Leadership for promoting teacher collaboration in Learning study and Subject Didactic Groups

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Content of the Symposiums three presentations

- **Background, 10 min.** (Henrik Hansson)

- **First presentation, 20 min.** – A case study of key factors to promote a sustainable culture of collaborative teaching development in a Swedish school and what the key factors implies to leadership (Stina Johansson)

- **Second presentation, 15 min.** An evaluation and comparison study of key factors to promote a sustainable culture of an adaptive form of Lesson/Learning study in Sweden and what the key factors implies to leadership (Henrik Hansson)

- **Third presentation, 20 min.** – A case study to promote a sustainable culture of collaborative teaching development in a Hong Kong school and what the key factors implies to leadership (Tammy Cheng & Fannie Chan)

- **Discussant and questions/reflections from audience, 25 min.** – Ms. Ellen Yuefeng Zhang, The Education University of Hong Kong
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japanese Lesson Study</th>
<th>Learning Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong> maximize the learning of a particular subject matter by a particular</td>
<td><strong>Variation Theory:</strong> analysing students’ learning and curriculum content</td>
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<td>group of students via teacher collaborative action research.</td>
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<td>Practiced in Japan for about 100 years</td>
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<td><strong>Kyouzai kenkyuu:</strong> study of curriculum and instructional materials, various</td>
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<td>theories</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consider Goals</td>
<td>• Consider <em>subject-based</em> goals</td>
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<td>• Study Curriculum and Standards</td>
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<td>• Study database of student development</td>
<td>• Pre-test &amp; interviews</td>
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<td>• Plan and Conduct Research Lesson (public lesson)</td>
<td>• Plan and Conduct Research Lesson (observation by research team)</td>
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<td>• Collect Data</td>
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<td>• Debrief Lesson (large scale)</td>
<td>• Post-test &amp; interviews</td>
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<td>• Revise and re-teach if desired</td>
<td>• Debrief Lesson</td>
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<td>• Use Debrief to Inform Instruction</td>
<td>• Revise and re-teach Research Lesson</td>
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Steps in a Learning Study cycle & the use of variation

1. Select a topic for study (V2)
2. Identify a tentative object of learning (V2)
3. Diagnose students’ learning difficulties (pre-test, interviews) (V1)
4. Confirm the object of learning & its critical aspects
5. Plan the research Lesson (V2, V3)
6. Implement & observe the lesson (V1, 2, 3)
7. Evaluate the learning outcomes (post-test, interviews) (V1)
8. Evaluate the overall impact of the study (V2)
9. Confirm the object of learning & its critical aspects
10. Disseminate & report the results (V2)

Another cycle of the study

Different teaching cycles
Background to Swedish context

Sweden

WALS, 2013 presentation
Background to Subject Didactic Groups

- Up to date, facilitated more than 150 Learning studies


- There is a gap of a collaboration culture on developing daily teaching in Swedish education

- First version of Subject Didactic Groups (Bergqvist, Hansson, Holmqvist-Olander, Kullberg, Marton)

- Pilotproject on Subject Didactic Groups in 2014. In the evaluation all participating teachers and principals wanted to continue work in SDG

- (Swedish context - *Evidence also suggests that many Swedish teachers work alone and are not benefiting from potential feedback and peer-learning opportunities that their colleagues can provide to improve and innovate their teaching practices* (p. 125). OECD (2015). *Improving schools in Sweden: an OECD perspective.*)
Subject Didactic Groups (SDG)

A fused arrangement with elements from Lesson- and Learning Study as well as Teachers Research Group adapted to serve daily teaching

- **Purpose**
  - Enhance students’ possibilities to learn and develop in daily teaching regarding both a longterm goal and specific learning goals/objects of learnings

- **Organisation**
  - Teachers grouped by subject and year they teach
  - Meetings about 2hs every week
  - One of the teachers educated to lead the work

- **Systematic and formative collaborative working structure, similar to in Lesson/Learning studies. Differences:**
  - No compulsory observations
  - Use of several lesson experiences from teaching similar things, when evaluating and analysing teaching

- **Variation Theory (a theory of learning) used as guiding principles for planning and conducting teaching as well as evaluating and analyzing teaching (Lecture theater 1, ES Hall, 10.45-12.15)**

- ...
Title of presentation 2

- Keyfactors to promote a sustainable culture of an adaptive form of Lesson/Learning study in Sweden and what the keyfactors implies to leadership
Questions investigated

1. What makes teachers dedicated to the work in Subject Didactic Groups?

2. What are key factors making Subject Didactic Groups sustainable in schools?

3. What do the key factors imply to Leadership?
To answer question 1 & 3 - Data and analysis

- About 300 questionnaires made by teachers after first year participation in Subject Didactic Groups

- Analysis made by comparing similar answers and grouping them into themes
  - Reasons to continue work in Subject Didactic Groups?
  - How to develop the work in Subject Didactic Groups?
Examples of common answers in the questionnaires

What reasons do you have to continue participate in Subject Didactic Groups? (translated by me)

**Teachers experience of students learning**
- ”We can see that the students learned a lot between pre- and posttest related to the learning goals we have focused on”
- ”The students easier generalize their knowledge to new situations”
- ”The work seems to benefit the low achieving students more, but also the high achieving students seems to benefit from us working like this”
- ...

**Teachers experience of their own learning**
- ”We now take more departure in students ways of seeing what is to be learned, in teaching”
- ”Questions related to what/why/how have been more clear in planning the teaching”
- ”We evaluate and follow up our teaching much more carefully now”
- ”It is not only practice, practice anymore, we build our teaching on specific strategies now”
- ...

Examples of common answers from the evaluations

How to develop the work in your Subject Didactic Group? (translated by me)

*Teacher collaboration replacing some of teachers individual daily teaching practices*

- "We need to make the weekly meetings holy, so that they become more regular to support our daily teaching”
- "We should not group teachers with different subjects in this work. If we do they will not be able to discuss and help each other with their daily teaching”
- "In some way make everyone realise that this is not a project”
- "The work needs to go faster, so that we can work on more learning goals during a school year than we have been able to do this first year”
- "We need to plan what learning goals we will focus on together in advance when making the plan of what to teach during the next school year”
- ...


Keyfactors and implied leadership, related to question 1 & 3

- Promote teachers dedication to and in the collaborative work
  - **Keyfactor:** Teachers experience of students learning
  - **Implied leadership:** use questions about students learning and make their learning visible, in evaluation of lessons and in whole work on learning goal

  - **Keyfactor:** Teachers experience of their own learning
  - **Implied leadership:** use questions on teachers learning and make their learning visible, continuously during the working process

  - **Keyfactor:** Teacher collaboration replacing some of teachers invididual daily teaching practices
  - **Implied leadership:**
    - Organize teachers in relevant teachergroups (subject and age to teach) to increase possibilities to work on the same learning goal
    - Organize for continuously meetings (once a week)
    - Create a joint plan of what to teach for the schoolyear in each teachergroup
To answer question 2 & 3 - Data and analysis

- Notes from group meetings with principals and teacher leaders. Five meetings (4-8 hours per meeting) with 13 principals and nine meetings with 71 teacher leaders (during a period of two years).

- After a two year period, 13 schools turned out successful and 2 turned out non as successful in developing the culture of Subject Didactic Groups in their respective school.

- Analysis by comparing the notes on how the schools tried to develop Subject Didactic Groups, relating them to either the successful or non successful schools, grouping and comparing them.
Comparison of successful and non successful schools in creating the culture of subject Didactic Groups

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Successful schools</th>
<th>Non successful schools</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Main focus on developing Subject Didactic Groups</td>
<td>- Trying to implement several developmental projects at the same time</td>
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<td>- Working prior and during the development to create a community</td>
<td>- Not working in a structured way to create a community</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Adjusting the arrangement according to the local context</td>
<td>- Trying to implement the arrangement as a static and inflexible model</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Longterm endurance in developing the culture</td>
<td>- Looking for quick fix</td>
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<td>- ...</td>
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Promote a Professional Learning **Community**
- **Keyfactor**: Structured work for shared vision, purpose, goals and approach to and in the collaborative work
- **Implied leadership**:
  - Start creating the community prior starting the collaborative work
  - Continuously and structured working on shared vision, purpose, goals and approach during the development
Example of an approach in Subject Didactic Groups

- The collaborative work is done to create best opportunities for students learning and development
- All students can learn and develop
- Our teaching makes a difference for students learning and development
- Our point of departure is students needs for learning and development
- To continuously develop teaching is to be professional
- Every teacher does not need to do the exact same thing in teaching but we need to have a joint approach to students, teaching and students learning
- We are not perfect but professional
- We create better opportunities for students learning and development if we collaborate on developing teaching
- We use our variations of perspectives and experiences to make the best opportunities for students learning and development
- All our students learning and development as well as all teachers teaching in the teachergroup is our jointly responsibility
- To develop teaching is a process and we are not striving to make the perfect lessons
- ...

More keyfactors and implied leadership, related to question 2 & 3

- Seeing sustainability as a constant improvement instead of implementing and maintain
  - Keyfactor: Conduct a formative developmental work to create the culture instead of trying to implement an inflexible model
  - **Implied leadership:**
    - Communicate the arrangement as needed to be adjusted according to the local context and develop systematically without losing its core
    - Organize for a shared and distributed leadership (principal, teachersleaders, teachers)
    - Make adjustments of the work in the specific direction aimed for to create the Professional Learning Community
    - Adapt other developmental work forced to be implemented to complement the work in SDG, and sometimes say no to other developmental work which does not complement
More keyfactors and implied leadership, related to question 2 & 3

- Seeing sustainability as a constant improvement instead of maintenance
  - Keyfactor: Seeing the development of the culture as a longterm work
  - Implied leadership:
    - Communicate the collaborative work not being a project
    - Create a longterm plan for the development and conduct a work for everyone to understand the plan
    - Communicate that the great effects on students learning and development will not occur right away
    - Communicate that the collaborative work might not replace much of the individual teaching practice in the beginning
Future aspects for successful schools to continue develop the culture of Subject Didactic Groups

- **Systematic sharing and development of work and results**
  - Conduct open lessons for colleges from same and other schools
  - Document and publish
  - Present and critical discuss with fellow colleges in same subject and other subjects
  - ...

- **Establish partnership with schools in Hong Kong**