



EARLI developed from a small group of occasionally gathering researchers to a full-fledged professional organisation. Professors such as Heinz Mandl, Erik De Corte, Erno Lehtinen, Neville Bennett, Pierro Boscolo, and many others met in the United States at the AERA meetings. During these meetings, the first blueprints for a European platform were drafted. In December 1983 Prof. Erik De Corte and Prof. Dick Snow, came up with the idea to organise an invited conference with the goal to found a European association for researchers. In the meantime, in the Netherlands, Prof. Robert-Jan Simons and Hans Lodewijks had the idea to found a European journal for educational research and made contacts in different countries. Shortly after, these four people met and decided to go for the invited conference and to put the idea of the journal on hold. Different people who already distinguished themselves in the field of Learning and Instruction were contacted to participate in the conference. Two sponsors financed this startup, the Office of Naval Research and SVO (the Dutch society for educational research) ran by Chris Van Seventer.

In June 1985, the first EARLI conference was held in Leuven, Belgium, to which a number of well known American scholars were invited, such as the late Dick Snow, the late Robert Glaser, Lauren Resnick and Bill Mc Keachie. In what came to be known as the first EARLI conference a total of 140 people were invited. At the end of the first conference, they decided to found EARLI. The first Executive Committee was led by Noel Entwistle, Heinz Mandl, Hans Lodewijks (secretary), Erik De Corte (President), Clotilde Pontecorvo, and Michel Gilly.

Shortly after the founding of EARLI, the idea of the journal resurfaced. In this respect, there was contact with Pergamon Press. In 1989, concrete steps were taken to start the first official journal of EARLI "Learning & Instruction" (L&I). When Erik De Corte's presidency drew to a close in 1989 and following a meeting of the Executive Committee in Rome, he accepted to act as the first Editor of L&I, with Lieven Verschaffel as editorial assistant. The first issue of L&I appeared in 1991.

During Prof. Bennett's presidency, it was decided to establish a permanent office in 1997. Neville Bennett and Rupert Wegerif surely can be called the architects of this permanent office where currently four people are appointed. The office is located in Leuven and our proximity to Brussels enhances EU contacts.

After two decades Learning & Instruction is Europe's strongest journal in Educational Research (its impact factor raised to 2.768 in 2010). This overwhelming success of L&I and the occasion of the 20th anniversary of EARLI led to several new initiatives since 2005: a new journal for EARLI called 'Educational Research Review' (which



obtained its first impact factor of 1.26 in 2011), a new award for young and promising scholars, position papers, Advanced Study Colloquia and the foundation of a sister association, EAPRIL (European Association for Practitioner Research on Improving Learning). In 2013, EARLI launched its third official journal. Frontline Learning Research is an open-access electronic-only journal that publishes innovative and dynamic research, either in terms of theme and/or in terms of methodology or data.

In order to stimulate the professional development of Junior educational REsearchers, EARLI established a network for Junior Researchers (JURE) in 1995. In close cooperation with EARLI, the JURE members organise yearly scientific events.

Many conference presidents, conference managers and local organising teams have invested a lot of time in organising our EARLI biennial conferences. Some of these conferences turned out to be a huge success, such as the recent ones organised by Bjorn Hasselgren in Gothenburg, Frits Oser/Ulli Baetz in Fribourg and Pierro Boscolo/Lucia Mason in Padova, Andreas Demetriou/Costas Constantinou in Nicosia, Benő Csapó/Csaba Csíkos in Budapest (2007), Jos Beishuizen/Gert Rijlaarsdam in Amsterdam (2009). Rupert Wegerif and Debra Myhill continued the tradition of excellent conferences in Exeter in 2011.

The latest EARLI Conference in Munich 2013 was organised by Manfred Prenzel and Martin Gartmeier. The upcoming 2015 EARLI Conference will take place in Limassol, Cyprus. The local organisation is led by Eleni Kyza (conference chair), Iolie Nicolaidou, and Andri Ioannou.

The continuous development of EARLI is well mirrored in the growth of membership over the years (400 members in 1991; 1.000 in 1999; 1.200 in 2001; 1.400 in 2003; 1.800 in 2005); over 2.000 in 2009; 2.339 in 2011; and 2805 in 2013) and the increasing activities.

Today, 13 Presidents and 12 EC's have led the association (Presidents: De Corte, Entwistle, Mandl, Simons, Vosniadou, Bennett, Boekaerts, Lehtinen, Dochy, Säljö, Boscolo, Lindblom and Beishuizen) and many Special Interest Group coordinators have contributed to the development of EARLI.

Filip Dochy, Leuven, August 2013