

Editorial: Getting New Horizons of Partnerships in Education Research

Shamil F. Sheymardanov¹, Aydar M. Kalimullin²

¹ Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia

E-mail: pedagogshamil@mail.ru

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3745-5776>

² Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia

E-mail: kalimullin@yandex.ru

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7788-7728>

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The events of recent years have produced unique circumstances for the development of the Russian scientific and educational community, requiring significant changes in the topics, subjects, and methods of study. Numerous issues persisted in this field despite the rapidly rising number of educational studies, most of which were caused by their inconsistency with the demands of current educational practice. The excessive theorizing, passion for Russian pedagogy's history, compilation, and other negative aspects of research are signs of its declining quality. Contrarily, when educational conditions changed quickly, there was a corresponding rise in the demand for pertinent research, the materials and outcomes of which have become crucial to the current educational process. This is especially important when it comes to the need to make decisions and adjustments regarding educational policy based on data obtained from scientific study.

This approach has emerged as a dominant trend in the change of educational research throughout the globe, particularly in advanced countries that were the first to establish such systems, gradually overcoming the traditional conservatism of our field. The growth of human and technological capabilities in the area of high-quality educational research has seen significant investments in Russia and other nations. We are referring to state-funded initiatives, grants, technological advancements, IT solutions and platforms intended to create a new, effective, and sustainable pedagogy based on science in the digital, post-COVID, and multipolar modern world.

By gathering a substantial amount of data on the various education actors, its ecosystem, technologies, and interdisciplinary knowledge, educational research can significantly contribute to the development of a sustainable society in the country. It can also improve the quality of education and upbringing. All of this will enable Russia to create an efficient educational strategy. Multidisciplinary research universities that have started to prioritize teaching as one of their top scientific goals may be at the epicenters of such a revolution. An extensive state program to reform higher education served as the catalyst for this process, and it was within its framework that a number of higher education institutions came to realize the value of pedagogical science for changing university culture and transformation of higher education.

Kazan Federal University, which only started to develop its own teacher training system in 2011, is one of the most effective examples in the establishment of multifunctional university complexes executing educational research. A new university model of teacher education was created with the addition of two pedagogical institutions to KFU, and this model has since emerged as one of the most effective methods for modernizing this field

both domestically and globally. KFU is now the only university in Russia due to a variety of metrics, consistently ranks highly in the top four worldwide and national rankings for the field of Education (THE, OS, SCImago Institution Ranking, RAEX).

A program of topical research in teacher education has developed here since 2015, when it was designated as one of the four primary goals of KFU within the “Project 5-100”. At the first stage, a focus was made on learning from advanced international expertise, enlisting the best foreign techniques, and working with renowned overseas academic institutions and researchers. As the new state program “Priority 2030” was put into effect in 2021, the main difficulty was integrating the gathered scientific potential into Russian educational practice. The current tasks of research in education at this stage include choosing relevant and useful topics, adhering strictly to one research technique, and ensuring the objectivity of methodologies. Conducting meta-studies and compiling reviews are significant points. Today, there are a substantial number of surveys conducted on small samples using the same item and subject and following the same protocols. Their combined findings must be presented, along with broad generalizations. In this regard, university scientists are developing a number of platform solutions for systematizing and monitoring such disparate studies by combining individual scientists into research groups on the platform of the International Community of Researchers in Teacher Education (ICRTE).

Working with big data is a task that has a lot of potential. First, there is a wealth of data available on students and schoolchildren nowadays, including information about their performance, instructors’ qualifications, and the education methods they employ. We must learn to put forward the right hypotheses and interpret the results, formulate specific recommendations and offer solutions, both for managers and for practicing educators. Second, we are beginning to develop regional platforms for data collection differentiated by topics in science and education. On their foundation, a nationwide network might be established in the future to assist the educational process for many kinds of educational institutions and student groups, such as in the area of inclusive and multicultural education. The creation of a digital platform for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data on accompanying children with ASD, as well as a digital platform for supporting a teaching career, are examples of the initial efforts of KFU in this area.

The coordination of the efforts of Russian and international scholars is the most key necessity for the realization of current projects. Modern research infrastructure today is crucial for new approaches to an effective research organization. It is becoming more open, accessible and allows the maximum participants involvement within the national scientific community and beyond, as well as within various research fields. There are numerous successful examples of digital infrastructure for scientific collaboration worldwide, varying from general to highly specialized (OECD, 2017).

The field of “Education” is a major study topic that merits the attention of experts from a variety of disciplines, including pedagogy, psychology, sociology, physiology, computer science, etc. Additionally, there is a need to forge a strong link between educational research and practice, as part of an evidence-based approach to education that relies on decision-making based on factual education activity and scientific data (Diery et al., 2021; Fischer et al., 2020; Mandinach & Schildkamp, 2021). It is time to develop a useful digital tool for scholars dealing with education, especially teacher education.

This current issue contains research findings from academics who collaborated on academic initiatives through the digital platform “International Community of Researchers in Teacher Education” (ICRTE, <https://te.kpfu.ru>), and who presented their research results at the VIII International Forum on Teacher Education (IFTE-2022, May 25-27, 2022).

The mission of the ICRTE portal is to become a multifunctional platform for free interaction of researchers from different fields of science around common interests and joint projects for the advancement of education. With the help of other partners, not just those in the education area, one may start his own research projects and supervise their continued realization due to the opportunities offered by this digital tool. Each project's page is filled with relevant info, links, and research findings. Any registered user can join an ongoing project by submitting an entrance form, on which he specifies his function and outlines how he could help the cause.

Scientific projects on the ICRTE platform are its main essence, but not the only one. Important sections are also "Scientists", "Publications" and "Research Groups". After registering, each user's personal page is added to the list of scientists, where they provide detailed information about themselves so they may be recognizable by their scientific interests, areas of expertise, and keywords. The list of papers provides details on all the research findings related to projects. The "Research Groups" part, which includes researchers engaged in a single large subject, is the next crucial element. Research groups can merge several projects established on the platform and provide user-free engagement within the confines of a shared topic.

As of this writing, the platform has over seven hundred registered users from over one hundred universities around the world, over eighty initiated projects, and about thirty research groups.

In turn, the VIII International Forum on Teacher Education (IFTE-2022) once again became the largest event of the year in the life of the scientific and educational community in Russia. About 12,000 participants representing 214 universities and research organizations from 29 countries came together in a hybrid format for event, titled "Education, Professional Development, and Health Maintenance of Teachers in the 21st Century". 203 activities, including plenary sessions, panel discussions, open podiums, open lectures, pitch sessions, symposiums, round tables, breakout sessions, and much more, took place during the course of the Forum's three days. It is notable that the primary agenda for these events was defined by the projects and research groups registered on the ICRTE. Projects on the research of primary education, comprehensive support for kids with ASD, preventing cyber risks among kids and teens, and inspiring future teachers to choose careers in education are a few of them. "Preschool Education", "Inclusive Education and Special Needs", "The Educational Environment Safety", "Education at University Schools", and "Digital Solutions in Education" are some of the most popular Forum subjects brought together members of the ICRTE research groups.

Thus, the International Forum on Teacher Education IFTE-2022, being integrated with the digital platform "International Community of Teacher Education Researchers", is a large-scale experiment in moderation of research activities, which allows coordinating and supporting groups of researchers studying similar problems in the field teacher education. ICRTE is the first specialized Russian platform promoting research collaboration on a wide range of issues related to teacher education. We expect that the persistent effort of its content producers and the addition of a variety of services will raise research to a qualitatively new level, eliminating disciplinary and international borders to address the most urgent issues in modern education.

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