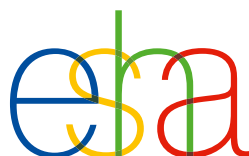




esa magazine

NOVEMBER 2011

Maximizing Living Resources in Schools



European School
Heads Association

ESHA magazine is the official magazine of the European School Heads Association, the Association for school leaders in Europe. ESHA magazine will be published eight times per school year. You are welcome to use articles from the magazine but we would appreciate it if you contacted the editor first.

Subscription

The ESHA e-magazine is free of charge. You can register through the internet at www.eshamagazine.org

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About ESHA

ESHA is a Foundation that consists of 32 Associations of Heads and Educational employers in 25 European countries in primary, secondary and vocational education.

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Encouraging leadership issues



Dear ESHA friends and members,

As ESHA president I visit the conferences of ESHA members and their associates. I was lucky to meet members from NAPD in Killarney in Ireland during their annual conference. I was in Barcelona speaking to and with members of Axia, our Catalan ESHA association. I was in Oslo where NSLF, our Norwegian association had their three yearly membership council. I was in Budapest visiting the ESHA regional conference; in spring 2011 there was the NAHT conference in Brighton, in August the ICP conference in Toronto and maybe I've forgotten a few. I couldn't manage to go to Croatia and Bulgaria and I'm sure that there were more conferences of ESHA associations.

At these conferences, thousands of ESHA members meet, discuss and learn to improve the quality of education leadership, all serving our schools and children in the best way we can. I am very impressed by the commitment and involvement during these meetings. In October, during the ESHA General Assembly, GA members discussed the topics quality and autonomy, and you can read the outcomes in the ESHA website at www.esha.org.

In November, the Dutch Principal Academy organized an expert meeting to discuss the new standards and competences of school leaders. We had twice the number of participants that we could harbour.

I think it's very important that educational leaders are so focused on their professional development. In all countries there is a discussion whether schools should get more autonomy; the right to make your own decisions and being accountable for these decisions. That's why you must learn how to do it. Knowing how, makes the work easier and more attractive. ESHA can and will play an important role in this development by investing in leadership networks during these conferences and on the ESHA website (www.esha.org). So do not hesitate to join us!!!

My thanks to you all for your continued investment in our children's future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ton Duif', with a large, stylized 'D' and 'U'.

Ton Duif
ESHA president

Can we lead a school alone?



BY ARI POKKA, FINNISH ASSOCIATION
OF PRINCIPALS

In Finland the school size is getting bigger. Behind that we can find two basic elements. One of the main reason is the municipalities' finance problems. Bigger units are more effective than small ones. On the one hand the population in Finland is concentrating on the metropolitan areas or bigger cities. It means, that rural area schools are more as a regional unit. That is also rising the number of students and staff in the schools.

One of the interesting questions is: can a principal lead a school alone anymore? Traditionally we have seen principals work characterized as a lonely task. Principals are often considered the last force that keeps even when the others have lost their faith. He or she is the school guarantee, the one who defends the school against the world, turns off the lights on the last corridor and is first on the scene when needed.

The school's management, such as management in general, has gone through many stages of development. In general, they are brought to life in school by business management consultants, who have sold the same product for business a few years earlier. There have been teams, distributed leadership, with emphasis more on human resources than on hard management where result is the only thing that matters. Common to many of these doctrines is that they are ill-suited for the school's leadership.

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Therefore, the Finnish school's ethos has remained strongly a patriarchal or matriarchal leader concept. She or he has been a charisma that every leader needs. Principals are, partly unwillingly, kept a lonely role as a strong leader status. Sometimes it was also aware of the backlash against the all "new and innovative" concepts of school leadership

The Finnish school's reality show, however, that we have to seriously ask the principals, can we lead to school alone? And I don't mean that the answer is shared or distributed leadership, such as the inclusion model, where the success, depends solely on teachers' willingness to commit to the task of management.

We must think of school leadership as a whole and try to find new perspective. Whose actions affect school and how has the school affected the surrounding society? I believe that we must start thinking about the school's management system. The sustainable school

leadership is a much bigger question than the Principal's and his or her deputies job description. Especially now, when the school size increases, and the school's activities impact on the surrounding community, is expanding all the time.

The school management is a challenge for both the school and its partners. Can we open our own culture and argue for the school's goals and needs in such a way that outsiders understand it? Can we see your own unique work as teachers and principals part of a package of many different types of work, which consists of community success? Are we able to build a school management system, in which all the relevant actors were involved in decision making?

The question of the management system is essential when we consider the future of Finnish school leadership. The management system is a principal resource for doing his or her job well. At a time when the principal tasks is not too crowded, it is essential to think about what kind of spiritual and intellectual tools we have in school leadership.

If we can ensure the successful working conditions and the view of humanity, I believe the school's leadership will be an interesting job. The management system can also change the nature of leadership. At the very best we can see the changes, that we are not anymore leading situational operations. More and more we are leading proactive thinking, where all schools key factors bring their very best ideas.

Agenda

2011

December 9

Colloquium organized by ESHA France in Paris:

“La gestion des ressources humaines dans les établissements scolaires en Europe”

2012

March 2–3

ESHA Spring meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia

March 15–16

AVS: Master classes & Annual Conference in Utrecht

March 23–24

ASCL Annual Conference in Birmingham

March 22–24

NAESP in Seattle, USA www.naesp.org

March 28–29

Nordic School Leader Conference in Gothenburg, Sweden

May 4–6

NAHT Conference in Harrogate, UK

October 29–31

13th ESHA Biennial Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland

Oslo principals measured rigidly on student performance

TEXT BY MODOLF MOEN



Being faithful to the political decisions while delivering strong academic results, are the most important goals for a principal. That is the clear signal from Oslos politicians to the city's principals.

As a part of The School Leaders Associations' recent national convention, a recent study on the relations between Norwegian principals and the county which employs them was revealed. Again, Oslo differs radically from the rest of the country. This applies particularly to the principal's perception of the school owner's demands for good academic student performance. An overwhelming 94 percent of the Oslo principals feel that their success is measured strongly on students' academic results. In the rest of the country only two out of ten principals respond the same.

Clarity is important

– It is important for principals to have clear spoken school owners. Vague leadership inhibits school development, says Solveig Hvidsten Dahl, recently re-elected president of the School Leaders' Association.

Hvidsten Dahl points out that clear expectations provides clear guidelines on what the principals are to be measured by, and it is this mechanism that is now becoming quite evident in Oslo schools.

– It is still important to remember that school development and results are more than just academic student performance. Society

has granted the school system a dual mandate, and schools should therefore equally ensure that students succeed in their social learning and thus develop the whole individual. The measurement regime in Oslo may therefore be perceived by many as a too narrow kind of evaluation.

Oslo controlled from above?

Eight out of ten Oslo principals also believe that their success is largely measured by how well they implement the political decisions the municipality imposes on them. This demand of loyalty is felt by all principals, since seven out of ten principals across the country answer the same thing: school owners expect them to implement policy decisions in a good way.

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One of the most prominent features of the study is the difference between Oslo and the rest of the country when it comes to how principal's experience contribution and participation in the local school development. Over half of the Oslo-rectors experience that the county makes little use of their advice in school development. It thus seems that the principals in Oslo feel they aren't listened to in comparison with other Norwegian principals.

Nationwide, 62 percent of principals experience that school owners makes use of their council. Three out of ten principals even believe that this happens to a high extent, quoting the survey.

The School Leaders' Association believes this is a hallmark of Oslo schools that is well worth discussing.

– Municipalities must beware not to execute narrow-minded, from-the-top management. While doing such, there is always a risk that the principal's first-hand knowledge and expertise is ignored. A blend of freedom, support and clear expectations for each principal, is the recipe for a good school development, says Solveig Hvidsten Dahl, president of the School Leaders Association.

Kyiv initiatives



TEXT BY IRYNA KOZINA, USHA VICE-PRESIDENT
NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE IN ESHA ASSEMBLY

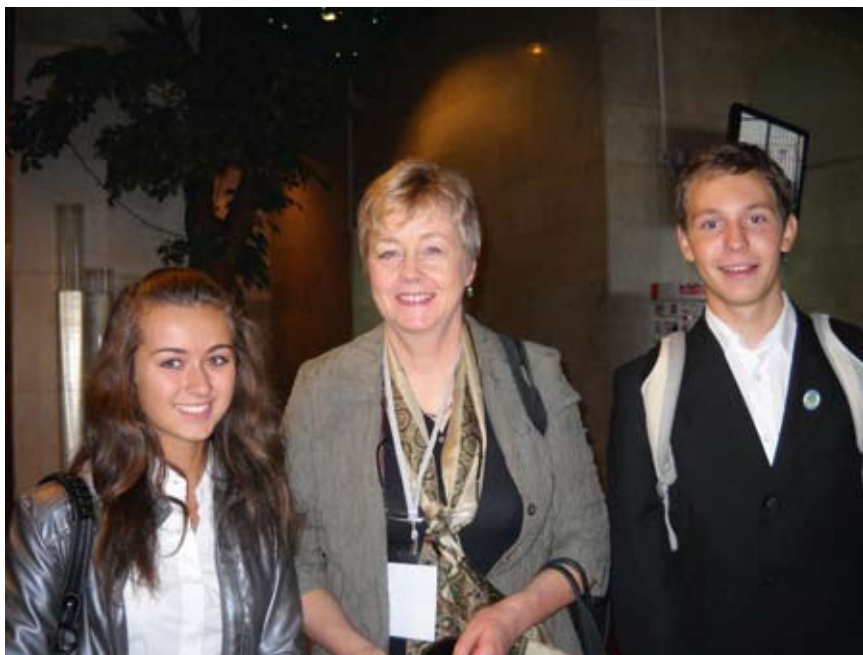
Schools are the designer of the future and even more. Schools of today predict and produce the future of our civilization. To be a teacher today is a great responsibility because it means to be responsible for the whole of the world.

Not so long ago in October the two very important events took place in the life of the Ukrainian teachers. The first one was the European Forum of Ministers of Education “School in the 21st century. Kyiv initiatives”. Rather important document “KYIV Communiqué” became the result of it (you can read it on the website of the Council of Europe). The Secondary school and its further development in the European education space were in the centre of the Forum attention. Common European history, tolerance as the new ideology for the European youth, human rights, languages, ICT, international school partnership and professional training of the teachers became seven main topics for discussion.

Kyiv schools opened their doors for our guests’ visits. The most interesting for them was the communication with the principals of schools, teachers, students and their parents. Our guests appreciated highly the atmosphere, hospitality, modern school equipment and most of all the students’ fluency in speaking foreign languages, freedom of thoughts and erudition.



Our lyceum and I received the Head of the Council of Europe Directorate of Education and languages Mrs Olof Olafsdottir who wrote in her message to us with the words of thanks and appreciation: “The Forum was a great success”.



The second very important event was the 3rd Congress of educators of Ukraine which took place in Kyiv on the 28th of October. We were waiting for it for more than 7 years. The Congress had to solve a lot of problems in primary, secondary, high and higher education and pre-primary one too. More than 360 meetings in different regions were held with the participation of the Ministry of Education and Science, Youth and Sports. Our association took an active part in the preparatory work of the Congress too.

Among the problems for solving there were:

- Quality of education in concrete actions and deeds;
- Being the part of the European education space;
- Trust and real support of school from the side of the state and the society;
- Prestige of the teacher's profession and the social status of a teacher (the salaries of the teachers including the principals are still low, they vary from \$150 to \$ 500 ...);
- School in the village. The programme "School bus and the road to school";
- Autonomy of the secondary schools and universities;
- ICT for every school. National ICT net;
- Investments into education. Ranking.
- etc.

The result of the Congress was the approval of the project:

- "National Strategy of the Education Development in Ukraine for 2012 – 2021 years"

The Congress gathered more than 1200 participants. Our president Olena Onats was elected to the Presidium of the Congress and I was given the first floor as the representative of Ukraine in ESHA, the Vice-president of USHA and the principal of one of the first lyceums in Ukraine.

Good decisions bring good results if they become true.
Optimism is our teachers' credo.

Maximizing Living Resources in Schools

TEXT BY DR. FELECIA NACE



How do educational leaders stay the course, accomplish goals of high performance and full implementation in areas such as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), language arts literacy, as well as sports and the arts, in the face of budgetary challenges? Irrespective of how many successes we have experienced as educators, still we feel the need to continuously broaden our scope and accomplish more, even in the face of economic hardships. Subsequently, we, as educational leaders, look toward already acquired and established school resources to compensate for a lack of funding. Effective leaders understand that there needs to be a plan in place to change mindsets-- shifting staff mindsets from monetary, external solutions to more grounded, internal problem solving, as we attempt to preserve excellence in education. Most leaders will agree that effective change in school systems, or any system for that matter, occurs more efficiently when change efforts are cohesive. ----->



Dr. Felecia Nace is the executive Director of Partners4EducationalChange, a company based in New Jersey, U.S. A. This educational consulting agency provides services to school districts which are experiencing difficulty fully implementing best practices. Dr. Nace believes, "Often times, staff members have the desire to change but

they simply are not equipped to actively participate in a collective change effort." Partners4EducationalChange walk staff, step by step, through the change process. For more information please visit the following website: Partners4educationalchange.org. If you have questions or desire a consultation, you can contact Dr. Nace directly at: educationalchange@ymail.com

Maximizing untapped potential in staff is quickly becoming a viable solution to budgetary deficiencies. This cost efficient approach to change can lead to substantial, long lasting transformations, and if executed as a school-wide effort, can be applied swiftly. True systemic change, by its very nature, challenges us to expand and build capacity through the effective use of living resources. Let us reflect on the average school district for a moment. Do teacher assistants, security guards, cafeteria workers, secretarial staff, and custodial workers all share common visions and educational goals with school districts? Think about the significant impact support staff can have on student success as these employees interface with students throughout the school day. These daily encounters connect support staff with students and can be positive, meaningful interactions, particularly if non-instructional staff is prepared and conscious of the opportunities for “teachable moments “. This

From my experience, maximizing and mobilizing instructional and non-instructional staff toward a cohesive trajectory is a small investment which garners huge dividends.

is where professional development training, whether in-house or outsourced, can be powerful. Non-instructional staff can be trained how to effectively support classroom instruction. These staff members could support everything from academic and social/emotional goals to helping improve school climate.

The success of a systemic change is measurable and can be assessed in numerous ways. For example, a

school district can measure the success of a systemic change by using indicators such as academic and social/emotional achievements, shifts in school climate, leadership effectiveness, and instructional shifts. Additionally, the measure of breadth and depth should be largely considered. By that I mean the extent to which a school district is willing to be inclusive. This entails viewing all employees as core staff, which can ultimately augment learning. In the fourth edition of *The Meaning of Educational Change*, Michael Fullan suggests that schools should work toward breaking down barriers. He believes that schools should not view factors as separate from one another.

Suggestions on how to include non-instructional staff in change efforts:

- Explain school goals to non-instructional staff in comprehensive terms. Any successful advertising company will tell us that using uninhibited, simplistic language to describe technical terms and concepts is the most effective means of communication for reaching a diverse audience.
- Allow non-instructional employees an opportunity to brainstorm how they might contribute to changes that are aligned with school goals. This fosters creativity and ownership among staff.
- As educational leaders, we need to abandon the topical layer of change, thinking more in terms of a well-rounded cohesive approach which breaks down barriers between instructional and non-instructional employees.

From my experience, maximizing and mobilizing instructional and non-instructional staff toward a cohesive trajectory is a small investment which garners huge dividends. Accomplishing this goal requires in-depth reflection regarding how the school or district presently views the term *systemic*. For example, if school staff members have

extremely varied ideas regarding the meaning of the term *systemic*, then it is incumbent upon leaders to ensure that there is a consensus of the term and its usage school-wide. Since students ideally drive the mission and goals within a given school district, they then are considered the nucleus, and so it would stand to reason that the surrounding entities are all positioned to support students in their learning experiences. However, this is not always the case. When I work with superintendents and other school leaders who desire to implement changes, I first venture to establish the target audience, giving the superintendent and school leaders the opportunity to voice who they believe should be informed of specific changes. Almost always, the target audience includes district and school administrators and teachers, in isolation from other employees.

School districts' common response to change can largely be attributed to the age-old strategy of professional development in education which primarily centers on teachers and school principals. Succinctly, this approach is indicative of limited breadth and depth and it is not consistent with a cohesive change model, which is more inclusive. Transparency on a large scale plausibly leads to more support and paves the way for effective implementation of strategies that work. For example, sharing statistics and academic goals with both instructional and non-instructional staff members, as well as with parents, can be a catalyst to wide-spread change. Many non-instructional staff members and other relevant partners in education may not be aware of summative school and district test scores. Sharing summative data with non-instructional staff in uncomplicated language may inspire those staff members to take an active role in helping improve the quality of education.

Superintendents, school leaders, and teachers will be surprised at the gems they will find amidst non-instructional employees--

everyone from military veterans who can share their experiences with students to artists with hidden talents. One clear example of finding a treasure trove among staff occurred in the year 1976 when it was discovered by some young cadets that Mr. William “Bill” Crawford, a janitor at the U.S Air Force Academy at the time, was a Medal of Honor winner. The discovery that this janitor had at one point in his life earned the Medal of Honor, turned out to be a life-long lesson for the cadet who stumbled upon the information and it changed the subsequent conversations and interactions between the cadets attending the academy and the janitor, Mr. Crawford. He possessed first-hand knowledge of battles and other military experiences that the cadets had only read about in books, but this living resource presented a rare alternative to text-book teaching and presented potential support for the implementation of best practices at the U.S Air Force Academy. This was an opportunity to engage staff (instructional and non-instructional) and students in the systemic thinking process.



It provides some comfort to know that while school district budgets have become more restrictive, we can still find opulence in living resources.

A recent inspiring story which also portrays collective thinking at its best was reported on NBC nightly news in the spring of 2010. A Florida school bus driver had an idea to support district reading initiatives by encouraging students to read on the school bus, thus creating a “library on wheels”. She asked students to turn in book reports, and rewarded stu-

dents after they had completed a certain number of books. This project helped support learning in the classroom while at the same time sent a message to students that learning neither begins nor ends at the sound of a school bell. The school district supported the bus driver’s efforts. The reward for the district... priceless!

A School Janitor, Mr. Willie Davis, who worked at Midvale Elementary School in Tucker, Georgia, was diagnosed with cancer during his employment with the school district. Surprisingly, after his death, the school in which he worked discovered that he had left a third of his insurance benefits, \$12,716.64, to the first grade Special Education class in the school. With the money, the school purchased video equipment, educational materials, and prizes to reward students for their accomplishments in class. Mr. Willie Davis played a key role in supporting educational goals, and encouraging students to put forth their best effort. The inheritance he left symbolized his dedication to education and the school itself. He was an intricate part of a learning community.

There are heroes among us in schools who will never be recognized in the history books, but the support they can provide to educational goals are immeasurable, and if carefully developed can facilitate school districts in providing a quality education to students irrespective of limited funding. Economic recessions often prompt people to take stock of their “silos” and determine how to maximize inventoried resources. Living resources in our schools, such as teacher assistants, custodial staff, secretarial staff, security teams, school bus drivers, and cafeteria personnel, in many instances, are able and willing to support educational best practices, but are often times overlooked. Strategic leadership which is inclusive of support staff can make a significant difference in how well a school district sustains best practices during economic downturns and it can also help define the roles and purpose of individuals working in school settings. Making swift cohesive changes can often times be equally as challenging as tackling budgetary issues. It provides some comfort to know that while school district budgets have become more restrictive, we can still find opulence in living resources.

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New laws for education in Hungary

TEXT BY DR. ÁCS, KATALIN

Although education is an issue, which is to be regulated strictly within the competency of a Member State, let us bring news about the recent changes on this field in Hungary – regarding the proposals of the new law on public education (called as ‘public nurturing law’ – furthermore referred to as PNL – at the moment), and of the newly proposed law on vocational education and training (VET).

Now, as ESHA is more concerned about public education – and does not really pay attention to VET – we focus on the PNL. Those, who want more information on the recent legal regulations on education, may find beneficial to visit the website of Eurydice. Concerning the overall legal regulations of the recent past in Hungary: we do experience a strong trend of centralization.



Center of politics in Hungary: Parliament in Budapest

Regarding the content and the process for the proposed draft bill on PNL, the overwhelming majority of the civil organizations on the scope of education have refused to accept it – along the preparation process they were not given the possibility to argue. So, the draft – *horribile dictu* – is lacking any regard for consideration of country wide known experts, professional associations, and civilians. These mentioned have demanded the withdrawal of the draft

bill and wanted to network with the social agents related to public education, as getting in touch with parents, preparing an information campaign for teachers, informing students – in a way that suits their varying levels of maturity – of their rights to democratic and reasonable education; informing further public education actors – e.g. municipalities, civil organizations, churches, educational groups, sport associations, etc., and each MPs indeed – of the consequences of educational legislation and campaigns.

Based on the above reasons, on a day of early November 2011, the Network for the Freedom of Curriculum (*or, if you prefer: of Education; in Hungarian: Hálózat a Tanszabadságért – HAT*) was formed of organizations and private persons, individuals.[1] Here, we would like to show the main issues we would like to form the frame of a new law on education, if there is one to be, replacing the existing legislation in force, which was set in 1993 and has been modified well more than a hundred times since.

Well, let us see the questions, one by one, just to shed a pale light on the issue – rather: on some aspects of the issue. How can become someone a teacher? What sort of private life can s/he live, while being a teacher? How can anyone become a head of the school? What sort of private life can s/he live as a head? Based on the experience of the recent past decades, the short answers follow.

- **How can someone become a teacher?**

Having successfully passed the entrance requirements to the University, anyone could start her/his studies to become a teacher – of one or two subjects. For example, for becoming a teacher in general education at secondary high schools (grammar schools): maths-physics, chemistry-biology, Hungarian-one foreign language (grammar and literature), etc. are generally chosen. No aptitude test has to be passed; none before, nor along, neither after the studies of

teacher training. The initial teacher training at the University usually takes five years; the successfully graduated young teachers (aged 23+) can proceed as taking a job as teacher at the appropriate level of schools, which may be state owned (i.e. maintained by a local government or municipality), or run by a church, or belong to some private entity. In any case, the employer is the head of the school; there will probably be an interview before entering the employment, but it is no aptitude test either; neither regarding the knowledge/science of the subject, nor regarding the skills for teaching in the classroom. – Consequently, concerning those who have no values of teacher's calling, if someone has no ambition for any occupation, s/he can (easily) enjoy vivid student life and can graduate as a teacher and (there is a danger that, unfortunately) soon will teach the youth how to avoid any vocation or responsibility. Of course, there are brilliant and gifted young teachers – but the small number of those who should not teach has been increasing; there is a Buggins' turn.

• **What sort of private life can s/he live, while being a teacher?**

The teaching job means 22 compulsory contact lessons a week, plus administration about an hour each day. The week consists of 5 working days; Saturdays and Sundays are free – except when there is a school or class event (excursion, competition, whatever) or a CPD course. For all of these, depending on the teaching career years, the teacher gets a public employee's salary – which is far less than necessary to run a family life at a reasonable standard. Therefore the teacher gives private lessons, or does something else for money. Late in the night, having checked and evaluated the tests pupils had done, prepared herself or himself for the lessons of the coming day, the teacher turns to sleep – we did not mention anything done for her/his family.

- **How can anyone become a head of the school?**

If there is a head's position available, the school maintainer calls for an open tender. The applicants are to stand for an interview in front of the teachers' staff – so the staff will form its opinion and submit it to the school maintainer. By the law, the applicant must have at least 5 (10) years experience as a teacher in the same type of school where s/he submits the application. Another interview may take place, at the school maintainer. As s/he got the job, her/

his salary will be raised up to about 150-160%, compared to what s/he got before, as a teacher. The position may be held for 5 years; then comes a tender for the position again, regardless how well s/he worked there as head.

Make a school atmosphere where knowing and being effective skillful is worth the most and forms a model to achieve.

- **What sort of private life can s/he live as a head?**

While a teacher enjoys a 6 weeks summer holiday, then a few days as autumn break, and about 10 days winter holiday (including Christmas

and New Years Eve), and a few days as Spring holiday (including Easter) – the head has to keep an eye always on the school; for any renovation or service work, preparing curriculars, administration; practically s/he cannot be on holiday for weeks on the summer even. During the school year, s/he got to give lessons (contact classroom hours) too – depending on the size of the school, 2-4 lessons a week. Working from early morning till evening every day, the head gets even less relaxing time for her/himself and family, than a teacher.

Teachers and heads would very much need time indeed, which they do not have because of working hard, paying attention to many students in the same time all day long – they would need free time for relaxing, living a cultural life, getting prepared for the students who demand wise, relaxed teacher, affective and scientific education, exciting lessons, a positive image of life. Time they need, to get round to their personal health, to their family & children, to improve themselves continuously in order to keep up with the ever changing demands, standards. That would only be possible if they get a reasonable salary at the school (i.e. twice or three times as much as they get today). And besides, of course, teachers and their heads need strength: solid awareness of the subject, new methods, improved communication skills, conflict solving tools, etc. to make their work attractive in the classroom, to get students enthusiastic, ambitious – make a school atmosphere where knowing and being effective skillful is worth the most and forms a model to achieve.

Pupils, students – the up growing generation – needs to be proven chances, and a second chance at any time and age; they deserve the right education, meeting their own special needs each; whether s/he is gifted or of middling ability or suffers any handicap. Thus, many types of schools, education, and training are necessary, available for serving the demands of the society. Today, students see that their (good) teachers are worn out, tired, and they know they do not earn enough, they are not aware of the recent cultural events or of things students value high – parents think the same, so the society would not appraise much of teachers as a whole, which is a shame. In the classroom, there is less and less respect may be felt towards the teacher, what is more, aggression may encounter, bullying increased. Attainments are lowering at most of the schools – to cut it short, society is generally not satisfied with the schools, as the provider of general education.

No doubt, there must be a change; a strong improvement. That would badly need social dialog with those who are partners in education – teachers, students, parents, politicians (as decision/law makers), experts, trainers, maintainers; to map the situation, find out the possible remedies and make plan for our renewed, carefully designed education at every level.

The draft proposal of the new, secretly written bill and its hidden background study, being already in the Parliament for debate and final voting, does not meet the challenges mentioned above. We

hope the MPs will recognize the danger it incorporates and will throw it back; for open discussion, debate and redesign.

No doubt,
there must be a
change; a strong
improvement.

*Dr. Ács, Katalin – Molnár,
Géza (ESHA-Hungary)*





World
Education
Forum

Participate in a global challenge

Did you know that almost 80 million children around the world still do not receive any kind of education?

That's why all educators in the world have to strike the alarm bell. We need to stand up and speak for all children. We as educators are responsible to educate youngsters and that the world invest in future generations of children.

The World Education Forum calls on you to be involved in our project.

World Education Forum

The mission of the World Education Forum is to increase the number of children which do gain access to education by influencing National Policy decision-making on a global scale.

The World Education Forum aims to set standards for educational investments for all countries through programs which are economical and sustainable. We believe that these aims will be supported by schools all over the world because such a World Education Forum is independent, non-political and without any religious constraint.

Educators advocate: **Education for every child!**

Understanding

One of the main presentations at the 2011 Conference was devoted to a detailed explication of the workings of PISA by Dr. Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector at the DES, and Dr. Jude Cosgrave, research associate at the Educational Research Centre [ERC] in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra. She has been working on PISA since its inception in 1997. She is Ireland's representative to the governing body of PISA.



Given the importance of PISA and the run-up to the next set of measurements, to be taken in 2012, the NAPD Executive Report is publishing a slightly abridged version of their presentation in three parts, over the next three issues.

Harold Hislop

PISA is in many ways a very emotive word in Ireland now, especially in educational circles. It was a major news item and a major shock for the educational system here when the results of 2009 were published last December. What Jude and I would like to get across is an understanding of PISA, where it has come from, where it fits, what it tells us. And I think one of the most important messages about that is to understand first of all just how complex and how ambitious PISA is in the sort of assessment it's trying to do. It's trying to develop an understanding of how well our students, at the age of 15, are actually able to apply certain skills – not just to learn them – but to apply them.

PISA has these two edges to it. On one level, it's extraordinarily ambitious in what it wants to do. And on the other, it produces a very simplistic league table. The problem with league tables is, they are so easy to produce and they can be reported on in a very simplified and maybe simplistic way.

Breaking down the 'simplistic' approach

We hope at the end of this session that we'll have broken down some of that simplistic approach. Because I believe as educationalists – be you a teacher, be you a leader, be you involved in evaluation – we have to understand what PISA is actually telling us. It's our duty to understand the assessment and what the information coming out of it is, and also to understand the limitations of it.

The 'Knee-Jerks'

There are two knee-jerk reactions that we can have. You know, initially, I suppose, when all of us get an assessment of some sort, we say, ah, yeah, but that doesn't take account of x or y or z. There's almost then a level of dismissal of it. The other knee-jerk reaction at

the other end is to take it in a very simplistic way and to build actions and policy decisions on that. And for the educational system it's terribly important that we avoid doing both of those extremes. We have to come to an informed judgment about what it's telling us, not just by itself but by using a whole lot of other information that goes with PISA. And we have to draw then much more comprehensive lessons for policy and practice coming out of it. And that's what we've been trying to do in the last year and a half or more.

What pisa measures and what it doesn't

We will look in detail at the results for PISA 2009 and Jude will talk about some of the characteristics that are associated with achieve-

ment, particularly in reading, which we'll be focusing on. The last two topics are really trying to understand the changes that have happened in achievement as measured by PISA and looking forward to the PISA to come in 2012.



Jude Cosgrave

What PISA attempts to measure: This slide shows the participating countries in PISA 2009. It gives an illustration of the extremely wide and diverse range of countries in terms of culture, language, population size, economy. It's also interesting to note that back in

PISA 2000, when it was first conducted, there were 32 participating countries, and that has mushroomed into 68 countries. So, PISA now has the possibly envious status of being the largest international assessment of education to date.

Where PISA came from

In the mid 90's discussions began among OECD member countries about the quality of indicators of educational outcomes and it was generally agreed that these were unsatisfactory and quite limited to things such as graduation rates. And these types of indicators don't actually tell us much about what young adults can actually demonstrate, or do, or what skills people have.

Countries wanted to obtain better measures of these sorts of things. Furthermore, a curriculum-constrained measure was not seen as a good idea because if you constrain an international measure to common curricular elements, you end up stripping away a lot of the content and what you're likely end up with is an assessment that assesses only very basic core skills, which really isn't relevant to young adult life.

PISA 2009 – Participating Countries

<i>OECD Countries</i>		<i>Partner Countries</i>	
Australia	Japan	Albania	Latvia
Austria	Korea	Argentina	Liechtenstein
Belgium	Luxembourg	Azerbaijan	Lithuania
Canada	Mexico	Brazil	Macao-China
Chile	Netherlands	Bulgaria	Republic of Moldova
Czech Republic	New Zealand	China (Shanghai)	Republic of Montenegro
Denmark	Norway	Chinese Taipei	Panama
Estonia	Poland	Colombia	Peru
Finland	Portugal	Croatia	Qatar
France	Slovak Republic	Dominican Republic	Romania
Germany	Slovenia	Dubai	Russian Federation
Greece	Sweden	Hong-Kong China	Serbia
Hungary	Switzerland	Indonesia	Singapore
Iceland	Turkey	Israel	Thailand
Ireland	United Kingdom	Jordan	Trinidad and Tobago
Israel	United States	Kazakhstan	Tunisia
Italy	United States	Kyrgyzstan	Uruguay

The core areas of reading, maths and science were selected as being important for assessment in PISA. However, this doesn't preclude other areas such as problem-solving, which was assessed in 2003 and will be assessed again in 2012. And I think it's important to say that PISA is an explicitly political exercise because it involves a substantial input from ministries of education from participating countries and it has been subject to an increasing amount of press coverage and attention from politicians.

An interesting example of this dates back actually to PISA 2000, when the German results were received with what's now become known as 'PISA Shock'. The results were lower than the Germans had anticipated and one of the peripheral consequences of that was that they actually had a national TV quiz show based on PISA.

What does PISA seek to measure?

It attempts to measure performance in three core areas: reading, mathematics and science. This is done every three years [beginning in 2000], and in each cycle one of these three assessment areas, or domains, is a major focus or a major domain and the other two are minor foci or minor domains. So that 2000 reading was a major focus, again a major focus in 2009 and so on. So we've got that core ambition in PISA, but there are a number of other aims of PISA, some of which are, in our view, competing with one another.

So, they want to have an assessment that's authentic and relevant, relevant to 15 year olds. The OECD wants to provide high-quality trend data so that countries can say how their education systems are performing relative to other countries over time, in response, perhaps, to changing demographics, educational reforms, curricular changes and so on.

PISA also wants to provide innovative information, and an example of this is the administration, in 2009, for the first time, of an assessment of reading on computers. So that's quite a significant departure from the more traditional paper and pencil type of assessments that we're all familiar with.

PISA also attempts to describe the types of knowledge and skills associated with various points on the scales. So, not only does it report scores, which are a little bit arbitrary, 550, 500, 450, but it also attempts to describe what a score means in terms of examples of specific knowledge skill students with a given score can do.

It also has a very rich contextual element in attempting to explain the results against a rich backdrop of system level, school level and student level indicators.

Challenges, Trends and Innovation

They stand at odds with one another. How can we have an authentic relevant assessment that's constantly updated; for example, with the huge explosion in ICTs and electronic media. How can we have that when we also want to provide trend data?

Of course we have to update the assessment because if we were trying to assess students next year, as we are, using exactly the same methods as we did 12 years ago, they'd be outdated. And the ambition to assess reading, mathematics and science whilst switching between major and minor domains adds a further layer of complexity to the whole exercise. So, some would argue that PISA's possibly too ambitious.

Challenges Within the Aims of PISA

- Trends and innovation create a natural tension: authentic, relevant assessment contexts *versus* providing accurate trend data
- Yet, knowledge and skills are not static, nor do they occur without context
- The ambition to assess multiple domains and switch from major to minor domain across cycles adds further complexity

PISA is Concerned with Applied Skills and Understandings

Reading literacy is...

- understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society.

Mathematical literacy is...

- an individual's capacity to identify and understand the role that mathematics plays in the world, to make well-founded judgments and to use and engage with mathematics in ways that meet the needs of that individual's life as a constructive, concerned and reflective citizen.

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PISA is Concerned with Applied Skills and Understandings

Scientific literacy is...

- an individual's scientific knowledge and use of that knowledge to identify questions, acquire new knowledge, explain scientific phenomena and draw evidence-based conclusions about science-related issues; understanding of the characteristic features of science as a form of human knowledge and enquiry; awareness of how science and technology shape our material, intellectual and cultural environments; willingness to engage in science-related issues, and with the ideas of science, as a reflective citizen.

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PISA looks at applied skills and understandings

If you look at the definitions of reading, maths and science, they all contain the term ‘literacy’.

A second point worth noting is that they all reference ‘using’. So it’s not just sufficient to *know* something, it’s to know how to *use and apply* it in an appropriate and relevant context. ‘Using’ is very important in PISA.

It’s useful to note that across the OECD the average of each domain or assessment area is set to 500 and the standard deviation to 100. The standard deviation is often neglected when we’re looking at results in terms of the league tables, but in fact the standard deviation provides very useful information.

Given the design of PISA, it’s recommended only to make trend comparisons when a domain was first a major domain. So it’s only possible or recommended to make comparisons for reading back to 2000, maths 2003, science 2006. In fact, this was an unintended consequence of the initial design of PISA. The standard deviation and other information about the distribution of achievement can tell you a lot.

Interpreting Achievement Scores

Proficiency levels group students’ scores on the reading, mathematics and science scales into levels so that the skills of students at each level can be described:

Domain	Levels
Reading	7 levels (1a, 1b, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
Mathematics	6 levels (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
Science	6 levels (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

In reading, Levels 1a and 1b were developed for the first time in PISA 2009 to allow for a better description of the knowledge and skills of low achievers

Below Level 1b (<262 points) is not measured in PISA (2% of students in Ireland)

In PISA, Level 2 (e.g. reading <407 points) is considered the minimal level of competency required for future participation in education, work and society

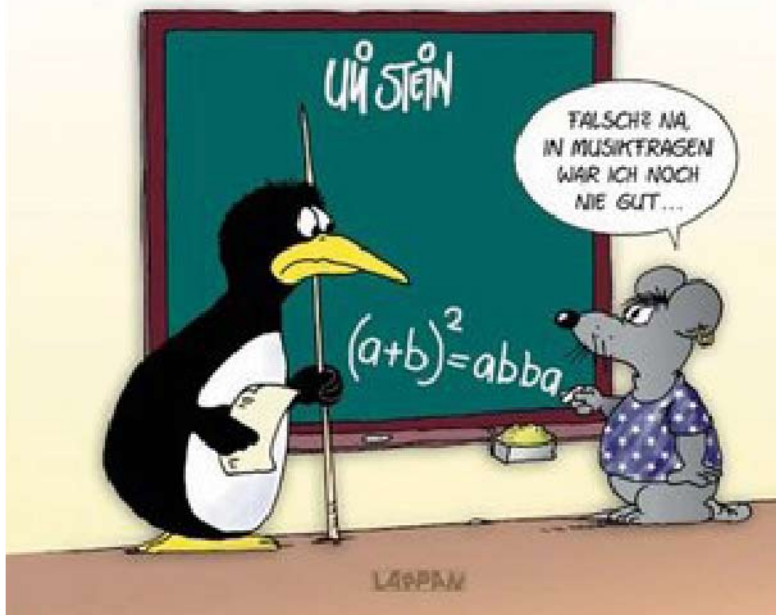
Level 5 or above (e.g. reading >625 points) is regarded as an advanced level of reading competency ¹³

So, countries can have very similar average achievement but very different distributions of achievement. An example would be Ireland and Germany. Similar average scores, but the dispersion of student scores is way wider in Germany than in Ireland, with the implication that the German education system, because it's quite segregated when you come into lower secondary level, is actually segregating the students out more so that the equity of the system in Germany on that measure is poor compared to Ireland. So, you can see there's a layer and complexity and subtlety to the results once we move beyond the average score.

So, moving beyond the average score, PISA attempts to group scores into proficiency levels. There are seven levels associated with reading and six associated with both mathematics and science. In 2009, for the first time, the proficiency levels for the reading scale were expanded to include levels 1a and 1b, which attempt to capture the types of knowledge and skills that students with a very low achievement are able to demonstrate.

The OECD uses below level 2 as a benchmark for students who have a below level of literacy for effective participation in future education and society. And similarly, level 5 and above is considered by the OECD to be an advanced level of reading.

PISA-ALARM!



Conference Report: Developing a Culture of Leadership



TEXT BY GREG DEMPSTER

On 1 September around 130 delegates gathered in the Glasgow Marriot Hotel for a packed day exploring key aspects in developing an effective leadership culture in schools. Delegates were invited to select two workshops from the following: Excellent Leadership Practice around Scotland; Learning and changes resulting from progression through a leadership programme; actively developing and sustaining a culture of leadership; successful approaches to building pro-active teams; An effective model of Distributive Leadership; and Mental Toughness. In addition to these, extremely well received, workshops the conference heard from four keynote speakers.

Graeme Logan, Education Scotland

“Leadership in the Donaldson Review and Developing a Culture of Leadership”



Graeme explained that he had been a member of the team led by Graham Donaldson, former Senior Chief Inspector with HMIE, set up as the Review of Teacher Education in Scotland. While the review considered initial teacher education it also addressed wider issues of professional development and leadership development.

The report ‘Teaching Scotland’s Future’ was published in January 2011. It included 50 recommendations. The Scottish government has accepted all these recommendations in whole or in part. The Government has published a formal response to the review called ‘Continuing to Build Excellence in Teaching.’ Graeme briefly summarised the main focus of recommendations and informed the conference about the National Partnership Group which has been set up by Government to push forward implementation of the recommendations.

Graeme highlighted and discussed three key points from the report: *“School education can realise the high aspirations Scotland has for its young people through supporting and strengthening, firstly, the quality of teaching, and secondly, the quality of leadership.”*

“Teaching should be recognised as both complex and challenging, requiring the highest standards of professional competence and commitment.”

“Leadership is based on fundamental values and habits of mind which must be acquired and fostered from entry into the teaching profession.”

Crucial in all of this was ensuring that the right CPD was undertaken and that its impact was reviewed. For all CPD we should be mapping it against our Professional Standards, identifying which aspects of the professional standards we are seeking to improve. In researching the review the team found that only 29% of teachers frequently tried to monitor impact of their CPD and only 22% said their schools did this frequently. Around 50% of teachers and schools infrequently or never measured the impact of CPD.

Graeme suggested three questions which could be used to lead professional dialogue back in schools:

- What does CfE mean for you in your establishment?
- What have been the major changes/improvements so far?
- What is your plan to continue with implementation?

The report also had a strong focus on leadership development and rehearsed much of the learning set out in established research in this area. Crucial in this is the contention that the quality of classroom teachers and of school leadership determine the quality of learning in a school. The report recommended that a clear leadership pathway should be developed in Scottish Education with the introduction of leadership concepts early in a teacher’s career. A greater range of CPD opportunities for experienced headteachers was called for alongside the establishment of a scheme of National Leaders of Education. The report also recommended the establishment of a ‘national one stop shop’ for leadership in the form of a virtual college of school leadership.

Graeme identified five challenges to effective leadership:

- *Complacency v's professionalism*: Why bother as much of what we are doing is okay?
- *Data drought*: We can't rely on system wide data international comparisons. We need a strong use of data in schools to improve learning.
- *Process primacy*: How we do things can't become why we do things.
- *Dubious and distracting dichotomies*: Issues that appear to be either/or rarely are.
- *Seductive snake oil*: Leaders need the strength to question the flavour of the month.

Graeme concluded with a quote from Graham Donaldson who had said that he wanted school leaders to be "*enthusiastic sceptics in pursuit of excellence.*"

Heather Dunk, Principal of Kilmarnock College

"What Makes for an Effective Culture of Leadership"



Heather explained the journey she had been on so far as the leader of Kilmarnock College. When she took up her post she found a staff who were individually excellent but had been 'hit over the head so many times by so many people' that morale was at rock bottom. On top of that, on the first day in post she found that the college literally had no money and also took a call from the First Minister asking what she was going to do about the fact the college wasn't giving out bursaries.

The inspectorate was conducting monitoring visits every month.

This was a constant reminder to staff that their competence was being challenged. They were extremely fragile as a result of this and their experience in recent years. Heather negotiated with HMIE that they would leave the establishment and return for a full review a year later.

She found that the culture in the college was a peculiar sort of compliance culture – ‘tell me what you want me to do’ layered with ‘I’ll do it when I want’. Changing this culture had been extremely difficult and time consuming. Heather set about it by articulating a clear vision for the college (that it would become a five star college in five years). She also made sure she was a very visible leader – making herself available to staff but also getting her sleeves rolled up and taking part in activities such as redecorating the drab interior of the buildings.

Heather essentially made a contract with her staff – setting out very clearly what they could expect from her and also what her expectations of them were.

She challenged the low staff morale by regularly celebrating successes – with gusto!

Heather noted that resilience had been crucial for her and her staff in dealing with setbacks and challenge from within and outside the college.

When the inspectorate returned they made four out of four confidence statements about the college with no qualifications. In the college inspection model this was as good as it gets!

Heather was a firm believer in the value of CPD. Despite a massive cut to her budget she had managed to protect CPD – with 76% of the budget being staffing costs it was clear that staff really are the organisations biggest asset and investing in them was essential.

Heather complimented the conference delegates for taking time out for their own CPD by attending the conference as it was crucial that leaders made time for their own professional development.

Heather showed pictures of the Scottish Cabinet meeting in Kilmarnock College and of them eating in the college restaurant and finished with the message that it was important to influence those who would make decisions about your establishment.

Heather listed seven points for effective leaders:

- Believe in what you are doing
- Build a great team
- Place the learner at the heart of all decision making
- Be open and honest
- Be resilient
- Have fun
- Be yourself

Tony Finn, GTCS

“What does it look like when a school creates a culture of leadership?”



Tony started by noting that we were moving into challenging times with the recent launch of the McCormac report – within it were opportunities and threats and quality leadership in schools would be crucial for it to work effectively. He also noted that as a system we needed to be very careful in the selection of our leaders as

different leaders have different styles and different schools have different needs, but if we spend our time viewing our role in relation to others then we are missing the point – we need to work collegiately.

Tony reflected on different definitions of leadership and offered a few quotes on leadership from pupils/students taken from a 2007 HMle Leadership report:

“Without leadership, there is no direction; with poor leadership there is the wrong direction.”

“A good leader is someone who has confidence, good interpersonal skills and is good at delegating.”

“A good leader can cope in tricky situations, can take control, can inspire, is wise and....thinks before they act.”

He suggested that, amongst a raft of other skills and attributes, humility was perhaps the most essential quality for good school leaders. This was defined by Pfeffer and Sutton in 2006 as “the ability to act with knowledge, while doubting what you know”.

In schools with positive culture, leaders:

- have high expectations and share them in a supportive way
- engage with people, know their team.
- empower people- take measured risks
- enable people and teams
- show enthusiasm and energy
- AND extend this ethos across the school

Successful school leaders:

- offer (and accept) leadership roles
- encourage leadership at every level, not just in the HTs office
- where possible, nurture, support and train those with leadership potential
- can handle disagreement and disaffection
- take pride in leading

Impact: In a school with a culture of leadership, colleagues generally:

- feel valued and respected.
- trust and are trusted.
- work together.
- accept and share responsibility.
- feel able to take measured risks.
- are flexible in respect of duties and responsibilities.
- inspire and are inspired.

In a culture of leadership, everyone:

- can aspire to be a leader
- can (and should) seek opportunities to update skills and knowledge
- Is encouraged to show initiative and to take a pride in good work
- contributes ideas and is flexible in their approach to their work
- has a right and a responsibility to be involved in school planning
- has a right to make honest mistakes...and a responsibility to learn from them
- should be offered chances to opt in...(and back in)

Tony finished with three thoughts. It is important to take an interest in your staff as broken relationships can take years to rebuild – the maintenance is worth it. You have the right to make honest mistakes and the duty to learn from them. Irrespective of circumstances school leaders must demonstrate enthusiasm and energy otherwise your worst fears will be a self-fulfilling prophecy – leadership inspires collegiality and collegiality inspires leadership.

Mike Carroll, University of Glasgow

“Being a Teacher Leader”



Mike started by reflecting that he had accepted the invitation to speak at the event because he was keen to support the delegates who were the real experts in teacher leadership and because they are the ones who will make a real difference for future leaders by creating the conditions to allow a culture of leadership to flourish.

Mike noted that there was not a proper leadership development continuum in Scotland. There was nothing in place which addressed or developed middle leadership – we have teachers and then aspiring headteachers, nothing in between.

As the concept of a good leader is different depending upon who you ask and the context of the leadership role differs too it is difficult to get agreed definitions. Also, every leadership journey is different – no two trajectories are the same. Emerging leaders need to find their own way through that journey and can learn a lot from reading, discussion and so on but will only through doing will they ‘understand’. The role for leaders and the system is to support emerging leaders through that and to give them opportunities to lead.

Mike noted that there have been different waves in the discourse about teacher leadership. The thought of leadership as a Teacher Manager focussed on the effectiveness and efficiency of the system. The second was as a Specialist where the focus was on team leadership and curriculum/staff development. The current wave is as an ‘Agent of Reculturation’ where the leaders is focussed on developing collegial working to bring about improvements in teaching and learning.

All presentations from this conference are available online:

Keynote Presentations

<http://www.slideshare.net/AHDScotland/keynote1-graeme-logan>

<http://www.slideshare.net/AHDScotland/keynote2heather-dunk>

<http://www.slideshare.net/AHDScotland/keynote3tony-finn>

<http://www.slideshare.net/AHDScotland/keynote4mike-carroll>

Workshops

<http://www.slideshare.net/AHDScotland/workshop1-graeme-logan>

<http://www.slideshare.net/AHDScotland/workshop2jackie-funnell>

<http://www.slideshare.net/AHDScotland/workshop2jackie-funnellleadership-activities-14th-september>

<http://www.slideshare.net/AHDScotland/workshop5wallace-highdistributed-leadership1>

<http://www.slideshare.net/AHDScotland/workshop6mental-toughness>



European School
Heads Association

It would not have been possible to run this conference without the invaluable support of the European School Heads Association (ESHA). For more about ESHA visit **www.esha.org** Please subscribe to the free ESHA magazine which is published

electronically ten times a year where you will be able to hear about educational thinking and challenges faced in schools around Europe.

AHDS is proud to be bringing the ESHA bi-annual conference to Scotland in October 2012. For more information or to book your space visit the dedicated conference website **www.esha2012scotland.com**

Evaluation of the school



MARIA GAYDAROVA

SCHOOL "RAINA KNJAGINJA" – PLOVDIV – BULGARIA

The objective of the article is to present an example of evaluation of the school. The necessity of evaluating the school has been described in the context of its stable development, achieving a qualitative educational process.

An example system of indicators has been shown, considering the main activities axes. Its application has been illustrated while developing an evolution strategy according the specifics of the school. An experimental method by evaluation the school processes has been described for solving specific school problems. A message is sent for the role of evaluation as means of quality management of the educational process.



Introduction

Each educational system has its specific problems, but what unites us is the mission to build qualitative and effective education. The main targets in education, which the European strategy “Europe 2020” draws to our attention, are: economics, based on knowledge and innovations, the students, left school before graduating, to be less than 10% of the corresponding age group and at least 40% of the population to have university degrees. In this connection it is necessary to ask how can the education respond to the necessity of stable growth? The answers can be found in the following directions – first by precise statistics, basic factor for effective management of the educational process, second by focusing the school programs on creativity and innovations, and also by investments, which are always connected with the quality of the educational process, so that their return is guaranteed.

The problems in Bulgarian educational system are decreasing students’ results among the European countries in international

comparing researches of PISA, ICCS and TIMSS, low motivation, big number of absence, growing aggression. There is no rating system for schools, a system for their evaluation is missing either. The objective of this article is to present an example model for evaluation of the school, which can be used for forming of the educational politics. The aim of the evaluation of the school is not to give marks, but to interpret the collected data, so that the specific problems are defined. It has to arise questions, not ratings. It is important to respect autonomy, the ethic norms and individual differences.

Theoretical issues: quantitative or qualitative way to evaluate the school.

All educational approach falls into two very broad traditions, quantitative and qualitative. We use both ways to evaluate the school.

Quantitative approach

Quantitative approach collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another. A hypothesis is usually stated, numerical data collected and analyzed and a conclusion is then drawn of these results. Questionnaires, surveys and experiments conducted under controlled conditions are some of the ways of collecting data.

In order to evaluate school objectively, we have built a system of indicators of the sphere available staff and material-technical resources, functioning and effectiveness. By their statistic processing we diagnosed objectively the specifics of the school and the fields of activities for improving the quality of education.

Qualitative approach

Qualitative approach is the other major perspective to evaluate the school. Qualitative researchers are more concerned to understand individuals' perceptions. It is based much more on the evidence of

the spoken and written word, which is evaluated, interpreted and reflected upon to produce a greater and deeper understanding of social situations. Interviews, observations, critical conversations and written documents are the sources for data. Action research is the study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it.

The total process – review, diagnosis, planning, implementation, monitoring effects – provide the necessary link between self-evaluation and professional development. (Elliott, 2000)

The teachers reflect on their own practice and to contribute to the development of others by sharing their best practice and insights. It fits well with their support for the concept of lifelong learning in a more general context. It also gives the stamp of approval to what those involved in the process of change in school has been saying for years, that for improvement to take place it needs the active commitment of teachers to change not just work practices but their values. The emphasis on recognizing personal and professional values and making them more transparent is at the heart of this process of professional improvement. (Clarke, Chambers, 2002).

An experimental method for evaluating the school processes

School evaluation main activities

Data collection

We have collected data using indicators for monitoring, poll cards and conversations with students, parents and teachers. We have conducted poll researches about the need of teachers' qualification, the psych climate in the class and the relations teacher-parent-student. Together with the parents we have looked for answers to the questions – how, what way:

- to optimize the work and to improve the quality of the teaching process, so that the school develops properly
- to improve the psych climate and to respond to specific needs of the school
- to stimulate the application of innovations, exchange of information, experience and good practices
- to motivate the teachers to distinguish the need of own development, to work in a team and in a spirit of cooperation
- to attract associates and partners in the face of parents and institutions.

After the conducted discussions we have chosen the following priority indicators for monitoring: number of students, number of absences, marks, outdoor evaluation, manifestations, number of computers.

Analysis of the state of the school and forming of development strategy.

We have analysed the specific state of the school by using the collected data and formulated the following key accents in the development strategy:

- Establishing of skills and competences for systematic application of innovative and motivating pedagogical practices, using computers.
- Realizing concrete initiatives for stimulating and encouraging the development of the school with the help of the school's trustees and non-government organizations.
- Achieving stable results and their multiplication by sharing the experience and the good practices.

We had specific aims – reducing the absences, holding and prevention of aggression, literacy improvement and increase of motivation.



Old School Building in town of Koprivshtitsa, Bulgaria

Preparing a schedule of activities and accomplishment of the activities.

We prepared a schedule of our activities in the directions: continuous qualification of the teachers, sharing of good practices, work on programs and projects, developing a system of school competitions, cooperation with institutions and parents and improving the school media. We have done the planned activities as follows:

- *Conducted qualification courses*

The teachers participated in the courses: “Development and presentation of lessons with the help of computers”, “Interactive methods and technics for a group work”, “Civil education”, “How do prepare projects”, “Development of presentations for an interactive board”.

- *Sharing of good pedagogical practices*

We conduct monthly thematic working meetings. A data base of

more than 100 multimedia developments of lessons was established. More than 30% of the teachers participate with reports for innovative practices in conferences. Distributed by the Regional Inspectorate Plovdiv are more than 20 researches of teachers in primary schools with the help of IT.

- *Work on programs and projects, developing a system of school thematic contests, competitions.*

We work on more than 10 international, national and municipal programs and projects every year. We achieved mass participation of the students. We encourage talented children and ensure system support of children with difficulties. We developed a system of school trainings / Who am I", " What I like in you", "The language of the body", "Friendship"etc/ , competitions "Best student of the class", in literature, mathematics, English and conferences .

- *Cooperation with institutions and parents.*

We work together with the University of Plovdiv and the Musical Academy. We have an active and supportive school trustees body. We hold 2 parents meeting each year and a written report is sent home in June. Parents are supported gifted and talented pupils as well.

- *Improvement of the school media.*

Students, parents and teachers put common efforts to improve the school media, so that the students could feel and keep the school as their own house. Permanent places have been created, where the students present their attitude for important events with their own best achievements – essays, paintings, poems, photos, received diplomas. Internet access in each classroom is available. We are renewing of the computer hardware and transforming the library into a library-information center.

- *Monitoring of the chosen indicators values and analysis of the results.*

To achieve good results, it is of importance the specifics of the school to be analyzed and taken into consideration. The rates of my school compare with other schools showing successful performance in the area of basic knowledge. The not excused absences are 0.7 for a student per year, the number of students has increased from 630 to 710 during the last three years, the number of computers has increased twice. Excellent results have been shown in competitions.

The students have created their own personal, positive attitude to the school, very active, mass and with pleasure participated in all activities. The application of the innovative methods and technics has lead to improvement the level of self-preparation, activation of the interest both of students and teachers. A real partnership with the parents is created. The psych climate has been improved, the aggressive attitude has been reduced.

Conclusion

It is necessary to evaluate the school, because thus the following is achieved:

- clear and objective landmark for the necessary direction of development what exactly we want to achieve in our every day work and what activities it is necessary to plan;
- effective management of the educational process is conducted;
- grounded and aimed educational politics is formulated, conformed both with the concrete specific conditions and the European directions for development;
- results and stable development are achieved.

I hope also as a result we could share common goals, good practices, experience, tolerance, acceptance of diversity and education based on fundamental culture norms. We need to build a relationship with students based on trust. It is our responsibility to give

them the knowledge of making the world a better place, to have the necessary skills to solve the problems and to rule the development, to be helpful and peaceful, sporting and creative. The implementation of the reflective practice during the evaluation the school is a good way to reach these aims, to improve the effectiveness and to form the necessary social and communicative students' skills.

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About Maria Gaydarova



My name is Maria Gaydarova. I have been a Head teacher in “Raina Kniaginia” School, Plovdiv, Bulgaria for 13 years now. I graduated the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” with mathematic procure-

ment, pedagogy, organisation and management. I have two specialisations in France on methods of qualification for school Head teachers and education evaluation system. In 2011 I received Post Graduate Certificate in Education from the University of Worcester, UK. Also I am a Vice-chairperson of the Education System Employers Union – Plovdiv, founder and editor of the regional magazine “The School”, co-author of 5th and 6th grade school books, of the book “Assessing the educational content”, published by the French Institute.

My colleagues and I work actively on a number of international and national projects and programs with the Open Society Institute, Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe. I participate with presentations in national and municipal conferences, organize and conduct qualification seminars with Head teachers, I am co-author on the education development strategy for Plovdiv. I work for the introduction of innovative methods and team organization, for quality-based educational process.

I have awarded with the mark of honor of the town of Plovdiv in 2007 for a considerable achievement in the development of education by the Mayor of Plovdiv and with honorable distinction “Neofit Rilski” in 2008 for long-lasting professional activity by the Minister of Education.

Leading ahead in 2011

COMENIUS NETWORK CONFERENCE IN LEON, SPAIN
REPORT BY JAUME PRAT

It took place in León (Spain) on 20th, 21st and 22nd October 2011. The keynote speakers were Bob van den Ven (Netherlands), Cynthia Johnson (UK), Tom Bennett (UK), Sigfried Kiefer (Austria), Leif Moos (Denmark), and Daniel Mujis (UK).

Bob van den Ven spoke on “How to cope with stress and burnout”. He pointed out that stress is not necessarily bad. It all depends on how you take it. Stress of creative successful work is beneficial, while that of failure, humiliation or infection is detrimental. He defined stress as a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed his/her strength. Our reaction on stress is either get away or fight, depending on whether we see it as a challenge or a threat.

Bob van den Ven: “How to cope with stress and burnout”

There are four kinds of stress symptoms:

- Physical: fatigue, headache, stiffness (neck, shoulders, heart palpitations, chest pains, sweating);
- Mental: decrease in concentration and memory, mind racing or going blank, confusion, loss of humour;
- Emotional: anxiety, nervousness, depression, anger, frustration, worry, impatience; and Behavioural: pacing, fidgeting, nervous habits (nail-biting, foot-tapping) increased eating, smoking and drinking.

Stress in education is featured by change, which is a central issue, by reduction of the budget, by school autonomy, by new media and technology, by dealing with uncertainty, and by balance between work and private life.

The managing competences for preventing and reducing stress in school are the management behavior of the school leader and the influence on staff well-being.

Finally, Bob van den Ven spoke on burnout, which can affect people highly committed to their work losing total interest. Burnout is featured by exhaustion and disillusionment.

Cynthia Johnson spoke on “Managing stress in the workplace”. She told about an experience set up to improve education in Hackney (London), a deprived area with over 100 languages and a lot of social housing and crime, low achievers and high achievers mixed at schools.

The impact was strong leadership and management, schools performing above the national average, absence levels reduced across all schools, and staff equipped to deal with change. Next steps are to focus on dealing with the issues that can lead to stressful situations, to improve quality of leadership and management to improve school performance, and to put in place a range of support for individuals.

Tom Bennett (UK) spoke on “Cyber bullying”. He pointed out that is an extremely new phenomena. In the UK is a huge problem which takes 50% of in-school police time. Cyber bullying is an offensive, harassing behavior which uses phone text, chat rooms, social networking, websites, and instant messaging. Dealing with cyber bullying means these four parties have to work together: school, teachers, parents, pupils.

Sigfried Kiefer (Austria) spoke on “European leaders’ training in education”. Participating countries and institutions were Latvian University (Latvia), HAN University (Netherlands), Umea University (Sweden), Akdeniz University (Turkey), University College in Upper Austria (coordinating institution). The training programme for school leaders consisted of 5 modules: Understanding Success, School and Community, The local school in a global society, Values and norms in school and society, Improving and developing schools.

Leif Moos (Denmark) and Daniel Mujis (UK) spoke on “A European framework of reference of education for school reference”.

The structure of the framework are five domains:

- Political and cultural expectations and their translation into internal meaning and direction.

Components of the domain are: Developing leadership and managing change, Developing strategic planning for schools, Translating external requirements into internal meaning, Negotiating and communicating meaning, visions and mission statements, Fostering ethical standards.

- *Understanding and empowering teachers and other staff.*

Components of the domain are: Improving teaching and student learning, Fostering teachers’ competencies in subject matters, didactics, methodologies, classroom management and ICT,

Building team work and distributing leadership, Ensuring performance management, assessment and evaluation, Developing efficient Human Resources Management, Creating a culture of professional learning.

- *Structuring and culturing schools.*

Components of the domain are: Developing school leadership and management, Creating an effective organizational and communication culture, Building appropriate organizational structures, Planning and managing human and material / financial resources, Ensuring transparent decision-making.

- *Working with partners and the external environment.*

Components of the domain are: Building and maintaining relationships with parents, the wider school community and national / local / school authorities, Cooperating with agencies and organizations / institutions outside the school at local, national or international level, Networking with other schools.

- *Personal development and growth.*

Components of the domain are: Developing and maintaining leadership competencies through continuous professional development, Building peer networks at local, national or international levels.

WikiSpaces: classroom sites and portals

TEXT BY FRED VERBOON

In 2001, a single person launched a fairly unknown web encyclopaedia. Today, its 17 million articles have been written by volunteers around the world, and almost all of its articles can be edited by anyone with access to the site. It has become the largest and most popular general reference work on the internet having 365 million readers. For some reason people like to contribute to Wikipedia.

The basic idea of Wikipedia is collaboration: people working together with a common objective. Collaboration is now within reach of every teacher and school head. **www.wikispaces.com** is free and extremely easy to use. You could say that Wikispaces is Word J on the internet. There are now millions of wikis on Wikispaces, varying from sites for the smallest classrooms to portals for the world's largest corporations and institutions.

Every teacher can now build her/his own class site or assignment portal on the internet. Editing the layout (the user Interface) and adding documents have never been easier. Wikispaces is built to work anywhere, anytime. All you need is a web browser and an Internet connection. Members can create sites without undue restrictions or rules. Students can edit pages without creating an account.

Wiki's can be revolutionary tools for building class sites. This may very well be your chance to embrace social media in the class room. How cool is that?

ESHA is using Wikispaces for its community work as well. A nice example of how your school or classroom site could look like is: **<http://eshacommunity.wikispaces.com>**. This Wiki is used to facilitate the community efforts of school leaders throughout Europe. Please feel free to comment on this article in the ICT@School section. Just like the way you rate the work of students!

The feature that you may want to use on **www.Wikispaces.com** is Projects. Whenever you have a particular assignment or activity, you can create a project for it, then define teams of members, each with its own unique pages, files, and permissions. That way, students in teams can do their group work completely independently from other teams.

Projects are available on all wikis that are categorized as Education. Projects have been built specifically for classroom work, so only available for schools.

Fred Verboon lives in Katwijk, The Netherlands, is married to Karen and father of Lisa and Vivianne. He is an independent consultant specialized in community building and turnaround management.



European School
Heads Association