

ESREA

European Society for Research on the Education of Adults

ESREA newsletter No. 1 March 2014

Dear ESREA member,
Here comes the first ESREA newsletter for 2014.

In the beginning of February we had the first meeting with the Steering Committee in Milano at Milano Bicocca University. It was an informative meeting where the new members were introduced to the organization of ESREA, the work of the Steering Committee as well as strategic discussion for the coming three years. The Steering Committee also elected Laura Formenti from Milano Bicocca University as a new chair and Adrianna Nizinska from University of Lower Silesia as vice chair. The minutes from the meeting can be found at www.esrea.org.

Further down you can read an exclusive interview with the new chair of ESREA.

This year six of ESREA eleven networks are planning to have a conference. The Life History and Biography research network just had their annual conference in Magdeburg. So, as always, there are a lot of activities going on in ESREA.

I hope that the spring is coming to all of you!

Best wishes
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This newsletter contains the following sections:

- Interview with the new chair of ESREA
- Forthcoming ESREA activities
- Information from the ESREA journal RELA
- Forthcoming conferences/seminars on adult education/adult learning
- New books on adult education/adult learning
- Ongoing research projects and announcements
- How to become a member of ESREA
- Forthcoming newsletters

Interview with Laura Formenti, the new chair of ESREA

So please tell us who you are, what are your research interests and how does it relate to adult education and learning?

I will answer to your question in a way that is coherent with my research interests. To be engaged in adult education made me reflexive about my own identity as an adult woman, a mother and a wife, a knowledge worker, an Italian, a "first generation" student. My passion

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for education came from my parents: many people in the '60 thought about education as a social ladder. It was sort of a myth, however: although I was a brilliant student, I became a precarious worker in times when it was not the rule. A patchworker: my career had a few turns, before stabilizing (in 1998) as a researcher at the Department of Human Sciences for Education, Milano Bicocca University. Then I became associate professor, now waiting for full professorship (I received my abilitation in december 2013).

So, now I present myself as an academic, a pedagogist and a researcher in adult education, but I am also a psychologist, psychotherapist, educator and trainer. My engagement with education did not follow a linear path; in my late twenties, education was how I made my bread, while the main interest was epistemology, so I applied to enter as assistant in the shrine of epistemology: the University of Geneva, where Jean Piaget had worked. I ended up working in a team of researchers who were studying adult learners. Epistemology and education connected.

How come you are interested in adult education and learning?

Since my degree in Psychology (1984), I had been organizing and giving courses for professionals, so I became an experienced trainer and adult educator even before I knew about it. I was very young, though, and meeting older professionals in unknown fields – social workers, educators, psychologists, doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers... I knew almost nothing about their work! – so it was quite natural for me to step back and ask them. I became a facilitator, who cared for the context and the process, more than contents of learning. I did not possess knowledge, but I was curious and I learned a lot. Later, preparing my PhD, I discovered all those theories, concepts, and practices, about the adult learner as someone who knows, an insider of experience, who can be put in the foreground, but in a way I already knew it and practiced it.

So, I tend to privilege participatory and cooperative methods, that involve adults in a process of collective reflexivity. I met biographical research during my PhD and I tried to connect individual lives and stories with a collective research work. This way of doing is also coherent with my epistemology: I feel at ease with the systemic approach, and the theories of complexity. My research interests have to do with relationships, in the professional context and the family: how do people learn in relation one to the other, and to the context? I try to connect the micro, the meso and the macrolevel of education, this brings me to favor interdisciplinary and even transdisciplinary research.

I like to work with professionals. The field poses many questions, and research is for me a way to listen to these questions, see what is behind them and find paths towards possible answers. The role of research in education is to look for "a better life", but of course the definition of what is a better life needs some more thinking...

I know that you have been engage in ESREA activities for a long time, can you please tell us a bit about that?

I discovered ESREA through one of its networks - March 1993, Geneva, "Life history and biography". I was beginning my doctoral studies and intended to use autobiography as a research method, so I went there and found a very open community of extraordinary people. I met Pierre Dominicé and Peter Alheit, convenors of the network, but also Agneska Bron,

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Gunilla Härnsten, Marie Christine Josso, and many others from whom I learned a lot. It gave a strong impulse to my research, and opened new possibilities to see autobiography in a more complex way. In fact, the presence of two frameworks in the network – a more subjective and a more sociological one – pushed me to go beyond an ideological counterposition of sights, and look for a more comprehensive and compositional view.

This was a first step to know about ESREA as a whole, and to become aware of the larger community of adult education research, and the richness of themes, the extraordinary variety of methods, paradigms, epistemologies that are expressed in this society. So I became more active, I began to participate to the Triennial Conferences and in 2008 I put my candidature for the Steering Committee. It was a couple of colleagues who pushed me to do that: as an Italian, I felt very often alone and marginal, even in a community like ESREA that is very open and charming. It was not even thinkable to candidate for the SC, at that moment.

Now you are the new chair of ESREA, how do you look upon your new task?

My story speaks for me. ESREA is a precious space, I am very grateful to those who had – more than 20 years ago – the idea of founding it. We need some space to think, to share our authentic voices as researchers, and to develop good research in a mutual way. We are living difficult times in the academy: there are pressures to narrow down our definition of education, and research is reduced to numbers. ESREA is a space for freedom, critical friendship, and reciprocal learning, besides the competitive dynamics of universities. Specially for the younger researchers.

I feel responsible to keep alive this spirit, and to foster any change that can be useful to reinforce ESREA's role towards its associates, but also towards the larger community of education, the politicians, the people whose lives we affect, in a way or another, through research. I am not alone (it would be scaring!); we are a strong and well equilibrated SC: 12 engaged people from different countries, languages, and academic cultures. Our diversity is crucial, to be able to find creative ways to push things forward. I see the chair simply as a facilitator, and a symbolic presence. The fact that I come from the South of Europe, and a woman, could inspire some more marginal researchers to find their voice, and be more active in ESREA. But we need time to discover.

What are your visions for ESREA for the coming three years?

We are already working on the new agenda. We will create stronger links between the SC and the networks, and try to have more associates from countries that are under-represented. We need to become more reflexive about the evolution of the field of adult education, and the difficult times that we are living, and see what can be done in our little community. ESREA can be more active in creating a new generation of inspired and clever researchers in adult education. How? First of all, we need to make an open conversation with the networks and the associates. They know what's going on. We "only" have to ask.

Thank you Laura!

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Forthcoming ESREA activities

More information on the conferences and call for papers see www.esrea.org

The 2014 conference of the ESREA research network on "Work life and Learning", 31 March - 2 April, University of Osnabrück, Germany.

The 2014 conference of the ESREA research network on "Migration, ethnicity, racism and xenophobia", May 14-16, Wroclaw, Poland.

The 2014 conference of the ESREA research network on Policy studies on adult education, June 18-20, Aalborg University, Denmark.

The 2014 conference of the ESREA research network Between Global and Local: Adult Learning and Development, June 26-28, Institute of Education, University of Lisbon, Portugal.

The 2014 conference of the ESREA research network on Interrogating transformative processes in Learning: An international exchange, June 26-27 June, Hellenic Adult Education Association.

The 2014 conference of the ESREA research network of Education and Learning of older Adults, Oct 22-24, University of Malta.



RELA European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults

RELA has now a call for papers on a thematic issue of RELA: Cartographies of research on adult education and learning. Submission deadline June 15, 2014. There is also an open call for non-thematic related papers (continuously open for submissions). More information about RELA can be found at: www.rela.ep.liu.se.

Forthcoming conferences/seminars

20-22 March 2014

Final Conference of the INSTALL project "Reflectivity in Higher Education: Research and Models of Intervention for Under achieving Students" in Naples, Italy.

For more information: www.installproject.eu

7-9 April 2014

Ninth International Conference on *Networked Learning in Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Professional Development* at University of **Edinburgh**, at John McIntyre Conference Centre in Edinburgh.

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More information: <http://www.networkedlearningconference.org.uk/>

7-11 April 2014

"Maestri di Strada" is glad to invite you and all member of your organization to participate in the adult training course "Special Teachers Training: Teaching in Harsh Environments". The course is addressed to operators from the adult education field and parents. The course is validated by the EU within the LLP programme (ref. n°IT-2014-1049-001) and participants can have it completely granted. Deadline for registration is September 17th 2013.

More info: <http://www.maestristrada.it/progetti/view/19/special-teachers-training-teaching-in-harsh-environments>

9-10 April 2014

The Practice-Based Education Summit 2014 will be held at Sydney Olympic Park, Australia. The theme of the Summit is "The promises of university education: Blending, including and integrating for future practice".

More information: http://csusap.csu.edu.au/~areport/pbe_summit_2014.htm

24-24 April 2014

The 6th International conference of Popular Education network (PEN), Malta.

For more informathttp://www.um.edu.mt/events/pen2014

27 – 30 April 2014

The Fourth International Conference of Adult Education. It will be held at the "Al. I. Cuza" University in Iasi, Romania. The conference will focus on Adult Education in Universities. Local and Regional Perspectives.

For more information: <http://iec.psih.uaic.ro/conferinta27042014/>

15- 16 May 2014

The Second Andragogical Symposia. Organiser: Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education. Topic of the symposia is: "Professionalization of adult educators"

For more information: <http://andragoski-simpozij.weebly.com/>

25-27 May, 2014

33rd Annual conference of The Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE), 2014, Brock University, Ontario, Canada.

More information: <http://journals.msvu.ca/ocs/index.php/casae2014/CASAE14/>

5-7 June 2014

The 3rd International laboratory for educational theory conference. The theme of the conference is "Has critique run out of steam? Traditions of critique and educational futures".

More information: <http://www.stir.ac.uk/events/calendarofevents/theorylabconference/>

5-7 June 2014

The 2014 AERC Steering Committee is pleased to invite you to submit a proposal for the 55th Adult Education Research Conference, Harrisburg, PA. Preconferences are scheduled for June 4th.

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For more information: <http://adulterc.org>.

10-13 June 2014

EDEN 2014 Annual Conference will be held in Zagreb, Croatia. Conference theme "From Education to Employment and Meaningful Work with ICTs E-learning at work and the workplace".

For more information: <http://www.eden-online.org/node/875>

11-13 June 2014

The 46th EUCEN, the European University Continuing Education Network, Conference will be held at Warsaw, Poland.

For more information: <http://www.eucen2014.eu>

28 - 30 June 2014

ND 2014 - International on Education and New Developments 2014 will be held in Madrid, Spain

For more information: <http://www.end-educationconference.org/>

July 3-5, 2014

"Activity Theory and Organizations" taking place in the 30th European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS), in Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

More information: http://www.egosnet.org/jart/prj3/egos/data/uploads/_2014/EGOS-Colloquia_Submission-of-SHORT-PAPERS_2014.pdf

25 – 27 June 2014

ProPEL, an international network for research in professional practice, education and learning, announce the second conference on at the University of Stirling in Scotland. The conference is entitled "Professional *Matters*: materialities and virtualities of professional learning".

More information: www.propel.stir.ac.uk

13-19 July 2014

ISA (International Sociological Association) World Congress of Sociology, Yokohama, Japan.

More information: <http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2014/>

1-5 September 2014

European Conference on Educational Research (ECER) will be held at the University of Porto, Portugal.

More information: <http://www.eera-ecer.de/ecer2014/>

29-31 October 2014

8th International Conference on Self-Education held in Strasbourg, France.

For more information: <http://colloque-autoformation.unistra.fr/en/presentation/>

26-27 March 2015

6th Nordic Conference on Adult Education and Learning will be held in Tampere. The theme is Adult Education and the Planetary Condition.

For more information: <http://www.peda.net/veraja/vsy/nordic2015/>

December 2015

The 9th International Conference in Researching Work and Learning (RWL9) will be held in Singapore. Conference theme “Work and Learning in the era of Globalisation: Challenges for the 21st Century”.

For more information: will soon be available.

New books in adult education/adult learning

Coimbra Vieira, C. M., Pedroso de Lima, M., Alcoforado, L., Mairos Ferreira, M, & Armando Ferreira, J. (2013). *Promoting conscious and active learning and aging - How to face current and future challenges?* Springer

Finnegan, F., Merrill, B. & Thunborg, T. (Eds.) (2014). *Student Voices on Inequalities in European Higher Education. Challenges for theory, policy and practice in a time of change.* Routledge

Formenti L., West L., Horsdal, M. (Eds.) (2014) *Embodied narratives. Connecting stories, bodies, cultures and ecologies.* Odense, University of Southern Denmark Press

Golding, B., Mark, R. & Foley, A. (2014). *Men Learning Through Life.* Niace.

Laot, F. (2014). *Un Film comme source pour l'histoire de la formation des adultes hommes... et femmes. « Retour à l'école ?* Presses universitaires de Nancy - Éditions universitaires de Lorraine: Collection Histoire des institutions scientifiques.

Schneider, K. (Ed.) (2014). *Transfer of Learning in Organizations.* Springer

Zarifis, G. K. & Gravani, M. N. (Eds.) (2013). *Challenging the 'European Area of Lifelong Learning': a critical response.* Springer.

Ongoing research projects and announcements

Journal of *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 12, 1 (2014) have a special issue: Adult and Lifelong Education: Global, National and Local Perspectives

Guest editors are Marcella Milana, John Holford and Vida Mohorčič Špolar from the network of Policy Studies in Adult Education.

There is a new journal called 'POSTCOLONIAL DIRECTIONS IN EDUCATION' that is now available online (need to register for free first) at:

<http://www.um.edu.mt/pde/index.php/pde1/index>

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The ERASMUS Intensive Programme "Comparative Studies in European and International Strategies in Lifelong Learning" took place in Wuerzburg/Germany for two weeks in February 2014 with 52 students from UK, Portugal, Italy, Hungary and Germany. It has been dedicated to analysing and comparing international and European strategies in Lifelong Learning. Field visits and guest lectures from EAEA, EC and UIL completed the in-depth comparison and analysis of the situation in various European countries. International groups have compared different foci of lifelong learning as Professionalisation Strategies, Learning Pathways in Higher Education, Resources for Lifelong Learning and Recognition of Prior Learning. The results are now published at www.lifelonglearning.uni-wuerzburg.de. It is planned to offer a new Winter School at University of Würzburg in February 2015.

How to become a member of ESREA

Membership in ESREA is open to either individual members and to institutional members. As a member you have a reduced fee at ESREA activities and you receive information in the field of research on the education of adults through the ESREA e-mail list and through the ESREA newsletter. As an individual member you have the right to vote at the general assembly which takes place each year (virtually through postal ballot). As an institutional member, all employees at the institution have the right to participate in ESREA activities to a reduced fee. However, the institutional membership allows only one vote at the general assembly.

If you want to become a member the process is the following:

1. Download the document at www.esrea.org
2. Fill out the form and e-mail to sofia.nystrom@liu.se
3. Within one-two weeks you will receive a confirmation of your membership by e-mail
4. At the same time as membership is confirmed you will be invoiced the membership fee which for 2014 is 50 Euros for individual members (25 Euros for PhD or Edd students) and 150 Euros for institutional members. Payment of membership fees can only be made through an international or EU bank transfer. **Cheques are not accepted.**

Forthcoming Newsletters

If you want to have some information included in forthcoming newsletters, here are the deadlines for the forthcoming newsletters 2014.

Number 2 2014 – deadline for submission June 8

Number 3 2014 – deadline for submission September 14

Number 4 2014 – deadline for submission December 7