

Tri-lingual international conference

In October 29-31, 2009, a tri-lingual international conference took place at the University of Basel in Switzerland. The theme of the conference was "Philosophy of Education and the Transformation of Educational Systems / La Philosophie de l'Éducation et la Transformation des Systèmes Éducatifs / Die Bildungs- und Erziehungsphilosophie und der Wandel der Bildungssysteme". The conference was mainly organized by Roland Reichenbach (Basel), in collaboration with (1) International Network of Philosophers of Education (INPE), (2) Network Philosophy of Education, European Educational Research Association (EERA), (3) Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (PESGB), (4) Société francophone de philosophie de l'éducation (Sofphied) and (5) Kommission Bildungs- und Erziehungsphilosophie der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft (DGfE).

The conference wanted to foster the exchange and discussion about the role of philosophy of education in the transformation of educational systems across three language groups (English, German, and French). In spite of long traditions in all three languages, educational philosophy presently appears to stand insecurely within disciplines and discourses of education and scientific policy. It seems questionable what role philosophical analyses in education should take within the ? at times, seemingly dramatically ? transformations of educational system in Europe.

The idea for this long overdue conference, which aimed to reduce the mutual inattention between anglophone, frankophone, and germanophone positions, originated several years ago among peers of EERA network 13.

The conference was quite successful. There were 12 invited speakers plus invited replies and about 26 additional contributions from peers from 16 countries!

EERA supported the conference financially, which allowed to support 18 PhD students from various European countries to attend the conference!

It is planed that some of the contributions of the conference will be published in EERJ.

Future Plans

It became obvious at the Basel conference that there is a desideratum expressed by many European peers to enforce the philosophical-educational discussions across language barriers. ECER (Network 13!) is not yet very successful in attracting a representative number of well known European philosophers of education (especially from non-English speaking countries and/or traditions, first and foremost from France and Germany, as well as others?).

The importance of language in philosophical reflection and analysis may account to a large degree for that deplorable fact. Future attempts in network 13 should give more emphasis to this problem.