial development and support programs, and gender studies.

E-mail: jlaker.sjsu@gmail.com

### **Emilija LAZAREVIĆ**

PhD, is a defectologist speech therapist and defectologist for Education and Rehabilitation Hearing Disability Persons, Principal Research Fellow, Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade, Serbia. Her fields of research are: speech-language development, speech-language disorders, early literacy development, reading and writing disorders, specific learning disabilities.

E-mail: elazarevic@ipi.ac.rs

### **Dušica MALINIĆ**

is a research associate at the Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade, Serbia. She has a PhD in education from the University of Belgrade. Her research focus is the causes of students' academic failure, teachers' pedagogical and methodical competence, and leadership in education.

E-mail: malinic.dusica@gmail.com

### **Marija MALJKOVIĆ**

PhD, is a special education teacher, Assistant professor at the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation. Her interests are focused on the fields of special education and rehabilitation, treatment of juvenile delinquents, systemic family therapy, addiction, and behavioral disorders.

Email: mara.maljkovic@gmail.com

### **Milica MARUŠIĆ JABLANOVIĆ**

is a psychologist and doctor of andragogy, senior research associate employed at the Institute of Educational Research in Belgrade, Serbia. Her fields of research interest are teacher education and career development, personal values, scientific and environmental education and literacy.

E-mail millica13@yahoo.com, milica.m.jablanovic@gmail.com

### **Olga MIKHAILOVA**

PhD, Assistant Professor of the Department of Psychology and Pedagogy, Faculty of Philology, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), Moscow, Russia. Her fields of research are: personality development psychology, psychology of innovation, acmeology and adragogy.

E-mail: olga00241@yandex.ru; mikhaylova-ob@rudn.ru



### **Mihaylo MILOVANOVITCH**

is senior policy specialist for system change and lifelong learning with the European Training Foundation, Italy, and a pro-bono affiliate and education integrity expert for the Center for Applied Policy and Integrity, Bulgaria. His current work and publications focus on policy appropriation experiences in education, integrity of education policy and practice, and stakeholder-driven education policy improvement in countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Northern Africa.

Email: mihaylo@policycenters.org

### **Snežana MIRKOV**

PhD, is a pedagogist, research associate at the Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade, Serbia. Her fields of interest are: different aspects of the learning process in academic settings (learning goals, learning strategies, self-regulation, epistemological beliefs), and their relations with the learning effects achieved in the teaching process.

E-mail: smirkov@ipi.ac.rs

### **Gordana MIŠČEVIĆ**

PhD, is a full professor in the field of social, environmental and scientific education (SESE) teaching methodology at the Teacher Education Faculty, University of Belgrade, Serbia. Her fields of research are: environmental education methodology, primary school teacher education (elementary science), preschool teacher education (elementary science), innovative models of work with children in the field of in elementary science, development of pupils' metacognition.

E-mail: gordana.miscevic@uf.bg.ac.rs

### **Kornelija MRNJAUS**

PhD, is associate professor at the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Education, Rijeka, Croatia. Her fields of research are: vocational education and training, career counseling, values education, and intercultural education.

E-mail: kornelija.mrnjaus@uniri.hr

### **Andreas OIKONOMOU**

PhD, is a psychologist, associate professor of the Department of Education at the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education, Thessaloniki, Greece. His fields of research are: educational psychology, developmental psychology, teacher education, environmental education.

E-mail: aoikonomou@aspete.gr

### **Kristinka OVESNI**

PhD, is an andragogist, full-time professor at the Department for Pedagogy and Andragogy, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia. Her fields of research are: human resource development, theories of adult learning, professional development, adult education planning.

E-mail: kovesni@gmail.com; kovesni@f.bg.ac.rs

### **Jelena PAVLOVIĆ**

assistant professor at the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. Research interests: learning and development in organizations, coaching psychology, qualitative research methods.

Email: jelena.pavlovic@f.bg.ac.rs

### **Branislava POPOVIĆ-ĆITIĆ**

PhD, is a special pedagogist, full professor at the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation, Serbia. Her fields of research are: prevention science, positive youth development and school-based prevention programs.

E-mail: popovb@eunet.rs

### **Vera RADOVIĆ**

PhD, is a pedagogist, associate professor at the Teacher Education Faculty, University of Belgrade, Serbia. Her fields of research are: general didactics, professional education, and development of teachers.

E-mail: vera.radovic@uf.bg.ac.rs

**Elena ROMANOVA**

PhD, Associate professor in the Department of Physical Education, Altai State University, Russian Federation. Her fields of research are: Motivation of young people to engage in physical culture and sports, physical culture and sports at university, inclusive education, modern aspects of medical and social rehabilitation.

E-mail: romanovaev.2007@mail.ru

**Mile SRBINOVSKI**

PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty of Technical Sciences, Mother Teresa University, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia. His fields of research are: environmental education, education for sustainability, ecology, environmental protection, biology education.

E-mail: mile.srbinovski@unt.edu.mk

**Jelena STANIŠIĆ**

PhD, is a pedagogist, research associate at the Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade, Serbia. The fields of her research are: environmental education, science study, teaching methods, and learning strategies.

E-mail: jstanisic@ipi.ac.rs

**Jelena STEVANOVIĆ**

PhD, is a philologist, senior research associate in the Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade, Serbia. Her fields of research are: language culture/ language competence and functional literacy, Serbian language in primary and high school level, stylistics and orthography of Serbian language, critical literacy and theoretical and empirical research into textbooks.

E-mail: jelena.stevanovic.jelena@gmail.com

**Danijela ŠĆEPANOVIĆ**

PhD, is Education Policy Analyst and Education Technologist working on research and developmental projects in the area of digital education. She works at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development in Serbia. She is an evaluation expert for the H2020 research program and member of the European Commission ET 2020 Working Groups

related to Digital Education development since 2014 - Digital and Online Learning (2013-2015), Digital Skills and Competences (2015-2017), Digital Education, Learning, Teaching and Assessment (2018-2020).

E-mail: danijela.scepanovic@mpn.gov.rs

### **Tina ŠTEMBERGER**

PhD, is a pedagogist, associate professor of Educational Research and a vice dean research at the University of Primorska, Faculty of Education, Koper, Slovenia. Her fields of research are educational research, alternative research methods, teacher competence, and inclusion.

E-mail: tina.stemberger@upr.si

### **Milja VUJAČIĆ**

PhD, is a pedagogist, senior research associate at the Institute for Educational Research. Her fields of research are: inclusive education, teacher professional development, cooperative learning, school effectiveness.

E-mail: mvujacic@ipi.ac.rs

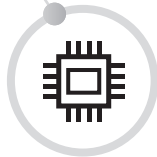
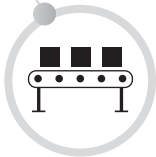
### **Janja ŽMAVC**

PhD, is a linguist, research associate, and the head of the Centre for discourse studies in education at the Educational Research Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia. Her fields of research are: rhetoric, argumentation, classics, multilingualism, curriculum design, didactics, discourse in education.

E-mail: janja.zmavc@gmail.com

# AUTHORS' INDEX

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## A

Abazi - 354, 357, 362  
Abbott - 375  
Abd-el-Khalick - 362  
Abel - 339  
Aczél - 77  
Adams - 142  
Agnew - 376  
Agyeman - 346  
Aizer - 375  
Ajzen - 339, 346  
Akerson - 38  
Aleahmad - 175  
Alexander - 375  
Alexandrova - 261  
Alkaff - 353  
Allen - 49  
Allman - 174  
Almeida - 65  
Almendarez - 27  
Ames - 297  
Ananiev - 319, 321, 325  
Anderson D.M. - 389  
Anderson J. - 236  
Anderson W.L. - 203  
Andryukhina - 259  
Antić - 36, 37, 48, 53  
Antonio - 176  
Arabatzi - 361  
Arba'at - 360  
Archer - 297  
Arnold - 135  
Arnon - 343  
Arthur - 396  
Ash - 119

Astratova - 259, 262  
Atman - 354  
Avalos - 63  
Avramović Z.- 95  
Avramović I.- 135  
Ax - 64  
Ayas - 38

## B

Baggaley - 238  
Bahar - 355, 373  
Bain - 201  
Bajaj - 299  
Bakken - 77  
Bales - 380  
Ball - 210  
Ballantyne - 343  
Banarjee - 277  
Bandura - 274, 287  
Banzragch - 238  
Banjari - 203  
Barcelona - 108  
Barke - 361  
Barman - 36  
Barnett - 54, 55  
Barnhart - 213  
Barraza - 353, 362  
Barron - 64, 65  
Barrows - 56  
Barthes - 74  
Bartlett - 210  
Bašić - 375  
Batinca - 212, 222  
Baumann - 119  
Bazić - 10

- Beara - 142, 151  
Beavers - 174  
Beers - 131  
Beijaard - 64  
Belacchi - 119  
Belawati - 238  
Beletzan - 78  
Benelli - 119, 120, 122, 129, 135  
Benson - 396, 397, 398, 405, 406, 407,  
409, 410, 411, 413  
Beręsewicz - 213  
Berg - 352  
Bergdahl - 211, 212, 236, 237, 243  
Berger - 65  
Berglund - 396  
Berk - 380  
Berman - 131  
Bernadette - 143  
Betzer - 57  
Biesta - 75, 92  
Biggs - 296, 311  
Binder - 119  
Bishop A. - 119  
Bishop K. - 352  
Bizzell - 76  
Bjerk - 377  
Black - 65  
Blagdanić - 36, 48, 49, 53  
Blaikie - 361  
Blake - 346  
Blazar - 160  
Blieck - 361  
Blomberg - 380, 389  
Blommaert - 212  
Bloom - 131  
Blumenfeld - 56, 57, 62, 65, 297  
Blyth - 407, 409, 410, 411, 412  
Bodenhorn - 353  
Bodur - 173, 174, 175, 176, 177  
Boekaerts - 274  
Boeve - 361  
Bogan - 352  
Bogner - 343, 353  
Boisvert - 297  
Bolam - 141, 142  
Bond - 211, 237  
Bonsignore - 175  
Booth - 74  
Bordeleau - 297  
Borisov - 320, 323  
Borko - 64, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177  
Borkowski - 273, 274  
Bornstein - 131  
Borzzone - 131  
Bostrom - 361  
Bouffard - 297  
Bouillet - 386  
Boujaoude - 362  
Bowen - 54  
Box - 54  
Boyes - 38  
Bracken - 353  
Bracy - 377, 380  
Bradshaw - 387  
Braten - 310  
Braun A. - 210  
Braun V. - 145  
Bredl - 212  
Breit - 173  
Bridgstock - 289

- Brinkworth - 388  
 Bromley - 109  
 Brow - 260  
 Brown - 203, 327  
 Brownell - 119  
 Browning - 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29  
 Bruce - 57  
 Buchanan - 57  
 Bukvić - 124, 406, 407, 411  
 Bulatović - 275  
 Bullis - 389  
 Bulunuz - 38  
 Burke - 76  
 Burns - 110  
 Bushina - 338  
 Bushway - 374, 375, 380  
 Buško - 275, 286, 288  
 Butenko - 338  
 Butler - 274  
 Butterworth - 95  
 Buttran - 142, 154
- C, Č**
- Caena - 196  
 Cafaro - 342  
 Cain - 119  
 Calvert - 299  
 Cancino - 121  
 Carlson - 119  
 Carmi - 343  
 Carpenter - 175, 177, 212  
 Carr - 352, 375  
 Casotti - 54  
 Castro - 38, 40, 47  
 Catalano - 375, 396
- Celinska - 377  
 Cestnik - 81  
 Chalikias - 361  
 Chan - 298, 299, 362  
 Chen - 174  
 Cheng - 56  
 Cherdakli - 253  
 Chia - 55, 66  
 Chin - 55, 66  
 Choy - 56  
 Christensen - 135  
 Chu - 353  
 Churchill - 173  
 Clark - 61  
 Clarke - 145, 387  
 Coates - 203  
 Cochran-Smith - 200  
 Code - 274  
 Cohen - 26  
 Consiglio - 213  
 Conzemius - 32  
 Copas - 175  
 Coppola - 352  
 Crouse - 297, 299  
 Culen - 353  
 Cunningham - 289, 352  
 Cutri - 174  
 Cvetek - 200, 201, 202  
 Czerniak - 65  
 Čekić-Marković - 390  
 Čolić - 122
- D, Đ, Dž**
- Dainville - 76  
 Danisch - 76



Darling-Hammond - 63, 64, 65  
 Daudi - 352  
 Day - 25, 375  
 De Brabander - 297  
 Deci - 259  
 Dede - 173, 174, 176  
 De Houwer - 131  
 de Jong - 211  
 De Laet - 387  
 De La Paz - 57  
 De Lisi - 135  
 DeLisi - 377  
 Delserieys - 38  
 Denicolo - 159  
 Denny - 387  
 Dent - 274, 275, 276  
 De Temple - 121  
 Dewey - 29, 52  
 Dickson - 197  
 Dierkhising - 389  
 Dietz - 336, 339, 340  
 Dignath - 274  
 Dijkstra - 141, 142, 143  
 Dimitrijević - 97  
 Dimitriou - 344  
 Dimopoulos - 353  
 Dochy - 56  
 Dong - 212  
 Dowler - 274  
 Doyle - 375  
 Draganić-Gajić - 376  
 Dragičević - 97, 108, 109  
 Driscoll - 297  
 DuBois - 174, 175, 176, 177  
 Dubovicki - 203

Dubrovina - 259, 267  
 Duell - 297, 299  
 Dülmer - 339  
 Duncan - 278, 279  
 Dutcher - 342, 347  
 Dweck - 169, 287, 296, 297  
 Dziubani - 203  
 Dzobelova - 259  
 Đerić - 58, 59, 63, 64, 143, 151  
 Đermanov - 143  
 Đević - 64, 164  
 Đorđev - 107  
 Đorđević - 106  
 Đukić - 143  
 Džinović - 63, 64, 141, 160, 164

## E

Easter - 298  
 Eccles - 259, 388  
 Edwards S.I. - 57  
 Edwards O.W. - 398  
 Efremov - 252  
 Elliot - 290  
 Elliott - 375, 377  
 Enger - 352  
 English - 64, 99, 122  
 Entwisle - 375  
 Entwistle - 295, 311  
 Erdogan - 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 360,  
     361, 363, 373  
 Erickson - 174  
 Erylmaz - 40, 47

## F

Fagan - 377

- Faherty - 237  
Farley - 387  
Farley Ripple - 142, 154  
Farrington - 375, 388  
Fauning - 132  
Feather - 336  
Fenning - 375  
Fernandez-Ramirez - 203  
Ferry - 76  
Fien - 343  
Filippatou - 57  
Finley - 342  
Fischer - 175, 176  
Fishbein - 339, 346  
Fishman - 69, 174, 175  
Fitzgerald - 336  
Fontanieu - 361  
Forde - 197  
Fors - 237  
Fox B. - 173  
Fox R.A. - 296  
Fragkiadaki - 38  
Fraser - 55  
Freelon - 222  
Friedman - 134  
Fullan - 67, 160  
Furlong - 387
- G**
- Gabler - 78  
Galichin - 321, 323  
Galyardt - 175  
Gao - 296  
Garb - 343, 353  
Garcia - 274, 275, 288  
Gariglietti - 299  
Garrison - 353  
Geier - 57  
Gelman - 95  
Gendenjamts - 238  
Georgopoulos - 344  
Geyer - 203  
Ghazali - 339  
Gijbels - 55, 56  
Gillis - 131  
Gini - 119  
Given - 142  
Glassett - 175  
Gojkov - 53  
Goldkind - 389  
Goldman - 353  
Goldstein - 168  
Golinkoff - 190  
Golley - 353  
Golub - 262  
Gonzales - 174  
Gonzalez - 121  
Gonzalez Cabanah - 296, 297  
Gorard - 110  
Gordeeva - 261, 262, 264, 265  
Gottfredson - 375, 377, 388, 389  
Gouveia - 78  
Govaris - 57  
Govekar Okoliš - 204  
Grant - 61, 160  
Green - 160  
Greenhalgh - 177  
Gregory - 259  
Greiml-Fuhrmann - 203  
Grey - 342

Grigorovitch - 38  
 Griller Clark - 389  
 Gromkova - 318, 325  
 Groot - 375  
 Gruber - 203  
 Grue - 77  
 Guagnano - 339  
 Gudmundsdottir - 211, 212  
 Gunstone - 48  
 Gunter - 387  
 Guskey - 160, 163

## H

Hadwin - 274  
 Hakes - 119  
 Halverson - 154  
 Hansen - 175  
 Hansson - 38  
 Hargadon - 175  
 Hargreaves - 61, 67  
 Harlan - 57  
 Harlen - 54, 55  
 Harlow - 380  
 Harris J.M. - 62  
 Harris P.R. - 361  
 Hart - 361  
 Hartman - 203  
 Harvey - 61, 63, 260  
 Hasani - 357, 360  
 Hathaway - 211, 212  
 Hattie - 311  
 Havel - 389  
 Hawkins - 375, 396  
 Hebib - 177  
 Heckhausen H. - 324  
 Heckhausen J. - 261, 323  
 Hee - 353  
 Henny - 31  
 Henriksen - 126, 134  
 Hernandez-Ramos - 57  
 Herriman - 119  
 Hershberger - 43  
 Herz - 389  
 Herzberg - 76  
 Hewitt - 377  
 Hill - 203  
 Hillman - 212  
 Hines - 354, 361, 362, 363  
 Hirsch - 389  
 Hirschfield - 377, 391  
 Hirschi - 323  
 Hirsh-Pasek - 190  
 Hjalmarsson - 375  
 Hodges - 211, 212, 237  
 Hofer - 297, 298  
 Hoff - 120  
 Hoffman - 143  
 Hofman - 141, 142  
 Hofstede - 338  
 Hogan - 160  
 Holmberg - 237  
 Holmes-Henderson - 77  
 Holzer - 362  
 Hord - 141, 142  
 Horsey - 375  
 Houle - 54  
 Howe - 143  
 Hoyle - 297  
 Hsu - 38, 353  
 Hu - 174

Huberman - 160, 163  
 Huddleston - 175  
 Huei-Min - 352  
 Hugensford - 343  
 Huizinga - 377  
 Hungerford - 353, 354, 361, 362, 363  
 Hunniger - 212  
 Hunt - 28  
 Hutter - 297, 299

## I

Idrizi - 357  
 Iermakov - 237  
 Igbokwe - 353  
 Ilić M. - 36  
 Ilić P. - 104  
 Ilić Z. - 375, 376  
 Ilyin - 322, 323, 325  
 Impedovo - 38  
 Inglehart - 338, 339, 345  
 Inhelder - 127  
 Ipek - 38  
 Ismaili - 354, 357, 358, 362  
 Ivanov - 237  
 Ivić - 53, 124  
 Ivković - 97

## J

Jack - 387  
 Jackson L.W. - 27, 28  
 Jackson M. - 202, 206  
 Jacobs - 173, 174, 175, 176, 177  
 Jagaiah - 131  
 Jahng - 176  
 Jakšić M. - 289

Jakšić I. - 298  
 Jamieson-Noel - 274  
 Jank - 84  
 Jansen - 274  
 Janjić - 97  
 Jass Ketelhut - 173  
 Javornik Krečič - 205  
 Jenkins - 119  
 Jenlink - 63  
 Jensen - 56, 212  
 Jenson - 387, 388  
 Jerotijević - 390  
 Jianping - 335  
 Joaguin - 325  
 Johansson - 382  
 John - 30, 37, 40, 43, 46, 138  
 Johnson - 174, 342  
 Johnston - 323  
 Jokić - 54, 55, 65, 308  
 Joksimović - 289  
 Jones - 134  
 Jonuzi - 357  
 Jošić - 143  
 Jovanović - 143, 390  
 Joyce - 161, 170

## K

Kaldahl - 76  
 Kaldi - 57  
 Kalof - 339  
 Kaltakci - 40, 47  
 Kame'enui - 119  
 Kampeza - 38  
 Kandil Ingeç - 37  
 Kanfer - 324

- Kanselaar - 297  
Karabenick - 274  
Karaçalli - 57  
Karimzadegan - 353  
Karlberg - 213  
Karyanto - 360, 361  
Kašić - 119, 131  
Kayalvizhi - 66  
Kearns - 131  
Keles - 353  
Kelly - 71, 176  
Kett - 380  
Khawaja - 362  
Khoshaba - 260  
Kilpatrick - 53  
Kim - 135  
Kimmons - 174, 212  
King - 32, 173, 203  
Kinnucan-Welsch - 63  
Kirby - 296  
Kiseleva - 262  
Kitsantas - 64, 290  
Kızılaslan - 356, 373  
Kjeldsen - 77  
Klafki - 84  
Knabb - 54  
Knaflič - 97  
Knoll - 52, 62  
Knutsson - 237  
Kock - 76  
Kocsis - 353  
Kodžopeljić - 122, 136  
Koehler - 177  
Koellner - 173, 174, 175, 176, 177  
Koenka - 274, 275, 276  
Kokhan - 237  
Kokotsaki - 65  
Kollmuss - 346  
Kolodner - 53  
Kolokoltsev - 237  
Konstantinović-Vilić - 377  
Kooij - 324  
Kopnina - 342  
Korać - 142, 143, 152, 153, 154, 155  
Korolkov - 254  
Korshunova - 259  
Kortenkamp - 361  
Korthagen - 160  
Korur - 57  
Kosanović - 142, 143, 155  
Kostić - 130  
Kostova - 353  
Kostović - 142, 143, 155  
Kovačević - 108, 112, 131  
Kövecses - 108  
Kraft - 160  
Kraig - 318, 320  
Krajcik - 56, 61, 63, 65  
Krajcik - 67  
Kranželić-Tavra - 375  
Kranjčec - 204  
Krasny - 174, 175, 177  
Kraynik - 237  
Krishnakumari - 361  
Kristal - 108, 111  
Krnjaja - 53, 143, 151, 152  
Kromrey - 352  
Kruger - 35, 40  
Krutka - 175, 177, 212  
Kub - 142

- Kubek - 375, 389, 391  
Kubitskey - 174  
Kudinov - 261, 323  
Kuhlemeier - 360, 361, 363  
Kumar - 277  
Kundačina - 362  
Kurland - 120, 121, 128, 129  
Kutu - 356  
Kuzmanović - 143, 286  
Kwan - 57  
Kyndt - 142  
Kyriakopoulos - 361
- L**
- Ladewski - 61  
Lagerweij - 360, 361, 363  
Lagutkina - 236  
Lai - 343  
Lajović - 160  
Lam - 56  
Lammers - 203  
Lang - 382  
Lantz-Andersson - 212  
Larina - 236  
Larouche - 297  
Larrabee - 36  
Lasen - 142  
Laurie - 203  
Lavrič - 200, 202  
Law - 298, 299  
Lawy - 75, 92  
Lay - 174, 176  
Lazarević - 116, 118, 119, 122, 134  
Lebedeva - 338  
Lečić-Toševski - 376  
Lee - 325, 353  
LeeKeenan - 142  
Leeming - 353  
Le Fevre - 63  
Leffert - 397, 399, 407, 410  
Le Hebel - 361  
Lehtonen - 213  
Leontiev - 260, 261, 262  
Levinson - 210  
Lewis - 55  
Li - 119  
Liang J.C. - 38  
Liang S.W. - 343  
Lim - 380  
Lin - 296  
Lindstrand - 38  
Lithoxidou - 344, 345  
Liu - 174, 175, 177  
Lochner - 375, 389  
Lockee - 211, 237  
Lodewijks - 297  
Loeber - 374  
Lonczak - 396  
Lončarić - 286  
Longobardi - 131  
Lopatina - 252  
Lorion - 413  
Losch - 160  
Louws - 174, 176, 177  
Loyens - 56, 57  
Lozanov-Crvenković - 173  
Lu - 260  
Lubovsky - 259, 267  
Lucangeli - 119  
Luloff - 342

Lundin - 212  
Ljung-Djarf - 38

## M

MacGregor - 203  
MacLachlan - 353  
Maddi - 260, 262, 263, 265, 266  
Magajna - 205  
Maguin - 374  
Maguire - 210  
Makki - 362  
Maksić - 106, 110  
Malinić - 63, 64, 386  
Mancl - 352  
Mancosu - 213  
Mann - 380  
Mannes - 397, 398, 409, 411  
Marcer - 143  
Marcinkowski - 353  
Marcinkowskim - 352  
Mardell - 142  
Marentič Požarnik - 200, 202, 205  
Marinellie - 122  
Marin Jerez - 261, 323  
Markova - 320, 325  
Marković - 98  
Martin - 32  
Marton - 295, 298, 311  
Marušić - 153  
Marušić Jablanović - 36, 48, 49, 342, 343  
Marx - 62  
Maslova - 236  
Maslow - 324  
Mason - 110  
Mates - 325  
Matijević - 53, 57  
Matović - 144  
McBeth - 353  
McCall - 174  
McCloskey - 173  
McGhee-Bidlack - 126, 129  
McGinnis - 168  
McGregor - 134, 290  
McKeachie - 275, 278  
McLaughlin - 63  
Mc Mahon - 197  
McMahon - 141  
McManus - 296  
Meece - 297  
Mee Hee - 353  
Meiboudia - 353  
Meirink - 174  
Memeti - 357, 358, 360  
Menard - 377  
Menyuk - 119  
Menzies - 65  
Meredith - 142  
Mergendoller - 56  
Merrick - 396  
Messer - 37, 40, 43, 46  
Metioui - 35, 37, 40, 43, 47  
Meyer - 53, 84  
Meyers - 353  
Micić - 96  
Mikeseii - 325  
Mikhailova - 261, 321, 323  
Milin - 143, 151  
Milinković - 124  
Milkus - 238

- Miller - 75, 76, 176, 352  
Milošević - 102, 113  
Minigan - 66  
Miočinović - 122, 127  
Mioduser - 57  
Mire - 31  
Mirkov - 275, 287, 295, 296, 297, 298,  
299, 300, 309, 311, 312  
Mirzaahmedov - 259  
Miščević - 48  
Mitchell - 48  
Moallem - 56  
Močnik - 76  
Mohd Zaid - 360  
Molle - 63  
Montpied - 361  
Mony - 353  
Moore - 211, 237, 361  
Moretti - 389  
Morgan - 380  
Morrone - 352  
Mortensen - 76  
Moskal - 203  
Moskovljević Popović - 120, 122  
Moust - 56  
Mrše - 390  
Muis - 298, 312  
Mujagić - 275, 286, 288  
Mukaržovski - 96  
Mumford - 398  
Murati-Sherifi - 357  
Muratović - 37  
Murphy - 76, 203  
Murray - 197, 198  
Mutum - 339  
Myers - 54
- ## N
- Nagy - 109, 119, 131, 323  
Najaka - 375  
Nastić-Stojanović - 375  
Negev - 343, 353, 360, 361, 363  
Nelson - 387  
Nesbit - 274  
Newman - 134  
Newmann - 343  
Ng - 287, 352  
Nguyen - 339  
Nikolić-Ristanović - 377  
Nippold - 121, 132  
Nissen - 126, 134  
Noonan - 174  
Norton - 342  
Nouri - 211, 212, 236, 237, 243  
Novak - 50, 63  
Ntanos - 361  
Nussbaum - 75
- ## O
- Obadović - 173  
O'Brennan - 387  
O'Brien - 360, 361  
O'Connor - 361  
O'Donnell - 375  
O'Dwyer - 353  
Ogunbode - 361  
O'Keefe - 297  
Olinghouse - 131  
Olson - 121  
Olsson - 38



- Olympia - 387  
 Opačić - 114, 298, 300  
 Oparnica - 275, 286  
 Orion - 343  
 Osborne - 66  
 Oshkina - 237  
 Osin - 261, 262, 264, 265  
 O'sullivan - 237  
 Ovesni - 173, 175, 177
- P**
- Pabon - 377  
 Packer - 142, 343  
 Pahl - 361  
 Pais-Ribeiro - 411  
 Pajares - 289  
 Palmer - 353, 362  
 Panadero - 273, 274, 276, 289  
 Pantic - 353  
 Parakevopoulos - 353  
 Paris - 274  
 Park - 174, 175, 176, 177  
 Parker - 25, 175, 177  
 Paternoster - 374, 375, 380  
 Patrick - 289  
 Pavlin - 76  
 Pavlović J. - 159, 160, 161, 162, 163,  
 297, 299  
 Pavlović V. - 375  
 Pavlović Breneselović - 53, 141, 143, 152  
 Payne - 388  
 Pecore - 56, 62  
 Pe'er - 353  
 Peguero - 377, 380  
 Pejatović - 153  
 Pejović-Milovančević - 376  
 Peng - 274  
 Perels - 274  
 Perry - 274, 297  
 Persico - 260  
 Pešec Zadavec - 76  
 Pešikan - 36, 48, 53, 124  
 Peter - 396, 407  
 Petrovački - 97, 111  
 Petrović - 98, 143  
 Phan - 298, 299, 309  
 Philipsen - 175, 176, 177  
 Phillips - 274  
 Piatelli-Palmarini - 118  
 Piccolo - 342  
 Piirto - 382  
 Pijaže - 36, 127  
 Pine - 37, 40, 43, 46, 55  
 Pintrich - 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 288,  
 289, 295  
 Piquero - 380  
 Pirc - 79  
 Plazinić - 300, 308  
 Plucker - 338  
 Poldrugač - 375, 387  
 Pollard R. - 54  
 Pollard J.A. - 396  
 Pollozhani - 358  
 Polshina - 325  
 Ponmozhi - 361  
 Ponte - 64  
 Pope - 159  
 Popović - 96  
 Popović-Čitić - 375, 406, 407, 411  
 Popović-Deušić - 376

- Postholm - 274  
 Powell - 173, 174, 176, 177  
 Pozo-Munoz - 203  
 Pratt - 119  
 Primack - 342  
 Prince - 213  
 Prtljaga - 52, 53, 54, 58, 60  
 Psacharopoulos - 27  
 Puckett - 30, 31  
 Pugachev - 237  
 Pulkkinen - 273, 274  
 Purdie - 311  
 Putnam - 64  
 Putnick - 131  
 Puustinen - 273, 274
- Q**
- Quintilian - 77, 78, 83, 90
- R**
- Radden - 108  
 Radić - 131  
 Radlović-Čubrilo - 173  
 Radović - 173, 175, 177  
 Radulović - 152, 155, 275  
 Ramli - 360, 361  
 Rasskazova - 260, 261, 262  
 Rasulić - 108  
 Raven - 352  
 Reboloso-Pacheco - 203  
 Redditt - 142  
 Reed - 375  
 Rees - 110  
 Regoli - 377  
 Reilly - 134  
 Reis - 213  
 Reyes-Garcia - 353  
 Rhodes - 297, 299  
 Richardson V. - 63  
 Richardson J.T.E. - 295, 298, 373  
 Rickinson - 343  
 Rieser-Danner - 54  
 Rihn - 296  
 Rikers - 56, 57  
 Ristanović - 58, 60  
 Roberts - 353  
 Robinson - 238  
 Robottom - 361  
 Roccas - 336  
 Rocco - 142  
 Rockcastle - 352  
 Rodriguez - 38, 40, 47  
 Roehlkepartain - 397, 407, 409, 410, 411, 412  
 Roglić - 375  
 Rolston - 342  
 Romanova - 237  
 Romashko - 322  
 Rosandić - 108  
 Rosenfeld - 61  
 Rosenthal - 288  
 Ross - 142  
 Rossi-Arnaud - 131  
 Roth - 352, 354  
 Rothstein - 66  
 Rovira - 353  
 Rud - 375  
 Ruggiero - 353  
 Ruiz-Mallen - 353  
 Rumberger - 380

- Rumble - 237  
 Rusljakova - 262  
 Russ - 174, 175, 177  
 Rutar - 204, 205  
 Rutten - 75, 76  
 Rutter - 361, 388  
 Ryabukhina - 320, 323  
 Ryan - 259, 289, 396  
 Rynsaardt - 160  
 Ryung - 353
- S**
- Sachs - 296, 298, 299  
 Sadovnikova - 259  
 Sagiv - 336  
 Sagy - 343, 353  
 Şahin - 38  
 Saigo - 352  
 Saizmaa - 238  
 Sakashita - 238  
 Salisbury - 110  
 Salzberg - 343, 353  
 Saljo - 295, 298, 311  
 Sanchez Abchi - 131  
 Sander - 203  
 Sans - 76  
 Santana - 66  
 Savanović - 308  
 Savery - 55  
 Savić - 111  
 Scales - 397, 398, 405, 406, 407, 409,  
 410, 411, 413  
 Schahn - 362  
 Schaie - 319  
 Schleicher - 95  
 Schley - 121  
 Schmidt - 56  
 Schmitz - 274  
 Schnase - 259  
 Schoenebeck - 175  
 Schommer - 297, 299, 300  
 Schommer-Aikins - 297, 298, 299  
 Schon - 159  
 Schugurensky - 174  
 Schultz - 336, 340, 341, 347, 361  
 Schulz - 261, 323  
 Schumann - 325, 327  
 Schunk - 274, 290  
 Schwartz - 336, 337, 338, 345  
 Scott - 109, 119, 363  
 Seegers - 297  
 Segedinac - 173  
 Segers - 56  
 Seifert - 297  
 Semenova - 259  
 Senechal - 120  
 Serra-Roldan - 398  
 Sesma - 407  
 Shaha - 175  
 Shek - 396  
 Shevyakova - 254  
 Shiang-Yao - 352  
 Shin-Cheng - 352  
 Shih-Wu - 352, 360, 361  
 Shillingford - 398  
 Shoreman-Ouimet - 342  
 Shores - 387  
 Short - 161  
 Showers - 161, 170  
 Shramko - 407, 410

- Shriberg - 121  
Shwom - 336  
Sicurella - 375  
Silberberg - 375  
Silva - 119, 131, 411  
Simić R. - 96, 104  
Simić N. - 153, 308  
Simmons - 352  
Simoncini - 142  
Sinclair - 389  
Skaalvik - 297  
Skordoulis - 361  
Sladoje Bošnjak - 300  
Smith C. -119  
Smith D. -275, 278  
Smith K. -199  
Smolleck - 43  
Snow - 120, 121, 128, 129  
Soares - 410  
Soćanin - 375  
Soetaert - 75, 76  
Sofroniou - 29  
Sokoloff - 413  
Soldatović - 143  
Somuncuogly - 297  
Sözbilir - 356, 373  
Spataro - 131  
Spiroska - 360  
Srbinovski - 353, 354, 355, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363  
Srećković-Stanković - 160  
Stables - 352  
Stahl - 109, 119  
Stančić - 111, 275  
Stanisstreet - 38  
Stanišić - 342, 343, 359, 361  
Stanković - 59, 63, 143, 151, 160, 163  
Stanojčić - 96  
Stanojević - 173, 175, 177  
Starkova - 325  
Starostina - 237  
Stein - 36  
Stepanova - 320, 321, 322, 325  
Stern - 339, 340  
Stevanović - 95, 96, 97, 102, 106, 107, 110, 112, 113, 119, 134  
Stevenson - 203  
Stoeger - 298  
Stojanović - 53  
Stojnov - 63, 160, 163  
Stoll - 141  
Stromso - 310  
Suarez Riveiro - 296  
Suhre - 274  
Sujo de Montes - 174  
Sun - 396  
Sutton - 210  
Sweeten - 374, 375, 380, 389  
Swennen - 197, 200  
Sychev - 261, 262, 264  
Symanyuk - 320, 323  
Syvertsen - 405, 409, 410, 411, 413  
Szechy - 353  
Szerenyi - 353  
Šefer - 58, 63, 64, 66, 119  
Ševa - 59  
Ševkušić - 143  
Šipka - 98  
Štefanc - 84

## T

Taccogna - 398  
 Tager-Flusberg - 119  
 Tal - 343, 353  
 Tamim - 61  
 Taneva - 236  
 Tanner - 343  
 Taraban - 54  
 Taşkın - 37  
 Taylor - 93, 135, 342  
 Tenjović - 106, 110  
 Teodorović - 59  
 Thomas J.W. - 56, 61, 62, 67  
 Thomas S. - 141  
 Tighe - 119, 120  
 Tindall-Biggins - 375  
 To - 119  
 Todd - 361  
 Tolchinsky - 131  
 Tomasello - 131  
 Tomera - 354, 361, 362, 363  
 Tomlinson - 288  
 Tondeur - 175, 176, 177  
 Torenbeek - 274  
 Torphy - 174, 176, 177  
 Tošović - 106  
 Treleaven - 212, 222  
 Tretyakova - 237  
 Trikaliti - 344  
 Trivić - 95  
 Trudel - 35, 37, 40, 43, 47  
 Trust - 211, 212, 237  
 Tsai - 38  
 Tulman - 380  
 Tunmer - 119

Turaga - 361  
 Türkmen - 37  
 Turner - 215  
 Tuul - 238  
 Twombly - 142

## U

Ültay - 37  
 Unruh - 389  
 Uşak - 355, 373  
 Usta - 37  
 Utkina - 259  
 Uyanga - 238  
 Uzelac - 386  
 Uzun - 353

## V

Valenčič Zuljan - 205  
 Valle Arias - 296  
 Van Berkel - 56  
 Van Den Bergh - 360, 361, 363  
 Van den Bossche - 56  
 Van Den Brink - 375  
 Van der Klink - 197  
 Van der Linden - 297  
 Van De Vijver - 338  
 Van Driel - 174  
 Van Dulmen - 407  
 Vangrieken - 142  
 Van Klaveren - 375  
 Van Petegem - 361  
 Van Putten - 297  
 Van Tulder - 161  
 Van Veen - 174  
 Varis - 212

- Varisli - 360  
Vasić - 97, 122, 124, 129, 130, 133  
Vath - 174  
Vavrus - 210  
Veenman - 161  
Vegetti - 213  
Vermunt - 297  
Vescio - 142  
Veselinov - 58, 60  
Veselinović - 390  
Vesić - 289  
Vezeau - 297  
Vigotski - 36, 109  
Villadsen - 76  
Vilotijević - 53, 101  
Vizek-Vidović - 289  
Vladisavljević - 130  
Voeten - 161  
Vogrinc - 205  
Volk - 343, 353  
Voss R. - 203  
Voss H. L. - 375  
Voyer - 110  
Vučetić - 286  
Vujačić - 59, 64, 289  
Vuković - 122, 135  
Vušurović - 390
- W**
- Waintrup - 389  
Walford - 362  
Wallace - 141  
Walsh-Daneshmandi - 353  
Wang B. - 175, 177  
Wang M.T. - 388  
Ward - 375  
Wardani - 360, 361  
Ward-Lonegran - 132  
Washington - 342  
Waterston - 295  
Watson - 121  
Wehlage - 343  
Wehren - 135  
Wei - 63  
Wei-Ta - 352  
Welsh - 388  
Weltzel - 339  
Welzel - 338, 339, 345  
Weston - 342  
Whalen - 211, 212  
Whitehouse - 173  
Wierstra - 297  
Wierzbicka - 108  
Wigfield - 259  
Wiggins - 65  
William - 65  
Willet - 177  
Williams - 360, 375  
Willits - 363  
Willott - 238  
Wilson - 375  
Winder - 296  
Winne - 274  
Winstead - 210  
Wolf - 55  
Wolfgang - 380  
Wolters - 274, 275, 288  
Wong - 296  
Wood - 259  
Woodhall - 27

Wrosch - 261, 323

Wubbels - 64

## X

Xenitidou - 344

## Y

Yablochnikov - 259

Yap - 339

Yaşar - 356

Yavetz - 353

Yildirim - 297

Yilmaz - 38

Yopp - 119

Yovanoff - 389

Yu - 275, 352

## Z

Zabukovec - 205

Zeer - 320, 323

Zener - 237

Zeng - 352

Zenki - 357

Zhu - 175, 176, 177

Zidar Gale - 79

Zimmerman - 273, 274, 290

Zlatic - 106

Zmeev - 323

Zmeyov - 318

Zobenica - 275, 286

Zsoka - 353

Zubrick - 135

## Ž

Žagar - 76, 79, 80

Žmavc - 76, 78, 79, 80

Žunić-Pavlović - 375

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## FROM REVIEWS

Main aim of the monograph titled *Problems and perspectives of contemporary education*, is to thorough explore, critically analyze and elaborate complex, dynamic, multilayers and reciprocal relationship between significant changes in educational social environment and readiness, of educational system to anticipate, recognize, understand and adequately respond to those challenges. All contributing authors enthusiastically embraced the notion that education presents an important and proactive agent of social changes and consequently accepted all challenges as an opportunity for improvement and development of both society and educational system.

**Professor Emeritus Djuradj Stakic**  
**Pennsylvania State University, USA**

The monograph is dedicated to looking into extremely significant and current concerns within educational policy and educational practice. The selected topic is viewed from the perspectives of contemporary theoretical approaches, but it is also empirically researched. A very large and relevant literature was used both for explaining the selected research subject and discussing the obtained results. A diverse, contemporary methodology was applied in researches, and the authors of works, starting from the existing results, analysed issues at a deeper level and illuminated some aspects that had not been studied thus far.

**Professor Marina Mikhailovna Mishina**  
**Russian State University for the Humanities, Russia**

The main topics covered by the monograph can be classified as traditional to some extent — related to approaches to learning, language culture etc., and modern — connected with the andragogical view, coaching in teacher training, also the problem of distance learning during the covid pandemic, and models for preventing problem behaviors...The main leitmotif that permeates the content of all presented articles is the topic of the development of key skills, attitudes, experience, creativity — by both subjects in the educational process, and it gives semantic integrity to the monograph.... In view of the new social realities, a reasonable emphasis is placed on the continuing education and development of the teachers themselves, dictated by the accelerated pace of social change.

**Professor Teodora Stoytcheva Stoeva**  
**University of Sofia „St. Kliment Ohridsky“, Bulgaria**

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