

You Shall Not Pass!? - On Failing Teacher Diversity and other Apocalyptic Scenarios

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It seems like an unruly quest to investigate teacher diversity as the neverending foci are accompanied by even more questions. This symposium takes up the challenge of scrutinising understandings of diversity related to teachers, teacher identity, and the teaching profession across Europe. With a focus on accessibility and “pass-ability” as well as availability, the presentations in the symposium will pick up possible notions of the concepts of “passing as a teacher” (Weber & Mitchell 2002), “to pass to become a teacher (again)”, how notions of passing have (not) changed over time and how practices of dis/abling teacher diversity manifest themselves in different (national) contexts. (Krause et al. 2023). The presentations will discuss how understandings of the academic realm, education policies and notions and practices of equity shape the possibility of getting access to, passing barriers and avoiding obstacles in, and successfully completing study programs.

References

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Presentations of the Symposium

How to Train Your Dragon?

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Universities are designed to generate academic/scientific knowledge on the one hand and to pass this knowledge on to subsequent students, e.g. future teachers, in an orderly and disciplined manner on the other. Despite all the openness (demanded or hoped for) in research, universities, therefore, are structured spaces that “have to” submit to orders and rules of passing on knowledge. These orders and rules include placing new knowledge in relation to existing knowledges and power structures and, thus, relating to existing academic disciplines. In this respect, universities are always conservative; breaking down disciplinary (scientific) boundaries to generate and value new and/or different knowledges is difficult. (Fleck 1979; Niewoehner 2012) However, universities are not only conservative in

terms of knowledge/theorising and scientificity but also in terms of the people who are granted access and those who are allowed to generate new knowledges in research. Research on the decolonisation of knowledges, the structural analyses of power in/of institutions and organisations, and the emancipations of Queer and Black Studies –to name just recent developments– have shown how narrow the boundaries of admission for diverse students and research on other/alternative knowledge systems at universities still are. (Karenga 1988; Sharpe 2014; Brim 2020) And while we can read the (re-)structuring of study programs in the light of the transmission of disciplinary order, new studies also offer opportunities to tear down the boundaries of universities and re-frame them as inclusive spaces. Based on the example of the founding of a new faculty of education at a Swiss university, the paper will address the question of diversity and possible otherness in education science (studies). It will briefly historicise the “common understanding” of the university and assumed roles of those (not) present. (Biesta 2010; Stanley 2006) Questions about opening the floor to others and otherness will then be posed using the Swiss example: - Who is allowed to gain access? Whose voices will be heard? Is it safe to be visibly diverse? - How can education studies be structured to prepare for uncertain terrains outside the scholarly world? - How do we train future teachers to deal with the (multiple) unknowns when thinking diversity at universities is still uncharted waters? - Is the “pluriversity” a strategic exit or another threshold to keep unwanted people out?

References:

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This Is the (Only) Way - Austrian Policies and Practices of Dis-Enabling Diversity in the Teaching Force

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This submission highlights barriers and facilitators towards a diversification of the Austrian teaching force. The early onset of segregation remains one of the main characteristics of the Austrian school system (Buchner & Petrik 2023, Herzog-Punzenberger & Schnell 2019). This manifests itself in disadvantages of specific groups such as people with disabilities and so called migration background to education in general and higher education specifically. Further barriers to entering the teaching force remain in place for the same groups: Entrance tests to teacher colleges for primary school teacher training remain focused on physical fitness (e.g. having to be able to do jump ropes and sing; e.g. <https://kphvie.ac.at/studieren/studieninteressierte/aufnahmeverfahren.html>) and German language, the

latter also holds true for university-led training for secondary teacher training. The legal basis for people with disabilities' access to the teaching force was created in 2006 (BMSG 2006) only and internationally educated teachers remain second class professionals (Proyer et al. 2022), limited in their access to entering the teaching force as such but also remaining excluded or being othered once in the system. So while there is an ever-growing (contested) discourse on whether increasing diversity in classrooms across Europe should be met by a more diverse teaching force (Massumi 2014) and how this could help amend educational inequalities, Austria remains busy retaining traditional order. These tendencies of limiting access to education are opposed to current strategies of the Austrian government to counteract ongoing teacher shortage with lateral entrants. The initiative "Klasse Job!" (<https://klassejob.at/>) aims at creating a narrative of teaching being an easy-going, more valuable cause than working in a stressful environment of the private sector. With a few modules of introduction into basic education, these "teachers" usually access the teaching force at the higher end of the salary spectrum. This presentation aims to explore the many ways to become a teacher if meeting specific criteria and unravel the one-way-street if not. Different fragments (legal documents, access criteria etc.) will be mapped out and interpretative narratives will be offered.

References:

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<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/eli/bgbl/I/2006/90/20060623> Buchner, T., & Petrik, F. (2023). Evaluating education policies through a spatial lens: Uncovering the ability-space-regimes of Austrian new middle schools. In *Space, Education, and Inclusion* (pp. 38-56). Routledge. Herzog-Punzenberger, B., & Schnell, P. (2019). Austria: equity research between family background, educational system and language policies. *The Palgrave handbook of race and ethnic inequalities in education*, 105-158. Massumi, M. (2014). Diversität in der Lehrerinnen-und Lehrerbildung–zur Bedeutung von Lehrkräften mit Migrationshintergrund. *HiBiFo–Haushalt in Bildung und Forschung*, 3(1), 17-18. Proyer, M., Pellech, C., Obermayr, T., Kremsner, G., & Schmözl, A. (2022). 'First and foremost, we are teachers, not refugees': Requalification measures for internationally trained teachers affected by forced migration. *European Educational Research Journal*, 21(2), 278-292.

Teacher Diversification in Ireland: Lessons to be learned?

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Diversifying the teaching profession has come to be of international concern (Abawi and Eizadirad, 2020; Ingersoll et al, 2021). This is a complex phenomenon drawing across a variety of conceptual underpinnings, performances of identities and ranges of local, national and international contexts. This paper reports on an in-depth study of a range of teacher diversification initiatives both from across Europe and under a nationally-funded scheme in Ireland (Keane, Heinz & Mc Daid, 2023). The paper identifies the rationale for teacher diversification, argues that when it comes to teacher identity, representation matters, but also that representation does not go far enough and teacher diversity work must simultaneously encompass system transformation to achieve a diverse, equitable and inclusive teacher profession. Theoretically informed by the double equity work of Childs et al (2011) equity in

and through admissions, the paper presents some key findings in relation to the requirements for Higher Education Institutions in taking diversification initiatives seriously in addition to the experiences of a selection of student teachers participating in diversification initiatives, both in their lectures and on school practicum. It presents an analysis of key moments in the student teacher education that cast light on the possibility for those student teachers to be authentically present in their chosen roles. The paper concludes with an overview of seven key principles which will support a more equitable, diverse and inclusive teaching profession. These principles include: - building awareness and sensitivity among all teachers, school leaders, teacher educators, and policy-makers of the normative nature of school and teacher education cultures as a precondition for meaningful reflection and action to create more equitable and inclusive work environments for all teachers. - Forging safe spaces in educational settings for authentic, respectful, and impactful dialogue in the pursuit of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive teaching profession. - creating safe spaces in education for democratic participation and recognition that the development of inclusive schools is the responsibility of all educators, wherein all teachers, irrespective of their socio-demographic positionalities, need to be prepared for and consider it their responsibility to be effective teachers for all students (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2009) and supportive colleagues for all staff in schools.

References:

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