Introduction

What does it mean „Responsible Educational Research (RER)" ?

The main objective of this volume of our Journal is to build a strong background of partnership and community of various European institutions in the area of Responsible Educational Research (RER) in order to share knowledge, best practices, experience and foster the dissemination and promotion of philosophy of RER.

Specific goals of this volume are as follows:

- to enable European researchers to undertake the educational issues connected with the health, gender, sustainable development, ICT in education and inclusive education in responsible way,
- to exchange knowledge between universities and enable them to transfer experience from their projects and research,
- to ensure the possibility for the researchers and other stakeholders to represent their work to the community and other scientists in Europe and beyond,
- to develop the governance for the advancement of responsible research by all stakeholders (researchers, policy makers, business and civil society organisations), which is sensitive to society needs and demands and promotes responsible educational research,
- to foster sustainable interaction between research institutions, business and policy makers,
- to ensure the dissemination of information about scientific achievements in the area of educational research at the international level.

The following factors are crucial for the development of educational research: open access, ethics and transparency. So far, none comprehensive activities have been taken that would clearly define the issues of transparency and responsibility of educational research.

The first important factor is **an open access** to scientific publications and articles. Currently, it is believed that access to research results contributes to the overall improvement of the quality of research and innovation in both public and private sectors. In principle, such activities are to support creation of the European Research Area and the Innovation Union – the two flagship initiatives of the European Commission in the field of research and development.

Open access is defined as the practice of providing on-line access to scientific information that is free of charge to the end-user and that is re-usable. In the context of research and innovation, scientific information can refer to peer-reviewed scientific research articles or research data. Wider access to scientific publications and data therefore helps to build on previous research results (improved quality of results), foster collaboration and avoid duplication of effort (greater efficiency),

accelerate innovation and involve citizens and society (improved transparency of the scientific process).

The next important factors are **transparency and ethics.** Researchers have an ethical obligation to facilitate the evaluation of their evidence-based knowledge claims through data access, production transparency, and analytic transparency so that their work can be tested or replicated. For example, researchers making evidence-based knowledge claims should provide a full account of how they draw their analytic conclusions from the data, i.e. clearly explicate the connecting data to conclusions. In case of educational research this issue is particularly important.

Transparency is one of the crucial criteria in educational research. Researchers are sensitized by transparency in the scope of advantage and disadvantage aspects of research project. It protects readers, as well as authors, from illegal inferences and distant associations which are beyond the reach of research project. Transparency provides conditions for verification of presented research results. Science education, focusing on human and social processes associated with its development and functioning, enters an area empiricism so many times, each time trying to determine the condition of the part of individuals and the conditions in which they have to operate. From the point of view of a certain scientific community, credibility of observations made and statements formulated based on them depend on the accuracy of methodological solutions adopted in this community. So it is particularly important in the process of publishing research results to gain transparency of their course, giving recipients the opportunity to review conclusions, without which they are exposed to the dangers of subjectivism, unauthorized generalization and interpretation of data collected during the research process. Transparency in presenting the results of the observations is particularly important for young scientists [Sławomir Pasikowski, *Transparentność w publikowaniu wyników badań empirycznych poświęconych edukacji (Transparency in publishing results of empirical research on education)*, Educational Studies Review, Vol. 1, No. 16 (2013)].

In a European context the following points of reference should be reflected in the design of research processes:

- ethical acceptability, which includes compliance with both the EU charter on fundamental rights, as well as the safety of research,
- orientation towards societal needs, which includes an orientation towards contributing to achieving objectives of sustainable development (consisting of economic, social, as well as environmental aspects).

Due to the fact that the volume is focused on responsible educational research, it is necessary to analyse the definition and main aspects of responsible research.

Firstly, responsible research refers to the comprehensive approach of proceeding in research, in ways that allow all stakeholders that are involved in the processes of research and innovation at an early stage. It enables:

- to obtain relevant knowledge on the consequences of the outcomes of their actions and on the range of options open to them,
- to effectively evaluate both outcomes and options in terms of societal needs and moral values,
- to use these considerations as functional requirements for design and development of new research.

Responsible research aims mainly at being:

- responsive: if research claims to be responsible, it has the capacity to change its direction or shape when it becomes apparent that the current developments do not match societal needs or are ethically contested; responsiveness refers to the flexibility and capacity to change research and innovation processes according to public values,
- inclusive: inclusiveness asks researchers and innovators to involve diverse stakeholders in the process to broaden and diversify the sources of expertise and perspectives,
- reflexive: reflexivity asks researchers and innovators to think about their own ethical, political or social assumptions to enable them to consider their own roles and responsibilities in research, as well as in public dialogue; reflexivity should raise awareness for the importance of framing issues, problems and the suggested solutions (Options for strengthening Responsible Research and Innovation, European Commission, 2013).

The articles had undertaken the challenge of being the examples of a good practice in the area of RER, and open-acces to them is one of the factors of transparency in our professional development.

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