9th Conference of IRAHSSE/AIRDHSS

Bucharest, Romania, 13-15 October 2025

Dear members of IRAHSSE/AIRDHSS,

We are excited to announce that IRAHSSE/AIRDHSS will be hosting its annual conference from the 13th to the 15th of October 2025. We are inviting educators, researchers, and scholars from around the globe to join us at the University of Bucharest for an engaging and insightful exploration of History, Geography and Social Sciences education's past, present and future.

The theme for the 2025 conference is:

Status, selection and functions of 'knowledge' in History, Geography, and Social Sciences education.

On the relationship between School, Academic, and Public Knowledge

Call for Papers

In situ presentations

Status, selection and functions of 'knowledge' in History, Geography, and Social Sciences education.

On the relationship between School, Academic, and Public Knowledge

In a world in which information is increasingly available and at our disposal, and in which critical thinking seems to increasingly have to compete with fake news, it is imperative to re-evaluate the place of knowledge, and its different types/forms, in school (subjects). In the last decades, a significant new focus of research on 'knowledge' has emerged, insofar that some scholars even discern a 'knowledge turn'. An important notion in this respect, coined by educational sociologist Michael Young (2009), is that of 'powerful knowledge', which he distinguished from everyday knowledge, prevailing in his eyes in competency-based curricula. He argued that disciplinary knowledge should be brought back into discussions about curriculum. Curricula should pay more attention to powerful knowledge: coherent, conceptual and *disciplinary* (i.e. subject-specific) knowledge that not only enables students to better understand the world they live in, but also makes them action-competent, enhancing their ability to participate in society. Powerful knowledge is distinct from everyday common-sense knowledge, as it is systematic, specialized, objective and reliable. Chapman (2021) adds that it has better claims to truth than other knowledge claims, and has the potential to empower those who know and understand it to act in and on the world. The notion of 'powerful knowledge' also presupposes a particular role of teachers and students. Curricula that foreground powerful knowledge require expert teachers who are equipped with different types of knowledge: content knowledge (mastering the current state of knowledge in the discipline), conceptual knowledge (understanding of the organizing ideas that structure content in a discipline), procedural and epistemic knowledge (understanding of how knowledge in a discipline is constructed and validated), and with relevant skills needed to implement procedures, manage information and organize one's learning in the domain. Such curricula also require active learners, who actively engage with this knowledge and not only absorb it in a passive way. This implies an education that puts both teachers and students at the center of the teaching and learning process.

Debates about 'knowledge' stir several pertinent questions to knowledge and/in school subjects. For instance:

- How does knowledge in a school subject relate to 'everyday' knowledge and to 'public' knowledge (available via the internet, via film, via social media, etc.), the latter being oftentimes questionable in nature (e.g. fake news)? And how does this knowledge relate to academic knowledge, whereby a 'process

of alchemy' (Popkewitz, 2004) takes place as academic knowledge is translated into school knowledge?

- What are underlying goals for imparting particular knowledge in the classroom? How do they relate to existing culture and identity building in society at large, and via politics?

- What type of knowledge should school subjects entail and engage with? Substantive and conceptual content knowledge? Epistemological knowledge? Procedural knowledge? And in what balance among them? Furthermore: how do these different types of knowledge relate to each other?

- What about the calls for interdisciplinarity linked to 21st-century skills century skills? How does this relate to 'powerful knowledge', for instance? Some question the value of sticking to autonomous school subjects, arguing that the challenges of the 21st century are interdisciplinary in nature; others suggest, on the contrary, that it is necessary to have an in-depth knowledge of one discipline before engaging in other disciplines and interdisciplinary work.

- Should the increasingly diverse nature of our classrooms be considered when discussing which knowledge to address and valorise? What is, for instance, significant knowledge for the large variety of learners (religious, ethno-cultural, socio-economic, gender, etc.), and is it necessary to take diversity into account when selecting knowledge?

- What is the role of teachers and students in the process of knowledge building? Who takes up which specific role?

Such questions concern educational policies, the building of standards and curricula, the writing of textbooks, and classroom practices. They also connect to teacher training and teacher professionalization initiatives. These questions further need consideration against the background of the increasing importance of ICT and, particularly, of gen-AI applications.

We encourage submissions that address, but are not limited to, the above-mentioned questions and aspects of history, geography and social sciences education, from policy to professional development. Contributions that do not fall within the proposed theme, but are considered significant and promise to make a contribution to the debate, will be welcome as well.

Submissions:

In accordance with IRAHSSE's bilingualism, all abstracts must be in English and French. Conference presentations must be either in English or French.

Submissions should be submitted in Word format and include one complete and one blinded version (two files). Abstracts should be no longer than 500 words for single presentations (15-20 minutes) and 1200 words for full session proposals (between 90 and 120 minutes) and should be accompanied by a brief CV.

Full session proposals must indicate the session typology (roundtable discussion or panel of individual presentations with discussions) and should include the name of the session chair. They should also list the contact details and a brief CV for each contributing academic and specify the name of the main responsible for the session.

Proposal should be submitted by email to carol.capita@istorie.unibuc.ro and denise.bentrovato@up.ac.za by 1st March 2025. The IRAHSSE/AIRDHSS Board will review the proposals and decide for or against acceptance no later than 15th of April 2025. The Board will decide on the order of the presentations.

Important Dates:

- Abstract Submission Deadline: 1st of March 2025
- Feedback from the reviewing committee: 15th of April 2025
- Registration of delegates making presentations starts the 16th of April 2025
- Registration deadline: 15th May 2025

Benefits of Participating:

Engage with leading experts in the field of education.

Present your research to an international audience.

Network with peers and establish collaborations for future research

Venue:

The conference will take place at the University of Bucharest, the Faculty of History and the Rectorate Building.

Conference fees:

- Non-IRAHSSE members €**125.00**
- Non-IRAHSSE members from countries below 20,000 US$ GDP per capita / GDP‑PPP €**100.00**
- IRAHSSE members € **75.00**
- IRAHSSE members from countries below 20,000 US$ GDP per capita / GDP‑PPP € **50.00**
- Students (without income) € **50.00**

Practical arrangements:

Informations regarding the arrival and stay in Bucharest will be available on the webpage of the conference.

We look forward to your proposals and to greet you in Bucharest.

The organising committee

Laura and Carol Capita (Bucharest University)

Denise Bentrovato (University of Pretoria)

Félix Bouvier (Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières)

Jean-Charles Buttier (Université de Genève)

Luigi Cajani (Sapienza University, Rome)

Marc-André Éthier (Université de Montréal)

Roar Madsen (NTNU Trondheim)

Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse (Catholic University of Leuven)