

At the beginning of this year of 2016, the *Revista Brasileira de Educação* (*RBE*) is completing 21 years of work dedicated to scientific publication and the promotion of debate about the dominant issues in the educational field. These two decades have allowed the accumulation of editorial experience, improvements to the submission and evaluation of articles, expansion of the journal's circulation, the publication of some articles bi-lingually and, above all, the affirmation of the journal as an excellent source for consultation to identify trends in academic research and writing in Brazil and abroad. These research trends and themes include higher education and the various dimensions of university life.

In this context, this issue presents articles that problematize issues related to the social function of the university, to public policies or to the educational actions related to higher education. Even if the quantity of work is still limited, in comparison to the volume of work about basic education for example, at their different levels and foci, the papers in this issue offer a sample of production of arguments about established and instigating practices of higher education, as well as considerations of the institutional history of the university and its methods, policies, subjects and social and educational objectives. The arguments presented trace routes while also reflecting critically, in a process of constant evaluation, to allow thinking of and providing higher education with greater quality in Brazil.

The movement of considering higher education has been generated in the internal movement through which the relations between teaching and learning of adults are produced, although with strong traces that link and stimulate the institutions of higher education to an internationalization project, a fact that strongly influences the elaboration of public higher education policies.

Thus, *RBE* presents a group of articles that with an epistemic diversity focus on higher education and the university experience. The theme is treated on various fronts: the production of evaluation indicators, the valorization of oral competency in the education of university students, the demand for higher education created by rural-urban migration and the transformations of the Brazilian university in relation to its space, financing, administration and production of knowledge. The

return of graduates to higher education, through graduate studies, is another issue raised. Other emphases that support arguments about higher education are added to these and to the density of studies in the field of educational policies and the history of education.

The first article “The Quality of Higher Education and the Complex Exercise of Proposing Indicators” by Marília Costa Morosini, Cleoni Maria Barbosa Fernandes, Denise Leite, Maria Estela Dal Pai Franco, Maria Isabel da Cunha and Sílvia Maria Aguiar Isaia, presents reflections on the quality of higher education conducted by the Higher Education Observatory Project, undertaken by RIES/Capes/Inep. The authors point to the complexity of proposing evaluation indicators that recognize the contextualized and temporal character of the university and multi-referentiality as a value. Themes such as internationalization, administration, undergraduate education, innovation and the professional education and development of professors are highlighted and related to the quality of higher education.

The second article, by Domingo Verano-Tacoronte, Sara M. González-Betancor, Alicia Bolívar-Cruz, Margarita Fernández-Monroy and Inmaculada Galván-Sánchez, addresses oral communication as a competence to be considered in university education, because of its importance in the process of insertion in the world of work. The authors present points of development of a rubric, with this being a tool for evaluation. The example presented indicates how a rubric designed can be a valid and reliable tool for evaluating the competency of oral communication.

Another aspect added to the discussion is the rural-urban migration of the male and female children of small farmers who are seeking university education. From this perspective, Nadir Zago, based on sociological studies and particularly studies about migratory movements, and interviews with university students in various courses who come from rural areas in western Santa Catarina (conducted in 2011-2012), presents relations between rural social transformations and the demand for higher education and socio-professional destinations for these youth.

The transformations Brazilian universities are undergoing in relation to their institutional configuration, financing, management and production of knowledge are discussed in the article by Zuleide Simas da Silveira and Lucídio Bianchetti: “Universidade moderna: dos interesses do estado-nação às conveniências do Mercado,” [The Modern University: from interests of the nation state to market advantages], which highlights the Humboldtian, Napoleonic and U.S. models of the university, to capture the development of these concepts, their convergence and materialization in the modernized university. The article emphasizes that in the discourse of the processes of economic internationalization, the idea of the university comes to be aligned to economic development by mediation of scientific-technological policy, under the orientation of supranational entities. Finally, it points to university counter-reform as a triple process involving: the subordinated integration of education to science, technology and innovation policies; institutional diversification and hierarchization according to the supply and duration of courses; and the entrepreneurialization of education.

As consequences of this process of institutionalization and development of the university, not essentially in Brazil, three other articles are presented that conclude this block. Bringing graduate studies into the discussion, Mariana Gaio Alves analyzes the return of graduates to higher education. This is a study conducted at two universities in Portugal, which sought to understand the return of graduates, and the relations of this process with situations of professional insertion, to satisfaction with the professional trajectory after graduation, to perceptions about the suitability of the college diploma to professional activity and various other social variables. The debate is important in the current context, considering that lifelong education assumes growing importance in contemporary societies and that the increasing precariousness of employment of the graduates has been a strong trend in the labor market.

Another theme addressed is environmental education. Vanessa Marcondes de Souza, in "For the Market or for Citizenship? Environmental education in public institutions of higher education in Brazil", highlights that institutions of higher education have been called on to find solutions to the environmental crisis. Nevertheless, despite the participation and the promotion of some actions, differences exist among environmental perspectives. The author argues that the insertion of companies within environmental courses can lead university education to serve market interests, retarding the resolution of environmental problems. The challenge is the environmentalization of public institutions of higher education, both in the academic structures and in the work of pedagogy, for the appropriation of environmental knowledge.

Concluding this group of articles, Higher education and regional development: the North of Minas Gerais in the 1960s" highlights the historical factors, based on the analysis of official documents and the print media, which contributed to the implantation of higher education in northern Minas. The authors César Rota Júnior and Maria Helena de Souza Ide conclude that the economic development in the region stimulated by government actions, came to require greater investment in education, to prepare citizens who could contribute to the industrialization process and were adapted to the consequent urbanization, culminating in the implementation of the first higher education courses, all for teacher education.

A second group of texts analyzes educational policies. The first addresses socioeconomic and ideological aspects of national educational policy for professional education in Brazil, in the recent period (2003-2013). Roberto Antonio Deitos and Angela Mara de Barros Lara compare the justifications and proposals for public policies for professional education. They indicate some socioeconomic and ideological aspects that consider the existence of educational deficiencies of the work force that do not meet the demands of productive sectors and consequently, indicate a need to elevate the schooling, qualification and salary income in the country. Another article about educational policies highlights, using paradoxical language, the strengths and weaknesses of a body of ideas present in contemporary educational policies. Wanderson Ferreira Alves, based on a theoretical approach

to education and research in the realm of labor sciences, discusses projects for measuring pedagogical work found in some contemporary educational policies, as well as the scope of a managerial rationality that accompanies them, considering both in light of the complexity of the human activity of work. He initially sought to characterize the sources and the scope of the “new” *management* in education. Going against precedent, the article reveals limits and impasses of school education guided by managerial rationality. Finally, the dynamics of situations of work are discussed, the complexity of human activity and the challenges that the current world of labor imposes on the attempts to measure labor.

The final two articles in this issue are inscribed in the history of education. Fabiany de Cássia Tavares Silva presents “Compared Studies as a Research Method: writing a curriculum history using curricular documents”, which discusses the theoretical and methodological conditions raised by the use of comparative study procedures. By highlighting fundamentals, fields and procedures she also analyzes differences and similarities, exploring informational content and establishing relations with the distinct situations in which curricular history were and are produced.

The final article, “The Introduction of Breaks in Primary Schools in Paraná: the place of body education, senses and sensibilities in school” by Sidmar dos Santos Meurer and Marcus Aurelio Taborda de Oliveira, highlights the social construction of school recess. The authors problematize recess, based on the idea of renovation of public elementary school in Brazil. School recess is considered as a curriculum measure that ranges from an informal practice to a constitutive element of school norms. To construct their argument, the authors analyze the rhetoric of authorities and records of Paraná public school teachers from the first decades of the 20th century. Thus, recess is seen in a variety of perspectives ranging from a diffuse understanding of its meaning, to the renovating wave driving the desire for a new sensibility that affirms the activity, the experience and the work either as a means, or as an end of public primary education.

This issue of *RBE* concludes with the presentation of two reviews about issues present in this issue: higher education and public policies. The first is about the book organized by Charles Soulié (org.) *Un mythe à détruire? Origines et destin du Centre universitaire expérimental de Vincennes*. The compendium allows understanding the reasons for and the significance of the installation of this university at a critical moment in French history, marked by profound intellectual and social transformations. According to reviewer Graziela Serroni Perosa, the book is a reference for researchers who are dedicated to analyzing the characteristics of expansion and diversification of the modalities of access to Brazilian higher education. The second review was written by Carmem Inez de Oliveira and Maria Luiza Gazolla Reis da Silva. The authors present “*Internacionalização das políticas educacionais: transformações e desafios*” [Internationalization of Educational Policies: Transformations and Challenges], by Abdeljalil Akkari. Reflecting on the internationalization of educational policies in Brazil, Akkari addresses democratization, and decentralization considering student performance on national exams (ENEM, SAEB, Prova

Brasil) and the influences of international organizations such as the World Bank, and UNESCO, defending that it is impossible to think of Brazilian educational policy without considering international trends and debates.

The *Revista Brasileira de Educação* highlights the importance of the issues raised in this edition, in keeping with the discussions on the Brazilian education scenery and would like to thank the authors.

We wish you all good reading.

Carlos Eduardo Vieira

Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba, PR, Brazil

Antonio Carlos Rodrigues de Amorim

Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, SP, Brazil

Cláudia Ribeiro Bellochio

Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Santa Maria, RS, Brazil

Laura Cristina Vieira Pizzi

Universidade Federal de Alagoas, Maceió, AL, Brazil

Marcelo Andrade

Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

Maria da Conceição Passeggi

Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, Natal, RN, Brazil

Marília Gouvea de Miranda

Universidade Federal de Goiás, Goiânia, GO, Brazil

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