

CENTRAL EUROPE

THE CONCEPTUALIZATION AND WORLD-WIDE DISSEMINATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF EDUCATION

Background

Education – formal, nonformal or informal – is the process whereby an individual or a group of individuals are socialized into a given culture. It implies that the values, attitudes, skills and the general, as well as the special competencies needed for a normal life in the given culture are inculcated. A common core of such competencies is necessary for the citizen in order to get along in the society in which he or she is born. In addition, an individual, who belongs to a given subculture or social class is thereby equipped with certain special values, habits and competencies. Thus, education in a given culture is by definition provincial. As a rule, education does not have a global, intercultural or international dimension. To change an educational system in terms of formal schooling takes quite a long time and considerable effort, because it is a deeply institutionalized system. Schools cannot be reformed overnight.

How can such an Encyclopedia be conceived so as to make the knowledge it presents about education internationally relevant? In other words: how can this *knowledge*, in spite of what has just been said, be given a “global” dimension? In planning the Encyclopedia we felt at the outset that the main emphasis should be on educational *research*. From the start, educational research was characterized by attempts to elucidate problems pertaining to education by means of methods and findings derived from psychology, sociology, history and philosophy. In this context, William James’ famous *Talks to Teachers on Psychology* given at Harvard in 1892¹ is relevant. At that time, many Americans, who had received their graduate training in Germany with Wilhelm Wundt and others, came back to the United States and got professorships at John Hopkins, Clark University, University of Chicago and Stanford. James then made the following statement:

“I say that you make a great, a very great mistake, if you think that psychology, being the science of the mind’s laws, is something from which you can deduce definitive programmes and schemes and methods of instruction for immediate school-room use. Psychology is a science, and teaching is an art; and sciences never generate arts directly out of themselves. An intermediary inventive mind must make the application, by using its originality.”

We shall not take issue with James or anyone else who holds the opinion that education is mainly an art and not a science. At any rate, educational problems can be elucidated, and sometimes even solved, by research rooted in both the social sciences and the humanities.

It should be noted that research pertaining to education was established on both sides of the Atlantic around the beginning of the twentieth century. In Germany, which was leading the way, scholars trained, for instance, by Wilhelm Wundt, founder of the laboratory of

¹ W. James: *Talks to Teachers on Psychology: And to Students on Some of Life’s Ideals*. London: Longmans Green, 1899.

experimental psychology, in Leipzig, began to apply experimental methods on problems in education. Wundt's student, Ernst Meumann published in 1907 his monumental *Einführung in die experimentelle Pädagogik* in three volumes.² In Great Britain, inspired among others by Francis Galton, differential psychology and mental testing began to be applied in schools. Cyril Burt became the first school psychologist in the world employed by the London City Council. In France, Albert Binet took on the task of constructing *echelle metrique*, an intelligence test that could be used in assessing the capacity of mentally retarded school children.

In the United States, however, it was Lewis Terman, who pursued the testing tradition. He received his doctorate at Clark University in Massachusetts supervised by the prominent pioneer G. Stanley Hall. He later carved a career in educational psychology through close links with Stanford University in California. Another pioneer of this time was Charles Judd, Dean of the School of Education at the University of Chicago. It would appear then that education, as a scholarly pursuit, had practically no role to play outside of Europe and the United States. Apart from Australia, Japan was the only country before World War II where educational psychology had a place in universities. Furthermore, there were no academic institutions, other than universities, that could serve as a basis for educational studies and research.

The years after World War II marked a turning point in the internationalization of educational knowledge, irrespective of whether it was research-based or not. An important role in establishing a "global" dimension was played by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which celebrated its 50th anniversary recently. In particular, the work of the Hamburg Institute of Education founded in 1952 and the International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP) founded in 1963 by UNESCO in cooperation with the World Bank and the Ford Foundation was pivotal. For a period of time Torsten Husén was a member of the Task Force which planned IIEP and was Chairman of its Governing Board over a ten-year period, from 1969 to 1980. Another UNESCO connection had to do with the membership in the UNESCO curriculum committee, which was set up in 1957 and concluded its work a couple of years later. This committee undertook the difficult task of trying to establish the principles underlying curriculum across educational systems all over the world, indeed an ambitious attempt to establish an international dimension in primary and secondary education. At least two members on this committee were from the Third World, one from India and the other from Brazil.

In 1980–81 the World Bank – through Dr. Akilu Habte, who at the time headed its departments of education – invited Torsten Husén, in his role as IIEP Chairman and the work in which he was involved in Botswana, to conduct a survey of the educational research and studies at universities in the Third World. This survey showed how small the resources were in terms of personnel and competence. In Africa, for instance, (with the exception of the Republic of South Africa), education as an academic discipline played a significant role only in three or four places, such as Nairobi and Ibadan. In Latin America, educational studies employed quite a few people. For example, an institute in Costa Rica reported that it employed some 40 researchers. The productivity did not match the personnel resources, however. At any rate, very few publications, if any were cited in journals or books in the rest of the world. It is not possible to go into the details here. Therefore, the concluding part of the report to the Bank was summarized as follows. Research in education in Third World countries to a large extent was institutionalized at ministries and not at the few universities. Most of the coun-

2 E. Meumann: *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die experimentelle Pädagogik und ihre psychologischen Grundlagen*. Leipzig, Engelmann, 1907.

tries, where the World Bank operated, did not possess professional research competence and supporting facilities that would enable them to conduct research associated with the Bank's programs. Lack of adequately trained professional staff was striking and the very few centers of excellence had staff members who had been trained in the United States and Europe. In the few countries with big projects of a policy-oriented character survey research techniques, including the handling of big sets of data, were required. Many of these surveys were related to the evaluation of entire national systems of education where the handling of big sets of data was crucial. Almost no developing countries had the resources to conduct such studies.

Certain recommendations were made as to how to build competencies for conducting educational research. The most productive and quickest manner was to send students for graduate studies abroad. Another recommendation was international seminars and workshops. The International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) in 1971 conducted a six week seminar in Gränna,

Sweden with about 150 participants from a large number of developing countries, a competence-promoting effort that turned out to have a great impact.

Planning and Preparing the Encyclopedia

The background sketch given above had to be considered when the colleagues whom the Editors-in-Chief had invited to join the project, got together to prepare the first International Encyclopedia of Education. We were faced with three major problems of "internationalization":

- 1) What topics would be the basis for separate entries, which could have cross-national relevance?
- 2) How should we select authors to be invited to write these entries in order to ensure that this selection reflected in a representative way the international research community?
- 3) How should we secure a proper international balance in the knowledge and scholarship we wanted to present in the Encyclopedia?

We held our first planning meeting in 1980 at the headquarters of what was then Pergamon Press (now part of Elsevier Science) at Headington Hill Hall in Oxford. We took it as self-evident that the overarching goal for an encyclopedia should be to present the existing body of *research-based* knowledge in education. During our initial discussions, it became evident that this goal was too narrow or onesided. We also had to consider the *descriptive* body of knowledge, pertaining to education. It was, for example, important to include entries, which presented the various national systems of education all over the world. We also should present the various philosophical and historical bases of education. After a lengthy debate we arrived at the conclusion that the Encyclopedia's subtitle should be "Research and Studies".

By definition, an encyclopedia is – or should – in various respects be *comprehensive*. It should present all the relevant knowledge in education. The entries should be selected, and the content that is included, structured in such a way as to meet the needs of all its users, irrespective of where they live. For reasons described below, it was extremely difficult to reach these goals from the outset. All of those who met for the first planning meeting in Oxford were either from Europe or the United States. There were no representatives from the rest of the world, although both the Editors-in-Chief had ample experience from educational systems in the Third World. Torsten Husén, for example, had experience as a planner in Africa and as Chairman of the IIEP Governing Board. IIEP's main task was to serve the Third World by training planners and conducting relevant research.

Other aspects of the need for comprehensiveness was the preparation of a list of entries and the selection of contributing authors. (The final decision in that case was left to the Section Editors.) The invitation of best informed contributors should be guided by the ambition to find not only those who were best informed, but also to reflect a reasonable international coverage.

The Editors-in-Chief spent quite some time after starting the enterprise in the early 1980s in the various reference libraries trying to take a hard look at the existing sources of information, such as Psychological Abstracts, various national encyclopedias of education or related fields, indices of handbooks, etc. It soon became evident that, at least in terms of number of publications and citations, the United States clearly dominated the scene. Our very rough estimate at that time (1981) was about 75–80 per cent of *published* research in education was conducted in the United States. Some 15–20 per cent came from Europe and, at most, five per cent from the rest of the world.

We cannot honestly say that we have succeeded to live up to the goals of comprehensiveness in terms of content, contributors and international relevance at which we have hinted. On the other hand, if we compare the International Encyclopedia with the one produced under the auspices of the American Educational Research Association, we have been rather successful in our endeavour to internationalize.

To begin with the Section Editors: in the first edition, five out of 17 editors were from Europe, eight from the United States and four from the rest of the world. In the second edition in 1994, we had 23 Section Editors, a fact which reflected greater comprehensiveness in terms of the academic territory we had tried to cover. Out of the editors, 11 were from the United States, seven were from Europe and five were from the rest of the world. In the last group, four were from Australia. It should be noted, however, that in the US group, at least two came from the “rest” group, the editor of the educational anthropology from Nigeria and the editor on women and education from Germany. At any rate, the disproportion in terms of Section Editors does not exceed that of the number of publications emanating from these parts of the world, as recorded in the various citation indices.

We ought to deal briefly with the difficult problem of structuring the body of knowledge presented. It was felt that the entries should be listed alphabetically. The difficult and delicate “chunks” of knowledge had to be ordered. The overarching problem was at what level of generalization should the pieces be cut.

Education – A Science?

In an early edition of Edward Lee Thorndike's *The Principles of Teaching Based on Psychology* published in 1906, his high-gear ambition was, according to the Preface, “to make the study of teaching scientific and practical”.³ He then goes on to say: “Scientific principles are the back-bone of the knowledge of teaching, but concrete exercises are its flesh and blood”. He devotes about one third of the book to illustrative practical teaching exercises. Since the book aims at spelling out how psychology can be used in education, he finds it important to explain how psychology is related to the art of teaching:

“The science of biology, especially human psychology and hygiene, give the laws of changes in bodily nature. The science of psychology gives the laws of changes in intellect and character. The teacher studies and learns to apply psychology to teaching for the same reason the

3 E. L. Thorndike: *The Principles of Teaching Based on Psychology*. New York, Seiler, 1906.

progressive farmer studies and learns to apply botany; the architect, mechanics; or the physician, physiology and pathology.”

In the Preface to the first edition the Editors-in-Chief proudly wrote that the International Encyclopedia represented “the first attempt to present an up-to-date overview of the international scholarship being conducted on educational problems, theories, practices and institutions”.⁴ It was, therefore, important to “define education as a field of research, study and discourse”. Reference was made to Lawrence Cremin’s book *Public Education*,⁵ where he defines education “as the deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and sensibilities”. Thus, education refers to the art of deliberately and purposefully influencing and/or shaping the behavior of children, adolescents and adults.

Educational theory is not as unitary and well-defined as, for instance, physics. It has several disciplinary dimensions. In French, educational theory is referred to as *sciences pédagogiques*. It is difficult to draw the borderline between education proper and behavior modification. It is hard to distinguish between curing a neurotic patient and teaching the same patient.

Thus education, as a field of research and studies about upbringing and teaching, is *multidisciplinary*. Cremin has coined the expression “ecology of education” which refers to the entire system of educative agents in society and the sociocultural and economic system within which education (be it formal or nonformal) operates.

Again, education has several disciplinary dimensions, which refer to a spectrum of social sciences and humanities, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, history and political science.

The field of education has in the Encyclopedia been subdivided into 22 “mega fields”, such as adult education, comparative and international education, curriculum, human development, philosophy of education, teacher education, teaching and educational evaluation. Apart from the two Editors-in-Chief, an Editorial board of 22 experts in the role of Section Editors took care of each one of the subfields.

Education is primarily a highly practical task. In most cases, it has, as pointed out above, to do with socializing children or young people, not only to a given culture but also, to shape competencies, which are important in a particular culture. Thus, education cannot be regarded as a science in the same way as, for instance, physics, not to mention mathematics. The very fact that it is bound to a given culture reduces the claims of the “real science”, i. e. to be universally applicable. Thorndike maintains that educational psychology can provide the “scientific basis of teaching” by providing the “laws” and “principles”, according to which changes by educational acts take place. Almost ten decades earlier, William James in his *Talks to Teachers on Psychology* spelled out a more humble gospel. He pointed out that there was in the 1890s a “boom” in psychology at American universities with newly established professorships, laboratories and journals. But he warned about “mystification”. There is however, no “new psychology, but the old” one that began in Locke’s time “plus a little physiology of the brain and the senses and theory of evolution. It is only the fundamental conceptions of psychology, which are of real value to the teachers: and they, apart from the aforesaid theory of evolution, are very far from being new”. He then goes on to make the following statement:

“I say moreover that you make a great, a very great mistake, if you think that psychology, being the science of the mind’s law, is something from which you can deduce definitive

4 T. Husén & T. N. Postlethwaite: *The International Encyclopedia of Education*. Oxford, Pergamon, 1985.

5 Lawrence Cremin: *Public Education*. New York, 1965.

programmes and schemes and methods of instruction for immediate schoolroom use. Psychology is a science, and teaching is an art A science only lays down lines within which the rules of the arts must not transgress, but what particular things he shall positively do is left exclusively to his genius ... To know psychology ... is absolutely no guarantee that we shall be good teachers. To advance to that result, we must have an additional endowment altogether, a happy tact and ingenuity to tell what definite things to say and do when pupil is before us.” That requires “a tact for the concrete situation ...” However, “the alpha and the omega of the teacher’s art, are things to which psychology cannot help us in the least”. (Op. cit., p. 9.)

Worldwide Dissemination of the Encyclopedia

From the outset this was an ambitious project in its aims and scope and in its size (ten volumes in the first edition and 12 volumes in the second). We had to marshal an army of some 1300 contributors from over 100 countries. But the difficulties of appealing to an international audience have already been amply elucidated and, prior to the publication of the first edition, there were several doubters at the publishing house that we could be successful in achieving our goal. Until the publication of the first edition of the *International Encyclopedia of Education* all previous reference works at the publishers had been in the physical or life sciences, the subject matter of which was seen to have more universal appeal. It was also the case that until this time all previous reference works in Education had either centred on educational affairs in a single country or group of countries, or else they had focused their attention on specific stages or levels of education. The rationale for supporting this ambitious project was the identification of a growing need for a well documented international overview of the major aspects of the education enterprise by taking into account the various practices and research paradigms in different socioeconomic, cultural and political contexts.

Reference works may be defined as meeting a number of reader needs. They should meet the needs of the experienced practitioner or researcher in a given field for specialist knowledge and they should provide an authoritative account of an area for the novice student. Thus for the *International Encyclopedia of Education* the target audience comprised students, teachers, researchers and faculty, while the target customers comprised university libraries, junior college libraries, ministries of education and government libraries.

The success of those who planned, edited and wrote the entries for the Encyclopedia in overcoming the inherently provincial nature of education is clearly borne out in the reviews. To quote one American reviewer: “Not all useful knowledge ends on our shores; and in many respects, being physically isolated from Europe and Asia, we have greater need to draw upon educational wisdom and practices of other countries. The *International Encyclopedia* is a good place to start.” The strategy of bringing together scholarly findings from the social sciences and humanities that bore on educational issues and problems proved highly successful. The first edition was awarded the American Library Association, 1986, Dartmouth Medal for an outstanding reference work and was selected as an Outstanding Academic Book by *Choice*, the main review media for the academic library community in North America. The reviewer of the second edition for *Choice* wrote: “(this edition) is even more impressive and must be viewed as a premier resource when ‘udged on virtually every criterion applied to a reference work. Perhaps most pleasing in this edition – for those researchers seeking national updates – are individual sections devoted to major reforms occurring in the 1980s and 1990s, and to predictions of what the major educational problems and issues will be for individual coun-

tries in the year 2000, an important feature given the worldwide emphasis on educational reform.”

The articles on the systems of education were universally well received, particularly the special effort devoted to developing countries. By the second edition⁶ over 150 hundred and fifty country educational profiles were covered. Each one dealt with the general background, the politics and goals of the education system, the formal structure: administration and supervisory structure in operation; educational finance; supplying personnel for the system; curriculum development and teaching methodology; examinations and certification; assessment, evaluation and research, major reforms and major problems for the future. Some entries were obviously more detailed than others because of the wealth of information available, but even countries like Chad, Colombia, Myanmar and Rwanda were covered in considerable detail. As Gerald Haigh commented in *The Times Educational Supplement*, “underneath the contributor’s dispassionately anonymous style, the reader can deduce something of the personal heroism that has gone into keeping higher education alive in a conflict-ridden country such as El Salvador”.

Behind the fulsome praise of the reviewers lies a not inconsiderable effort on the part of the editors to avoid political polemic. Even the attempt to be even handed and comprehensive in coverage ran into problems when, for example, objections were raised by China regarding the inclusion of an entry on Taiwan.

As has been remarked above, a reference work is designed to provide an authoritative, up-to-date, comprehensive “body of knowledge” of a specialist field. It provides a systematic organization of otherwise disparate materials. At the same time that information needs to be readily accessible. This requires that each entry is both scholarly and readable. It needs to be divided into sensible sections and subsections. An initial definition is always helpful. Not only should the basic facts be there but the subsequent analysis should be both informative and critical. All the main viewpoints need to be presented and the evaluation should be precise, concise and objective. It should be meticulously referenced and include a bibliography.

To this end, the publishers worked closely with the Editors-in-Chief to provide a clear set of guidelines to the prospective authors to assist them in the preparation of their articles, bearing in mind that not all authors had English as their first language. All references were carefully verified by the publisher.

While it is always laborious attempting comprehensive searches in a large multi-volume Encyclopedia “at least in print” a very important component in assisting with this task is the subject index which needs to be not only accurate but also exhaustive. Both the international and the multidisciplinary dimensions of this work made this an especially challenging task. While we were fortunate in having the *Thesaurus of ERIC descriptors* – which is familiar to education librarians/information workers and to experienced researchers in education – as a basis on which to build, we were also conscious of its North American origins and sought to extend the terminology to encompass the range of terms required by an international readership.

Promoting the Encyclopedia to an international audience is not difficult – the relevant libraries are easily identifiable and the researchers and students may be reached via the various scholarly societies. The proof of the pudding is in the relevancy of the content to an international audience. It is not possible to get absolute sales by country since some go via distributors such as Blackwells in the United Kingdom. Thus almost certainly some of 233 sales under United Kingdom went to other parts of the world. It is interesting to note that after the

6 T. Husén & T. N. Postlethwaite: *The International Encyclopedia of Education*. 2nd ed. Oxford, Pergamon, 1994.

United States, Japan has the largest number of sales. This was also true for the first edition. Sales in the United States represent some 40 percent of the total which is similar to the pattern we see for our primary journals. Perhaps not surprisingly sales of the first edition were initially very slow in North America – a reflection perhaps of the parochial nature of the subject, for while both the editors-in-chief were distinguished international scholars, they were European. It was not until the reviews began to appear in the American journals, and in particular, the awarding of the Dartmouth Medal by the American Library Association, that sales in the United States began to accelerate. By the time the second edition appeared its reputation in North America was well established. Indeed one interesting subset of sales for the second edition was to the United States Army.

Within Europe, after the United Kingdom, sales were highest in Germany, followed by The Netherlands. Sales in the Latin countries remain fairly low (however, the first edition was translated into Spanish and some sections were also translated into Greek).

Within the African continent it is interesting to note that sales in Nigeria exceed those in South Africa. Within Asia, sales in Taiwan and India are noteworthy. Following consolidation of the higher education institutes within Australia, sales of 47 sets would suggest that at least one set of the Encyclopedia sits in every major academic library.

As outlined earlier the target audience for this work comprises students, researchers and faculty in education as well as practitioners. However, much of the value of the work is realized only when it is ready to hand. Since the Encyclopedia is primarily an institutional purchase electronic delivery offers the possibility of desktop access as well as more productive searching and browsing of information. One obvious omission in coverage in the Encyclopedia was that of higher education which was deliberate since Pergamon had published the *Encyclopedia of Higher Education* edited by Burton Clark and Guy Neave in 1992.⁷ Both Encyclopedias have now been integrated on one CD-ROM⁸ in updated form as the first step in providing an electronic resource in education that will hopefully increase the accessibility of the information.

TORSTEN HUSÉN & BARBARA BARRETT

⁷ B. R. Clark & G. Neave: *The Encyclopedia of Higher Education*. Oxford, Pergamon, 1992.

⁸ Education: *The Complete Encyclopedia* on CD-Rom 1998. Elsevier Science, Oxford.