Editorial 2/2015

Education, Politics and Economy

HERNER SÆVEROT AND DZIUGINTA BARALDZNES

Nordic Studies in Education is a journal focusing on research in the Nordic countries regarding numerous questions about education. With this issue this is quite clear, as all the Nordic countries are represented except Iceland. The five articles have different perspectives on different educational questions, yet we can see some similarities as well. For example, the relationship between education, politics and economics is visible on several occasions.

In Tone Saugstad’s article – “Pædagogikken mellem det bureaukratiske og det postmoderne praksisfelt” – changes in the field of practice are examined. It is argued that the flexible field of practice can no longer be seen in light of a bureaucratic perspective, in which theory and evidence-based knowledge are transferred to practical actions. Such a condition creates new challenges for education. In response to these challenges the author turns to Aristotle, while suggesting that the discussion ought to go from evidence and the relation between theory and practice to the relationship between knowledge and action, and wondering whether the educators may consider what kind of knowledge should be used in a given situation.

In the next article – “Vem värnar om skolans demokratia-uppfattning? En textanalys av 2009 års svenska gymnasireform” – Per Adman examines specific debates concerning school reforms in Sweden. The author takes a political perspective and looks at both the right wing and left wing parties. What he finds is that the right wing parties seem to disregard equality and democrat-
ic issues in their thinking about reforms, while the left wing parties seem to be divided in terms of this. Drawing on his research findings, the author is worried about the future when it comes to focusing on democracy and equality in Swedish reforms.

Arnt Vestergaard Louws and Noemi Katznelson’s article “Paradoxes in Danish Vocational Education and Training” reveals a paradox in Danish vocational education and training (VET). On the one hand, Danish VET schools expect efficiency and better learning outcomes, but, on the other hand, the authors claim that the teaching practices of VET create unmotivated and weak students. The authors argue that this has to do with the marketization of education.

The last two articles enter the field of higher education and address some significant political and educational questions as well. While Vuokko Kohtamäki’s article “The Interaction of Teaching and R & D: Struggle of Academic Leaders in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences” analyses the interaction between teaching and research and development (R & D) in the Finnish state universities of applied sciences, Kristine Hoeg Karlson’s article “Conceptualising a Model of Feedback in Higher Education” investigates teacher feedback practices in higher education. The author presents a conceptual model of feedback in higher education from the co-constructive and relational perspective and addresses some important educational questions: How does the quality of teacher feedback affect self-regulated learning? How do teachers help students in their learning process? How do teachers facilitate the learner’s development of self-regulated learning practices? Both Kohtamäki and Hoeg Karlson reveal some urgent challenges that higher education faces.

We hope that the abovementioned articles are read with interest and curiosity, and that they can lead to exciting discussions and new insights, but above all to new questions about education.