

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

I am very happy to introduce this inaugural issue of *Kultura Pedagogiczna/ Pedagogical Culture* with an invited collection of research papers on the theme of ethics and education. The papers have been written by leading Polish and international scholars and were first presented at a conference jointly organised by the Faculty of Education and the Institute of Philosophy of the University of Warsaw. I will comment further below on the significance of this collection of papers, but first I would like to make a few remarks on the new journal, including its aims, its scope and its audience.

The title *Kultura Pedagogiczna/ Pedagogical Culture* calls attention from the outset to the point that education is never merely a technical matter; it is never merely a transmission of skills, knowledge and values. All educational action takes place within social and historical circumstances where cultural forces are already alive and influential. It is difficult, even humanly impossible, to make all these influences transparent by assembling them and subjecting them to critical scrutiny. But it is nevertheless necessary, as far as possible, to identify and investigate such influences. In the research and scholarship associated with any profession, it is important not only to discover new knowledge that informs the expertise of that profession's practitioners and leaders. It is equally important to investigate the professional cultures which affect how that expertise is exercised in practice: how well, for whose benefit, with what kinds of tacit preferences, and so on. Where the expertise in question is itself pedagogical, as distinct for instance from the kinds of expertise required in professions like engineering, accountancy or indeed medicine, cultural factors reach to the very heart of the expertise itself. This often happens, however, in ways that are overlooked, or taken for granted. That is to say that in-built biases may not be so noticeable

because they have become deeply embedded in an inherited professional ethos; also perhaps because preoccupation with securing effectiveness and value for money tends to concentrate attentions on other matters. Such biases may be political, religious, socio-economic, gendered, or other in origin. They include, moreover, the widest range of human beliefs and attitudes about the good life and what ought to be done to pursue it. In this intricate context the effort to illuminate pathways of learning that are both promising and defensible, remains one of the most important of educational challenges.

Accordingly this new journal seeks to invite research perspectives which shed a critical light on the professional cultures of teaching, and of educational practice more widely. It hopes to provide an open forum for research-informed debate on pedagogical questions among educational researchers, scholars in humanities and social sciences, educational practitioners, including teachers and those in management and leadership positions, and not least, educational policy-makers. Too often professionals in such areas move in separate circles, with their own professional cultures cultivating a sense professional insulation and isolation from each other. There is a pressing need for a forum which removes walls that are rarely deliberately built but that nevertheless grow in such a way as to contain educational discourse in separate enclosures.

To facilitate this aim of providing a forum that is open to the widest range of interested parties, the journal will be an open-access one, also an on-line one. The open-access policy means that membership of one or other specialist group within the arena of education will not be necessary to read any of the articles. As an on-line journal its contents will be instantly available to readers and instantly available for reference purposes. The journal's not-for-profit strategy means that its publication must be funded through sources other than subscriptions from readers or through funds received from a scholarly society to which readers are subscribed. This can give rise to particular difficulties that must be overcome in the early issues of the journal if it is to survive and thrive in the longer term.

The journal has a Polish home, being published by the University of Warsaw, but it will have an international research scope. This means it will accept articles in Polish and in English. There is not a definite policy of 50:50 here. For the reasons mentioned at the close of the previous paragraph there may in fact be more papers in English during the first two years. In order to establish strong

research credentials for the journal, many of the articles published in the early issues will be invited ones by leading scholars from Poland and abroad.

In line with the editorial strategy for a new open-access journal explained above, the inaugural issue of *Kultura Pedagogiczna/ Pedagogical Culture* is a special issue, jointly edited by my Irish colleague Pádraig Hogan and myself. Its theme, ethics and education, is particularly appropriate to the new journal's title. It contains a collection of papers by philosophers of education from Poland, United Kingdom, Belgium and Ireland. All of the papers began as contributions to an international conference in Warsaw in November 2011, jointly organised by the Institute of Philosophy and the Faculty of Education of the University of Warsaw. The presenters were from quite different backgrounds, both within philosophy and philosophy of education, though all were experienced scholars with a shared interest in educational questions. Some knew each other through membership of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain but the experience of a conference on ethics and education through the medium of English in Poland was new to all. The conference schedule was designed to provide extensive opportunities for debate, which was vibrant, inclusive and sustained over two days in Warsaw. In previous eras approaches to ethics and education were frequently required to follow the orientations provided by churches, political parties or other dominant groups in society. By contrast, the explorations pursued in the contributions in the following pages seek to explore ethical questions in education while taking due account of what Hannah Arendt called the plurality of the human condition.

Finally, in preparing the first issue of *Kultura Pedagogiczna/ Pedagogical Culture*, I would like as Editor to express my appreciation for the support, both editorial and financial, received from the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain. In particular I would like to record my thanks to Professor Richard Smith, outgoing Chair of the Society.

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