

Initiatives and Changes in European School Organization

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BACKGROUND

This study was assigned with the purpose of identifying the main initiatives and changes that are taking place in the field of work organization, in European schools. More specifically, the study focuses on the presence of organizations that enable cooperation, as for example the team-based organization, where the team provides teachers with the ability to build up collective learning and sustainable development.

The questions that the study set out to answer are:

- What forms of cooperation exist in European schools?
- How common is teamwork among teachers?
- What other issues of teacher competence and development are there?
- What is currently in focus (if any) when it comes to research in this area?

An additional goal has been to identify the knowledge frontier in Europe in order to have a future exchange of knowledge.

TEAMWORK – THE SOLUTION IN SWEDEN

The Swedish Educational System has repeatedly undergone school reforms containing components of how to be organized. The idea that teachers should be organized in teams is one organizational concept that has gained strength through the 1900s. In Sweden, the organizing in teamwork is called ‘work teams’ and it is seen as an organizational solution to the growing need for cooperation in a decentralized school. This is a trend similar to what has long been in progress in industry and other parts of society, where large units have come to be replaced by smaller units. Schools are said to become more and more like organizations with goals and a stronger emphasis on measuring results. In any case, schools increasingly present themselves in organizational terms. (Löwstedt, 2002).

Among other ideas, perhaps not as highlighted, are the importance of leadership and evaluation. There are also networks, with the objective of implementing collaboration between schools. Nevertheless, when it comes to work organization in Swedish schools, the idea of work teams has been the most accentuated one. The break-through of the ‘team’ has followed upon a far-reaching decentralization of the school system the last decade. Development trends within the Swedish system have been to decentralize administration as much as possible. The municipalities are responsible for practically all education below university level. Along with providing the municipalities with overall responsibility for running the school, the task and role of the main authority within the school area was transformed from providing detailed rules into a role focusing on follow-up and evaluation of activities. The state body, the National Agency for Education, which is the largest central agency in the school area, currently performs these tasks.

The Swedish Educational System has a long tradition of interest in organizational issues. As early as in 1980, the concept of team was stated in the Compulsory School Curriculum. As of today, the term is removed from the Curriculum (LPO 94) and replaced by the term ‘collaboration’. The way, in which this collaboration is to be formalized and conducted, is a matter of the individual school. Despite this, the idea of work teams seems to be more popular than ever

and the term is present in almost every Swedish school. There is, however, substantial diversity among the constitution of the teams, between municipalities and between individual schools. For example, teams can be constructed based on different criteria, such as subject areas, the age of pupils etc. The difference between an individually based and team-based work organization is basically that, in the latter case, the school does not plan which pupils a teacher should teach at a certain time and place. Instead, planning involves a large group of pupils for which a group of teachers (a work team) is responsible. Driven to an extreme, this means that the teaching involved is a shared task for the group; that it is the group's responsibility to distribute, co-ordinate and develop the work so that the objectives can be achieved.

One of the arguments for working in teams is that they enable rejection of traditional working patterns, where teachers work alone, in favor of cooperation. In a team, teachers have the potential to engage in dialogue, knowledge sharing and group reflection. By the help of a team, teachers can also reduce their insecurity and isolation. Moreover, the team can provide a network of supportive teachers, make the workload easier and hence increase the job satisfaction and motivation of teachers.

A difficulty with the team-organization seems to be the compliance with its objective. It has been stated that the main task for the team has become matters of administrative tasks and not cooperation as such. This is verified by studies showing that only 11% of teachers in Swedish upper-secondary schools say that the team is dominated by the coordination of the teaching itself. Further disadvantages with the team-based organization, is that it is time-consuming and that nobody takes on responsibility since everybody is accountable. Representatives from teacher unions also claim that there is team responsibility at the expense of teachers' professionalism ("Skolvärlden" No. 18 2001, "Lärarnas tidning", No. 18 2001).

There is a quite extensive research on the subject of teamwork. The focus is on whether the team is completing its mission in developing teachers' competence, or if it is just a new forum for teachers to plan their scheduling and solving pupil problems. Consequently, questions are raised on how to create and develop a functioning work team. In brief, the concept of work team or teamwork is a key word in the Swedish Educational System and more or less an unwritten rule of how to organize the work organization. It is regarded as a good way of accomplishing collaboration, and thus good quality operations.

WORK ORGANIZATION

The work organization of a school can be described as "the way in which work is distributed, specialized and integrated among schools' personnel and how this leads to learning and change. The work organization adopted can be seen as the result of the interaction between the way the professionals involved exercise their profession and the management objectives of the school administration" (Löwstedt, 2002, p. 2).

In some European countries, there is an apparent trend towards deregulation and increased autonomy for individual schools. Along with these changes follows a less standardized situation in which schools start to function in the same way as other organizations to a greater extent. Stronger leadership, clearer hierarchy and highly developed forms of cooperation, characterize those schools that have come to resemble organizations. One might argue that new ways of organizing would comply with new demands in times of changes, which in turn would lead to greater efficiency in schools.

At the time being, there is a shortage of teachers in many European countries. One way to handle this situation would be to organize schools in different ways. The burdensome work of teachers could be facilitated through collaboration, which would bring about a regain in status for the teaching profession.

In spite of the fact that the work organization in schools might benefit from a change towards more interaction, collaboration and knowledge sharing, there seem to be obstacles that hold back this kind of development. For the most part, these obstacles pertain to institutionalized notions on how to behave in schools. The traditional values, that circumscribe the Educational System, entail a work organization that more or less stays the same, with the lack of all sorts of interactive systems. There are also reservations towards putting too much emphasis on teams, in the sense that it leads to a neglect of the entire organization.

Within Europe, one can expect large dissimilarities in the work organizations due to political, economic and historical differences between the countries. The primary objective with this study was to investigate the ideas and changes taking place in the field of work organization. However, since ideas of work organization seldom are particularly central to the discussion of activities in schools, the study has been narrowed down to locate the forms of collaboration that can be found in European schools. Due to lack of formalized collaborative work, other issues, regarding teacher competence and school development which come close to matter in focus, have also been included in the study.

THE STUDY

This study aims at describing the work organizations in schools, in some European countries. The descriptions are based on information gathered from interviews. The choice of using interviews, as a primary source of information, is connected to the fact that the purpose is broad and that the concepts applied might be abstract or not even in use in some countries. In addition, information has been gathered through exchange of emails. Written material, supplied by respondents or found elsewhere, has been used to complete the primary data. The study does by no means produce a complete picture of the situation in each country, but rather just gives a reproduced glimpse of what is going on in the field of work organization in schools as described in the interviews and emails.

CONTACTS

The first contacts were established in Sweden through the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Agency for Education, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, research institutions and teacher unions, which have led to further contacts through recommendations. One aspect of this type of method is that one thing leads to another in the sense that the countries, organizations and scholars that are included in the paper depend on previous contacts. I have also tried to discover interesting scholars and organizations by searching on the Web. However, the most efficient way of establishing contacts has proven to be by the help of other contacts. Especially when contacting people abroad, a reference to someone else has been essential in order to get a response.

The selection of countries presented in this paper was not settled in advance. At an early stage of the project, emails were sent to all the representatives of the European Network of Education (Eurydice Network). Contacts were then entrenched with those responding.

COMPLICATIONS

The process of finding ‘the right people’ has been a lengthy one, where I have found myself walking around in circles or reaching dead-ends. Sometimes, however, one finally stumbles upon people willing to share ideas. Furthermore, I have had problems in formulating the questions. This probably derives from the sweeping character of the purpose. People want questions that are more precise. A broad purpose however, is crucial if one does not beforehand know what to expect. With an open approach, one can go deeper on what seems to be particular in each country as the study goes. However, the concept of teamwork has been specifically investigated and therefore more central to this study than other forms of work organizations.

Other complications concerning the information gathering are related to differences in language and lack of practice. There are different ways of talking about the same issue -conceptual differences, which can perplex a study of this kind. In some countries, the issue of work organization in schools is not particularly present in practice, theory or in research, which naturally hinder any kind of discussion on the matter. Most research in the school area is focused on pedagogical issues and children’s learning, without any connection to work organizational issues.

REVIEW OF THE COUNTRIES

The countries that I have gathered enough information about regarding the matter in focus are presented below. The information concerning different countries is not very systematic and varies in character due to the complications described above. A list of the main sources of information, on each country respectively, is to be found at the end of this paper.

NORWAY

The Norwegian Educational System

The responsibility of the Norwegian Educational System is divided between the municipalities, the counties and the State (the Ministry of Education and Research). In Norway, the State has the overall responsibility in implementing educational standards. Compulsory education is founded on the principle of a unified school system that provides equal and adapted education for all on the basis of a single national curriculum. The Norwegian Board of Education is the state body that deals with curricula, educational support and research, information and communication technologies and examinations. In each of the 18 counties, a branch of the National Education Office represents the central government at the regional level. In cooperation with municipal and county authorities, the National Education Office ensures that appropriate schooling is provided for young people in compliance with all regulations concerning the school, and also ensures the provision of adequate adult education facilities. In recent years, considerable responsibility and decision-making authority has been delegated from the central government to municipalities and county authorities. Individual municipalities are responsible for running primary and lower secondary schools. Within the framework of statutes and na-

tional curricula, municipalities, schools and teachers are able to decide what learning materials to use and what teaching methods to adopt. Each school has a head teacher as well as various boards and committees. Even if standards and the general framework of teaching are determined centrally by the Ministry, the Government's aim is to change the system of administration from one entailing detailed regulation to one of management by stated objectives for the different public sectors. (Eurybase).

Collaborative Work

The Ministry has engaged the Work Research Institute (among others) to evaluate the Norwegian National Reform in Upper Secondary Education (R 94). The evaluation (EVA 94) shows that, in spite of the state's intention, the majority of teachers do not find conditions favorable to develop new ways of teaching, cooperation and learning. Still, it is stated in the EVA 94, that teamwork is an organizational principle that to a greater extent could be applied in schools since it provides a way of developing and extending competencies, which is said to be necessary in today's society (EVA 94, p. 68).

As of today, collaboration has slightly increased along with the ongoing decentralization of the Educational System. Altogether, the Upper Secondary School is still struggling with the implementation of the work organizational ideas from R 94. In Compulsory school, however, work organizations that enable cooperation are common to a greater extent than in upper secondary schools. In Norway, the attempts to implement different organizational changes are both centrally and locally (municipally) driven and in compulsory school the latter is more common. Some of the development work is has even been outsourced to the consulting business, namely PriceWaterhouseCoopers. Reforms characterized by top-down process when implementing them, has been a matter of criticism from the WRI.

Teamwork

The idea of teamwork is common in compulsory schools and has been so for a long time. With the new reform, the National Curricula (L97), the concept has come to spread even more as 'team education' was explicitly stated as a suitable way for teachers to cooperate.

Other Issues of Teacher Competence and Development

Flexible Organizations

Even if teamwork as such is a popular organizational arrangement, teaching teams are not regarded as the sole solution for collaboration. Ideas are put forward, that the work organization has to be adapted to the objectives in each situation. In Norway, there is a tendency towards a growing understanding of other types of organizational solutions and more flexible ways of working.

Self-Evaluation

The Ministry has integrated the development of a national evaluation program with the task of reforming compulsory education. The development of this program is an instrument both for raising the quality of the education provided and for fostering the principles of the comprehensive school. In Norwegian compulsory school, teachers have five planning days during the school year that are often used in order to carry out local evaluation and development programs. There is a requirement for all schools to evaluate how far the organization and implementation of work at the school are in line with the objectives of the curriculum. The Municipi-

pality is responsible for ensuring that the evaluation is carried out. School-based assessment is seen as an important part of school development. It should be a support for the development of the school, and add to the personnel's understanding of the relations between general conditions, processes and results. School-based assessment is said to be an important starting-point for local development work. (National Reports on Evaluation of Schools).

Research

Regarding research, the matter of work organization in schools is not very central in Norway, but still touched upon. The Work Research Institute (WRI) has always performed research tied to the organization of work. Action research, which is research by means of practical interventions, is an important component of the institute's activities. In action research, empirical knowledge, theories, methods and new goals are development through cooperation in processes of organizational changes. Much of their work is initiated by some state body, as for example The Norwegian Board of Education, which hence formulates the guidelines. Jon Frode Blichfeldt is the leader of a theme group called Work and Learning. The group is studying the Educational System, where the aim is to develop methods and theories related to teacher competence and development. Moreover, Associate Professor Halvor Bjørnsrud at Vestfold University College, Department for Teacher Training, is working with the role of action research in the development of teachers understanding of the scope in the curriculum. Even if teamwork is common in practice, it is rare in research. However, Professor Tom Tiller at the Program for Learning and Practical Pedagogy (PLP) at the University of Tromsø is involved with research projects connected to the issue of teamwork.

Summary

In Norway, the Educational System is marked by reforms initiated during the 1990s. Alongside the Governments intention to decentralize the administration of the school system, a need of increasing cooperation between teachers has emerged. State bodies as well as local authorities have tried to introduce an organization that supports this. In the latest reform (L97) the concept 'teaching team' was explicitly stated. At the time being, teamwork among teachers is common in Compulsory school. In addition to the expansion of teamwork, there is a growing awareness for the need of flexible organizations within schools. From a national level, the idea of self-evaluation is regarded as crucial for local school development and as a consequence, five planning days a year are allocated for this. When it comes to research, there is not a strong emphasis on issue of teamwork. However, the Work Research Institute's research is closely connected to organizational matters.

FINLAND

The Finnish Educational System

In Finland, the State's strict steering and control previously characterized the educational administration. Since the 1980's, school legislation has been reformed, which has brought about a continuous increase in the decision-making powers of local authorities and educational institutions. As a consequence, steering and control of the local authorities' educational administration has decreased dramatically. The local authorities' cultural and educational administration is no longer pushed by field-specific legislation to any major extent. (Eurybase). In 1994, the making of the local curriculum became a task of each school. Still, the National Board of Education issues guidelines on how to perform the practical work of teaching. These

guidelines are the foundation of the curriculum. The Municipality's role is important when it comes to drafting the curriculum, as it is responsible for the schools having a curriculum to follow. Since the national guidelines have become more relaxed, it is more important that schools are given the best possible means to specify the objectives of their own work. (Framework Curriculum for the Comprehensive School 1994). The new flexible school system in Finland means that schools are seen more strongly and individually connected to the surrounding community. This trend also means that administrative decision making is nowadays strongly locally oriented (Huusko, 2000).

Collaborative Work

Following upon the decentralization, there has been an increasing need for cooperation and collaboration in schools and between schools and their surroundings. The issue of collaboration is quite complicated because of strong individual orientation in the teaching culture. On the other hand there are a lot of efforts to increase collaboration in Finnish schools. Among other things, the local curriculum making has ever more called for collaboration among teachers and other staff in Finnish schools. To plan curriculum in collaboration with the others, a teacher needs to acquire such knowledge outside the school environment that cannot be found in the textbooks (Kärkkäinen, 1999).

In order to cope with future challenges for general education, a project was launched under the administration of the National Board of Education: "Anticipatory project to investigate teachers' initial and continuing training needs". The final report is based on extensive research and proposes the following areas to be developed:

- Community thinking
- Leadership
- Facing differences and changes
- Co-operating skills. More cooperation is needed between teachers, between schools and most important of all between schools and the world outside.
- Opening and changing learning environments
- Awareness of society

Furthermore, the report suggests that there has to be a stronger link between initial training and continuing training and continuing teacher training must take into account the development of information and communication technology. Also, the attraction of the teaching profession must be increased. (Lukkainen, 2000).

Teamwork

The concept of teamwork does exist, even if the term as such is not very common in Finnish schools. Even in Swedish language schools people do not use the term 'teamwork' or work teams, but rather talk about 'cooperation among teachers'.

There is nothing explicitly said about teamwork in the guidelines from the national authorities. Rather, it seems to be the responsibility of the local authorities to bring on structures that enhance this type of cooperation. Nevertheless, there is a pressure towards teamwork in the Finnish school system. According to Dr. Arto Willman, there are a lot of teams in the Finnish schools, but the quality of collaboration in these teams is quite technical and learning is also more single-loop oriented. In many cases, teachers favor to separate their actual work from

their duties at the organizational level. As a consequence, the team is more or less an instrument for teachers to plan administrative tasks. Willman explains what hinders the development of the team:

”In Finland, like in many other countries, teachers have a strong professional autonomy so it is not an easy job to create collective culture which support teachers' efforts to team work.”

Huusko (1998) come close to this view by saying that cooperation in Finnish schools are still not self-evident even at a single school level. Rather, the teacher community protects itself from conflicts, which in practice is shown as an absence of dialogue.

According to Kärkkäinen (1999) the founding of teacher teams in elementary schools has only recently taken place, and it is still to be seen what this kind of new organization of collaboration will consist of.

Other Issues of Teacher Competence and Development

Self-Evaluation

It is regarded as crucial for the school to evaluate its activities systematically and continuously. It is the role of the Municipality to create the framework of this evaluative work. This self-evaluation process can include both teachers and students and its main objective is to “find the ideal distribution of tasks among the members of the faculty and staff which ensures the best possible use of professional skills and expertise of the faculty and staff members”. Moreover, the evaluation of teachers’ performance is seen as a basis for developing teaching. (Framework Curriculum for the Comprehensive School 1994).

Computer Knowledge Forum

Teachers also develop their knowledge by searching for information on the Internet and other kinds of information technology. Still, in compulsory school, the network building of this kind has just begun. The National Board of Education co-operates with universities in projects that aim at developing the work organization, by the help of computer networking. The ESNI-project contained collaborative learning for teachers in the ESNI environmental. The project included the creation of Knowledge Forum Group Work Software. Through these computer networks, interaction with other teachers and researchers was amplified.

Research

In Finland, research in this area is not very developed, at least not empirical research. However, there are some researchers that lately have directed their interest towards the matter of collaboration and teamwork.

Dr. Arto Willman at the University of Oulu has been involved with some research projects related to the question of teachers’ teamwork and collaboration. In his doctoral dissertation (2001), Willman discusses the interpretative repertoires used by teachers when describing collaborative teamwork. Willman approaches teacher teamwork from three dimensions, namely from the viewpoint of current changes in educational policy, the working culture of teachers, and from the viewpoint of productive teacher collaboration. Teacher teamwork is defined as a process throughout which teachers work together as a team in order to plan, carry out and reflect on their classroom practice.

Another researcher who has an interest in this area is Matti Kuittinen, an organizational psychologist at the University of Joensuu Finland (Department of Psychology). Kuittinen is interested in the lack of collaboration between schoolteachers and he has lectured on hidden psychological obstacles of collaboration (envy, competition etc.) and the teachers have found his approach to be very true in their everyday school life.

Finally, there is Jyrki Huusko who is working as a docent at the University of Joensuu, Faculty of Education. His main research area is 'School Improvement'. He also works as a principal in Karsikko Junior School. Huusko has produced some articles on shared curriculum-making, cooperation in teacher organization etc. According to Huusko, it's all about school culture, which is something that he has developed in his theories.

Summary

In Finland, the Educational system has been adjusted to the strong social changes that are characteristic of today. There has been a reduction of centralized administration, in which the decision-making powers have been delegated to schools. As a result of this decentralization, schools have increasingly moved towards a work organization that enables cooperation and collaboration with their surroundings. The issue of teamwork has only recently come to be introduced in schools and hence, the concept is not yet spread to all school units. When teamwork does exist, it is most of the time a forum for teachers to handle administrative tasks. Another way to develop the work organization of schools is networking by the help of new computer technology. When it comes to research, organizational matters are not very focused. However, there are some scholars that are concentrating on matters of teachers' teamwork and cooperation.

DENMARK

The Danish Educational System

In Denmark, the Ministry of Education issues the principal conventions and orders for compulsory school. It thus lays down regulations pertaining to the aims of the teaching in each subject and topic, and it issues curriculum guidelines for the individual subjects as well as guidelines for the distribution of lessons. The supervision and administration of compulsory schools rest with the municipality. Together with the individual school, the municipal council decides on the implementation of the general aims and curriculum guidelines stated by the Ministry. The municipal council has the overall responsibility for the school system of the municipality. It can lay down the objectives and scope of the activities of the schools. It is responsible for the following matters: appropriations to the school system and the individual school, the appointment and dismissal of head teachers and teaching staff, the structure of the school system (including the number of schools, the size of each school in terms of form levels, special educational assistance etc.), the framework of the organization of the teaching (including the number of lessons, special educational assistance, and the setting up of classes), special educational assistance, referral of pupils to other schools, guidelines for enrollment as well as matters relating to school libraries. The municipal council approves the curricula proposed by the individual schools.

Collaborative Work

In Denmark, the school system is decentralized and therefore it is a matter of the local community to decide and construct the work organization in each school. This implies a variety of work organizational solutions. Lately, structures in schools have become more supportive to interaction and collaboration among teachers. Still, development of the work organization and collaboration is not yet generally spread in Danish schools.

Teamwork

A year ago the two big national partners, the Danish Union of Teachers and the National Municipalities, agreed to move the decentralization even further by making it possible to devolve a number of administrative tasks from school leadership to self-managing teams. It seems as if this idea is catching on very rapidly. This comment has been added to the Act of the Folkeskole 1993, stating that teachers should work in teams. As a result, the idea of team is very widespread in Danish schools. Most Danish 'Folkeskoler' (compulsory schools) have teams including most teachers. The level of commitment and responsibility differs however. And working in teams does not necessarily have to imply a great deal of cooperation.

Research

The work organization is not central to research in Denmark and therefore no researcher with the focus of collaboration or teamwork as such, is identified in this study. There is however some research perspective to the matter of teacher competence. In this area, there is Professor Lejf Moos, Program Director, at the Research Program on Professional Development and Leadership at the Danish University of Education. Professionalization is understood as developing teachers' competence, guiding learning environments/institutions and evaluating processes and institutions. The idea is that pedagogical professionalization is enhanced under the condition of collaboration between teaching and practice at the local work place. There are three main research perspectives: leadership, institutional development and professional development.

Summary

In Denmark, the decentralization of the Educational System has led to a larger responsibility for the municipalities. As a result, the work organization of the school is matter of the local community and varies from an area to another. Despite the far-reaching decentralization, there is an intention initiated from a national level towards collaboration, and to be more exact: teamwork. At the moment being, the idea of teaching team is catching on rapidly. Formally, the 'team' has recently taken over some of the responsibility from school leadership. In research, the idea of collaboration and teamwork does not seem to be central. However, teacher competence is a matter of interest at the Research Program on Professional Development and Leadership at the Danish University of Education.

GERMANY

The German Educational System

Since 1998, Germany is divided into 16 Länder (states). The responsibility for the educational system is determined by the federal structure of the state. Under the Basic Law the exercise of governmental powers and the fulfillment of governmental responsibility are serving upon the

individual states. The states therefore have the right to legislate, unless the Basic Law awards legislative powers to the Federation. Differences in administration and organization are big in the different states. The body responsible for the cooperation of the Federation and the states is the Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion of the Federation and the states, in which the Federal Government and the governments of all states are represented with the same number of votes. Within the Federal Government, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is primarily responsible for the Federation's areas of responsibility. In each state, this is a matter for the Ministers of Education. Whenever major decisions on structure and substance have to be taken, Federation and states, employers and employees reach such decisions in a joint effort. (Eurybase). Due to this administration, it is hardly possible to talk about a general view over the Educational System in Germany. However, the overall system is quite traditional, characterized by central steering. At the local school unit, the school principal is the working leader who is organizing time and space.

Collaborative Work

In some states, there is a greater discussion around issues connected to the work organization in schools and there is a current debate on whether to decentralize, enable school autonomy or not. These ideas come from different part of the country (Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg etc) and also from a Foundation called Bertelsmann. In the some parts however (Bayern) not much is happening in this field. Nevertheless, changes are in the air. There is a move towards an organizational way of thinking in schools and this is becoming popular even in the southern and more conservative states in Germany.

There is no explicit requirement for teacher to collaborate. However, according to Professor Hans-Günter Rolff, the Government is advising schools to work towards increasing collaboration. But since teachers' individual autonomy is regarded as highly important, there are no formal obligations of that kind. In primary schools, the staff can work together very intensively. Nevertheless, the type of collaboration that actually exists in German schools often comes from informal and unstructured meetings and more seldom from a work organizational solution. Successful schools are perfect in working together horizontally, but there are still problems regarding the vertical 'know-how-transfer'.

Teamwork

When it comes to teamwork, the situation is quite different between the states. In most states, teamwork does not seem to be particularly well known. According to Cornelia Stern, Program Director at the Bertelsmann Foundation, teachers usually work alone in their classrooms. But a lot of pedagogical questions have come up twinned with more autonomy of schools, which in turn has led to a change in the direction of teamwork. In some states, teamwork is existing in practice since it has become a part of the head masters program. Often, the existence of teamwork is the outcome of joint diagnosis where strength and weaknesses of schools are identified, whereupon the results are translated into mission plans. In the country as a whole, there are however regular teams divided by subject areas that come together in meetings. Yet, the frequency of these meetings is very low, as a result of which this constellation cannot be called teamwork. Nonetheless, teamwork is becoming increasingly known. The problem, however, is that teachers are reluctant and the question is whether it leads to collaboration or not.

Other Issues of Teacher Competence and Development

In-Service Training

In Germany, there is a current development of teachers' competence, in the sense that teacher training is to become integrated with the daily work at schools. The idea is to have teacher's in-service training as an ongoing process instead of in the shape of a course.

Network for Innovative Schools

The Network of Innovative Schools in Germany¹, developed by The Bertelsmann Foundation, aims at supporting innovative schools and school reform ideas by pursuing a bottom-up approach. The Network of Innovative Schools works in three key areas:

- Certifying innovative schools

By way of an application procedure, any school in Germany can become certified 'Innovative School', if they satisfy some criteria.

- Providing tools and experiences for the school development process

Through the Network, the Bertelsmann Foundation offers an infrastructure, which enables the spreading of good ideas and exemplary reform efforts concerning school development. In this way, an exchange of experiences is facilitated so that innovative schools learn from each other. In Germany, more than 450 schools, which are all striving for reform, are part of this Network. Successful approaches to reform are installed in the database of the network. Furthermore, there are small learning networks where the transfer of know-how among schools is tested.

- Supporting Learning Networks between schools

This involves a close cooperation of around five schools who exchange their development methods, related to a certain area. Among these areas of interests are the improvement of learning skills for lifelong learning, staff development and structures of communication and organization in school.

Comparative Quality Evaluation

Quality evaluation is yet another topic on the front-line in German schools. There are a lot of comparable studies in German schools, where schools are being evaluated against each other. Among others, the Bertelsmann Foundation has entered into international research about quality testing, where they look at the most important criteria in quality. In order to work on comparison and strengthen schools, they need different information on knowledge is generated and how learning is attained in different school systems. As a result of this international quality evaluation, they are now also training teachers in teamwork and project management. Their Canadian Prize-winning region, the Durham Board of Education, inspired this. They of-

¹ There is also an international network provided by the Foundation: the International Network of Innovative School Systems (INIS). Whereas the national network focuses on the transfer of know-how among schools, the international network pursues the transfer of know-how among successful school systems. In focus today, is the quality comparison of schools.

ferred good training as they had co-operative group learning in the center of the students training, in which teachers had to be trained first.

Research

On the subject of research, there is a wide range of topics that are currently in focus when it comes to school development. However, even if the organizational approach in schools is becoming popular there is not much research on it. Professor Hans-Günter Rolff at the University of Dortmund, manager for the Institute for School Development Research (IFS) has been working with organizational issues in schools for many years. The IFS explores the changing of learning topics and social conditions of learning as well as the school organizational matters in all school forms and grades. The IFS also gives continuous diagnoses about schools in the 'Year-book of School Development', in which results from interviews, as well as qualitative and quantitative data, about changes in schools, are being published. In the last few years research topics that have received special priorities are those aiming at more responsibility and self-organization in schools, further development and evaluation of schools and school administration and supervision. Furthermore, the IFS are consulting schools and training teachers. Among other things, they are advising schools to have more training and team-building. Rolff believes that teamwork and collaboration are among the main topics in Germany today. American researchers are a source of inspiration and they, in turn, are sustaining the importance of teamwork and ideas of learning community.

The division of State and Public Administration at the Bertelsmann Foundation strives for good school education and school management, as well as for a broader level of participation of citizens in decision-making processes. The Bertelsmann Foundation is currently dealing with international research, the innovative school system, and an evaluation of schools where they try to see which school system they would learn most from. The Foundation supports schools in their challenge to cope with major social changes to transform themselves into learning organizations. Moreover, the Foundation has a wish to end the isolation of schools, in that the individual school management is to be given more responsibility. For this reason, the Bertelsmann Foundation supports the development of regionally integrated educational structures and encourages a better co-ordination between the public educational sector, the local business community and schools. The Bertelsmann Foundation also award (Carl Bertelsmann Prize) schools or regions/countries that are successful. Cornelia Stern, Program Director State and Public Administration, is currently involved with the international network projects. They now have expert groups in different countries and they nominate school systems, either the whole country like Denmark or special areas like Cantons in Switzerland or states in Germany. Since it is a part of the nominating, organizational issues are dealt with as well.

Another researcher in this area is Dr. Gerhard Eikenbusch, Principal and Teacher Trainer At The North Rhine-Westphalian State Institute for School and Adult Education (LSW), in Soest. Eikenbusch is also the author of several books on school development and evaluation.

Summary

In Germany, the educational system is quite traditional. Nevertheless, it is hardly possible to get a general country overview, because of the differences between the states. In some states, issues of school development get more attention. Yet, in other parts, schools stay the way they are. As a whole, there is seldom any explicitly stated direction for teachers to cooperate. But

even if collaboration is not something that teachers are forced to engage in, it is still a growing issue. To sum up, teamwork is neither a common concept in German schools, nor is it a formal organization. However, teamwork as such does exist in some parts of Germany and the matter is getting growing attention. In general, there is more collaboration in primary school. Still, the type of collaboration that exists is more informal and spontaneous developed meetings rather than the result from some work organizational solution. Other actions that are currently in focus in Germany revolve around issues like: spreading successful solutions by means of networks, quality evaluation through comparative studies and in-service training of teachers. These issues all touch upon collaboration and work organizational ideas such as teamwork, but not to any larger extent. As to research, there is a wide range of topics being studied but not so many of them are connected to organizational matters in school. However, at the University of Dortmund, there is an Institute for School Development Research (IFS), which is currently involved with close-linked research. In addition they perform teacher training with regard to collaboration and teambuilding.

THE NETHERLANDS

The Dutch Educational System

In the mid-eighties, a policy of deregulation and increased autonomy of the Dutch school system was introduced (Karsten, Voncken & Voorthuis, 2000). A distinctive feature of the Dutch educational system of today is that it combines a centralized education policy with the decentralized administration and management of schools. The Central Government controls education by means of legislation and regulations. Control is exercised in this way over both publicly and privately run institutions. Responsibility for education is divided between the central government, the provincial and municipal government authorities and the competent authorities. The competent authorities are the bodies in charge of implementing legislation and regulations in Dutch schools. Each municipality serves as the competent authority for the publicly run schools in its area. The competent authorities for privately run schools are the boards of the associations or foundations that arrange them. Some areas of competence can be delegated to the principal and his team, but the final responsibility still rests with the competent authority itself. (Eurybase). Schools are mainly being financed by the State as well as by religious organizations. In The Netherlands, there is a freedom of education, meaning that it is free to set up schools in accordance with religious or ideological ideas. This has led to a wide variety of establishments, but private schools are still in majority since most of the students (70%) attend these schools. Regarding influences on school development, teacher unions are not playing an important role anymore. The conditions of labor are decentralized. On the other hand, there is much stimulation from the side of the government and there are agencies supporting schools – as many as 60 agencies for primary schools.

Dutch schools are said to have high autonomy, similar to the situation in Sweden. However, the national authorities are in charge of the curriculum. Consequently, the Dutch school can be referred to as “the Relative Autonomous School”. Associate Professor Sjoerd Karsten calls it “rhetoric from the government inspection”, which means that the school is still controlled and therefore not truly autonomous. For example, there are still central exams, governmental goals to fulfill and the inspection is also publishing performance indicators. Even if the official saying is that there is more freedom, by looking closer at the situation, one still assumes a pressure on schools.

Collaborative Work

In The Netherlands, there have been different ways to restructure educational organizations, in order to meet new challenges such as more autonomy and school improvement. There is a governmental wish for schools to become more like organizations and to develop their work organizations in accordance with that. This adds force to ideas of stronger collaboration among teachers at the local school unit.

Teamwork

Among teachers in the Netherlands, there is a tendency towards working in teams. This new ideas has followed upon the fact that schools and teachers have become more accountable, whereupon they try to develop own systems, from monitoring all the pupils in a linear development through the whole school, moving towards cooperation between teachers over ages. However, there is a gap between thinking and doing, which implies that many schools are still quite traditional.

Other Issues of Teacher Competence and Development

Learning Organizations

The concept of 'Learning Organizations' has in recent years become relevant in Dutch schools. With the increasing autonomy, school personnel need to make greater efforts to cooperate and support each other instead of being isolated teachers. The organizational learning is financed by the central Government. Hence, the Government praises changes in the direction of learning organizations, but schools are perhaps not given enough freedom in order to do so. (Karsten, Voncken & Voorthuis, 2000).

The concept of the new ideas of learning organizations have come to spread in schools all over The Netherlands, but in practice, there is still only a minor part of all schools that are applying the new policy. Some Ph.D. students recently did some research on school policy and they found out that 10% out of 7000 primary schools were applying the new policy, including organizational learning. However, there were a huge group of followers, and perhaps 10 % in the back with traditional organizations.

The type of learning organizations that can be observed among Dutch schools do not necessarily use the specific term 'learning organization', but also refer to their work in terms of quality improvement or school development. Still, they all have some of the characteristics of a learning organization. (Karsten, Voncken, & Voorthuis, 2000). These characteristics are for example:

- Greater cooperation and support among school staff
- Teamwork
- Staff as agents of change
- Dialogue with the surroundings
- Innovative leadership
- Involvement of the teaching team in the process

Collaboration between Schools

In The Netherlands, there is also a new trend towards greater collaboration between schools. Primary schools work together more closely in the sense that they have a central management with an exchange of teachers. These increasing managerial tasks also mean more workload.

According to Karsten, most teachers do not disapprove of this. Even if teachers have more to do, they are happier with this new type of policy. However, when teachers gather in groups, there is also a greater need for leadership.

Research

Most of the research is concentrated on the financial aspects of schools, such as new ways of financing schools. Personnel policy making is more evaluative and descriptive. Hence, teamwork is not very central in research in The Netherlands. However, along with the autonomous system, there is a growing interest for organizational ideas in research. At the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of Amsterdam, Associate Professor Sjoerd Karsten, is performing research on matters like learning organizations, school autonomy and consequences of educational funding. Karsten is part of the management group of the Fundamental Research Division (FO Division) at the SCO-Kohnstamm Institute, University of Amsterdam. Among research carried out by the FO Division, there is for example a program called Education Policy and Organization. This program concentrates on the relations of the administrative-organizational structure with pedagogical-educational aspects

Summary

In the Netherlands, there has been a far-reaching decentralization of the school system, in which schools have become more autonomous. Still, there are still some centralized elements and influence from the Government. Therefore, the Dutch school system is described as “relatively autonomous”. Lately, the work organizations in schools have been influenced by organizational ideas. In brief, there is a growing idea of teamwork in the country as a whole. Moreover, the idea of the school as a ‘learning organizations’ has gained much attention. From a national level, these actions are supported in terms of financial aid. In the Netherlands, there is also an increasing collaboration between schools, which leads to the possibility to exchange teachers but also a greater need for leadership in schools. When it comes to research, organizational issues are not so much in focus, but rather issues of ways to fund education. Nevertheless, the notion of organizational learning is touched upon in research, for example at the at the SCO-Kohnstamm Institute, University of Amsterdam.

BELGIUM (FLANDERS)

The Belgian Educational System

In Belgium, the movement towards a federal state has strongly influenced the educational system and the responsibility over education has been transferred to the three communities (Flemish, French and German). In this study, the Flemish educational system is described.

In Flanders, there is a wish to deregulate the system as much as possible, like in the Netherlands. The Walloon (French-speaking) system is similar to the Flemish system but there are still differences dating from way back in the history. One difference is that the number of catholic schools is smaller on the French side. In the Walloon part of the country, people are more leftist, what in Sweden would be called social democratic, whereas in Flanders they are more conservative. Nonetheless, a change is in the air, towards a more liberal view.

The Flemish educational system is governed by the Flemish Parliament and the Community Minister. Until the 1980s, the system was highly centralized and decision-making was the

privilege of the Minister of Education. At present however, there is a trend towards decentralization of the educational system as a whole. School practice of today is the outcome of interactions between the community level and the organizing body at the local level. The management function of the organizing body is often shared with the school head (directeur). In Flanders, there is an Inspectorate, which supervises the implementation of the tasks delegated to the organizing bodies. The development of the curriculum is in the hands of the organizing body (school board) of the local school, but it has to be approved by the authorities. Schools are grouped in networks on the basis of their legal status: the network of community schools (14,6%), the network of provincial and local authority schools (16,8%) and the network of grant-aided free schools (68,6%). The schools are also referred to as state schools, municipal schools and free schools. The Catholic schools are undoubtedly the most numerous of the establishments in the third category. As a result, the Catholics have a strong influence over the educational system in Flanders. (Flemish Eurydice Report 2000). The teachers unions are also split up between the political parties. Also here, the Catholics have the most influence.

The Flemish system is much like the Dutch system. In fact, there is a lot of influence coming from the Netherlands regarding educational matters due to cultural similarities and language. There is also established cooperation on educational matters between the countries.

Collaborative Work

The educational system in Flanders is quite traditional and collaboration only exists to a certain extent. Each school board is free to organize its own educational system, including its work organization. Consequently, there are no official guidelines. There is however a general and growing idea, implying that schools should look for ways to improve differentiation. (Dom & Verhoeven, 2001).

Teamwork

In Flanders, the concept of 'team' is something that is present but it is not a general principle. Difficulties in finding systematic information on the issue are also indicating that teamwork as such is not common in Flemish schools. Professor Jef Verhoeven gives an idea of teamwork in Belgium:

"During several projects we have visited schools where teamwork was present, but teamwork was certainly not very popular. The structure is present to organize it, but it is not the general pattern in Belgium."

In many schools there are class committees and 'vakwerkgroepen' (a committee of teachers teaching the same subject in a particular level of education and consulting with each other about the content etc. of the course). Theoretically, there is a possibility that teachers end up working in teams, but it is not clear how many schools that really practice it. Moreover, a pilot project started last year in about 20 vocational schools concerning modularization. One of the goals with this project is teamwork. Whether they really apply teamwork in these schools or not remains unknown. However, one can imagine that, since this is one of the targets, it could be applied. Even if it is possible that teachers informally engage in some sort of teamwork (informal meetings), there seem to be no formal structure for this type of work organization.

Other Issues of Teacher Competence and Development

Democratic Decision-Making

A few years ago, the Flemish Government established participation councils and local school councils, in order to have more democratic decision-making in schools. School-based management has made the role of the teacher more and more important. In addition of the improvement of schools, teacher participation leads to better information flows, improved teacher communication within and across schools and improved incentives to attract and retain quality teachers. The question is whether teacher empowerment has improved in reality. Data from surveys suggests that these new bodies are not sufficient in order to increase teachers' influence on school policy. For the participation process to become institutionalized and for teachers to overcome their reluctance, support and training is needed. (Van Heddegem I. & Verhoeven J. C., 1998).

Institutional Self-Evaluation

In Flanders, there is no strong institutional tradition of formal self-evaluation in schools. Nevertheless, self-evaluation has been encouraged by the new inspection system and the current schemes for external support to schools. The implementation of the self-evaluation procedures is a matter of the organizing bodies. (Flemish Eurydice Report 2000). The intended wish for school autonomy is also implying internal evaluation, where the school itself is able to critically look at its own activities. In reality, one cannot as yet say that schools in Flanders have attained a conscious process of self-evaluation, since schools do not really judge their activities. The average school is not continually performing this task and in those schools that are intensively involved in self-evaluation, for the most part it seems to be a matter of the head. (Devos G. & Verhoeven J. C., 2000)

In-Service Training

In-service training, with the focus on integrating all the forms of teacher training into one coherent framework, was implemented in 1996 through the Decree of 16 April (1996). This policy change stems from the political intention to increase local autonomy. As for the structural organization for the in-service program, there are no fixed rules, implying that all sorts of variations exist. Among the competencies common to all teachers, the Decree suggests that teachers develop openness for collaboration and relations with others. It is also stated that teachers should have a sense of flexibility and the capacity to organize. (Flemish Eurydice Report 2000). Even if it is not explicitly stated as an objective, this seems to be a way to discard the former isolation of teachers.

Research

The trends in teacher competence and development, acknowledged above, are national actions that are all touched upon in research. Many of the actions undertaken to develop the educational system comes close to the matter of collaboration, but the question of teamwork is not particularly present in research. Professor Jef Verhoeven, at the Center for Educational Sociology of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, is performing research connected to organizational matters in schools. At the research center, the content is concentrated on the structures and processes influencing educational opportunities in society. This leads to a focus on both the structure of the education system as a whole and on what is going on in schools and classrooms. All levels of education are treated in empirical research, but the emphasis is on secondary and higher education. Among other things, Verhoeven has been involved with studies on teachers' assessment procedures. He has also performed a study and an article on the matter

of self-evaluation. The approach used in the article is “the school as an organizational whole in which task-distribution and co-ordination processes take place”. (Devos G. & Verhoeven J. C., 2000). It is stressed that self-evaluation should be seen as a process, more of an attitude than something that is done at a particular moment. Moreover, Verhoeven is currently involved with projects concerning the professional status of teachers and the influence on schools organizational culture.

Summary

The situation in Belgium is somewhat shattered, due to the federalization of the country. In addition, the educational system in Flanders is divided into three networks according to its legal structure: state schools, municipal schools and free schools. In Belgium, and more exactly Flanders, the educational system is quite traditional, but the trends that are sweeping over Europe also affect Flanders. This has led to an increasing decentralization, upon which the development of a growing interest of organizational ideas in schools has followed. Moreover, there is a lot of Dutch influence on the Flemish side, which underpins ideas of decentralization and autonomy. Furthermore, the Catholics have a lot of influence over the educational system and the great majority of pupils attend catholic schools. As a result from the decentralization, there are growing ideas of collaboration. However, the concept of teamwork is hardly common, even if the concept is getting growing attention. In schools, teamwork does not seem to be very popular. Even if teamwork do exist, it is in an informal way. Other trends that are currently in action in Flemish schools are strongly connected to teacher development: empowering teachers influence, self-evaluation in schools and in-service training. With regard to research, organizational matters in schools have been studied to some extent, but the matter of teamwork has not gained any attention. The center of attention in research revolves around subjects like assessment policy, self-evaluation and the professional status of teachers.

UK (ENGLAND)

England, Wales & Northern Ireland have similar systems and Scotland has another. In this paper, the situation in England is presented.

The English Educational System

Major reforms introduced by conservative Governments from 1979, include the Education Reform Act 1988 which introduced the first National Curricula in England. Education in England is administered at both national and local level. Central government has powers and responsibility for the total provision of the education service, for determining national policies and for planning the direction of the system as a whole. Local education authorities (LEAs) and individual institutions implement and administer the policies and they also have their own statutory powers (delegated orders and regulations) and responsibilities. In England, all reforms since the 1980s has put emphasis on the right of parental choice. In short, this imposes a duty upon the LEA to work out arrangements with all parents. Following the General Election in June 2001, a new central government department, Department for Education and Skills (DfES), was established with the purpose of creating opportunity, releasing potential and achieving excellence for all. DfES is responsible for planning and monitoring the education service in England. The restructured inspectorate (OFSTED) was set up in September 1992. OFSTED is a non-ministerial government department, whose remit is to inspect, report on and improve standards of achievement and quality of pre-school and compulsory education

through regular independent inspection, public reporting and informed advice. In order to make the self-management of schools effective, Education Development Plans (EDPs) were introduced in 1998 under the provision of the School Standards and Framework Act. EDPs provide a framework for LEAs, working in partnership with their schools, to carry out their duty to raise school standards and are the main mechanism for measuring the success of the LEA. The framework comprises of three key elements: an audit of current performance, targets for individual schools and the LEA as a whole, and a statement of the LEA's specific priorities for delivering school.

Collaborative Work

In England, most teachers work in a traditional and individualistic manner. In an average English school, everything, including teachers work, is happening 'the old way'. Dr. David Frost offers an explanation to the lack of collaboration:

"The problem, and one of the reasons for collaboration not being more widespread, is the fact that teachers feel threatened. It is an agency problem – they don't want to share their own secrets and experiences. They also feel that they don't have the time to collaborate when they teach all day and then start planning for the next."

Even though collaboration is not generally common in English schools, the issue is growing along with an extensive range of policy moves. The major dominating feature of England is government led initiatives and since the Government has picked up on these 'new' ideas (that researchers have had for a long time), they are trying to implement them through different actions. For example, there is a newly started college for School leadership, which is funding and sponsoring this kind of development. The General Teaching Council (GTC), a fairly new organization, which has representatives from unions, is also pushing questions like these. Moreover, a major problem with the top-down reforms is that they are causing irritation among teachers. There is a strong intervention by the government. They are the ones raising standards and giving the input. Professor Carol Fitz-Gibbon explains that the Government is in an interventionist, dirigiste phase. There are so many initiatives but almost none of them are evaluated and teachers' experience and competence is not taken care of sufficiently.

Furthermore, there is a growing enthusiasm for issues of teachers learning and collaboration - a growing agenda for 'regaining professionalism'. The profession is in need of more status, especially since it is losing members. Professor Ted Wragg gives his view:

"The nature of how teachers work is not what it used to be. Because of the high degree of intervention, many teachers are leaving the profession, which is a big problem in England today."

Teamwork

Exactly how teachers work will vary greatly. There are many posts of responsibility in schools and these may manage teams. There are also organizations such as subject-specific groups that teachers can join. In general, there is more team working in primary schools and in innovative schools. However, teaching in teams is not common in England. Even if teachers sometimes work in groups, the concept of 'team' is not used.

Other Issues of Teacher Competence and Development

Even if teamwork as such is not a widespread idea, the notions of 'learning organizations' and 'learning community' have been introduced in English schools. Nevertheless, these ideas are not general in English schools, but rather implemented in a few more innovative schools.

Continuing Professional Development

The Government's new strategy for teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) aims to give more money to individual teachers and the control to decide how they wish to spend it, and to provide more opportunities for teachers to learn from good professional development practice in other schools. As a part of the wider continuing professional development, the Department has developed the Professional Development Record guidance, which offers guidance to schools to build on induction and support performance management to benefit both the individual teacher and school. There is also the Standards Framework, which sets out the standards of practice that teachers should expect to demonstrate at particular points of their career and make suggestions for supporting development activity. The Teachers' Standards Framework summarizes the National Standards that currently exist in teaching under the ten dimensions of teaching and leadership.

The ten dimensions of teaching and leadership are:

- knowledge and understanding
- planning and setting expectations
- teaching and managing pupil learning
- assessment and evaluation
- pupil achievement
- relations with parents and the wider community
- managing own performance and development
- managing and developing staff and other adults
- managing resources
- strategic leadership

These are the governmental initiatives, which provide training for teachers and there is also an inspection arrangement concerning this, run by OFSTED. In practice however, the schools control teachers' experience. The LEAs take some responsibility for putting on courses. The bottom-line though is that the school can choose to send a teacher on a course or not. Teachers can also take courses at universities or attend conferences. The competence of teachers is checked within schools by the management - if they choose to do so.

Performance Indicators

England has a notable experience with performance indicators. A performance indicator is a statistic that is intended to reflect the quality of the performance of an institution. In England it is regarded as important to have freedom to consume and the performance indicators are said to help parents and pupils in choosing schools. The indicators can thus serve as marketing of schools. The national press publishes 'league tables' which rank schools. These tables are a crucial element for the Conservative Government to create a market in the education system. The rationale is that, by applying market theories, schools become more effective. (De Jong, Karsten & Visscher, 2001). By no means is everyone satisfied with these school performance indicators. The use of the indicators has met some criticism from the educational world as well as from researchers. There are pressures to make indicators part of an aggres-

sive management culture, including target setting and performance related pay. (Fitz-Gibbon & Tymms, 2002). In addition, OFSTED's role in gathering and processing data has been questioned. Many of those I have been in contact with refer to the OFSTED as 'a dreadful organization'.

Networks

There are some efforts in gathering teachers in clusters, sometimes at the initiatives from schools. Network as such seems to be a key concept in England and the networks might exist between teachers and between schools. However, even if the concept is widespread, the question is who is networking. The principle might just call it network, when in fact just a few are involved in this.

There are also attempts to get groups of schools together in clusters in order to cooperate. Sometimes these arise spontaneously and sometimes they are area-created. Beacon schools are one example and the Education Action Zones are another.

Beacon schools are schools which have been identified to be among the best performing in the country. Therefore, they represent examples of successful practice which are to be brought to the attention of the rest of the education service. Beacon schools are expected to work in partnership with other schools to pass on their particular areas of expertise and so help others to develop and reach as high standards as themselves. Since the start in 1998, it has become clear that Beacon schools are contributing to the establishment of strong collaborative partnerships between local schools. Through their established networks with other schools, Beacon schools provide teachers with the opportunity to learn directly from other teachers' experience. Some schools are working closely with unsuccessful schools, while others are providing initial teacher training and support for newly qualified teachers. Their dissemination methods are wide and varied but include seminars, mentoring, in-service training and consulting. Schools are listed by the Department as qualified to apply on the basis of information from the inspectorate (OFSTED). Furthermore, LEAs can nominate schools which they consider suitable for Beacon status. LEAs role in this is to contribute in creating learning networks between schools. Having started with a pilot group of 75 Beacon school, the number has grown to a total network of 1,000 schools.

With The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 came a new type of body at local level in England. Education Action Zones (EAZs) consist of local clusters of up to around 20 schools, typically covering two or three secondary schools and their feeder primary schools. There are currently 99 EAZs, mostly based in areas facing challenging circumstances in terms of underachievement or disadvantage. (Eurybase). The EAZs were an important part of the Labour Party manifesto, and the work on introducing them began as soon as the new government was elected. Each zone receives up to £1 million each year, £500k from the Government as a baseline and the rest from funds raised from private partners. Every zone is run by an Action Forum, and managed by a project director for the zone. In order to help innovative work, the zones have certain legislative freedoms, such as setting new contracts with teachers and using the existing flexibility in the curriculum.

Research

Many English researchers hold the opinion that not enough is being done when it comes to collaborative work in schools. There is not much research into groups of schools or teams.

Moreover, research is loosely connected to what is actually being done in schools. The research is mainly evidence based, but there is an increasing drive on teacher based research. Nevertheless, there are some projects conducted in cooperation between universities and schools. At Durham University, for example, there is a close collaboration with schools and in terms of 'distributed research'. Their work has developed since Professor Carol Fitz-Gibbon, Director Curriculum, Evaluation and Management Centre, started one indicator system for a dozen schools in 1983. They now work with thousands of schools in the UK (and also with odd schools in 30 countries around the world). At the secondary level, for example, they work with about one in three schools. Fitz-Gibbon is also the author of *Monitoring Education: Indicators, Quality and Effectiveness*, which contains the philosophy and details regarding the work with indicators. She has also performed research and articles on cross-age peer tutoring. Together with her colleague, Professor Peter Tymms (CEM Centre), Fitz-Gibbon has recently written "Technical and Ethical Issues in Indicator Systems: Doing Things Right and Doing Wrong Things". In this article they present their widely used indicator system, which in contrast to the published and top-down implemented systems, is a 'grass-root', research oriented system.

Prominent when it comes to educational research in England, there is also Professor David Hopkins, at the University of Nottingham. Hopkins wrote his Ph.D. on 'Organizational Change in Faculties of Education'. His research is in the area of teacher and school development, educational change, teacher education, and policy implementation and evaluation.

Dr. David Frost, at the University of Cambridge, is involved with projects concerning school (teachers') development and learning and the way teachers and schools engage in collective learning. He is currently a member of the School Improvement and Educational Leadership team in the Faculty of Education and a member of the management team for 'Leadership for Learning: the Cambridge Network'. He has considerable expertise in the field of continuing professional development. His research has focused on strategies for supporting teachers as 'change agents' and his current work addresses the question of how the quality of teaching and learning in schools can be improved through the development of organizational capacity and professional networking. Furthermore, Frost has been working with the knowledge creation with Professor David Hargreaves (no longer member of the staff at the University, but working for the Government, close to the decision-making).

Furthermore, there is Professor Ted Wragg, at the University of Exeter and a member of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Wragg's research projects include performance-related pay, fresh hold assessment and performance management. In some recently produced papers, "Threshold Assessment: The Experiences and Views of Teachers", "Head teachers' perceptions of Threshold Assessment", Wragg analyses teachers' views around assessment policies.

Summary

In England, there has been a strong tradition of autonomous schools. With the Conservative Governments, the development went the other way, towards a more centralized system. In 1990, the first national curriculum came and today there is a rigid school inspection (OFSTED). The educational in England is therefore not what it used to be. Teachers have to fight for their autonomy and because of the fact that the profession is losing members, the main issue is regaining professional status. According to the government and its agencies,

every one of their ideas works perfectly, but teachers and researchers sometimes have another idea. Teamwork is not common in practice or in research. However, ideas of learning communities, networking and development of teachers competence, have gained a lot of attention. Moreover, the policy to have performance indicators is considerable widespread in England. In England, the authorities exercise management of the school sector and individual schools are obliged to carry out its directives. However, the uniformity of the schools throughout the country is not a fact, even if there is central control and standardization. The individual school unit, its leadership and local profile has increasingly become the center of attention, which leads to schools exhibiting more and more organizational characteristics. An example of this is the Beacon schools. Research in the area of education is mainly evidence based and the focus is often on school performance. To a certain extent, there are also research on teachers' collective learning and development.

FRANCE

The French Educational System

In France, the educational system is a stable and highly centralized operation with a very traditional system. The Minister for Education is responsible for the education policy. Nevertheless, decentralization was introduced in 1982, which has led to a greater responsibility at local and regional levels. However, the State still has a considerable role. It continues to define the educational choices and curricula, and, just as before, it is responsible for recruiting, training and managing staff. It also decides the status and operating rules for teaching establishments, and allocates the necessary teaching and administrative posts. The French administrative system is still organized as a strict hierarchy with a central level represented by the Minister for Education and his large crew and the general inspectorates. In addition to an evaluation program, the general inspectorates provide advice and information to the Minister for Education. Administration at regional level is called académie or rectorat and at local level the responsibility is within the 96 departments. (Eurybase).

Collaborative Work

The work organization in French schools is not subject to greater change. Teachers work in traditional ways where the teaching profession is regarded as an individualistic one. There is no formal organization of cooperation. Even if there are big differences between French schools in many aspects (élite schools), there are no major differences when it comes to work organizational matters. Cooperation is strongly praised by officials, but not very much practiced by teachers. Nonetheless, teachers are supposed to cooperate to "establish the school development plan" every four years, discuss the results of the national evaluation of students and how to remedy the weaknesses of their students. Teachers are also to organize some forms of interdisciplinary learning and forms of whole school assessment.

Teamwork

According to Professor Denis Meuret, the only form of team that exists in French schools contains of some teachers of the same group of students. Even if collaboration in general and teamwork in particular is absent in most French schools, there is an official statement of teamwork:

“Within each institution there is an educational team and a teaching team, which directly participate in each pupil's career choices. The educational team responsible for each pupil is composed of the pupil himself, his teachers and his parents. Its purpose is to ensure that the pupil's schooling is properly conducted, encouraging conversation between members and enabling the exchange of information. The teaching teams, constituted for each class or for each group of pupils within one cycle, meet under the chairmanship of the head teacher. Their task is to encourage concertation between teachers, ensure follow up and assessment of pupils, organize assistance with personal work and advise pupils on their schooling and their career and academic choices. The teaching teams are therefore responsible for contact with the families and the pupils, working in collaboration with other staff, particularly those responsible for education and guidance.” (Eurybase)

Other Issues of Teacher Competence and Development

It doesn't seem to be any particular issues of development that are currently in focus in France. However, there is a considerably developed performance evaluation system.

School Performance Evaluation

The Ministry published performance indicators the first time in 1994. The objective with a national program for educational standards in France is to provide detailed information at all levels. This is rooted in the tradition of hierarchical and administrative culture of governmental evaluation. The emphasis is on self-evaluation. (De Jong, Karsten & Visscher, 2001)

Research

Research is not very focused on this particular matter. Mainstream research, in the field of education, focus on the description on what is occurring inside the classroom, i.e. when teachers actually teach their subject. As a result, no researchers with connection to matters of work organizations are identified and presented in this paper.

Summary

The French system has for long been very centralized and traditional to its character. However, considerable decentralization has changed the system somewhat and given more responsibility to the local and regional levels. This change has not had any deeper impact on the work organizations in French schools. Teachers still work in traditional and individualistic ways, this in spite of a national stated pressure on collaboration and work in 'teaching teams'. Moreover, there is a national program for performance indicators. As regards research, mostly classroom issues are in focus.

GREECE AND TURKEY

In my efforts of finding information about the work organization in Europe, I was provided with an adequate amount of information to present the countries above. As for the rest of the world, there are probably many interesting developments, but unfortunately, they cannot all be included in this study. For example, it has come to my notion that there are a lot of changes going on in the educational systems in Eastern Europe, which might also have effects on the

work organization. In this last part, I present a few brief ideas that I have touched upon in Greece and in Turkey.

A Teacher Evaluation Program in Greece

The Greek Educational System is highly centralized, under the jurisdiction of the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (MERA), and characterized by short-lived educational reforms. The political parties with strong and consistent ideology are convinced that they know what to do without consulting teachers and consequently, consultative meetings with teacher unions are rare. However, as a member of the EU, Greece is emphasizing West European standards, following for example French and German methods. In 1998, reformers wanted to raise student performance by the regulation of teacher performance. A top-down evaluation system was initiated by the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs as one of many governmental policy decisions (Chrysos, 2000).

Annual Assessments and lack of collaboration in Turkey

In Turkey, teachers' experience and competence are taken care of by annual assessments realized by the inspectors working for the Ministry of National Education. These inspectors do their assessments according to specific criteria. According to a researcher in this field, Associate Professor Cevat Celep, the main problem is lying here. This type of assessment process is effective and natural neither for the teacher nor for the inspector. In addition, a main deficiency about the process is that the inspectors just talk about their own suggestions of what teachers should do about their teaching process. As a result, suggestions and offers by the Inspection remain ineffective.

In terms of teachers' cooperation, it would be wrong to say that teachers work collaborative by the regulations of Ministry of National Education. Although, at the beginning of every year teachers are supposed to give some course and come together to decide about the aims, objectives and the things they are planning to achieve. There is no firm strategy to put these meetings into practice, as teachers do not take them seriously. Therefore, there are no notions of team/group work or collaboration among teachers in Turkey. As far as research goes, there is nothing about teamwork or collaboration among teachers, in Turkey.

FINAL SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The primary objective with this study was to investigate the ideas and changes taking place in the field of work organization in European schools. The starting point was the current situation in Swedish schools, with its emphasis on teamwork. The objective was then narrowed down to locate the forms of organizations that enable collaborative works. Since many countries seem to lack formalized collaborative work, other actions, regarding teacher competence and school development have also been included in the study. Even if many countries hardly have any work organizations that support collaboration, there are other actions which involve collaborative work among teachers. Moreover, this study set out to locate what is currently in focus when it comes to research in this area and to identify scholars for future exchange of knowledge.

Within Europe, there is a huge variety of actions in schools and there are also large differences within countries. As a consequence, it becomes hard to get a general overview. Among

other things, the far-reaching decentralization, which is visible in many European countries, makes it nearly impossible locate all current actions and developments. In this paper, the presented descriptions of actions and research taking place, do by no means produce a complete picture, but rather just gives a glimpse of what is going on (or not) in this field.

All over Europe, countries differ in the way the educational system is administered. There has been a shift towards a decentralization of most educational systems with the exception of England where there has been a change in the opposite direction. Most countries therefore have a significantly decentralized system (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, The Netherlands). However, in some countries, the school system is centralized (Germany, England, France). Along with a deregulated system, there is often more responsibility and autonomy given to the local school, which in turn often results in a greater development of work organizations that enable cooperation and interaction in schools. With increasing autonomy, school personnel need to make greater efforts to co-operate and support each other instead of being isolated teachers.

COLLABORATIVE WORK & TEAMWORK

The issue of collaboration between teachers in schools seems to be somewhat problematic to establish since there is a strong individual orientation in the teaching culture. Meanwhile, in some European countries there are many efforts towards collaborative work. In general, teamwork does not seem to be a common concept or way for teachers to collaborate in Europe, with the exception of the Nordic countries. The issue is however gaining a growing attention in the Germanic countries and other ideas of collaboration are growing in the UK. Notably, the pressure towards a higher amount of teamwork and collaboration often comes from a national level. In reality however, these national intentions do not necessarily end up in work organization that supports collaboration, interaction and dialogue.

When teams do exist, the degree of teamwork is often questioned. The basic idea is that the construction of a team will enhance teachers' ability to cooperate and thus develop their competencies and enable collective learning. However, most forms of teamwork among teachers are said to be quite technical and single-loop oriented. The administrative tasks are given too much attention instead of collaboration and the achievement of pedagogical goals.

In the Nordic countries, especially in Sweden, work organizational issues have for a long time been the matters of many reforms. Moreover, the term collaboration is often stated in the National Curricula. The way, in which this collaboration is to be formalized and conducted, is normally a matter of the individual school. Meanwhile, most schools seem to find the solution in the creation of a team (Sweden, Norway, Denmark). The level of commitment and responsibility differs however. In addition, working in teams does not necessarily have to imply a great deal of cooperation. In Norway and Denmark, there are explicitly formulated pressures towards teamwork. Overall, collaboration has grown in recent years – or at least the concept of it, as well as the notion of teamwork. This is due to an ongoing shift of responsibility to the local levels. In Finland for example, the local curriculum-making is something that calls upon a greater need for collaboration among teachers and other staff in Finnish schools. In general, work organizations that enable cooperation are more common in Compulsory School (especially primary schools). The actions undertaken in Compulsory School are more often implemented on the initiative from the Municipality and therefore more locally developed. It is also in Compulsory School where the idea of teamwork is more common.

A similar development has taken place in The Netherlands, where there have been different ways to restructure educational organizations, in order to meet new challenges such as more autonomy and school improvement. There is a governmental wish for schools to become more like organizations and to develop their work organizations in accordance with that. This adds force to ideas of stronger collaboration among teachers at the local school unit. However, the concept of teamwork is not at all widespread to the same extent as in the Nordic countries. Instead, ideas such as the concept of 'learning organizations' have come to spread. The applying of organizational learning does not call for any specific way of structuring. Nevertheless, among the characteristics are teamwork and innovative leadership. Even if these ideas have spread in Dutch schools, there is still a gap between thinking and doing. Many schools are still quite traditional with the lack of innovative ideas. In the Netherlands, there is also increasing collaboration and networking between schools, which leads to the possibility of exchanging teachers but also to a greater need for leadership in schools.

In Flanders, there is a lot of influence from The Netherlands which mainly calls for the development of autonomous schools. Along with that, there has been an increasing drive for collaboration. However, the concept of teamwork is hardly common even if it might exist in some informal way. Nevertheless, current trends in self-evaluation and in-service training put emphasis on continuing collaboration among teachers. Yet of today, the work organization of Flemish schools is still quite traditional.

In Germany, the situation when it comes to education is very different between the states. In some states, there are more innovative ideas and changes in the air. However, there is a move towards an organizational way of thinking in schools and this is becoming popular even in the southern and more conservative states in Germany. There is no explicit requirement for teacher to collaborate, due to the regard of the teachers' individual autonomy. The type of collaboration that actually exists in German schools often comes from informal and unstructured meetings and more seldom from a work organizational solution. A current trend in Germany is for schools to become part of innovative networks, in which the spreading of successful solutions takes place, including organizational ideas.

England is in a league of its own, since it is the only country with a move towards centralization. The situation of today is that of central management. However, the uniformity of the schools throughout the country is not a fact, even if there is central control and standardization. English schools still have strong elements of autonomy, inherited by old traditions. Since teaching is regarded as an individualistic profession, collaboration is not easy to establish. Teamwork is not common in practice, but there are other forms of interaction between teachers. Through the use of networks between schools, teachers have the opportunity to learn directly from other's experience. Moreover, there is a CPD-plan, which is the State's new strategy for teachers' development. In England as well as in France, there is also a notable use of performance indicators, which is part of a detailed quality evaluation system.

The French system has for long been very centralized and traditional to its character. However, considerable decentralization has changed the system somewhat and more responsibility has been given to local and regional levels. This change has not had any deeper impact on the work organizations in French schools. In spite of a national stated pressure on collaboration and work in 'teaching teams', teachers still work in traditional and individualistic ways. In France, the work organization seems to be a rigid one – not subject to any major change. With

a shift towards decentralization and autonomous schools, one would expect something to happen in this area. However, in France there are deeply rooted traditions of hierarchical and administrative culture, which seem to conserve the French school system.

In Europe, work organizational school issues are not common in research. In Sweden, Norway and Finland, there are however some institutes and researchers which are closely connected to organizational matters, such as teamwork. As to the rest of Europe, organizational matters in research are even less in focus. Still, there are some scholars that are concentrating on matters of teachers' teamwork and cooperation. In Germany for example, there is some research that is currently involved with collaborative and teambuilding matters. This research bridges over to matters that currently exist in Dutch research, such as 'learning community' and 'learning organizations'. In general however, research in the field of education in Europe is more focused on classroom issues, such as teaching and students' learning rather than out-of-classroom interactions such as collaboration and teachers' learning.

By looking at the situation in Europe, not much has been found when it comes to work organizational issues. However, if we would have looked at North America instead, more information had certainly been gathered. Many scholars that I have been in contact with refer to the work of North American researchers, for example Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves. There is a concept of 'teaching team' that seems to be quite widespread in North America, in schools as well as in research. In recent years, increasing ideas of effective school culture have emerged and as an offshoot of that, more attention has been directed to organizational culture and the development of conditions beneficial to creating effective school culture. Ideas like these have been matters of research for Fullan and Hargreaves, as well as many others. In their theories, collaboration is a central aspect. Collaboration promotes effective school culture because it helps in breaking down teacher isolation. In addition to these ideas are the notion of leadership as a key function in school effectiveness, school culture, and school image. (Bolender, 1997).

CONCLUSIONS

Some ideas of more flexible forms of organizing have reached European schools, especially in those countries where a deregulation of society as a whole is present or already well established. Still and perhaps not too surprisingly, schools more readily devote their attention to the pedagogical and didactic matters than to the administrative components of the school.

Even if the issue of teamwork is far from the matter in focus in all countries, there seem to be a general view that schools would benefit from more interaction and cooperation. Lately, teachers have obtained increasing tasks, apart from educating students, such as organizing, cooperating and evaluating the whole school. This requires a greater exchange of experience between teachers. Moreover, there is a shortage of teachers, which calls for an increasing collaboration among teachers in order to facilitate their burdensome work. Another aspect derives from changes in society. In order to adapt and meet new demands, more flexible organizations in schools are needed.

The increasing tasks, the shortage of teachers and the changes in society all underpin cooperation and learning among teachers. A new way of thinking around the teaching profession is needed – perhaps even a change of culture. But how do teachers learn on a daily basis and how can processes of reflection come about? Learning is to a large extent social interaction,

and therefore a prerequisite for teachers' learning and development. This has been acknowledged in many countries and solutions to break the isolation have been introduced. However, many are touching upon the difficulties in delegating responsibility and the problems with ineffective top-down reforms. In order to change the culture, ideas and values, more than a formal change is needed and personnel at local levels should perhaps be more engaged in the process of change. From other domains of society, we know that group-based organizations can help with these kinds of difficulties. Consequently, teamwork can be regarded as a solution, at least in theory, since teamwork enable rejection of traditional and isolated working patterns. In a team, teachers have the potential to engage in dialogue, knowledge sharing and group reflection. By the help of a team, teachers could also ease their workload and increase job satisfaction and motivation.

In Sweden and in the other Nordic countries, teamwork has been the organizational solution to the growing need for cooperation in a decentralized school. According to this study, this is hardly the case for the other European countries. This leads to the question whether group-based organization comply with the nature of school activities, i.e. is teamwork the appropriate solution for an organization such as the school? Perhaps, a seemingly natural and theoretically possible solution in Sweden is less suitable in other countries. It might be the case that schools require another approach than what has proved successful in industry and other parts of society. On the other hand, organizational solutions, such as teamwork, would perhaps work perfectly well even in schools if they were tried and developed to a fuller potential.

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