

Invitational Symposia at the WERA Focal Meeting in Tokyo, Japan (5-8 August 2019)

**Symposium offered by
IEA and PERA**

**ADVANCING INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE RESEARCH
ON TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATION**

The session aims at being a forum to present, discuss and disseminate latest research findings which contribute to knowledge in the field of international comparative research on teachers and teacher education and to the development of educational practice. The session focuses on the methodological perspectives on international comparative research. The session looks on the link between teachers and teacher education and places in the centre the issue of the quality of research and quality of teachers over a career and the quality of teacher education in challenging times.

Benefits of international comparative research on teachers and teacher education include widening the understanding of our own and other systems and broadening our knowledge on international trends. However, critical use of such research results with taking into account the contexts of the systems and the methodological challenges immersed in such research are important if we would like to make any improvement in education and advance our research.

The contributors to the session critically examine an issue of responsibility for the research and education and aim to answer the following questions:

- What are the key elements of making international comparative studies?
- How to assure the quality and relevance of international comparative research?
- What is the contribution of international comparative studies to enhancement of national research capacity?

The session encourages collaboration amongst educational researchers from various regions, who represent their own institutions and serve as leaders of various organisations.

Keywords: comparative research, methodology, educational practice, teachers and teacher education, quality

Discussant: Prof. Barbara Schneider, Michigan State University, USA

Chair: Prof. Joanna Madalinska-Michalak, University of Warsaw, Poland
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Symposium paper abstracts:

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The Making of IEA's comparative studies – assuring quality and relevance across educational systems

IEA has contributed to the methodological advancement of international large-scale comparative studies of educational achievement since 1958, aiming to gain a better understanding of the effects of policies and practices within and across education systems.

Although IEA studies are linked to different grades and subject curriculum, their instruments are designed around “opportunity to learn”. They look at three levels within a curricular model: intended, implemented, and achieved, and in doing so, collect a rich array of contextual data (e.g. Mullis & Martin Eds., 2017). To ensure high-quality comparative standards, all questions are adapted, translated, and pre-tested before the assessment is administered (Martin, Mullis & Hooper, Eds. 2017).

IEA's Progress in International Literacy Study (PIRLS) will be used as an example, showing the development of assessments, framework, instruments, and the detailed survey operation procedures. There will then be a brief review of the resulting outputs and resources (Foy, Eds. 2017).

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Teachers' data in the IEA Datasets – opportunities and challenges in using them

IEA's open datasets provide a solid evidence base for researchers, educators and policymakers, recognized by UNESCO (UIS, 2018) as invaluable for monitoring progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

It will be illustrated, how IEA data may provide deeper insight into topics such as equity in education, gender (UNESCO, 2017), parental engagement and strategies, student attitudes and other selected contextual factors linked to educational achievement, facilitating understanding of available contexts information as well as the challenges and limitations in using the data from the self-reported instruments (UNESCO/IEA, 2017).

Interpreted together with achievement data, the evidence generated by the questionnaires allows for a better understanding of results and provide evidence that can contribute to improved learning for all. The key focus of this contribution is on using the available data to inform the discourse on teaching and selected trends related to teaching practices and the profession.

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The Contribution of International Comparative Studies to Enhancement of National Research Capacity

Since usually limited resources determine the capacity for research, international comparative studies provide many opportunities for improvement of educational theory and practice through a comprehensive examination of factors that determine student academic achievements and efficient work in education. Such studies and in-depth analysis of national data demonstrate potential to support informed decision- and policy-making since this type of studies provides robust and reliable evidence that, for example, early involvement in quality education, parental support for student learning, and optimal conditions for learning influence student academic achievement. Researchers and users of such studies must also be aware of many challenges (e.g. different curriculums, the age of students in the same grade and language of instruction) that can reduce the comparability of results in different countries and the organisers must try to minimise or eliminate such systemic disparities. This paper will provide examples that support the central argument of this study.

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**Teachers and Teacher Education in Challenging Times.
Lessons learnt from International Comparative Research**

The paper focuses on the link between teachers and teacher education and it places in the centre the issue of the quality of teachers over a career and the quality of teacher education in challenging times. The paper addresses the following questions: What counts most in teacher quality and teacher education quality in challenging times? What can we learn from this approach regarding the issue of quality teacher and quality of teacher education? What are the opportunities and pitfalls of using the international comparative approach on teachers and teacher education? The paper is based entirely upon the perspectives of academics from different countries contexts, where countries are located on five continents and they are a mix of developed and developing countries and the results of the discussions that took place during one of the European Educational Research Association Central Session “Teachers and Teacher Education – What counts most in challenging times?” held at European Conference on Educational Research, ECER 2018 at Free University of Bolzano, September 2018.

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