

Introduction

DOSSIER: XXI Universitas/BR National Seminar (Seminário Nacional Universitas/BR)

This issue of the Online Magazine of Education (Reveduc), published by the Federal University of São Carlos (Universidade Federal de São Carlos – UFSCar) presents the dossier about the XXI Universitas/BR National Seminar (Seminário Nacional Universitas/BR), held on May 29th-31st, 2013, at the university. Responsible for organizing this series of more than twenty National Seminars, the Universitas/BR network is a group of researchers, undergraduate scholars and graduate students from several Brazilian universities located in all regions of the country. It originated from the Higher Education Policy Working Group of the National Association for Research and Graduate courses in Education (Grupo de Trabalho Política de Educação Superior da Associação Nacional de Pesquisa e Pós-Graduação em Educação – ANPED). Since 1993 it develops integrated research projects on the general issue of public policies for higher education. The consolidation and intellectual production of Universitas/Br network is currently predominantly focused on research and strengthening of the relationships among graduate programs in education in the country. The most recent of the integrated projects developed so far was completed in 2012 and its goal was the analysis of the expansion policies of higher education in Brazil (1966-2011). The theoretical accumulation and mastery of the general theme, as well as of its several characteristics, enabled Universitas/Br network to develop a new project/education observatory (Obeduc), which was funded by CAPES and Inep/MEC.

The current subgroups of this research are:

1. Financing in the expansion of higher education;
2. Institutional and academic organization in the expansion of higher education;
3. Assessment in the expansion of higher education;
4. Teaching in the expansion of higher education;
5. Access and permanence in the expansion of higher education;
6. Knowledge production in the expansion of higher education;
7. Rural higher education.

The papers that comprise this dossier correspond to the two conferences and various poster exhibitions planned by each research subgroup for the event.

The first conference, given by Professor Eric Spears, Ph.D. examines, analyzes and interprets the meaning of the “Brazilian student mobility” (Mobilidade estudantil brasileira) or “Science without Borders” (Ciência sem Fronteiras) program. It establishes some important parameters in order to visualize the expansion of higher education and its functions in the context of public policies in Brazil with reference to the analysis of economic/political relationships between this country and central ones, such as the U.S.A and the UK, among others. The second one, by Luiz Fabio

Mesquiati, Ph.D. describes and analyzes the changes and prospects of the higher education “system” in the UK.

The seven papers present and examine the current results of the subprojects that are being carried out by the respective subgroups of Universitas/Br network. Reiterating what was previously said, it can be stated that the range of topics - the financing of higher education in the National Education Plans (Planos Nacionais de Educação) post-1988 constituency; distance teacher training in the National Education Plans and in “empty spaces”; the expansion of higher education, teacher education policies and career attractiveness; evaluation and expansion of higher education post-LDB/1996; “Lulism” and the changing nature of the teaching work; knowledge production and the expansion of higher education policy post-LDB/1996; and rural and educational social movements – addresses and deepens central aspects of higher education issues which our country and its researchers are currently facing.

All these texts that are part of this dossier, as well as the careful and clear exposition of theoretical analysis and findings, present very relevant conclusive syntheses, while highlighting issues that ask for the continuity of study efforts of researchers in this network and others who recognize this field of study and research as one of the most important and crucial for the future of our country as a nation.

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(English version by Maria Claudia Bontempi Pizzi)