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THE ASSOCIATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE: MISSION AND ACTIVITY

The article deals with the main directions of activity of the leading organization concerning teacher education – The Association of Teacher Education in Europe. The author presents the mission of the organization and its impact into the teacher training system of Europe.

Key words: The Association of Teacher Education in Europe, mission and activity, teacher education, professional competencies, research.

The Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE) is a non-governmental non-profit European organisation, aiming at enhancing the quality of Teacher Education in Europe and supporting the professional development of teachers and teacher educators, at all levels.

The members of the ATEE are individuals and institutions involved in the research and practice of teacher education, both within and outside higher education.

The ATEE has an administrative governing body, the Administrative Council, which is constituted by 10 members who help define the policies and strategies, and of which a core group of 4 members form a Bureau, chaired by the President.

Decisions are taken by the General Assembly, where all members have the right to vote.

ATEEs mission

The ATEE aims to enhance the quality of Teacher Education in Europe through active dialogue and international exchange of research and practice in initial and in-service teacher education.

Teacher Education implies all the activities which develop and enhance the professional competences of teachers, during initial, induction and in-service phases of their careers. Such activities could be offered by institutes for higher education, by government departments (or ministries) of education, by schools as employers of teachers, by teachers themselves and by any other commercial or non-commercial initiative.

The ATEE wants to stimulate the dialogue between teacher educators, researchers on teacher education, students, teachers, employers, politicians, inspectorate, NGOs and any other group involved in teacher education, research and innovation in (teacher) education.

International exchange is not restricted to Europe. Teacher educators in Europe can learn from each other but also from experiences, research and ideas from outside Europe. Similarly, European experience, knowledge and research can support teacher educators outside

Europe in the general enhancement of the quality of teacher education throughout the world.

Research and practice can be used to raise knowledge and understanding of the most effective ways in which to educate teachers. Therefore, we try to find a fruitful combination of both research and practice, which can lead to a synthesis of both theoretical and practical knowledge.

Activities

To achieve the aim as stated in its mission statement, the ATEE tries to increase co-operation between individuals and institutes engaged in Teacher Education both inside and outside Europe. This is done by promoting international networks, such as the research and development centres, through the stimulation of joint research and by stimulating innovative approaches to teacher education.

The exchange of research and practice is facilitated by the publication of the European Journal of Teacher Education and by the organisation of conferences e.g. the annual ATEE conference in autumn as well as the ATEE Spring conference.

The Research and Development Centres (RDCs) are the core of the organisation, creating a backbone for social coherence within the association and providing the first platform for dialogue, exchange and joint international activities between individuals and institutions.

The ATEE supports co-operation between national and international associations which are involved in teacher education.

Finally, the ATEE aims to stimulate the dialogue between teacher educators and politicians, by informing and influencing politicians at a European, national and regional level, and by engaging itself in political studies connected to the area of Teacher Education.

International Relations

The ATEE takes part in a board network of national and international institutions, associations and governmental bodies in the area of teacher quality and teacher education.

Through its memberships, the ATEE has a broad network of pre-service and in-service

teacher education institutions in a wide variety of countries, covering the most of Europe and countries from outside Europe (including the United States, Australia and African countries). Next to these institutional network, the ATEE has through its members relations with national associations and organisations in the area of teacher education (e.g. the MOFET Institute in Israel, the VELON in The Netherlands, etc.).

To strengthen the voice of teacher education in the world and to stimulate exchange in the worldwide community of teacher education, the ATEE participates in the World Federation of Associations for Teacher Education, where the ATEE cooperates with the Association of Teacher Educators ATE in the United States, the Australian Teacher Education Association ATEA and the African Association for Teacher Education.

On a regular basis the ATEE is invited by the European Commission to give the association's view on policies concerning teacher quality and teacher education.

Research and Development Centres

The research and development centres are the heart of the association. The RDCs offer communities where teacher educators from all over Europe and beyond meet, exchange and cooperate.

The RDCs are organized around themes. In this way they create a platform for teacher educators who share the same interest. Activities within RDCs can vary from shared research, EU funded projects, preparations of shared publications (e.g. a thematic issue of the European Journal of Teacher Education), etc.

The RDCs have during the annual conferences several working sessions. In this way they create a small scale community offering a home for conference newcomers. Some RDCs also meet between annual conferences.

The community aspect of the RDCs is an important difference with other (research) associations in the area of (teacher) education.

Publications

The ATEE has several publications to support and inspire teacher educators and to contribute to the improvement of teacher education and teacher educators.

The most important type of publication is the European Journal of Teacher Education, a scientific reviewed Journal, free available to all members.

Next to the Journal, the ATEE publishes books that resulted from work in the Research and Development Centers of the ATEE.

Finally the ATEE contributes to national and European debates on teacher quality and teacher education by publishing policy documents.

Becoming a Teacher Educator

On Sunday 24 August the new ATEE book 'Becoming a Teacher Educator' was launched at the ATEE conference in Brussels. Stimulated by the effortless support and inspiration of the editors Anja Swennen and Marcel van der Klink, a team of authors from within the ATEE has provided the international community of teachers educators with an important contribution to the knowledge base of the teacher educator profession.

Professor Marc Vermeulen emphasized the role that this book can play not only in making the knowledge base of teacher educators more explicit, but also in developing a clear ethics for teacher educators and by supporting beginning teacher educators in their entrance to the profession.

"Becoming a Teacher Educator" is an impressive book for teacher educators who want to become engaged in the latest views and practices of their profession. It is the first book that addresses a range of important topics related to the work of teacher educators, the induction of teacher educators and their further professional development. "Becoming a Teacher Educator" has a practical focus and it provides theoretical insights, experiences of experts and practical recommendations.

The book is rooted in the Association of Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE) and many of the chapters are written by authors who are active members of the ATEE. Distinguished researchers and practitioners from different parts of Europe, and beyond, joined their efforts to write a book that is truly international and combines research, practice and reflection.

"Becoming a Teacher Educator" is essential reading for novice teacher educators as well as experienced teacher educators who want to keep up with the latest insights in their profession. This book provides a guide for those who supervise or coach novice or veteran teacher educators, and for various professionals who bear responsibility for the professional development of teacher educators.

"Here is a growing need for evidence-based resources made available to (future) teacher educators. Since a learning society requires new sets of competencies of the main actors, we are most in want of knowledgeable teacher educators that support the professional development of their (student) teachers. This book fits the actual demands" – (Dr. Joost Lowyck, Professor Emeritus, former director of the Teacher Education Institute, Leuven University).

"This is an original book in a very important area. The editors define the concept of "teacher educator" widely and I think, therefore, that the book is relevant for schools, higher education, and education authorities of

all kinds. The authorship and theme have wide relevance across Europe, Australasia and North America” – (Prof. Bob Moon, Professor in Education Teaching Studies, Department of Education, Open University, UK).

The Quality of Teachers

Teacher education plays a very significant role in increasing and safeguarding the quality of teachers. The Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE) aims to improve the quality of teacher education in Europe through the international exchange of research and practice in pre-service and in-service teacher education, and through active dialogue between the different stakeholders.

When developing national or European policies on teacher quality, it is important to incorporate professional and academic perspectives on teacher professionalism and teacher development. To fuel these policies and to contribute to the clarification of the concept of teacher quality, the ATEE recently brought together an international group of over 300 teacher education professionals who are involved in the theory and/or practice of educating teachers.

At its 30th annual conference in Amsterdam, ATEE members addressed the issue of teacher quality by means of keynote presentations, paper presentations during parallel sessions, and meetings of research and development centres. The participants were invited to engage in an interactive and ongoing debate during the conference, stimulated by a discussion paper prepared by the Academic Committee of the conference.

The outcomes of the 30th ATEE conference were translated to seven recommendations on the development of, criteria for and use of in-

dicators for teacher quality. During ATEE's 31st annual conference in Portoroz, Slovenia, the recommendations were discussed and accepted by the General Assembly.

This document presents the seven recommendations and the elaboration of the recommendations. The aim of the recommendations is to inspire teachers to reflect on their professional quality and to help them to find indicators for this quality and to develop this quality. We also hope that the recommendations will support policy makers who are involved in developing indicators to identify teacher quality.

The Open Method of Co-ordination

Although the European Union's ambitions with respect to education are high, the authority of the European Council with respect to education is limited. The European Council has no legislative authority in the field of education. Legislation and regulations with respect to education and consequently with respect to teacher education, are the full responsibility of member states.

To support policies concerning education, a more in-direct strategy is used, called the Open Method of Co-ordination. This method is a way of co-ordinating and stimulating policy development at national levels by defining shared goals and timetables for reaching these goals, followed by a definition of qualitative and quantitative indicators and benchmarks, the development of national policy plans with targets, sharing of national experiences through peer learning and peer review and finally periodic monitoring and evaluation, both on the national and European levels

References

1. Association of Teacher Education in Europe
www.ateel.org

ЮСТИНА ЄРКУЛЬ

АССОЦИАЦИЯ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ В ЕВРОПЕ: МИССИЯ И ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ

Статья рассматривает основные направления деятельности ведущей организации в сфере подготовки учителя – Ассоциации образования учителей в Европе. Автор представляет миссию организации, и ее вклад в систему педагогического образования Европы.

Ключевые слова: Ассоциация образования учителей в Европе, миссия и деятельность, подготовка учителя, профессиональные компетентности, исследования.

ЮСТИНА ЄРКУЛЬ

АСОЦІАЦІЯ ОСВІТИ УЧИТЕЛІВ У ЄВРОПІ: МІСІЯ ТА ДІЯЛЬНІСТЬ

Стаття розглядає основні напрями діяльності провідної організації у сфері підготовки учителя – Асоціації освіти учителів у Європі. Автор представляє місію організації, її вклад у систему педагогічної освіти Європи.

Ключові слова: Асоціація освіти учителів у Європі, місія та діяльність, підготовка учителя, професійна компетентність, дослідження.