Abstract:

This paper treats changes of the literacy concept. It presents five most important conceptual frameworks, such as literacy rate, functional literacy, Freirean framework, New literacy studies and literacies of information. Literacy can be defined as the ability to read and write, as a set of basic skills or as competencies. Because of OECD’s influence, the functional literacy concept is the most powerful one. Literacy involves a continuum and is oriented mostly towards economical outputs. Influence of OECD is supported by the international surveys IALS, ALL, PIAAC, PISA and LAMP. The surveys TIMSS and PIRLS organized by IEA are influential as well. This paper summarizes the most important critical reviews to the OECD’s methodology and to the interpretation of the results. It also comments current activities of OECD, UNESCO and European union. Based on the socio-cultural framework, it brings in several recommendations how states and organizations could approach literacy and its assessment. The paper relies on the documents of UNESCO, OECD, IEA, the World Bank, the European union and on the published works of foreign and local experts.