DEVELOPING STUDENTS' CORE COMPETENCES AND PRINCIPAL'S MISSION. A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

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http://www.financial-education.org/home.html

If we expect now that students get more core competences, we have to change the principal's core mission. This presentation focuses on European best practices enabling principals to transform their individual schools. It is the result of my work as a practitioner involved in numerous European projects on School Leadership (**ESLN** - European School Leadership Network (2004-2006), School leadership and Governance (EFEE/ETUCE 2011-2013) and recently **EPNoSL**, **European Policy Network on School Leadership**

http://toolkit.schooleadership.eu

If we want to engage ourselves for more democracy and more equity at school, if we want to prepare our youth for lifelong learning, if we want to avoid violence, youth unemployment, lack of interest in school, anxiety about the future, lack of confidence, among youngsters, then we have to adopt different measures to change the school culture and the school governance at individual school level:

- Self evaluation of schools

- Distributed school leadership and autonomy

- Changes in teacher recruitment

- Competence-based training and assessment of teachers and school heads

- Cross collaborative activities between business and education world

1. **Self-evaluation of schools** :

Involvement of students, teachers, parents and school leaders in a collegial work.

One of the successful practices in Finland is based on this method, while most other countries still have inspection bodies.

At the end of the Nineties, a European project was launched in several European countries by the European Commission. This pilot project was called "evaluating quality in school education".

One of the tools was a practical guide to self-evaluation. I had the opportunity to use the "**self-evaluation profile**" [1] (John Mac Beath, Denis Meuret, Michael Schratz, Lars Jakobsen) and to put the proposed self-evaluation questionnaire into practice in my school three times.

The "**self-evaluation profile**": Please, evaluate the school in relation to each area on the following scale.

	AERA	As we are now*	Recent evolution
Out-comes	Academic achievement	++ + - - -	
	Personal and social development	++ + - - -	
	Pupils destinations	++ + - - -	
Class room Level	Time as a resource for learning	++ + - - -	
	Quality of learning and teaching	++ + - - -	
	Support for learning difficulties	++ + - - -	
School Level	School as a learning place	++ + - - -	
	School as a social place	++ + - - -	
	School as a professional place	++ + - - -	

Enviro nment	School and home	++ + - - -	⇧ ⇨ ⇩
	School and community	++ + - - -	
	School and work	++ + - - -	
Other area			

Legend: **++**: major strengths in this area, **+**: strengths outweighs weaknesses,

 - : weaknesses outweigh strengths, **- -**: major weaknesses in this area.

The arrows indicate the trends since the previous evaluation two years before in the given area: upwards arrow means improvement, etc.

(More information on the self-evaluation profile here.

Each time the questionnaire was used, about 50 representatives/delegates of students, parents, and teachers and 5 members of the leadership team had to answer questions concerning all the aspects of school life. Then we evaluated the weaknesses and strengths together and used the information to prepare the school development plan for the following 3 years.

We had to consider not only input but also output, to measure results, which is much more relevant. There is often a gap between what is decided on at the top and what comes out in the classroom! These results were taken into account by the staff of our school and then some teachers decided to do peer-supervision. So it is a good way to create a new culture at school and to promote teamwork.

Result 1: If we want to give students and parents new roles and responsibilities, the first step is to involve them in the internal evaluation of the school.

2. Distributed school leadership and autonomy are required to enable individualized learning

To change learning methods at my school and to remind my teachers of this fact, I posted this statement on the door of the teacher's room in our school [2] (Joyce, B.R. & Showers, B):

- 5% of learners will transfer a new skill into their practice as a result of theory.

- 10% will transfer a new skill into their practice as a result of theory and demonstration.

- 20% will transfer a new skill into their practice as a result of theory, demonstration and practice.

- 25% will transfer a new skill into their practice as a result of theory, demonstration, practice and feedback.

- 90% will transfer a new skill into their practice as a result of theory, demonstration, practice, feedback and coaching.

Competence-based learning, integrating initiative and responsibility for the learner and for all the partners working inside and outside the school means that we no longer have a "command and control policy" from the centre, no longer a vertical hierarchy.

Instead of huge institutions, we need to implement a "school-based innovation" [3] (David H Hargreaves –Sept, 2007), allowing personalized learning with:

- not an "age" but a "stage" approach

- "bottom up" instead of "top-down"

- "empowerment ", allowing teachers and school heads to have expanded responsibilities.

- 3 long terms replaced by 5 or 6 terms

- flexible time management in the school : variable blocks of time are a flexible resource for teachers

- a new design for buildings and learning spaces,

- flexible student groups

Some experiments – like Slash 21 in the Netherlands – have shown that 13 years old students are able to choose what they want to learn, able to decide when and how, able to know why, connecting learning with their own future. Other experiments have shown that 3 years old children are able to create rules for their kindergarten group without influence of adults, proving that all children attending an education institution should be involved in a meaningful way, with facilitation methods suitable for their age.

Involving students, giving them a voice within school and allowing them participate in decision making, can critically contribute to the enhancement of the social capital of schools. Participation is an important learning experience and a form of active citizenship within the safe environment of the school, preparing for an active and responsible citizenship in the society. Information is not enough: to ensure equitable access and social justice, internal evaluation and feedback from the parents and the students are necessary.

Result 2: If we wish to stop thousands of students dropping out each year, we have to get rid of our rigid organization based on classes, where teaching is the same for all. We also have to share more responsibilities with teachers, students and parents.

3. **Teacher recruitment**

Access to studies leading to become a teacher should not only be based on purely intellectual criteria, but including personal and social skills.

The influence of "Informal Education", for example: long-term and frequent involvement in youth work involves high "soft skills" development such as: communication, teamwork, decision-making, organizational skills and self-confidence, intercultural and leadership skills.

Training abroad includes acquiring higher language skills but also intercultural and leadership skills. We have to take these skills acquired informally or non-formally into account, because 4 of the 8 'European key competences" [4] are transversal and teachers must have these key competences in order to be able to collaborate with others and to work with and within society.

A school needs teachers with professional skills and personal commitment. They also have to be facilitators, team members, researchers, lifelong learners, reflective practitioners.

Teacher training must prepare for life and work in a "learning community". Future teachers have to get an approach to teaching that goes beyond traditional subject boundaries. They also have to be trained as "leaders" in management and finance because they will have to organize external partnerships.

Result 3: Teachers will have to recognize that "co-construction" is at the basis of knowledge and to be aware of the necessity to integrate the influence of non-formal and informal education.

4. Competence-based training and assessment of teachers and school heads

A "European" initial and in-service training will connect the future teachers and school leaders with European institutions, research institutes, universities, science centres, companies and associations involved in science, arts, finance, education, etc. They will learn to work with external partners of the school.

Collaborative practices enable teachers and students in some European countries to develop transversal skills mentioned among the "8 European key competences", including science education, entrepreneurship education, and financial education.

"Science education" is a good example. We all have to promote science education and to motivate children and school students for science and technology because this means more jobs and less unemployment for the younger generations. European projects on science education have been very successful, connecting the teachers with science centres (see "**Hands 'on, Brains 'on"** covering 8 European countries led by Hannu Salmi, a researcher from Finland), with Universities and other partners (see "**Science in schools", then InGenious).**

Formal, non-formal and informal education have to converge in order to shape a new educational model within a long-term project. If we consider that a majority of European students spend just 200 days at school in a year and about 165 days outside of school, we are easily convinced that not only teaching is important, but just as important is the informal learning through activities carried out by parents, cities, associations, science centres, Universities and other partners.

European projects – like **eTwinning**, **ELOS** (Europe as a Learning Environment) and **ELICIT** (European Literacy and Citizenship Education), are aiming at developing key competences

for the future European citizen. **Erasmus+** will also enable European teachers and other staff to enhance project-based and problem-based learning whilst also addressing trans-disciplinary questions.

The Elos Network uses the **"Common European Framework of Reference for Languages"** from the Council of Europe (2000) and the **"Common Framework for Europe Competence"** providing indicators for students aged 12-19. It is based on the "European key competences" and intends to build a concrete bridge between the core competences and practice in schools.

European projects – like **ELICIT+ (**European Literacy and Citizenship Education) [5] are aiming at developing key competences for the future European citizen, and first of all the "European teacher". The skills are declined around 7 areas: curriculum, European cultures, intercultural education, motivation and personal development, use of information and communication technologies, ethics of the school, evaluation.

The main objective is to establish a sustainable and growing network of training modules and training locations for teachers, parents and other actors in education to educate a growing number of European pupils, students and adults to become responsible European citizens who can be competitive in the global community.

The project consortium is composed of 24 partners from 13 different European countries including universities, education institutes, associations, NGOs, schools, local authorities. The target groups are adults involved in education (formal, informal and non-formal) and students at all levels, from schools to universities.

European initiatives like **Erasmus+** will also connect the future teachers and school leaders with European institutions, research institutes, universities, science centres, companies and associations, among them those involved in science, arts, financial and entrepreneurship education.

These forms of "European" teacher training and, developing school leadership, the European project **ESLN** - European School Leadership Network – which I was part of the steering group (in 2004-05-06) and recently the **EPNoSL** - European Policy Network on School Leadership (in 2013-14-15) [6]- should allow our schools to implement "life long learning" and a "competence-based education".

Result 4 : A "European" initial and in-service training will connect the future teachers and school leaders with European institutions, research institutes, universities, science centres, companies and associations involved in science, arts, finance education.

5. **Cross collaborative activities between business and education world**

It is essential to develop cross-collaborative activities between the business and the education worlds: companies should be allowed to provide training content; they also need to be more involved in the assessment of skills when training periods are set up.

Self-commitment, personal development, innovation driven by ICT - companies and schools have a lot in common and much to share. To let students develop awareness, autonomy, the ability to make choices and take responsibility, discover their own motivations and potential, we have to involve companies in the daily life of the schools, to influence the design of student learning methods and/or of school buildings, adapted to the 21st century, enabling teachers to work with assistants, external partners thus practicing teamwork.

We should consider the company as "a developer of talent", take the European recommendations and some successful and inspiring practices in Europe into account, mostly introduced by **a public-private partnership - Foundation -** initiating change at school:

- **"MODUS 21 (MODUS F)"** school experimentation led both by the Bavarian Ministry, companies and organizations in partnership and shared responsibility: http://bildungspakt-bayern.de/

- **Jet-Net** http://www.jet-net.nl/english Jet-Net, Youth and Technology Network Netherlands, is a joint initiative of leading Dutch technology companies and secondary schools. Together they provide students with practical content for the science curriculum, with a great variety of activities and also allow students to gain a better understanding of their future career prospects in industry and technology. Launching Jet-Net- style programs in the field of STEM education, promoting the "triple helix approach" should be possible in different European countries.

- In Germany, the publishing company **Universum** offers teachers of economics and also teachers of other disciplines content in finance and social sciences from both companies and government within the framework of the **Jugend und Bildung** Foundation training: On the website "Lehrer on line" teachers find online courses, projects, educational materials for teaching economics and finance, but also on all social issues: http://www.jugend-und-bildung.de http://www.lehrer-online.de/

- **The "Entrepreneurial Skills Pass**" proposed by **the Austrian Chamber of Commerce of Vienna - WKÖ in Austria**

  https://www.wko.at/Content.Node/kampagnen/ufs_en/index.en.html recognized by the European Commission as a key device for developing all "entrepreneurial" skills but also "intrapreneurship", that is to say not only essential to the creative future business but also one that will work in a company where you will also need the same skills: organization, animation, decision making, teamwork, self-confidence, etc.

- Developing financial literacy through private-public partnerships, training teachers and students **: CYFI Child and Youth Finance International** is an NGO, working worldwide http://childfinanceinternational.org to make it possible that every child can have access to financial inclusion. By the collaborative work with a lot of partners (private and public), they could elaborate a Learning Framework and Curriculum Certification for financial education.

Result 5: Companies should be allowed to provide training content and to be more involved in the assessment of skills when training periods are set up.

CONCLUSION

- To face new challenges in our societies and to develop innovation and creativity in our digital world, we have to benefit from exchanging knowledge and practices.
- New contents, new competences, new stakeholders inside and outside the school : To be able to prepare our youth for the future, we have to define a new role and new responsibilities for all principals.

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[1] Self-evaluation in European Schools: A Story of Change © First published 2000

by John Mac Beath, Denis Meuret, Michael Schratz, Lars Jakobsen – by RoutledgeFalmer

11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE . Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by RoutledgeFalmer - 29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001;

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The Self Evaluation Profile may be seen as formed of two components : A formal description

of the schools in twelve areas, and a methodology to discuss which of these twelve are the

most relevant for evaluation in the specific situation of the school.

Content of the areas

	AERAS
O **U** **T** **C**	Academic achievement - *Do the pupils reach a satisfactory standard in most subjects when they leave the school?* - *With reference to pupil's prior attainment, is their rate of progress higher, lower or close to what might be expected?* - *Does the school widen or narrow the gap between low and high achievers, boys and girls,… regarding academic achievement?*

O **M** **E** **S**	Personal and social development - *How successful is the school in enhancing social qualities such as sociability, sense of co-operation, civic attitudes, consideration for others, sense of solidarity and of equity?* - *How successful is the school in producing autonomous individuals, able to meet the future positively and creatively, with a strong sense of morality?* - *To what extent does the school improve non academic skills like the ability to teamwork, to problem solving, to coping with complexity, to communicate effectively, the sense of initiative, the capacity of invention?* - *To what extent do all categories of pupils equally develop these attitudes or skills?* - *To what extent are the value and purposes of personal and social development discussed and agreed among staff?*
	Pupils destinations - *Do you consider that pupils experiment satisfactory destination when leaving the school?* - *To what extent are these destinations the most appropriate for their level of academic skill and personal development?* - *How far did the school prepare pupils for these destinations?* - *For a same level of academic skills, do all categories of pupils, according to gender, social class, ethnic background, enjoy the same destination?*
CL **AS** **SR** **OO** **M** **LE** **VE** **L**	Time as a resource for learning - *Is enough class time devoted to learning as opposed to administration, discipline, settling in/packing up?* - *Are too much class hours lost for any reason ? for truancy?* - *How large are the inequalities of learning time between most and least able?* - *How much time do pupils spend on homework? Is it productive time?*
	Quality of learning and teaching - *Are standards of learning and criteria of achievement clear and understood by pupils and teachers?* - *Is teaching and learning efficient enough?* - *What procedures are used in the school to monitor or enhance the quality of teaching, to ensure good conditions for teaching, to help teachers who may be in difficulty?* - *Do all pupils enjoy equal quality of learning?*
	Support for learning difficulties - *Are learning difficulties detected in an enough valid and quick way?* - *Importance and effectiveness of the support to pupils with learning difficulties* - *Are the pupils who receive support those who need most? Those who take advantage at most?* - *To what extent are difficulties with learning a consequence of inadequate teaching or ineffective organisation at the school level?*

	School as a learning place - *Are pupils organised and grouped in ways that maximise their opportunities to learn ?* - *Are teachers committed to reviewing and ensuring progress of all pupils ?* - *Are they systems and procedures to ensure quality and to support effective teaching ?* - *Is the curriculum adapted to meet pupil needs ?* - *Do the pupils think that their teachers are helpful ?*
SCHOOL LEVEL	**School as a social place** - *Is there a climate of mutual respect between pupils , rather than bullying and disrespect ?* - *What is the quality of relations between pupils and staff ?* - *Does the school provide opportunities for pupils to exercise decision-making and responsibility ?* - *Are rules clear, accepted ?* - *Are rewards and sanctions applied with equity and justice ?* - *More generally, is the life in school an help for the pupils learning and development ?*
	School as a professional place - *How does the school respond to changes in its environment ?* - *Is the school able to move in planned direction ?* - *What is the quality of internal discussions and decision-making procedures within the school ? Is the optimal range of stakeholders involved in such discussions ?* - *Does the in service training provided to the staff meet their needs and the ones of the school* - *Is there sufficient and effective help for staff meeting some difficulties?*
	School and home - *Is the information provided to parents what they want and what meet their needs ?* - *Do parents feel welcome in the school ?* - *Are they equally treated, whatever their social position or ethnicity ?* - *Do teachers learn enough from parents regarding their children needs or problems ?* - *Do parents support their children's learning ? Is the policy of the school in order to support this support enough developed ?*
ENVIRONMENT	**School and community** - *Do the conditions of life in the community (wealth, employment, cohesiveness, confidence towards the future, what it expects from the school) create a supportive environment for the school ?* - *What does the school offer to the community ?* - *What does the school to enhance school-community relations ?*
	School and pupil destination - *Is the school helping young people to develop the skills and qualities which employers/ schools of destination want ?* - *Do employers / schools of destination provide information, support and resource for schools regarding their needs and their appreciation of the pupils they receive as staff or pupils?* - *Does the school help employers to be fully aware of the knowledge and skills of their pupils?*

[2] Joyce, B.R. & Showers, B. 1983 in ESLN (European School Leadership Network)

[3] System Redesign – 1 –The road to transformation in education - David H Hargreaves – Sept, 2007, Ed. Peter Chambers, for **SSAT**

[4] 8 European key competences: Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC): Competences are defined here as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfillment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.

The Reference Framework sets out eight key competences:

1) Communication in the mother tongue;

2) Communication in foreign languages;

3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;

4) Digital competence;

5) Learning to learn;

6) Social and civic competences;

7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and

8) Cultural awareness and expression.

The key competences are all considered equally important, because each of them can contribute to a successful life in a knowledge society. Many of the competences overlap and interlock: aspects essential to one domain will support competence in another. Competence in the fundamental basic skills of language, literacy, numeracy and in information and communication technologies (ICT) is an essential foundation for learning, and learning to learn supports all learning activities. There are a number of themes that are applied throughout the Reference Framework: critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving,

risk assessment, decision taking, and constructive management of feelings play a role in all eight key competences.

[5] ELICIT+: http://www.aede-france.org/ELICIT-Project.html

[6] The EPNoSL Toolkit – School Leadership for Equity and Learning:

http://toolkit.schooleadership.eu