



Newsletter

Number 7 - Autumn 2007

Editorial

By Arno Reints

The Ninth International Conference on Textbooks and Educational Media in Tønsberg, Norway was a great success. Professionals from all continents gathered to discuss and exchange ideas and research findings about new developments. It was a great conference. More about it in this Newsletter.

One of the many positive things of the conference is the growing of the IARTEM-community. Many participants at the conference participated in the UNESCO online discussion forum about textbooks. New courses are being organized, conferences held and researchers look for cooperation. Mutual contacts are growing.

Conferences are a very important means of stimulating research cooperation. In the meantime the Newsletter can be one of the other means to keep in contact. I would like to invite you to do so.

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NEWS FROM IARTEM

Boarding-news

Jaan Mikk retires from IARTEM-Board

Our vice-president for years, prof. Jaan Mikk, has decided to leave the Board. He has been a board member for a long time. Within IARTEM Jaan Mikk has pushed the Baltic countries into IARTEM, which was a great asset to IARTEM. His affinity with textbooks and textbook research can hardly be exaggerated. Jaan Mikk has written numerous publications. Important topics of his work are: readability of texts, value education and the use of the computer in textbook research. He is a warm advocate of quantitative methods in textbook research. His extensive knowledge of textbooks is written down in his book "Textbook: Research and writing".

Recently Jaan Mikk started an online course on the Basis for the Success of Textbooks (see further on in this Newsletter). We offered Jaan Mikk a well-deserved 'goodbye' at the conference in Tønsberg, in september of this year.



New Board-members

At the General Assembly three new board members were elected. In this Newsletter Chaechun Gim (South Korea) and Jesús Rodríguez Rodríguez (Spain) will present themselves. The other new board members, Natalija Mazeikiene (Lithuania) will present herself in the coming Newsletter.



Chaechun Gim is a professor of Education, Yeungnam University in South Korea. He got his B.A. and M.A. from Seoul National University and Ph.D. from UCLA in the United States. Before he moved to the University, he had worked as senior researcher for government-granted research institutes such as KEDI (Korean Educational Development Institute) and KICE (Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation). Dr. Gim completed more than 50 national policy studies last 10 years in the areas of national curriculum, textbooks, and evaluation. He has played a key role in developing national curricula, textbook policies, and evaluation systems in Korea. Dr. Gim was accepted as a distinguished person into Marquis *Who's Who in the World* in 2007 and 2008.

Jesus Rodriguez Rodriguez

Teacher and Associate Professor at the Department of Didactics and School Organization of the University of Santiago de Compostela. Presently, vice dean of the School of Educational Sciences. His doctoral dissertation dealt with teachers' perceptions regarding didactic materials and it was awarded the National Prize for Educational Research.

Since 1990, Professor Rodriguez Rodriguez has been part of the *Nova Escola Galega* for pedagogical renewal. The purpose of *Nova Escola Galega* is to reflect on the role of resources in education and to propose new lines of action regarding media in the education community. Besides he currently is the director of the *Revista Galega de Educación* (The Galician Education Magazine), a resource for teaching staff to share experiences as well as providing strategies for the classroom. Some of his experiences with materials have taken place in Latin American countries where he had the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities such as conducting courses and seminars, and elaborating materials (Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Ecuador, among others). For approximately a year and a half he was a member of the University of Puerto Rico teaching staff, providing instruction in the area of didactic materials. At the moment, he is coordinating the congress on didactic materials that will be held in Santiago de Compostela. This year marks the 4th Edition of the congress and is entitled "Innovative Didactic Materials and Resources". He also participated in coordination of the Iberian congress "*A Fenda Dixital*" that held its first edition in the town of Silleda (Pontevedra) as well as the Congress "Educational Activities and Resources in Galician Museums". He works with a variety teams in the areas of Didactic Materials design and research. One of the projects he participated in was "The elaboration of didactic materials by and for adults". This was an innovative didactic experience with third year students in Social Education and was awarded the First Prize for Innovation by the University of Santiago. Another project, "The elaboration of didactic materials for students with special education needs", was awarded the First Prize in Educacompostela for Educational Resources. At present, He is a member of the Stellae Research Group at the University of Santiago.

His research and publications focus on the field of didactic materials in "formal" and "non-formal" settings. Recent publications include the following:



Rodríguez Rodríguez, J. (2006). *A elaboración e a adaptación dos materiais polos propios profesores* (Elaboration and adaptation of materials by teachers themselves). Santiago de Compostela: Nova Escola Galega/Concello de Santiago.

Cid Fernández, X. M. and Rodríguez Rodríguez, J. (2006). *A fenda Dixital e as súas implicacións educativa* (The digital divide and its educational implications). Santiago de Compostela: Nova Escola Galega.

Rodríguez Rodríguez, J. and Castro Rodríguez, M^a M. (2007). *Materiales didácticos para una intervención intesdisciplinar desde los ámbitos formal y no formal*. *Píxel Bit*, 29.

Dates

- Board meetings
 - April 28, 2008 in Santiago de Compostela (Spain)
- IARTEM-conferences
 - The 10th IARTEM-conference will possibly be held in 2009 in Santiago de Compestela
- Newsletter: May 2008; please deliver copy by April 1, 2008, to a.reints@clu.nl
- 9-12 January 2008, BETT 2008, Olympia London; www.bettshow.com. It is the world's leading educational information & communications technologies (ICT) event, attracting 600 educational suppliers and over 28000 visitors, and bringing together the global teaching and learning community for four days of innovations and inspirations
- 3-4 March 2008: Conference Designs for Learning at Stockholm University (see further on)
- 20-21 June 2008: TAA-Conference on Text and Academic Authoring, Las Vegas (see further on)

IARTEM-Conferences

Tønsberg 2007

Almost ninety professionals gathered for four days at the Ninth International Conference on Textbooks and Educational Media, from 5 - 8 september 2007, in Tønsberg, Norway. They came from all continents to discuss how the central theme of the conference -Peace, Democracy and Reconciliation- was reflected in textbooks and educational media. Inspiring lectures from Jean Bernard (Unesco), Staffan Selander (Stockholm), Simone Lässig (GEI, Germany), Ayaz Naseem (Canada) and Svein Lorentzen (Norway) were feeding discussions during the whole conference, leading as a red thread.

Exchanging research projects forms the heart of the conference. The paper presentations were organized in four workshops:

1. Balance between Textbooks and Educational Media
2. The Use of Textbooks and Educational Media
3. Approval, Selection and Language Policy in Textbooks and Educational Media
4. Learning form Texts and Images in Textbooks and Educational Media

There were presentations of empirical data, and of textbooks and educational media developed by researchers. Reflections on textbook development and approval in different parts of the world.

The publishing and governmental panels were also a very useful part of the conference. This part of the conference seems a very important new aspect to me. The bringing together of governments, researcher sand publishers is an important step forward to the fostering of the innovative quality of textbooks and educational media.

And there were theoretical sessions and visits to schools, and dinners with high spirits, to complete a very nice conference! Tak Tønsberg!

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Conferences

First International Conference on Designs for Learning: Call for Papers

On 3-4 March 2008 Didaktikdesign, an Institution at Stockholm University, organizes the first Conference on Designs for Learning. Designs for learning has a clear focus on learners in their making and transformation of knowledge. The conference will debate necessary conceptions of learning, agency, modes and media in relation to meaning making in formal and informal sites of learning.

The conference will be organized around presentations of theoretical perspectives, research methodologies and empirical findings. Additionally, workshops will be organized around specific areas of interest.

Deadline for submission of abstracts is December 1st 2007. Abstracts are limited to a maximum of 500 words.

Conference fees:

Registration before December 31 2007: € 270

Registration after 1st of January 2008: € 320

Conference fee includes two lunches, coffee and tea plus 1 year subscription (4 issues) of the new international journal Designs for Learning (which will be launched at the conference).

More information and forms for registration and submission of papers are now available at the conference website: www.didaktikdesign.nu/conference.htm
For further information, please contact:

Fredrik.lindstrand@lhs.se

Anna.akerfeldt@lhs.se

TAA-Conference on Text and Academic Authoring in Las Vegas

The American Text and Academic Authors Association (TAA) holds its annual conference of 2008 in Las Vegas, June 20-21, 2008. For more information go to www.taaonline.net. You can also find information on their awards. In the latest issue of their journal, *The Academic Author*, you also can find information about the fact that the U.S. Department of Education has established the "What Works Clearinghouse" (www.w-w-c.org) to identify educational programs or products (including textbooks) that have been evaluated by research. This website represents a first attempt to focus on effective research as a criterion for textbook adoption. TAA's website contains an article in which one of the prominent textbook evaluators, Christopher Stream, regards the U.S. adoption process with scepticism:

"The textbook adoption process has become the battleground for social conflicts in states and communities, said Stream. "On the one side is the Texas model (the religious right; ideas determine social condition) and on the other side is the California model (the liberal left; must be sensitive to all conditions)," he said. "Learning is secondary to the process. Effectiveness is not on the list." A part of the puzzle, said Stream, is linking textbooks to effectiveness. Currently, books are reviewed by unskilled and untrained reviewers. Also, he said, the textbook given to teachers through the textbook adoption process isn't the one they would use, yet they are accountable if children don't learn. "There's also censorship that goes on among publishers of K-12 texts," said Stream. "They water down the book even further than required to ensure that they don't offend anyone and lose the adoption."

What is the motivation? he asks. Money. "I think it's a myth that Texas and California control textbook adoptions," said Stream. "Textbook supply is controlled by four mega publishers. It's a \$4.3 billion industry. It's big money, big industry."

The result, he said: powerful political interests whose censorship influences content; powerful publisher market domination, which stifles competition and innovation; and dull, boring, ineffective texts.

Stream said two options for fixing the current textbook adoption process are to decentralize it and return control to districts and schools, and to offer more customized textbook options based on what schools want (something that is already being done in some areas).

You can find more information about the TAA Foundation's work on this issue at http://www.taaonline.net/TAAFoundation/textbook_study.html

Schooling and Masters in the field

Good Books, Bad Books: What makes an effective textbook?

On February 20 – 22, 2008 a three day course on **textbook writing and design** will be organized in Utrecht, The Netherlands. The course leaders are James McCall (Centre for Publishing Studies, Stirling) and Arno Reints (CLU. University of Utrecht). The course is meant for educational publishers, teachers, educational quality managers , ministeries of education etc.

How to obtain the quality of textbooks will be the leading theme of the course. The course is organized around four categories for evaluation:

- quality of content

- pedagogical approach
- design and presentation
- production standards

The cost for the three day course will be € 550. For registration and information, please send an email to a.reints@clu.nl

Basis for the succes of textbooks

The Open University Centre of the University of Tartu, Estonia invites you to take part in our unique online course

BASIS FOR THE SUCCESS OF TEXTBOOKS

(WebCT course via Internet)

Course instructors: Prof. Jaan Mikk, Prof. Anthony Haynes

Course language: English

Certificate award: University of Tartu Certificate

Outline:

The course will help editors and authors to:

- compose attractive textbooks and other study aids
- commission textbooks and assessment of book proposals
- write easily understandable text
- form the values of students appropriately via textbooks
- evaluate the quality of manuscripts
- market and reprice textbooks

Organisation: he course will be delivered from October 22, 2007 till April 15, 2008

Number of credits: 6 ECTS

Participation fee: 240 euro

For more information: jaan.mikk@ut.ee

For registration: esta.pilt@ut.ee, before October 15, 2007

Institutions in the field

The Institute for Textbook Research, Budapest, Hungary

The Institute for Textbook Research was founded by the Hungarian Foundation for the Future Generation in 2006, with the aim to establish a professional basis for cooperation between textbook researchers and developers.

Our ambition is to facilitate the continuous collection, discussion and exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of textbook research and development. The Institute would like to contribute to the development of new textbooks and materials which may serve as efficient and reliable tools of learning.

László Kojanitz
director



The Institute is run on the basis of grants and incomes from the professional services provided. We are confident that the tasks commissioned by textbook publishers and institutions developing pedagogical program packages as well as central educational authorities provide a sound basis for our present activities and future development.

As the only institute of its kind in Hungary, it carries out pedagogical researches, comparative analyses and gives professional aid to help central authorities prepare and make decisions on textbook and teaching materials production. In addition, it provides direct professional aid to help publishers develop textbooks in line with the UNESCO-strategy stating that *"such activities as training of textbook evaluators and managers, creation of review boards, building of quality assurance systems, and development of higher technology, lower cost publishing capacities and distribution systems are vital to the effective operation and sustainability of the book chain"*. (Comprehensive Strategy for Textbooks and other Learning Materials, UNESCO, 2005)

One of the main tasks carried out by the Institute was hence the development of a criteria system for the evaluation of textbooks, which examines textbook quality and usability from the perspective of learning and learners was developed. This new textbook evaluation system formed the basis for and was integrated in the new government regulation on textbook approval.

These aspects are underscored further by the UNESCO-strategy saying that *"In its support of the right to quality education for all, textbooks for the 21st century must reflect more inclusive pedagogies and diversified content which not only impact academic*

knowledge, but also engage learners in interaction leading to the acquisition of life skills and universally shared values. " (Comprehensive Strategy for Textbooks and other Learning Materials, UNESCO, 2005)

With this in mind, the evaluation system proposed by the Institute is structured neither on the basis of textbook elements (texts, illustrations, didactical and information tools) nor on that of teaching functions (transfer of knowledge, motivation, systematisation, coordination, differentiation, conduct of learning). By contrast, the basic aspects of this new, learning oriented textbook evaluation are to be defined by the components of learning.

The Institute's main objective is to establish platforms for examining questions on the production, usage and evaluation of textbooks and teaching materials and to collect and transfer knowledge and experience in a systematic way in this field.

To this end, the Institute aims to

- establish close cooperation with textbook publishers and other institutes for research and development in Hungary;
- establish both extensive and intensive professional contacts with foreign pedagogical institutions as well as institutes for research and development with similar tasks.

For further information, see: www.tankonykutato.hu

UNESCO launches Online Discussion Forum on Textbook Development

In October UNESCO launched an online discussion forum on textbook development. Discussion themes were about good practices of textbook development and about how to measure the effects of textbooks. Many IARTEM-members took part in that discussion. In total 2.000 viewers followed the discussion. The forum has been closed now. The next forum will be opened in early 2008. Comments and suggestions (including possible topics) for the next forum on textbooks and learning media can be sent to Jean Bernard: j.bernard@unesco.org.

RESEARCH COOPERATION

Looking for textbooks electricity 9-12 years

Our work concerns a comparative analysis of sciences textbooks at french primary school, during the XXth century. This study also focuses on the programs and official support documents . It is indeed interesting to compare the intentions of the programs prescribers (prescribed national curriculum) to those of the textbooks authors, in order to emphasize the common points and the differences. At this time, we studied two topics : "air materiality" and "electricity" and we are very interested to find collaborations (or a help) in order to compare science teaching at primary school at a european/international level. Thus we propose to create a research network about analysis of sciences textbook and a data base of textbooks on line.

If you are interested to work together on this network, please send a email and join us.

In case you are not interested, but if you have the opportunity just to send a copy file of sciences textbooks at primary school of your country (and thus to help to create the data base), we will be very grateful.

M. Guedj (GHDSO/RESHEIS) & S. Laubé (CREAD/Centre F. Viète)

contact :

muriel.quedj@montpellier.iufm.fr

sylvain.laube@bretagne.iufm.fr

Looking for Evaluation Instruments and Systems

CLU. University of Utrecht has started a project on evaluating instruments and systems which are used in evaluating, awarding and approving textbooks. We want to discover how these instruments and systems are organized, and on what theories or considerations these are based.

Please send you instruments and/or evaluation systems to: a.reints@clu.nl

Looking for textbooks in world history

What we are looking for is a textbook in world history with emphasis on the post-WWII-period but it may even stretch back to the 19th century. The target group is 15 year old schoolchildren. The State Publishing House is the interested party. We have had some experience in translating (and sometimes adapting) Scandinavian history textbooks. Of course, the national perspective is quite strong and the Scandinavian mentality is close to us but we are willing to see if even world history textbooks from other countries could be feasible.

Please contact Thorsteinn Helgason: thelga@khi.is

Looking for researchers on the historic of textbooks natural sciences

My name is Jørund Falnes. I am a PhD student at the University College of Vestfold, and I am working on a doctoral thesis on science textbooks used in the Norwegian primary school (for the moment I look at books early in the 20th century). At the IARTEM conference in Tønsberg I was lucky to meet a few conference participants who are doing similar research as I do (Muriel Guedj and Sylvain Laubé).

As I do, they think we are very few people doing historical investigation on textbooks dealing subjects as chemistry, physics, zoology and botany. Most of the historical studies on school science I have come across, has first and foremost focused on national curricula and teaching methods and principles. Historical studies where the main focus is on the texts are more seldom, I think. So, please let me know if you know about anyone who is on the same "narrow field" as I am.

Best regards Jørund Falnes. Contact: jorund.falnes@hive.no.