

Editorial Note

With the dawn of the new year, our journal enters its fourth year. It is a fact that challenges, problems, and unpleasant situations are increasing instead of decreasing, spreading to more corners on the planet instead of being limited. Adult Education, in its critical and emancipatory perspective, is emerging as more necessary than ever. In this issue we find remarkable articles that embrace different but crucial issues in Adult Education. These articles cover a wide range of topics concerning issues of educational policy, online education, employment and lifelong learning policies, transformation theory, occupational practices, all of them examined under the lens of a critical approach.

In their article **Kostourou and Papageorgiou** examine the educational dimension of midwifery in professional education programs of this professional field in Greece. Although the educational dimension of midwives role is rather rather than profound the question is whether midwives fully understand all the dimensions of this role, their importance, and the conditions for its appropriate exercise. To explore this question twelve in-depth semi-structured interviews with midwives - trainers and eight interviews with men and women who had participated in childbirth programs in Greece were conducted. What emerges as a key conclusion is that midwives need more support for the educational part of their role, but also strengthening their practice as trainers by integrating the basic principles of Adult Education into their programs.

Giannakopoulou's article concerns the role of communication in forming online learning communities. The research presented is based on a qualitative approach and more specifically on fourteen semi-structured interviews with undergraduate and postgraduate students of Hellenic Open University. Based on the main findings of this research Giannakopoulou reaches the conclusion that learning is a social process of knowledge construction and cannot be effective if it is deprived of the dimension of communication and interaction within an appropriate social context, such as that created in online learning communities.

In their article **Tsiboukli and Efstratoglou** deal with the issue of employment and occupational prospects in Greece and its connection to lifelong learning policies. Applying the Oxford Global Economic Model, they estimate that during the period 2022-2030 the total employment rates in Greece are expected to decrease by 3,4%. This forms a paradox; in a period of economic growth, we have no new jobs created (jobless growth). They suggest facing more critically lifelong learning policies, and mapping more carefully the job market calling also to have a deeper view on those who rarely participate in training programs and are considered also to dropout from formal educational processes.

The issue of Mezirow's perception of the role of emotions in Transformation Theory is one of the most crucial and interesting debates for more than thirty years among scholars of this field. **Karakou and Karalis** examine this issue based on content analysis of the texts of Jack Mezirow. Their findings show that Mezirow linked emotion to the key elements of his theoretical construction (object and means of transformation, phases of transformation, and the role of adult educator). According to the research findings Mezirow managed to develop a comprehensive theory, keeping the boundaries of adult education distinct from psychotherapy.

In her article **Virvidaki** states that both public discourses and dialogue between adult learners are in many cases confined to competitive and assertive claims, leading to a reduce the potential of the dialogical act. Virvidaki suggests specific strategies for the adult educator, to render learners more sensitive to elements of uncertainty implicated in the process of collective rational inquiry. In this way students can activate their ability to handle more intricate and multidimensional discursive processes,

beginning to transform the restrictive stance towards the dialogical act, that they had manifested at the beginning.

In his article **Vassilopoulos** seeks the contemporary role and objectives served by the transfer of European lifelong learning policies for vocational education and training in Greece, through the analysis of European policy texts. What emerges is that European Union developed its interest in lifelong learning after 1990 in the context of an instrumental logic where the emphasis was placed on (vocational) education and training structures which were considered to be more effectively linked to serving the needs of the labor market. In the Greek case, on the one hand, we are not aware of the impact of the transfer of European policies on employment and the economy. On the other hand, the achievement of the objective of social inclusion and the fight against social exclusion within a system characterized by low participation and aggravation of social inequalities is in doubt.

The next issue of our journal will be dedicated to future orientations of the Transformative Learning (TL). The community of TL scholars has highlighted the theoretical exploration as a "theory in progress", consisting of a continuous development and elaboration of the perspectives it includes. Although there is a general agreement among the scholars of Transformative Learning that its defining characteristic is the aim of deep transformation, and that the related theoretical views constitute a living theory, there has not been a thorough collective discussion about how these concepts are understood. This issue will form the core of the next issue, in which important scholars of this field will present their views.

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