

Special Issue: The development of education research in ex-Soviet states

Liudmyla Mashtaler and Stephen Gorard

We are delighted to introduce this Special Issue of Review of Education, focusing on the education research taking place in countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union, some of which now form the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). We received many submissions, suggesting considerable enthusiasm for this work to be showcased. Several of the papers that have been accepted appear in this issue, and others will follow in subsequent issues. We hope that researchers and readers in these countries will be encouraged to contribute in the future. In addition, to proposals for more traditional special issues in the future we would also welcome similarly regionally-themed showcases, perhaps from South Asia, South America, and elsewhere.

Following the dismantling of the USSR, the newly independent countries that formed it then faced many pressing economic, political and societal issues. Therefore, in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse, education and especially education research was not necessarily a priority. Nevertheless, the education systems of the post-Soviet countries have undergone substantial change, and education research capacity is playing catch up to some extent. The interest of researchers from the CIS and Ukraine in international scientific publications has begun to grow relatively recently. A wider interest was not perhaps encouraged in the Soviet era, and most education researchers published their studies in more local journals. This continued the schism between post-Soviet education and elsewhere, maybe especially the rest of Europe, and the US.

More recently, the process of writing scientific papers for the international community has begun to develop, but guidance and methods resources for conducting research in Russian or other languages native to researchers from the post-Soviet space remains insufficient. Therefore, researchers frequently follow old examples of scientific papers, which are usually confined to a strict formal framework and can adversely impact the quality and innovation of new research. Thus, one of the tasks of such issues is the integration of post-Soviet science into international academia and the exchange of opinions with foreign authors. This challenge can be seen to some extent in the papers for this Special Issue which, despite review and editing, are often of a different format to that usually seen in Review of Education. The purpose of the SI is to encourage engagement for the good of all, allowing a wider readership to understand more about research in ex-Soviet states, and helping CIS and other researchers to communicate with readers elsewhere.

The authors of this special issue have raised important questions related to the integration of post-Soviet education into the international arena, as well as general trends in science and education affected by technological advances and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some studies included in this issue consider the problem of distance education. One aspect is the limited communicative capabilities of technological media, encouraging the search for means to improve their effectiveness. The authors considered the specific features of the use of modern technical means during the training of future representatives of certain professions. Particular attention has been paid to the training of future teachers, as the quality of teaching depends not only on their mastery of the material, but also on the quality of education of future students.

Inclusion is another pressing issue in the modern education system of the post-Soviet countries because, despite the considerable progress in legislation, the practical implementation of inclusion in the post-Soviet countries is taking place slower than in Western Europe, for example. This, in turn, explains the

researchers' focus on European standards. The authors investigated ways to boost the motivation of students and teachers, namely through explaining the functioning of the TQM model in the education system.

Some studies cover specific problems of teaching students of technical specialities, military officers, as well as research methods in teaching languages. In particular, authors cover teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language and the specific features of teaching English in Ukrainian schools, comparing Ukrainian practices with those of other countries where English is taught.

We hope that the studies included in this issue will be useful to educators from different countries and will help gradually efface the boundaries between the world science and science in post-Soviet countries.