



## Reflections on Trends in Teacher Education in Europe Using the Scenario Perspective

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## **Reflections on Trends in Teacher Education in Europe Using the Scenario Perspective**

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ATEE-RDC19 (MARCO SNOEK, CARLOS NOGUEIRA FINO, VALERIE HALSTEAD, GILLIAN HILTON, JOSEF MIKL, JÖRAN REHN, JESUS MARIA SOUSA, LEX STOMP, PETER VIEBAHN)

*SUMMARY In the preceding papers the scenario model of ATEE-RDC19 is used as a reflecting instrument on trends and development in teacher education in different European countries. In this short contribution, a reflection on those papers is made to see whether common trends arise. In this rough picture, it is possible to see that in all analysed countries there is a tendency towards a more pragmatic and individualistic approach in society, influencing teacher education. But these two trends (toward pragmatism and towards idealism) are not in all case studies strongly connected. However, bearing in mind some critical comments on the scenario model, strong and definitive conclusions are to be avoided.*

*RÉSUMÉ Dans les articles précédents le modèle des scénarios du RDC 19 de l' ATEE est considéré comme un instrument de réflexion sur les tendances et développements caractérisant la formation de futurs enseignants dans différents pays d' Europe. Ici nous voulons réfléchir sur ces articles afin de découvrir si il y a des tendances communes entre les différents pays. Dans la société de tous les pays cités on observe une tendance au pragmatisme et à l'individualisme qui influence la formation des enseignants. Mais ces deux tendances (envers le pragmatisme et l'individualisme) ne sont pas intimement liées dans toutes les études de cas. Il faut se méfier des conclusions catégoriques et définitives, surtout si l'on tient compte aussi de quelques critiques formulées envers le modèle des scénarios.*

*RESUMEN En las ponencias anteriores, el modelo de escenario de ATEE-RDC19 se usa como un instrumento de reflexión sobre las tendencias y el desarrollo de la formación del profesorado en los distintos países europeos. En esta breve contribución, se hace una reflexión sobre estas ponencias para ver si surgen tendencias comunes. En esta imagen básica, se puede ver que en todos los países analizados, existe una tendencia hacia un enfoque más pragmático e individualista en la sociedad, el cual influye en la formación del profesorado. Pero estas dos tendencias (hacia el pragmatismo y el idealismo) no están estrechamente relacionadas en ningún estudio. Sin embargo, si se tienen en cuenta algunos comentarios críticos sobre el modelo de escenario, se debe evitar sacar conclusiones firmes y definitivas.*

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG** *In den vorausgegangenen Beiträgen wurde das Szenariomodell der ATEE-RDC19 als ein Instrument zur Reflexion über Trends und Entwicklungen in der Lehrerbildung verschiedener europäischer Länder benutzt. In diesem Kurzbeitrag werden einige Überlegungen zu der Frage angestellt, ob sich in diesen Übersichtsartikeln gemeinsame Tendenzen erkennen lassen. Grob betrachtet lassen sich in den untersuchten Ländern gesellschaftlich zunehmend pragmatische und individualistische Ansätze feststellen, die auch jeweils die Lehrerbildung beeinflussen. Aber diese beiden Tendenzen (in Richtung auf Pragmatismus und Individualismus) sind nicht in allen Fallstudien eng miteinander verknüpft. Unter Berücksichtigung einiger kritischer Kommentare zum Szenariomodell scheinen klare und endgültige Schlußfolgerungen jedoch unangebracht.*

### **Common Trends in the Case Studies**

In this thematic issue several case studies are presented, looking at trends and developments in teacher education in six European countries. Next to that an analysis is made of a policy document on Education in Europe, prepared by the meeting of the European Ministers of Education, the 'Educational Council'. This document is presented as an advice to the European Council on a common future policy on education in Europe.

These case studies and the analysis of the policy document are done, using a common frame of reference, being the scenario model developed by Research and Development Centre 19 of the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE-RDC19, 2003). Although the conceptual basis of this model can be questioned (Linde, 2003a,b), it can serve as an instrument for reflection, using a common perspective. To identify the common trends, the different case studies will be summarised.

#### *The European Policy Document*

Based on a text analysis, the analysis on the Report of the Education Council (Mikl, 2003) shows that there is a preference for the use of economically oriented keywords indicating the emphasis on a competitive Europe in a global market. Keywords referring to humanistic goals of education are hardly used at all and are not translated into explicit goals. The text shows a preference for the unification of the systems of education and training in Europe, therefore, putting emphasis both on social coherence and individual achievement.

Based on this text analysis, it can be concluded that, at least with respect to the language used, the European educational policy will be guided by a pragmatic approach, where economic concerns dominate other moral or ethical values.

#### *England*

The contribution on the developments in education and teacher education in England, from the 1970s until now (Halstead, 2003), shows that schools and institutes for teacher education have gone through a number of changes in the last decades. During that period, the policy on (teacher) education has been dominated by different successive priorities. In the 1970s, educational policy is dominated by a progressive child-centred approach and freedom for students and institutions. In the 1980s, a national curriculum (both in school and teacher education) is introduced, based on the needs of equal opportunities for all children. In the 1990s education becomes dominated by a

businesslike approach and education focuses on training of skills for future work. At present, practical difficulties in society leads to more emphasis on education tailored to the individual and stronger diversification.

When we try to illustrate these changes with the use of the scenario model, England goes through the model in a circular way and almost a complete circle has been made.

### *Portugal*

Sousa (Sousa, 2003) shows that for a long period of time, the educational policy has been dominated by a strong orientation on values concerning citizenship, cultural heritage, equal opportunities and democratic participation. This indicates an attitude focusing on a social coherent society based on idealistic values.

However, an abrupt political shift took place in 2002 when a new Portuguese government was elected, ending a long-term political domination by the Socialist Party and introducing a new right-wing domination of the Social Democratic Party and the Popular Party. This political shift was accompanied by a severe shift on education and educational studies, stimulated partly by the low ranking of Portuguese educational results in the PISA-study. Although the new government has only just started its work, the first measures and the rhetorics indicate an abrupt shift towards a much more pragmatic approach focusing on economical development and private enterprises.

### *Germany*

The reflection on the developments in German teacher education (Viebahn, 2003) takes a somewhat different perspective. This paper is not so much focusing on general developments in society or on national educational policy, but analyses educational changes in the curriculum for teacher education. Viebahn indicates that teacher education in Germany was dominated by an academic approach, emphasising the idea(l) of scholarly education expressed by high academic standards, translated into a common discipline-oriented curriculum for teacher education. Recent developments stress the need for more flexibility for students by a modularisation of the programme and on more emphasis on a practical orientation of teacher education focusing on competences. In that respect, there is a change from an idealistic (academic) and social coherent (uniform) curriculum to a more pragmatic (competence-based) and individualistic (flexible) curriculum.

### *Poland*

Education and teacher education in Poland has undergone dramatic changes in the last 15 years (Salitra, 2003). From the former Communist (educational) regime, a more open educational system is built. The former situation can be characterised by a strong social coherent approach, based on idealistic (Communist) values. Within the new open system a national core curriculum is developed, focusing on Christian and humanitarian values like responsibility, respect for the cultural heritage, etc. In that respect the developments still fit in the social coherent-idealistic scenario, taking into account that the idealistic values have changed dramatically. Recent changes however

also put emphasis on the need for economical development, focusing on the participation in the European market economy. This leads to a more pragmatic approach.

#### *Sweden*

In 2000 a radical reform of teacher education was suggested, implying a strong liberalisation of the curriculum (Linde, 2003a). In the new regulation for teacher education, the curriculum for all teacher education consists of three parts: a general education core, common for all students; an orientation focusing on specific subjects or subject areas the teacher has to teach; and a specialisation focusing on specific education themes or subjects. A student can design his own profile and curriculum. This is closely connected to a government that intends to steer by goals and that gives freedom to institutions and students, leading to a strong individualisation. The Swedish teacher education model implies a strong emphasis on integration of knowledge, based on the value of an organic solidarity within the Swedish society. Even though the goals of the teacher education reform reflect both social coherent and individualistic elements, the individualism is dominant. The organic solidarity reflects the idealistic values in the Swedish society. However, at the same time, the possibility for the student to shape the curriculum according to his own career prospects, can lead to pragmatic approaches by students.

#### *The Netherlands*

Due to a shortage of teachers and a shift towards more autonomy for schools, teacher education in The Netherlands is in rapid change (Snoek, 2003). These changes can be defended both from an idealistic and from a pragmatic point of view. The change towards a more competence-based curriculum in which there are flexible and individual learning routes and the growing involvement of schools in the curriculum for teacher education indicate a change towards a stronger individualisation in Dutch teacher education. This individualisation both concerns the student perspective (individual learning routes) and the school perspective. The school perspective is associated with a strong emphasis on market-oriented teacher education, which answers the needs of individual schools.

Although a somewhat different scenario model is used, the Dutch developments tend towards a shift towards the individualistic side of the ATEE-RDC19 scenario model.

When these trends are combined graphically in the scenario model, the picture shown in Figure 1 arises. This graphical representation shows that the authors of the contributions, using the ATEE-RDC19 scenario model to reflect on the developments in (teacher) education in their countries, come to the conclusion that (teacher) education in their countries is dominated by two general trends: one towards a stronger individualisation and one towards a more pragmatic approach to education. In some countries one of the two trends prevails (Poland towards pragmatism, The Netherlands and Sweden towards individualism), in other countries (England, Germany and Portugal) a combination of both can be seen. Both changes can be recognised in general developments in society in Europe, where structures stimulating social coherence (connected to clear and distinguished religious, humanistic or political standpoints) are disintegrating leading to a stronger individualisation and where economical competition is growing.

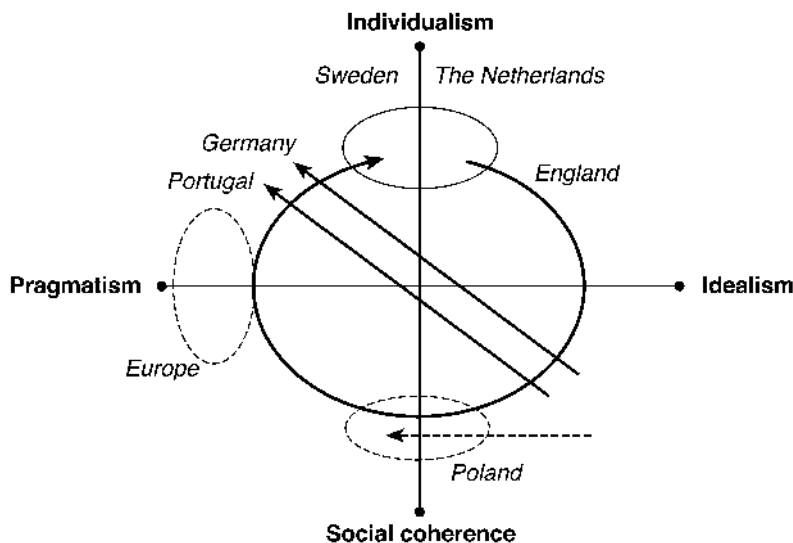


FIG. 1. National trends in teacher education.

*Different Interpretations*

However, we have to be careful to draw strong conclusions from the different reflections on the countries. Göran Linde (2003b) has already pointed out that the scenario model has some weaknesses in a methodological way. The dimensions are not real dimensions and the extremes on the axes do not exclude each other. Also Marco Snoek (2003) indicated that the changes in The Netherlands, for example, can be argued both from a pragmatic and an idealistic point of view. The need to be careful in drawing conclusions is shown by the way in which the concepts used in the scenario model are interpreted differently.

The concept of pragmatism is used in different ways. Both in the analysis of the Educational Council document and in the Portuguese and Polish reflections, pragmatism is interpreted in an economical way: education focusing on economical goals and participation in an European economical market is called pragmatic. At the same time, the reflections on German teacher education associate a pragmatic approach with an approach where teacher education focuses on practical knowledge (competences) instead of academic knowledge. Finally, in the Dutch reflection the measures to fight the shortage of teachers are interpreted as pragmatic.

The concept of idealism is associated with the ambition to strengthen general moral and ethical values, but also with the focus of education on academic knowledge. But even the values can be interpreted differently, since the values in the former Communist society in Poland are different from the democratic values of today. Also the concept of social coherence is interpreted differently, varying from a one-size-fits-all curriculum (a national or core curriculum) to curricula focusing on educational goals aiming at cooperation and tolerance.

Taking these considerations and limitations in mind, we want to refer to the original intentions of the scenario work: to make teacher educators more aware of and sensitive to external developments, either by designing scenarios themselves or by using a given

scenario model to reflect on the present day situation and to place trends and developments in a broader perspective.

Reflection is a powerful activity to stimulate learning processes and the country analyses show that the model is useful as a reflective instrument. It stimulated discussions between the people involved in the country analyses about common trends and differences and about what kind of future is desirable.

The next part of this thematic issue will focus on the use of scenarios as tools for learning.

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