

Editors' foreword

As I am sure you know only too well, 2020 has been an extraordinarily difficult year for all who work in the field of education, as indeed it has been for everybody affected by the pandemic. Therefore, it is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the fourteenth volume of WoPaLP with the hope that, though we are all still struggling with the virus, the excellence and unique interest of the contributions to this edition will take your mind off your troubles for a while and feed it with the kind of intellectual nourishment that we all need.

The seven articles in this volume are particularly varied, ranging in topic from the validity of an English placement test for refugees to the use of literature in university EFL classes and the remotivation strategies of Hungarian homeschooling parents, just to mention some of them. We hope they will be of interest to researchers and educationalists of all stripes and also offer inspiration for the next generation of student-researchers as they develop their own research ideas.

First up we have a fascinating case study of an English placement test for refugees administered by a local resettlement agency in the United States. In this study Amy Soto uses observation of preparatory classes as well as the actual test administration, interviews with the learning centre coordinator and the lead English teacher, and analysis of testing materials to investigate the washback effect of the test. Based on the analysis of her results, she points to some required improvements in its constructs due to insufficient care taken during the test development process and underlines the potential social consequences of such tests.

In Songul Dogan Ger's pilot study of teacher's attitudes and practices in a Hungarian English-speaking international school, the researcher carries out in-depth interviews with three experienced teachers to investigate how they deal with the teaching of culture in their classes. Her results show that the teachers' handling of culture in the classroom is more implicit than explicit and that teachers would benefit from being trained in techniques for teaching culture. Maroua Talbi's article also focuses on the teaching of culture but in this case at the tertiary level. After explaining that in many university courses primarily concerned with the teaching of language the cultural dimension is left out, she focuses on a BA-level course specifically designed to raise students' intercultural competence. Her exploratory case study examines both the teacher's aims and strategies and the students' reactions to the course.

The next three articles all focus on different aspects of university education. Anna Pereszlényi's paper is concerned with the challenges that face new students when they enter the university. More specifically she is interested in the difficulties students have with reading literature in the native language after a school experience in which the emphasis is put mostly on preparing for the exam and students get little if any practice in reading texts in their original language. She asks whether it is worth using literary texts in EFL classes in order to help students surmount this barrier and seeks to discover how students view this initiative. In essence this is a very interesting piece of action research where the teacher after having identified a problem, provides a solution for it and wants to evaluate its effectiveness through doing research.

Imre Fekete's article could also be seen as a form of action research. In his exploratory case study the focus is on a specific task type which is a frequent requirement for EFL teacher trainees and can also be a component of a high-stakes test at his institution. He seeks to find out more about students behaviour when writing short literature reviews in order to improve both their preparatory courses and the examination task. Using a range of data collection methods – think-aloud, field notes and interviews – he examines how a single participant deals with this task in the expectation that his findings can suggest further research directions and also be transferable to similar contexts.

In Zsófia Széll's research the focus moves from the teacher trainee to the teacher trainer, and their beliefs about the importance of creativity. Her aim is to create and pilot a qualitative interview guide designed to find out about teachers' beliefs in connection with creativity. She interviews three teacher trainers using the guide and concludes that more emphasis should be put on the role of creativity in EFL teacher training in Hungary in order that the teachers of the future can be encouraged to be more creative and therefore more effective.

Finally, we have another quite separate piece of research which takes us out of academic institutions and into the institution that most of us first experience: the home. Melinda Mikusova's pilot study focuses on the disappointments and successes of four Hungarian homeschooling parents. Through in-depth interviews she is able to tentatively offer a model of the demotivations and remotivations of these parents over several years of their homeschooling experience, which she will further analyse and expand on in her continuing PhD research.

We hope you find something to catch your interest in all of these articles and we thank our contributors both in this 14th edition and in our previous editions for the quality and value of their research. And let us also take the opportunity to thank all those who have helped to continue the work of WoPaLP in bringing you high-quality, stimulating and inspiring accounts from new as well as more experienced researchers. Please enjoy these excellent articles and stay safe.

We wish you happy reading!

The editors