



ALERT  EDUCATION
consulting

HOW TO TURN A PYRAMIDAL STATE ORGANIZATION INTO AN EFFICIENT DECENTRALIZED GOVERNANCE

This presentation

is the result of my work as a practitioner
involved in professional associations of school
principals since 1998



focuses on European best practices enabling
principals to transform their individual schools
and consequently obsolete state organizations.

If we want :

to engage ourselves for more democracy and more equity at school,

to prepare our youth for lifelong learning,

to avoid violence, youth unemployment, lack of interest in school, anxiety about the future, lack of confidence, among youngsters,



we have to adopt different measures



5 steps

- **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**

First step

Self evaluation of schools

Involvement of students, teachers, parents and school leaders in a collegial work : the “self evaluation profile”

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



The “self-evaluation profile”


- At the end of the Nineties, a European project called “**evaluating quality in school education**” was launched in several European countries by the European Commission.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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.





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	++ + - -	
Classroom	Time as a resource for learning	++ + - -	
	Quality of learning and teaching	++ + - -	
Level	Support for learning difficulties	++ + - -	
School 	School as a learning place	++ + - -	
	School as a social place	++ + - -	
Level	School as a professional place	++ + - -	
Environment	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.

Second step

Distributed school leadership and autonomy are required to enable individualized learning

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.

Second step

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 - 1983):

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.

Second step

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 (Slash 21 in the Netherlands – 13 years old students)

If we refuse to have 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.



Third step

Teacher recruitment

- Access to studies leading to become a teacher must be selective because this profession requires personal and social skills and the choice of candidates should not only be on purely intellectual criteria, but including “soft skills”.
- A school needs teachers with professional skills and personal commitment. They also have to be **facilitators, team members, researchers, lifelong learners, reflective practitioners.**



Third step

A reminder of the 8
key competences

- Recommendation [2006/962/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. The framework describes the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to each of these 8 key competences:
- **communication in the mother tongue,**
- **communication in foreign languages,**
- **mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology,**
- **digital competence,**
- **learning to learn,**
- **social and civic competences,**
- **sense of initiative and entrepreneurship,**
- **cultural awareness and expression.**

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'** 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.

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.

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.



Forth step

Competence-based training and assessment of teachers and schoolheads

- A “European” initial and in-service training will connect the future teachers and school leaders with external partners of the school and prepare them for life and work in a “learning community”.
- Collaborative practices enable teachers and students to develop transversal skills mentioned among the “8 European key competences”, including science education (see “Hands’on, Brains’on”), arts, financial and entrepreneurship education,
- Formal, non-formal and informal education have to shape a new educational model and a long-term work through activities carried on by parents, cities, associations, 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, answering trans-disciplinary questions.

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 now the **EPNoSL** - European Policy Network on School Leadership (final conference held in May 2015 - EPNoSL toolkit will be presented today in Zug) - should allow our schools to provide “equity and learning”, to implement “life long learning” and a “competence-based education”.



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 and finance education.

Fifth step

Cross collaborative activities between business and education world

Self commitment, personal development, innovation driven by ICT ... companies and schools have a lot in common and much to share. To let students develop an 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, or of school buildings, adapted to the 21st century, enabling teachers to work with assistants, external partners, practicing teamwork.

Fifth step

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/F (Germany) - JETNET (NL) - Science in schools (UK) - Universum (Germany) - WKÖ (Austria) - CYFI (NL)

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



Investment Plan for Europe and Education

- Youth unemployment is one of the main challenges Europe is facing.
- Such an exceptional problem requires a coherent and coordinated response
- To address the jobs crisis the EU's 15-24 year olds are facing, the European Commission (DGEC) and the European Investment Bank will launch the **“Skills and Jobs – Investing for Youth”** program, to enhance employability via **“Investment in Skills”** **315 billion of investments will be mobilized for the period 2015-2017.**
- The Bank's program is seen as a complement to the multiple national and regional schemes **initiated by the Member States.”**



Conclusion

- This presentation shows how school leaders can change the school governance at their level. The other decisions depend on the will of the ministers, who should “shift to Europe” and no longer recommend practices belonging to the past.
- It is our role and our responsibility - as school leaders - to influence our governments to engage in the necessary reforms.

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