

Researching Education in Times of Globalization: What is happening to Gender Equality in Schools?

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Abstract. The author's intention is to show the predominant trends in discussions about gender equality in education today. It seems that the coordinates are getting more and more fixed: standardized international approaches in educational research are closely connected with political and economic imperatives; the neoliberal terminology (i.e. "knowledge-based economy", "cost-effectiveness", etc.) is put to frequent use. The issue of gender equality in education is set aside, as the success of girls in international testing presumably attests to achieved gender equality. The parties in question are now "post-feminist successful girls" on one side and "failing boys" on the other. This talk about the advantage of girls masks numerous subtle discriminations (either old or new ones that are generated by the new social and economic conditions). The author shows that "rhetoric" of equal opportunities stems from a greatly narrowed focus on what gender means in terms of equality in education. This analysis is complemented with a wider view of the post-feminist landscape (in which feminism is seen as no longer needed), more and more marked by the neo-liberal logic of practicality in the context of accountability, wider educational goals are completely put aside. These developments toward neo-liberal discourse of excellence (already analyzed in quite a detail in Anglo-American theory) are truly global. The author will try to problematize this discourse that is more and more gaining ground in public and political debates and leads to harmful consequences.