

WIETEKE VAN
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DUDEVSKY,
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TOBY WITTE

EDITORIAL

In 2022 46.460 asylum seekers arrived in the Netherlands (CBS, 2023) and 36.871 people asked for international protection in Belgium (Statistiek Vlaanderen, 2023). In this light it is not surprising two of the contributions in this second 2023 Journal of Social Intervention are dedicated to how Dutch education supports refugees or newcomers. Both articles put the experiences of students at the core of their research and show that there is room for improvement. If we truly want education to create equality of outcomes next to equality of opportunity, both schools and teachers need to realize that students with a refugee background need individualized support and attention. This might suggest that one size does not fit all students when it comes to how we offer our support or approach students in a classroom.

In the peer reviewed article *You have to fight to get there: an exploratory study into the experiences of refugee-background students*, Diana van Dijk and Anne Kooiman found that refugee students studying at a higher education institute in the Netherlands, are highly motivated but less able to capitalize on higher education for their aspirations, because of multiple disadvantages. Besides unfamiliarity with the Dutch education system and a language barrier, they encounter exclusionary mechanisms. They struggle to connect with fellow students and do not always feel safe to ask questions or seek support, while inclusion and a sense of belonging are crucial for study success.

Isabel Berman more or less comes to the same conclusion in her study *Just like any student: Facilitating factors for the transition from International Connection Classes to Dutch secondary*

EDITORIAL

education, published in our Student Work section. Her study focuses on the experiences of young newcomers with the transition from International Connection Classes (*Internationale Schakelklas*; ISK) to regular Dutch secondary education. The results show that for newcomer students the adjustment period in a new school is prolonged, due to additional challenges such as language insecurities, separation from friends, and balancing their ethnic and national identity. The study emphasizes the importance of individualized education and social support.

Natascha Notten, the author of our IWO (*Innovaties in Werkveld en Onderwijs*) contribution, would probably stress the importance of *guides* in bridging this inequality. In the IWO section she explains that a guide offers knowledge, experience, and a social network to someone who has no access to these resources in their own environment. They do so without expectations and from an equal position. Notten also mentions that teachers are often named when people are asked about the guides in their life.

The second peer reviewed article in this issue addresses a whole different subject. It evaluates a program that supports children with mild intellectual disabilities who have parents with mental health concerns. In *You are Okay. Experiences of participants with the 'You are Okay' program*, Ivon Riemersma, Floor van Santvoort, Karin van Doesum, Clemens Hosman, Jan Janssens, Rianne van der Zanden en Roy Otten found that the program supports children by decreasing their emotional and behavioural problems. Their study strengthens the idea that this family-focused approach is helpful in children's treatment.

This issue's books section reviews three publications on vocational education and training. *Begeleiden van vakmensen in ontwikkeling*, reviewed by Tijmen Schipper, is the inaugural address of lecturer Marco Mazereeuw. It focusses on guiding students to become agile professionals, an assignment which requires agile trainers and education alike.

Inger Smid gives a comprehensive insight in the *Handboek beroepsgerichte didactiek* by Hoeve, Van Vlokhoven, Nieuwenhuis and Den Boer. Smid takes the reader along various topics within pedagogy and didactics in (higher) vocational education.

The third contribution is from Josje van der Linden, who wrote the editorial of the Books section as well. *Transitioning Vocational Education and Training in Africa* is written by a large group of scientists from Uganda, South Africa, United Kingdom, and The Netherlands. It addresses the subject of vocational education and training from an original perspective of a '*Social Skills Ecosystem*'. The book offers an analytical framework for theory building and the development of interventions in the area of education and work.

All together we hope to offer you an issue with an inspiring variety of articles, appealing to educators, students, researchers and professionals.

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