Policy Futures in Education

Call for Proposals

Transnational Conversations: (Re)Forming Teacher Identities in Policy and Practice

The professional identities of teachers are (re)formed in relation to, and in struggle with, intersecting and sometimes opposing policy agendas. Problematic constructions of professional identities and subjectivity have emerged in educational policies and practices, which impose particular ways of being a teacher and doing ‘an education project’. The increasing dominance of neoliberal and neoconservative discourses in education policy see ideas about enterprise, performativity, targeted investment, and nationhood (to name but a few) play with and against traditional notions of education as democratic practice. These discursive tensions replay in nuanced, unique and familiar ways globally, interacting with the complexities of the local contexts in which they occur. Teachers become “knowingly and unknowingly entangled with their local and global contexts” (Arndt et al., 2018, p. 98) producing shifting and complex constructions of professional identities.

Prevailing neoliberal discourses seem to impose a “dictatorship of no alternatives” in educational policies and practices leaving an impression that teacher identities are wholly constructed in the imposed discourses by those “holding power”; overpowering discourses of collectivism, collegiality, and empowerment, in which democratic education and democratic professionalism have been rooted. In Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) the positioning of teachers as the ‘subjects to market discipline’ (Apple, 2005); ‘employees’ and ‘business managers’ (Duhn, 2010; Kamenarac, 2019; Woodrow & Press, 2017); ‘economically savvy’ professionals and ‘investment brokers’ (Gibson, McArdle, & Hatcher, 2015), are some of the existing and yet problematic identity formations of teaching professionals identified in the scholarship. It is more than ever important to re-think and problematise constructions of the subject, subjectivity and identity in our educational contexts; recognising the dynamics of control, compliance and resistance involved in the construction of teaching identities. Opening ourselves up to the diversity and alterity of who we are as teachers encourages critical conversations about what we do and why we do it and who benefits from such educational ‘projects’ and identity constructions. Through these conversations we can reveal, challenge and resist imposed discourses, and create alternative ways of being that call to the fore democratic projects and pedagogies.
This Special Issue invites authors to engage in a collective exploration of current educational policies and practices in the field of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) specifically, and to discuss ideas related to complexities, contradictions and limitations of prevailing professional identities and subjectivity on a global, national, and local level. In particular, the issue calls for submissions that highlight projects of transformation and change revealing the ways in which teachers can interrupt neoliberal subjectivities. By engaging with multiple theoretical and disciplinary lenses, and multi-layered, critical, political and intersectional conceptualisations of teachers’ identity and subjectivity in education, this Special Issue calls for submissions that respond to, but are not limited to, the following topics and questions:

- Complexities and contradictions in current educational policies and practices in your country that may set a powerful context for particular ways of being an early childhood teacher and doing ‘an early childhood project’
- Prevailing, legitimised, silent/entirely absent, rejected and/or left unproblematic constructions of subjects, professional identities and subjectivity in neoliberal educational policies and practices
- Critical examinations of who benefits from the prevailing identity constructions in an early childhood education and care, as locally, socially and culturally embedded practice, and why?
- Robust professional discourses and professional identities in educational policies and practices
- Teacher ‘professionalism’ in a neo-liberal education policies and practices
- Notions of resistance, agency, advocacy and activism in educational policies, practices, and teacher education programmes
- The role of academics, policy makers, teaching professionals and important others in offering alternatives that strengthen and sustain a diverse, democratic and more socially just education policies and practices and a more just world

By opening space for conversations across differences and diversity of our disciplines, theoretical lenses and educational contexts, it is our hope that we can create opportunities for an ongoing dialogue about current educational policies and practices, prevailing and yet problematic contractions of subjects, professional identities and subjectivity and, come together, across differences, to recognise and create alternatives.
Timeline

a) Potential authors submit an abstract (no more than 500 words) by September 30, 2019 to olivera.kamenarac@waikato.ac.nz and k.gould@auckland.ac.nz. Please put Policy Futures in Education in the Subject. The abstract should include an overview of the proposed paper and references.

b) Outcomes of the abstract review will be announced by October 31, 2019

c) Authors of accepted proposals will be invited to submit a full manuscript by February 2, 2020

d) Special Issue editor sends revisions to authors by May 1, 2020

e) Authors submit full manuscript by July 3, 2020

Submission Guideline

For the full manuscript word limits, reference styles, and submission guidelines, please refer to the homepage of the journal Policy Future in Education https://journals.sagepub.com/home/pfe

References


