

Georgios TSAPARLIS
University of Ioannina, Department of Chemistry

INTRODUCING *CERAPIE*

The targets

CERAPIE is a follow-up publication to the 5th *European Conference on Research in Chemical Education* (5th ECRICE), that took place with great success in the University of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece, from 21 until 25 September 1999.

In undertaking this publication, the following targets have been set:

1. To provide to both researchers and practitioners of chemistry education in Europe an additional means to publish their work, taking into account that the existing international science education and chemistry education journals are very limited in number.
[In particular, there is a need for an exclusive means for the publication of science education research in the special domain of chemistry.]
2. To secure a high quality of the published work, by submitting it to peer reviewing by professional science education researchers and/or chemical educators.
[All reviewers are members of research and teaching staff of higher education institutions in various countries. The names of all those who have been involved so far in the review process are listed on page 4.]
3. To speed up considerably the review and publication process.
[It is well known that in the case of the standard journals this process is very slow (often about two years) in contrast to the science (chemistry, physics, biology, biochemistry etc.) journals where it is not unusual to have as low times as four months. Actually, this is the most important reason for which *CERAPIE* has been launched.]
4. To make *CERAPIE* as widely read as possible, by distributing it free through the Internet.

The review process

All authors of accepted contributions to the 5th ECRICE [that were reviewed 'blind' (anonymously) by two external reviewers, in the form of a short and an extended abstract] were invited to submit their full papers for *CERAPIE*. With the exception of invited contributions, the full papers were each sent to two reviewers (as a rule, the reviewers of the corresponding abstracts), who were asked to review them and make one of the following recommendations:

- accept as it is;
- possibly accept as it is;

- (possibly) accept after minor revision (the possibly can be deleted);
- (possibly) accept after major revision (the possibly can be deleted);
- possibly reject;
- certainly reject.

Of necessity, the review of the full papers was not 'blind'. In addition to their recommendation, reviewers had to answer 19 questions concerning the clarity, originality, methodology, connection with previous work, bibliography, interest for researchers and teachers, and overall quality.

The Table below provides statistics about the papers of 5th ECRICE and the manuscripts received for *CERAPIE* by the time this editorial was completed.

5 th ECRICE	<i>CERAPIE</i>
Total numbers of papers: 101 Invited: 11 Accepted after review: 90	Full papers received: 47 Invited: 5 For review: 42 Accepted after review: 20 Accepted conditionally (pending revision): 6 Still under review: 9 Rejected: 7

The editorial decision about acceptance/conditional acceptance after minor or major revision or rejection of the manuscript was based entirely on the reviewers' recommendations. The reasons for rejection of mainly research papers were mainly poor methodology. As one distinguished reviewer commented criticising a particular manuscript,

'We want to encourage people to get interested in chemistry education research, but they must learn the methodologies of the discipline.'

This statement expresses quite lucidly the quest of *CERAPIE* for quality, and must be taken seriously into account by every chemical educator. The message must be clear: chemistry education research is not easy research. *CERAPIE* wants to encourage the *fast* dissemination of the results of science/chemistry education research, but this research must be of *at least good quality*.

Note that *CERAPIE* is not a profit-making publication. It is available free of charge on the Internet, while the revenues from the 5th ECRICE cover the cost of the present and the next issue. Reviewers also offer their work without payment.

Categories of papers

Each paper of *CERAPIE* is distinguished into one of the following categories:

- (i) invited contribution;
- (ii) research report;
- (iii) research communication;
- (iv) paper on the practice of chemistry education;
- (v) note on the practice of chemistry education.

Invited contributions come from invited plenary lectures, invited symposia, and the invited workshop; these contributions have not been subjected to review either in abstract or in full paper. A *research report* is about original research work in science/chemistry education, which has not been published or is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. A *research communication* provides a *short* preliminary account of research work; to our knowledge this service appears for the first time in the science education research literature, while it is a well-known practice in pure science. A *paper on the practice of chemistry education* is distinguished from a *note on the practice of chemistry education* only by the length of the contribution: contributions up to two pages are notes; with three full pages and over they are papers.

Finally, as happened with the 5th ECRICE contributions, each paper of CERAPIE has been placed into one of twelve sub categories: (0). General issues in science education. (1) Methods and issues of teaching and learning. (2) Concepts. (3) Concept teaching and learning. (4) Problem solving and other higher-order cognitive skills (HOCS). (5) Assessment. (6) Science-Technology-Environment-Society (STES). (7) New Educational Technologies (NET). (8) Attitudes. (9) Chemical education in Europe: Curricula and policies. (10) Teacher education and training. (11) Experiments and practical work.

The future of CERAPIE

Certainly readers will wonder if there is going to be a future for CERAPIE. Its original aim has been to provide the best possible means for the participants of the 5th ECRICE to present internationally their work if they so wished, and if the work was of high or at least good quality. This aim is fulfilled with the publication of the first two issues. But the four targets, which we set, could not be fully satisfied by just doing that.

In our opinion, CERAPIE must have a more permanent presence. That is the reason why a volume number has been inserted. Issue No. 2 will contain again papers from 5th ECRICE that have been already been submitted. The publication date of the second issue will be probably in March 2000. A third issue with other papers from the ECRICE that may be submitted, as well as with entirely new submissions, is planned; for details, see GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS. And then? The continuation of CERAPIE is a very hard job, which cannot be undertaken by one person. We invite everyone interested in a dialogue about the most effective way to make the presence of CERAPIE permanent.

Acknowledgement

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