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## The Reluctant Change Agent

Change, Chance and Choice among Teachers, Educational Change in the City

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# THE RELUCTANT CHANGE AGENT



# The Reluctant Change Agent

– Change, Chance and Choice among Teachers  
Educational Change in The City

Pernille Berg



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# Abstract

Med udgangspunkt i et kompetenceudviklingsprojekt for lærere i en svensk kommune adresserer denne afhandling de stigende krav til forandring og innovation, der karakteriserer den offentlige sektor generelt. Ved at følge kompetenceudviklingsprojektet gennem en fire-årig periode sættes projektet i en kontekst af innovation, globalisering og forandring.

Forfatteren argumenterer, at dele af den nuværende diskurs omkring forandring inden for uddannelsessektoren er for unuanceret og herved undlader at adressere nogle af de vigtige aspekter vedr. forandring. Forfatteren har ved at følge nogle af de 75 lærere, der har deltaget i kompetenceudviklingsprojektet, identificeret fire typer af lærere og disses forhold til forandring. Disse fire typer omfatter forandringsagenten, reformisten, ildsjælen og den dedikerede lærer. Disse fire typer er efterfølgende placeret i et forandringspektrum, hvor deres positioner ift. ovenfra initierede forandrings tiltag og skoleudviklingsområder er skitseret.

Ved at have udarbejdet denne research og denne kategorisering er det muligt for forfatteren at elaborere og kritisere den allerede foreliggende research omhandlende forandring af skole og uddannelse. Forfatteren tydeliggør hvorledes ovenfra initierede forandrings tiltag baseres på en fejlagtig formodning om hvorledes forandring forankres og implementeres. Det er herved muligt for forfatteren at præsentere flere forklaringer på hvorledes og hvorfor forandring kan møde modstand. Forfatteren går så vidt at argumentere, at når forandringen manifesterer sig i en fysisk repræsentation af enkelt individer, som formodes at være forandringskraften, forkastes denne forandring af bærende udførere af forandringen. Den fysiske manifestation bliver omdrejningspunktet for de mange faktorer og variabler, der influerer og betinger en forandringsproces, og for den enkelte lærer er dette ikke nødvendigvis attråværdigt. Med denne analyse kritiseres forandringsdiskursen og forfatteren argumenterer, at det er nødvendigt at situere forandringsdiskursen i forhold til innovationsdiskursen, da begreberne 'forandring' og 'innovation' anvendes tvetydigt af nogle forskere. Ligeledes argumenterer forfatteren, at innovation som begreb og diskurs er stigende i et sådant omfang, at det løbende udvides og nuanceres, og derfor et fænomen, man som institution skal forholde sig til. Det er dog yderligere forfatterens argument, at innovationsdebatten vil beriges af at inddrage den indsigt, som de fire lærerkategorier vedr. forandring, har bibragt. Herved skabes der en erkendelse og forståelse af, at den metastrukturelle forandring manifesteret i én fysisk repræsentation, 'forandringsagenten', er at skabe en kampplads for forandringsprocessen, som ikke er realistisk, strategisk klogt eller etisk forsvarligt. Forfatteren argumenterer hermed for en

vedvarende kritisk analyse af de bagvedliggende årsager til forandring og innovation og kontinuerligt at spørge: hvorfor denne forandring og innovation, for hvem denne forandring og innovation og hvordan denne forandring og innovation?

Afhandlingen er baseret på flere teoretiske discipliner, innovation, uddannelses-sociologi, organisationssociologi og globaliseringsociologi. Denne tværdisciplinære tilgang er forårsaget af erkendelsen af, at en kritisk analyse af begreberne forandring og innovation i konteksten af kompetenceudviklingsprojektet fordrer en tværdisciplinær tilgang. Forfatteren identificerer anomalier, som ikke umiddelbart lader sig forklare inden for én tilgang. Der argumenteres løbende i afhandlingen for hvilke teorier, der kan berige analysen med ny og kritisk indsigt. Metodisk er afhandlingen kvalitativ, og gennem fire år har forfatteren både observeret, interviewet og skrevet sammen med de deltagende lærere. Herudover har forfatteren med udgangspunkt i refleksive tekster samt offentlige tekster tilgængelige på hjemmeside og i foldere foretaget analyser af de holdninger og begreber, som lærerne udvikler og forholder sig til gennem projektet.

Med afhandlingen bibringer forfatteren kvalitativ data og heraf udarbejdede kategorier vedr. forandring til en innovationsdiskurs, der i stigende grad er med til at sætte dagsordenen for uddannelsespolitik og forandringskrav i flere lande.

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In writing these words a long journey is nearing its end. The last thoughts, the last words of reflections and wisdom are granted permission to speak. It is also time to recognise everyone who has enabled and aided me in completing this work.

As I am writing these final words, faces, voices and moments pass through my mind. The many different experiences, epiphanies, nadirs of research frustrations pass through and a sense of deep gratitude and acknowledgement to those people, who by opening their hearts, minds, classrooms and offices enabled this research to take place, emerge.

This dissertation would not have seen the light of day had it not been for many different people who advertently and inadvertently gave me the possibilities to fulfil my dreams of completing my research education and this dissertation. Throughout my work I have been met with openness, earnesty and interest. People, who have been quite busy with their own tasks and to-do's, have still taken time to meet with me and patiently let me be a momentary part of their lives – without any of them this dissertation would never have been possible!

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Gratitude also goes to the Research Institute who initially enabled me to commence my research. The Research Institute was closed in 2006 and my thoughts go to the members of staff who supported the research and me when it was still in its infancy. Without the Research Institute I would not have had any means to support the initial stages of this research and the Research Institute provided me with academic and critical support when it was truly needed.

My deepest gratitude also goes to the people and institutions from the City. Their openness and willingness to let me observe and interview as many persons as possible made the research. Without them it would not be possible for me to provide new insight and analysis to the currently blooming discourse within innovation in the

public sector. To them I hope that my analysis does them justice and provide them with a stronger impetus to continuously develop in-depth knowledge and experiences when it comes to educational change in order to prevent piecemeal changes, which only have impact at the mercy of the few converted.

Furthermore I owe Johanna Esseveld and Per Wickenberg an immense thank you – you provided me with critical feedback and encouragement when I needed it most. Thank you for your sharp observations and polite hints at potential errors in the making. I can only hope that I caught them all.

On a personal note I owe a great deal of gratitude to many people: close family and dear friends who have been a constant support throughout the long process of finalising my dissertation. The patience they have shown when having been subjected to long tirades of analytical stipulations is noteworthy and priceless. To Bríd Conneely and Marcus Jones, thank you is quite insufficient in expressing my gratitude to you! I hope ‘hence’ and ‘thus’ are eradicated permanently from my vocabulary! To Titti G. Persson, for lending me your painting, ‘Ekorrhjul, Om att följa efter eller’, which has stayed with me for years and remained a constant source of inspiration. It is a deep honour that I have been able to borrow this painting to illustrate the contextual essence of this dissertation. Tak! To Cathy Sheehan, who passed away, while cheering for me on from the sideline, I send thoughts and reassurances; yes, every second, every hour, every day, every thought, every pause, every moment spent on this dissertation was worth it and I think you would have appreciated its conclusions. To Professor John Jackson, my mentor for quite some years now, who also passed away while my head was still stuck deeply down in the matter of change agents, thank you for all your support! Not a day goes by without me thinking of you and waiting for your astute mind to challenge me yet again.

To my husband and our children – thank you – a small but deep-felt word – I really look forward to being an active part of your lives again and not a mere voyeur on the sideline!

pernille berg  
Copenhagen, April 2011

# Preface

“Two important trends in recent years have expanded the circle of those directly engaged in teaching work. First, “*professional development*” – activity focused on helping experienced as well as beginning teachers strengthen their teaching capabilities – has had remarkable growth. Not long ago, school districts rejected plans to spend time and money on staff development, arguing that this was the responsibility of state agencies, and that it made little sense to invest in teachers who may move away. Today we find an increasing focus on such undertakings at the local level. The second trend is a largely increased emphasis on analysis of the tasks and choices teachers make in the course of their working day. “*Reflective practice*” describes the process in which teachers think longer and harder about what they do and work to guide their activities accordingly” (Lortie 2002: viii; my emphasis).

In 2001 the District Centre of Education launched a competence development programme. The aim was to ensure that 75 teachers acquired new teaching methods. In 2008 the programme has still not reached its conclusion. In September 2001, the first 25 teachers commenced the postgraduate programme initiated by the District Centre of Education.<sup>1</sup> In 2010 38 teachers had completed the programme and gained a master’s degree and 15 teachers completed the programme without pursuing a master’s degree. Of the 38 teachers, 16 completed their master’s exam in May 2008. At that point in time some teachers were still planning to submit their master’s in order to complete the programme. This means that approximately 50% of the total cohort fully completed the programme, which is not an impressive statistical fact if we are to assess the programme from the perspective of completion. Particularly as the project had to extend its duration in order to allow a larger number of teachers to complete.

It is thus tempting to write that the programme has to some extent failed to reach its goal. However, I am not so sure! It may not have turned out as imagined but to say it failed may be to underestimate the nature of educational change and the efforts and resources educational change require. Perhaps it would be fairer to quote Fink and Stroll

“... change is indeed ‘easier said than done’” (Fink and Stroll 2005: 38).

---

1 Given the nature and impetus of the programme I have chosen to call the entire project ‘Striving for Action Teachers’ and henceforth refer to the postgraduate programme and project as such.



# Introduction – the times we live in

Living in a time where we are told that everything is changing so rapidly that we may never actually grasp that things have changed, it has become increasingly difficult to remain abreast of change and development. We also live in a time where there is an on-going debate as to what to call “our” era: post-modern society, perhaps; or liquid modernity (Bauman 2004); ‘digitalised knowledge-communication society’ (Kroksmark 2006: 7); knowledge society (Drucker in Wells et al 2005); or maybe hyper-complex society (Qvortrup 2001). It becomes increasingly difficult to ascertain whether the debate is polemic, political or symbolic of what Baudrillard has named “hyper reality” (Baudrillard in Wells et al).<sup>2</sup> The world has become “a world purely of simulation, of simulacra or images” (Baudrillard in Wells 2005: 59).

Even though the pace of our society is such that change is occurring so rapidly that we have difficulties in “keeping up with the times”<sup>3</sup>, there are voices who convincingly argue that even in the midst of change we have things that are constant and stable.<sup>4</sup> Andy Hargreaves makes this crucial point when he writes that although change permeates the educational system, the educational system also represents something constant.<sup>5</sup> “Schools may be assailed by change but they are also places of great historical continuity” (McCulloch in Hargreaves 2005a: 5; Persson and Stavreski 2004: 91). Or paraphrasing T. Peters, the paradox is to ensure stability in order to be able

---

2 Andy Hargreaves (2003) does not particularly like the term ‘the knowledge society’ but uses it because it is accepted and used by many. “in truth, though, knowledge society is really a learning society” (Hargreaves 2003: xviii). It is also the term used throughout this dissertation although I agree with Hargreaves and also Anders Persson’s (2003a) critical reflections on what knowledge really entails. The reason for applying the term ‘knowledge society’ is to maintain the mental awareness that in today’s society knowledge has indeed become a market commodity to the extent that individuals are seen as responsible for compensating for the societal change (historian Jes Fabricius Møller in Nielsen 2008: 5).

3 One example of the speed with which things change is mobile phones and the rate at which new models are launched on the market. Indeed technological development and information technological development are frequently mentioned in this context (e.g. Hargreaves 2003).

4 Similarly some argue that our society is not as post modern or globalised as such, (e.g. Cox in Wells et al 2005: 51).

5 See also John Naisbitt (2007).



to pursue constant change (Peters in Mulford 2005: 336).<sup>6</sup> Indeed the educational institutions symbolise the constant challenges any society faces namely of achieving the right balance in the continuum of stability and change.

The following account is a history of an ambitious attempt by a Swedish local school district to achieve social and educational innovation. The ambitious level of the District is not only represented in the way it has administered this project. The District has also expressed its level of ambition in attracting international focus to its endeavours. The account of the project, which this dissertation will address and analyse, must be set in the context of myriad change and continuity; it must also be set in the context of theories of education, theories of innovation and theories of change.<sup>7</sup> I have chosen to depict the discussion below as an account of the development of educational change in a local school district. The development of educational change comprises many aspects, and as Michael Fullan (2007) purports, the nature of educational change is complex, as it depends on extensive structural coherence and many actors. This often means that the process of change is full of unforeseen and unpredicted surprises and challenges. During my analysis I will argue that the project initiated by the Swedish local school district represents not only challenges and unpredicted surprises but contradictions and tensions which permeated every aspect of the project.

---

6 Michael Fullan (2003) polemically observes that living on the edge of chaos can just as easily refer to living on 'the edge of order' (2003: 22).

7 The name of the geographical area, the local school district, specific institutions and individuals who participate in the total population of data have been anonymised. Hence the geographical area is henceforth called the City and the local school district is henceforth called the District of Education, abbreviated to the District. The individuals from the respective educational institutions are alphabetised in order to ensure anonymity. Furthermore the District has availed of a Norwegian University as supplier to the programme 'Striving for Action Teachers'. This is henceforth called the Norwegian University and the key person to ensure the collaboration between the City and the Norwegian University is called 'the Professor'.

# Research question

The research was initially conducted as part of an evaluation of Striving for Action Teachers. The reason for the evaluation was to evaluate and describe aspects of the programme, and so the initial work was focused on fulfilling this brief.<sup>8</sup> The brief contained many questions regarding the effect and impact resulting from competence development with regards to learning environment, organisational development and learning impact and questions related to the role of teacher training in relation to educational change – for example, e.g. how has Striving for Action Teachers affected the participating teachers, the pupils, colleagues, the school as an organisation and the school management.<sup>9</sup>

As the research relating to the evaluation developed and evolved, an independent research question evolved. This research question centred on the observed schism between organisational change and the individuals participating in ‘Striving for Action Teachers’. Hence the research question is “how can the apparent schism between organisational change and the individual teachers be explained?”

The ph.d. is structured as follows:

- an account of the District and the project
- a chapter on my research design and methodology, including methodological reflections
- a discussion of the way in which the globalised and postmodern context has affected the discourse on educational development
- a discussion of Striving for Action Teachers
- a critical discussion on educational change and innovation
- concluding remarks

---

<sup>8</sup> The evaluation commenced in January 2004, three years after the programme had been initiated.

<sup>9</sup> The brief is listed in full and translated in appendix 1. I have, in my notes from a meeting, observed that the brief was more in the form of a narrative than of an evaluation – an observation which I discuss in the methodology chapter.



# Striving for Action Teachers in the City – the million dollar investment . . .

This chapter contains a brief description of the Master's Programme initiated and run by the District.

## The City and the District

In his exposé on educational change, Michael Fullan (2007) writes that if one has to strategically choose a district deemed suitable for successful educational change, one should choose a district in which change is already on the agenda. The District in question has a long-established reputation for seeking change and implementing projects.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, 'Striving for Action Teachers' can be placed in a continuum of projects aimed at ensuring change within the educational institutions in the City.

Striving for Action Teachers can be perceived in many different ways. It can be seen as postgraduate education, which teachers could opt for as part of their competency development – one programme amongst many; it can be perceived as yet another project launched by the District; it can be perceived as symptomatic of what Dan Lortie calls professional development (Lortie op.cit.); or it can be perceived as a project in which the District has invested financially in order to spend allocated state funding in new ways.

Striving for Action Teachers was a master's programme which was expected to provide 75 teachers with a master's degree in action learning.

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<sup>10</sup> This characterisation is obtained from interviews with members of staff in the District, the Research Institute, teachers in the project and researchers who have worked in the City.

It was initiated in 2001, when 25 teachers commenced their first session in the Master's Programme Action Learning. They began a programme which gave them the option of studying for three years and obtaining postgraduate credits of 45 ECTS points. If they wanted to pursue a master's degree, they would have to study for another year and complete the programme with a master's dissertation. The initial agreement between the District and the Norwegian University consisted of a six-year period in which three cohorts of teachers would engage in a three-year programme. The agreement stipulated that the Norwegian University was responsible for the programme (content, acquiring lecturers, tutors etc.) and the District for the contracts with the participants and the physical aspects of the programme: lecture halls etc. (interview with Norwegian programme manager conducted in 2004, interview notes 2004). The contract stipulated, as mentioned above, that the teachers could choose to complete the programme with a master's, which added an extra year to the programme. The programme was designed to last three years, consisting of 1.5 years of studies to which the master's dissertation is added, totalling 90 ECTS points (*studieordning*, appendix 3). 45 of the ECTS points were awarded after three years and another 45 ECTS points would be awarded after completing the dissertation. The first two years of the programme consisted of what is called the 'basics' (in Norwegian: *basisdelen*). This part of the programme consisted of lectures, individual written assignments, group work within the cohort, and discussions. The 'basics' was awarded 30 ECTS points and was followed by the part of the programme called the 'in-depth period' (in Norwegian: *fordypningsdelen*), which consisted of a written assignment that took up the third year of the programme.

At this point it was possible to complete the programme and be awarded 45 ECTS points, having acquired the stipulated competences within action learning. In order to obtain the master's degree, the teachers had to engage in another year of studies, which consisted of a course in research methodology and the master's dissertation. The dissertation is awarded 30 ECTS points. The first two years consisted of approximately three seminars per semester and concurrently an ICT system was used to enhance communication, group work, and reflection. The teachers participating in the programme were allocated paid time to participate in the programme, in the form of a twenty five per cent reduction in work time for the first three years. However, if a teacher opted to write a master's dissertation, this work was regarded as optional and hence voluntary.

The master's programme was funded by the Swedish state and the programme itself delivered by the Norwegian University.

The objectives of Striving for Action Teachers were to ensure that:

1. The teachers were upgraded and qualified to teach in a different and more motivating way.
2. The teachers could inspire and help their colleagues at their respective schools.
3. The teachers could be lecturers at a future teaching college.

# Research design, methodology and reflections

## From evaluation to conceptualising new phenomena

The original research design was constructed to fulfil the evaluation brief (appendix 1). The brief requested that the evaluation should produce insight at every aspect of the project from a 'school' point of view: that is the school as an organisation; school management; teachers as work team; teachers as colleagues in general; teaching as a profession; and the impact of teaching with regard to the teachers. The data collection focused on how the participants viewed various aspects of the issues listed above. From the onset the data collection was designed to consist of both qualitative and quantitative data (appendix 3 and 4 contain example of questionnaires and appendix 5 and 6 contain examples of guides for interviews). Additionally, the data collection also consisted of obtaining information regarding the project, the context in other words. The research is based on a different types of empirical data, predominantly qualitative data. The advantage of this research is the longevity of the collection process. I, as the researcher, have been involved with and have had access to the 'field' for four years (2004-08). This has proven to be a significant advantage as the project has allowed me to obtain insight into what can be identified as categories of perceptions and opinions during the programme and insights into the development of the project. I subsequently argue that the evaluation project changed into a research project. The data collected during the evaluation project form a vital part of my research and I have consequently categorised the data collection belonging to these into different phases. Temporally these phases are identified as the following:

**Table 1:** Phases of research process

	Category	Period
Phase 1	Evaluation project	January 2004 – January 2006
Phase 2	Research project	January 2006 – August 2008

## The Importance of triangulation

The data has been collected throughout the project, which means that I have had access to data from 2004 until 2008. The data consists of researching websites, published leaflets, official documents, written material, three sets of questionnaires, field observations, participatory observations, 11 individual interviews, three in-depth group interviews, and one focus group interview. In total 15 interviews in which I have interviewed 14 of the teachers (33% of the final teacher population). I have, with the permission of the participants, obtained notes on their reflections from graduates of the programme, which have been used both as data in its own right and also in order to saturate the data which I have collected. The Norwegian programme developer, Norwegian Professor, has been interviewed, as has the second Norwegian programme manager. Norwegian supervisors have been interviewed, as have external examiners. Two principals have been interviewed in an interview which lasted three hours. The second programme manager in the District has been contacted on numerous occasions via e-mail and telephone – these conversations are not listed as interviews but as conversations, which form part of the background knowledge to the project.

In other words, the data has been triangulated both internally and externally. I have presented the data collection to both the Research Institute, the District, to leaders at various educational institutions in the City, to the Norwegian project team as well as to the participants of the programme. I have participated at a conference with action learning and action research as the theme in order to obtain deeper insight into the theme of the master's programme. Furthermore, I have, alongside Anders Persson, held meetings with the District. During these meetings, the District has received updates and annual reports which have been presented and discussed. The meetings have also served as meetings of dialogue and reflection and have thus been meaningful to both the District and the research team. Meaningful in the sense that the District has been inspired by our recommendations. Conversely we, the research team, have had opportunities to obtain further insights and explanations regarding our observations.

Table 2 illustrates the research methods applied throughout research phases 1 and 2. In addition to these concrete activities, e-mail communication and various short conversations must be added as sense-making activities (Karp 1996) adding depth to the data listed below.

**Table 2:** Data collection, type, phase of research process, location

	Type of data	Phase of research process	Location	Participation
Initial meeting	Documentative research Qualitative	1	The educational district centre	GG, project secretary from EEIL, AP and PB
Meeting	Documentative research qualitative	1	The Research Institute, Stockholm	Norwegian Professor, Director of department on educational studies, AP and PB
Questionnaire	Quantitative	1	E-mail distribution	Sample size of 15, AP and PB
Interview with Programme Manager (Nor)	Qualitative	1	The District	Interviewee and PB
Interview (A)	Qualitative	1	The District	Interviewee and PB
Observation	Qualitative	1	The District	First cohort, programme manager from Norwegian University lecturers and PB
Observation	Qualitative	1	Lecture	First cohort, programme manager from Norwegian University lecturer and PB
Meeting	Qualitative	1	The District	PB
Interview (B)	Qualitative	1	Teacher's school	Interviewee and PB
Interview (C)	Qualitative	1	Teacher's school	Interviewee and PB
Interview (D)	Qualitative	1	Teacher's school	Interviewee and PB
Interview (E+F)	Qualitative	1	Teachers' school	Interviewees and PB
Observation	Qualitative	1	Teacher's school	Teacher, teacher's pupils and PB
Meeting	Qualitative	1	Stockholm, meeting room	Head of R&D, Educational District Centre, second project manager, AP and PB
Questionnaire	Quantitative	1	E-mail distribution	Second cohort, sample size of 10, AP and PB
Documentation research	Qualitative	1	Written materials	Master's papers, AP and PB
Interview	Qualitative	1	Interviews	Second markers and AP
Observation	Qualitative	1	District Exam and presentations	Graduands, school colleagues, school principals, Norwegian Programme manager (first and second), second programme manager (the Educational District Centre)
Conference Observations Conversations	Qualitative	1	Town in Sweden	Norwegian first programme manager and second programme manager, teachers and PB
Interview (H)	Qualitative	1	Taxi in Stockholm	Interviewee and AP
Interview (I)	Qualitative	1	Teacher's school	Interviewee and PB
Observation	Qualitative	1	Lecture hall	Teachers from all cohorts, Norwegian second programme manager, lecturer, Norwegian supervisors and PB



Interview	Qualitative	1	Conference centre	Supervisor of teachers at the programme and PB
Group interview	Qualitative	1	Conference centre	2 supervisors of teachers at the programme and PB
Meeting	Qualitative	1	Stockholm	Norwegian Professor, AP and PB
Interview (J)	Qualitative	1	Teacher's school	Interviewee and PB
Interview (K)	Qualitative	2	Teacher's school	Interviewee and PB
Interview (L)	Qualitative	2	Teacher's school	Interviewee and PB
Interview (M)	Qualitative	2	Teacher's school	Interviewee and PB
Interview (N)	Qualitative	2	Teacher's school	Interviewee and PB
Questionnaire	Quantitative	2	E-mail distribution	Third cohort, sample size of 6, AP and PB
Documentation research	Qualitative	2	Written materials	Master's papers, AP and PB
Documentation research	Qualitative	2	Websites	AP and PB
Meeting	Qualitative	2	District	Second programme manager and PB
Focus group interview (O, P, Q, R, S and T)	Qualitative	2	Teachers' school	6 interviewees, AP and PB
Group interview (U and V)	Qualitative	2	Teachers' school	Interviewees and PB
Group interview	Qualitative	2	School	Interviewees (principals) and PB
Meeting	Qualitative	2	Copenhagen	Head of R&D and second programme manager from the Educational District Centre, AP and PB
Observation	Qualitative	2	District, Exam and presentations	Graduands, school colleagues, school principals, Norwegian Programme manager (first and second), second programme manager (educational district centre)
Documentation research	Qualitative	2	Published material containing information on the graduates	Used by PB in analysis
Documentation research	Qualitative	2	Reflective notes written by members of the ALF network <sup>1</sup>	Used by PB in analysis
Documentation research	Qualitative	2	Website of the City	PB and AP

<sup>1</sup> These notes have come into existence due to the second programme manager of Striving for Action Teachers and have been forwarded to me with the approval of the network members. The notes were anonymised by the second programme manager, as promised to the network members (appendix 10). I do not know who wrote each note.

As I have collected and deliberately triangulated the data, it is important to mention that the data has been anonymised. However, some of the teachers who were interviewed also appear as respondents in the questionnaires, teachers writing about the master's programme from their perspective and as members of the established network of graduates. This means that what can be interpreted as breath in data is both breath and depth in data, as some of the data is produced by the same person at different times and for different purposes. Hypothetically, this can be illustrated as below.

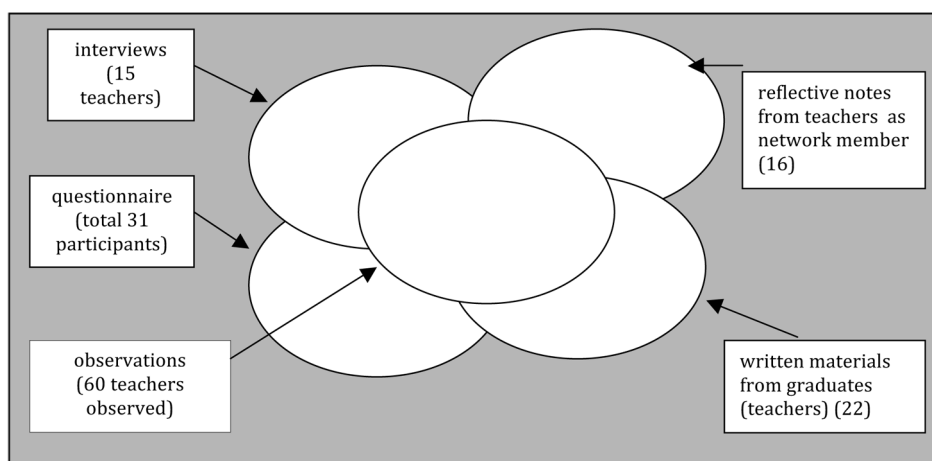


Figure 1: teachers participating in primary data population (author's compilation)

Given the issue of anonymity and given the fact that it would be speculative for me to commence identifying the potential occurrences of overlap, it is not indicated in the presentation of data. Each set of qualitative data is categorised and alphabetised with reference to the type of data collection: e.g. interview or reflective note. Given the extent to which the data has been triangulated some teachers may occur under different auspices. Some of the teachers have thus participated in the research during its entire phase. I have deliberately chosen to use the data obtained from my interviews together with the reflective notes in order to present the categorisation developed by me as part of my analysis. This increases the probability of some teachers' participating in different ways.

## Language – the paradox of quality

Striving for Action Teachers will in subsequent chapters be characterised as a project situated in a multifaceted context – be it from a research perspective, from a perspective of situating the project in the context of projects undertaken by the District,

and so forth. In the account of Striving for Action Teachers it became clear that the project is developed and conceptualised by a team consisting of Swedish civil servants and Norwegian university people. To add to the heterogeneity of the project, I, as evaluator and researcher, am Danish. When it came to collecting documents, observing lectures, meetings etc., the language has not been a barrier.<sup>11</sup> When it came to conducting interviews, language could be seen as a potential barrier. Given the fact that my Swedish proficiency level does not encompass transcription skills, it was deemed appropriate that the procedure listed in table 3 would enhance the quality and validity of the interview data.

**Table 3:** Procedure for interview

Step	Activity	Person	Value <sup>2</sup>
1.	Schedule interview meeting and venue	PB	Assurance of meeting and sense of professionalism
2.	Confirm interview session and send interview guide in advance	PB	Assurance of meeting, transparency and sense of professionalism
3.	Prior to interview explain the reasons for note technique	PB	Transparency and creating report and confidence in the forthcoming interview situation
4.	Take careful notes during interview	PB	Quality measures and developed interview technique
5.	Write reflective notes on interview upon return to Copenhagen	PB	To immediately jot down the initial impressions and thoughts on the interview in order not to forget the details of the interview, contents and influencing aspects. Increases the quality of the data subsequently.
6.	Write summary of interview	PB	To ensure transparency and provide the interviewee with the opportunity to approve and comment on the interview. Adds stamp of transparency and quality to the data and the process in general.
7.	Mail summary to interviewee for acceptance and opportunity to reflect on format and content of interview	PB	Assures the interview is completed professionally and provides me with the opportunity to continue the interview setting more informally subsequently if report has been established successfully.
8.	Comments and reflections added to summary of interview	Interviewees	Adds additional information and knowledge to that interview as the interviewee has provided the summary with complementary notes and hence elaborated on their viewpoints. The reflections have added quality and new insight to data.
9.	Add interviewee's comments and reflections to interview summary	PB	The interview data becomes richer and more saturated. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Kvale (1997) on the normal steps of interviewing.

<sup>3</sup> Bente Halkier (2002) has written on the ethical aspect of conducting qualitative research and argues that as a researcher it is important to reflect on the extent of involvement of the interviewees in order not to disappoint them with promises, which are subsequently not delivered. I purposefully engaged in a post-interview dialogue to ensure that the interviewees had a chance to comment on my notes, as these notes would become the primary data in my thesis. Every interviewee has been informed of the process and the reasons for the extensive process.

<sup>11</sup> It would, however be presumptuous of me to assume that the various cultures present in the research context have not affected the data collection in any way.

This procedure has been adhered to at every interview and has become the reason why I argue that the language issue, which was initially perceived as a potential barrier became a quality assurance paradox.<sup>12</sup> Every interviewee has seen the summary of the interview and had the opportunity to approve, comment, offer reflections and add new information, knowledge and/or opinions. The data obtained through this quality assurance procedure is invaluable and has provided me with insights into the topics raised in the interview. As Kvale (1996) has written, the interview continues after the interview has been completed – this goes for the interviewer as well as the interviewee. By mailing the summary of the interview to the interviewee, it became legitimate and possible for the interviewee to allow the aftermath of the interview to be processed and expressed.

## The research process

The dissertation is intricate as it draws on different theoretical disciplines. In that sense it is multidisciplinary. It is based on pedagogical thoughts, classical sociological theories such as social order, social change, educational sociology, organisational theories, innovation theories, and social theories. I did not initially intend to apply different theories to the extent which I have. As the research process evolved and the questions were unfolded, it became evident that in seeking to critically assess and explain the emerging patterns, I had to apply, revisit and modify different theories. Part of my research found explanatory power in the ANT theory. Bruno Latour's (2005) ANT theory provides us with a sociological theory of interactionism and network theory, which proved to be highly explanatory of education in action. Bruno Latour argues convincingly that the "social" is constantly reproduced through actions thus requiring us to observe, assess and reflect on same said actions. As Bruno Latour writes

"It's true that in most situations resorting to the sociology of the social is not only reasonable but also indispensable, since it offers convenient shorthand to designate all the ingredients already *accepted* in the collective realm. ... But in situations where innovations proliferate, where group boundaries are uncertain, when the range of entities to be taken into account fluctuates, the sociology of social is no longer able to trace actors' new associations. At this point, the last thing to do would be to limit in advance the shape, size, heterogeneity, and combination of associations" (Latour 2005: 11).

As the understanding of the research data became embedded within the field of innovation, Latour provided me with knowledge to focus on emergent patterns of flu-

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12 I have only once recorded in my post-interview reflective notes that language was an aspect which influenced the interview negatively. In processing the data from this interview, I highlight this fact as the interviewee became less elaborate and talkative as the interview progressed. Other factors, such as back-ground interference may have affected this tendency, however, language definitely added to this tendency (field notes: 19 January 2006).

idity, networks and actions. The challenge was to trace and sketch these patterns in order to illustrate firstly how the District inadvertently has created a creative knowledge base consisting of teachers which potentially ensured the institutions innovative capacity and secondly the ramifications of this.

Peter Dahler Larsen's (2002) eloquent arguments on how to present data have been a fruitful assistance in how to present the data set which I have collected over the years. Peter Dahler Larsen argues convincingly that seeking an objective status is a somewhat superfluous exercise when it comes to qualitative data. This does not mean that qualitative data is an unscientific discipline, which can easily be adopted by anyone. The scientific nature and aspect of qualitative data and analysis lie in the way in which the research process has been conducted. Furthermore, Peter Dahler Larsen illustrates that the essence of qualitative data is the craftsmanship and the quality of the collecting, analysis and presentation of data. Furthermore the aspect of quality is contextual, to which I subsequently return. According to Peter Dahler Larsen, the discussion of quality can almost be described as a discussion of validity<sup>13</sup>. He says that the quality of qualitative data should be placed within the following criteria:

- the criteria of transparency
    - o this criteria refers to the way in which the methodological decisions and actions have been explicitly explained and presented
  - the criteria of craftsmanship
    - o this criteria refers to the way in which the data has been collected patiently and diligently
  - the criteria of communicative validity
    - o this criteria refers to the way in which 'a statement from the analysis is 'strong enough' to sustain a subsequent dialogue'<sup>14</sup>
  - the criteria of heuristic criteria
    - o o this criteria refers to the way in which the research analysis has managed to produce new knowledge, new insight and new perspectives
- (the above is an amalgamation of Dahler Larsen 2002: 79-82).

Following Peter Dahler Larsen's thoughts and view on the quality and value of qualitative data, some of the data obtained throughout the research process will be presented as displays.<sup>15</sup> The reason for applying displays is because of the value, which they add to the research. Below are listed some of the advantages of displays;

1. It contributes to prioritising and forces you to stay focused
2. It facilitates and aids you in bounding and saturation

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13 The discussion of validity has often been ascribed quantitative data collection, however, validity and objectivity are also relevant and applicable concepts in the discussion of qualitative data (see e.g. Halkier 2002 and Kvale 1996).

14 Peter Dahler Larsen observes that communicative validity is too easily obtained if only sought amongst peers familiar with the jargon (2002: 78).

15 A display can take on different forms and depends on the data itself and the context in which the data is presented and contributes to the argument. A display can be anything from a table of relations to a visual mapping of the relations between the data.

3. It facilitates and aids you in ensuring concentration of and storing your data
4. It facilitates and aids you in identifying deficiencies and anomalies
5. It facilitates and aids you in presenting and condensing data and thus inference
6. It contributes to ensuring communicative validity
7. It conveys the stringency between data and conclusion
8. It contributes to ensuring that you can infer, argue and sustain the over-all analytical point throughout your research analysis

(Dahler Larsen 2002: 105-7)

## From evaluator to researcher – part I

As mentioned earlier this project originally started out as an evaluation of the master programme in action learning. The brief (listed in appendix 1) thus emphasised measuring the impact of the educational programme. At which point did the evaluation project become a research project, at which point did the focus move beyond the scope of recording and tracing the impact of the programme?

The research design was from the beginning of the evaluation process composed as multidisciplinary, applying various methods and ensuring that these methods were applied in a triangulating capacity. However, the research philosophy was greatly inspired by the perception that the empirical data will provide the research insight and ultimately challenge the previously established knowledge. The research philosophy is hence embedded within the rich discipline of qualitative data collection. The context, the temporal-spatial dimension of the topic researched, will also influence the data. As I also write below reflecting on the research process, the researcher herself is influenced by the context and in turn influences the context. Given this philosophical approach to the project it is thus possible to assert that the data itself ‘opposed’ the more rigorous evaluation process.

## The power of anomaly

During the collection of the data it became clear that something did not make sense. The questionnaire we collected from the first cohort of teachers indicated an immense level of frustration and initially we aimed at explaining it as learning frustration, poor project management (the disappointment of participating teachers regarding unrealised expectations and poor project management). However, as the work progressed, this did not make much sense. Dahler Larsen poignantly describes the process,

“the mechanical aspect of qualitative methods cannot be reified and made independent; it is in constant dialogue with the aspect of comprehension; that is to say the reasoning reflection of the concrete methodological steps” (Dahler Larsen 2002: 30; my translation).

Although we could point to aspects and areas of improvement, it was clear that this finding was about something else. I continued to collect data and in the process of triangulation it became clear that the interviewees expressed frustrations at deeper levels than just learning frustration and annoyance with the project management. An anomaly presented itself. An anomaly which actually persisted for some time. This anomaly became even more apparent when my findings were compared to the findings of a similar project conducted elsewhere in Sweden. The researcher identified enthusiasm, joy and pride at undergoing a similar action learning programme (Furu 2007).<sup>16</sup>

Was I able to identify frustration because I was not the project manager, as the researcher was in the above case? Was the identified frustration due to the structural context; namely that the teachers who had completed the questionnaires and been interviewed came from many different schools in a geographical area, which was more compatible to modern urban living than the other project, which was set in a more rural to small town like setting?

It did not make sense; it was not possible to explain. The challenge became not to shy away from the anomaly but to persist and see what unfolds.

This processual thinking is extremely demanding and can easily be compared to Einstein’s *‘Einführung’*:

“the search for highly universal laws ... from which a picture of the world can be obtained by pure deduction. There is no logical path leading to these ... laws. They can only be reached by intuition, based upon something like an intellectual love (*Einführung*) of the objects of experience.” (Einstein in Popper 2007: 8-9; original emphasis).

I have attempted to visually display the anomalies

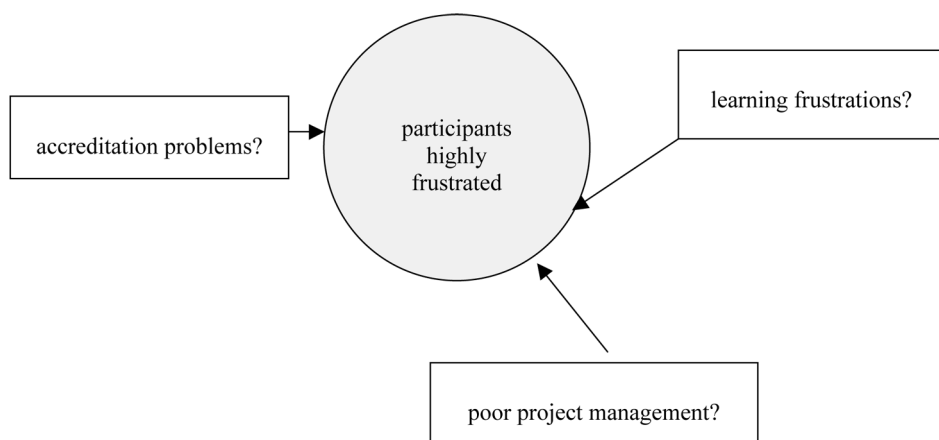


Figure 2: Anomaly. How to explain.

16 This programme was also developed and managed by the Norwegian University.

As can be seen from the figure based on the issues of dissatisfaction experienced, contention and frustration, there were various parameters, which could account for the frustration and annoyance expressed by teachers in interviews (e.g. interviewees B, D, E, F, I, J and K) and at meetings with Norwegian Project Manager; e.g. accreditation issues could indicate that this may account for some of the issues which the participants expressed. This did not, however, explain the annoyance they expressed with the contents of the programme, the frustration of colleagues at their schools, and the challenges of implementing their newfound knowledge in their everyday life. The argument that could be presented along the lines that this was normal learning frustration was inadequate. If it were a learning frustration, this frustration had to be able to account for every aspect of their dissatisfaction, be it regarding the Norwegian project management team, the lecturers, the project management team at the District, each participant's school, the attitude of colleagues etc. Such an argument lacked stringency and explanatory value cf. Dahler Larsen. It is precisely because of the persistence of this anomaly that the data collection process did not cease. Participants who had been interviewed initially were subsequently interviewed again in order to identify whether the learning issues had subsided. Instead of just interviewing the teachers at the different cohorts, the persons who had participated in the first interviews were contacted with the aim of interviewing them again. Some of these participants attended the conference in Sweden and I engaged in conversations with them regarding their dreams and goals regarding applying action learning as an integral part of their professional life (field journal: 2005). These conversations did not shed further light on the conundrum.

Serendipitously, one participant from the second cohort used the phrase change agent in an interview. In a further interview with a teacher from a secondary school on the outskirts of the City, the focus of the conversation turned to change:

“During the interview subjects such as change and change processes were mentioned several times and K pondered profoundly on the role of a change facilitator, change agent, responsibility for change. *X does not view the programme for action learning as making him responsible for change at his workplace* and does not want to be personally responsible for change but is positive towards change if not for anything else but for the sake of change. The dilemma regarding change from an organisational perspective was touched upon several times; what happens to the individual teacher if this teacher becomes the personification of change initiated by management? Being the initiator creates different relations to her/his colleagues depending on who has initiated the change process. If management has initiated change, is it genuine change? What is genuine change? What is the impact and meaning of change to the pupils depending on who has initiated the change if they appreciate the change?”

(extract from summary of interview conducted in January 2006,  
Appendix 6: author's translation; my emphasis).

This proved to be a significant turning point. It was in identifying the way in which the participants identified themselves in relation to the word change agent that the project paradoxically changed course forever and I was able to develop a very different understanding of the participants' frustration.



It altered the course of the research, as the data posed some intriguing questions, which could not be answered within the evaluation brief. Accounting for the impact of the programme with regards to the organisational culture, to school management, to colleagues, to teaching itself, and to teachers, the evaluation process became a mechanical exercise and to a certain degree superficial, as it did not deal with the anomaly, 'the crux of the matter'. The teachers (was it actually possible to argue that it was teachers and not just one person?) did not perceive themselves as change agents. The Norwegian Professor had, in an interview, expressed the sentiment that the teachers were to become competent at change processes and upon return to their schools become responsible for development work (conversation with Norwegian Professor conducted 4 October 2004 – appendix 7). However, given the above indicators from the teacher, the question has to be asked, how do the teachers perceive themselves?

From then on, I became a researcher intent upon identifying the anomaly and ascertaining the various ways in which the anomaly manifested itself. As I will present and discuss in chapter 8, the pertinent point to make here is that by identifying this rejection of the initial educational and developmental aims of the programme, it became possible for me to ask the questions:

- why did the teachers reject this concept?
- how can their rejection make sense given that they had been presented and introduced to the programme and yet they did not see themselves as part of the project behind the programme?
- how could the anomaly be presented in a meaningful way? Meaningful as in offering new insight to the people associated with the project, be it the District, the Norwegian University, the schools, the teachers etc.

Given the increasing focus and argued need for change within the educational sector and public sector in general, the observed rejection became of critical research merit and my focus altered considerably.

## From evaluator to researcher – part II – from ethereal to essential

As fortuitously as the interview described earlier – which radically impacted the research process – was perceived, another incident was seen as correspondingly disastrous. An incident which would extensively impact the research process, albeit in a very different way.

As mentioned briefly, the Research Institute funded the evaluation project independently. This gave the research team a sense of freedom and we (Anders Persson and I) honestly conveyed this crucial aspect to the teachers who completed the ques-

tionnaire (Appendix 3). The Research Institute provided the research team with funding which provided the research team with 25% of our time to evaluate the project. This funding was scheduled to continue until the end of 2007. However, the funding ceased dramatically and suddenly due to external factors beyond the control and influence of the Research Institute, the District centre and the research team. The funding ceased as the Research Institute was closed down due to government cutbacks. This setback occurred in the autumn of 2006, and for a period of several months the research process was affected by the uncertainty regarding future funding and hence the future status of the project.

I have previously listed the numerous conversations and meetings held with the District serving many purposes:

1. triangulation
2. clarification of data (hard facts of participants in terms of schools and teachers)
3. access to data (principals and external markers for example), and
4. presenting data as part of the evaluation project.

During these meetings the altered focus of the project had also been presented and the District found the new insight interesting and valuable to their professional practice. Given this interest in the research, the District offered to finance the remaining part of the research process.

My role thus changed from being an independent and detached evaluator who had deliberately not attempted to conduct action research but rather remain as the researcher who asked questions and made observations. I had not intended to act as the action scientist who is defined by Argyris et al (in Hansson 2003) as someone who:

“engages with participants in a collaborative process of critical inquiry into problems of social practice in a learning context. The core feature of this context is that it is expressly designed to foster learning about one’s practice and about alternative ways of constructing it” (Argyris et al 1987 in Hansson 2003: 65; my emphasis).

As my role changed given the fact that my funding changed, I had to pose the question, what is it changing to?

My altering role had to be addressed and identified, and it became evident that the funding in itself did not affect the status or the identity of my role. My role had gradually and qualitatively altered as the research process had entered phase 2 and also as the research project become intertwined with the project Striving for Action Teachers.

The research team submitted annual reports every year and presented the findings of these annual reports to the District Centre, and the contents and recommendations of these reports influenced the development of the programme. My role altered as this pattern of interrelationship emerged. As dialogue evolved and became based

on trust<sup>17</sup>, as the data collection accumulated and was presented to the second programme manager who commented and shared accumulated data, my role changed.<sup>18</sup> The funding situation brought this shift in my role from evaluator to something else to the fore, and it became necessary to identify and categorise this new role.

Given the radical shift in focus of the research and given the fact that parts of the preliminary explanations and insights relating to the anomaly identified were based on the theoretical discussion in which we will engage shortly, the novel role now identified was inspired by this discussion. Furthermore, my reflections on the altered role were inspired by the change in research focus and the methodological impact it served. As Greiff et al write: research should be democratic and emancipatory. Research questions should emanate from the field and the teachers' work experiences rather than from educational bureaucrats (2004: 17). This was indeed the case with the research as the individual teacher rejecting the term 'change agent' led to a significant change in the research question.

In order to understand and explain the anomaly I had to apply different sociological theories, e.g. the impact of globalisation to educational change, knowledge society, educational change discussions, theories of innovation within the public sector and sense-making et al. In so doing I conducted what Bruno LaTour calls *bricolage*, bringing together a patchwork of theories to explain the nature of the anomaly (LaTour 2007: 7).

In the course of this endeavour it became clear to me that the current debate on innovation misses a core aspect of the schism innate in any change process. This schism is evident when we look at the people who are targeted as vectors of change and innovation and compare their expectations with the expectations of the project organisers, and further at the meta-expectations of actors, e.g. departments of education, governments, international agencies et al, concerned with educational change.

The data collection process had moved from evaluation to research and my role had consequently morphed from evaluator to researcher.

I have elaborated on the ethical, social and personal aspects of the research process and the way in which this evolution affected the research process and speculatively how it affected the data below.

## Methodological Reflections

I have deliberately chosen to call this subchapter 'methodological reflections' and hereby wish to refer to the reflective nature which is an intricate part of conducting

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17 Trust as an important and influential aspect of teamwork has been documented by many (e.g. Fullan 2007 and Ekman et al 2007).

18 Confidentiality is equally as important as trust and it is pertinent to mention at this point that in the dialogue and presentation of data, confidentiality has been fully respected and explicitly listed by both researcher and second programme manager.

research (Shulamit Reinharz 1992). I have elsewhere (Berg 1994) reflected on what it is like to have your personal attributes, such as gender, class, and race confronted in a totally different context and how it impacts your research process and research itself.<sup>19</sup> In conducting the research for this dissertation, those personal attributes have played a considerable role, as they do in any given situation.

“I have feminist distrust for research reports that include no statement about the researcher’s experience. Reading such reports, I feel the researcher is hiding from me or does not know how important personal experience is. Such reports seem woefully incomplete and even dishonest” (Reinharz 1992: 263).

I have, since completing my training as a sociologist, also worked full-time as a teacher at a school<sup>20</sup> in Denmark and have consequently a very high propensity towards ‘going native’. I have been in a position where I have been both the practitioner and the researcher. My own teaching experience has been a major advantage and also disadvantage. It has been an advantage, firstly in my ability to understand what the teachers referred to when they spoke about the convert resistance and jealousy of their post-graduate training; secondly, in my understanding of what their ‘normal’ day would consist of (the small daily routines that become overly important and reduce your ability to deal with the ‘bigger’ issues (Mulford 2005)); thirdly, in my understanding of how the ‘market metaphor’ has impacted our lives as teachers (Hargreaves 2003); fourthly, how the school culture impacts your personality and your abilities to teach, suggest changes, implement changes.

The disadvantages entail, firstly, that I have had to be very careful that I was insightful rather than impositional in my reflections, interpretations; secondly, not equating my experiences with theirs or vice versa; thirdly, not searching for the generic structures in teaching and learning but rather let the ‘ground’ pave its own way (Glaser and Strauss 1967); and fourthly, not letting my own sense-making impact their sense-making.

I share, however, the view of many researchers, who ultimately believe in social equity, emancipation, empowerment etc., that only by acknowledging these potential biases is it possible as a researcher to move forward and conduct your research. I have consequently not been able to bracket my own experiences within the teaching profession but I have been able to acknowledge that it has impacted my research to some extent. I have been very honest and open about my own background when talking to the teachers and both the Norwegian University and the District. I have also been able to reflect upon the ways in which it has impacted my research and hence attempted to reduce the disadvantages and benefit from the advantages. These reflections have been noted in my field journals. The advantage of having worked as a teacher for almost 20 years concurrent to obtaining various degrees and conducting various research should not be underestimated. The practice that Marilyn

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19 Oakes et al (2005) also make some wonderful observations when it comes to white, middle-to-upper class researchers being very uncomfortable with conducting research ultimately aimed at reducing social inequality.

20 The school offers both secondary and third level education, I have taught at both although solely at third level since 1998.

Cochran-Smith (2005) refers to benefits from both practitioners and researchers (see also Lund (2004) for an account of the benefits of such a partnership), being able to participate in both fields provides me with in-depth knowledge and an ability to communicate in both worlds. My work experience has also contributed to establishing rapport with the teachers and has thus aided the interview situations positively. I have previously listed an interview which was affected by the language issue (me speaking Danish and the interviewee speaking Swedish). During the same interview my professional experience as a teacher enabled me in establishing rapport, as the interview was conducted at the teacher's school, and I was able to convey understanding of the work surroundings and the nature of the workday immediately and genuinely.

The primary data has been collected over an extended period of time – from January 2004 till June 2008. As I depict elsewhere, the programme is an example of micro-politics in which the local actors, namely the District and politicians, have played a major part in bringing about this programme. As I will also depict in the analysis, this local attempt at bringing about educational change is an excellent example of what Oakes et al (2005) refer to as mediating institutions in the zone. The money, which the District has been able to spend on the postgraduate programme, is funded at national level. As I argue elsewhere, it is an example of responding creatively to market forces in educational reforms.

The data collected over a three and a half year period has thus consisted of all the actors involved in the programme. I have not collected extensive data on the school principals although that was the intention at some point. The in-depth interview with two school principals offered insightful opinions and their perception of the project has provided me with additional data which added further nuances to teachers' reflections. I do not purport that their views are representative of every principal of every school participating in the project. The objective of the interview was to produce insight into how they perceived the teachers after their new knowledge and competences. Furthermore they were also interviewed as I wanted to obtain their view on the teachers' opinion on change agents. The interview became a very intriguing diversion, namely that of a sectarian school culture, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation. The reason why school principals in general were not interviewed related to the fact that I specifically wanted to pursue the perceptions and opinions of the teachers. Their voices became the voices of the existential schism that traditional change projects and postmodern change requirements make on every person within the postmodern educational system. This does not reduce the importance of school leadership.<sup>21</sup> At this point the experiences of the teachers were more pertinent. As I began to identify the emerging pattern of the influence of the school principals, this was relayed to the District. They had also identified this aspect and had commenced

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21 Other research focusses greatly on the impact of school leadership and posits a close correlation between school performance overall, grade achievements, and the degree to which the teachers thrive and find their work conditions stimulating. This research has also brought about the concept of classroom leadership. (Examples of such research: Blase 2005; Pont et al 2008; Fibæk Laursen 2010, pending publication).

a programme for the principals. The success of this is, however, low according to the District.

Although I identify the data as qualitative and term the data collection process as qualitative, I have also collected quantitative data in the form of questionnaires. This data has been treated descriptively and has functioned as part of identifying general patterns when it came to the teachers' perception of the programme and the impact it has on their daily lives (Appendix 3). The questionnaires have thus become part of the qualitative process, as I have used them in preparing the in-depth interviews.

My interviews have been conducted in Danish and Swedish and this has occasioned many contemplations and reflections. I have deliberately chosen not to record the interviews, as my Swedish is not fluent enough to transcribe. This 'linguistic' bias is consequently evident and has impacted the entire research process. Interestingly enough however, I have only once recorded in my post-interview reflections that language impacted the interview to such an extent that I had the impression that the teacher interviewed was uncomfortable. As I was very aware of this linguistic bias I developed a practice where I was extremely careful and ethical in my data collection. Before every interview I would send the topics that were to be addressed at the interview. The interviewed teacher could respond and we could modify or extend the topics. In one situation a teacher responded that the topics seemed extensive and hence overwhelming. We subsequently wrote to each other and actually ended up discussing the topics prior to the interview. The teacher was consequently very 'prepared' and had some excellent observations. Due to this process of openness and communication, the teachers were (apart from the one mentioned above) very comfortable and prepared for the interview. One teacher had made written notes prior to the interview and jotted down notes as we discussed the topics. I consciously use the term "discuss", as I perceive the interview process as a dialogue (Kvale 1996).

During the interviews I was very adamant that the teachers should understand the questions, particularly my 'probing'. Most of the interviews were conducted in the teachers' staff room and were illustrative of the openness most of the teachers wanted to express to their colleagues. This setting was highly inappropriate in one situation and I should have suggested another venue. As it turned out, the teacher made a comment during the interview and we changed venue. The interviews were highly successful in the sense that they contributed to furthering my research process and also aided the teachers in reflecting on their own teaching and learning (the emancipatory and reflective nature of qualitative research). Furthermore they are exemplary of what Peter Dahler Larsen has identified as emic and epic meeting process. After each interview was completed, I would write a detailed summary (see appendix 6 for an example) and the teacher interviewed was able to read and reflect further and, more crucially, alter any misinterpretations and misconceptions that had arisen, either due to language or my fallacious 'sense-making'. The summaries hence became part of a joint reflective practice and have proven to be invaluable to my research process.

I was hesitant when it came to using my notes from the interviews and this presented me with a conundrum that I had to deal with. I found the data to be of ex-

tremely high value. I found that the data collection process was of high quality, yet I felt that my summaries did not qualify to be used as quotations – my notes were not the interviewees' own words!

To resolve this conundrum, when presenting their opinions and their examples I also made use of the reflective notes from the official printed material from some of the participants, and have used both the summaries and the notes, in order to give them their voice as much as possible – their words, albeit slightly polished words. In using both types of qualitative data I have been able to compare and observe nuances.

The observations, which I have accumulated throughout the period, have not been subjected to the same rigorous joint reflective practice with the participants. I am, however, eternally grateful to Anders Persson for sharing my observations in a reflective discourse. His insights and comments have been challenging to say the least but also highly conducive to the success of my research. Furthermore, my observations, conversations and interpretations have been relayed to the District, the University and the teachers in annual reports which have been sent to every person involved. The annual reports have subsequently informed the agenda for meetings and have produced feedback and reflections. Given my contention that educational change is highly political and localised (Oakes et al 2005, Cochran-Smith 2005, Boyd 2005, Hargreaves 2005), these meetings have to be situated in this context. It has thus brought Fink and Stoll's (2005) observation on the nature of change to the fore. The first annual report was highly critical in its observations and recommendations and the reception of this was awkward to say the least. The political nature of educational change and how it impacts the researcher was also highlighted when I was asked to present my findings to an interactive conference held by the District.

The conference, which I have described as a positive and commendable initiative in the above chapters, was attended by the District (the director, head of R&D, programmer and other interested parties). The University responsible for the programme was represented by some lecturers and teachers participating in the programme. Other teachers participating in a similar programme in another district also attended the conference. The conference was designed to facilitate experiences and knowledge and as such was intensive for the participants. I was originally intended to attend as an observer and to avail of the chance to meet most of the teachers attending the programme at the same time. I was then asked to present some of my findings and found myself facing the typical dilemma: what should I tell them and how much?<sup>22</sup> Some of the teachers attending the conference had not yet received the questionnaire and I did not want to influence them negatively. As it turned out, some of the teachers subsequently told me that they worried that I had succumbed to 'naivism' of the University and it impacted teachers wishing to participate in the interviews (was expressed by interviewee K). It also impacted the amount of teachers participating in the last collection of questionnaires (cohort 3). The annual report had only been sent to the class which had participated in the research, and consequently some

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22 I chose to present the current findings as expressions of the empowering sense teacher training can induce. I have attached the presentation in Appendix 9.

teachers had not read our reports. Therefore they were unaware of my position and misinterpreted my presentation at the conference. I was subsequently told by some of the teachers that they perceived my presentation as an extension of the political narrative of the project *Striving for Action Teachers* and that, by not mentioning any of the more negative aspects of the project, I had come across as naïve and blinded by the positive spin of action learning. It was a situation that poignantly illustrates how fragile the researcher's position is. I have obviously been extremely dependent on the teachers' willingness to participate in the interviews. As I mentioned earlier, only one teacher came across as affected by my Danish and hence rather uncomfortable. The remaining interviewed teachers have all expressed positive opinions about participating in the research. Therefore I have had to deduce that my presentation ultimately impacted the teachers who at that point did not know the research, my role and me very well.

Some teachers have later acknowledged that they would have liked to participate in the interviews but had been too busy. One interview had to be cancelled due to a series of unfortunate events – snowstorms and transportation difficulties. The interview was subsequently completed but the low response rate, which I experienced from the third cohort in the questionnaire, may have been due to the impact of this presentation. It is conceivable, although impossible to ascertain. Returning to my presentation at the conference I decided to let the presentation consist of the teachers themselves and presented extracts of the interviews conducted hitherto. It was thus quite honourable and true to the data. My presentation can be seen as an attempt to give the teachers a voice – a voice, which they had actually been without in the early stages of the programme. It was intended as such. I gauged that the conference was not the venue to express my apprehensions and critical reflections, as the objective of the conference was to facilitate reflections and share experiences and knowledge; the first teachers to graduate presented their papers, for example.

The above experience is a good example of the researcher feeling obligated and morally obliged to contribute to the stipulated objectives of e.g. in this case the objectives of the conference. However, although discombobulated at the unforeseen implications of my choice, I still think it was the right choice. As Bente Halkier (2003) argues, a researcher is still bound by good old-fashioned behavioural norms, not least of which is good manners.

The political context was, however, therefore very explicit and factions apparently existed; some had succumbed to naivism, others maintained that they were not influenced by the 'sect' as it was identified by some participants. The political nature of the programme, i.e. the micro-political context (Boyd 2005) or zone of mediation (Oakes et al 2005) was also conveyed in the various responses to our annual reports and particularly to the interaction between the District and the University responsible for the programme. The first annual report was consequently not well received by the University and although never confrontational became the issue for an exchange of opinions. The District also received the report and reflected on it. We later discovered that they had taken our recommendations on board, however, with-



out informing us about it. Equally the University later acknowledged that they had initiated some changes to the programme, again based on our recommendations.

Given the political nature of educational change, it has been an enormous advantage that the initial funding to this project has come from an external and independent party. The different attempts at directing my research or impacting my research have been relatively easily defused given the fact that I knew that I did not have any financial and thereby morally/power related obligations towards either party involved in the project. I have therefore been able to participate within the 'normal' relationship; I have still been dependent on everybody's participation and I have ultimately relied on his or her openness. However, I have also been able to accept offers and invitations when I deemed it would benefit the research, e.g. the conference mentioned earlier and another conference on action learning and action research. However, I fully support the view in the quote below and have critically reflected on the different episodes that have taken place in the last years.

“Even if in modern organizations there is no real master of the process, *power* plays a crucial role in all selections, and a reflexive methodology has to reflect this. The expert must expect that his best-meaning proposals which try to balance all stake-holders interests on all levels, will be filtered through the existing web of power relations; and he must always count with being instrumentalised by particular interests” (Moldaschl and Brödner in Bjørndal 2004: 134); original emphasis),

As the funding situation altered, my role changed. This became a symbolic depiction of the way in which a project is not linear and is often bounded by external intricacies, which illustrates that we can never apply a rational logic of pre-planning to any project. The advantage of the independent funding was replaced with the advantage of becoming a researcher and thus an epitome of the essence of the postmodern project; chaos and creativity surround knowledge production. The advantages of independent funding were particular to the initial stages of the project as I had the opportunity to 'find my bearings', obtain insight into the field and the various people within the various constellations of alliances and intricacies.

# Educational Change – keeping up with the times?

The role of the educational system is not a new topic of investigation, indeed the classicists within sociology have all written extensively on the educational system (e.g. Durkheim (1961) and Parsons in Moore (2004)). Whether the view of the educational system is humanist, functionalist, or cultural neo-Marxist (Wells et al 2005), it is still a very popular topic in terms of the role it plays when it pertains to forming our current and future society. The educational system has undergone a plethora of reforms and change in recent time. As Hargreaves et al write: “educational change is ubiquitous” (Hargreaves et al 2005: vii). Although some argue that the educational system has always undergone change and reforms,<sup>23</sup> Hargreaves et al argue that

“While educational change has always been with us in some sense or other ..., many of the changes are very different now, in both their substance and their form” (Hargreaves et al 2005: viii).

The educational system has experienced reforms and change at a very high pace since the 1960s and reforms have indeed become familiar components of teaching.<sup>24</sup> Change and innovation have consequently become a part of the everyday life of teaching and with such an abundance of change and innovation, one would assume that the educational system had become accustomed to and experienced with change. This is, however, not the case. Research<sup>25</sup> has instead shown:

23 Dan Lortie (2002) writes for example in the preface to the second edition, “Education does not change at a rapid pace – the major structures in public education are much the same today as when *Schoolteacher* was written in 1975” (2002: vii). See also Mats Greiff (2004) for a fascinating analysis of historical change in the educational system.

24 See e.g. Boyd (2005) for an account of the development of educational reforms since the Second World War.

25 There is an abundance of literature that critically discusses the factors of impediments to educational change (be it political, structural, societal, cultural, managerial or personal), (see e.g. Fink and Stroll

“how and why large-scale curriculum innovations rarely progressed beyond the phase of having their packages purchased or “adopted” to the point where they were implemented fully and faithfully, and could bring about real changes in classroom practice. At the same time, they also revealed how the promise of exceptional innovative schools usually faded over time as their staff grew older, their charismatic leaders left, and the system withdrew permission for them to break the rules” (Hargreaves et al 2005: viii).

The conundrum of how change is made sustainable and successful is still not resolved (see e.g. Fullan 2003) and the debate about whom the change is for is also on-going, e.g. who benefits from the reforms and why is one reform replaced by another.<sup>26</sup> Fink and Stroll (2005), Berliner and Biddle in Mulford (2005), Cochran-Smith (2005), Oakes et al (2005), Wells et al (2005) and Hargreaves (2005) also point to the political aspect of change, “make no bones about it, the origins of some of our present educational uncertainties are manufactured and malevolent and should not be causes for celebration but for fundamental critique” (Hargreaves 2005a: 7).<sup>27</sup>

Independent of the perspective on society, the education system is seen to play a pivotal role in forming the citizens of the future.<sup>28</sup> And conversely, the society has an immense influence on the educational system. Bill Mulford illustrates this when he (referring to M. Levin) writes that one can actually question how autonomous schools really are (Mulford 2005: 353).

Currently the educational system is facing the task of being told that given the change to the post-modern world, the knowledge-based economy, they have to improve the educational system, “more people should be *better educated* than ever before” (D. Hargreaves: 2003: 19; my emphasis; see also A. Hargreaves 2003: 87).<sup>29</sup> The question

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2005; Miller 2005; Blase 2005; Hargreaves 2005; Mulford 2005; Darling-Hammond 2005, D. Hargreaves 2003, Bennich-Björkman 2003 and Mühlenbock and Solli 2003).

26 See Deborah Meier (2005) for an excellent account of the educational system and its beneficiaries.

27 Heather-Jane Robertson (2005) has some stark examples of these so-called crises in the educational system used cynically in the political debate calling for educational reforms.

28 Although Meier brilliantly points out that one may confuse correlation with causation when one discusses the impact of education on prospective life-chances (2005: 323), I am here referring to the fact that the education system is assumed to have the responsibility for educating ‘our’ children. Quoting Meier, “Schools were invented as a replacement for the most authentic forms of education – those that stemmed naturally out of families, neighborhoods and workplaces ... but there aren’t alternatives unless we reorganize the entire society that surrounds us so that the raising of the young is again woven into all aspects of modern life” (Meier 2005: 316). Or as Andy Hargreaves writes “The teacher’s role as a vital socializing agent in preparing generations of the future, must never be underestimated or overlooked” (Hargreaves 2003: 42). See also Anders Persson (2003) for a critical analysis of the school as an institution in our society in which many pertinent questions are posed, e.g. why do children who do not like the school have to stay?.”In a society which made no distinction between citizenship and education, the second was seen as an agency for socialization” (Touraine 2000: 266).

29 Although I briefly reflect on the type of knowledge that is sought, I do not discuss cognitive theories on knowledge. For an excellent discussion on what kind of knowledge is required in the knowledge society, please see Bereiter and Scardamalia (2005). In their article they are able to critically assess Bloom’s taxonomies and purport how today’s knowledge actually requires ‘expert knowledge’ and ‘deep knowledge’. Hence educational institutions may fallaciously base their curricula on Bloom’s taxonomies and not educate the teachers for the future as they otherwise claim. (See also on Howard Gardner (2006) on his research on knowledge for the future).

is how the educational system can fulfil that task and what kind of society the current teachers are facing. Furthermore it is as Wells et al (2005) contend pertinent that we address the perception of globalisation and how those views pertain to educational change. As is illustrated in subsequent chapters, the educational system exists in a hybrid of manifold and complex demands. Some demand quality, others efficiency, others again innovation, some cry out for re-establishing the 'old' school, some simply ask for 'better teachers' (e.g. as quoted in D. Hargreaves 2003: 19), and others yet call for a 'reculturing' of the school. In order to understand this hybrid and complex web of demands it is pertinent to understand the perspectives behind the demands. As Thomas Sergiovanni also writes, we need to understand the human view behind the systems in order to understand and achieve change (Sergiovanni 2005: 313).

## Understanding Educational Change

Educational change is a vastly researched topic and as noted previously education change is ubiquitous. Consequently Hargreaves (2005a) argues that it is pertinent that we try to obtain knowledge regarding educational change – conceptually and in action in order to be able to understand it better. Given the fact that educational change is all around us and that the educational system is inundated with an increasing demand for change and innovation, it is important to understand how educational change is implemented and sustained. Hargreaves identifies several reasons why educational change is difficult:

1. the reasons for changes are poorly conceptualized
2. the beneficiaries of the changes are not identified
3. the aim and goal is too ambitious
4. the change is just too fast and hence difficult/impossible to cope with
5. resources are scarce and hence the change is unsustainable
6. lack of long-term commitment
7. key staff is not committed
8. the teachers are not involved in the change
9. parents or other stakeholders may oppose the innovation
10. leaders are too controlling or too ineffectual
11. the change occurs in isolation

(Hargreaves 2005a: 1-2). I also find the literature rarely defines and categorises educational change concisely enough. As I will argue in a subsequent chapter, educational change and innovation are often used interchangeably.<sup>30</sup>

“We create isolated islands of change much more than we build great continents of them. Successful schools change on a widespread basis continues to be infuriatingly elusive.” (Hargreaves 2005a: 2).

Or as Darling-Hammond writes,

“In some places, a concerted effort has been made to strengthen the knowledge base for teaching and teachers’ regular access to that knowledge. In others these efforts remain piecemeal – a good idea here and a thriving innovation there” (Darling-Hammond 2005: 384).

Although continents of change may not be built, quite a number of ‘isolated islands’ have been created. The question is how we understand these ‘isolated islands of change’.

“One reason is that educational change is not just a technical process of managerial efficiency, or a cultural one of understanding and involvement. It is political and paradoxical process as well (Handy in Hargreaves). People fear change not just because it present them with something new, uncertain or unclear – because it has no obvious or common meaning for them. *The agenda of educational change is also contested.* Education is the greatest gatekeeper of opportunity and a powerful distributor of life chances. In a socially divided and culturally diverse society, what education is and how it is defined will always tend to favour some groups and interests over others. So attempts to change education in fundamental ways are ultimately political acts. They are attempts to redistribute power and opportunity within the wider culture. *Educational change is not just a strategic puzzle. It is, and should be a moral and political struggle.*” (Hargreaves 2005a: 2; my emphasis).

Hargreaves suggests four areas, which may aid and facilitate such an understanding, namely:

- “Educational change in a world of chaos and complexity, and as a process that is complex and chaotic itself,
- The societal forces which drive educational change, and the ways that educators understand and respond to them,
- The political factors that shape the purposes and processes of educational change,
- The emotional aspects of learning, teaching and leading and how these can guide and divert educational change agendas” (Hargreaves 2005a: 3).<sup>31</sup>

30 Persson and Stavreski (2004) are able to discern three different types of change that elucidate one of the reasons why change is as complex as it is. They identify ‘adaptation’, ‘reform’ and ‘change’ and are hereby able to explain why teachers experience a work-life ‘squashed’ in the middle of top initiated reforms and bottom induced adaptation and change (my translation of *anpassning, reform og forvandling*).

31 One aspect, which Hargreaves does not address, is whether the very ontology of the school is averse to easily implementing change. If one accepts the argument posed by e.g. Anders Persson (2003) namely that the school’s ontology is dichotomous in that it both aspires to create equality and prepare pupils for the labour market, it becomes understandable why educational change can never

The messiness in which educational change occurs is indeed complex and manifold among other things due to the above-mentioned four areas. As I depict below, the complexity becomes evident as soon as one attempts understanding the context of educational change. Furthermore I also argue that the field of educational change may aid us in understanding change processes at organisational level but confound our understanding of educational change as they do not adequately differentiate between educational change at organisational and institutional level. I thus align myself with the analysis by Leonard Waks (2007). Prior to this discussion it is pertinent to address the impact of globalisation with regards to education and the debate of change and innovation. In the following chapters I revert to these themes.

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be easily implemented. Greiff (2004) also writes that the school has a double function and is thus slow to change.



# Globalisation and Education

Educational change is a global phenomenon; be it England, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, Norway, France, Ireland, Sweden, Australia, Denmark etc., a common denominator for the past decade has been an on-going trend of educational change.

Zygmunt Bauman writes about the forces of globalisation, in view of globalisation and identity, that:

“There are seemingly random, haphazard and utterly unpredictable shifts and drifts of what for the lack of a precise name are called ‘forces of globalization’. They change beyond recognition, and without warning, the familiar landscapes and cityscapes where the anchors of our durable and reliable security used to be cast. They reshuffle people and play havoc with their social identities.... We talk these days of nothing with greater solemnity or more relish than of ‘networks’ of ‘connection’ or ‘relationships’, only because the ‘real stuff’ – the closely knit networks, firm and secure connections, fully fledged relationships – have all fallen apart” (Bauman 2004: 93).

From this more gloomy picture Fink and Stroll observe that:

“it would seem that our societies are passengers in time between a passing ‘modern’ age and a new complex, diverse, confusing and ... chaotic post-modern era. *The problem for educators is how to create organizations which prepare our children to engage with this changing and uncertain world* and shape it for the better, while preserving their basic humanity in the midst of potentially dehumanizing principles and practices” (Fink and Stroll 2005: 18; my emphasis).<sup>32</sup>

There is consequently an increasing demand on the educational system to perform ‘better’ and create ‘better’ teachers.

But what does globalisation entail and which impact does it have on the educational system and more importantly on innovation and change?

It is reading Andy Hargreaves’ (2003) account of the knowledge society and its impact on education that the paradoxical and sometimes despairing aspects of glo-

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32 Some argue, however, that it is fruitless to attempt predicting the future as this is impossible and it is consequently “improbable that we can ‘accurately and precisely specify the characteristics of schools adapting to such consequences’” (Leighwood et al in Mulford 2005: 338).



balization resonate heavily and somewhat sadly. When the French Inspector General of France's educational system, Alain Michel, writes,

“Globalization, because of the risks it brings of *soulless standardization*, can lead to fragmentation and a reduced sense of belonging to a wider community. The excesses of unbridled markets, in which prices and the market are more important than social or cultural relationships, are being met with a reaction of narrow nationalism, regionalism and parochialism” (Michel in Hargreaves 2003: 31; my emphasis),

he brings forth a picture of an impersonal, cruel and uninviting society which does not appear particularly aspiring and wholesome. Indeed Hargreaves' depiction of globalisation and our current knowledge society is on the one hand not particularly positive. On the other hand he also recognises the increasing level of affluence and choice which it has brought. Hargreaves argues that in current society we have witnessed not only an increase of uncertainty<sup>33</sup> but also an increase of insecurity. By addressing the aspect of insecurity Hargreaves highlights the way in which globalisation can be seen to polarise and accentuate the economic, political and social differences between poor and rich, between developed and undeveloped countries. His analysis brings forth the paradox of globalisation where few get more and more end up with less.<sup>34</sup> More alarmingly though, Hargreaves argues – like Bauman – that globalisation and the knowledge society have impacted our lives to the degree that we are unable to act as 'true' democratic citizens. He conveys a picture of people who would rather consume that spend time together, of young girls who spend more time texting each other than spending time together with friends, relatives and family (Stroll in Hargreaves 2003: 25). Hargreaves portrays the inhabitant of the knowledge society as a person who is unable to sustain long-term relationships, who is unable to spend quiet moments alone (rather we constantly check our phones for messages). “The knowledge society increasingly threatens to move us into a world that offers neither solitude nor community” (Hargreaves 2003: 25). Hargreaves describes the knowledge society as being rather 'gaseous', in that we have so many choices due to globalisation but the choices we have basically deal with inessentials. Furthermore Hargreaves argues that the issue of globalisation is one of morality, or rather a lack of morality. “The asymmetric threats that confront us arise out of the asymmetry ... (of) globalization. We have global markets but we do not have a global society. *And we cannot build a global society without taking account of moral considerations*” (George Soros in Hargreaves 2003: 34; my emphasis).<sup>35</sup> The knowledge society is superficial

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33 Hereby referring to the increasing complexity or risk associated with our current society. Globalisation has brought the complexity of flexible economy and increase in risks (Hargreaves 2003: 28).

34 For a compelling account of this polarising nature of globalisation see Daviron & Ponte's (2005) account of coffee production; while 'we' drink our lattes, the coffee producers become more and more marginalized.

35 George Soros (of Eastern European origin, but emigrated to the States) has as a very successful businessman also assisted in many benevolent enterprises and aided in creating businesses in many countries of the former Soviet Union (The Soros Foundation) and argues continuously for a market economy in which its citizens are aware of their moral obligations (for a similar discussion of the nature of the market economy see Robertson 2005).

and has gravely impacted our human character to a degree where we must ask the question whether we are able to sustain long-term relationships. Referring to Richard Sennett and Michael Ignatieff, Hargreaves writes “the destabilizing effects of work in the industrial economy were ones of scarcity, necessitating long working hours and strong dispositions of scrimping and saving. In the knowledge economy, the destabilizing effects are often ones of abundance” (Hargreaves 2003: 38).

The knowledge society thus becomes a place where we may (some of us) have material wealth and so many choices in our professional and personal lives that we incessantly scan through the different aspects of our lives; we become ‘tourists’ in the context of affluence and a cornucopia of choice and freedom.<sup>36</sup> Our career depends on swift and ambitious choices and our personal life depends on conveying the right choices with regards to home, spouse, children etc. The result is one of superficiality and an inability to actually perform in long-term groups. It is this context Hargreaves has developed his position on educational change and his vision for teaching.

Before discussing what kind of educational change should be recommended and aspired to, I wish to draw attention to the argument put forth by Wells et al (2005). They argue convincingly that educational change and the term globalisation can be analysed from different perspectives; e.g. neo-liberalism, liberal progressives, post-Marxists and neo-Marxists. “Given the array of theoretical and epistemological perspectives presented in the general social science literature on “globalization”, it is difficult to assess not only the dimensions of globalization but also what it might mean to the field of education” (Wells et al 2005: 64). Wells et al characterise globalization as a combination of many different factors, namely economic, political, social and cultural. From an economic perspective globalization refers to the increasing exchange internationally and politically to predominantly transnational interactions (Wells et al 2005: 43).<sup>37</sup> Culturally and socially, globalisation has meant, apart from the above Bauman quotation on identities, that influence, trends, norms and opinions are no longer solely a matter for the national state.<sup>38</sup> Wells et al highlight

36 ‘Tourists’ is what Zygmunt Bauman has termed the group of people that reap the rewards of globalisation.

37 Professor José Santos from Insead has indeed identified another aspect of globalization, namely the emergence of metanational companies (Santos paper presented to FUHU 10 May 2006, see also Doz et al 2001).

38 One example of the implosion of the national boundaries can be seen in consumption and brands; economic development has increased at a pace that is daunting to say the least. The fact that brands work in a global setting is not a new occurrence; it is the pervasiveness that is. The way in which products have become more than just brands but also personalised expressions of lifestyles is indicative of the way in which the classic boundaries of nation, class, occupation, political affiliation have altered and have been replaced with something quite different, e.g. Bauman’s depiction of the consuming void. Another example is the recent upsurge of Apple: the history of Apple is a pertinent example of the postmodern society. Steve Jobs is viewed as one of the *coolest* C.E.O.s about. When he presents Apple’s latest technological innovation, the presentation is akin to an appearance by a rock star. The way in which Apple as a brand and identity is linked to Jobs can be seen in the recent speculation and critique Apple has received during Jobs’ recent illness. Their showrooms combine design, technology, ‘trendiness’ and everything that is hip to such an extent that people queue outside to visit new showrooms. One product replaces another with a speed which is amazing (see [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)). How many brands have an identity so akin to cult that you have a terminology for newcomers? (I am here referring to the term ‘switchers’, a term that refers to people who switch from pc to mac). Another example is the iPod. The iPod did not just replace the walkman, the

that there is not *one* definition of globalization and not *one* opinion on the impact of globalisation.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, it is this disagreement that they find crucial as this difference impacts views on educational change and reforms (2005: 43-44).

Wells et al identify four different overall theoretical positions regarding globalisation and educational change:

- Neo-liberal
- Liberal progressives
- Realists
- Post-Marxists

Briefly outlining each position the importance of this discussion pertains to the different views each theoretical view holds on globalization and the distribution of material resources, and globalization and the role of nation-states and how these views can be uncovered in the respective educational perspective. William Boyd (2005) has also illustrated the impact of the different positions on educational change. Boyd describes just how far apart the positions are and the difficulties this poses in the arena of educational change and reforms (2005: 69).

The neo-liberals can be said to promote “free, unregulated markets coupled with aggressive individualism ... for neo-liberals, then, unrestricted global markets are the ultimate symbol of social progress” (Mander in Wells et al 2005: 44). When it comes to educational change the neo-liberals push for deregulation and demand for privatization. “In sum, the neo-liberal paradigm of educational change calls for dramatic restructuring of public education by minimizing government’s involvement in the daily operation or oversight of schools and increasing the role of private interests and investments in deciding how schools are run and whom they serve” (Wells et al 2005: 47).

Heather-Jane Robertson’s (2005) account of the neo-liberal demands on educational reforms illustrates how these advocates have ‘capitalised on school failure’ (2005: 120). According to Robertson’s analysis, the discussion on how educational institutions must be accountable and provide excellence supplies the means by which market policies can be advocated. In her analysis Robertson exemplifies the way in which the ramifications of globalisation have altered our society, which in turn affects the demands posed on the educational system promoting market policies.<sup>40</sup>

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iPod is a distinct example of the development of postmodernism; the iPod is the personification of technology blending with personal development – it is not just a trendy status symbol, it is a means of expressing your identity through your taste in music. The iPod cannot be copied, you cannot be copied, you are unique and that uniqueness is honoured and celebrated in the embodiment of the technological development: the iPod. See also Edgar H. Schein (2004) for an original cultural analysis of Apple in which he observes that Apple is working on the assumption that “business not only should be more than just making money; it can and should be socially significant” (2004: 344; original emphasis). For a more critical analysis of lifestyle and postmodernism, of which Apple can be seen as an example, see Persson 2003b.

39 However, Wells et al write that all theorists agree to the definition given by Kumar, “Political, economic and cultural life is now stronger influenced by developments at the global level” (Kumar in Wells et al 2005: 43).

40 Indeed Robertson conveys poignantly how alluring the market policies can seem to the different participants exemplified in corporate participation in schools. “It is in this climate that increasingly resource-starved classroom teachers have turned to corporate-sponsored contests and curriculum

Boyd (2005) also discusses the market policies applied within educational reforms. Free school choice is a good example of an educational reform situated within this position. However, Boyd is able to show that the market forces are never allowed to 'play' when it comes to the crunch, e.g. the demand-supply equation is never implemented. Teachers do not get the school of their choice, for example, just as schools that are not popular are not closed down. At the end of the day planning and structural decisions mitigate the market forces and it may be fairer to label the system as a 'quasi-market'.<sup>41</sup>

The liberal progressives also hold a positive view of market forces although they are more cautious in embracing globalization as a predominantly good thing. The liberal progressives are of the opinion that "there is a direction to history and that the appropriate sorts of political intervention can help us locate it as well as speed up the way" (Giddens in Wells et al 2005: 48). The liberal progressives also argue that nation states will survive given the strength of their human capital – that is to say, the better educated the citizens are, the stronger the nation. This view quite logically means that the liberal progressives argue for investing in human capital.<sup>42</sup> "An updated educational system...will not only spur economic growth but also further the goal of social justice, as governments commit to providing all teachers – not just a privileged few – with a challenging curriculum to prepare them for a lifetime of 'creative problem-solving, identifying and brokering'" (Reich in Wells et al 2005: 49).<sup>43</sup>

The realists are of the view that globalisation is grossly overrated and that globalisation does not impact the nation state economically, politically and culturally to the extent that others claim.<sup>44</sup> Not many realists write about educational change, but Wells et al argue that the perspective of realists holds that although educational systems can be said to become more and more alike, "the evidence suggests a partial internationalization of educational systems and not the end of national education per se" (Green in Wells et al 2005: 53).

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resources to augment their teachers' diets. When you are hungry, even a Big Mac begins to look good" (2005: 132).

41 Discussing the implementation of school choice, Anders Persson (2003) has made the interesting observation that while it can be seen as something positive, i.e. parental influence and opportunity to express their commitment and wishes regarding the children, the question is whether that choice is indeed 'free'. Research indicates that parents tend to choose schools familiar from their own background and occupations, and it is the more affluent and influential groups of parents who gain from this policy – that is to say the parents who possess the required human capital to make such complicated choices (see e.g. also Boyd 2005).

42 This position should be contrasted with the position held by Hargreaves (2003) who argues that the 'investment' should be in 'social capital'.

43 "..., the clearest distinction between the neo-liberals and the liberal progressive modernizers in education is the different roles they see the state playing in response to globalization. While the neo-liberals call for an end to the burdensome and out-dated 'welfare state', which includes state-run educational systems, the liberal progressive modernizers call upon policy makers to invest more heavily in the state-run educational system and to create higher, more challenging goals and standards" (Wells et al 2005: 50).

44 It is certainly a view that can give one solace in after reading the more gloomy analyses depicted by Hargreaves, although I am not convinced by their argument that the nation-state still retains a considerable scope for maneuvering (see e.g. Daviron & Ponte 2005).

The post-Marxists are of the opinion that globalisation has exacerbated the already existing consequences of capitalism and hence increased the exploitation of workers worldwide. However, in a crucial distinction from neo-liberals, the post-Marxists purport that although national boundaries have diminished in importance, what we are witnessing is the creation of a 'meta' state in which "the intersection of the largest transnational corporations and the international political directorates of many nations constitute a new governing class" (Aronowitz & DiFazio in Wells et al 2005: 55). Consequently, it can be said from a post-Marxist view that the "inter-dependent relationship between the state and the capitalist economy may not be lessening with globalization, but may be becoming stronger" (Wells et al 2005: 55). Post-Marxists' critical perception of the state and its role is also evident when it comes to educational change. Indeed post-Marxists argue that educational reforms tend to serve the already privileged and also tend to introduce a market discourse, and consequently commodify the educational system for the benefit of the already advantaged and privileged.

Wells et al also identify another perspective which is crucial when it comes to understanding the different positions on educational change. The cultural neo-Marxists<sup>45</sup> are very critical of the impact of globalisation; indeed some theorists identify the trend of 'McDonaldisation' which permeates almost every country. The critical and frighteningly convincing part of their argument is that globalisation has meant a new way of sedating the working class: namely that of consumption. "This neo-Marxist critique of consumer culture and neo-liberalism highlights what is often referred to as the 'postmodern paradox': increasing cultural homogeneity occurring simultaneously with increasing cultural heterogeneity" (Wells et al 2005: 60). On a more positive note, neo-Marxists identify in globalisation and its impact on the nation state a potential benefit: in the way in which globalisation has brought about more heterogeneity and has made it increasingly difficult for nation states to maintain their homogeneity. This can for example be illustrated by the increase in local social movements.

With regard to educational change, the neo-Marxists are critical of reforms that merely sidestep the 'real issue of institutional hegemony' (Wells et al 2005: 62):

"Cultural neo-Marxists argue that other popular pedagogical tools fall into the same category of safe simulations that side-step race, class, and gender production in a global capitalist society. For instance, standards-based assessment and portfolios are technical reforms that allow schools to merely reconfigure their own hegemonic culture into new modes of control. The learning that teachers do in obtaining these methods rarely includes critical social theories that deconstruct the ways that such methodologies mask the spread of domination" (Wells et al 2005: 62).

Quoted here at length, Wells et al write in conclusion that:

"Based on our review, we believe that the global trends and development cited in much of this literature will continue to have a major impact on schools, communities, parents and teachers.

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45 It is important to observe that Wells et al are aware of the somewhat arbitrary distinction between post-Marxists and neo-Marxist (Wells et al 2005: 65). However, they use the distinction to note that some theorists still maintain their analytical position with a Hegelian form of Marxism (ibid).

As we head into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it appears as though the ability of nation-states to build a redistributive, universal and standardized educational system is greatly undermined by neo-liberal agenda for globalization, the commoditisation of culture into a more centralized transnational media industry, and the pluralisation of cultures that arise through fragmentation and diversification. ... Thus it appears as though the phenomenon of globalization will mean many different things for education. Most certainly in the near future it will mean a more *competitive and deregulated educational system* modelled after the free market but with more pressure on it to assure the next generation of workers are prepared for some amorphous ‘job market of 21<sup>st</sup> Century’. And finally, *schools will no doubt also be the sites of various counter-hegemonic movements and pedagogies*” (Wells et al 2005: 64; my emphasis).

## What kind of educational change?

From the above it becomes clear that nothing is apolitical, neither the way we view globalisation, or the way we view the role of education; nor indeed how we view educational change. Wells et al (2005) have analysed and conveyed how globalisation and the way in which we perceive the nature of globalisation and the impact of globalisation pertain to how we view the way in which the educational system should change, what the aim is and towards what it should strive. Although the position (liberal progressives) of investing in human capital appears sympathetic, particularly in light of the dim picture of our human state of affairs depicted by Hargreaves (2003), it is imbued with inherent failings. The position argues convincingly that it is pertinent that future generations are well educated<sup>46</sup> and educated in such a way that these future generations can carry out the jobs and tasks required of them. That is to say that young teachers of today must be taught to be flexible, creative, able to identify and solve problems, proactive and ‘knowledgeable’ – so that they will be able to perform the tasks required by a globalised society and ultimately alleviate social differences and inequality.<sup>47</sup>

It is a position which is important to understand and be able to identify as it has permeated various educational reforms, e.g. the U.S. reform of Goals 2000. Various countries have witnessed an amazing increase in standardization within the educational system, be it at primary or secondary level, e.g. in both Denmark and Sweden. This is actually quite contradictory to the inherent position of liberalism, but clearly appears to be the case with the reforms initiated within the past 20 years.<sup>48</sup> That is

46 The question is what kind of education; is it an education which is based on an instrumental rationality, or one which strives to genuinely let young people become ‘knowledgeable’? (See Persson (2003a) for a distinction between knowledge and education. See also Krokmark (2006) for his concept ‘google knowledge’ which poses new challenges to the teachers).

47 Or as characterized by Hargreaves, the teachers must be taught “creativity, flexibility, problem-solving, ingenuity, collective intelligence, professional trust, risk-taking, and continuous improvement” (Hargreaves 2003: 21).

48 “The new educational orthodoxy is, in this sense, a paradoxical combination of choice that is supposed to promote diversity, with standards that impose uniformity” (Hargreaves 2003: 131).

to say the popularity of this position within policy-making agencies has had a major impact on the educational system, (see e.g. Boyd 2005 and Robertson 2005), and thus we can assert that this position of liberal progressives constitutes one of the factors that explains the hybrid of educational reforms and change. Comparative research on Scandinavia, Great Britain, the States, Australia, Spain, Portugal and Greece concludes that educational reforms have been based on market forces and hence consist of “a regime of contracts and competitive individualism” (Lindblad and Popkewitz in Dowling 2004: 233).<sup>49</sup>

The failings of the position for example in relation to investing in human capital are inherent in the sense that the advocates of this position argue for the development of individual skills. Even if the position argues for new methods of teaching and hence argues for systemic reforms, the core belief is to ensure that the individual teacher can face the demands of the future knowledge society. And as William Mulford (2005) argues very convincingly, in order for change to have any chance of occurring, it must naturally include the individual aspect. But as Mulford also illustrates, in order for change to occur, it requires more than one individual (a similar point is made by both Adam Kahane 2010 and Otto Scharmer 2009).

Given the complexity of globalisation and our current society, we need a lot more than human skills. As Hargreaves writes, “what is at issue are the kinds of globalisation we support” (2003: 33). The effects of globalisation, which include polarisation, exclusion and nationalism, are a political choice. “Unlike uncertainty or complexity, widespread insecurity is not an unavoidable state of being but a political choice in the knowledge society” (Hargreaves 2003: 29). The investment should consequently not be in human capital alone but should encompass social capital.<sup>50</sup>

Social capital refers to ‘the ability to form networks, forge relationships, and contribute to as well as draw on the human resources of the community and wider society’ (Hargreaves 2003: 40). Or as defined by Francis Fukuyama, “a set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permits cooperation among them” (Fukuyama in Hargreaves 2003: 40). Further referring to Fukuyama, Hargreaves writes that social capital is the prerequisite for civil society and ultimately democracy. The education system should hence aspire to support its teachers in achieving such qualifications.

“... , a strong system of state education is not only integral to a prosperous knowledge economy but also vital for protecting and strengthening democracy in the way it builds community and develops character. Now, more than ever, *teachers should not just be catalysts of the knowledge economy*, they should be essential counterpoints to it, building and preserving the public, communal democracy that parallels the knowledge society and is also imperilled by it” (Hargreaves 2003: 39-40; my emphasis).

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49 Oakes et al (2005) also observe this permeation of the ‘market metaphor’ of education. As they contemplatively reflect, “The ideal of creating a democratic citizenry has arguably been almost completely replaced by the goal of creating *good entrepreneurial or corporate citizens*” (Oakes et al 2005: 291; my emphasis).

50 Furthermore and more crucially, the focus on human capital is based on a view of education as an investment, hence our reason for attending school becomes one of ‘instrumental motivation’; we obtain an education but not necessarily knowledge (Persson 2003a).

According to Hargreaves it is a question of establishing a new kind of professionalism in which the teaching profession no longer can be characterized as 'de-professionalised', a term which refers to the increase in the bureaucratisation of teaching regulations which has reduced teachers' pedagogical range of choice considerably. Persson et al (2003) also observe this tendency, and write that Swedish teachers experience standardised reforms which dictate their objectives and goals. These reforms are set within what Tom Tiller (1993) has termed 'technological and economic rationality'.<sup>51</sup>

This new professionalism of the teaching profession consists both of professional learning and professional development. Both are required in order for teachers to teach *beyond* the knowledge society, which thus consists of: "character, community, security, inclusiveness, integrity, cosmopolitan identity, continuity and collective memory, sympathy, democracy, and personal and professional maturity" (Hargreaves 2003: 51).<sup>52</sup>

This new kind of professionalism certainly sounds appealing and although I support Hargreave's contention that the educational system should aspire to establishing professional learning communities, I think it is pertinent to pause for moment and contemplate what is implied by professionalism.

Hargreaves writes that this professionalism of teaching consists of both professional development and professional learning. Professional development refers to the personal growth of each teacher as an individual and implies that individual teachers possess the self-confidence and self-worth attributed to *real* grown-ups. This highly normative account of personal growth is interesting (although it is also extremely demanding), but it does not explicitly deal with the real issue which I feel is pertinent in a discussion of the qualifications of teachers. Persson (2003a) has, in his analysis of the educational system, identified the way in which every social relation is imbued with power.<sup>53</sup> Consequentially, addressing the power relationship between teachers and pupils becomes quite crucial when it pertains to developing a new professionalism. Hargreaves writes that professional development means that teachers will now possess a sense of worth which means that they will not be afraid, or easily stressed, in meeting with their teachers. Without belittling the stress and pressure which

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51 Persson et al continue their analysis of this technological and economic rationality and convey how the paradigm of 'New Public Management' is a highly efficient paradigm as it advocates reduced expenses but does not claim responsibility with regards to the consequences of reduced expenses; namely a decrease in quality (2003a: 43). See also Katrin Hjort (2005) for a critical discussion of the influx of new public management on the Danish educational system.

52 Hargreaves et al (2001) have for example shown the mismatch between the current conditions of education and the needs of the young teachers. Firstly, the young teachers constitute a heterogeneous group with different needs but the curriculum is centrally designed; secondly, the curriculum is standardised, pushing common subject-matter but the heterogeneous teacher group demands a more integrated curriculum in order to be captivated and engaged in learning; and thirdly, although standards are externally set, teachers become involved in designing learning goals. There is thus a mismatch between the externally set directives and the 'internally' driven needs for learning.

53 Power defined as "an individual or collective actors' ability to bring forth, change or prevent actions and achieve intended consequences" (Persson 2003: 28; my translation). It is important to observe that power is omnipresent and hence just a part of social life. It is in its relations or constellations that it can be attributed a normative value, e.g. negative or positive.



teachers can experience in the teaching situation – on the contrary – I purport that incorporating Persson’s discussion of generational power can contribute greatly to Hargreaves’ contention.<sup>54</sup> By acknowledging the power relationship between teachers and teachers, we are able to define professional development as also consisting of teachers being aware of the power element of their profession.

One could say that this is implicit in Hargreaves’ term of ‘grown-up values’, but it is not mentioned; and given the highly normative element and quite complex nature of professional learning communities per se, I think it is important that it be explicitly addressed and incorporated in the discussion of both professional development and professional learning; and by extension, of the professional learning community. Furthermore it is important to observe, as Hargreaves does elsewhere, that teachers undergo what can be characterised as a quite normal development in their teaching profession, as they mature and experience career development (see e.g. Hargreaves et al 2001; Dowling 2004; Mulford 2005).<sup>55</sup> This impacts their opinions towards change, and must be incorporated in the term professional development. Hargreaves is aware of this and has conducted research into teachers’ emotional being (2005b).

Professional learning refers to striving towards creating an environment of *real* learning which, I argue, consists of the same perception of knowledge as defined by Persson and is akin to the learning environment in which the teacher’s motivation to learning is not instrumental but rather ‘self-motivating’ (Persson 2003: 90).<sup>56</sup> The purpose of the learning environment is hence not to invest in human capital but rather one of acquiring knowledge as opposed to merely an education. The teacher becomes an adult who is interested in creating a learning environment and promoting knowledge. However, the crucial contribution by Persson in this context is the way in which he identifies that the pedagogy used must also be set in the context of power. Hence Persson contends that when the pedagogy normally attributed with an emancipatory aspect now aspires to creating a *real* learning environment, and furthermore becomes mandatory, it can no longer be called emancipatory; instead, one can term it manipulative.

Professional learning is also described by Allen and Glickman (2005) in their analysis of the creation of the League of Professional Schools, where professional learning implies being teacher oriented and attempting to ensure optimal learning conditions.

Only by ensuring that the educational system becomes equipped and adept at teaching *beyond* the knowledge society (as Hargreaves has coined it), are we able to redress the negative impact of globalisation and the adverse effects of the knowledge society.

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54 Indeed, Persson is poignantly able to present the teacher’s position at the school as an over- and underdog due to his analysis of power (2003: 40).

55 Dowling (2004) has in her article on educational change and life stories as a method argued persuasively for the awareness and acknowledgement of teachers’ life stories as a way in which firstly, to be aware of the different generations of teachers who are represented at schools and hence their different experiences, perceptions etc; and secondly, to allow us to be aware of the life situation the various teachers are in.

56 See also Bereiter and Scardamalia (2005) on a discussion on different types of knowledge.

I argue that only by acknowledging the dichotomous and contradictory objectives of the school are we able to address what the school also means to some teachers. None of the authors hitherto quoted and discussed omit mentioning that the school does not seem to appeal to every child, to put it mildly. Indeed, one of the objectives of the educational system – to achieve equality (socially, economically etc.) – has not occurred, among other reasons due to the inherent dichotomous objectives of the school. The school both reifies and produces new forms of polarisation.<sup>57</sup> Thus it sounds very appealing when Hargreaves writes that:

“We live in a time when great vision is called for...when our prosperity and security depend on our capacity to develop pupils and teachers who can understand and be able to engage with the dramatic social changes that today’s knowledge society represents” (Hargreaves 2003: 161).

However, one could also argue that we live in a time where we have the chance to create a greater vision in which a school is developed in such a way that it does not perpetuate the prior negative impacts of schools.<sup>58</sup> A point I shall return to in subsequent chapters.

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57 See e.g. previous research I have conducted on how working class girls attempt resisting feminisation by their choices in post primary education, only to be let down by the school (Berg 1994).

58 Deborah Meier’s (2005) account is one such example and describes an attempt at creating a school which is authentic in its commitment, mental presence and genuine studies, which Anders Persson (2003) presents as an example of a learning environment where both teachers and teachers are working with *knowledge*. See also Touraine’s 2 principles: “ first, we must be at least as much concerned with those we are teaching ... as with ‘what’ we are teaching; second, learning is impossible without work and effort on the part of the learner” (2000: 282).



# Strategies of implementing educational change

The very political and normative discussion of educational change in the previous chapters clearly illustrates the complexity of educational change. This complexity continues when we address the nature of educational change strategies. It is as important that we elucidate this complexity, in the same way that Wells et al explored the implications that views on globalisation had on the perception of educational change, and in turn the different perceptions of the educational institutions as organisations impacted the way in which educational change is approached.

Similarly Boyd (2005) conveys the way in which these positions compete and indeed confound matters when they pertain to educational reforms; in consequence, change becomes messy: “Alternative models of governance are competing, based upon quite divergent logics: bureaucracy, professionalism, decentralization and market forces. To make the situation even more confusing, these different logics sometimes are combined in a single multifaceted ‘package’” (Boyd 2005: 73).

Placing his analysis in the context of economic and political development, Boyd is able to show how the rhetoric of educational reforms has changed considerably. From focusing on educational equity in order to ensure social justice and stability, the rhetoric has changed to promote academic excellence in order to ensure economic competitiveness (2005: 74). In this context Thomas Sergiovanni’s (2005) contribution is pertinent and also necessary. Furthermore, Sergiovanni’s contribution is important as his conceptual analysis can assist us in developing a ‘balanced’/‘educated’ view of which educational change strategy should be applied.

Based on a discussion of the nature of organisations, Sergiovanni (2005) argues convincingly that given the different types of organisations that have been identified, educational institutions cannot simply be categorised as one particular type of organisation and then be placed in a general organisational discourse. Rather one must address the different views on schools in order to be able to identify the various strategies that exist and hence ascertain how these strategies affect policies, reforms

and developed changes.<sup>59</sup> Sergiovanni proceeds to identify different types of change and also different types of educational strategies applied in bringing about change. He identifies three types of strategies that are based on how schools are perceived: formal organisation, markets or communities.

The view of schools as formal organisations refers to the perception of organisations as having the same features and characteristics as other formal organisations. That is to say that the generic nature of organisations can be recognised in schools also, and transferring knowledge and practices become an easy matter. “Thus strategies for change (along with strategies for leadership, motivation, organization and accountability) that work well in formal organizations found in the corporate world and other sectors of our society are generally assumed to apply to the school” (Sergiovanni 2005: 297).

Viewing the school as a market implies that the school operates on the same principles as the market: competition, free choice and incentives (see previous discussion). Boyd also adopts the standpoint that these principles will produce better teaching (2005: 75).

When it comes to the view of schools as communities, seeing the school as a community implies that schools “can become covenantal learning communities with cultures that compel changes among teachers and teachers that result in *better* teaching and learning” (Sergiovanni 2005: 308; my emphasis). But what does better mean in this context? Is it the same ‘better’ that politicians advocate when they impose demands on the schools? I infer that Sergiovanni interprets better as referring to the normative aspects of learning as presented by Hargreaves, as the teaching and learning which take place at a ‘knowledge’ school presented by Anders Persson. However, it is important to observe that these value-loaded words can be interpreted and applied differently.

The respective organisational views of the school rise from different perceptions of human nature: namely constrained and unconstrained.<sup>60</sup> Sergiovanni argues that depending on which view of human nature is adopted, the change reforms vary. More importantly the reasons given for reforms failing will also vary. These different views can also be found in the six forces towards change which Sergiovanni identifies, namely bureaucratic forces; personal forces; market forces; professional forces; cultural forces; and democratic forces. Reforms based on the view of schools as organizations tend to base the reforms on the bureaucratic forces and personal forces.<sup>61</sup>

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59 “Treating all organized entities the same and indiscriminately transferring practices from one to the other can result in a category error that raises questions of validity” (Sergiovanni 2005: 298).

60 The constrained and unconstrained view of human nature respectively are part of the same continuum. However, the constrained view holds the view that human beings are by nature selfish and takes the position that human nature is basically selfish and leans more towards evil than good. Conversely, the unconstrained view believes that human nature is innately good and will strive to do good (Sergiovanni 2005: 304-5).

61 The bureaucratic force refers to rules, mandates and requirements aiming at establishing standardisation, be it work processes or outcomes. Personal forces apply personal, leadership and interpersonal skills in order to bring about change (Sergiovanni 2005: 299).

The market view naturally tends to apply the market force.<sup>62</sup> And the view of schools as communities invokes forces that are professional, cultural and democratic.<sup>63</sup> In outlining how these different forces bring about change Sergiovanni writes that it requires that the forces impact on other variables that are required in bringing about change. These variables include the opinions of teachers, teachers knowledge of their subject matter, their teachers learning skills and the teaching skills of the teachers.

“If these key mediating variables are influenced *positively* by the changes forces used, then *enduring changes* in relationships, teaching practice, and teacher learning are *likely to occur*” (Sergiovanni 2005: 302; my emphasis).

In other words, if there is a consistency between the change forces and mediating variables, we are more likely to witness change which impacts and is sustainable. Alternatively, if the change forces and mediating variables do not correlate, the change we witness will be fleeting and untenable.

As Figure 3 illustrates, the different patterns of forces, mediating variables and change produce results in different ways. Consequently Sergiovanni is able to visualise that firstly, educational change is if anything context-based and secondly, that teachers play a pivotal role in change. Indeed teachers are seen as extremely influential in ensuring educational change (see also Blase 2005). Sergiovanni refers to David Cohen who argues that unless teachers are included in the change process and thus know about change, the likelihood for the change to succeed is jeopardised (2005: 304).<sup>64</sup>

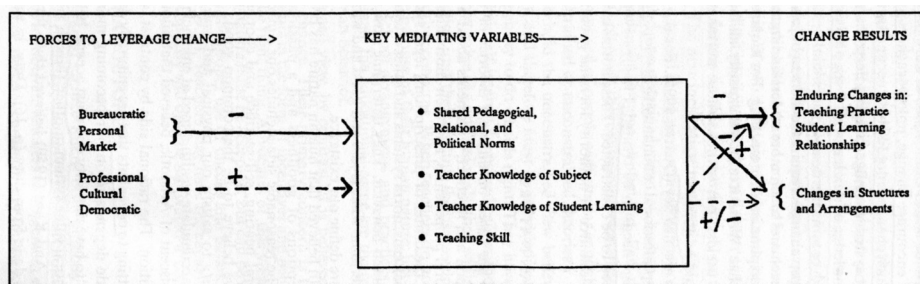


Figure 1: Relationships between forces, mediating variables and change

Figure 3: Relationships between forces, mediating variables and change (Sergiovanni 2005: 303)

62 Market forces “rely on competition, incentives and individual choice to motivate change” (Sergiovanni 2005: 299).

63 Professional forces refer to items such as expertise, collegiality, establishing a sense of obligation and in general an attitude of professionalism and sense of community. Cultural forces refer to the subjects of values and norms, ideas and goals – they refer to establishing a shared set of values when it pertains to pedagogy and other factors required when it comes to establishing a community. Democratic forces refer to as the word implies a sense of democratic values, e.g. social contracts and shared commitments – a sense of joint spirit in building a democratic community (Sergiovanni 2005: 299).

64 Indeed Hargreaves et al’s (2001) book title is extremely expressive and relevant; *Learning to Change*.

Sergiovanni is here able to illustrate how complex and difficult it is to achieve the different types of educational changes. He conveys the reality of change, namely that it is dependent on many different variables and forces.

More importantly Sergiovanni conveys the complexity of change when he writes that

“If the questions are ‘what works in bringing about quick changes in schools’ and ‘what works in bringing about changes in schools structures and arrangement’ then the answer is change forces that are based on various versions of rational choice theory as embodied in views of schools as either formal bureaucratic organizations, formal organic organizations, or as markets. But when questions such as ‘what works in schools over the long term’ and ‘what works for leveraging deep changes in schools’ are asked, then the answer is change forces that are based on views of schools as communities” (Sergiovanni 2005: 309-10).

That is to say that the three forces, bureaucratic, personal and market, can be applied in changing the structures of the school but they are not particularly effective when it comes to deep change. In order to achieve deep change, the strange strategies applied must be based on professional, cultural and democratic forces. In this, Sergiovanni can be positioned with Hargreaves in advocating the establishment of a professional community built upon professional learning and teaching. However, as it is evident from the above quotation, Sergiovanni has also identified the strategies that appear to be effective when it comes to structural changes.

The question is whether the current messiness of educational change (Hargreaves 2005a) is due to an imbalance between the quick changes and the long-term changes? That is to say if the focus is predominantly on structural reforms, these may be correctly implemented using bureaucratic and organizationally based strategies; but the potential success is limited given the fact that such reforms, albeit warranted and necessary, merely scratch the surface. In order to ensure that such reforms survive and be fully implemented, deep change has to accompany them.<sup>65</sup>

“Without technical capacity, all the professional values in the world would be useless, but without those norms all the professional knowledge and skill would be impotent” (David Cohen in Sergiovanni 2005: 304). Sergiovanni has illustrated the different positions, change forces and their implications in table 4 below.

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65 Michael Fullan (2003) argues convincingly that the school must be viewed as an organisation and this organisation exists in a context. According to Fullan the messiness may come from the fact that we live on the edge of chaos, a fact that we cannot alter; and he also maintains that we have not been able to develop sustainable strategies for educational change.

**Table A: Change Forces, Theories and Consequences in Organizations, Markets and Communities**

Mindscapes for the School	Change Forces	Change Practices	Legacy	Theories of Human Nature	Teacher Involvement in Change	Change Consequences	Observed Changes
Bureaucratic formal organizations	Bureaucratic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rely on rule, mandates and requirements to provide direct supervision, standardized work process and or standardized outcomes to prescribe change.</li> <li>2. Rely on personality, leadership style and interpersonal skills of change agents to motivate change.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Bureaucratic Values</i></p> <p>rationality efficiency uniformity</p>	<p><i>constrained:</i> the visible hand of rational choice theory linked to penalties is necessary to motivate change</p>	calculated	Teacher change just enough to avoid sanction. Change stops when sanctions are removed.	changes in structure, timetables and arrangements.
Organismic formal organizations	Personal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Rely on personality, leadership style and interpersonal skills of change agents to motivate change.</li> <li>3. Rely on competition, incentives and individual choice to motivate change.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Human Relations Values</i></p> <p>needs based motivational theories interpersonal leadership</p> <p><i>Market Values</i></p> <p>Behavioural theory evolutionary biology economics</p>	<p><i>constrained:</i> the visible hand of rational choice theory linked to psychological rewards is necessary to motivate change.</p> <p><i>constrained:</i> the indivisible hand of rational choice theory linked to individual self-interest is necessary to motivate change.</p>	calculated	Teachers change just enough to receive gratification of needs. Change stops when rewards are not available.	change in structures, timetables and arrangements.
Market Place	Market	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Rely on competition, incentives and individual choice to motivate change.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Market Values</i></p> <p>Behavioural theory evolutionary biology economics</p>	<p><i>constrained:</i> the indivisible hand of rational choice theory linked to individual self-interest is necessary to motivate change.</p>	calculated	Teachers change just enough to win in the market place. Winning becomes less important after repeated losses.	mixed but not enduring

(Sergiovanni 2005: 300-1).



Mindscapes for the School	Change Forces	Change Practices	Legacy	Theories of Human Nature	Teacher Involvement in Change	Change Consequences	Observed Changes
Professional Community	Professional	4. Rely on standards of expertise, coded of conduct, collegiality, felt obligations and other professional norms to build professional community.	<i>Professional Values</i> competence continuous learning altruism personal responsibility	<i>unconstrained</i> : the visible hand of professional socialization provides standards of practice and norms that compel change.	ethical	Teachers internalise norms of competence and virtue that compel change.	deep changes that endure
Conventional Learning Community	Cultural	5. Rely on shared values, goals and ideaqs about pedagogy, relationships and politics to build conventional community.	<i>Community Values</i> conventional relationships caring personal responsibility	<i>unconstrained</i> : the invisible hand of community norms, values, and ideas that speak in a moral voice to compel change.	normal	Teachers internalize community norms that compel change.	deep changes that endure
Democratic Community	Democratic	6. Rely on democratic social contracts and shared commitments to the common goal to build democratic community.	<i>Democratic Values</i> constitution bill of rights civic virtue citizenship	<i>unconstrained</i> : the invisible hand of democratic traditions and internalized norms that compel change.	moral	Teachers internalise democratic norms that compel change.	deep changes that endure

Situated in this context of the different perspectives on educational change, it becomes evident why it is tempting to name some reforms as superficial, short-lived, and myopic. If an undue emphasis is placed on reforms situated within the mindscape of bureaucracy, the implications are that the change stops as soon as the sanctions applied in the change process end. The environment is not one of collaboration, collegiality and community or, using Hargreaves' words, that of a professional learning community. It also becomes quite understandable why Fink and Stroll (2005) argue that educational change is easier said than done (Fink and Stroll 2005: 38)! Indeed it appears that the true challenge is to balance the different types of reforms and in fact striving towards establishing a 'covenantal learning community, professional community, and democratic community' (Sergiovanni 2005: 310). Although Boyd agrees with Sergiovanni's analysis, he also indicates some inherent problems with advocating schools as communities.

"Indeed, the problem of 'community' lies at the heart of the issues dividing partisans on the topic. ... *there are limits on the 'goodness' of the boundaries of any community.* Whether the 'shared community' is at the neighbourhood, local, regional, or national level, it inevitably excludes some people, often with serious social consequences" (Boyd 2005: 71; my emphasis).<sup>66</sup>

It is an important observation to make, namely that a community perspective does not all problems solve! For a more analytical and encompassing critique of 'communitarianism' see Touraine 2000, (e.g.: 168).

Boyd makes yet another very crucial observation. As I have purported, educational change and reforms are political in nature. Boyd also makes that observation and as cited previously he argues that the different positions tend to be so embedded within their perspectives that they have difficulty in agreeing on almost everything.<sup>67</sup> However, Boyd claims convincingly that such polarised views do not serve any purpose. Rather he contends that what is needed is a 'pragmatic but precarious middle ground' (2005: 71). Advocating a 'fair or managed markets' position, Boyd illustrates how a free market system does not pertain to an educational system given that the supply-demand aspects never can be fully operational. Likewise Boyd argues that "if markets can fail, so can government policies and agencies, including public schools" (Boyd 2005: 71).

Hargreaves also advocates this balanced position when he discusses his characterisation of the professional learning communities.

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66 Indeed one needs only think of 'gated communities' to remember the excluding and more sinister connotations of 'community' (see e.g. Persson 2003b: 71 and 73).

67 Boyd presents examples of data, which have been applied by both 'sides' of the debate to serve their respective views (2005: 69).

## Professional learning communities – the ultimate objective?

In characterising professional learning communities Hargreaves is able to both deal with the educational challenges of the knowledge society and move beyond the knowledge society. That is to say that Hargreaves does not diminish the effects of the knowledge society. Rather the educational system must stay tuned and ‘keep up with the times’. However, as mentioned previously, how we choose to live with the knowledge society is our decision. Currently so many examples of the attrition of the educational system can be explained by political responses to the knowledge society that “teaching for the knowledge society becomes a distant dream” (Hargreaves 2003: 133). Teachers suffering from resignation, indeed depression, despair, fatigue, frustration and disillusionment illustrate vividly the effects of the educational reforms witnessed within the last decades. Crucially, Hargreaves is not advocating that we return to the bygone days of the golden past. It is not a question of the educational system being an innocent victim of vicious attacks, although attacks have been suffered and some were slanderous and demeaning. The golden days were not glorified and pure, the past also holds examples of teachers who were reluctant to change to the point of being bonehead stubborn. Examples of rigidity, incompetence and bureaucracy are plentiful and reciprocal.

The way in which these discouraging conditions can be ameliorated is by working towards the creation of professional learning communities.

“A strong professional learning community is a social process for turning information into knowledge. It is a piece of social ingenuity based on the principle that ... ‘new ideas, knowledge creation, inquiry and sharing are essential to solving learning problems in a rapidly changing society’” (Hargreaves 2003: 134)

Referring to research carried out by McLaughlin and Talbert, Hargreaves writes that professional learning communities “centred their work on pupils and shared responsibility for pupils’ mastery of content and progress in the curriculum. They developed ‘innovative’ methods of teaching that achieved a better ‘fit’ of course work to pupils without compromising expectations for pupils’ conceptual learning” (Hargreaves 2003: 134).

Professional learning communities contain the following characteristics:

1. They transform knowledge
2. Inquiry is shared
3. Evidence informed
4. Situated certainty
5. Local solutions
6. Joint responsibility
7. Continuous learning

8. Communities of practice (Hargreaves 2003: 147).<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore Hargreaves' analysis elucidates two trends within educational development. The first, which he terms the world of culture, refers to the period preceding the 'standards, tests, inspection and choice' of the second world – the world of contracts (Hargreaves 2003: 129). In his analysis of these two worlds Hargreaves is able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of both worlds and so pose the question: "Can these two worlds of contracts and cultures somehow be brought together in ways that preserve their strengths and minimize their weaknesses?" (Hargreaves 2003: 133).

Professional learning community becomes the attempt to answer the question posed above. Professional learning communities are both contractual as in being accountable, and responsive to the community (both near and far). They strive towards quality and continuous development and learning with the aim of ensuring better learning and teaching and they focus on ensuring optimal conditions for teaching in order to achieve learning and hence teach beyond the knowledge society.

However, professional learning communities are intricate and depend on many elements coming together in order to become successful. Hargreaves lists both the internal and external resources necessary in order to establish professional learning communities.<sup>69</sup> In an account of a success story of a Canadian school that was able to establish a professional learning community, it unfortunately also became evident that they can corrode just as easily. Hargreaves identifies the different policies that must come together in order to support the creation and continued existence of professional learning communities spanning from leadership to professional networks and regionalisation of support services to name a few (Hargreaves 2003: 136-8).

Hargreaves is not the only one who has reached the conclusion that the crucial element when it comes to change pertains to every aspect of the school. Indeed just as Sergiovanni has argued, we can differentiate between short-term change and deep change. If we want to achieve deep change, the change must take place within the school culture. Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2005), who writes about a theory of teacher education that incorporates grounded theory, argues that given a constructivist view of knowledge it becomes impossible to impose 'knowledge' or 'knowledge base' on teachers or indeed schools.

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68 Hargreaves contrasts these to characteristics of performance training sects and makes the observation that performance training sects are basically obfuscating the crucial element of living in the knowledge society, namely responsibility (Hargreaves 2003: 146). Furthermore, the performance training sects are based on the fallacious assumption that knowledge and practice are easily transferable and ultimately ignore the crucial point that "in educational change, context *always* makes a difference" (Hargreaves 2003: 46; my emphasis).

69 "Their (professional learning communities) success depends on continuing support from outside the school, compatibility with external reform imperatives, strong support in terms of teaching materials and leadership development, and a staff with sufficient levels of knowledge, competence and skill to share with their colleagues" (Hargreaves 2003: 136).

## School culture – the way we do things around here

Andersson et al (2003) argue that culture can be defined as “a set of rules, values and symbols which are reified and adhered to by a group of people” (Arnstberg in Andersson et al 2003: 15; my translation). They go on to define school culture as something which consists of not just one but many cultures, e.g. the culture of teaching and the culture of the school (values, climate). Indeed the school culture can be compared to organisational culture and thus consists of norms, values, rituals, feelings and climate (Schein in Fink and Stroll 2005). My personal preference for a definition of school culture see it as an organisational culture and can thus summarised as “the way we do things around here” (Deal and Kennedy in Fink and Stroll 2005: 32). By applying this definition one is also able to understand why culture can sometimes be used as argument for resisting change as the envisaged change may indeed alter ‘the way we do things around here’. This colloquialism sweetly expresses the way in which culture assists in maintaining stability as it implies; ‘we do it this way here because it works and we know it works!’ However, it is important to remember that ‘the way we do things around here’ can also imply a culture of change; culture need not be static, dogmatic, rigid or negative.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore it is pertinent to reiterate that change should not be a goal just for the sake of changing. Andersson et al also emphasize the crucial point that educational change is not the solution to ‘our’ frustrations and disappointments with society in general. The school cannot resolve the inequities and our disappointments we may experience when it comes to our expectations of what a society should be about and what actually takes places (Andersson et al 2003: 23).

As I have argued in the previous chapters, educational change is not always for the better. Indeed the educational system globally has witnessed an onslaught of reforms within the last decades, which have resulted in more difficult working conditions for management, administration and teachers. Reforms that have simultaneously occasioned an increase in expectations with regard to teacher output, and the restructuring of the teaching systems themselves.<sup>71</sup> These contradictory pressures are what Hargreaves refers to when he purports that the rate and content of educational change witnessed within the last decades differ to previously experienced educational changes.

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70 Cochran-Smith reiterates the importance of accepting that schools are places of culture and not just teaching and learning (2005: 268).

71 I here refer to the fact that e.g. team teaching is compulsory at secondary school level in Sweden (Andersson et al 2003).

## Why this fascination with educational change?

Andersson et al ask the important question: “Why should the Swedish school change? What is actually wrong with it?” (Andersson et al 23: 21; my translation). Sergiovanni (2005) reminds us of the fact that the any implemented educational strategy and change may be invalid, if it is incorrectly based on a fallacious perception of the school. Robertson, among others, has illustrated how educational change can be cynically and politically exploited. But it is critical and pertinent that we occasionally stop and ask: “why?”.

Many of us possess an – albeit sometimes dormant – functionalist perception of the educational system and thereby believe that the school should educate our children for the future and ensure that they will be able to thrive and prosper. I also think that many of us would agree with the view expressed by Anders Persson (2003) that the school to some extent is a ‘fake’ concoction. The school has evolved due to the industrialisation of our society; in other words it serves a purpose which may not reflect the children’s choice of how they want to spend their time. Knowing this adds value to the normative perception of the school’s role, namely that it serves the role of alleviating inequity in our society by ensuring that every child has a fair ‘shot’ at ‘it’ in her/his adult life. That is to say the school serves a democratising purpose.<sup>72</sup> The impetus, when it pertains to educational change, comes easily when we hear of, read about, or otherwise experience the school as anything but democratic or indeed democratising.<sup>73</sup>

It is in this context that Li Bennich-Björkman’s (2003) analysis of a success story should be read. Bennich-Björkman’s analysis is very similar to Deborah Meier’s (2005) account and both accounts are examples of a school’s attempt at improving the learning environment at the school. Both schools are set in deprived areas with socially disadvantaged children. The reason why these accounts are fascinating relate to what Persson (2003a) calls the fascination of the ‘underdog’ – not in order to create mythical and romanticising stories about their plight and thereby perpetuate these conditions, but rather to reach an understanding of their conditions and attain the means to alter those conditions: in other words to achieve emancipation.

Bennich-Björkman presents a school set in a part of a town characterised by high unemployment, and a large population of immigrants with low educational background and social problems. Many community development projects and programmes have been initiated in order to redress the social problems and improve social conditions. The school is thus situated in what we normally refer to as a deprived area. The school is a success story in achieving ‘deep change’, although Bennich-Björkman is reluctant to pass judgment as to whether or not the success is perma-

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72 Bason et al (2009) have presented four values as the public sector’s reason d’être – productivity, efficiency, service and democracy. The democratic value is the elusive and abstract value, which is hard to pin down in our daily lives.

73 Mary Raftery and Eoin Sullivan’s (1999) account of the children forced into, placed or born into the industrial schools in Ireland is one such example of the heart-breaking accounts of schooling serving anything but an educational purpose.

ment. Due to its success, the school has attracted a high degree of public interest, from politicians, media, other schools and indeed newly educated teachers that want to come and learn from their experiences. Bennich-Björkman's analysis is interesting because she questions the current trend of school effectiveness where the schools listed as exemplary examples tend to be located in socially stable, middle-class and affluent surroundings (for a similar discussion, see Hargreaves 2003).

The school, Navestadsskolan, was able to change the environment and hence create a better learning environment. Whether it can be called a professional learning community is another question but Navestadsskolan implemented three pervasive changes. Firstly, the organisational structure of the school was changed to become radically decentralised; secondly, the pedagogical approach was changed radically so that each class had two teachers rather than one teacher for each subject; and thirdly, the didactical approach was changed in order to prepare the teachers for the demands of the knowledge society. These changes (some of which can be characterised as being innovative)<sup>74</sup> were not the only reason for success. The reason for the successful change at Navestadsskolan pertains to two major factors.

Firstly, credit must go to the headmaster of the school – and the way in which leadership was executed. Secondly, the way in which the changes were implemented was crucial. Regarding the headmaster, she was newly appointed and was experienced in achieving change at schools. She was also an ardent believer in democratic change processes which ensured that the changes were supported by as many people as possible. In other words, the changes were brought about by top-down and bottom-up initiatives as the teachers themselves contributed proposals to the change process. In order not to suffocate the change process and slow down the initial energy and initiatives, small groups were allowed to go ahead and experiment. In this way, the headmaster ensured that everyone at the school supported the proposed changes.

Bennich-Björkman mentions that the teachers initially viewed the pedagogical changes with fear and reluctance, as they feared the implications of these changes. However, they were persuaded, not least because the changes were proposed by colleagues and not imposed from above, making them more acceptable. Thus Bennich-Björkman is able to conclude that the success of the changes was secured because the headmaster allowed change to take time, ensured that the changes were communicated properly, and that teachers eager to implement the changes were allowed to experiment (which thus gave them valuable experience when it came to implementing the changes throughout the entire school). Finally, as mentioned above, the participation of everyone at the school was ensured, in other words the process was seen to be democratic.

The method can thus be compared to the one outlined by Allen and Glickman (2005) although it did not entail the element of action research.

However, Bennich-Björkman mentioned one important aspect of the educational changes she analysed, and that is whether these changes are what it actually takes in order to provide the teachers with a real shot at 'it'? (It referring to social mobility). Or do the changes only cause further frustration when the teachers obtain

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<sup>74</sup> Chapter 9 will discuss the difference between change and innovation.

just enough knowledge to realise that it is will not be enough to take them further? (Bennich-Björkman 2003: 107). Similarly Meier (2005) observes that given the way in which the knowledge society expects our children to become more educated, it is no longer enough simply to have a secondary degree. Nowadays, our children must also have a third level degree; we keep changing the stakes, moving the targets – and when we want to assure our children that they have a decent shot at it, the ‘it’ changes. Consequently it seems to be perpetually unattainable to those very children whom the educational system is supposed to help!

Even if the schools Meier and her colleagues have developed were all about creating authenticity and could thus reach out to children otherwise not interested in attending schools, the question is why some teachers remain disinterested? Why did they still perceive the school as totally irrelevant to their lives, why did they see school as ‘compulsory’?<sup>75</sup> Deborah Meier is not able to answer that question; the quest continues. Another question might be why these children who experience the school as a failure should be obliged to attend school?

Another example of educational change is the ambitious establishment of The League of Professional Schools established in Georgia. The ambition<sup>76</sup> is to create an environment in which schools exist and develop based on a similar but contextualised philosophy. The League, as it will henceforth be referred to, is built upon a framework that consists of three elements:

1. The governance of the school is democratized (charter).
2. The focus of the governance is driven by the school’s own shared vision of exemplary teaching and learning (the covenant).
3. Action research<sup>77</sup> is conducted to inform the governance process – the “critical study process”. (Allen and Glickman 2005: 227).

The interesting aspect of the League is that it has created a continuous growth of knowledge, experience and reflection. This can for example be seen in the research conducted by researchers, teachers and teachers. One example of this growing accumulation of knowledge is e.g. Allen and Glickman (2005).

Allen and Glickman make two crucial distinctions in their research on the success of the League and the process of implementing the three framework factors of the League. They identify firstly the process of building a foundation for change, and secondly the process of deepening the work.

With regards to building a foundation for change, they argue that the following factors are important: readiness for change, getting started, trust, building understanding and building a school-wide vision. Furthermore, Allen and Glickman write that trust is a critical factor in establishing the groundwork. If trust were not genu-

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75 ‘Tvång’ as Persson (2003a) has characterised it, I have translated it ‘compulsory’ and not ‘forced’ which the word ‘tvång’ can also imply.

76 “The mission statement of The League of Professional Schools reflects a belief in the power of democracy to guide school restructuring in order to bring about on-going school renewal that is focused on teachers” (Allen and Glickman 2005: 226).



ine, it would be a 'mock democracy' or contrived collegiality (cf. Hargreaves op.cit.). Allen and Glickman also make the interesting observation that experienced teachers may not be as much reluctant to change, as dubious about the genuine nature of the proposed changes: is the emperor wearing any clothes?

Trust is seen to be more than crucial. "The reward of a trusting environment is immeasurable, yet the price of a lack of trust is dear" (Blase and Blase in Allen and Glickman 2005: 233). Trust entails teachers trusting in the principal being able to make the right decision; it entails respect and a fundamental belief that teachers are able to make the right decisions, not just from their own individual perspectives but also from a school perspective. Trust implies actions and not just words. Developing an understanding takes time, and Allen and Glickman observe that the schools which are able to build such an understanding realise that perspectives must be altered.

"School wide action research is not something that a school can simply add to what it is already doing. Changes in the normative behaviours in the school must be made; substantial time must be set aside for collecting and analyzing data; the school's governance process must be able to respond to action research findings; new roles must be assumed by teachers and administrators; and external support must be secured. A school faculty that just starts 'doing' action research without addressing these changes will find action research has little effect on the life of the school" (Calhoun, Allen, Halliburton & Jones in Allen and Glickman 2005: 235).

Building a school-wide vision is crucial and important. It is at this point important to note that such a vision is not developed overnight; it is a process, which is neither instantaneous nor linear.

Allen and Glickman observe that the way in which a school develops a school-wide vision entails dialogues, which are focused on school-wide issues, i.e. teaching and learning. These dialogues must include everyone and not just focus on sharing stories and experiences. Instead the dialogues must be focused on issues pertaining to the way in which the school should develop.

Allen and Glickman write that based on their research they are able to discern some common characteristics when it comes to the impact information can have. The fact that the schools have access to information means that information inspires and encourages the teachers to become actively involved. Furthermore teachers acquire information and hence help to begin to work together collectively. They possess the information necessary for collective reflection. Such shared experiences inspire and encourage teachers to continue with their innovative work. Lastly, information can open teachers' eyes to the fact that they need to change!

Indeed Allen and Glickman observe that inclusive behaviour is pertinent and it entails that more and more become involved in decision making processes, means that people's confidence increases, people can see the value of the different decisions reached and the value of the work of the different positions at the school. There is an honest dialogue which respects the different opinions people may have, people lose the fear they have when it comes to change and more and more feel comfortable about the work that gets done and the changes implemented. Indeed the perspective on leadership shifts from being perceived as decision making to meaningful coordination with the involvement of everybody.

Although Allen and Glickman write that deepening the work entails shifting focus to a teaching and learning focus, they are aware of different opinions in this regard. Some researchers argue that the schools must deal with the issues surrounding the implementation of change, with administrative stuff. However others, e.g. Darling-Hammond, argue that it is important not to drown in 'administratricia'. By becoming more focused on teaching and learning, the schools and teachers also become very appreciative of networking and sharing experiences and knowledge, in other words they work as real grown ups and have acquired the skills and knowledge required for learning to change (Hargreaves et al 2001). As has been mentioned previously, change takes time and the experiences from the League schools also reflect that perception. Indeed the experiences support Hargreaves et al's statement that change is not an event, it is a process (2001: 184).

However, there is one element that is pertinent to note and bear in mind, namely that change requires time and resources. Time every day! Time is more than just processual; it also relates to time needed every day in order to fulfil the different aspects of the League's objectives.

The experiences from the League schools do not differ from other research in considering the importance of the principal. As Bennich-Björkman conveyed in her account of the Navestadsskolan, the principal had a massive influence in bringing about the changes of the school. I have already mentioned Deborah Meier a few times; she is also mentioned as an example of a principal whose role in bringing about change cannot be underestimated (Sergiovanni in Allen and Glickman 2005: 243). Similarly Andersson et al (2003) argue that the principal has a major influence in creating and maintaining change and hence is a major influence in bringing about change within the school culture.<sup>78</sup>

The experiences of the League schools are extensively researched and unlike Bennich-Björkman, Allen and Glickman are able to conclude that the League schools have successfully created professional learning environments and that these effects are measurable and positive. The effects are evidenced by improvements in both teachers', faculty and parents' perception to learning and teaching (Allen and Glickman 2005: 244).

Critical questions that one can ask of Allen and Glickman's article are: What kinds of school are members of the League? Are they characteristic of the innovative school, i.e. schools situated in middle-class to affluent areas with a homogeneous teacher body? (Hargreaves 2003; Bennich-Björkman 2003). Do the schools reduce the polarisation of teachers? (Meier 2005) Do they reduce the proportion of teachers that feel they are in school only to fill time (Persson 2003a)? Formulated differently, do the schools avoid the failings of the 'normal' school?

Although I find the above examples of educational change impressive and highly inspiring, I also worry and wonder whether by omission we easily become guilty of not addressing the elements of the political, societal, economic, racial and gender

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<sup>78</sup> The impact and significance of school leadership is undisputed although it is difficult to make concise analytical correlation. Research indicates that school leadership impacts the level of the pupils' learning outcomes. In other words, pupils learn and do well when the school leaders are able to create and sustain learning environments (Pont et al 2008: 33).

aspects which Oakes et al (2005) discuss in their article on the 'zone of mediation'. Oakes et al argue that educational change when it pertains to striving towards reducing inequality as it pertains to gender, class and race, has to become non-neutral. The quotation below is an excellent example of the neutral language Oakes et al (2005) talk about and criticise. Even though they are able to show that many authors, incl. Sergiovanni, I would purport, are very aware of the political context of educational change, they adopt a value-free language. Presumably in order to make it more acceptable or plausible:

“Stability and change, it appears, co-exist because of the tendency of stability to absorb changes without altering underlying forms and assumption ... The tendency for schools to remain stable is attributed to a network of assumptions, beliefs, regularities and traditions that comprise norms which define, and then provide, meaning for teachers. These collective meanings help teachers make sense of their existing practices, affirm their sense of purpose, and help them to rationally accept the school situations they experience in schools” (Sergiovanni 2005: 296-297).

Indeed the above quotation could be paraphrased thus:

“School are situated in particular, local enactments of larger cultural norms, rules, values, and power relations, and these cultural forces promote either stability or change.” (Oakes et al 2005: 288)

However, the above quote does not incorporate the sense-making activity, which Sergiovanni also refers to in his observation on the change-stability cultural context. Oakes et al are aware of sense-making and observe that this also occurs in a context of 'political, economic, and social structures' (Oakes et al 2005: 290), one could add racial and gender.<sup>79</sup> Oakes et al argue that change literature has dealt with pertinent and highly relevant issues of change; e.g. change is a process, which takes time, the process is not linear and depends on the specific school culture as posited above. However, the literature attempts at establishing neutral terms, which are acceptable by the different institutions, agencies, and actors involved in a change process. Oakes et al argue that by omitting non-neutral aspects such as class, gender, race etc, which are always contextualised in a setting of global, societal, regional, local and individual norms and these norms are highly political issues, e.g. norms re. gender, race etc., it is difficult to deal with the change process and e.g. the resistance the change proposals may be met with.<sup>80</sup> Oakes et al present their concept of 'the zone of mediation' which incorporates the different elements they have found to be missing in the more value-free forms of change literature.

The zone of mediation is a concept that aids in understanding the change process in a local context. As I have already argued, the school is located in a local context.

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79 David Karp's book, *Speaking of Sadness*, is a vivid account of sense-making and bell hooks (2010). He writes beautifully on sense-making in his account of teaching in a highly political context of gender, ethnicity and culture.

80 Cochran-Smith (2005) also argues for a political awareness when it comes to educational policies in general and change more specifically. Indeed she argues that teacher education must deal with the political nature of teaching as a profession and incorporate critical inquiry into the teacher education.

The local context will vary from school to school, in breadth and depth. The terminology ‘zone’ is inspired by the term ‘zone of tolerance’ referring to “the latitude or manoeuvrability granted (or yielded) to the leadership of the schools by the local community” (McGivney and Moynihan in Oakes et al 2005: 288). Furthermore mediation refers to the concept of a ‘mediating institution’ which is an “organized social setting (e.g. a school system) that channels macro-political and economic forces into particular ‘sites’ ... to mediate ... the interactions between individuals with those sites” (Oakes et al 2005: 288). The zone of mediation attempts at incorporating both concepts and also contains additional elements.

Firstly, the zone of mediation does not only refer to the local context / the ‘local’ zone, it also pertains to global, national, regional and societal contexts, hence the context is ultimately unique and complex.<sup>81</sup> Secondly, the concept also includes the awareness that within the local context, the zone is a reciprocal relationship where the school constitutes a zone in itself – or many zones for that matter. Thirdly, the zone is not a constant entity but changes depending on the person, persons, that is to say the zone is dependant on the specific context of time, identity and place. Oakes et al argue that by combining the two concepts, zone of tolerance and mediating institution, we are able to address the complexity in which schools are set. Indeed, it becomes possible to identify the external forces that influence the schools, e.g. the global economy / the knowledge society. We are able to identify the localised context in which these mediations take place, e.g. educational reforms and are hence able to ensure that educational change striving for reducing inequality has a better chance at succeeding.<sup>82</sup>

By highlighting the shortcomings of the neutral language developed by mainstream educational change authors hitherto, Oakes et al (2005) are able to show that to a certain extent these have addressed educational change only superficially.<sup>83</sup> They illustrate how most reforms are incorporated into “the pre-existing school culture... In other words, the pressures from the school and the community are likely to favour the dominant societal actors ... at the expense of the reform’s beneficiaries” (Oakes et al 2005: 298). In their critique of change models they write:

“Changes which simply improve the efficiency and effectiveness of current practices are categorized as ‘first-order’ or ‘incremental’ changes, and those changes which seek to alter the basic ways that organizations function are ‘second-order’ or ‘fundamental’ changes. Perhaps it would be helpful to consider equity-minded reforms such as de-tracking as ‘third-order changes’, defined as fundamental changes which also seek to reform core normative beliefs about race, class, intelligence, and educability held by educators and others involved in our school” (Oakes et al 2005: 298).

If we accept Oakes et al’s point, it means that we have to reassess the ‘deep’ change advocated by Sergiovanni and the professional learning communities presented by

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81 Hence this position is similar to Hargreaves’ analysis of teaching in the knowledge society.

82 Indeed Oakes et al are able to argue for national reforms – that is to say a mixed package of reforms, both top-down and bottom-up in order to achieve equality. In the contextualised and localised setting they can identify the forces which resist and indeed hinder change.

83 See also Nieto (2005) for a similar position.

Hargreaves. Reassessing from the point of omission; although Sergiovanni is very explicit about norms and values and argues that deep change is about democratic values and tradition and hence norms that infuse change to achieve these democratic values, he does not mention the issues relating to Oakes et al's 'third-order' change. I would, however, argue that Sergiovanni would not disagree with Oakes et al, and implicit in the democratic values are equality and equal opportunities. But Oakes et al have a point. As Sonia Nieto (2005) writes:

“Educational change strategies are often developed with the best of intentions but with little thought given to the enormous diversity of backgrounds and experiences that teachers bring to their schooling. When this is the case, educational reform tends to be a prescription for the “remedy of diversity” and those teachers who have been most severely marginalized and alienated from schools tend to be the ones who once again suffer the most” (Nieto 2005: 156).

A strategy that aspires to achieve deep change must also strive towards 'third order' change if it is to bring about *real* deep change. Hargreaves' concept of professional learning communities must incorporate an understanding of community that includes the critique of community presented by Boyd (2005). One way to do that is to let the professional learning community meet Oakes et al's zone of mediation, which is aware of the zone's ontology; one of being dependent on time, identity and place.<sup>84</sup> If, however, the professional learning community is to bring about “deep change”, the community has to be aware of the implicit tendency to exclude somebody or something, as Boyd conveys so brilliantly: “it inevitably excludes some people, often with serious social consequences” (2005: 71).

One way of ensuring “deep change” is to incorporate what Cochran-Smith calls 'critical inquiry'.<sup>85</sup>

Therefore I posit that given the importance of educational change, 'third order' change has to be added to Sergiovanni's detailed figure on change forces, and Cochran-Smith's critical inquiry has to be incorporated into Hargreaves' professional learning community. Furthermore I would like to draw attention to the analyses conducted by Michael Fullan (2003). Fullan has written extensively on educational change and has also addressed societal changes and their impact on educational change. In addressing chaos theory or complexity theory Fullan is able to draw some

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84 By accepting the temporal and spatial context, it becomes more than a merely academic exercise. As Latour writes, “never was the need for radical social sciences more pressing than it is today!” (2007: 8).

85 Cochran-Smith (2005) applies critical inquiry as part of developing a new teacher education. Critical inquiry consists of the following elements;

- Choice
- Leadership and membership
- Centre
- Time
- Hard Talk
- Local / Community Experiences
- Observation and practice
- Dissemination
- Integration / Coherence

crucial conclusions, or lessons as he calls them.<sup>86</sup> The lessons are important and are listed below:

1. Give up the idea that the pace of change will slow down.
2. Coherence making is a never-ending proposition and is everyone's responsibility.
3. Changing context is the focus.
4. Premature clarity is a dangerous thing.
5. The public's thirst for transparency is irreversible.
6. You can't get large-scale reform through bottom-up strategies, but beware of the trap.
7. Mobilize the social attractors – moral purpose, quality relationships, quality knowledge.
8. Charismatic leadership is negatively associated with sustainability" (Fullan 2003: 24).

This gives rise to three crucial observations to which I wish to draw attention.

1. The discussion on educational change becomes more and more complex as we have to decipher the different connotations and meanings attached to the term.
2. This complexity reflects the fact that education is a multifaceted process.
3. Confusion arises because concepts are used interchangeably to describe and explain different phenomena and activities. I would like to bring the attention to one example of this ambiguity and confusion. It pertains to the concepts of educational change and innovation.

The relevance of addressing the development of professional learning communities and deep change is to facilitate an holistic approach to the intricacies of schools. As will become apparent in the detailed analysis of the District, Striving for Action Teachers and the way in which the teachers themselves define and reflect on their participation, deep change is not easily achieved, particularly when the process of deep change is not strategically incorporated and addressed in the course of events but rather expected to unfold naturally and almost by default.

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86 Complexity theory argues that 'systems' or processes are non-linear, unpredictable, interact or correlate, auto-catalyse, exist on the edge of chaos, social attractors, butterfly effects and a complex adaptive system (Fullan 2003: 22-23).



# Professionalising the profession; Change, Chance and Choice

Striving for Action Teachers can be perceived in many different ways and so the District has also presented it in different ways. The presentations, interpretations and perceptions have all contributed to the account given below. The account is by no means extensive and should not be read as such. It is itself situated in its specific context.

If Striving for Action Teachers had followed a linear and straightforward process 75 teachers could have had a master’s degree in action learning by 2007. As I mentioned in the beginning, this is not the case. Based on data obtained from the district the development is as follows:

**Table 5:** Participants and completion of master’s programme

First year of study	Number of teachers	Completed the programme	Completed their master’s
2001-02	25 commenced		
2002-03	25 commenced		
2003-04	25 commenced		
2004-05			8 from first cohort
2005-06			6 from first and second cohort
2006-07			8 from all cohorts
2007-08			16 from all cohorts

(author’s adaptation of data presented by current project manager at annual seminar for district educational leaders, November 2007)

The teachers came from very different schools, ranging from pre-school level to secondary level, state-funded to private schools, schools for children with special needs to schools normally associated with high-achievers. The teachers were deliberately



invited from all types of schools<sup>87</sup> in order to ensure that the change would not be isolated within one type of school system or school level.

In order to trace the actions of Striving for Action Teachers we need to map what happened as the programme unfolded. The following chapter accounts for the development of Striving for Action Teachers and the various narratives which I have obtained during my research, either through questionnaires, observations and interviews or through textual analysis.

Striving for Action Teachers was a programme structured as a project organisation. The District purchased the programme from the Norwegian University. The division of responsibility pertaining to the contents of the programme was as follows:

The University appointed a manager to take care of the programme management and the academic contents. The initiator from the District Centre of Education was the original Swedish programme manager whose responsibility was to deal with relations to the schools, be responsible for the practical aspects of the lectures, seminars, and the day-to-day problems pertaining to the programme.

Striving for Action Teachers can thus be depicted as shown in figure 4:

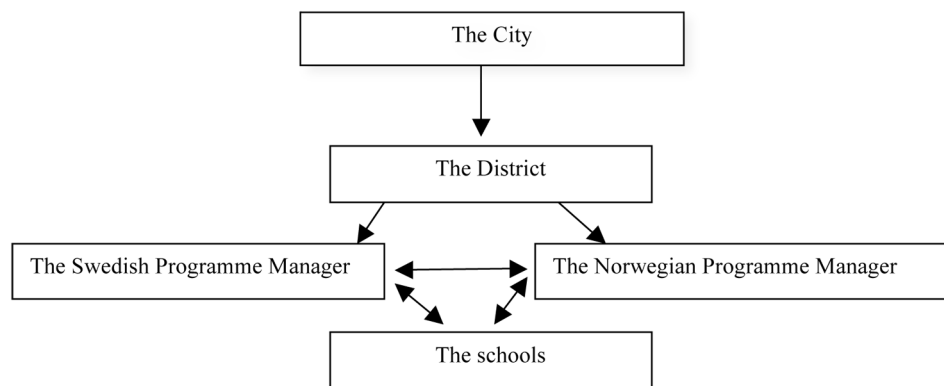


Figure 4: Project organisation of Striving for Action Teachers

The project organisation for the programme can be perceived as a classic project organisation with linear and supposedly clear demarcations of responsibilities.

The participants would consult the Norwegian Programme Manager about academic questions and the Swedish Programme Manager about practical questions pertaining to contract and issues relating to their workplace.

The District was responsible for anchoring the programme within the City. The Norwegian University can thus be seen as an external supplier/contractor.

87 See e.g. Anders Persson et al (2003) for a characterisation of secondary schools (knowledge, career and compulsory).

## Striving for Action Teachers – what is it all about?

As Striving for Action Teachers is based on teaching teachers to become competent and comfortable with action-learning, some of the objectives of the programme can be found in the programme for the university's general master's programme in Action learning;

“The programme should qualify teachers and school principals to master the new demands which society poses to the school and other organisations that have learning, teaching and knowledge transfer as their primary tasks. The Master's degree in Action-Learning is primarily aimed at occupations in the educational system but also towards learning and development related occupations in the public and private sector. This Master's degree is particularly relevant in occupations which require high competences in the areas of learning organisations, teaching and tutoring, knowledge transfer and communication” (from Master Programme in Action Learning; my translation. See appendix 2 for the full study guide to the Master's degree in Action Learning).

The aspect of action learning was also very explicit in the original material posted on the District's webpage. They wrote;

“One of the most central challenges in future pre-schools and schools is to recruit and maintain staff with the ‘right’ competences. It is equally important to ensure that competences are developed and furthered amongst the current employees ...

The District's schools need more teachers who conduct research and reflect systematically on their own practise in order to develop with the demands posed by our current society to a school in the 21st century ...

Those who apply and are accepted to the programme will spend the first two years studying action-learning, which includes reflection and research on your own practise ...

Those who are accepted to the programme will also function as mentors for teacher teachers in the District, not to be confused with traditional tutoring. Those who choose to complete the entire programme will complete the programme with a master's dissertation and hence be qualified to train other teachers. This is a strategy development which we hope to be able to provide in the District in the near future” (material from the District's webpage accessed October 2006; my translation and emphasis).

As can be seen from the above quotations, the programme can be seen as an attempt at enhancing teachers' competences in order to meet the demands of our current society or the knowledge society. However, the programme moves beyond just enhancing competences, it also envisions that the teachers will assume the role of change agents at their respective work places, will be able to function as mentors for prospective teachers and indeed train other teachers. The project was thus aiming to create a network of teachers that could facilitate further learning, further enhancement of

action-learning; with action-learning seen as the way in which the teachers would be able to meet the demands of the knowledge society.<sup>88</sup>

In an official leaflet, the District describes the contents of the programme thus:

“The studies are based on lifelong learning. ... The concept ‘lifelong learning’ has influenced the development of words such as experiential learning and action learning.” (quote from official leaflet 2005; 2006; 2007: 3; my translation).<sup>89</sup>

The contents of the programme are thus based on the different ways of teaching and approaching teaching as a profession. The contents of the programme are heavily inspired by work and research conducted by a Norwegian professor who has written extensively on the way schools work, and in greater detail on the work of teachers as a profession. Furthermore the Norwegian professor has developed the concept ‘action learning’, inspired as noted above by the demands of lifelong learning and the way in which teaching and learning can be developed. We can thus place the project in the context of teacher training aimed at enhancing competences in order to develop and enhance the learning environment and learning organisations (Fullan 2007). The current programme leader in the City has, for example, described the objective of the project by stating:

“The teachers must be prominent drivers in the development work in their own work teams and at their schools.” (quote from presentation at annual seminar for district educational leaders, November 2007; my translation).<sup>90</sup>

The City and the District initiated the programme. Their ambition was to provide the teachers in the City with a programme which should ultimately lead them to obtaining a degree in competences akin to those described here by Lynne Miller:

“It is teachers who provide the support and challenge that promote learning; it is teachers who encourage improvement through the feedback they provide; it is teachers who present materials and ideas that engage teacher interest; and it is teachers who safeguard the academic integrity of the work that gets done in school... They are child developers, coaches, guides, advocates, and critics. They create environments where teachers can achieve their best work” (Miller 2005: 249-50).

In other words, the programme would train teachers to become the teachers of the future, teachers in a knowledge-based society, and more importantly, teachers who would be able to teach the new types of teachers and respond to their ‘learning need’ as identified in a project which had preceded ‘Striving for Action Teachers’.

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88 Although it was never mentioned as such the network which was expected to come about from the project was a type of transformative network / learning network as described by Ekman et al (2007: 98-101).

89 ”Studiernas bas är det livslånge lärandet... Begreppet ‘livslångt lärande’ har påverkat utvecklingen av ord som erfarenhetslärande og aktionslärande” (quote from official leaflet 2005; 2006; 2007: 3).

90 “Pedagogerna ska vara en framträdande drivkraft i utvecklingsarbetet i det egna arbetslaget och på den egna skolan” (original quote from presentation at annual seminar for district educational leaders, November 2007).

That is to say, teachers who would no longer teach according to the 'old' paradigm in which teaching was individual, isolated and personal (Fullan and Hargreaves in Miller 2005: 250). Instead, the teachers would become active agents in 'reculturing' (Miller 2005) their schools having acquired the competences necessary to teach according to the 'new' paradigm.

The new paradigm entails the following changes;

- From individualism to professional community
  - o 'Teachers replace the individualism, isolation and privacy of traditional schools with new norms of collegiality, openness and trust'
- From teaching at the centre to learning at the centre
  - o Focusing on 'how teachers learn and consequently adjusting their teaching accordingly'.
- From technical work to enquiry
  - o Teachers acknowledge that their knowledge is not static; their teaching is not based on a 'tool box' but rather a continuously developing intellectual exercise. 'Systematic inquiry, research, and reflection are at the core of teacher's work. Like their teachers, teachers are involved in a process of continuous learning and improvement'.
- From control to accountability
  - o The teachers' learning is more important than maintaining order and discipline. 'Instead of working as individuals to establish standards of behaviour, teachers work together as colleagues to develop standards of learning to which they hold themselves and their teachers accountable'.
- From managed work to leadership
  - o 'When teacher performance become the product that schools develop, the role of the teacher changes dramatically from being assembly-line workers to being designers, conductors, and leaders.'<sup>91</sup>
- From classroom to whole school focus
  - o The focus shifts from having primary concern with individual classes to thinking about the entire school and its learning environment as such (based on Miller 2005: 250-2).

In an official leaflet regarding *Striving for Action Teachers* the former director of the District writes;

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91 In this respect Miller also writes that the teachers assume responsibility and become leaders among the administrative leaders. She asserts that the two groups work together collaboratively and aim at creating a more democratic and participatory school (2005: 250). Whether this is the aim of reculturing schools and developing teachers' competences or indeed the natural outcome of reculturing is unclear. It is, however, important to note this crucial aspect of reculturing schools, as defined and analysed by Miller, as it plays an interesting part in the sometimes contradictory demands placed on schools in the various reforms and changes (see e.g. Hargreaves (2005) on the 'messy' nature of change, Blase (2005) on the various nature of reforms and Sergiovanni (2005) on the different types of reforms).

“We who work in the City know that *development does not stand still here. Not when it comes to the development of the school, that’s for sure.* The thoughts and visions indicating that the school’s work should emanate from reality and the every-day – which is what actually is happening – was kick-started by a newspaper article, and the concept action-learning entered the vocabulary. Concurrent to this we were working with self-evaluation as a method of evaluation. The Norwegian professor was the link to the town. The threads were woven together and we made an agreement with the Norwegian University, and with the Norwegian professor as the head of the Master’s programme. This has now reached its goal with the first eight out of 75 pre-school teachers and teachers having graduated. One goal of the District’s action plan is that the teachers who have completed the Master’s Programme in Action Learning will be *a driving force in development work within their work teams and at their own schools.* Now that have reached shore with the first boat we see that the competency which we have acquired can describe an approach to the entire City’s development; for you who work meeting people and running development for the future.” (quote from official leaflet 2005: 2; my translation and emphasis).<sup>92</sup>

From the above quote Striving for Action Teachers is situated in the context of change; of constant change – “*development never stands still*” and in particular the development of the ‘school’ – school in general. The participating teachers are presented as having acquired a valuable and important competence, which upon graduation is expected to become an asset at work for colleagues and pupils. The work expected of the teachers can be described as valuable change agents or, as is written, they will play a role as *a driving force* (“*framträdande drivkraft*”). Striving for Action Teachers is seen as the way in which the City is equipped for the future. The paragraph is formulated in a language where change is conveyed as a wave which has to be approached by active surfers – teachers becoming active change carriers. The language is imbued with a change discourse in which teachers embody and personify the change at the school.

The following year the same director adds a new paragraph in a similar vein:

“By *central support for continuous competency development* the District will try to encourage the graduates to participate *in new development assignments for the City.* But it is *the responsibility of the school leaders,* who have ‘action-learning teachers employed at their school, to create the conditions for action-learning and research to make an impact as a way of thinking at the schools.” (quote from official leaflet 2006: 2; my translation).<sup>93</sup>

92 “Vi som arbetar i the District vet att *här står inte utvecklingen stilla. Inte vad gäller skolans utveckling i alla fall.* Det var en tidningsartikel för ett antal år sedan som satte igång tankar och visioner om att skolans verksamhet skulle kunna utgå ifrån verkligheten och vardagen – vad som faktiskt sker. Begreppet aktionslärande kom in i vokabulären. Parallellt arbetade vi med självvärdering som utvärderingsmetod. Professor xxx var knuten till staden. Trådarna knöts ihop och vi slöt avtal med xx Universitet med Professor xxx i spetsen, i det Mastersprogrammet som nu har gått i mål med de första åtta av sammanlagt 75 pedagoger. Ett mål i district centre of education Handlingsprogram är att de pedagoger som genomfört mastersprogrammet i aktionslärande skall vara en *framträdande drivkraft i utvecklingsarbetet i det egna arbetslaget och på den egna skolan.* När vi nu rott iland den första båten ser vi att den kompetens som tillförs oss skulle kunna vara en tillgång för hela yyy’s stad utveckling, för dig som arbetar i möten med människor och leder utveckling för framtiden.” (quote from official leaflet 2005: 2).

93 “Genom centralt stöd till fortsatt kompetensutveckling och nätverkande kommer the district centre of education att försöka uppmuntra gruppen exminerade till nya utvecklingsuppdrag inom stan. Men det är upp till de skolledare, som nu har en ‘aktionslärande-pedagog’ anställd på sin skola, att skapa förutsättningar för att aktionslärande och forskning i vardagen slår igenom som ett förhållningssätt ute i verksamheter.” (quote from official leaflet 2006: 2; my translation).

Three aspects are pertinent to observe at this point. Firstly, the District, as represented by the director, places Striving for Action Teachers in the continuum of development projects and the director regards the graduate teachers as playing a key role in future development projects – again the emphasis on their role in the implementation of change. Secondly, the director writes that Striving for Action Teachers will not be the only competency development project but continuous support for competency development can be expected to follow. Thirdly, Striving for Action Teachers represents an approach, which can be a framework for development work at the schools. However, and this is important; the responsibility rests with the school leaders. An addition which is critical as this responsibility was not explicit in the beginning. The narrative of the project thus changes in time, perhaps due to acquired experiences. A point I wish to argue with reference to subsequent analyses of the interviews; the teachers felt abandoned by their managers and principals. An issue which the District responded to, e.g. in the above paragraph.

The second project manager presents the project as a piece of a larger puzzle encompassing a trip to New Zealand, legislation on IUP<sup>94</sup>, the law on teacher training, projects with partnering schools and a project called '*utan timplan*', which, combined with 'Striving for Action Teachers', all characterise the District's focus on development projects (presentation provided by the second project manager at an annual seminar for every leader in the City in November 2007).

In the official leaflet from 2007, the current director of the District Centre of Education writes:

“The results of preschool and school work must be related to the work of personal development which we ensure for every one of our participants. What happens in the development of the small child joining us in our preschool activities up to the time when the adult leaves us after completing secondary level? The question is posed both from a societal and individual perspective. From a societal perspective because we have the task of creating a safe nation/society with decent citizens. *From an individual perspective because personal development is about every person's right to realise and live his/her own dream.* Strong visions appear when you think these thoughts. Another question is thus important. What is the decisive factor to contributing to the realisation of the goals? It can only pertain to every one of us being conscious of the fact that results are created in the interface between child and adult, between pupil and teacher and requires that the organisation understands that the interface must be based on a *liberated creativity* in the staff instead of directives from the central administration. Within this perspective, the teachers who have been examined in the master's programme in action-learning are an important and valuable resource. Through action-learning you develop as a creative pedagogue within the concept of lifelong learning and experiential learning and become the professional pedagogue who uses research in the service of school development. This *coach* is needed by both teachers at the schools and colleagues in order to realise and live their dreams.” (quote from official leaflet 2007: 2; my translation and emphasis).<sup>95</sup>

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94 From 2006 a portfolio method was implemented at every school; every pupil had an individual development plan containing goals, milestones and progress pertaining to their learning ([www.iup.nu/1.html](http://www.iup.nu/1.html)).

95 “I förskola- och skolverksamhet måste resultat relateras till den *personliga utveckling* vi hjälper var och en av våra deltagare till. Vad händer i utvecklingen hos det lilla barnet i vår förskoleverksamhet fram till att den vuxna lämnar oss efter avslutad gymnasieskola? Frågan ställs både ur ett samhälleligt och ett individuellt perspektiv. Samhälleligt därför att vi har uppdraget att skapa trygghet i landet

From this quote we can identify a new direction in the official narrative of the project. The new narrative places the project in the quest for self-realisation, be it as a child, a pupil, as an adult, a teacher, or a colleague. The programme is now situated in the context of creating the required competences amongst the teachers in order to facilitate this individual development – personal growth. Another three observations to the above quote must be listed, namely:

1. The usage of the word ‘coach’ which implies that the graduates of the master’s programme are seen as competent in their new role of teaching – facilitating personal growth through coaching.
2. Furthermore, the usage of another popular word; namely *creative*. Although the narrative has thus changed slightly, it is still situated within the context of post-modern – knowledge society. It is interesting to observe how the programme is continuously situated in a continuum of change and currently identified societal needs. The common theme in the quotes is that Striving for Action Teachers is a piece of a greater puzzle of school development and change in the City and the teachers partaking in the programme are seen as vital participants in these plans.
3. Teachers from Striving for Action Teachers are left in no doubt regarding their responsibility; they are to assist both pupils and colleagues – you become the ‘professional teacher who uses research in the service of school development’. In other words, you are perceived as a change agent when you have participated and completed Striving for Action Teachers according to the official pamphlet. You are the agent who will make change happen!

## The Impetus of Striving for Action Teachers?

How did Striving for Action Teachers come about? As we have read from the former director of the District, the Norwegian Professor is characterised as the ‘link which has tied the threads’ – we may ask what these threads are? Different sources of inspiration? Different sources of influence? Different demands made by society? Was he the response to different demands experienced by the District? Or is the ‘link’

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med gode samhällsmedborgare. *Individuellt för att den personliga utvecklingen handlar om vars och ens rätt att förverkliga och leva sin egen dröm.* Starka målbilder dyker upp när man tänker dessa tankar. En annan fråga blir därför viktig. Vad är den främst bidragande faktorn för målpuppfyllelse? Det kan endast handla om att vi alla är medvetna om att resultat skapas i mötet mellan barn och vuxen, mellan elev och lärare och först när organisationen förstår att mötet måste bygga på en *frigjord kreativitet* i personalgruppen istället för på centrala direktiv. I detta perspektiv är pedagogerna som examinerats i mastersprogrammet i aktionslärande en viktig och värdefull resurs. Genom aktionslärande utvecklas du som *kreativ pedagog* inom begreppet livslångt och erfarenhetsbaserat lärande och blir den professionella forskande pedagogen i skolutvecklingens tjänst. Den *coach* både unga och kollegor behöver för att kunna förverkliga och leva sina drömmar” (quote from official leaflet 2007: 2).

characterisation more an emotional metaphor for the impact which the Norwegian Professor has had on the visions of the District?

Historically speaking the City can be seen as a district which actively engages in projects. This focus on educational change and educational projects is not particularly new to the District, quite the contrary. The impetus and origin of the Striving for Action Teachers Project was, for example, a continuation of another extensive project. The history of the project Striving for Action Teachers was presented by the first project manager and initiator in January 2004 and is accounted below. A similar account of the history of the project has also been given by other persons involved in the project, e.g. project secretary, Norwegian Professor and Swedish director of the Research Institute<sup>96</sup> (field journal: 23 September 2004; interview notes 4 October 2004).

The City launched an ambitious project at district level back in 1995 which aimed at securing competences in a decentralised district and focused on lifelong learning. Among other things, this project led to a particular project focusing on engagement, environment, influence and lifelong learning (EEIL). EEIL was initiated by politicians and was launched in 1999 for a four-year period. The person heavily involved in the EEIL is characterised as highly energetic and charismatic. EEIL involved the participation of some educational institutions and both teachers and pupils were actively engaged in the project. During the EEIL project, pupils were given the opportunity to work independently and initiate various activities. EEIL was a clear testimony to pupils' drive and initiative. The overwhelming energy, which the pupils expressed during the EEIL project, impressed and inspired the above-mentioned person and became a great source of inspiration for the project Striving for Action Teachers. The energy of the pupils and drive which they applied to the project and consequently to their learning was an indicator of the impact of pupil influence, which the District did not want to ignore. The teachers involved reported how they were challenged by the pupils' drive and initiatives and experienced that their current roles as teachers were insufficient in coping with these active pupils. The evaluation of EEIL also documented that the teachers' attitudes and self-perception changed as the pupils became more independent, active and took more initiatives. Concurrently to this acquired experience, the law of IUP, ([www.iup.nu/1.html](http://www.iup.nu/1.html)), was passed which made teachers responsible for developing plans for teachers' learning situations.

Given the development of new external needs, which affected the work of the teachers and the role of teaching, the City formulated a new project, whose aim it was to secure new competences to teachers, spanning pre-school to secondary school level. The project was developed and conceptualised by the initiator and later the first project manager and a professor from a Norwegian University, who were already acquainted with the City by having collaborated with the District in other projects. The highly energetic Norwegian Professor and the first program manager enabled the collaboration between the Norwegian Professor and the District, as they were

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96 The Research Institute became involved in Striving for Action Teachers as it initially funded the evaluation of the project. The Research Institute was a renowned research institute, which had established a separate department focusing solely on studies on education in Sweden. The Director supported the evaluation of Striving for Action Teachers both financially and organisationally.



highly successful in securing funding for the various projects.<sup>97</sup> The first project manager has subsequently left his position within the District. Whilst with the District, the project manager had launched many projects and has by colleagues been characterised as a person full of ideas, by some seen as a real entrepreneur, but not necessarily a great organiser of projects.<sup>98</sup>

The Norwegian University that was contacted to deliver the postgraduate programme is renowned internationally for having developed action research within an educational setting. This is henceforth characterised as action-learning. The Norwegian Professor is by many people characterised as being very innovative (I here apply the term as it is commonly applied) and very charismatic, in other words an entrepreneur.<sup>99</sup> He is renowned for his commitment to action-learning which he was exposed to during a research trip to England. His authorship is extensive within this field and he has conducted extensive research within this field. He has initiated a considerable number of projects on this topic and has worked as an advisor and co-developer in several districts. In Sweden, three districts have established partnerships with the Norwegian University with a particular focus on action-learning. Each project has been developed and designed by the Norwegian Professor.

The District has collaborated with the Professor during an extensive period of time and *Striving for Action Teachers* is one example leading to another project. This project aimed at enhancing school leaders' competences within action learning. Furthermore the initiator and designer of the programme also attributes credit to another person, namely the one that was involved in the first project which made the District realise that the teachers needed more competences if they were to meet the needs of the pupils. The project's creation and realisation is largely due to these three people.<sup>100</sup>

The Norwegian University had experiences with successfully running other projects similar to this and was consequently very optimistic about the potential success of the project.

The project *Striving for Action Teachers* has co-existed alongside other projects focusing on enhancing the educational institutions in the District. The project can thus be placed in the spectrum of externally imposed reforms (state reforms and policies), projects initiated by the District itself and individual school projects initiated by school leaders, work teams, by individual teachers and by teachers. It is thus a case where the educational change did not only emanate from state regulations or from teacher initiatives. Indeed the impetus came from every level of what Michael

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97 The EEIL can thus be seen as a project in which the City experienced what Krokmark (2006) has termed 'global knowledge' and the *Striving for Action Teachers* was an attempt to enable the teachers to assume their new role as teachers.

98 Characterisation made during meetings in 2004, 2005 and 2006 (field journal notes).

99 As Mühlenbock and Solli (2003) write, "Entrepreneurs are persons who do something. They are not active in the sense that they react to other people's action, that is to say reactive. They are instead proactive; actions come from them. They are initiative and they initiate action. Thus they take action themselves but they also make other people act" (Mühlenbock and Solli 2003: 174; my translation).

100 For an interesting discussion of ownership of a project from an entrepreneurial point of view, see Mühlenbock and Solli 2003.

Fullan (2003) refers to as the ‘tri-level argument’: the schools, the district, and the state (2003: 54). The project can thus be seen as being extremely ambitious because the District clearly set about creating change at every level and for every type of school in the District. Furthermore the project can be categorised as attempting to create ‘deep change’ (Sergiovanni 2005: 301) rather than merely upgrading teachers’ qualifications.

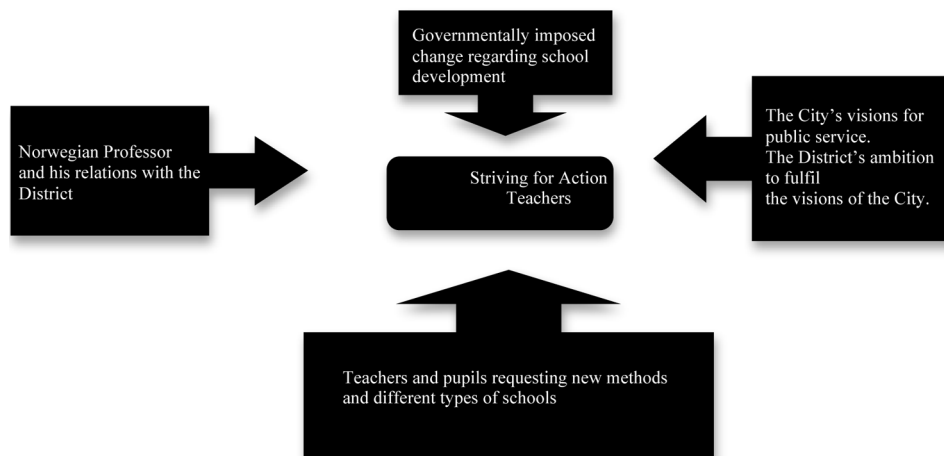


Figure 5: Impetus for Striving for Action Teachers: top and bottom

From the figure above we are able to identify a context of top-down and bottom-up forces which brought about the birth of Striving for Action Teachers. As I will argue subsequently, these various forces, which influenced the development of ‘Striving for Action Teachers’ naturally added to its complexity but also to its potential success and synergistic impact.

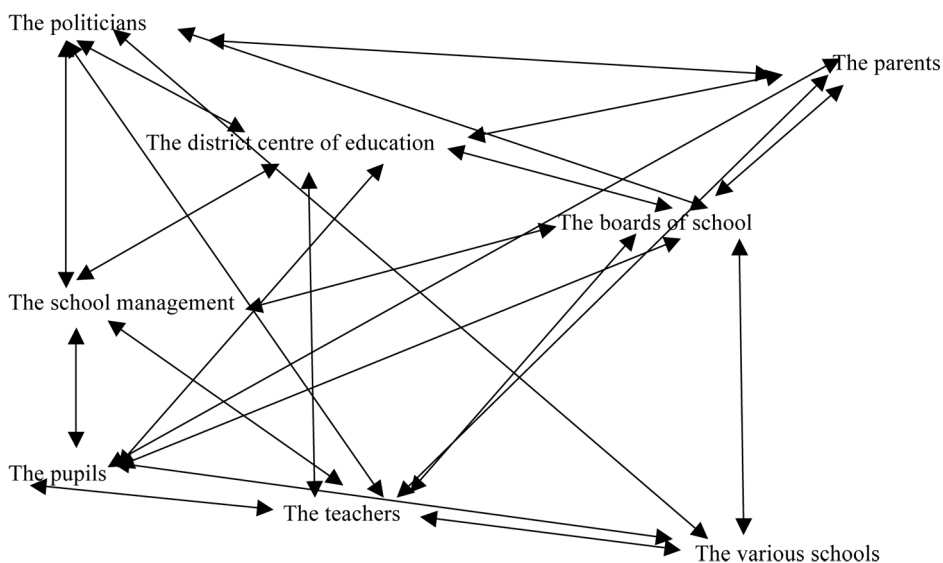
## The micro-political context

The geographical setting of the Striving for Action Teachers is, as mentioned, within the City. This means that different educational institutions at different educational levels (from pre-school to secondary level) participate in Striving for Action Teachers. The educational institutions participating in Striving for Action Teachers include pre-schools, primary schools, and secondary schools. Private schools were also able to participate.<sup>101</sup> The project was funded by a national project, whose objective was to increase the ratio of teacher-teachers in classrooms across Sweden. A considerable amount of money was allocated to each district, in this case SEK 25 million. The ini-

<sup>101</sup> Subsequently this became an interesting issue as the District would not continue to fund the teachers from the private schools to participate in network activities (field note October 2008).

tiative is thus also an example of how Swedish school policies have become more and more decentralised within recent years. The political initiative can be seen as a positive act to reduce the negative impact of previous reductions. The District deemed that the funding would not be able to alleviate previous reductions in staff and hence chose to redefine the objectives of the allocated funding. Striving for Action Teachers can still be seen as enhancing teacher-teacher ratio, at least 'creatively' speaking, since the participating teachers had reduced teaching hours and hence substitutes were required. The District had another project running at different schools and the experiences from that project were, as previously mentioned, that the teachers lacked 'knowledge' when 'real' learning occurred. That is to say they were not able to meet the pupils' needs when the pupils were engaged in defining their own learning aims and goals. Therefore the District concluded, from their experiences and input from previous projects, that 'real' change was required. The District can thus be seen to act against the top-down imposed regulations and respond to the demands of a school national policy that can be characterised as a system of economic control. The District saw the proposed initiative as an ad hoc solution that would not bring about real changes, which were required in our current knowledge society. A quite ambitious initiative was consequently implemented (field journal, Interview with first project manager, February 2004). It is therefore possible to characterise the project as an example of a project situated in between top-driven and bottom-up driven educational change.

Given that the project came about this way, it is situated in the context of micro politics (Blase 2005) and as the analysis will later convey, it is this micro political setting that assists us in ascertaining and understanding Striving for Action Teachers. At this point it is important to observe that the District was able to receive local political support for the project because the City in general aspires to the 'best and first' in the region. Given the structure of Striving for Action Teachers it is possible to apply the above definition to the situation. I have depicted the micro-political context below.



(figure 6 designed by author based on Blase 2005: 264 ff.)<sup>102</sup>.

From the figure it is evident that Striving for Action Teachers may affect many people in many different contexts and is thus very ‘exposed’ to ‘unconscious or conscious actions that may have political significance’ (Boyd 2005: 265).<sup>103</sup>

## When change must come from below – bottom-up in other words

It is not only the attempt to create change agents and establish a network of change agents that differentiates this project from other projects enhancing teachers’ competences. It is the nature of the postgraduate programme that differentiates the programme from others. It is the way in which the teachers are seen as pivotal in bringing about change and therefore recognising the importance of starting with the teachers (Blase 2005). It is because of this one can assert that in realising the pivotal role teachers play in restructuring and reculturing schools, the District initiated a project

102 Røste and Godø, 2005, have also written on collaborative partnerships in micro-political settings aiming at bringing about change and innovation.

103 Indeed it is quite understandable that the school is often seen as a ‘microsociety’ (Blase 2005). Its impressiveness is also evident when Bennich-Björkman writes “One million teachers and 125,000 teachers go to school every day. It is 1/7 of the Swedish population. No other organisation affects this many people on a daily basis” (2003: 101; my translation). See also Skolverket’s report no. 166 (1999 for a similar account of the various actors involved in the work pertaining to school strategy development, school management and daily operations.

which would profoundly impact the participating schools. This makes it highly courageous. Indeed the project is an example of teachers not being viewed as ‘a problem to be finessed or coerced’ as they usually are (Fink and Stroll 2005: 29). The project can thus be situated in the realm of both top-down but also in bottom-up change, since the teachers would be able to function as change agents at the respective schools and hence bring about a change process from a bottom-up perspective.

## Who chose to become Action Teachers?

Although the *raison d’être* for Striving for Action Teachers has been presented as ensuring that the teachers within the City developed competences that could be applied in diverse ways, the teachers may have many different reasons for participating.

In the first cohort 25 teachers were accepted as teachers of the programme. They came from 14 different schools, ranging from pre-school to primary schools and again to secondary schools. Some schools sent only one teacher; other schools sent three teachers. Teachers with special needs as their primary focus also participated. The District canvassed for participants through traditional and more untraditional channels, which meant that participants of the first cohort enlisted for a variety of very different reasons. Some chose to participate for very personal reasons (e.g. get a break from teaching), others were inspired by the theme, some saw career opportunities; some signed up because their managers had encouraged them to participate, and others wanted a master’s degree. (Data obtained from questionnaire conducted in 2004 and interviews conducted in 2004 and 2005).

**Table 6:** Participants from first cohort and reasons for participating in Master’s Programme

	Total population	Participants in the questionnaire	%	Reasons for participating in programme: Encouraged by management	Reasons for participating in programme: Other reasons
School	14	10	75		
Participants generally	24	15	66	2	13
Men	8	4	50		
Women	16	11	69		

(Author’s compilation).

Given the objectives of the programme and given the fact that the programme is situated between top-down and bottom-up, one expected impetus for participating was that management (school leaders) had chosen the future change agents. In other words management had the opportunity to pick and choose between the teachers

whom the managers found most likely to assume the role as ‘change agents’. As the table illustrates, this is not the case with the first cohort.

The then Head of Research and Development explains this pattern at a meeting in 2004 and argues that the pattern is understandable and due to the manner in which the District chose to recruit the participants, through untraditional means such as advertising in local newspapers. The District had deliberately chosen not to use school leaders as gatekeepers in selecting the participants, which meant that the first cohort was primarily driven by personal ambition (interview field journal 23 September 2004). When asked why the District had chosen this way to attract the participating teachers, the then Head of Research and Development answered that they wanted to recruit participants in a different way in order to get teachers who really wanted to participate. The reasons given indicated that applicants were driven by personal motivation and not obligations to their principal. Although only 2 of the respondents in the questionnaire had been encouraged to participate in the programme by their managers, I conclude that school leaders were aware of the programme and that some school leaders responded to this programme positively and proactively.

In comparing the three cohorts and their reasons for participating, a similar pattern emerges. In table 2 the various reasons for participating in the master’s programme are listed based on input from the three questionnaires. In answering this question the respondents were allowed to make multiple choices for participating, given that a variety of elements may indeed influence a person’s decisions for participating in professional training.

Even though it is possible to identify similarities in the reasons given for participating, the cohorts themselves have been characterised as different from each other. One participant characterised the first cohort as representing the more “sanctimonious” type of teachers compared to the second and third cohort (interviewee K). Here interviewee K referred to the fact that the participants of the first cohort appeared more attuned to the cause of action learning and more dedicated to changing the school system. Similarly the District has characterised the first cohort as being more “passionate” when it comes to teaching as a profession (field journal – meeting with the District February 2005). To ensure continuation of the change instigated at each educational institution the District aimed at ensuring that the same school sent new teachers in subsequent recruitment of participants. When analysing the lists of participants from this perspective, this objective was not successful as only 4 schools sent participants to each cohort of the programme. If we add schools that sent participants to two of the three cohorts, we can increase this number by 6 schools. This means that 10 schools out of 34 had participants in more than 1 cohort. The schools would thus have had the possibility of learning about the programme for more than 5 years or 6 years depending on which cohort they sent participants to.<sup>104</sup>

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104 These calculations are based on lists of participants received from the District.

**Table 7:** Schools' attendance pattern in Striving for Action Teachers based on data obtained from the District

Schools	Every cohort	Two cohorts	One cohort
Total population: 34	4	6	24

(Author's compilation )

This means that at 24 schools the teachers were alone in acquiring the competency as a change agent. 10 schools sent teachers at more than one cohort enabling those to build a team of knowledge carriers – or as the former director of the District wrote in the pamphlet; 'drivers of change'.

**Table 8:** Teachers' reasons for participating in the master's programme based on three questionnaires collected in 2004, 2005 and 2006

Reasons for participating	First cohort (15 respondents)	Second cohort (10 respondents)	Third cohort (6 respondents)	Total 31
Encouraged by own school management	2	2	1	5
Personal reasons, e.g. individual competence development	7	7	10	24
To develop as a teacher	12	11	13	36
Part of school's development plan	1	2	2	5
Own initiative to participate	11	7	8	26
To change the general approach to teaching at own school	6	7	5	18
To obtain a master's degree	5	6	5	16
Other	2	0	4	6

(Author's compilation based on the questionnaires from the 3 cohorts)

From the table above each teacher has availed of the possibility to list several reasons for participating in the programme. It is, however, possible based on for example the teachers' own reflective accounts re. their participation in the programme to identify some typologies of teachers. The typology presented below is important in the discussion later on the complexity of change and innovation.

Some of the teachers have upon graduation been asked to account for their reasons for participating in Striving for Actions Teachers – the reasons given by the graduates correlate closely to the reasons identified in the three questionnaires.

I have chosen illustrate the different reasons for participating using the participants' own words. They express the many different reasons for participating in the

programme and the various reasons are only one contributing factor for Striving for Action Teachers having turned out as it did.<sup>105</sup>

It is interesting to pursue the participants' own reflections on their participation and observe the emergence of different patterns.

## Encouraged by own school management – the loyal change agent

The participants who were encouraged to participate by management express loyalty and gratitude. The person below describes a wish to “give back” – to contributing to the school's development.

That I can call myself master in action learning is primarily thanks to my two former principals, xx and yy. During their time as principals, they were way ahead when it came to school development, and it was only natural for them to support their staff in developing, which is why they encouraged me and others to apply.

The programme has been remarkably rewarding, not least because it has given me sharper tools in my ability to reflect on my role as teacher. I have first and foremost been given an opportunity to seriously conduct and study individually-contextualised learning. Precisely this individually-contextualised learning I believe will be an important part of the puzzle when it comes to liberating the school from the old regulated structure, where “the pupil in the centre” is merely an empty concept.

I even hope in the future to have the opportunity to work at a school where the pupils' development and learning are the focal point. Maybe I can contribute to the school's development towards a point where the study plans are taken seriously, using my experiences from the master's programme.

(Graduate 2: my translation from official leaflet 2005: 6)<sup>106</sup>

I have chosen to call the graduates who express loyalty and gratitude towards the programme, *the loyal change agents*. As they appear in a public leaflet, it is to be ex-

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105 It is important to note that the participants in the questionnaires answered while they were still attending the programme whereas the reflective notes re. participating in the programme obtained from the leaflets are written upon graduation and for public purposes.

106 “Att jag idag kan titulera mig master i aktinslärande har jag framförallt mina två tidigare skolledare, xx och yy, att tacka för. Då de under sin tid som skolledare låg långt framme vad gäller skolutveckling, var det naturligt för de matt stötta sin personal att utvecklas, varför de uppmanade både mig och andra att söka. Utbildningen har varit oerhört givande, inte minst då den gett mig skarpare verktyg i mitt reflekterande över min roll som lärare. Jag har framförallt gets möjlighet att på allvar bedriva og studera det individanpassade lärandet. Just det individanpassade lärandet tror jag är en väldigt viktig pusselbit i arbetet med skolans frigörelse från det gamla regelstyrda strukturen, där ‘eleven i centrum’ bara är ett tomt begrepp. Jag hoppas att även i fortsättningen få möjlighet at jobba för en skola där elevernas utveckling och lärande står i centrum och kanske kan jag med mina erfarenheter från mastersutbildningen ge ett bidrag till den skolutveckling som tar läroplanens mål på allvar” (graduate 2: original quote from official leaflet 2005: 6).



pected that they express a loyalty. However, it is also interesting to delve further into their statements.

“...thanks to my two former principals, xx and yy. During their time as principals they were way ahead when it came to school development, and it was only natural for them to *support their staff in developing*, which is why they encouraged me and others to apply ... I even hope in the future to have the opportunity to work at a school where the pupils' development and learning are the focal point. *Maybe I can contribute to the school's development*” (graduate 2, quote from above; my emphasis).

From this excerpt it is possible to identify the significance of support and encouragement from school management. The graduate expressed an awareness of the positive attitude at managerial level towards school development and readily accepts a role and responsibility when it comes to working towards and with school development. Literature recording educational change often cites the lonely life of a dedicated teacher – ‘the pioneer of change’ (Hargreaves et al 2001: 166).<sup>107</sup> This graduate appears readily to accept the relevance of school development and her/his role in facilitating and supporting this development.

“During the 15 years I have worked as a teacher I have basically been studying as well as working. I want to be continuous developing and meeting new challenges. When I was encouraged by my principal to participate in the Master's programme in action learning, I felt as if I was given an opportunity to mix theory with praxis within the frame of work and even make a contribution to the development at the school as I work as ‘manager of development’. I have an exciting role as I work both with the pupils and within management. Action research felt like a good approach to development. Action research is about developing and changing the organisation and about obtaining knowledge about how this change works and what happens along the way.

Now upon completion I am really happy about the new knowledge and experiences I have obtained through lectures, literature research, group discussions, specific written reflections and my own action research at my school. In conjunction with my work I have been discussing and reflecting on different pedagogical question during meetings every week together with teachers/pedagogues. I look forward to continuing with action learning as part of the development work at my school and *am even open towards sharing my knowledge and experiences at other schools*” (graduate 10).

(My translation from official leaflet 2006: 10; my emphasis).<sup>108</sup>

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107 “Pioneer: 1. a person who is the first to study or develop a new area of knowledge, culture, etc..” (Advanced Learner's Oxford Dictionary in Ellis 2006: 4). As Hargreaves et al write, “The intellectual work of thinking one's way through new programs and practices is never more difficult than when it is undertaken alone” (2001: 166).

108 “Under de 15 år som jag har arbetat som lärare har jag i stort set hela tiden studerat vid sidan av mitt arbete. Jag vill ständigt utvecklas och anta nya utmaningar. När jag blev tillfrågad av min rektor om Mastersutbildningen i aktionslärande kände jag att jag skulle få möjlighet att inom arbetsram utvecklas genom att varva teori med praktik och även kunna bidra till utveckling på skolan, eftersom jag arbetar som utvecklingsledare. Jag har en spännande roll med ett ben i praktiken med eleverna och ett i ledningen. Aktionsforskning kändes som ett bra verktyg för utveckling. Aktionsforskning handlar om att utveckla och förändra verksamheten och om att skaffa sig kunskap om hur denna förändring går till och vad som sker under resans gång. Nu efter genomförd utbildning, är jag väldigt glad över de nya kunskaper och erfarenheter som jag har fått via föreläsningar, litteraturstudier, gruppreflekationer, enskilda skiftliga reflektioner och i mitt eget aktionsforskningsarbete på skolan. Parallellt med mitt arbete har jag tillsammans med pedagogerna

The interesting observation regarding graduate 10 is that this person is not only interested in giving back to his/her own school, but also in becoming a member of the network surrounding the educational institutions in the City – in other words graduate 10 fully adheres to the objectives of the programme as listed by both Directors of the District. Furthermore the graduate readily and eagerly accepts the responsibility of managing change, being the ‘driver of change’.

It is also possible to identify *the loyal change agent* in some of the interviews which I have conducted. One interviewee expresses strong sentiments about the possibility of aiding colleagues in their work and how the programme has provided her with new knowledge which can facilitate her in this work (interviewee (B)).

Another graduate writes

“Due to, and thanks to, my two former principals, xx and yy, I applied and was accepted to the Master’s programme in action learning. They (the two principals) strongly contributed to an action research and school development conducive environment, which is why it (*the programme*) felt right for me. The Master’s programme could have been designed for me as I am interested in school development topics.

The programme has given me an awful lot, among other things necessary tools of analysis which I must possess in my pedagogical profession” (graduate 13).

(My translation from official leaflet 2006: 20; my addition).<sup>109</sup>

This graduate also expresses a gratitude and willingness to become part of the school development: “*the Master’s programme could have been designed for me as I am interested in school development*” (op.cit.). Also, the graduate expresses an interest in more than just developing her/his own subject and teaching. It thus appears as if the graduates through the programme have adopted an insight and willingness to become a part of school development. The above quotes from the graduates are written upon completing the programme and the words and concepts applied are in tune with what the programme wants to represent. Furthermore this rhetoric was explicit from the very beginning of the programme. Some teachers were from the very beginning in agreement with the purpose and vision of the programme.

“I heard about the Master’s programme in Action Learning through my principal who thought it sounded like an education for me. To be able to affect my work situation has always appealed me and I would obtain the necessary means/tools through the programme in order to become a ‘driving force’ in the work pertaining to change.

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på skolan diskuterat och reflekterat kring olika pedagogiska frågor vid konferenserna varje vecka. Jag ser fram emot att fortsätta med aktionslärande i utvecklingsarbetet på skolan och är även open för att delga mina kunskaper och erfarenheter till andra skolor.” (graduate 10).

109 “I kraft av, och tack vare, mina två f.d. skollärare, xx och yy, sökte jag och antogs till Mastersprogrammet i aktionslärande. De bidrog starkt till et aktionsforsknings- och skolutvecklingsvänligt klimat varför det kändes angeläget för mig. Mastersprogrammet verkade vara som klippt och skuret för mig eftersom jag är intresserad av skolutvecklingsfrågor. Utbildningen har gett mig oerhört mycket bl.a. i form av nödvändiga analysredskap jag måste ha i min pedagogiska profession” (graduate 13: original quote from official leaflet 2006: 20).

*One of my most important assignments, as I perceive it, is to disseminate the knowledge in order for more to gain insight into the experiences which I have acquired through the duration of the programme” (graduate 14).*

(My translation from official leaflet 2006: 26; my emphasis).<sup>110</sup>

The above quote is interesting, as graduate 14 explicitly writes that s/he wanted to obtain knowledge and tools that would enhance her/his knowledge and competences regarding change in order for her/him to become “*a driving force*”.

This explicit loyalty and dedication to school development is almost idyllic and certainly coveted by many school leaders.

“It was my then principal, ww, who encouraged my colleague and I to participate in the Programme. It turned out that her feeling that we would both appreciate this type of programme was correct.

We live in a changing world and it is not just the amount and type of knowledge, which has changed, it is also the pupils and the role of the teacher. As teacher you have to be constantly willing to tease out and try out new ways of working in order to harness the meaningfulness and variation in learning” (graduate 18).

(My translation from official leaflet 2007: 26; my emphasis).<sup>111</sup>

The *loyal change agent* has many different faces and graduate 18 does not explicitly express concern and dedication the school development but more to the development of teaching methods, the role of teaching and the teacher. The difference is not insignificant as we will observe subsequently. The quote is very different to graduate 20, below, who quite clearly enlists her/himself as a dedicated change agent of the school.

“My former principal, ww, inspired me to apply for the master’s programme in action learning as this education would be able to add new force to the work re. change at our school.

*When practical experience can be tied to theory, it adds further force and substance to change” (graduate 20).*

(My translation from official leaflet 2007: 38; my emphasis).<sup>112</sup>

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110 “Jag horde talas om Mastersprogrammet i aktionslärande genom min rektor som tyckte det lät som en utbildning för mig. Att kunna påverka min arbetssituation har alltid tilltalat mig, och genom utbildningen skulle jag få nödvändiga verktyg för att kunna vara en drivande kraft i förändringsarbetet. En av mina viktigaste uppgifter blit, som jag ser det, att sprida kunskaperna så att fler kan få del av de erfarenheter jag gjort under utbildningens gång” (graduate 14: original quote from official leaflet 2006: 26).

111 “Det var min dåvarande rektor, ww, som uppmanade min kollega och mig att delta i mastersprogrammet. Det visade sig att hennes aningar om att vi två skulle uppskatta denna typ av utbildning var riktiga! Vi lever i en föränderlig värld och det är inte bara mängden och typen av kunskap som har förändrats, utan också eleverna och lärarrollen. Som lärare måste du hela tiden vara villig till att utforma och prova på nya arbetssätt för att värna om meningsfullheten och omväxlingen i inläringen (graduate 18: original quote in official leaflet 2007: 26).

112 “Min dåvarande rektor, ww, inspirerade mig att söka till mastersprogrammet i aktionslärande då denna utbildning skulle kunna tillföra ny kraft i förändringsarbetet på skolan. När praktisk erfarenhet kan knytas till teori ger det ytterligare kraft och tyngd bakom förändringen” (graduate 20: in official leaflet 2007: 38).

We are here witness to teachers who are dedicated to the work pertaining to change and they use words such as

- School development
- Driving force in the work pertaining to change
- New force of change at the school

It is pertinent to bear in mind that only a minority of the participants were encouraged to participate by school management. Their dedication to change and the work pertaining to school development is noteworthy and some of their experiences will be touched upon subsequently. The above quotes contain quite emotional language and convey the extent to which these participants have

Dedicated themselves to the programme and its promise of potential change. *The loyal change agent* in place ready to be the driving force.

## Personal reasons, e.g. individual competence development

When participating for personal reasons is expressed by some of the participants these reasons can typically be related to

- The opportunity for further education
- Personal development
- New career opportunities
- Interest in school development

From the three cohorts of questionnaires it is evident that many of the teachers participate in the programme for many reasons, some of them personal and some based on an interest in acquiring new knowledge.

### The open-minded

“When the master’s programme appeared, it felt like a real opportunity for further training in general. I was more focused on topics then and was somewhat sceptical towards the ‘fuzzy pedagogy’ and it took some time before I grasped for real the aim of the programme. It was not fuzzy, but provided fresh ideas which could be adapted to your own school.

To study the school as an organisation is interesting. What makes some schools progressive while others stagnate? What does it take for school change to become successful? At the practical level the development of the role of a mentor is exciting. This holds a free area for us teachers to exploit and fill with content.

I think that my knowledge and experience from the master's in action learning can be applied to the continuous development of the role of the mentor and of pupil influence at the school, combined with the 'Myndigheten för skolutvecklings' initiative at schools in deprived areas. How can we structure the school day for pupils even further and simultaneously make them feel more included/participatory at the school?" (graduate 9).  
(My translation from official leaflet 2006: 6).<sup>113</sup>

Graduate 9 expresses an openness when s/he writes that what initially appeared 'fuzzy', subsequently became insightful knowledge with regard to school change and development. Graduate 9 can be seen as participant who is responsible and open-minded but not initially a dedicated change agent. Rather the programme has provided her/him with new input which has instigated the development of new ideas to be implemented at his/her own school.

"After many years as a teacher it felt important to continue educating oneself in order not to get stuck in old routines. That is why I chose to enrol in the Master's programme. It has been five good years" (graduate 12).  
(My translation from official leaflet 2006: 16).<sup>114</sup>

Graduate 12 is also an open-minded teacher, not necessarily a change agent but a potential change agent. The motivation for participating was personal but open-minded, namely: '*in order not to get stuck in old routines*' (op.cit.; my emphasis).

An open mind is often listed as a pre-requisite for change and development (Bason et al 2009) and some of the teachers initially participating on the basis that competency development is a way in which to ensure that one does not get '*stuck in old routines*', as it were, may subsequently accept the role of change agent as a natural development – but they may also choose to accept other opportunities arising from their newly acquired knowledge and experience.

## The altruist and the achiever

"The challenge with the master's programme was to develop my personal and professional competences, and use that knowledge to contribute to the development of co-operation between

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113 "När masterutbildningen dök upp kändes det som en rejäl möjlighet till fortbildning i allmänhet. Då var jag mer ämnesinriktad och kände en viss skepsis mot 'flumpedagogik' och det tog ett tag innan jag förstod riktningen i utbildningen. Det var inte flum utan fräsche idéer som gick att koppla till den egna skolan. Att studera skolan som organisation är intressant. Vad gör vissa skolor framgångsrika medan andra står och stampar? Vad krävs för att en skolförändring ska bli framgångsrik? På praktiktivå är utvecklandet av mentorsrollen spännande. Här finns ett stort frirum för oss lärare att utnyttja och fylla med innehåll. Jag tror att mina kunskaper och erfarenheter från masters i aktionslärande kan användas till ett fortsatt utvecklande av mentorsrollen och elevninflytandet på skolan sammankopplat med *Myndigheten för skolutvecklings* satsning på skolor i utsatta områden. Hur kan vi tydligare strukturera upp vardagen för eleverna och samtidigt få de matt känna sig mer delaktiga på skolan?" (graduate 9: original quote from official leaflet 2006: 6).

114 "Efter många år som lärare kändes det viktigt att fortbilda sig, för inte bli kvar i gamla mönster, Därför valde jag att anmäla mig till Mastersprogrammet. Det har varit fem bra år" (graduate 12: original quote from official leaflet 2006: 16).

management and the professionals working at the school (this graduate works as a special's ed. teacher; my supplementary comments).

My hope is that I will be given more opportunities to run action learning processes where the teachers' and pupils' development form the focal point" (graduate 15).  
(My translation from official leaflet 2007: 10; my emphasis and addition).<sup>115</sup>

Graduate 15 expresses two different opinions of interest to me:

Firstly s/he writes that s/he participated in the programme in order to enhance her/his personal competences (op.cit.). Secondly, s/he writes that s/he participated in the programme in order to enhance her/his professional competences. (op.cit.).

Although personal competences are receiving further recognition when it comes to explaining successful change programmes (e.g. Torr 2008), there is a difference between personal and professional motivational issues (Amabile in Torr 2008). Choosing to attend a course in order to enhance personal competences must presumably be more open-ended and not goal orientated. A person may chose to attend in order to have a 'good time', experience new things, meet new people, get inspired or engage in the process just for the sake of it. Professional competences are acquired for a reason; perhaps to obtain new insights, new knowledge, new methods in order to become better at doing what one is already doing; or in order to become able to do new things well. There is a purpose/ a goal.

Personal and professional competences may consist of similar aspects but the two reasons for attending the programme may also conflict.

The person attending the programme for personal reasons, open-minded and attending in order to gain new insights may be seen as altruistic and as such positive towards the programme and what it entails.

The person attending for professional reasons can be categorised as the achiever, maybe even a career-minded teacher, attending the programme in order to obtain new insights that are expected to be applied and implemented upon returning to the school of employment.

The altruist and the achiever may have conflicting aspirations and opinions when it comes to attending the programme and also when it comes to school development.

"When the opportunity to participate in the master's education was presented to me, I perceived it as a challenge. I was tempted by the opportunity to develop myself but also by the opportunity to obtain methods and tools to further enhance the role of preschool when it comes to children's development and learning" (graduate 19).

(My translation from official leaflet 2007: 34).<sup>116</sup>

115 "Utmaningen med masterutbildningen var att utveckla min personliga och professionella kompetens och med den kunskapen medverka till att utveckla skolors arbete tillsammans med de yrkesverksamma i skolan. Min förhoppning är att jag ges fler möjligheter att driva projekt i aktionslärande processer där lärares och elevers utveckling står i centrum" (graduate 15: original quote from official leaflet 2007: 10).

116 "När möjligheten att delta i mastersutbildningen gavs, kändes det som en utmaning för mig. Jag lockades av möjligheten att utvecklas själv, men också få metoder och redskap för att ytterligare lyfta fram förskolans betydelse för barns utveckling och lärande" (graduate 19: original quote in official leaflet 2007: 34).

Graduate 19 is an exemplary representative of the altruist; ‘I was tempted by the opportunity to *develop myself* but also by the opportunity to *obtain methods and tools* to *further enhance* the role of ...’ (op.cit.; my emphasis). The altruist is open-minded and focused on acquiring new knowledge – not goal orientated or with a set agenda of expectations. The altruist is closely aligned to the open-minded and the last category to be presented: the team-player.

## The team player

“I viewed participating at the master’s programme in action learning as an opportunity to develop my personal competences and increase my understanding of learning. The opportunity to discuss learning and develop my interest in school development appealed me. The interest in development work concerning further teacher training and supervising the teachers also appealed me (referring to teachers at teachers’ college).

I regard action learning as an opportunity to develop co-operating cultures where pupils’ influence and responsibility for learning is enhanced” (graduate 16).  
(My translation from official leaflet 2007: 18; my addition).<sup>117</sup>

The team-player as represented by graduate 16 is also altruistic. Personal development is one of the reasons why s/he chose to participate in the programme. Furthermore graduate 16 participated in the programme because s/he wanted to learn more about collaborative cultures (op.cit.). I have chosen to differentiate between the altruist and the team-player because the team-player specifically writes of ‘co-creating’; doing so explicitly involves other people. The team-player readily accepts the involvement and influence of others, in the above example also the pupils.

“It felt like a big challenge to me to get the opportunity to participate in the Master’s programme in action learning. The challenge was to get the opportunity to develop my personal competences and thinking but also – with the aid of the programme – *to contribute to develop my work team and the work of the school*, together with my colleagues.

Now having completed the programme, I am very happy with the new knowledge and experiences I have acquired, but first and foremost to have had the opportunity to discuss and exchange experiences with other teachers and pedagogues which the programme has given me.

*With the assistance of my new knowledge and experiences I look forward to continuing the development work which has been initiated during the programme.* I am particularly interested in continuing to develop the communication between the actors who are around the school, in order to improve the conditions of the pupils’ learning. I hope that I can contribute to increasing levels of understanding and openness between pupils, parents, teachers and pedagogues” (graduate 4).

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117 “Jag såg möjligheten att utveckla min personliga kompetens ock att utöka min förståelse för lärande genom att gå mastersutbildningen i aktionslärande. Möjligheten att diskutera lärande och utveckla intresset för skolutvecklings tilltalade mig. Intresset för utvecklingsarbete i lärarutbildningen och kopplingen till teachererna vi handleder, lockade också. Jag ser aktionslärande som en möjlighet att utveckla samarbetande kulturer, där elevers inflytande och ansvar i lärandet främjas” (graduate 16: original quote from official leaflet 2007: 18).

(My translation from official leaflet 2005: 10; my emphasis).<sup>118</sup>

Graduate 4 is the exemplary team-player and illustrates how the altruist and team-player often walk hand in hand.

Of the four categories/personae presented in this section the achiever stands out as the archetype which may conflict with the remaining three archetypes. The achiever may be more goal-orientated than the others and thus also set about embarking on action learning for different reasons than the others.

## Develop as a teacher – the professional

Other graduates express clear sentiments when they write about why they chose to participate in the programme. They can be seen as professional teachers working with dedication and diligently enhancing their competences with regard to teaching and acquiring insights and knowledge related to various aspects of learning. As graduate 3 writes, the programme provides teachers and schools with knowledge and insights.

“To be a teacher for younger children entails a lot of contact with the parents. Through cooperation with the home, it is possible to provide the child with good learning conditions. During the last years I have experienced a need to improve relationships with parents of foreign origin.

The Master’s Programme gave me knowledge and tools regarding reflection. Action research and action learning represent a type of research related to praxis which takes account of professional experience, daily experiences and scientific theory. It is an approach which is positive and developmental for teachers and schools” (graduate 3).

(My translation from official leaflet 2005: 6)<sup>119</sup>

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118 “Möjligheten att få delta i Mastersprogrammet i aktionslärande kändes som en stor utmaning för mig. Utmaningen låg i att få möjlighet att utveckla min personliga kompetens och mit tänkande, men också i att med hjälp av utbildningen medverka till att utveckla arbetslagets och skolans arbete, tillsammans med mina kollegor. Nu efter genomförd utbildning, är jag väldigt glad över de nya kunskaper och erfarenheter jag förvärvat, men framförallt för den möjlighet till discussion och utbyte av erfarenheter med andra pedagoger, som utbildningen har gett mig. Med hjälp av mina nya kunskaper och erfarenheter ser jag fram emot att fortsätta med det utvecklingsarbete som initierats under utbildningens gång. Särskilt intresserad är jag av arbeta vidare med att utveckla kommunikationen mellan de aktörer som finns inom skolan, för att förbättra elevernas förutsättningar för lärande. Jag hoppas att jag ska kunna bidra till att öka förståelsen och openheten mellan både elever, föräldra och pedagoger” (graduate 4: original quote from official leaflet 2005: 10).

119 “Att vara lärare för yngre barn innebär mycket kontakter med föräldre. Att i en samverkan med hemmet ge barnen bra förutsättningar för lärande. Under de senaste åren har jag upplevt ett behov av att förbättra kontakterne med föräldrar med utländsk bakgrund. Masterutbildningen gav mig kundskap och verktyg för refletion. Aktionsforskningen och Aktionslärande står för en forskningen med verklighetsanknytning som tar tillvara yrkeserfarenhet, dagliga upplevelser och vetenskaplig teori. Det är en inriktning som är bra och utvecklande för lärare och skola” (graduate 3: original quote from official leaflet 2005: 8).



“I chose to participate in the master’s programme in action learning to obtain deeper understanding of the complex ‘praxis’ – that is to say, what goes on in the class room. It is precisely the praxis which is the point of departure for action learning” (graduate 5).

(My translation from official leaflet 2005: 12).<sup>120</sup>

Graduate 5 expresses the professional sentiment concisely when s/he writes that the Master’s Programme offered an opportunity to increase knowledge of the classroom – where the professional teacher spends a great deal of her/his professional life.

Below, graduate 7 expresses it clearly – developing her/his professional life is the reason for participating.

“I chose to attend the master’s programme in action learning because I wanted to get inspiration and in order to develop in my professional life. Reflection, action-, be conscious and get aha-experiences in my daily meeting with children, colleagues and parents.

As a preschool teacher I view action learning as a way of looking at things. It has to follow you as a red thread through the entire day – not just at work, even in your spare time. During LIFE. Both emotions and intellect have to be part of lifelong learning. Carpe diem ...” (graduate 7).  
(My translation from official leaflet 2005: 16; original emphasis).<sup>121</sup>

“Pedagogy and methodology have always interested me and I often ask myself questions such as *what position does the school have in society? What knowledge do pupils need in order to be well equipped for life? How can the pupils acquire such knowledge?* Thus it has been extraordinarily stimulating to participate in the Master’s education focusing on action learning.

*This Master’s programme has given me broader views when it comes to working with pupils, and regarding the development of the entire school in order to face new times*” (graduate 21).  
(My translation from official leaflet 2007: 40; my emphasis).<sup>122</sup>

Graduate 21 is also representative of the professional teacher who is dedicated to her/his work; namely pedagogy and methodology – the questions listed by graduate 21 are exemplary of questions that a teacher frequently tries to answer.

“Special school and *sameskola* are types of schools which co-exist with primary school. The two types encompass a minority of pupils. However, the influx of pupils has increased noticeably within the last decade. This is a contradiction in our country, which strives towards a school for all; and in our town, which speaks of inclusive teaching.

120 “Jag valde att gå mastersprogrammet i aktionslärande för att söka fördjupad förståelse och kraft till utveckling av den komplexa praktiken, alltså det som sker i klassrummet. Det är just i praktiken som aktionslärande tar sin utgångspunkt” (graduate 5: original quote in official leaflet 2005: 12).

121 “Jag valde att gå Mastersprogrammet i aktionslärande för att jag ville få inspiration och kunna utvecklas i mitt yrke. Reflektion, action-, bli medveten och få aha-upplevelser i mitt dagliga möte med barn, kollegor, föräldrar. Som pedagog ser jag aktionslärande som ett förhållningssätt. Den ska följa som en röd tråd genom hela vardagen – inte bara på arbetsplatsen utan även på fritiden. Till LIVET. Båda känsla och intellect ska vara med i det livslånga lärandet. Carpe diem ...” (graduate 7, original quote from official leaflet 2005: 16).

122 “Pedagogik och metodik har alltid intresserat mig och frågor som *Vilken ställning har skolan i samhället?, Vilka kunskaper behöver eleverna för att vara väl rustade för livet?, Hur ska eleverna inhämta bestående kunskaper?* ställer jag mig ofta. Därför har varit oerhört stimulerande att få deltag i Mastersutbildningen med inriktning på aktionslärande. Denna masterskurs har inneburit att jag fått vidgade vyer både när det gäller samverkan med elever och utveckling av hela skolan för att möta nya tider” (graduate 21: original quote in official leaflet 2007: 40).

Two extensive national surveys, 'Impaired pupils in school' and the Carlsbeck's committee's thoughts, indicate in general that pupils thrive in locally integrated special schools. The surveys also highlight that the level of knowledge is too low compared to the pupils' capacity.

The two actions I have completed and described indicate a close connection to the learning of pupils in need of special support. One action encompasses these pupils' reading skills. The other their inclusion in primary school. Both actions are within my field of interest regarding school development. More knowledge is warranted when it comes to pupils' reading skills in general which are prerequisites for further learning and inclusion, which is a prerequisite for a school for all." (graduate 8).

(My translation from official leaflet 2005: 18).<sup>123</sup>

Graduate 8 is so engrossed in her/his professional being that the need for further knowledge and further actions are listed as reasons for participating in the programme.

"I supervised work teams from preschool to open university level in the academic year 01/02 within the 'it is' project, in which teachers were able to develop their professional role and their own learning through pupil focused, problem-based and cross-disciplinary work. I wanted to continue working along the same lines. Experiential learning is inevitable from the perspective of lifelong learning." (graduate 17).

(My translation from official leaflet 2007: 24).<sup>124</sup>

The interesting point to make here is that in the above quotes change or driving forces of change are not mentioned. The participants are highly embedded in their profession as teacher and have a strong perception of what that is. Change is not on the agenda but rather improving teaching methods and enhancing the methods – in other words continue to ensure teaching as a profession.

## The professional reformer

"I saw the Master's programme as an exciting challenge. That a district like the City implements such a great and extensive endeavour for their employees is unique. That is why I feel honoured

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123 "Särskola och sameskola är skolformer tillika med grundskola. De båda förstnämnda omfattar ett fåtal elever. Dock har tillströmningen av elever till särskola ökat markant det senaste decenniet. Detta är motsägelsefullt i vårt land, som strävar mot en skola för alla, och i vår stad, som förordar inkluderad undervisning. Två omfattande nationella utredningar, Funktionshindrade elever i skolan och Carlbeckkommitténs betänkande visar generellt att elever i lokalintegrerad särskola trivs med sin skolgång. Utredningarna påtalar också att kunskapsnivån är för låg i förhållande till elevernas kapacitet. De båda aktioner jag genomfört och beskrivit hör tätt samman med inläring för elever i behov av särskilt stöd. Den ena behandlar dessa elevers läsfärdighet. Den andra deras inkludering i grundskola. Båda ligger inom mit intresseområde beträffande skolutveckling. Mer kunskap efterfrågas allmänt kring elevers läsförståelse, som utgör grund för fortsatt kunskapsinhämtande, och inkludering, vilket är en förutsättning för en skola för alla" (graduate 8: original quote from official leaflet 2005: 18).

124 "Läsåret 01/02 handledde jag arbetslag från förskole- till folkhögskolenivå inom it is-projektet, där pedagoger fick utveckla sin yrkesroll och sitt eget lärande genom elevorienterat, problembaserat och ämnesövergripande arbete. Jag ville arbeta vidare i samma anda. Erfarenhetsbaserat lärande är ju oslagbart sett ur ett livslångt perspektiv" (graduate 17: original quote in official leaflet 2007: 24).

at getting the opportunity to attend the programme and at the same time proud to have completed my master's studies.

I am interested in entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship within the school. When it comes to pupils and staff alike. The school must be able to look after the pioneers and reformers who can think beyond the national steering documents. It is important to have competences and insights into the culture of the school in order to create incitements for the propensity for change within the school's actors.

I hope that the experiences from the programme will lead to the creation of a network based on the theme action learning- action research in order that a continuous update of our competences can take place" (graduate 6).

(My translation from official leaflet 2005: 14).<sup>125</sup>

Graduate 6 may be the envisioned archetype but it is not necessary to envision the professional reformer because s/he exists. Graduate 6 can be seen as having fully accepted and endorsed the impetus for the Master's Programme. The reasons for the programme are listed: 'It is important to have competences and insights into the culture of the school' (op.cit.; my emphasis). The loyalty is not expressed to the City, the Districts or her/his school but to the 'cause' – the cause being the school.

## Part of the school's development plan

### Change the general approach to teaching at own school

"Now and again opportunities present themselves to me in life. The master's programme was one such opportunity. I was working full-time as president in the local division of the Teachers' Union when the district centre of education thought that someone from the union should participate. As I am interested in learning in all shapes and sizes, I was game" (graduate 22).

(My translation from official leaflet 2007: 46).<sup>126</sup>

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125 "Jag såg Mastersprogrammet som en spännande utmaning. Att en kommun som 'Stad', gör en stor och omfattande satsning för sina anställda är unikt. Därför känner jag mig hedrad att få förmånen att gå kursen, samtidigt som jag känner mig stolt över att ha klarat av mina masterstudier. Jag är intresserad av entreprenörskap och intraprenörskap inom skolan. Både vad det gäller elever och skolpersonal. Skolan måste kunna ta tillvara de eldsjälar och nytänkare, som kan tänka längre än bara till national styrdokument. Här är det viktigt att ha kunskaper och insikter i skolans kultur för skapa incitament för förändringsbenägenheten hos skolans aktörer. Jag hoppas att erfarenheterna från utbildningen gör att ett nätverk kan bildas utifrån temat aktionslärande- aktionsforskning, så att en fortsat uppgradering av våra kunskaper sker" (graduate 6: original quote in official leaflet 2005: 14).

126 "Då och då i livet öppnar sig möjligheter för mig. Mastersutbildningen var just en sådan möjlighet. Jag arbetade heltid på Lärarförbundets lokalavdelning som ordförande då förvaltningen tyckte att någon från lärarfacken borde vara med. Eftersom lärande i alla former intresserar mig tänkte jag på idén" (graduate 22: original quote in official leaflet 2007: 46).

## Career aspiration: to obtain a master's degree

“For many years I have worked with small children, both at preschool and the first year at school. This has given me a lot of practical experience. When I read about the objectives of the master's programme and the opportunities it could facilitate, my interest in attending was aroused. To get the opportunity to obtain more competences, the opportunity to enhance career opportunities within my profession and to become eligible to become involved at teachers' colleges was what made me interested in the Master's programme.” (graduate 11).

(My translation from official leaflet 2006: 12).<sup>127</sup>

From the reflective notes of the graduate participants it is possible to categorise the teachers in different ways: the loyal change agent, the dedicated teacher, the altruist and the achiever (please see appendix 10: 195 ff. for reflective notes in original format). These reflections have been written by participating teachers who completed the master's programme. The interesting observation to make is that they do not form a homogeneous team of change agents. It is possible to argue that their interests and motivations differ when they pertain to educational change and what the master's may mean to them in their endeavours. These differences are not new manifestations only appearing from the reflective notes. They were quite apparent when they were interviewed specifically in relation to working with educational change aspects, e.g. working in their team.

A pattern is emerging at this point. I have indicated a potential schism between top-down initiatives and bottom-up initiatives. Waks (2007) has argued convincingly that organisations that do not integrate and adhere to institutional demands will perish and wither away. However, we have also seen from the literature on educational change that change in order to be integrated and supported, is dependant on local initiatives and individual implementation and contextualisation. It is thus interesting to note how the participants would view their reasons for participating, their roles and what they take with them from the course and henceforth.

At this point it is possible to identify four categories:

- Change agent
- Reformers
- Passionate pioneers
- Dedicated teacher

I have listed them below in below and given examples of some of the words used above in the categorisation of reasons given for participating.

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127 “Jag har arbetat många år i barngrupper, både i förskolan och i förskoleklasser. När jag läste om målet för Mastersprogrammet och vilka förutsättningar det kunda ge, väcktes mitt intresse för att delta. Att få möjlighet till kompetenslyft, möjlighet till karriär inom yrket och att få behörighet att vara verksam på lärarutbildningar, var det som gjorde att jag ville satsa på Masterprogrammet” (graduate 11: original quote from official leaflet 2006: 12).

**Table 9:** Categorisation of teachers participating in Striving for Action Teachers

<b>Change agents</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School development</li><li>• Driving force in work pertaining to change</li><li>• New force of change at the school</li><li>• Loyal change agent</li></ul>	<b>Reformers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Achievers</li><li>• New career opportunities</li><li>• Professional reasons</li><li>• Interest in developing teaching material</li></ul>
<b>Passionate Pioneers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enjoys working and improving teaching methods</li><li>• Enjoys being with the children and youth</li><li>• Actively seeing new teaching methods and new teaching roles</li></ul>	<b>Dedicated teachers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open-minded</li><li>• Altruist</li><li>• Team-player</li></ul>

(Author's own work).

## From personal aspirations to organisational support

From the previous discussions on change I have argued that many factors affect educational change. An important aspect of educational change is the school culture. However, another aspect is also important, namely institutional support.

Based on the first questionnaire, which was sent to the first cohort, it was possible to make some general observations regarding the programme. In general the teachers were satisfied with the programme and found that they benefited from the programme with regards to their professional work and also as a personal development. On a more critical note the teachers also expressed some disappointment.

## The City and school management

The respondents express disappointment regarding the commitment from the District and their own school management. One respondent writes:

”The interest from the City could have been better”<sup>128</sup>

Another respondent comments that the conditions could have been better but does not elaborate on what is meant by this statement. A third respondent writes that the points of the programme have been changed during the programme – that is to say the allotted ECTS points awarded whilst not receiving pay during studying. This aspect addresses the latter part of the programme as described initially; the teachers could opt for a master's dissertation. Whilst writing the master's dissertation, the teachers would not receive pay or reduced time whereas the schools would be com-

128 ”Intresset från xxxs stad kunde varit bättre”, one respondent comments in the questionnaire from the first cohort.

pensated financially by the District. This particular aspect pertaining to the master's dissertation became a heated issue within the first cohort.

## From teacher to master – the clash of credentials

During a meeting with both the Norwegian and Swedish programme management (the second programme managers) and the teachers from the first cohort the aspect of writing the master's dissertation was discussed. During this meeting the participants voiced the opinion that they were unable to answer the question whether they needed one or two years to write a master's degree. They said that would like to see old master's dissertations before reaching a decision and needed to know what was expected of them (field notes 16 September 2004). The Swedish programme management said that the teachers would have their expenses regarding literature covered. The Norwegian programme manager informed the teachers that they were responsible for contacting their supervisors themselves and agreeing which 'action' would form the basis of their dissertation. The Norwegian Programme Manager also informed the teachers that some of them were not eligible for a master's degree as they did not have enough ECTS points in order to obtain a master's degree. The ECTS points acquired from the Master's Programme would not be enough as they missed some ECTS points entering the programme. At this point some of the participating teachers at the meeting became irritated and voiced their annoyance. One teacher was particularly infuriated and voiced her anger regarding what she called the 'part of accreditation'.<sup>129</sup> The atmosphere at the meeting became quite intense (field notes 16 September 2004). Based on the input from the questionnaire the 'part of accreditation' and time allotted to the master's dissertation were aspects of the programme in general, which affected more than one teacher. A majority of respondents in the questionnaire intended to write a master's dissertation. As we can see from table below, 12 of 15 respondents intended to write their master's dissertation.

**Table 10:** First cohort: intentions on writing a master's dissertation

	Write dissertation	Not write dissertation	Do not know whether to write dissertation
Dissertation is part of the school's development plan	3 (from the same school)		
Not part of the school's development plan	5	1	1
Do not know if part of the school's development plan	4 (one writes that it ought to)	1 (one comments probably not)	
In total (15 respondents)	12	2	1

(Author's compilation based on questionnaires obtained in 2004).

<sup>129</sup> The teacher called it the 'berörighetsdelen'.

From this it is possible to conclude that the issue of writing a master's dissertation and the issues pertaining to this work would be important to most of the teachers participating at the meeting. From the questionnaire it is possible to discover why this issue would stir a debate. As I have described earlier, the programme can be split into two parts; one containing the first 45 ECTS points (15 ECTS per year) and the second (fourth year) containing the remaining 45 ECTS points, of which the master's dissertation comprises 30 ECTS. According to some of the respondents in the questionnaire, the programme was initially said to consist of 40 Swedish points. However, subsequently the programme was upgraded to consist of 60 Swedish points. The result was thus that the first part of the programme no longer constitutes 50% of the programme from the points awarded. The points awarded to master's dissertation are now more than 30% and this work has to be conducted at a time where the teacher has returned to full-time work, the teacher has become a full-time teacher again. Some respondents viewed this aspect as poor programme management.

This aspect of points awarded to the master's dissertation was also extenuated by the matter of accreditation. Some of the teachers from the first cohort commented on this in the interviews, and one teacher said that the matter of accreditation had affected him greatly (interviewee D). Elaborating on this statement, the interviewee said that the teachers' different formal backgrounds could be viewed equally as a good or a bad thing. This insight emphasizes the fact that different knowledge bases can be stimulating for the discussion, but can also devalue the programme (interviewee D). It is pertinent to observe that the question here is whether it is the accreditation which is the cause of annoyance, or whether it is the way in which the issue has been debated and 'handled'.

According to interviewees C and D, every teacher from the first cohort brought their official documents to the second session during their first year of studying (2001) and gave them to the first Norwegian programme manager. Afterwards the teachers received no further information. One year later, the first Swedish programme manager mentioned that there might be accreditation issues for some of the teachers. The second Norwegian programme manager is now requesting those same papers and has been informed that the papers are at the Norwegian University. The teachers from the first cohort do not receive information until the autumn of 2004 as to whether or not they have a problem regarding their accreditation (interviewee B and D). To them the entire issue becomes a clash of expectations but it is also possible to make the observation that the teachers participated in the programme as reformers who wanted to obtain academic credentials in order to further their career opportunities. Interviewee F voice the concern that the accreditation issue can be regarded as a potential devaluation of the programme. Interviewees U and V explicitly state that they participated in the programme to obtain new credentials and were looking forward to applying these credentials in their professional career. Hence the clash of credentials can also be viewed as active reformers expecting the programme to enhance their career path.

It is expected that other types of teachers, be it change agents, passionate pioneers and dedicated teachers, would want to document their obtained credentials. The

example of the clash of credentials illustrates the insufficient attention and understanding the District initially displayed towards the teachers. By merely regarding them as either ‘students participating in a course’ or as ‘future drivers of change’, the value of credentials became symbolic and an outlet of frustration from the teachers who wanted to be viewed as much more than those two categories.

## The role of the District; friend, folly or foe?

During the interview with interviewee K, he mentioned the conference ‘*Spridningsdugnad*’, at which the then director of the District jokingly mentioned that nothing was happening, ‘that things moved along too slowly’. But there was a core of seriousness behind the remark. Interviewee K observed that that attitude actually went against what researchers write about change from an organisational perspective: namely that every type of change takes time. This example led the conversation to the role of the District in the programme. Speculations arose regarding what the District wanted with the programme and with the teachers who have participated in the programme. The District had, according to interviewee K, definitely launched Striving for Action Teachers to gain recognition as a Pioneering District of Change,<sup>130</sup> but it is not clear what they wanted of the teachers. “Originally the funding was intended to increase the ratio of teachers to teachers and the question is whether the programme creates this?” (interviewee K; my translation)

Interviewee K reflects on Striving for Action Teachers and comments that where the programme (the lecturers and the literature) talks a lot about bottom-up change, one can say that the conditions leading to the programme are very much top-down, and asks what are the implications of this? The interviewee refers to conversations with other programme participants, in which they have discussed the objectives of the District and whether the District is aware of what they have actually initiated. Furthermore some of the participants have discussed the University in relation to the District. The discussions dealt with the structure of the programme and how it was designed; how, for example, have the lecturers been chosen? Based on qualifications, friendships, or action network; or based on the objectives of the programme? Sometimes, according to interviewee K, it seems as if the lecturers came from ‘the old guard’ (‘Tordenskjolds soldater’) – that is to say that it is “friends” who are invited to lecture. Furthermore the interviewee says that when you have heard one particular lecturer (Norwegian Professor) once, that is “more than enough” (interviewee K; my translation).<sup>131</sup>

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130 Interviewee K calls the District: “spjtspetskommun”, which I have translated into the District.

131 I have inserted the reflections below deliberately, as they illustrate how the interviews have occasioned reflections regarding ‘Striving for Action Teachers’ in some of the interviewees. One interviewee thus continued to send me up-dates on the current climate of the school at which he



Other interviewees mention the role of the District and interviewee L says that the District has not fulfilled her expectations. The sessions held by the District for the teachers have not been successful and interviewee L blames this lack of success to the high turnover of people responsible for development with the City. She says that this has changed with the appointment of the second programme manager of Striving for Action Teachers. Interviewee L goes on to say that local school management has sabotaged the programme by not facilitating the participation of teachers in the master's programme by ensuring a reduced workload – the teachers have not “been able to be teachers”. Some participants have had to fight local school management in order to obtain the reduced workload promised, according to interviewee L.

One example of this is given by interviewee D, who experienced a disagreement with local management. The situation was only resolved when the District came to

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was employed. It illustrates the need for ongoing reflection. The different meetings with other colleagues and management are important issues when instigating change and these require a lot of energy and support (see also Hargreaves and Fink (2006), Darling-Hammond (2005) and Fullan (2007) in their analyses of professional learning communities).

Below are the interviewee's subsequent reflections and mail correspondence prior to receiving the interview summary / minutes. The Dewey quotation is from a discussion on pedagogical development where the interviewee observed that it sometimes feels as if it is a pendulum swinging.

“Hej Pernille,

Det tycker jag också (comment to me thanking him for his participation in the interview), det var bra för mig att få formulera vissa saker som jag har gått och funderat på. Hypotesen om vad masterutbildningen leder till är kanske lite tillspetsad, men det ligger ändå något i att man antingen blir chef eller byter skola (eller lägger ner studierna).

Aktionslärande är som jag sa något som jag själv tycker är vettigt (för mig), då det innebär ett systematiserande av mina egna erfarenheter, och då helst i förhållande till någon teoretisk utgångspunkt.

När det gäller tillämpning av aktionslärande i klassrummet blir det svårare, eftersom det är relativt tidskrävande att låta eleverna genomgå alla steg i “läran”. Vissa element, som reflektionslogg går att använda och fungerar enligt min erfarenhet till viss del.

Vad jag gör och hur jag gör det i klassrummet, är egentligen viktigare än något annat. Eleverna lär sig genom det de får erfara, de gör som jag gör (om de inte aktivt tar avstånd från det) och inte som jag säger – det blir nästan modellärande. Det absolut viktigaste är hur jag prögar dem (det låter hemskt, men behaviorismen som teori fungerar i detta fall, helt i strid med vissa av Dewey's tankar).

Skickar med Deweycitaten som jag nämnde igår.

Hälsningar “

Dewey skrev:

”>>Den gamla pedagogiken<< brukade ignorera den dynamiska karaktär, den kraft till utveckling som fanns nedlagd i barnets omedelbara erfarenhet, och därför antog man också att styrning och kontroll bara var en fråga om att egenmäktigt placera barnen på ett givet spår och sedan tvinga dem följa det. >>Den nya pedagogiken<<, å andra sidan, löper risken att behandla utveckling på ett alldeles för formellt och innehållslöst sätt. Barnen förväntas >>utveckla<< ett eller annat faktum eller sanning direkt ur sitt eget tänkande. De blir tillsagda att fundera ut saker eller lösa problem på egen hand, utan att förses med de bakomliggande förutsättningar som är nödvändiga för att börja och styra en tankeprocess. Ingenting kan utvecklas ur ingenting, inget utom det ofullgångna kan komma ur det ofullgångna – och detta är just vad som sker när vi hänvisar barnen till sitt eget begränsade jag och ber dem utveckla nya sanningar om natur och handlingsliv från den utgångspunkten. (Dewey s 116)

Dewey, John (2004): *Individ, skola och samhälle*, Stockholm: Bokförlaget Natur och kultur

his assistance, and negotiated with the local school management to secure a reduced workload.

Part of these experiences of tensions regarding the role of the District and its relationship with the University can be attributed to the organisation of the project. As I have illustrated *op.cit.*, the District was to handle the structural aspects of the project and the University with the contents of the programme. This demarcation of responsibilities did not work as the teachers approached the Swedish project manager with all their queries and challenges due to proximity; the Swedish project manager, particularly the second project manager has been accessible and responding to their queries (opinion e.g. expressed by interviewee D). The tensions are also due to the lack of understanding the role of the teacher and the work which the teacher is expected to undertake at her/his school/workplace as part of the programme. The nature of the 'change', the process of change and the needs for the teacher engaging in this process are perceived by the teachers as being neglected by the District. This neglect brings about the tensions and schism and the tensions can be observed at the workplace, where the teachers do not meet interest or support by their fellow colleagues or superiors (e.g. interviewee A, C, D, E, F, K, L, M and N).

## Affecting the work team

It is difficult to ascertain the extent of the affect on the work team of members' participation in *Striving for Action Teachers*. It is, however, evident that it depends to a great extent on the work team, the structure pertaining to the work team and the members of the work team. It is thus possible to identify different probable ways in which work teams can and have been affected by *Striving for Action Teachers*. It is also possible to meet teachers who experience that the master's programme has affected the work team positively. They report, for example, that the programme has affected the team in that it is more stable, with the result that the team is able to discuss matters without conflicts arising from these discussions (e.g. interviewee R). Probed by colleagues, this sentiment is subsequently altered and the perception changed to the opinion that the team has always worked along those principles (interviewee R in conversation with interviewee O).

## If I knew what to say

As I have shown, the participating teachers were expected to become "change agents" and take charge of development work at their respective schools (e.g. former director

in official leaflet 2005 and 2006; 3 and second programmer manager in presentation from November 2007).

When asked whether the work team has been affected by Striving for Action Teachers, one participating teacher (interviewee D) replies that he did not know what to say in the beginning. His colleagues were curious and interested, and asked questions such as "what do you do at the programme?" – but he did not know what to say, and therefore his work team was not greatly affected. Later on, he became more able to answer questions and presented the programme to every work team at the school. Interviewee D describes how unpleasant it was not to be able to answer questions from other colleagues and the pressure of being supposed to instigate change, particularly when it was not quite clear what the change was supposed to be about.

## Please enlighten me

One teacher (interviewee A) comments that she is part of different work teams. She is part of a work team for special teachers and the master's programme has affected that team greatly. Her colleagues frequently ask questions and comment on what the interviewee purports to have learnt at the programme. The team has frequently asked the interviewee for interpretations, explanations and specific work methods based on input from the programme. The colleagues are not particularly interested in reading the material themselves although the material has been offered. The colleagues are more interested in receiving verbal information and practical material, such as developed work sheets which can be used for specific tasks.

At another school, interviewee K participates in a work team consisting of 30 colleagues and the interest shown to the interviewee here can be compared to the response of the team described above.

Similarly another interviewee (interviewee F) says that his work team has been affected by his participation in the programme. The work team has arranged formal meetings where the agenda has consisted topics related to the programme.

Interviewee B mentions that her work team has been affected by Striving for Action Teachers but this is also due to the fact that her work team is represented in the programme with 3 teachers and the work team comprises 5 teachers in total. In other words, the participating teachers from Striving for Action Teachers can set the agenda with greater ease and discuss their topics during working hours. They are not dependant on the acceptance of other teachers to the same extent as participating teachers who are the only participating teacher from Striving for Action Teachers in their work team, at their school. Consequently it becomes more easy to change the agenda and drive the change.

As one interviewee (interviewee J) expresses it, the work team has definitely been affected. The work team has been affected through discussions and by applying the

material developed by the participating teacher. Colleagues are very interested in the topics and engage actively in the discussions, but do not read the materials themselves due to other assignments and responsibilities.

## Which work team?

Another teacher experienced a high turnover of teachers in his work team and has not found that his work team has been affected to any extent (interviewee D).

Interviewee K mentions that 'Striving for Action Teachers' has not affected his work team, as his work team does not work optimally because his team members are involved in many different streams, which ultimately impacts teamwork negatively.<sup>132</sup> The colleagues with whom interviewee K shares an office have on the other hand been 'subjected' to many pedagogical discussions, inspired among other things by the master's programme. The discussions are based on observations, thoughts, books etc. These discussions are very interesting but not structured. Interviewee K and his colleagues have planned structuring the discussions a bit more and scheduling slots in their workday where they have planned which topics are up for discussion.

## Jealousy at not being amongst the chosen 'ones'

One interviewee (interviewee C) has experienced that other colleagues are jealous. This jealousy may not be overt and the interviewee B cannot point to a particular incident where anything was said but has felt that some colleagues have appeared jealous at his participation in Striving for Action Teachers. Contemplating on this jealousy, the interviewee goes on to say that he can relate to their feelings as they may perceive his acquired competency upon completion as an asset in negotiating for a pay rise. These sentiments are similar to the findings of Hargreaves et al (2001) on teacher culture and the experiences form part of their arguments for forming professional learning cultures.

Another interviewee (interviewee K) has also experienced that colleagues – some very good – have changed their behaviour towards him. Whether this is due to his participating in Striving for Action Teachers, or whether it is due to the project and research related to this project is difficult to say. However, interviewee K has had the experience that some colleagues will for example change the topic of conversation

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132 The secondary school at which interviewee K is employed offers many different streams and has therefore a high number of teachers of very different backgrounds.

when he enters the room. He related this experience to one of the principals, whose comment was: ‘welcome to school management!’.

Whether it is due to jealousy, reluctance to change or personality clashes is difficult to say. However, interviewee L has experienced that her work team has been greatly affected by Striving for Action Teachers or at least by her presence and participation in the work team. The impact and effect have manifested themselves in conflicts and discussions, which have led to disagreements as to whether or not the proposed changes should be implemented; and if so, to what degree, and how? One colleague even said to interviewee L that she was not to assume that she could “come and take over”.

Another interviewee (interviewee O) recalls an initial apprehension towards the teachers who were participating teachers at the master’s programme. Some teachers expressed a sentiment that it was the favourites (as in management’s favourites) who had been chosen for the programme. Interviewee O recounts that this feeling of apprehension changed – ‘it tipped’ – and can even point to the exact day when it changed: namely the day when the participating teachers at the master’s programme presented their work to their colleagues. From that day, things gradually began to change for the better – “which was good”.

My interview with 2 school leaders validated the potential perception of the chosen participants as “favourites”, in that they were able to provide examples of former school leaders whose decisions were based on favouritism (interviewees: principals).<sup>133</sup>

From the examples above the potential tensions are evident; each teacher experiences different reactions depending on the micro-political context at each school; are they alone?, do they have colleagues at the programme, do their managers provide them with institutional support and facilitate knowledge sharing. Furthermore the teachers are experiencing different reaction depending on their own reasons for participating in the programme and the loyal change agent (e.g. interviewee C) experiences the reactions from colleagues who do not support the agenda of change.

Of greater importance and significance it is possible to argue that the individual teacher becomes the embodiment of change – the change which I addressed in chapter 6. By being the embodiment of change the teacher also becomes the embodiment of the change’s chance of potential success, which are dependant on variables beyond the influence and power of the teacher. The tension which may come as a result of this is potentially extensive and emotional to the individual teacher.

## Pupils, parents and Zeitgeist, Enthusiasm is contagious

The commitment of the teachers and their enthusiasm for Striving for Action Teachers seems to affect the pupils in different ways. Not all teachers have observed that their

<sup>133</sup> Interview conducted May 2007 at the school in the District.

pupils have been affected by Striving for Action Teachers; however, most of the interviewees state that their pupils have been affected in one way or another. The way in which the teachers have tried to introduce their acquired knowledge and competency to the pupils clearly affect this observed and self-experienced impact. Interestingly, some teachers also observe the impact (or rather lack thereof) on the parents. The fact that this also depends on the 'specific actions' which the teachers have implemented renders it dubious to reach any causal conclusions. The observations made are based on empirical observations recorded by the teachers themselves.

The programme has impacted the way in which interviewee A conducts her teaching, and by extension her pupils. Interestingly enough, the interviewee mentions that due to the way in which she has organised her work as a result of the impact from the programme, the pupils' parents have also been affected. This is a pertinent point to emphasize, because it illustrates how the micro-political context becomes an aspect upon which the teachers focus. Interviewee 1 raises this point herself, completely unprompted the interviewer. As Tomas Krokmarks (2006) mentions in his article, the causal correlation in the way in which the teachers are becoming more focused on the peripheral aspects of teaching is difficult to make. It is, however, also a pattern which can be observed in the data.

Interviewee A is exemplary as the passionate pioneer, she readily and happily experiments with new teaching methods and mentions that because Striving for Action Teachers has taught her to be more methodological and to record her actions and observations. She has for produced more written materials on her classes due to the programme. Therefore she is experiencing that she has the empirical data to support her observation that the programme has affected the pupils. They have improved within the area which she teaches, as a result of her different approach. Furthermore, the interviewee mentions that the pupils are far more committed to learning and more responsible in their learning process.

Other teachers have also observed that their pupils have been affected positively. Interviewee F gives the example of how the actions which have come about as a result of the programme were presented to the pupils' parents. These parents came to the meeting and asked questions; some were sceptical, but the enthusiasm of the pupils reassured them. The interviewee continues to explain that his approach to his work has changed and this is a result of his participation in the programme. He is more aware and conscious of his choices as a teacher and is able to convey these considerations to the pupils. The way in which he is able to be more explicit and honest about his reflections and his decisions gains the respect of the pupils, and they sense his dedication and serious approach to teaching. This in turn affects their attitudes and makes them more serious and interested in the subject. The pupils' parents sense the same seriousness to the teaching.

Interviewee B has shown and given the pupils the written work she has produced throughout Striving for Action Teachers, and the pupils have appeared to be interested – this interest may be purely polite and political, though. Interviewee B has not recorded or experienced that Striving for Action Teachers has affected the way in which she conducts her work, or how she plans her work. To conclude that the

programme has not had any effect would be misleading, however. Interviewee B mentions that she feels more competent at reflection, and benefits from this acquired competence.

Interviewee C has also distributed his written work to those pupils who have expressed an interest. This interest, too, may be polite and political. Interviewee C says that the programme has not affected the way in which he works per se, and it has not affected the way in which the pupils work. It has, however, affected his way of working in the sense that it has explicated the work, and given the nature of the programme it has brought an enlightened insight to the job. Given the fact that the programme occasions research into one's own work, it provides insights which in turn bring about an increased satisfaction with one's profession. A such interviewee C represents the perspective of a reformer focusing on one's career.

## What affects pupils today?

According to interviewee J, the pupils are affected because they are given more time to reflect – they are affected by the programme indirectly, yet in a way that is noticeable. As interviewee J observes, it is difficult to determine whether this is due to the programme or due to the *Zeitgeist*.

According to some interviewees, the pupils may be affected primarily because they become involved in the 'action' initiated by the teacher as a result of the master's programme. This might take the form of an assignment requiring an 'action', or might be influenced by the programme to initiate an 'action' based on an observation. Interviewee M thus says in an interview that she found that her pupils were not preparing for class in the way in which she expected them to: they only did what she specifically told them to do. Sharing this experience with her colleagues, and realising that they had similar encounters and experiences with their pupils, interviewee M launched an 'action' and in this way the pupils were affected by Striving for Action Teachers.

## Unaffected

The pupils may be affected, but not by Striving for Action Teachers – so says interviewee C. He purports that the programme has not affected his way of working in general and hence not affected the pupils.

It is very difficult to say whether the master's programme has affected the classroom teachers at all. The interviewee does not discuss meta-learning with the teach-

ers. Sometimes the topic pops up but it is not planned and is the exception rather than the rule. Interviewee K says that it is a difficult discussion to have with pupils, as they do not know what they are supposed to learn in the specific subject. They do not possess the knowledge regarding the subject's objectives, goals and methodological limitations. They are unable to reflect on areas pertaining to the meta-learning aspects of the subject when they have completed the course.

During the first year of the master's programme interviewee K and a colleague formulated a research project regarding pupils' learning styles. They found it difficult to say whether the pupils had been affected. Nevertheless, the interviewee was able to ascertain that the pupils obtained knowledge regarding their different learning styles, but did not apply this knowledge when they had to form study groups. In response to the question whether it has had any impact on them, a conclusive answer is difficult to posit as the pupils may well apply the knowledge at some later time. And again, perhaps the question should rather be whether it is learning styles that ought to determine group composition – or phrased differently, whether it is a different rationality that the pupils apply when they act in a learning context?

Interviewee K reflects in writing on the way in which the pupils are affected by his acquired competence and comments that:

“...when it comes to applying action learning in the classroom, it becomes more difficult as it is relatively speaking very time consuming to let the pupils go through every step of the ‘learning curve’. Certain elements, e.g. reflection log, can be applied and work relatively well based on my experience.

What I do and how I do it in the classroom are actually more important than anything else. The pupils learn through what they experience, they do what I do (if they do not actively reject it) and not what I say – it almost becomes ‘model’ learning. The absolutely most important thing is how I influence them (it sounds terrible but behaviourism as a theory works in this case, completely against some of Dewey's thoughts).” (Original emphasis and my translation)<sup>134</sup>

Other interviewees observe that the pupils have not been affected by Striving for Action Teachers, maybe because they have not focused on the pupils when it comes to the teachings of Striving for Action Teachers. One example is interviewee L, who has spent most her time and energy on her work team. The pupils have not been affected as such, although the acquired systematisation and methodological approach to teaching have inspired and motivated interviewee L and as a result she enjoys the time spent with her pupils.

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134 “Aktionslärande är som jag sa något som jag själv tycker är vettigt (för mig), då det innebär ett systematiserande av mina egna erfarenheter, och då helst i förhållande till någon teoretisk utgångspunkt. När det gäller tillämpning av aktionslärande i klassrummet blir det svårare, eftersom det är relativt tidskrävande att låta eleverna genomgå alla steg i ”läran”. Vissa element, som reflektionslogg går att använda och fungerar enligt min erfarenhet till viss del. Vad jag gör och hur jag gör det i klassrummet, är egentligen viktigare än något annat. Eleverna lär sig genom det de får erfara, de gör som jag gör (om de inte aktivt tar avstånd från det) och inte som jag säger – det blir nästan modelllärande. Det absolut viktigaste är hur jag präglar dem (det låter hemskt, men behaviorismen som teori fungerar i detta fall, helt i strid med vissa av Dewey's tankar).” (interviewee K; original emphasis)



## The role of school management – affecting or affected?

Given the participation of 34 schools, the ways in which the schools participate vary. Interviewee A mentions in the interview that management has not shown any interest in the programme. Nor has management indicated that they intend to apply the teachings from the programme. The interviewee explains this lack of interest or intent as being due to the rapid turn-over of managers within her school, which according to the interviewee is not a typical school (it is a special ed.'s school). As the interviewee works at different schools, given her work as special ed.'s teacher, she differentiates between the schools and management. Thus the interviewee argues that the contents of *Striving for Action Teachers* are very appropriate for both schools and she had experienced a great interest in her work, also from external institutions. However, this great outside interest is not mirrored by school management.

School management can show an interest in *Striving for Action Teachers* and when they do, it is expressed in the following ways:

- Encourage the teachers to become participants in *Striving for Action Teachers*, as with interviewee K.

In the first cohort we have already observed that the majority applied of their own accord. Indeed, this pattern continued. Furthermore I have illustrated that school management support by continuously sending participating teachers to *Striving for Action Teachers* has been limited to less than 33%. As one interviewee observes, when a school is continuously sending teachers to the programme, this is a strong sign of commitment to the District's endeavour (interviewee F). It would be fallacious to conclude to the opposite, according to interviewee F.

- Support the teachers whilst teachers and continue to reduce their workload throughout the entire period, including the master's dissertation.

Some teachers have experienced that management was supportive of the master's dissertation, and even continued to reduce the workload of the teachers – even though this was not financially covered by the District.

Interviewee B states that the management has shown an interest in her studies and this is evident in the way in which she had a reduced workload whilst writing her dissertation.

Interviewee C has experienced the same interest.

Interviewee F further comments on this type of support by school management, reporting that at his school management has requested that his master's dissertation is relevant to the school.

Similar experiences: interviewee N and interviewee O.

- Read the written assignments produced by the participating teachers' during their studies. Interviewee B notes that management has read her written work.
- Ask how the programme in general is conducted and progressing (e.g. interviewee B, C and L).
- ensure that master's dissertation is part of the school's development plan (e.g. interviewee B).

- include the acquired learning in the pedagogical discussions at the school, for example during pedagogical work days (e.g. interviewee D, interviewee K and interviewee O).
- Be swayed by arguments presented by the participating teachers, thus including action learning topics on the agenda of pedagogical meetings (as experienced by interviewee J)
- Refer other teachers' pedagogical questions to teachers participating in Striving for Action Teachers (interviewee F)
- Participate in the programme for school leaders on action learning (e.g. interviewee J).

## Re-culturing the school or aptly fitting in?

Interviewee A observes that one school at which she works at can be described as not particularly interested in pedagogical discussions. This observation is directed towards the teachers, which is interesting as she herself has experienced an enthusiasm for her work and acquired knowledge. However, she characterises the atmosphere as dull and colourless which is illustrated by the fact that the school has in total sent 5 teachers to Striving for Action Teachers but 3 of those 5 have subsequently left the programme without completing the programme (according to interviews).

This school is the only school which can be characterised as a "working-class" school with a high influx on second generation Swedes. The school is described by interviewee 1 as a school that really needs to make action learning a part of its development strategy.

To some participating teachers their school is not in need of reculturing. Striving for Action Teachers fits in just as it is (e.g. interviewee B and C). To other participants, Striving for Action Teachers is anathema to the school, but whether this means that the school is in need of reculturing or whether Striving for Action Teacher is inappropriate is difficult for some of the participants to discern (e.g. interviewee D).

When the total staff comprises of 70 teachers and 8 teachers are taking part in the programme, it is difficult to conclude that the school in general is not affected the by the programme (interviewee E).

Some schools are already progressive and in favour of projects as characterised by participating teachers themselves – the question whether they contribute to reculturing the school or whether their acquired knowledge is just a component of the progressive identity of the school is thus hard to determine (e.g. interviewee J).

One interviewee (M) reflects on this and writes that the way in which it is possible to observe an impact is the extent to which the topics that are discussed are inspired and influenced by topics raised during the master's programme. Interviewee M elaborates on this subsequently, writing that:

”Certain issues have been raised by me from my master’s perspective but approximately two years before this current school year some interesting questions were raised at a coordinating meeting for the work teams and subsequently discussed in the work team. They (the questions) were raised by management and some individual colleagues. I generally experienced that those of us who are participating in the master’s programme kind of had our heads around these questions and felt at home right from the start as if we had been ‘trained’ to address the different questions within the realm of the school. Afterwards I think that it has become more natural to raise pedagogical questions, assessment questions, knowledge questions etc.” (Author’s translation).<sup>135</sup>

It is difficult to gauge whether the school has been affected by Striving for Action Teachers, says interviewee K, but he also says that he has experienced some interesting things based on his project / action which he has presented to all the teachers. The project was developed by management and interviewee K contemplated whether he wanted to conduct research on this project. In the beginning the interviewee was not interested as it was a project initiated by management but upon reflection during a long break, the interviewee decided that the project was interesting and decided that he would like to participate. The interviewee has informed management and they are welcome to read the master dissertation although the primary data accumulated in the research process remains the property of interviewee K, and is thus classified as confidential. After having conducted some research, interviewee K has presented the project to all the teachers and he has experienced some interesting reactions. Some colleagues now greet interviewee K with: ‘Here comes the researcher’, others tell him that they now think about the project every time they see him. Interviewee K has distributed questionnaires to colleagues and it is very interesting to observe that some very good colleagues have not responded at all. Others say that they are positive about the project and the idea of the project, namely evaluation; but become even more positive having been presented with the usage of the project (seen in action). Interviewee K has experienced that some colleagues have changed their behaviour and change the topic under discussion when he enters the room. The interesting thing, according to interviewee K, is that just by presenting his project, change has been initiated – “that is all it takes!” (Author’s translation).

Other interviewees observe that Striving for Action Teachers aptly fits into what is already a school actively engaged in many projects (interviewee N, O, P and S).

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135 ”Vissa saker har tagits upp av mig utifrån mitt masterperspektiv, men under ungefär två års tid före innevarande läsår togs också intressanta frågor upp på lagsamordnarmöten för att sedan diskuteras i lagen. De initierades av ledningen och enstaka kollegor. I stort upplevda jag det som att vi som deltog i mastersutbildningen liksom hade huvudet mer inställda på dessa frågor och kände oss hemma i dem redan från början, som om vi hade ‘tränats’ mer att se på skolvärldens olika frågor. Därefter menar jag att det har blivit naturligare att ta upp pedagogiska frågor, betygsfrågor, kunskapsfrågor osv” (interviewee M: my translation).

## Teaching – a particular method? – reflecting the way to the future?

The programme has not impacted the way in which the interviewee works. Instead the interviewee has observed that he is 'better' at reflecting in that he is more knowledgeable of what reflecting means and how it is done. The programme has raised some interesting questions (interviewee D). Or as interviewee K expresses in writing:

“Action learning is as I said something which I think is sensible (to me) as it entails a systematisation of my own experiences and does so preferably in connection with a theoretical point of departure.” (Author's translation).<sup>136</sup>

Learning to reflect and discuss work-related issues is listed as part of the positive aspect of Striving for Action Teachers by e.g. interviewee E. Acquiring a systemic competence consisting of reflection and a conscious knowledge of what you as a teacher want to achieve, and how you are going to go about achieving it, are some of the very positive aspects of the programme according to interviewee E. “You dare do new things”. This opinion is also shared by interviewee L, who says that she keeps a journal which she writes in daily.

Interviewee K is generally very positive about the programme. Asked about what is positive, the interviewee says that the programme enables you to develop personally and it has been an interesting process. The programme enables you to develop a more succinct and concise terminology. Even if concepts like reflexivity and the role of a teacher were not new as such, it has been exciting get a deeper understanding of concepts such as action learning, change, organisational theories, school development, school culture and so forth. Furthermore the interviewee says that the programme has also had the effect that one gets more frustrated in one's own work situation, as one has obtained insight and knowledge of organizational theories etc. It is not necessarily a good thing. One can say that the programme gives you insight and that this insight causes that you swing like a pendulum, moving from frustration to action – to doing.<sup>137</sup> As you gain insight and knowledge, you either grow frustrated as an employee and that makes you change your workplace; or you want to assume responsibility and act – so you seek leader responsibilities/-positions (Author's translation).

Interviewee K also says that it is difficult to say whether it is action learning that has changed and influenced his way of teaching, but he has thought a lot about his subject's methodology and didactical premises. In that sense the master's programme has contributed a more substantial and meaningful terminology.

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137 By doing and action I refer to the Danish word: 'handlekraft'.

## When it comes to change – embodying change; coveted or rejected?

As I have stated earlier, Striving for Action Teachers is seen by the Norwegian University and the District as a way in which the schools in the district can have change agents working pro-actively and embracing the development projects initiated within the District and at the schools. However, the participating teachers do not necessarily share that view without apprehension – even though they were allowed to participate in the programme on the understanding that they were expected to be change agents in their work teams. As I have illustrated by the four typologies, there are very different reasons for participating in the programme and different perceptions on teaching. Interestingly and of critical importance to the programme was the explicit rejection by some participating teachers to the category 'change agent'. The fact that the teachers were aware of the expectation and title as change agent is explicit in the example below;

Interviewee S says to a fellow teacher:

"You from the xx programme were *only chosen* because there were participants from that programme (from that particular school) and *you were to be change agents* at the xx programme" (author's translation and emphasis from written summary).

As an "action teacher" you are expected to be "proactive, pro development projects and pro change" (interviewee F). In other words: you are constantly "on" or, as expressed by the director of the District the 'driving force of change'. But not every teacher is endorsing of that role or even comfortable with that role. Interviewee F says that this feeling of being "on" all the time is somewhat ambivalent. You are no longer anonymous and although it is highly satisfactory to have a substantiated opinion based on acquired knowledge, it can also be daunting. Embodying change is intense and easily becomes the battleground. As I have accounted for above, the teachers' various debates with colleagues regarding change are both stimulating and challenging but also potentially tiresome and conflictual. The teachers do not find the conflicting debates easy to deal with. Instead it is possible to argue that in embodying change it is not possible for one individual to represent the many aspects of change which I have presented in chapters 5, 6 and 7. Embodying change can thus just as easily become conflictual and destructive (see Kahane 2010 on destructive vs constructive change).

Interviewee K rejects the daunting responsibility of being the change agent. The interviewee has thought a lot about the role of a change facilitator – or the change agent, the individual responsible for change. The interviewee does not see the education he has undertaken as making him responsible for change at his work place. Nor does he want to be individually responsible for change, but he is nevertheless positively inclined towards change – albeit not for the sake of change per se. One dilemma is mentioned several times: namely the dilemma regarding change viewed from an organizational perspective. What happens to the individual teacher if this

person becomes the personification of a change process initiated by management? Being the initiator or individual agent of change creates / causes different relations to your colleagues depending on who has initiated the change process. If management has initiated the change, is it genuine change? What is genuine change? Does it matter to the teachers who has initiated the change process, if they are happy with the change? Furthermore, what about power? If it is management that initiates the change, whose change is it? Who owns the change and who controls the change? (Author's translation).

Embodying change is not necessarily coveted. Rather it is by some teachers perceived as risky business. Other teachers take another stance, a more philosophical stance, e.g. Interviewee Q who says succinctly that he has obtained an insight, the insight that change is in fact possible but that does not mean that he would like to be responsible for instigating this change.

## Me – a change agent? I don't think so!

Interviewee K thus rejects being made responsible for change and does not regard the acquired competency as making him responsible for change.

Interviewee O says that she is not a change agent: 'I am I'. She recalls an episode in which she reflects upon her work with her team members. One team member appeared to be listening only reluctantly, but accepted what interviewee O was doing with the pupils who in turn were writing their reflections in journals. The colleague read the journals and became inspired by the approach, even suggesting to interviewee O and they collaborate; and things evolved from there. Interviewee O states that it felt as if something had happened, as if something had been initiated but she still clings to the tenet: *'me' a change agent – no!* (Author's emphasis).

Interviewee S says that a change agent can be seen as a front runner ('spjutspets') and proceeds to say that school development is a development steered towards goals. The former director of the District motivated Striving for Action Teachers by using the metaphor of a river, where the teachers participating in the master's programme were the front runners forging up the river ahead of the others. In other words, leading the change process. The interviewee continues to say that he agrees with goals and likes change and development but the word 'change agent' (forandringsagent) refers to an agent who is part of big "state system" and hereby implying that he does not see himself as a change agent being part of a 'big system'. To interviewee S change is fascinating from a philosophical point not as an instrumental and instigated mechanistic action.

Another interviewee (interviewee M), when asked which initial thoughts come to mind when the word 'change' is mentioned, replies that change should not take place for the sake of change – if change is initiated, it has to be for a reason and with a specific goal and she doesn't see herself as a change agent.

If we revert to the four categories which I introduced earlier in the chapter, an interesting pattern emerges: namely a rejection of being the change agent on the grounds that the word itself implies change instigated from above – a top-down initiative not necessarily endorsed by the people for whom the change is supposedly intended.

The embodiment of change is not necessarily an easy physical place to be as it becomes the manifestation of battle; open and proactive thinking vs insular and rigid thinking, pro management vs pro collegiate, pro rational development planning vs passionate and committed teaching.

The embodiment of change becomes the physical manifestation of the rhetoric which I presented earlier in the chapter and to some teachers, this embodiment is not a coveted place to be.

**Display 1:** Categorisation of teachers participating in Master’s Programme

<p><b>Change agents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School development</li> <li>• Driving force in work pertaining to change</li> <li>• New force of change at the school</li> <li>• Loyal change agent</li> </ul> <p>Example: Interviewee C</p>	<p><b>Reformers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievers</li> <li>• New career opportunities</li> <li>• Professional reasons</li> <li>• Interest in developing teaching materials</li> </ul> <p>Example: Interviewee F and K</p>
<p><b>Passionate Pioneers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoys working and improving teaching methods</li> <li>• Enjoys being with the children and youth</li> </ul> <p>Example: Interviewee A, O</p>	<p><b>Dedicated teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open-minded</li> <li>• Altruist</li> <li>• Team-Player</li> </ul> <p>Example: Interviewee D, L<sup>4</sup> and S</p>

<sup>4</sup> Interviewee L for example says that she is very happy with the acquired knowledge gained from the master’s programme and says that she has learnt to work more systematically, apply theories and has improved her skills when it comes to making presentations. Another interviewee M is very systematic about the way in which Striving for Action Teachers has affected her way of teaching. She says that it has made her work more systematically; become more interested in new pedagogical developments, particularly in the classroom; become more analytical; made her knowledgeable regarding the school world; made her more confident professionally speaking and hence better at her job; more knowledgeable when it comes to assessment and therefore better at assessing her pupils; she is better at developing new didactical methods; and better at developing new ways of working. She writes: ”I probably experience (my work) much as I have always ‘thought’; but I think that I can state my case more clearly when it comes to actions, methods and ways of thinking about the organisation both to myself as well as to the pupils and colleagues” (Author’s translation). (”Jag upplever det nog om jag alltid ‘tänkt’ men jag tror att jag på ett tydligare sätt kan argumentera för mina handlingar, metoder och tankegångar om verksamheten såväl för mig själv som för elever och kollegor”, original statement).

The professional reformers may or may not endorse the change initiatives set in motion. They perceive the programme as a chance to work with new knowledge which may enhance their career opportunities. They may embrace the change and work in favour of the proposed initiatives if these enhance their chances to work with research and development opportunities.

The passionate pioneers continue to work with their main focus cantered on their “calling”. But the dedicated teachers and passionate pioneers reject the term change agent.

The dedicated teachers enjoy the teachings of Striving for Action Teachers insofar as they appreciate the new input which the course brings to their profession as teachers. They regard the course as an opportunity, a chance to obtain new knowledge which they can use in their daily lives as working teachers. However, they choose not to work as change agents; they happily share their knowledge, but do not assume any responsibility for the implementation of change throughout the entire school. They perceive this to be a responsibility which is beyond their calling as a teacher. They are professionals in the capacity of providing learning for the pupils.

The passionate pioneers are the teachers who identify themselves with their calling and the challenges which they face on daily basis. They will voice new ideas and the need for change in order to improve the situation of their colleagues and pupils. However, they reject the term 'change agent' as they do not see themselves as part of the institution – and by extension they reject responsibility for the institutionally imposed change.

Embodying change is rejected by most teachers as they do not accept personifying change given the strife this personification brings about. If change has to be brought about, it has to be developed, initiated, experimented, tested, supported in many different ways than hitherto experienced by the teachers.





# Innovation and educational change – ambiguity and obfuscation

In previous chapters I have written extensively on the concepts of globalisation and educational change. I have argued that although the concept educational change is complex, it is possible to reduce this complexity by unfolding the myriad of factors impacting and affecting educational change. Furthermore I wish to argue that we can reduce the complexity of educational change by not using innovation interchangeably with change. By ensuring that we do not apply these concepts interchangeably, we may strengthen the debate on educational change and thus aid the various actors who work with educational change and innovation on a daily basis, be it politically, administratively, managerially or pedagogically. Innovation has become an increasing focal point of political and administration attention. With the increase on political demand and debate on innovative solutions within both the public and private sector, the need for clarification and a nuanced perspective equally increases. Furthermore, it is my contention that by delineating educational change from innovation and obtain an understanding of innovation, it is possible to reduce the ramifications of embodying change.

David Hargreaves (2003) has written extensively on educational change and innovation. David Hargreaves differentiates between innovation when it pertains to business and industry, and innovation when it pertains to education. Hence innovation within the world of business and industry usually means a new idea which ultimately “adds value to a product, process or service” (D. Hargreaves 2003: 27).<sup>138</sup> Whereas innovation pertaining to education refers to the fact that “practitioners *learn to do things differently in order to do them better*” (D. Hargreaves 2003; 27; original empha-

138 See also Lotte Darsø (1999) who distinguishes between creativity and innovation precisely by emphasizing that innovation adds value financially whereas this demand is not attached to the process of creativity. See also Peter Drucker’s (1985) classic on how innovation and entrepreneurship are interrelated and an important part of business development. In his book Drucker illustrates how innovation is more than just technological innovation.

sis).<sup>139</sup> With this definition, innovation is set in the context of knowledge creation and thus seems to differ from the concept of education change, which can basically refer to anything – ranging from national reforms to individual change in classrooms. Furthermore educational change can entail knowledge creation, but it can also (as illustrated in the different positions on educational change) entail reforms and policies that strive to achieve equality or strive to reduce unnecessary bureaucratic procedures, in other words to do things better, to give just a few examples. However, the concepts on innovation and educational change merge even more and are sometimes used interchangeably, which is understandable when we investigate the concepts a little further. What does it actually mean when Tor Vidar Eilertsen (2004) writes that “the fear of innovation and chaos is greater on the journey of action research than research based on hypotheses...” (2004: 37; my emphasis). Does he refer to the first or second definition of innovation? Does he refer to the fear of change? Or to the fear of participating in an environment which focuses on creativity and the generation of ideas? Another example where innovation is applied and does not really contribute to the discussion is in Janne Madsen’s (2004) article on combining action research and socio-cultural perspectives. Until innovation is mentioned in the article, Madsen has illustrated what action research is all about and she asks the question what to call her new perspective. One option is ‘innovation research’. No explanation is offered, and it appears as if innovation is equated with change (Madsen 2004: 152).

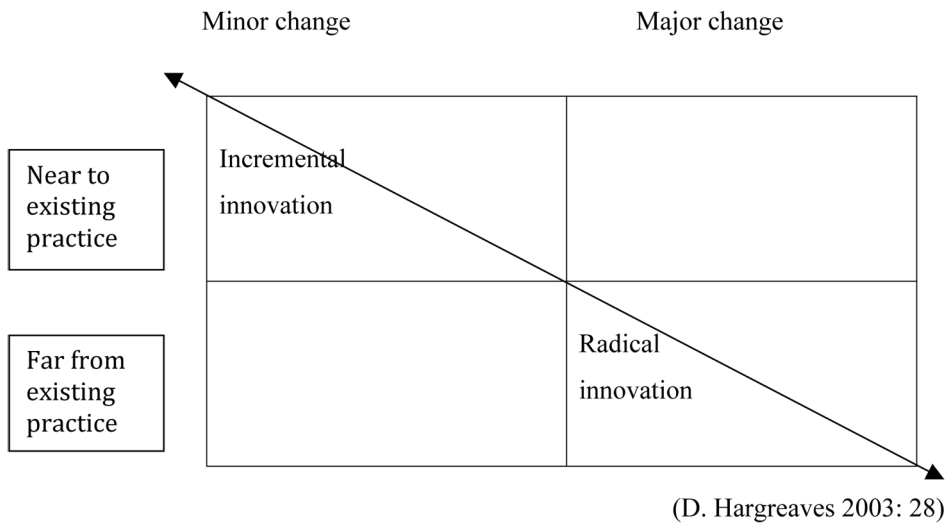
If we compare D. Hargreaves’ discussion on innovation with Cuban’s definition of first and second order change, the similarities appear.

First-order changes refer to efficiency and effectiveness of current practices; indeed another word is incremental (Cuban in Oakes et al 2005: 298). Second-order changes refer to changing the basic ways organisations function (Cuban in Oakes et al 2005: 298). Similarly D. Hargreaves distinguishes between incremental and radical innovation: “Incremental innovation is a minor change that is close to existing practice, and radical innovation is a major change that is far from existing practice” (D. Hargreaves 2003: 28).

It thus appears that we can apply the terms interchangeably and some authors tend to use both words without defining the distinction between them clearly (e.g. A. Hargreaves 2003; 105). A. Hargreaves, for example, quotes Robert Reich and his view on companies’ ability to create knowledge: “mutual learning that leads to continuous innovation tends to be informal, unplanned, serendipitous” (Reich in A. Hargreaves 2003: 9). D. Hargreaves does not distinguish between the concepts himself but visually does seem to present some difference.

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139 For an example where ‘innovation’ is used in this context, see e.g. Bennich-Björkman (2003). See also Fink and Stroll (2005).



**Figure 7:** The Nature of Innovation

The incremental innovation and hence minor change is close to existing practice whereas radical innovation is far from existing practice. The important aspect of this figure is that D. Hargreaves distinguishes between the two concepts and it thus appears as if innovation brings about change. In other words innovation *precedes* change. Change is the result of innovation. Another example of this implicit distinction can be found in Hargreaves et al (2005) when they write about the growth of *educational innovation* in the 1960s and 1970s:

“... showed how and why large-scale curriculum innovations rarely progressed beyond the phase of having their packages purchased or “adopted” to the point they were implemented fully and faithfully, and could bring about real *changes* in classroom practice” (2005: viii; my emphasis).

Again it appears as if innovation precedes change. However, insofar as authors fail to clearly distinguish between the two terms, confusion arises. Do educational innovations refer to D. Hargreaves’s definition; or are they used interchangeably with educational change, in which case the sentence quoted is a tautology. If, however, we assume the quote can be interpreted in the sense of innovation preceding change, Cuban’s definition can be elaborated as follows:

First-order changes refer to innovation regarding efficiency and effectiveness of current practices and hence alter the current practices.

Second-order changes refer to innovation, which ultimately alters the basic ways organisations function.

This definition can help us understand A. Hargreaves’ point when he writes: “the school’s pioneering system of teacher advisory group (an *innovation* that was subsequently adopted and implemented as a province-wide reform), ...” (A. Hargreaves 2003: 109; my emphasis).

Although the above clarification reduces the ambiguity and confusion somewhat, I am not convinced that it solves the problem altogether.

Firstly, I find it highly problematic that one word is used to encompass several meanings. I here refer to the fact that innovation usually refers to new ideas that add value, in particular economically. A company's willingness to innovate is closely related to the industry in which they are situated and the current financial situation of the company (Bason et al 2009). A company is not going to innovate if they have not got the financial capacity to conduct research. The risk-willingness is proportional to economic growth (Thomas Schøtt 2005). Similarly, I have (op.cit.) illustrated how the educational system has changed with reference to global and national development, as with the Swedish educational system, which has become a system of economic control due to national economic recession. Economic rationality and instrumentalisation impact the educational system, and may also have an impact on their augmentation with regard to innovation.

Secondly, innovation and educational change are described in the same way, in the sense that both processes entail similar phases and elements. Regarding the phases D. Hargreaves writes that innovation requires an idea, applying it in practice and also its widespread adoption. D. Hargreaves also talks about innovation 'overload' and how culture can impact the success of innovation. Furthermore D. Hargreaves differentiates between top-down and bottom-up innovation and an innovative system, which facilitates innovation. In his analysis of innovative school systems the required characteristics are very akin those of a professional learning community:

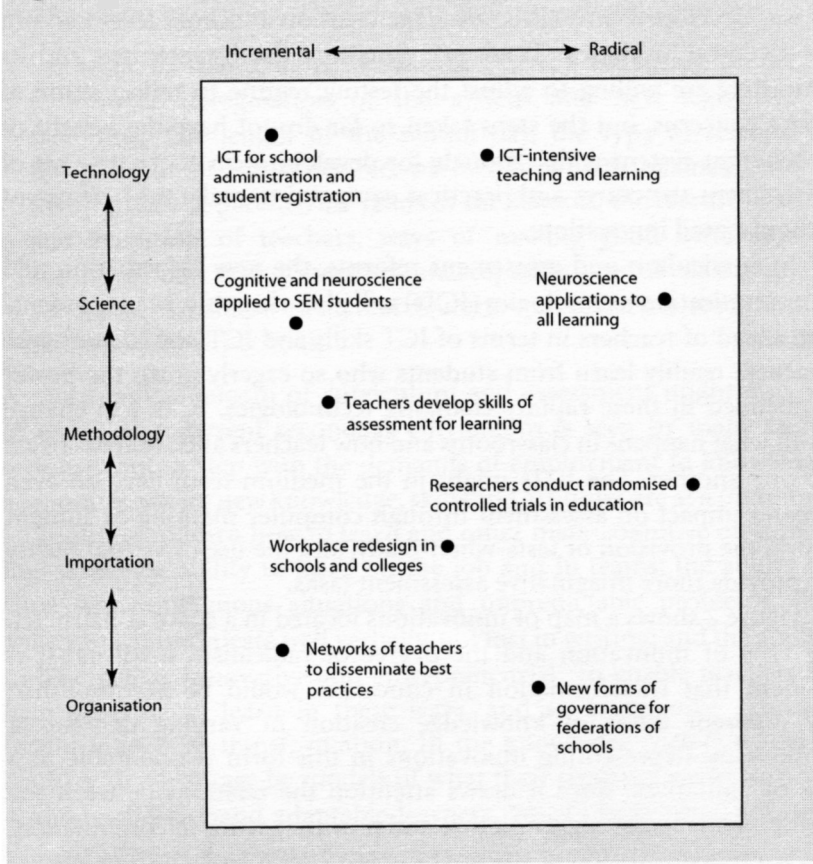
- Leadership
- A learning culture that is able to overcome resistance to innovation
- Professional teachers who must have the necessary conditions to 'innovate'
- Collaborative network where experiences and knowledge is shared.

(The above characteristics are based on D. Hargreaves 2003: 33-50).

It appears that the two words, innovation and change, can be used interchangeably; we could have replaced change with innovation – the above definitions thus did not resolve the problematic situation.

When innovation is equated with change, it becomes obfuscating! In order to get closer to an understanding of innovation as something different from educational change, we need to investigate a little bit further. D. Hargreaves illustrates such changes in figure 8 where he conveys the complexity of innovation within an educational setting when he situates it in the spectrum of incremental and radical innovation and provide concrete examples of innovation.

**Figure 8 A map of innovations in education**



(David Hargreaves 2003: 32).

Figure 8: A map of innovations in education

However, I would argue that the figure also contains examples of practice change and hence not necessarily innovation, e.g. where teachers develop skills of assessment for learning and networks of teachers arise to disseminate best practices. I agree with D. Hargreaves' definition that these examples are examples of knowledge creation but may not necessarily be innovation. If we were to argue stringently that these examples were examples of innovation, we would have to prove that they also result in some kind of value creation to others than those immediately involved in the activities.<sup>140</sup>

This analysis may be interesting but there is one crucial warning which must be issued. An analysis such as this may succumb to the 'market metaphor' (Oakes et al 2005) and hence make the fallacious assumption that educational institutions are like any other organisation in the market (Sergiovanni 2005) thus rendering the

<sup>140</sup> Similar examples of incremental and radical innovation are presented by Røste and Godø in relation to public innovation in Norway (2005: 17-18).

analysis invalid.<sup>141</sup> I am not hereby purporting that such an analysis cannot take place. On the contrary I find it very pertinent that we continuously address the development of educational institutions; the question is, from which perspective? I am not convinced that the concept innovation clarifies or improves the discussion considerably; I would argue that it confounds matters instead. The confusion and ambiguity in applying a concept with two different meanings is not what we need in an already complex setting. Which meaning of innovation is better? Is the one pertaining to education subordinate to the one pertaining to business or industry?

Innovation today is very much a buzzword and a fad; a Google search on innovation gives you for example over a million hits.<sup>142</sup> Innovation has grown exponentially in popularity within the last three years and permeates almost every public discussion on market needs and also on the role of education (see e.g. [www.børsen.dk](http://www.børsen.dk)).

“Without any reduction of the pressure on the basics, we must also now aspire to nurture through education on the new qualities of *creativity, innovation and enterprise*, as more young people become knowledge workers of various kinds” (D. Hargreaves 2003: 21; my emphasis).

Just because educational institutions must be aware of the different needs of the knowledge society and, as A. Hargreaves argues, should aspire to teaching beyond the knowledge society, it does not necessarily follow that educational institutions must adopt the same terminology. Caution here may be very well-advised, as the term ‘innovation’ can become part of the new public management discourse, and by extension a way in which to allow educational institutions responsible for making educational reforms to claim success by merely referring to their ability to innovate!<sup>143</sup>

## Elucidating change

To me, the above discussion gives rise to a critical question: should the concept ‘innovation’ be applied at all in a discussion on education and educational change? I would indeed posit that we need to tread carefully when applying the concept ‘innovation’ and continue to address the various meanings and expectations pertaining to the concept ‘innovation’. Although it is difficult to replace ‘innovation’ with another concept that can encompass ideas that bring about change within an educational setting, I would argue that we need a concept that can elucidate each idea turned into

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141 See also Persson and Stavreski on the school as an organisation (2004: 111).

142 [www.google.com](http://www.google.com): innovation: 99.400.000 hits in June 2009. Educational innovation obtains 1.180.000 hits in March 2010. There is even a facebook group called educational innovations, illustrating the impact and scope of this rhetoric.

143 Røste and Godø (2005) explicitly link innovation to new public management (for a critique of new public management and its impact on educational organisations see Persson et al 2003).

an activity that strives to improve knowledge creation, be it from a teacher, teacher, administrative, leadership, parental and / or community perspective.

I argue, as we have already seen, that educational change does not necessarily bring about knowledge creation. A. Hargreaves has illustrated how the opposite has indeed happened, e.g. in the case of Blue Mountain secondary school in Ontario, Canada. I believe that we need a term, a concept that can elucidate the process, the idea and the method that improves teaching and learning. It has to be a term that is different from educational change, as educational change encompasses processes which can embody other aspects and objectives as well.

However, for want of a better word, it may aid our discussion if we differentiate between innovation as commonly applied and innovation within the public sector as presented by e.g. Bason et al (2009), Ekman et al (2007) and Halvorsen et al (2005). In their respective research it becomes apparent that innovation is more than product improvement or creating economic value. Innovation within the public sector is about creating social value. I would also caution the mere adaptation of the concept public innovation as it may still be equalled with change (see e.g. Røste 2005 for such tendency). The objectives pertain to enhancing citizenship and democracy (Bason et al 2009).<sup>144</sup> Or as described by Murray et al 2010: “we define social innovations as new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet *social needs* and *create new social relationships or collaborations*. In other words, they are innovations that are both *good* for society and *enhance* society’s capacity to act” (2010: 3; my emphasis).<sup>145</sup> Although it demarcates the concept social innovation from the traditional perception of innovation as product development, it is still extremely broad and hence analytically problematic.

Change should not be mistaken for innovation and innovation should not be mistaken for change. We may change for the sake of changing but innovation must have an objective – a goal. To confuse matters further, working with innovation is often perceived as requiring the same as when working with projects (Bason et al 2009). Innovation may require project management skills but it should not be mistaken for project management (ibid.). As Ekman et al argue (2007), innovation requires knowledge, trust, relations and time.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, innovation is a non-linear process of knowledge creation and is dependent on the intangible aspect of serendipity (Merton 2004). Furthermore and importantly, just as Nieto (2005) and Oakes (2005) both addressed the way in which supposedly neutral language regarding educational policies need not necessarily be neutral when it comes to which groups in society are included and which groups are excluded from these policies, it is equally important to observe that public innovation may conceal similar exclusionary practices (see e.g. Denvall and Wright Nielsen 2006).

144 I do not intend to present the concept of innovation in a dichotomous setting, i.e. private vs. public innovation. It should be seen as a spectrum albeit with distinct features. Features of the public value creation can be found in social entrepreneurship and the need for economic efficiency can be identified in public innovation (for more details on social entrepreneurship, please see Tania Ellis 2006).

145 The quote brings about more questions as in what is good and good for whom in society?

146 Annemette Digmann (year of publication not listed), ‘Inddrag brugerne i innovationsarbejdet’, Region Midtjylland



I have in the chapters above argued that the discourse on educational change is highly illuminating from several perspectives. Firstly, we have from various researches obtained interesting insights into the lives of teachers and their perceptions, experiences and opinions on the many structural reforms which have permeated the educational system. Secondly, research has emphasised the need to apply a nuanced view to the school as an organisation, and given us insights into the various cultures which exist at a school, be it pupil cultures, teacher cultures or management cultures. I have argued that the discourse on educational change can be characterised as highly normative, striving to ‘improve’ the educational system, make ‘better’ pupils and hence citizens and have ‘real’ grown ups as teachers. This normative aspect is one of the reasons why the discourse becomes difficult as a way in which Striving for Action Teachers can be addressed. Although the research from educational change perspectives is able to elucidate and contextualise Striving for Action Teachers, it cannot explain the observed issues concerning change and the embodiment of change.

Leonard Waks (2007) has also provided a critique of the discourse on educational change. Waks argues that the debate has been obfuscated by not distinguishing succinctly between institutional change and organisational change and extends his critique by arguing how the originally developed concepts have been applied incorrectly:

“When Andy Hargreaves says that educational change is ‘so difficult ... and getting it to take place for more than brief periods can be so hard,’ he must in the same way have some more specific but *unspoken reference* in mind than whatever is included simply in the meaning of the term ‘change’ itself” (Waks 2007: 280; my emphasis).

Waks argues convincingly that the term educational change is not adequately defined and hence it becomes difficult to know what is meant by e.g. fundamental change (ibid.). Waks therefore defines change:

“when we speak of change, we refer to some feature of some object of the world that changes, such that at one time the feature is present (or absent) and at a subsequent time it is absent (or present)” (Waks 2007: 280).

By so defining change Waks proceeds to differentiate between change in entity, feature, scope, rate and magnitude. In so doing Waks is able to argue that there is a difference between organisations and institutions and hence in organisational change and institutional change. Waks defines an organisation thus: “something is ‘organic’ when it is composed of distinct but structurally united organs, which serve distinct purposes but are coordinated for the united action of the whole” (Waks 2007: 282).

Institution on the other hand, whilst it can be perceived as an organisation, means:

“social arrangements establishing, ordaining, or authorizing the ideas, norms, organizations, and frameworks that regulate the processes of human interaction in the primary areas of life. *Institutions establish, set up, and arrange social life – they put it in order and set it to work*” (Waks 2007: 285; my emphasis).

The distinction is important as it enables us to clarify the word change. Reverting our attention to Sergiovanni (2005) we may conclude that institutions precede organisations, institutions may set the agenda to which organisations must adhere, or at least acknowledge by agreement or disagreement. Institutions may be the change forces which organisations have to adhere to, given the hierarchy in which they (the organisations) are situated.

As Waks argues,

“Institutions form the background of organizational life. They shape the habits, ideas, and norms regulating the existing organizations that they authorize or ordain. They make up the cognitive and affective surround of organizations. The goals and practices of organizations must conform to institutional norms and ideas to retain their social position, and they are pressured to change functionally or structurally as the institutions ordaining them undergo change” (Waks 2007: 286).

By so defining organisations and institutions Waks is able to argue that

“Education as a social institution consists of the background ideas, values, norms, and frameworks that motivate and regulate organizations, that breathe life into them and, when they have fallen out of alignment, withdraw life from them. These ideas, values, norms, and frameworks are conditioned by the past and are embedded in present habit. The institution in this sense is rarely, and then only incompletely, within our field of vision. It comprises the stable, transparent background of organizational life in any historical period” (Waks 2007: 288).

By developing this distinction Waks presents a functionalist picture of social order and social change and referring to Talcott Parsons he writes that change takes place at every level in order to ultimately ensure stability. This means that institutions are not static and unexposed to change. On the contrary the change takes place at institutional level and indeed ‘fundamental change’ takes place at institutional level. In other words, educational organisations (schools) have the responsibility of interpreting and defining the ideas, values and norms which can be said to be permeating the current society. This means that schools and educational districts have to allocate time focusing on the paradigms of norms and values issued by their respective political organs, e.g. the department of education etc. This becomes further complicated when we remember the societal trends identified in the chapter on globalisation as departments of education, concurrent to issuing laws and decrees, are engaged in the same task: namely that of identifying and interpreting the global paradigms.<sup>147</sup> Indeed the activity is reciprocal, because each organisation attempts to impact and affect their surroundings, too. Waks is aware of this interactivity between what can be termed ‘supra-structures’ meeting ‘structures’. Waks argues that the way in which the impetus for change is brought about can vary and is hence complex. New ideas can be presented and carried forth in the public debate and there are many different factors that come into play when it comes to the generation of new ideas.

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<sup>147</sup> Waks is quite cruel in his verdict on the organisations that do not fulfil these tasks successfully: they become extinct (2007: 294).

“Organizational change is more a matter of institutional *timing* than of clever strategic ploys of consultants and change agents. Innovative ideas and practices that were initially rejected out of hand as ‘way out’ may eventually be accepted as ‘right on time’ They may gain attention in popular magazines and journals of opinion, then be shaped by entrepreneurs into small but well-publicized experimental models, and finally be taken in hand by leaders who the public regards as ‘responsible’” (Waks 2007: 295; original emphasis).

This critique of the discourse on educational change is pertinent to bring to our discussion, not least because it brings forth a clarification of the word change and the meaning of change. Waks presents a convincing argument that the debate regarding educational change has failed to differentiate usefully between the different structural agents in society. Furthermore, Waks illustrates how e.g. Cuban, who has inspired many of the authors within the discourse on educational change, applies the categories of change incorrectly, which further confuses the debate. The value of Waks’ analysis also relates to the way in which Striving for Action Teachers can be accounted for. In the account of Striving for Action Teachers I have emphasised the different sources of impetus for the project;

- experiences based on the previous project EEIL from the teachers
- experiences based on the previous project EEIL from the pupils
- inspiration from new ideas presented in newspapers (e.g. so listed by former director of the District)
- influence of the Norwegian Professor who has developed a ‘well-publicized experimental model’
- the local entrepreneur in the shape of a ‘creative and entrepreneur-like’ project manager within the District
- financial timing given the possibility to use the state funding to create more resources in schools

These different sources of inspiration combined to make the ‘timing right’ and Striving for Action Teachers thus came about. I would argue, though, that one important facet is still missing and this ingredient takes us beyond the debate on organisational vs. institutional change. It is the source of the concept of knowledge. As I have written, the concept of knowledge has influenced the creation of Striving for Action Teachers. From the official material, it is presented as lifelong learning, the knowledge society (e.g. official leaflet 2005).

In an official leaflet regarding Striving for Action Teachers the former director of the District writes:

“We who work in the City know that *development does not stand still here. Not when it comes to the development of the school, that’s for sure.* The thoughts and visions indicating that the school’s work should emanate from reality and the every day – which is what actually is happening – got kick-started by a newspaper article. The concept of action learning entered the vocabulary. Concurrent to this we were working with self-evaluation as a method of evaluation. The Norwegian Professor was the link to the town. The threads were woven together and we made an agreement with the Norwegian University and with the Norwegian Professor at the head of the Master’s programme, which has now reached its goal with the first eight out of 75 pre-school

teachers and teachers. One goal of the district centre of education's action plan is that the teachers who have completed the Master's Programme in Action Learning will be *a driving force in the development work in their work teams and at their own schools*. As we have reached shore with the first boat, we see that the competency which is gained by us can be an approach for the entire City's development; for you whose work involves meeting people and guiding development for the future." (quote from official leaflet 2005: 2; my translation and emphasis).<sup>148</sup>

However, it is a different concept of knowledge and learning which we must introduce to the discussion on order to make full sense of Striving for Action Teachers. The reason why the picture is not yet complete is based on the following unresolved issues spurred by Waks' analysis. If the discourse on educational change failed to provide us with a clear definition of change, is it possible that other pertinent aspects of the debate regarding educational change have been omitted?

My analysis based on the teachers and their reflections has illustrated that the some teachers reject the expectation of being the carrier of change, the *change agent*. Furthermore my analysis of the debate regarding educational change has presented a critique of that debate. Given the increasing demand on the educational sector to change and innovate, I have also argued that we need to address and nuance our understanding of innovation. By applying a nuanced understanding of change and innovation we are able to critically assess the objective of creating change agents.

Although the District identified, based on different input (listed above), the need to bring about innovation<sup>149</sup>, the District equalled this need as the need for change agents, expecting teachers them to be vectors of change. By not acknowledging the difference between institutional and organisational change, the District is leaving the teachers to face the reactions themselves at each school. I have previously presented the current impetus for educational change and what Annemette Digmann (2011) has also described as the more sinister reasons to innovate; globalisation in its various representations brings about the impetus to change; from google knowledge (Krokmarks 2006) to new information systems. Globalisation has exposed the previous view of education and learning; that each school can define its own practice and future till today where each school has to define its role within its immediate and extended network.

This altered structure beckons that educational institutions and organisations have to address the reasons for change, the need for change and its consequent need

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148 "Vi som arbetar i kommun vet att *här står inte utvecklingen stilla. Inte vad gäller skolans utveckling i alla fall*. Det var en tidningsartikel för ett antal år sedan som satte igång tankar och visioner om att skolans verksamhet skulle kunna utgå ifrån verkligheten och vardagen – vad som faktiskt sker. Begreppet aktionslärande kom in i vokabulären. Parallellt arbetade vi med självvärdering som utvärderingsmetod. Professor xxx var knuten till staden. Trådarna knöts ihop och vi slöt avtal med xx Universitet med Professor xxx i spetsen, i det Mastersprogrammet som nu har gått i mål med de första åtta av sammanlagt 75 pegagoger. Ett mål i district centre of education Handlingsprogram är att de pedagoger som genomfört mastersprogrammet i aktionslärande skall vara en *framträdande drivkraft i utvecklingsarbetet i det egna arbetslaget och på den egna skolan*. När vi nu rott iland den första båten ser vi att den kompetens som tillförs oss skulle kunna vara en tillgång för hela yyy's stad utveckling, för dig som arbetar i möten med människor och leder utveckling för framtiden." (quote from official leaflet 2005: 2).

149 Annemette Digmann (2011) has identified different causes that bring about the need to innovate, similar to the needs to be about change as presented by the District.

to innovate whilst recognising that innovation is not a linear or controllable process leading to predictable outcomes – quite the contrary.

The District dedicated resources and has continued to invest resources in Striving for Action Teachers. The District has thus repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to address the needs for change and to a certain degree the reasons for change. Striving for Action Teachers carries the characteristics of a project willing change. From other research it appears that Striving for Action Teachers was designed as other projects within the public sector, willing change and expectation innovation but not designing the process to ensure this outcome. “..Most nonprofits and government agencies skip experimentation” (Nambisan 2009: 47) or in other words, most public innovation projects apply a rationalistic and linear model to innovation and thus fails to address the different phases of innovation (for a model on innovation, see Scharmer 2009). As I have argued throughout the dissertation, the complexity of educational change be it at institutional or organisational level is among other things due to the many various actors and stakeholders involved (see figure 6, page 97). With particular reference to this aspect of complexity Nambisan is able to argue that experimentation is quessential to the potential success of social innovation. Experimentation and collaboration are necessities in ensuring development of solutions that bring about the desired change and innovation. Nambisan identifies the need to define the real problem (exploration), involve the stakeholders (involve), experiment and execute. This requires a network-centric perspective.

As the participating teachers were assumed to form their own network, be the network of change agents and left to define their own ‘actions’ (problems) at their respective workplaces, there was neither sufficient exploration or experimentation provided. They were expected to become ‘drivers for change’ but left without the secure foundation of knowing what they represented: change or innovative prototyping?

They became the embodiment of top-down change which some teachers rejected and thus the potential of social innovation correctly identified from the EEIL project evaporated.

# Change vs. Passion – concluding remarks

“In essence, power and politics dramatically affect and even drive all key dimensions of change and innovation in organizations.” (Blase 2005: 267).

It has been a constant challenge trying to fathom how it is possible to map out / tease out the intangible. Action learning strives to base its activity on the participants’ need. It is based on action research and its *raison d’être* is based on participatory actions that are consequently supposed to be founded in potential bottom-up change and with the aspect of unpredictability.

Concurrently, educational organisations have been obliged to enforce rigorous models of quality assurance and evaluation schemes. New public management methods can be identified throughout the educational systems today and although there appears to be profound critical reflections concerning these methods, they are still widespread (e.g. Persson and Stavreski 2004).

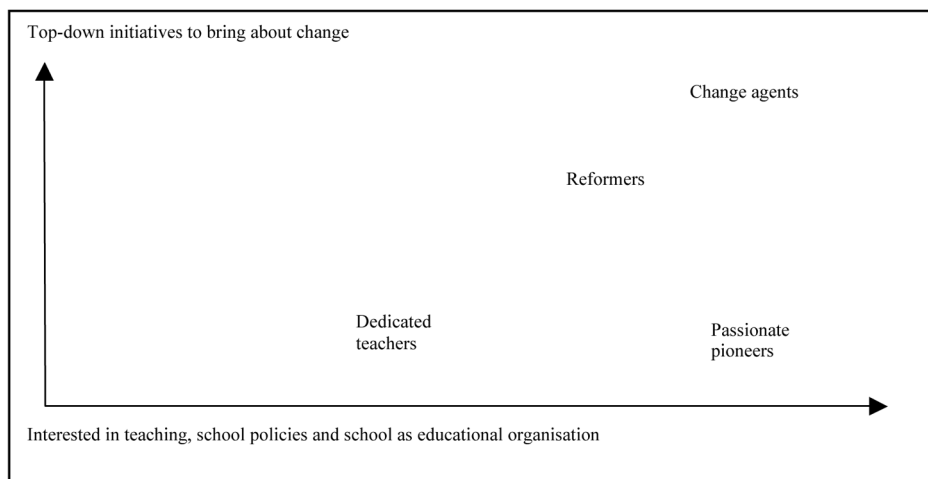
In parallel to this phenomenon, there is a growing demand for and expectation of constant change and innovation, as I have previously indicated. This demand can be seen as partly due to the increasingly prevalent perspective that change and innovation are needed if we are to be able to maintain our role in the globalised and postmodern system (see chapter 7 for this discussion). The impetus for change and innovation is also due to the expectation of efficiency and increased productivity (Mandag Morgen issues; 30 November 2009, 21 January 2010 and 15 Marts 2010).

To add to the complexity there is a growing awareness that learning in today’s society cannot be based on a teaching philosophy which may have worked in industrialised society. Buzzwords and trends of creativity and innovation can be observed and identified floating around the educational system and public sector in general.

The interesting thing is that creativity especially and innovation to a certain degree are highly unpredictable (Torr 2008; Bason et al 2009). Furthermore both creativity and innovation require a great deal of knowledge, or as Amabile defines it (in Torr 2008), creativity requires craft. But craft alone is in-depth skills, whereas creativity is passion and craft combined. Innovation may be goal orientated but the process of

innovation is unpredictable and cyclical, highly un-lean. It is the intricate relation between goal oriented purpose and unpredictability and complexity which has to be addressed in order to identify and understand the rejection of change agents which I have presented took place by some of the participating teachers in Striving for Action Teachers.

In figure 9 (below) I have sketched the spectrum of change within educational institutions adding individual archetypes based on display 1.



Author’s own figure.

Figure 9: Individual archetypes in the context of change

The figure is to be read from the following perspectives:

Educational systems experience institutional development and change, which we may never witness close-up. The educational organizations experience the ramifications of the institutional change and manifests itself as an example in new quality systems, new procedures for hiring and working etc.

Institutional development may be initiated from above, in the form of systemic development initiatives. As Waks (2007) writes, these can be seen as ministerial decrees or greater systemic trends. New public management may be seen as such a systemic trend – likewise the focus on innovation may be another. Individuals who accept the systemic trend can be perceived both as reformers and change agents – as the interviewees agreed, the change agent is seen as the front runner, the person sent ahead of the group as a representative of the systemic institutional change.

Some of the participants in the programme endorse the role of change agents – they are loyal to their school management and accept the change taking place at their workplace and want to play a part in this change. Others may not necessarily have expressed opinions regarding change but adhere to the reforms from a career perspective and accept that reforms are imposed and must be implemented.

Other instances of organisational development may be initiated from below, by passionate pioneers that observe that something is amiss and want to introduce new practices, products and/or processes. They often do not align themselves with management and are dedicated to the cause: their inclination and loyalty is not necessarily to the system, and the change is not goal-orientated but case-based. Such type of initiated change may eventually lead to institutional change as Waks defines institutional change but this is dependant on various variables beyond the control of each passionate pioneer.

Another type of development is that of pedagogical development. As with institutional development, this type of development can be initiated from above as well as from below. I have chosen to label teachers who endorse pedagogical development as reformers – they may be the teachers who advocate the latest trends of pedagogical methods, and they work diligently in ensuring the latest methods are implemented. Participating in research teams – they are the loyal team players.

I have previously identified the teachers who are energized by working with their profession, with their subject. These are the dedicated teachers who spent extra time talking to the children, who take extra time in calling the parents, share their experiences with their colleagues. They are the teachers who love their job, who willingly dedicate a lot of time to their job just for the sake of it – not for career purposes, not for the system but for their subject and for the children. In other words, they are care-takers.

Of these four types of teachers, the passionate pioneers and dedicated teachers are most often coveted. This is highly understandable because both passionate pioneers and dedicated teachers are extremely energized, inspirational and quite often very knowledgeable and insightful. They share characteristics with creative spirits, and it thus makes sense when David Watson argues that educational leaders should lead their employees as creative spirits (David Watson interviewed by Claus Holm 2009: 22). In my analysis I have emphasized the emotional language often applied by the passionate and dedicated teachers.

Creative spirits thrive when they experience autonomy, encouragement, collective spirits, challenge and stability. Gordon Torr (2008) has eloquently described and analysed the way in which creative spirits work and flourish. Torr argues that creative spirits are highly motivated by what he labels ‘intrinsic motivation’ (a theory developed by Teresa Amabile (in Torr 2008)). The creative process is labeled the maze and creative spirits thrive on the maze alone. However, creative people come up with amazing ideas and concepts and creative people are highly inspirational and thus much coveted.

The challenge, however, is that creativity is unpredictable and thus the concepts developed by creative people are not always predictable.

Herein lies the conundrum because at the systemic level, creativity is seen as manageable and warranted because it is a prerequisite to innovation, which is a commodity that is much sought-after in contemporary society.

The alluring and seductive picture depicts a win-win situation: the “system” wants change and innovation and the creative spirits, the passionate pioneers and dedicated



teachers bring about this change and innovation. There are just a couple of problematic issues to address.

Firstly, the teachers participating in Striving for Action Teachers to a certain extent rejected the concept 'change agent' and more interestingly rejected responsibility for taking charge of educational change at their local schools. In other words, the teachers did not see themselves as primary drivers of organisational educational change, but rather as co-drivers. They are "positive" towards change, which may be seen as an objective of Striving for Action Teachers – the reputation of the last conservative bastion resisting change in any form may certainly bring about some interesting 'publicity'. As I have presented earlier, to present teachers as receptive towards change may be to reduce the extent of change, which they have already incorporated into their daily lives as teachers.

A similar view is presented by *Skolverket* in their report from 1999 in which they take into account the complexity of school management. In consequence, the actors involved in school policy development, school development and school projects in general often feel overwhelmed, and therefore act based on processual and Un-linear relations. The report notes that teachers may be very interested in the various discussions which have to be undertaken, but their involvement depends on their loyalty to the school principal and on the way in which they have been informed of the topics (1999: 53 ff.) There is not an inherent logic to school development. My findings support this conclusion. However, my findings also document that teachers cannot be defined as a uniform and homogeneous group of actors when it comes to motivation and opinions with regard to school development. The teachers reject personifying change and its manifold meanings.

Secondly, the way in which the word 'innovation' has been used in the literature on educational change has also left me pondering whether the authors clearly differentiate between innovation and change. This may be an abstract discussion but as has become evident, it is highly influential on the way in which this confusion affects political interest in change agents.

It is possible to make one observation: namely innovation and change are inter-dependant. However, innovation is not defined and this means that the debate does not clearly elucidate the what, how and why's of the relationship between innovation and educational change. David Hargreaves's model on innovation may be explained by Waks as examples of educational change.

It is the institutional (institution as defined as Waks op.cit.) demand for innovation which is omitted from the literature on educational change and by not addressing this demand, innovation in this context is not defined and presented. Instead what is presented is the account of change as pervasive and expected. This means that it is possible to argue, as Michael Fullan does; that educational organisations must address this incessant change and ensure that they are capable of changing. This is presented as a need to be willing to change (e.g. as expressed by the current Director of the District). However, I purport that this is the manifestation of the demand for innovation as it is presented in everyday life – beyond the incessant change is the demand for innovation, which produces more than a capacity to change. It brings

about the feeling of “being on all the time” (interviewee I), or as I call it, ‘hyper alert’. It is the “hyper alert” state which represents the demand for innovation. The crucial difference between the debate on educational change as presented by the discourse on educational change, and the demand for innovation which I purport is an institutional demand, is that the goal is not defined when it comes to the demand for innovation.

The discourse on educational change is embedded within a normative paradigm of improving the current situation, embodying elements such as the reduction of racial differences, improvements in gender equality, improved social mobility, the creation of “knowledgeable” citizens. The demand for innovation is not specific or goal oriented. The demand is that pupils have to be more creative in order to survive the future (op. cit. the current director of the District). Future citizens must be more creative, entrepreneurial, and innovative because this is needed – no goal other than survival is given, and that is the stark difference. We need innovative solutions to provide solutions to the needs of educational change.

### *Innovative learning – the way to the future*

Tomas Kroksmark (2006) accounts for this demand in his article on innovative learning in which he argues that it is possible to identify a new concept of knowledge – a concept which is replacing a concept of knowledge that has permeated our societies for thousands of years. Kroksmark writes that the traditional learning concept is based on the perception that a person undergoes a process, which is methodologically planned and executed and created with the purpose that the person acquire a knowledge which the person did not possess previously. Furthermore this meant that planning for such a learning process was also categorised and systematised to a degree where there was very little scope for navigation – there was only one right way of doing things (Kroksmark 2006: 10).

“... the phenomenon of learning is in a Copernican spin which does not accept prescribed manuals; where the monopoly on learning is no longer with the institutions; where learning cannot be quantified, but where learning is an activity which is controlled by the individual and in ways which hitherto no research has been able to describe” (Kroksmark 2006: 11; my translation).<sup>150</sup>

Kroksmark is able to make that assertion based on his analysis of the way in which the concept of learning is changed given societal changes. As he writes, the colloquial term “the Googlisation of learning” aptly describes what has changed because the term alludes to the fact that the infrastructure of learning has changed and that is indeed what has transpired (Kroksmark 2006: 11).

Knowledge has changed its infrastructure – into what?

According to Kroksmark knowledge as it is possible to acquire it today can occur anywhere, it cannot be controlled/planned/systematised in a formal process, it has in

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150 “... fenomenet lärande står i en kopernikansk vändning, som inte accepterar föreskrivna manualer, där monopoliet på lärande inte längre är institutionernas, där lärandet inte kan kvantifieras, utan där lärande är en aktivitet som styrs av individen och på vägar som ingen forskning hittills lyckats beskriva” (Kroksmark 2006: 11; my translation).

other words changed and the previous hierarchies of knowledge are replaced by the paradigm of knowledge as common property.

“Knowledge has become every man’s property, it is situational, temporally coincidental and globally related and relative. The most prominent (feature) is that the global knowledge gives rise to local knowledge frictions due to the fact that individuals have infinite access to information” (Kroksmark 2006: 11-2; my translation).<sup>151</sup>

The implication of this new type of knowledge is that learning has changed. The new type of knowledge is both creative and transformative and this has implications to learning, not to mention the power structures normally associated with the school based on the industrial logic. Kroksmark argues that the new type of knowledge, the different societal structure defined as postmodern demands another type of learning which incorporates the premises of learning as it takes in the new type of knowledge – innovative learning which again is based on, among other things, intuitive learning, group learning and experiential learning (Kroksmark 2006: 13).

The picture is seductive and it is also what passionate teachers will describe when they talk about their work as teachers and what they experience when talking about the new ways in which the pupils work today. Furthermore the new type of knowledge which Kroksmark describes also embodies the challenges which the project EEIL experienced. It becomes understandable why the District would endorse and support a project which would ensure teachers that could work with those topics, subjects and challenges. In that respect the District responded courageously to challenges proposed by different persons and bodies within the City.

However, change agents and reformers are not identities with which the passionate pioneers and dedicated teachers can identify themselves with. Indeed, passionate pioneers and dedicated teachers reject the label of change agent – they cannot identify themselves as being part of the system.

If the ‘system’ wants creativity and innovation, it has to be prepared to accept the unpredictable and accept its role as facilitating potential change. Which means that educational reformers have to redefine both goals and evaluation criteria.

This need for new solutions is in the realization that the current set-up does not provide answers to the new need. The educational system has to change in order to address this need and thus innovation is required. The District identified the need, identified the challenges and the District allocated resources to develop a potentially innovative system comprising of teachers who would address the need and present the solutions.

This in itself is courageous and ambitious. However, the District did not continue the process of social innovation but expected the teachers to embody and personify the change and be bearers of change. The teachers were to be the innovative system which would bring about change.

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151 “Kunskap har blivit till vars och ens egendom, situationell, temporalt tillfällig och globalt relaterad och relativ. Det mest utmärkande är att den globala kunskapen ger upphov till lokala kunskapsfriktioner genom att individen har oändlig tillgång till information” (Kroksmark 2006: 11-2).

The unforeseen outcome was that the teachers rejected this role as they through their learnings experienced the need for systemic structures facilitating change and innovation which require collaboration and network perspective rather than an actor driven change dependant on different organisational factors beyond the control of each change agent.

However, the teachers did not reject their passion for teaching and their ability to convert their passion into action and as such it seems befitting to end by quoting Hannah Arendt;

“Beginning is the supreme capacity of man” (Arendt in Baehr 2003: xxi).



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# Appendices

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# Appendix 1

Initial document containing the focal points regarding the evaluation of the project 'Striving for Action Teachers'. The brief listed in exact form below has been formulated by the professor at the Norwegian University and the initial project manager.

Utvärdering av masterutbildningen i aktionslärande i kommunen

kommunen önskar få masterutbildningen i aktionslärande utvärderad och beskriven på följande nivåer:

1. **De studerande:** Hur de påverkats av utbildningen och deras möjligheter att utöva detta i yrkesvardagen.
2. **Eleverna.** Har de fått andra möjligheter till lärande med utbildningen som grund?
3. **Kollegorna** i arbetslagen. Hur har de påverkats? Har utbildningen "spillt över" även på dessa? Har utbildningen uppfattats som ett stöd även av kollegor, eller är den hotfullt mot något?
4. **Skolledningens** betydelse.
5. **Skolan** som organisation. Påverkas en så stor organisation över huvud taget av en insats som denna? I så fall: på vilket sätt? Specifikt omkring relationen mellan möjligheter och hinder.
6. Et **generellt** fokus på de grundläggande villkoren i skolan för store vikt på aktionslärande.

Som komplement till denna utvärdering skulle en spridning av resultat och påverkan vara önskvärd, både i ett regionalt och nationellt perspektiv.

---

Initial document containing the focal points regarding the evaluation of the project 'Striving for Action Teachers'. The brief listed in below is a translation of the original brief.

The brief

Evaluation of the master's programme in Action Learning in the District

The District would like to have the master's programme in Action Learning evaluated and described at the following levels:

1. **The teachers:** How are they affected by the programme and their opportunities to implement their learning in their professional lives.
2. **The pupils.** Have they received different opportunities for learning due to the programme?

3. **The colleagues** in the workteams. How have they been affected? Has the programme had a 'spill-over effect' even on them? Has the programme been perceived as possibly useful by colleagues, or has it been perceived as in some way threatening?
4. **School management** and its effect.
5. **The school** as an organisation. Is an organisation this big even affected by an initiative such as this? If so, in what way? Specifically concerning opportunities and obstacles.
6. A **general** focus on the school and the basic conditions with regards to action learning.

Complementary to this evaluation, dissemination of the results and effects would be appreciated, both regionally and nationally.

# Appendix 2

Masterprogrammet i aksjonlæring.  
90 studiepoeng  
Godkjent i xx's styre 28.01.03 og i xxx 20.02.03.

## 1. Programansvarlig

Program for læring og praktisk pedagogikk

## 2. Beskrivelse af studiet

Studiets basis er den livslange læring. Skolen har fått nye oppgaver gjennom det stadig økende samfunnskravet om at læring skal foregå som en livslang prosess. Begrepet "livslang læring" har påvirket utviklingen av ord som erfaringslæring og aksjonslæring. Disse samfunnsplagte læringskrav krever ny og utvidet kompetanse. Lærere, skoleledere og andre arbeidsledere må være i front når det gjelder læring generelt og erfaringsbasert læring spesielt. De skal kunne utvikle skolen og arbeidsplassen som modeller for gode læringsmiljøer og lærende organisasjoner.

## 3. Kompetansemål

Studiet skal kvalifisere lærere og skoleledere til å mestre de nye krav som samfunnet stiller til skolen og andre organisasjoner som har læring, undervisning og formidling som sine primæroppgaver. Mastergraden i aksjonslæring er primært rettet mot arbeid i utdanningssystemet, men også mot lærings- og utvikingsrelatert arbeid i andre offentlige såvel som private sektorer. Denne utdanningen passer særlig i yrker som krever høy kompetanse innen felterne læringsorganisering, undervisning og veiledning, formidling og kommunikasjon.

## 4. Opptaksgrunnlag

Opptak til studiet gjøres på bakgrunn av en vurdering av utdanningsbakgrunn og praksis, jfr. UFDs forskrift til krav om mastergrad, §5, "Krav om erfaringsbasert mastergrad av 90 og 120 studiepoengs omfang." I tillegg til tre års høyere utdanning kreves to års relevant yerkespraksis.

## 5. Faglig organisering og progresjon

Studiet organiseres i tre hoveddele:

- 30 studiepoeng basisdel, 3 semester.
- 15 studiepoeng fordypningsdel, 2 semester.
- 45 studiepoeng spesialiseringsdel over 2 semester.

Innhold for basisdelen:

- Innføring i aksjonslæring
- Aksjonslæring og organisasjonskultur
- Motivasjon og muligheter for læring på arbeidsplassen

- Læring og lederutfordringer
- Barrierer i læringsarbeid
- Kvalitative forskningsmetode med vekt på mikroetnografi og reflektiv skrivning

#### Innhold for fordypningsdelen:

- Læringsteori, med vekt på konstruktivistiske og narrative teorier
- Læreren som aktør/den utvidete lærerprofesjonalitet
- Mesterlæring og læring gjennom perifer deltakelse
- Kulturanalyse og lærende organisasjoner
- Metoder- med vekt på metaforanalyse og skygging

Teachererne velger tre av disse delemnene.

#### Innhold for spesialiseringsdelen:

- Kvalitativ og kvantitativ metode (10 studiepoeng).
- Masteravhandlingen (35 studiepoeng).

## **6. Undervisningsformer og pedagogiske arbeidsmåter**

### Generelt for alle studiedelene

Det vil bli lagt vekt på varierte læringsformer for alle studiedelene. Erfaringsutveksling og diskusjon vil ha en sentral plass i opplegget. I tillegg til forelesninger og annen fellesundervisning legges det opp til at deltakerne skal arbeide aktivt med problemstillinger og oppgaver.

De pedagogiske arbeidsmåtene for spesialiseringsdelen består i hovedsak av forelesninger, gruppediskusjoner og veiledning. Omfanget på masteravhandling settes til 40-50 sider. Det knyttes individuell veileder til avhandlingen.

## **7. Eksamensformer**

Eksamen for basisdelen består av både en skriftlig og muntlig del som teller likt, og det gis en samlet karakter. Prosjektoppgaven er individuell, og utgjør den skriftlige delen av eksamen. Det gis en samlet karakter for både skriftlig og muntlig eksamen etter en todelt skala: Bestått/ikke bestått. Eksamen for fordypningsdelen består av både en skriftlig og en muntlig del som teller likt, og det gis en samlet karakter. Fordypningsoppgaven utgjør den skriftdele delen av eksamen. Prosjektoppgaven skal være vurdert till bestått før teachererne kan gå opp til muntlig eksamen. Den muntlige delen av eksamen må også være bestått før fastsetting av samlet karakter. Det gis en samlet karakter for både skriftlig og muntlig eksamen etter en todelt skala: Bestått/ikke bestått.

### Masterstudiet i aksjonslæring avsluttes med en offentlig eksamen bestående av:

- a. avhandling
- b. muntlig framleggning av oppgavens hovedfunn i plenumssamling
- c. samt muntlig eksaminering relatert til oppgave og oppgitt og selvvalgt pensum.

## **8. Utenlandsopphold**

Utenlandsopphold vil være aktuelt i de tilfeller norske teacherer deltar i studier finansiert av instanser I andre land og der samlinger m.v. legges til steder utenfor landets grenser. Øvrige utenlandsopphold kan være if orm av feltarbeid eller andre former for datainnsamling, spesielt I forbindelse med masteravhandlinger (del tre i studiet).

## **9 Studieevaluering**

Evalueringen vil foregå som en kontinuerlig drøfting av studiet på samlinger og videokonferanser. Avslutningsvis for hver studiedel foretar deltakerne en skriftlig evaluering av studiets mål, innhold, arbeidsmåter, organisering, progresjon og relevans for yrkesutøvelsen.

## Appendix 3

Questionnaire distributed to participants of cohort 1, 2 and 3 in respectively 2004, 2005 and 2006.

### **Enkätundersökning inom ramen för mastersutbildningen i aktionslärande**

Som du säkert vet gör vi en utvärdering av mastersutbildningen i aktionslärande i The District. Utvärderingen finansieras av xxxinstitutet och är helt fristående i förhållande till såväl xxx Stad som Universitetet i xxx. Utvärderingen kommer att bestå av flera olika undersökningar, bland annat enkät, intervjuer, dokumentstudier och observationer. Den föreliggande enkäten vänder sig endast till utbildningens första kull.

Som du ser frågar vi efter ditt namn och telefonnummer. Detta för att vi sedan ska kunna välja ut vissa för en uppföljande intervju, där en del frågor fördjupas. Vi garanterar att materialet behandlas konfidentiellt. Om du absolut inte vill uppge ditt namn går det naturligtvis bra att besvara enkäten anonymt.

Vi vill understryka att syftet med utvärderingen inte endast är att ta reda på hur den utbildning du deltar i fungerat, utan materialet kan också användas för att förbättra utbildningen för kull 2 och 3 och andra liknande utbildningar i framtiden. Ditt deltagande är alltså viktigt på flera olika sätt.

Om du har frågor eller synpunkter är du välkommen att ringa eller skriva.

Tack på förhand för din medverkan!

xxx i juni 2004

#### **Anders Persson**

projektledare, forskare vid Arbetslivsinstitutet i Malmö, docent i sociologi vid Lunds universitet och adj. professor vid Malmö högskola.

Tel.: 040-109509

E-mail: anders.persson@soc.lu.se

#### **Pernille Berg**

forskningsassistent och doktorand vid Lunds universitet.



## Bakgrundsuppgifter

Namn:.....Tel.  
nr:.....  
Födelseår:.....  
Kön:  kvinna  man  
Skola:.....  
Typ av lärarutbildning:.....  
Typ av tjänst:.....  
Hur länge har du arbetat som lärare?.....  
Eventuell annan relevant information: .....  
.....  
.....

## Motiv och förväntningar

Varför deltar du i utbildningen? (flera alternativ kan kryssas)

- Blev uppmanad av skolledningen
- Individuell kompetensutveckling
- För att utvecklas som lärare
- Som led i skolans utvecklingsplaner
- Tog själv initiativ till deltagandet
- För att förändra skolans undervisning
- För att få mastersexamen
- Annat, nämligen.....

Mina förväntningar före utbildningen var:

- Mycket höga
- Höga
- Varken höga eller låga
- Låga
- Mycket låga

I vilken grad har förväntningarna infriats:

- Mycket hög grad
- Hög grad
- Varken hög eller låg grad
- Låg grad
- Mycket låg grad

Om dina förväntningar inte infriats, vilka är de främsta skälen till det?

.....  
.....  
.....

## Uppläggnig och innehåll

Hur bedömer du utbildningsinnehållens relevans i förhållande till din egen arbetsvardag?

- Relevant
- I stort sett relevant
- Varken relevant eller irrelevant
- Irrelevant

Hur bedömer du utbildningens teoretiska nivå?

- Mycket hög
- Hög
- Varken hög eller låg
- Låg
- Mycket låg

Hur bedömer du utbildningens svårighetsgrad?

Mycket hög  Hög  Varken hög eller låg  Låg  Mycket låg

Hur har du upplevt samlingarna? (flera svarsalternativ kan kryssas)

- Som ett bra komplement till övriga inslag i utbildningen
- Som ett välkommet avbrott i vardagen
- Som ett störande moment
- Som en social mötesplats

Hur har du på det hela taget upplevt undervisningen vid samlingarna?

- Mycket bra
- Bra
- Varken bra eller dålig
- Dålig
- Mycket dålig
- Så varierande att *ett* omdöme inte kan ges

Hur har du på det hela taget upplevt de olika handledningsinslagen i utbildningen?

- Mycket bra
- Bra
- Varken bra eller dålig
- Dålig
- Mycket dålig
- Så varierande att *ett* omdöme inte kan ges

Hur tycker du att ClassFronter har fungerat?

- Mycket bra
- Bra

- Varken bra eller dåligt
- Dåligt
- Mycket dåligt

Hur har kursadministrationen fungerat?

- Mycket bra
- Bra
- Varken bra eller dålig
- Dåligt
- Mycket dåligt

## **Utbildningen, undervisningen och skolan**

Hur upplever du att din utbildning har påverkat ditt arbetslag?

- Positivt
- Negativt
- Varken positivt eller negativt
- Vet ej

Hur upplever du att din utbildning påverkat dina elever?

- Positivt
- Negativt
- Varken positivt eller negativt
- Vet ej

Hur upplever du att din utbildning påverkat skolledningen?

- Positivt
- Negativt
- Varken positivt eller negativt
- Vet ej

Hur upplever du att din utbildning påverkat skolan?

- Positivt
- Negativt
- Varken positivt eller negativt
- Vet ej

Innebär aktionslärande en förändring av ditt sätt att arbeta och undervisa?

- I mycket hög grad
- I hög grad
- I låg grad
- I mycket låg grad
- Vet ej

Innebär aktionslärande en förändring av dina elevers sätt att arbeta?

- I mycket hög grad
- I hög grad
- I låg grad
- I mycket låg grad
- Vet ej

Passar aktionslärande in i det som du bedömer vara skolans kultur?

- I mycket hög grad
- I hög grad
- I låg grad
- I mycket låg grad
- Vet ej

Hur upplever du att skolan/skolledningen lyckats använda det du lärt dig inom utbildningen?

I mycket hög grad  I hög grad  I låg grad  I mycket låg grad  Vet ej

## Övrigt

Hur har du upplevt din totala arbetsbelastning (arbete + utbildning) under utbildningens gång?

- Alltför hög
- Hög
- Lagom

Ingår mastersutbildningen i skolans utvecklingsplan?

Ja  Nej  Vet ej

Har du för avsikt att skriva mastersuppsats?

Ja  Nej  Vet ej

Om ”ja”: Vilket är ditt uppsatsämne: .....

.....

.....

Övriga synpunkter på utbildningen etc.: .....

.....

.....

## **Questionnaire regarding the master's programme in Action Learning (author's translation)**

As you probably know, we are conducting an evaluation of the master's programme in Action Learning in the District. The evaluation is financed by the Research Institute and is independent of the District and the Norwegian University. The evaluation will consist of different assessments, among other things questionnaires, interviews, researching documents and observations. The current questionnaire is solely directed to the first cohort.

As you can observe, we ask for your name and telephone number. We are doing this as we would like to conduct interviews in order to elaborate on some of the questions. We guarantee that the data is treated confidentially. If you do not want to divulge your name, the questionnaire can be completed anonymously.

We would like to emphasise that the objective with the evaluation is not solely to ascertain how the programme in which you have participated has worked. The data

obtained will also be used as a way in which to improve the programme for the second and third cohort and similar programmes in the future. Your participation is thus important in many different ways.

If you have any questions or viewpoints, you are welcome to call or write us.

In advance, thank you for your participation!

The District June 2004

**Anders Persson**

Project manager and senior researcher at The Research Institute in Malmö, senior lecturer in sociology at Lund University and adj. professor at Malmö Högskola.  
Tel.: 040-109509  
E-mail: anders.persson@soc.lu.se

**Pernille Berg**

Research assistant and ph.d. teacher at Lund University

**Background information**

Name:.....Tel.no:.....  
Date of birth:..... Gender:  female  male  
School:.....  
Type of teacher education:.....  
Type of position:.....

For how long have you worked as a teacher?.....

List any relevant information: .....  
.....

**Motivation and expectations**

Why are you participating in the programme? (several boxes can be chosen)

- Encouraged by school management
- Developing individual competency
- To be developed as a teacher
- As part of the development plan of the school
- Initiated my participation myself
- To change the teaching at the school
- To obtain a master's degree
- Other:

which was.....

My expectations prior to the programme were:

- Very high
- High
- Neither high nor low
- Low
- Very low

To which degree have your expectations been met;

- To a very high degree
- To a high degree
- Neither to a high degree nor to a low degree
- To a low degree
- To a very low degree

If your expectations have not been met, what are the foremost reasons for this? .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Structure and contents**

How do you assess the relevans of the contents of the programme compared to your own work day?

- Relevant
- Largely relevant
- Neither relevant nor irrelevant
- Irrelevant

How do you assess the theoretical level of the programme?

- Very high
- High
- Neither high nor low
- Low
- Very low

How do you asses the level of the programme with regards to difficult/challenging?

- Very high
- High
- Neither high nor low
- Low
- Very low

How have you experienced the seminars? (several boxes can be chosen)

- As a good complement to other components of the programme
- As a nice break to the normal workday
- As a disruptive moment
- As a social place to meet

How have you experienced the teaching/lectures at the seminars?

- Very good
- Good
- Neither good nor bad
- Bad
- Very bad
- So varied that it is not possible to extend *one* assessment

How have you experienced the different supervision elements of the programme?

- Very good
- Good
- Neither good nor bad
- Bad
- Very bad
- So varied that it is not possible to extend *one* assessment

How do you think *ClassFrontier* has been working out?

- Very good
- Good
- Neither good nor bad
- Bad
- Very bad

How has the administration of the programme been working?

- Very good
- Good
- Neither good nor bad
- Bad
- Very bad

## **The programme, the teaching and the school**

How do you experience that your training has affected your work team?

- Positively
- Negatively
- Neither positively nor negatively
- Don't know

How do you experience that your training has affected your pupils?

- Positively
- Negatively
- Neither positively nor negatively
- Don't know

How do you experience that your training has affected the school management?  
 Positively  Negatively  Neither positively nor negatively  Don't know

How do you experience that your training has affected the school?  
 Positively  Negatively  Neither positively nor negatively  Don't know

Has action learning impacted the way in which you work and teach?  
 To a very high degree  
 To a high degree  
 Neither to a high degree nor to a low degree  
 To a low degree  
 To a very low degree  
 Don't know

Has action learning impacted the way in which your pupils work?  
 To a very high degree  
 To a high degree  
 Neither to a high degree nor to a low degree  
 To a low degree  
 To a very low degree  
 Don't know

Does action learning fit into what you assess your school culture to be?  
 To a very high degree  To a high degree  To a low degree  
 To a very low degree  Don't know

How do you experience that the school management has succeeded in applying what you have learnt at the programme?  
 To a very high degree  To a high degree  To a low degree  
 To a very low degree  Don't know

## **Additional information**

How have you experienced your total workload (work + programme) during the duration of the programme?  
 Too high  
 High  
 Low

Is the master's programme part of the school's development plan?  
 Yes  No  Don't know

Do you plan to write your master's dissertation?  
 Yes  No  Don't know



If “yes”: What is your topic: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Additional opinions regarding the programme etc.: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## Appendix 4

### Example of interview guide

Hej xxx,

Emnerne for interviewet er emner, som også blev berørt i spørgeskemaet:

Utbildningen, undervisningen og skolan:

- Hur upplever du att din utbildning påverkat ditt arbetslag?
- Hur upplever du att din utbildning påverkat dina elever?
- Hur upplever du att din utbildning påverkat skolledningen?
- Hur upplever du att din utbildning påverkat skolan?
- Innebär aktionslärande en förändring av ditt sätt att arbeta och undervisa?
- Innebär aktionslärande en förändring av dina elevers sätt att arbeta?
- Passer aktionslärande in i det som du bedömer vara skolans kultur?
- Hur upplever du att skolan/skolledningen lyckats använda det du lärt dig inom utbildningen?

Det vil sige, at emnerne især fokuserer på hvordan du kan 'mærke' hvordan uddannelsen har haft en indflydelse på din arbejdsdag og din opfattelse af dit arbejde.

På gensyn og igen tak for hjælpen!

Pernille

### Example of interview guide (Author's translation)

Hej xxx,

The topics for the interview are topics also raised in the questionnaire:

The education, teaching and the school:

- How do you experience that your training has affected your work team?
- How do you experience that your training has affected your pupils?
- How do you experience that your training has affected school management?
- How do you experience that your training has affected the school?
- Has action learning impacted the way in which you work and teach?
- Has action learning impacted the way in which your pupils work?
- Does action learning fit into what you assess your school culture to be?
- How do you experience that the school management has succeeded in applying what you have learnt at the programme?

In other words, the topics focus in particular on how you sense that the programme has influenced your work day, and your perception of your work.

See you and again thank you for helping out!

Pernille

## Appendix 5

Example of interview guide with project team members from the Norwegian University

Interviewguide til interview af professor and second project manager

De to interviews foretages af respektivt Anders Persson og Pernille Berg.

Interviewet er berammet til at vare en time og følgende emner berøres i interviewet:

- de didaktiske overvejelser bag uddannelsen
- valg af forelæsere
- valg af vejledere
- hvordan forventes lærerne (deltagerne) at omsætte aktionslæring uddannelsen i praksis?
- organisationen af uddannelsen – det rent administrative og planlægningen af uddannelsen
- Class Fronter
- kommunikation med xxx Kommune og de studerende

14. september 2004

### **Example of interview guide with project team members from the Norwegian University**

(Author's translation)

Interview guide for the interview of the Norwegian professor and the second project manager

The interviews are conducted by Anders Persson and Pernille Berg respectively.

The interview is scheduled to last an hour and the interview is structured around the following topics:

- the didactical strategies pertaining to the programme
- choice of lecturers
- choice of supervisors
- how are the teachers (participating teachers) expected to apply the action learning training in their daily work?
- the organisational structure of the programme – the administrative and scheduling aspect of the programme
- Class Fronter
- the communication between the District and the teachers

14 September 2004

## Appendix 6

Example of summary of interview with reflective comments from the participant.

Interview med Interviewee K, – anonymiseret

Interviewet fandt sted mandag den 16. januar 2006 i xxx og blev foretaget af Pernille Berg.

Inden interviewet var der fremsendt spørgsmål/emner, som ville blive berørt i interviewet – dette betød, at Interviewee K havde haft mulighed for at overveje og nedfælde noter. Denne proces betød, at eventuelle sprognaster (dansk – svensk) ikke skabte forvirring eller hæmmede interviewet. I de enkelte tilfælde, hvor der var tvivlsspørgsmål, blev enkelte ord oversat til svensk af Pernille undervejs i interviewet.

Nedenstående referat fremsendes torsdag den 19. januar til godkendelse. Såfremt der er rettelser eller tilføjelser, indsættes disse af Interviewee K selv.

Det skal påpeges, at referatet nedenfor er struktureret ud fra spørgsmålene, medens vi i selve interviewet koblede nogle af spørgsmålene sammen. Ligeledes sikrede vi til sammen, at alle spørgsmål var besvaret, inden interviewet blev afsluttet. Interviewee K blev forsikret fuld anonymitet både personligt og skolemæssigt ved senere anvendelse af interviewmaterialet. Nedenstående skal derfor anses for at være fortroligt. Ligeledes blev Interviewee K tilspurgt om at deltage i interviews senere, til hvilket han svarede positivt.

Spørgsmål/emner, som var fremsendt inden interviewet:

Utbildningen, undervisningen och skolan

- Hur upplever du att din utbildning har påverkat ditt arbetslag?
- Hur upplever du att din utbildning har påverkat dina elever?
- Hur upplever du att din utbildning har påverkat skolledningen?
- Hur upplever du att din utbildning har påverkat skolan?
- Innebär aktionslärande en förändring av ditt sätt att arbeta och undervisa?
- Innebär aktionslärande en förändring av dina elevers sätt att arbeta?
- Passar aktionslärande in i det som du bedömer vara skolans kultur?
- Hur upplever du att skolan/skolledningen lyckats använda det du lärt dig inom utbildningen?

*Baggrundsinformation*

Xskolan er et gymnasium placeret i udkanten af xxx. Xskolan udbyder mange forskellige programmer, bl.a. programmer for handicappede, idrætsprogram, international baccalaureate. Og tekniske programmer. Derudover udbyder Xskolan de mere

traditionelle gymnasieprogrammer, som f.eks. samfunds- og naturvidenskabelige programmer.

Xskolan er en stor skole med ca. 1300 elever. Med de mange forskellige programmer betyder det, at arbejds teams på de respektive uddannelser har svære vilkår i og med, lærerne underviser på mange forskellige programmer.

Xskolan har haft en deltager på kull 1 men vedkommende har skiftet arbejdsplads.

Interviewee K har arbejdet på xxskolan i 5 år og startede dermed sin lærergerning her. Interviewee K underviser p.t. i matematik men underviser også i filosofi, når dette udbydes. Interviewee K beretter hvordan det var meget positivt at begynde at arbejde på Xskolan og hvor positivt han blev modtaget af kolleger. Introduktionen til skolekulturen var dog ikke struktureret på nogen måde, dette betød, at der er i dag er udarbejdet en guide til nyansatte og en mere struktureret velkomstprocedure.

### *Generelt omkring Mastersuddannelsen*

Interviewee K er generelt positiv omkring uddannelsen. Adspurgt omkring det positive i uddannelsen svarer Interviewee K, at uddannelsen giver en mulighed for personlig udvikling, og det har været et interessant forløb. Uddannelsen giver én mulighed for at få et klarere begrebsapparat. Selvom begreber som refleksivitet og lærerrollen ikke var decideret nye, har begreber som aktionslæring, forandring, organisationsteorier, skoleudvikling, skolekultur med videre været spændende begreber at få en dybere forståelse for. Ligeledes siger Interviewee K, at uddannelsen for så vidt også har medvirket til, at man bliver mere frustreret over sin egen arbejds situation fordi man har fået et indblik og kendskab til organisationsteorier med videre. Dette er ikke nødvendigvis en god ting. Man kan sige, at uddannelsen giver én et indblik og det indblik medvirker til at man bevæger sig i et pendul, som spænder fra frustration til handlekraft. I og med at man får indblik og kendskab/viden bliver man enten meget frustreret som medarbejder, så man skifter arbejdsplads, eller man får lyst til at tage ansvar/handle, så man søger lederstillinger.

*I løbet af interviewet blev emnerne som forandring og forandringsprocesser nævnt flere gange om Interviewee K tænkte meget over rollen som forandringsfacilitator, -agent og ansvarlig for forandring. Interviewee K ser ikke, at uddannelsen gør ham ansvarlig for forandring på sin arbejdsplads og ønsker ikke at være individuelt ansvarligt for forandring men er positivt indstillet overfor forandring om end ikke for forandringens skyld. Dilemmaet omkring forandring i et organisationsperspektiv blev berørt flere gange, hvad sker der med den enkelte lærer, hvis denne bliver det personlige ansigt for forandring igangsat af ledelsen. Det at være gangsetter skaber nogle andre relationer til kolleger afhængigt af hvem der har initieret forandringsprocessen. Hvis det er ledelsen, der har igangsat forandringen, er det så en genuin forandring? Hvad er genuin forandring? Hvilken betydning har det for eleverne, hvem der har igangsat forandringsprocessen, hvis de er glade for forandringen?*

Ligeledes blev magtelementet i en forandringsproces berørt – hvis det er ledelsen, som initierer forandringen, hvis forandring er det så, hvem 'ejer' forandringen og hvem styrer forandringen?

Interviewee K refererede til konferencen afholdt af Bildingsnämnden den 13. oktober 2005, hvor Leif Olin i spøg nævnte, at der ikke skete noget, at det gik for langsomt, men bag spøgen lå alvoren. Interviewee K påpegede, at den holdning egentlig strider imod hvad forskere udtaler om forandring i organisationsøjemed, nemlig at al forandring tager tid. Dette eksempel bragte samtalen hen mod en snak omkring kommunens rolle i videreuddannelsen. Spekulationer omkring hvad vil kommunen med uddannelsen og de lærere, som har deltaget i uddannelsen. The District har, ifølge Interviewee K, helt tydeligt igangsat uddannelsen for at være en spydspidskommune, men det fremgår ikke helt hvad de har forventet at anvende lærerne til. Oprindeligt var midlerne, som har finansieret uddannelsen, øremærket til at øge lærerkapaciteten i forhold til elevantallet, og spørgsmålet er, om uddannelsen skaber et fundament for dette?

Hvor masteruddannelsen taler meget om bottom-up forandring, kan man sige, at uddannelsens tilblivelse er et top-down projekt og hvad er implikationerne af dette? Interviewee K refererer til samtaler med andre kursister, hvor man har talt om hvad kommunen vil med uddannelsen, om de er klar over hvad de har igangsat. Ligeledes har nogle af kursisterne talt om uddannelsens udbydere i forhold til kommunen. Diskussionen har omhandlet uddannelsens struktur og hvordan programmet er sammensat, hvordan udvælges de forskellige foredragsholdere? Er det ud fra kvalifikationer, venskabsrelationer, aktionsnetværk eller ud fra uddannelsens formål. Nogle gang, jf. Interviewee K, kan man godt få fornemmelsen af at det er Tordenskjolds soldater, som holder foredragene, det vil sige, at det 'vennerne', der indbydes til at forelæse. Ligeledes nævner Interviewee K, at når man har hørt Tiller én gang, er det rigeligt.

Svar til de fremsendte spørgsmål

- Hur upplever du att din utbildning har påverkat ditt arbetslag?

Interviewee K nævner, at uddannelsen nok ikke har påvirket hans arbetslag i og med, at hans arbetslag ikke fungerer optimalt grundet lærernes involvering i mange forskellige programmer, som vanskelig teamarbejdet. Men derimod er hans kolleger, som han deler kontor, blevet 'udsat' for mange pædagogiske diskussioner blandt andet inspireret af masteruddannelsen. Her diskuteres iagttagelser, tanker, bøger med videre blandt andet inspireret af masteruddannelsen. Disse diskussioner er meget interessante men ikke struktureret. Dog har kollegerne og Interviewee K en plan om at strukturere dem lidt mere og planlægge 'fika' stunder, hvor de har planlagt hvilke emner, der skal diskuteres.

- Hur upplever du att din utbildning har påverkat dina elever?

Det er meget svært at sige, om uddannelsen har påvirket eleverne. Interviewee K har ikke samtaler med eleverne omkring metalæring. Enkelte gange tales der om metalæring men det er ikke planlagt og nok mere undtagelsen end reglen. Interviewee K udtaler også, at det er svært at kræve denne metalæring af eleverne i og med at de ikke ved hvad de skal lære i faget. De har ikke kendskab til fagets mål, formål og metodiske begrænsninger. Først når de har gennemgået kurset, kan de reflektere over metalæringens aspekter af faget.

På uddannelsens første år udformede Interviewee K og en kollega et projekt omhandlende elevernes læringsstile. Spørgsmålet om det har påvirket eleverne er svært at svare på. Interviewee K kunne observere, at eleverne fik kendskab til og viden omkring deres respektive læringsstile men ikke anvendte denne viden, når de skulle danne projektgruppe. Spørgsmålet, om det har haft betydning for dem, er derfor svært at svare på i og med at eleverne måske tager det med sig senere hen. Ligeledes er spørgsmålet måske snarere, om det er læringsstilene, der skal determinere gruppesammensætningen – eller formuleret anderledes om det er en anden rationalitet, eleverne anvender, når de agerer i læringskontekster?

- Hur upplever du att din utbildning har påverket skoledningen?

Skolen har haft en rektor som var meget kreativ og progressiv og interesseret i uddannelsen, men på grund af nogle organisatoriske problemer (med en anden leder), skiftede denne job til en anden skole. De samme organisatoriske problemer var årsagen til, at Interviewee Ks kollega, som deltog i masteruddannelsen, fandt et andet job. Skoleledelsen har dog været positiv og er det fortsat. De tilbød Interviewee K at deltage og anvende et projekt omhandlende evaluering af eleverne til sit masterprojekt. I starten var Interviewee K ikke interesseret, idet det var et projekt igangsat af ledelsen men efter at have reflekteret over det i løbet af sommerferien, besluttede Interviewee K, at projektet var spændende og derfor gerne ville deltage i det. Interviewee K har informeret ledelsen, at de er velkomne til at læse slutrapporten men alle de primære data er hans og fortrolige.

Interviewee K har derfor præsenteret sit projekt for alle lærere, og der har været nogle interessante reaktioner på det. Nogle kolleger hilser f.eks. på Interviewee K med 'Her kommer forskeren', andre fortæller, at de nu tænker på matricer (som projektet omhandler) hvad gang de ser Interviewee K. Interviewee K har uddelt spørgeskemaer til kolleger og her er det interessant, at nogle meget gode kolleger slet ikke har svaret. Andre beretter, at de umiddelbart var positivt indstillet over for anvendelsen af matricer men nu er efter at have set anvendt.

Interviewee K har erfaret, at kolleger har ændret lidt adfærd eller for eksempel snakker om noget andet, når han kommer. Denne erfaring delte han med én af skolelederen, som replicerede, 'velkommen til skoleledelsen'.

Det interessante er også, ifølge Interviewee K, at blot ved at stå frem, er en forandring igangsat – mere skal der ikke til.

- Hur upplever du att din utbildning har påverket skolan?

Det er svært at sige, om uddannelsen har påvirket skolen.

- Innebär aktionslärande en förändring av ditt sätt att arbeta och undervisa?

Om det er aktionslæring, der har påvirket undervisningen er svært at sige. Men Interviewee K har gjort sig mange tanker om fagets (matematik) didaktik og metodik. I den forbindelse har uddannelsen bidraget med et dybere begrebsapparat.

- Innebär aktionslärande en förändring av dina elevers sätt att arbeta?

Som nævnt tidligere er det svært at svare på, om der er en direkte virkning og om denne virkning kan observeres med det samme, men måske på sigt.

- Passar aktionslärande in i det som du bedömer vara skolans kultur?

Ja, umiddelbart passer aktionslæring ind. Interviewee K karakteriserer skolekulturen som værende ikke akademisk.

- Hur upplever du att skolan/skolledningen lyckats använda det du lärt dig inom utbildningen?

De problemer, der har været i skolens ledelsesgruppe, kan fortsat mærkes, og den kreative lederprofil arbejder i dag på en anden skole. Dog er skoleledelsen ikke dediceret negativ.

Pernille Berg

Torsdag den 19. januar 2006

Nedenfor er Interviewee Ks efterfølgende refleksioner og mailkorrespondance *inden* referatet var fremsendt. Dewey citatet er i forbindelse med en snak omkring pædagogisk udvikling, hvor Interviewee K påpegede, at det nogle gange føles som et pendul, der svinger.



Hej Pernille,

Det tycker jag också, det var bra för mig att få formulera vissa saker som jag har gått och funderat på. Hypotesen om vad masterutbildningen leder till är kanske lite tillspetsad, men det ligger ändå något i att man antingen blir chef eller byter skola (eller lägger ner studierna).

Aktionslärande är som jag sa något som jag själv tycker är vettigt (för mig), då det innebär ett systematiserande av mina egna erfarenheter, och då helst i förhållande till någon teoretisk utgångspunkt.

När det gäller tillämpning av aktionslärande i klassrummet blir det svårare, eftersom det är relativt tidskrävande att låta eleverna genomgå alla steg i "läran". Vissa element, som reflektionslogg går att använda och fungerar enligt min erfarenhet till viss del.

Vad jag gör och hur jag gör det i klassrummet, är egentligen viktigare än något annat. Eleverna lär sig genom det de får erfara, de gör som jag gör (om de inte aktivt tar avstånd från det) och inte som jag säger – det blir nästan modellärande. Det absolut viktigaste är hur jag präglar dem (det låter hemskt, men behaviorismen som teori fungerar i detta fall, helt i strid med vissa av Dewey's tankar).

Skickar med Deweycitaten som jag nämnde igår.

Hälsningar Interviewee K

Dewey skrev:

">>Den gamla pedagogiken<< brukade ignorera den dynamiska karaktär, den kraft till utveckling som fanns nedlagd i barnets omedelbara erfarenhet, och därför antog man också att styrning och kontroll bara var en fråga om att egenmäktigt placera barnen på ett givet spår och sedan tvinga dem följa det. >>Den nya pedagogiken<<, å andra sidan, löper risken att behandla utveckling på ett alldeles för formellt och innehållslöst sätt. Barnen förväntas >>utveckla<< ett eller annat faktum eller sanning direkt ur sitt eget tänkande. De blir tillsagda att fundera ut saker eller lösa problem på egen hand, utan att förses med de bakomliggande förutsättningar som är nödvändiga för att börja och styra en tankeprocess. Ingenting kan utvecklas ur ingenting, inget utom det ofullgångna kan komma ur det ofullgångna – och detta är just vad som sker när vi hänvisar barnen till sitt eget begränsade jag och ber dem utveckla nya sanningar om natur och handlingsliv från den utgångspunkten. (Dewey s 116)

Dewey, John (2004): *Individ, skola och samhälle*, Stockholm: Bokförlaget Natur och kultur

## Appendix 7

### Summary of conversation with Norwegian Professor Samtal med, den 4/10 2004 i Stockholm

Samtalet gjordes utan bandspelare, delvis i en taxi och jag har här rekonstruerat huvuddragen ur minnet. Vi har möjlighet att återkomma till xx i ytterligare samtal och intervjuer.

1. På vilket sätt har xx deltagit i den praktiska utformningen av mastersutbildningen i the District? Mastersutbildningen bygger på xxx idéer om aktionslärande och xx har också författat kursens huvuddokument, studieplanen. xx har fortlöpande deltagit i utbildningen som föreläsare för att skapa sammanhang i utbildningen (se 4 nedan).
2. Vilka problem löser mastersutbildningen? Det behövs en radikal kraft för att förändra sega skolinstitutioner. Den kraften menar xx att han successivt skapat i ett långsiktigt arbete sedan 1984 då han under en period forskade i Bath i England med David Oldroyd. Inspirationen till det som blev ”aktionslärande” uppstod i mötet mellan konservativa engelska skolstrukturer och idéer om erfarenhetslärande. Under 1990-talet ökade intresset för skolförändring i Norge och Sverige och xx bok *Aktionslärande* svarade delvis upp mot detta förändringsbehov. Dessutom behövs alternativ till lärarutbildningen, eftersom teachererna där, enligt xx, lär sig att hata pedagogisk teori och därför måste sådan vävas in i praktiken.
3. Vilka problem ville the District lösa med sin närmast osannolikt ambitiösa satsning på aktionslärande? LD som karismatisk drivkraft (EEIL-projektet) var initialt en nyckelperson. Eleverna utvecklade en osannolikt stor kraft inom EEIL-projektet och visade praktiskt att skolan kan ta elevernas behov av inflytande på allvar. *Idén om en utbildning för lärare växte successivt fram och målet blev att utbilda pedagoger som ett slags piloter som kunde få skolan att leva upp till läroplanens mål.* The District har kommit att bli xxx's viktigaste arena och hans uthållighet just här förklaras av att LD och GG skapat ständigt nya ekonomiska och organisatoriska förutsättningar för att gå vidare (efter mastersutbildningen har nyligen startats skolledarutbildning och nu finns planer på ett vetenskapligt nätverk som bl.a. xxx ska vara ledare för och där the District ska vara en mycket central del).
4. Slutligen bad jag xxx kommentera resultatet vi fått i enkäten med kull 1, dvs. att utbildningen är administrativt och organisatoriskt ganska dålig men att många deltagare är mycket nöjda med innehållet. Han menar att kursledningen varit medveten om problemen under lång tid, men att det varit svårt att hantera dem. E ville exempelvis ha ordning men inte GG och detta var orsaken

till att E hoppade av, påstår xxx. Det var ett medvetet val att inte ha fortlöpande utvärdering, den traditionella kursvärderingen med sin betygssättning av enskilda personer och moment skulle nämligen skymma helheten. När det gäller valen av föreläsare har de styrts av två saker: dels bristen på ”rätta” föreläsare, dels att man inte ville skapa en sekteristisk utbildning där endast sådant som var troende aktionslärandeideologer fick agera lärare. I och med att man anlitat pedagoger som egentligen inte kan utveckla idéer om aktionslärande har xxx mer än vad som var tänkt från början fått vara med i undervisningen för att sörja för återkopplingen till utbildningens ursprungliga tanke. xxx's återkommande inlägg har blivit utbildningens ”ideologiska” kitt.

5.

## Appendix 8

### The Local Sphere of Sustainable Leadership

“Locally, in a district or a region, . . . , sustainable leadership must

- Reassert the sequential priority of learning, then achievement, then testing
- Obtain the resources of in-school time, staff support, professional development, and opportunities for retreats, so that school staff can work together to become a stronger learning community
- Provide leadership coaches and process consultants to assist schools in becoming stronger learning communities
- Create leadership development schools to grow outstanding future leadership
- Establish technical and human systems for information and data management, including school-based data, locally accumulated data, and external research evidence
- Promote school-driven inquiry and review as paths to improvement
- Provide in-system mentors, retired leaders who serve as coaches, and regular support group meetings for serving principals
- Ensure that all schools have succession plans and that these are shared with the district; limit the excesses of succession frequency and abolish the practice of regular and mathematically predictable principal rotation
- Establish a process for teachers, administrators, district officials, and community members together to develop a commitment to shared improvement targets
- Develop multiple indicators of accountability and apply these collectively, not just individually, as an incentive for schools to assist one another
- Encourage and fund local networks for schools to share effective practices and improvement strategies
- Orchestrate focused and intensive instructional training initiatives in areas in which the system and its schools are not yet strong, to expand schools’ repertoires and ensure that there is excellence to share among them
- Audit past policies and change experiences before embarking on fresh change initiatives”

(Hargreaves and Fink 2006: 269-270).

## Appendix 9

### **Presentation at the District's first public conference on Striving for Action Teachers**

**Translated – with the original quotes listed first.**

**the presentation was presented as a powerpoint with one single statement per slide**

Conference on the Master programme in Action Learning

Programme:

- What came after EEIL?
- 'I got a voice'

EEIL (1999-2003)

- Engagement
- Environment
- Influence
- Lifelong learning

"Man tør vove noget nyt, man får en systemkompetence, som er meget værdifuld"  
'You dare to engage in something new, you obtain a systemic competence which is very valuable'

"Man bliver mere bevidst om hvad det er man går og laver."  
'You become more conscious of what you are actually doing.'

"Man får modet til at vove noget nyt."  
'You get the courage to dare something new.'

"Det giver en større tilfredsstillelse i lærergerningen."  
'It gives you a greater satisfaction in your teaching vocation'.

"Det har givet en et ekstra plus."  
'It has given me an extra dimension.'

”Positiv inspiration til undervisningen.”  
’Positive inspiration to my teaching.’

”Jeg er blevet bedre til at reflektere.”  
’I have become better at reflecting.’

”Jeg har lært at værdsætte mine egne erfaringer.”  
’I have learnt to appreciate my own experiences.’

”Værdien af at sprede viden, samarbejde og indgå i arbejds teams.”  
’The value of disseminating knowledge, co-operation and being part of work teams.’

”Det kännes man har något att säga – det er skönt.”  
’It feels as if I have something to say – that is great.’

”Jeg fik en stemme.”  
’I was given a voice.’

## Appendix 10: Reflective notes from members of the network for graduates

The reflective notes have been collected by the second programme manager who sent the members a letter in 2007 asking the question: 'What is going on in your life when it comes to action learning?' ('Vad hander hos dig när det gäller aktionslärandet?')

The notes have been anonymised and it is thus not possible to identify whether some of the members work at the same school.

The notes are reproduced in Swedish below and appear in the dissertation in their translated version.

### Nummer 1

På min skola är inte tankarna om aktionslärande nye. Min chef kände till Norwegian Professor (pb) och hans förhållningssätt till lärande sedan tidigare och när jag inledde mina masterstudier hade min kollega redan avslutat sitt första år. Det var faktiskt min chef som föreslog att jag skulle gå utbildningen eftersom han ville stärka tänke- och arbetssättet på skolan.

Jag upplever att min kompetens blivit väl nyttjad på skolan. Under de första tre åren delade jag min nyvunna kunskap med mitt arbetslag och genomförde bland annat ett förbättringsprojekt gällande vort temaarbete. Under studiernas sista år engagerades hela personalen i den kulturanalys och det efterföljande utvecklingsarbete som låg till grund för min rapport.

Föregående år, da jag var föräldraledig, blev jeg ombedd såväl av min chef som av personalen att fortsätta leda utvecklingsarbetet på skolan. Vi arbetade vidare med förbättringsarbeten i tvärgrupper. Personalen har varit välvilligt inställd till aktionslärande som arbetsform, vilket har underlättat mitt arbete med att leda utvecklingsarbetet. Vi har tillsammans inlett en ny samarbetsform, har börjat nya nätverk och har *skapat ett nyt tänkesätt kring möjligheterna att påverka det dagliga arbetet. Vi har gått från att vara offer till att bli aktörer.*

Det kommande läsåret ska vi vidareutveckla utvecklingsarbetet kring de frågor personalen själv ser som viktiga genom att lyfta arbetet till en ny nivå. Efter att ha handlett xxx i våras blev jeg intresserad av att arbeta med lärande samtal som kollegial reflektionsform. Då jag presenterade arbetssättet för mina kollegor var de genast med på noterna. På måndag nästa vecka, 10/9, kommer de fem som valts ut till samtalsledarna att träffas för att gå igenom arbetsprocessen, reflektera över aktuell litteratur samt lyfta fram viktiga frågor att diskutera i samtalsgrupperna under läsåret. st, varav jag är en, är entusiastiska inför projektet, vilket känns bra.

*Jag upplever att jag har fullt stöd från ledningen och att jag har personalen med mig i utvecklingsarbetet. På vår skola är aktionslärandet på väg att implementeras i det dagliga arbetet. Min förhoppning är att de lärande samtalen ska bidra till att vårt aktionsarbete blir mer märkbart ut i barn- och elevgrupperna.*

## **nummer 2**

På xxxskolan har vi intentionen att jobba i projektform en gång per termin i våra arbetslag. Då arbetar vi tematisk och försöker att förena elevernas erfarenheter med kursplanernas strävansmål. Arbetslagen har kommit olika långt i detta arbetet eftersom vi har jobbat tillsammans olika länge i lagen och befinner oss på olika ställen i vårt förhållningsätt till arbetsmetodiken.

Spridningen av aktionslärandet på skolan började vårterminen-07 när ytterligare ett arbetslag tog del av xxx och min aktion återgick då till sin tjänst efter att ha varit barnledig. Vårt tidigare arbete spreds till lärarna i hennes nya arbetslag och tillsammans med xxx genomfördes aktionen igen i mindre skala.

I slutet av september visade jag bildspelet om vår aktion inför personalen på xxxskolan och xxxskolan. Jag klargjorde också vad för erfarenheter vi hade gjort och vilka slutsatser vi kommit fram till under aktionen och försökte att inspirera de matt pröva på bildanalysmodellen.

På skolan arbetar vi i olika utvecklingsgrupper och jag deltar i utvecklingsgruppen för arbetsmetoder. Vi har försökt att få en samsyn på hur man kan använda portfolion som verktyg, för att få eleverna att få syn på och reflektera över sitt lärande.

Mycket av arbetet i utvecklingsgrupperna är helt i aktionslärandets linje, att pedagogerna tillsammans ska försöka att utveckla vertyg i skolan och göra en förändring som kan förbättra lärandet.

De gemensamma diskussionerna och reflektionerna som har gjorts, bidrar också till att vi får ett gemensamt språk, som gör att vi kan närma oss varandra och bygga en gemensam plattform för vidare erfarenheter som kan leda till utveckling.

## **nummer 3**

Tack för det goda initiativet att tala med våra skolledare och att vi ska skriva till dig om våra tankar.

Bakåt ha rmina skolledare stöttat mig men har samtidigt inte använt mig som ALF-pedagog. Troligen har de tagit hänsyn till mitt examensarbete men ibland har jeg haft en liten känsla av att jag går in på bitr.rektors domäner. Det är min känsla, men xxx säger att det inte är så.



Personalens svar på Temo-undersökningen för xxxskola var inte så bra. Vi tog en utbildningsdag för att undersöka orsak och lösningar. En dag som xxx (moderator) och xxx använde på ett utmärkt sätt. Mycken gråt och skratt, vilket behövdes. En bra början till att fortsätta arbetet på.

En tanke jag hade om varför vi inte fungerade tillsammans var att vårt mål SPRÅKET, inte hade diskuterats ordentligt så alla gjorde efter sitt huvud och då blev det fungeringar över varandras arbete. Det vill säga att en gemensam syn om vägarna till språket är viktig för sammanhållningen på xxxskolan.

Den 28 september ska vi ha en utbildningsdag om hjärnbaserat lärande. Detta har jag mycket böcker om och ett stort intresse för. Det är särskilt fakta och vetenskap som jag vill ta fram för vrt arbete i förskolan. En av anledningarna till att jag är förskollärare är att jag hela tiden har haft känslan att det är i förskoleåldrarna det händer det viktigaste. Nu har jag fått redskap att skapa något bättre. Jag har pratat med xxx och xxx om mitt intresse. Jag skulle vilja ha som uppdrag att driva processen fram till att vi verkligen arbetar efter de kunskaper som finns om hur vår hjärna utvecklas och fungerar och vad vi i förskolan behöver arbeta med för bästa möjliga utveckling. Gärna tillsammans med barnens föräldrar med några kvällskurser för dem.

Jag har hittills sagt, för att inte trampa över mina befogenheter, att jag kan agera frögurka för att så idéer om hjärnbaserat lärande. Samtidigt vill jag ha ett tydligt uppdrag och ha tid att göra ett ordentligt uppdrag. Jag kan inte enbart ta mig rollen av utvecklare. Jag måste få uppdraget också för att ha mandatet som 'gödselspridare'.

Detta kan bli ett projekt att söka pengar till. Jag har redan börjat skriva för att få med hur det börjar och vilka document som behöver sparas.

#### nummer 4

Jag driver utvecklingsfrågor på skolan tillsammans med rektor och i det arbetet väver jag in aktionslärande. Jag håller i de pedagogiska konferenserna varje vecka.

Jag känner mig nyfiken på konferensen i Göteborg och träffen den 10/9 som ordnas av Malmö Lärarhögskola gällande forskning i skolan.

Jag är sugen på forskning men vet inte hur jag ska gå vidare än. Jag skulle kunna tänka mig att forska tillsammans med någon kollega som gått utbildningen, kanske på uppdrag av Skol- och fritidsförvaltningen? Att hålla i utvecklingsfrågor mer centralt skulle också intressera mig (har kanske inte med rubriken att göra .).

*Känns svårt att driva aktionsforskning ensam.* Jag känner att det skulle vara betydligt lättare att vara två.

Gällande min rektors inställning till aktionslärande känner jag att jag har fullt stöd ifrån henne.

## nummer 5

Hej!

Vad händer? Just nu försöker vi bara sätta oss in i allt nytt som sker xxx MEN min rektor xxx är positiv till aktionslärande. Han har meddelat xxxx att jag skulle kunna användas som resurs i en mentorskapsgrupp inom xxxx. På xxxx kan jag informera nytillkomna lärare.

I torsdags var jag på xxxskolan och talade om vår syn på mentorskap här på vår skola i allmänhet och i synnerhet om hur vi i mitt arbetslag har kopplat mentorskapet till vår undervisning. Det verkade som om flera tyckte jag hade något att komma med. De köpte inte allt, men bl a information om sekretess och offentlighetsprincipen gjorde att alla reagerade.

Jag fortsätter med min aktion med ansvarsuppsatser och vi har filat en del på vår upplägning av arbetet med styrmedel. Vi utvecklas hela tiden.

Ett nytt projekt ska starta som kan bli riktigt intressant. Vi ska arbeta tillsammans med en skola i Chile med utgångspunkt i projektet hållbar utveckling och det ska vara ett utbyte om miljö och demokratisering. Tre personer xxxx från xxxskolan kommer att åka till Concón utanför Valparaiso i slutet av ktober, vilket vi fått bidrag till från Programkontoret. xxx (Olympialärare) är redan på plats eftersom hon arbetar på skolan som volontär.

Vi försöker få ihop medel så att fyra lärare från den chilenske skolan ska kunna komma hit i början av nästa år. Har du några stålar? =)

Förhoppningsvis kan det komma in en del aktionslärande av detta också. Om du har lust kan du få ta del av rapporterna vi skickar till programkontoret.

Alf-ped bad rektor skriva istället! (projektleders noteringar)

## nummer 6

Lärande samtal

Under läsåret 2006/2007 startade skolledning på ... skolområde, tillsammans med xxx, upp arbetet med Lärande samtal, en metod för reflektion och eftertanke i vardagsarbetet. xxx' uppsats utgjorde underlag för samtalen som genomfördes ned samt-

lig pedagogisk personal i skolområdet. xxx deltog dessutom som aktiv samtalsledare, planerade och efterarbetade samtalen samt agerade mentor till sina kolleger.

Med anledning av vår utbyggnad till en F-9 skola med början läsåret 07/08, utgjorde samtalen dessutom en möjlighet för gemensamma reflektioner kring denna förändring. xxx slutliga utvärdering framkom det att så gott som samtliga var väldigt positiva till metoden och skolutvecklingsgruppen beslutade att fyra samtal skulle genomföras under kommande läsår, 07/08.

xxx kommer under innevarande läsår att ingå i skolområdets utvecklingsgrupp och tillsammans med ledningsgruppen vidareutveckla, planera och utvärdera läsårets kommande Lärande samtal. Hon kommer även i förtsättningen att själv agera samtalsledare, samt under gemensamma träffar med övriga samtalsledare, bidra med kunskap och erfarenhet till sina kolleger.

Ledningsgruppen, tillsammans med xxx, kommer också att diskutera möjligheten att på längre sikt vidareutveckla metoden Lärande samtal, som en självklar del i områdets skolutveckling. Detta gäller övergripande utveckling, det enskilda arbetslagets men också som en metod för eleverna att träna sig i reflektion och eftertanke.  
bitr. rektor

#### nummer 7

Än så länge händer inte mycket på xxxskola när det gäller aktionslärande. xxx kom en ny rektor Ht-2006 och han var då även rektor för xxxskolan, jag hade i stort sett ingen kontakt med honom. xx var med och lyssnade när jag hade ett föredrag för några arbetskamrater som var intresserade att lyssna på det jag hade skrivit om till min masterexamen.

xxx har varit biträdande rektor under nästan hela tiden jag har gått utbildningen. Vi har haft en del därför gjorde jag en redovisning för dem i slutet av varje termin och informerade om det jag skulle fortsätta skriva om. xxx var då rektor på xxxskolan och även han var med och lyssnade. xxx har vist intresse för vad jag gjort i mina aktioner och sagt att xxx ska ta till vara på min kompetens. Nu är det bara så att xxx finns inte kvar på xxx skola, hon är rektor på xxxskolan.

Eftersom xxx har slutat fick jag en ny biträdande rektor from Ht-2007, xxx. I början av terminen hade jag ett möte med xxx och xxx då jag berättade vad jag skrivit om under alla fyra åren. Jag informerade även om de olika konferenserna jag skulle åka på under höstterminen. De fick även information om de möten som vi ha i Alf-gruppen och om handledning.

Jag har själv börjat med aktionslärande tillsammans med den förskolläraren som jag arbetar tillsammans med i förskoleklassen. Vi laser en bok av Ulla Wagner 'Samtalet som grund', arbetar med barnen, skriver loggbok och diskuterar för att gå vidare.

Anledningen till att jag inte har hela arbetslaget med mig beror på att det har skett stora förändringar vad gäller personalen. Det fina samarbete vi hade finns inte kvar.

Jag har inte haft någon dialog med någon i ledningen, så jag har tagit kontakt med xxx för att få till stånd en dialog där vi kan diskutera vad jag kan göra för nytta.

För tillfället har jag inte fått något svar från xxx om det är möjligt att starta en dialog och om skolan har någon nytta av min kompetens.

## nummer 8

En reflektion kring tiden efter masterexamen

Så som kursen i Aktionslärande och ambitionerna kring den samma presenterades under hösten 2001, kändes det som en mycket bra kvalitetshöjande åtgärd. Sex år senare kan man fundera både en och två gånger på var vi har hamnat.

Min första reflektion kring det hela var att jag självklart tycker att det också blivit så, mycket med tanke på hur vi valt att lägga upp arbetet på min arbetsplats. Vid vidare eftertanke anser jag dock att vår kompetens måste utnyttjas och utvecklas på tre olika plan. Först och främst är önskan så klart att den ska tas till vara på den egna arbetsplatsen, men jag som person måste också ta ansvar för att förvalta det jag har lärt mig och utveckla min kompetens i den sfär där jag själv ansvarar, d.v.s. i klassrummet och i min undervisning. Samtidigt är det så klart viktigt att kompetens också tas tillvara på det kommunala planet. Utifrån denna inledning kommer jag därför att summera hur jag tycker att det känns idag, på respektive plan.

”Jag och min master”

Fyra år av hårt arbete, pedagogiska diskussioner, vägledning, massor av intressanta föreläsningar och möjlighet till reflektion måste ge avtryck i det fortsatta arbetet för varje enskild pedagog. Jag ser på saker annorlunda idag än vad jag gjorde innan. Jag tror att studierna har givit mig en större vidsynthet och hjälpt mig att se möjligheter istället för hinder. Jag kan ta tag i och göra förändringar i mitt lilla arbete, det med eleverna, med större tilltro till mig själv. Det värsta som kan handa är ju att det inte blir bättre än tidigare och då får man pröva en annan väg. Att pröva, ta lärdom och reflektera över resultatet, för att sedan planera fortsättningen känns idag självklart. Jag känner att när vi tillsammans diskuterar hur kompetenserna tagits tillvara ligger det oftast på organisationsnivå och inte på gruppnivå, i klassrummet. Oavsett hur vi tycker att respektive skola tar hand om den nya kompetens som nu finns i väggarna,

så måste det vara vårt eget ansvar att de till att kompetensen utnyttjas, utvecklas och ger resultat i mötet med eleverna.

”Skolan och min master”

I samband med min mastersuppsats började vi ett utvecklingsarbete på skolan, som fortfarande pågår. Fördelen för vår del är att både xxx och jag tagit vår examen och vår rektor hela tiden stöttat utvecklingsarbetet. xx tog vid där jag slutade och utvecklingsarbetet är nu inne på sitt 4:e år. Under årens lopp har personalen arbetat med olika vägar för att hitta områden vi vill utveckla och förbättra, vi har i grupper arbetat med förbättringsområden, där varje grupp sedan presenterat ett färdigt förslag som vi andra gett respons på. Min upplevelse är att vi tack vare detta identifierat förbättringsområden och sedan kunnat fokusera på vart och ett, få fram ett resultat och fatta ett gemensamt beslut mycket mer effektivt än tidigare. Vi har också fått ett trevligare klimat, större samsyn och gemenskap bland personalen, oavsett yrkesgrupp. Detta läsar arbetar vi vidare med lärande samtal, Lisbeth fungerar som utvecklingsledare och jag själv deltar som samtalsledare i de lärande samtalen. Förutom mitt arbete som undervisande lärare i skolår 4-9, arbetar jag också som arbetslagsledare för pedagogerna i skolår 4-9 och sitter med i skolans ledningsgrupp, vilket gör att jag känner att jag fått en större spelplan nu än tidigare.

”Kommunen och ALF-gruppen”

Från början var förvirringen stor kring hur vi skulle kunna arbeta vidare tillsammans. Jag personligen trodde nog att det hele skulle rinna ut i sanden, för strukturen kändes oklar. Fortfarande känns det att vi ligger i startgroparna, men jag känner en stor tillförsikt inför vårt arbete tillsammans. Jag hoppas att den struktur vi ny lagt grunden till, kommer att kunna utvecklas till ett nätverk som kan hjälpa oss att fortsätta föra pedagogiska diskussioner också utanför vår egen arbetsplats och att vi därigenom kan hitta nya inspirationskällor och vägar till kompetensutveckling. Det viktiga är dock att vi alla kan bryta ner det hela till vår egen vardag, för det är ju trots allt i mötet med dem vi jobbar för och med som resultatet ska komma. Målet måste alltid vara att förbättra förutsättningarna för elevernas lärande!

## nummer 9

Ja jag minns och jag skäms att det tog så lång tid

Det som hänt på min skola angående Aktionslärande är inte så mycket. Som du kanske kommer ihåg sa min rektor när jag inbjöd honom till att vara med på examensfester: -sån skit går jag inte på.

Jag vet inte om jag varit för utydlig själv – antagligen. När vi var två som gick, xxx hade vi ju en dialog och kunde hjälpas åt. Men sedan slutade hon och jag var ensam kvar. Jag fick mina samarbetspartner på socialförvaltningen och det fyllde min tid och intresse.

Efter en 'depp period' är jag på gång igen. Kom precis hem från ett möte med föräldrarna i vår FM grupp.

Det är oerhört inspirerande att få göra detta. Sen kanske det inte ligger inom det som andra menar är aktionslärande men för mig gör det det.

Min rektor är positiv så till vida att han tycker det är bra *MEN alla föräldrarna kommer ju inte och det är ju väldigt konstigt.*

Jag ser det på ett helt annat sätt.

De föräldrar som kommer kommer och det är bra. De i sin tur berättar för andra och så kan det spridas positiva signaler. Vi kanske inte ser resultatet just nu men vem vet vad som sker i tysthet. I mina ögon är dessa 15 föräldrar hjältar. Intresserade och aktiva i sitt föräldraskap.

Jaha, det här är säkert inte vad du ville ha men jag har inte något annat att berätta. Till chefens fördel eller vad det kallas finns väl att vi är en stor skola och han kan inte hålla koll på allt som händer och sker.

Han var positiv till vi sökte utbildningen helt klart men hade inte några idéer om vad vi kunde syssla med.

Vid lönesamtal har han inte nämnt mina studier och ökade kompetens med ett ord. Istället påpekade han att jag haft en svacka och därför inte kunde räkna med några extra pengar. Att svackan berodde på skolans oförmåga att handskas med svåra barn och att jag fick stå ensam i en outhärdlig situation hade han nog glömt. Nu blev jag visst lite bitsk. Men så blir det när du ber om svar på sådana frågor. Eftersom jag förmodligen inte svarat rätt får du gärna precisera ytterligare frågor.

## nummer 10

Genom att jag arbetar som skollära, uppfattar jag att min situation ser annorlunda ut jämfört med de som arbetar som pedagoger. Jag tycker att jag har många möjligheter att använda aktionslärandet i min verksamhet, i mina arbetslag. Speciellt under läsåret som kommer, eftersom vi i ledningsgruppen för xxskolorråde, har startat ett visionsarbete med alla som arbetar hos oss, från 1 till 16 år. Vår handledare i detta arbetet har som utgångspunkt i aktionslärande, med stor erfarenhet och många metoder får reflektion för att lyfta fram erfarenheter som grund för nytt lärande. Vi kommer under läsåret bl.a. att arbeta med att prova, lära och utvärdera olika metoder att reflektera, för att sedan skapa vår verktygslåda för personalen.

Jag upplever ett stort stöd i min ledningsgrupp, och att mina kunskaper tas tillvara på ett bra sätt.

Hälsningar

## nummer 11

Ett par dagar efter att jag tog min examen i våras fick jag av Mats Mattson en preliminär förfrågan att tillsammans med xxx medverka i ett program för specialpedagoger i xxx 6-7 december 2007. Om det blir av eller inte vet jag inte, men det kändes i alla fall hedrande att bli tillfrågad. Att få hjälp att sprida det man har gjort är dessutom aldrig fel och att få göra det utanför hemmaplan är ju alltid enklare till en början. Så vem vet, i december kanske det bär av mot huvudstaden.

När det gäller den kompetens som jag har erhållit via mastersutbildningen i aktionsläranden har den inte tillvaratagits i större utsträckning på min arbetsplats. Detta beror dels på att jag inte har marknadsfört mig själv, dels att det inte finns resurser att ta tillvara kompetensen. Min rektor vet på ett ungefär vad jag har gjort, men säger att det är upp till mig att komma med idéer på hur jag kan sprida mina erfarenheter, så får hon sedan försöka göra det möjligt att förverkliga dessa idéer. Ärligt talat har jag inte tänkt så långt ännu, men får väl komma fram till något under hösten. När jag nu sitter och funderar inser jag att det är aktionslärandet i sig, sättet att förändra sin praktik genom systematisk reflektion, som jag helst vill sprida. Visst delger jag gärna andra mina erfarenheter av hur man kan locka ungdomar att läsa skönlitteratur, men det är arbetssättet, hur jag har kommit fram till mina svar som är det centrala för mig, dvs att forska tillsammans med eleverna.

Den här terminen arbetar jag 50%. Förutom att jag kommer arbeta vidare med det utvecklingsarbete jag skrev min mastersuppsats om, har jag bytt arbetslag och ska ha en kurs i elevinflytande för elever i elevrådet och elever i skolans styrelse (som dock inte finns längre). I elevinflytandekursen är ett av mina mål att med hjälp av aktionslärande tillsammans med de deltagande eleverna sprida vikten av elevinflytande till övriga elever på skolan. För mig är det viktigt att få elever att ställa krav på inflytande, krav på att få göra saker tillsammans med övrig personal osv och det är ett område jag gärna hade arbetat er med. På xxx har vi pedagogiska råd där såväl lärare som elever deltar och att t ex få arbeta med elevrepresentanter i de pedagogiska rådenore spännande. Jag får väl driva mina frågor i mitt nye arbetslag om inte annat. Tidigare har jag även fungerat som mentor för nytexaminerade lärare, något som också var givande och där jag faktiskt utgick från systematisk reflektion. Lärarstudier och nytexaminerade lärare är inspirerande att arbeta med.

För att jag ska hålla i gång aktionslärandet tills jag har kommit på ett sätt att ta tillvara min kompetens kommer jag att handleda en teacher som tänker ta sin masterexamen detta läsår, anmäla mig som medreflektor till examensarbeten från Högskolan i xxx samt delta i olika nätverk. Utbildningen i aktionslärande har varit givande för mig och jag kommer att ta tillvara min kompetens, blit det inte på min nuvarande arbetsplats, så blir det någon annanstans.

## nummer 12

Jag är nöjd med min utbildning i aktionslärande. Jag tycker att jag har god nytta av de kunskaper och erfarenheter jag har gjort. Fyra år skapar en process av nytänkande och förståelse.

Jag har drivit en par aktioner i arbetslagen på min skola men ungefär samma resultat. Det första stora projektet var ett utvecklingsprojekt Jag idag i Sverige som handlade om identitet. Jag samarbetade med xx på xx. Mitt underlag till masters handlade om självkänedom för ökat inflytande och ansvar.

Det är oftast en lång process att plantera idéerna i arbetslagen. Under arbetets gång hör jag mycket suck och kritiska röster. När arbetet är klart är det positivt och projektet är uppskattat. Mitt arbete kring självkänedom har gett mig själv möjligheter att förstå olika processer i arbetslaget mycket bättre. Jag ser inte förmågan att placera in människor i fack som en speciell tillgång, men den ökade förståelsen för varför olika personer reagerar som de gör, har gett mig mycket värdefull kunskap.

Jag är arbetslagsledare för två arbetslag som fungerar helt olika. Det ena arbetslaget F-6 Montessori, är ett väl fungerande samarbetande arbetslag. Här ger ambitionen att arbeta efter Montessoripedagogiken vissa begränsningar. Det andra arbetslaget 4-6 är det individuella klassrumsarbetet mer förekommande. Samarbetet sker mest inom klassens ramar.

Jag är helt klar med vad jag skulle vilja arbeta med i nästa aktion. Det känns inte som det är några problem att få stöd från mina rektorer. Problemet är att motivera och inspirera arbetskamraterna som är ganska upptagna av förverkliga sitt eget arbete. Det finns inte någon ambition eller vilja i 4-6 arbetslaget att samarbeta.

Aktionen är en fortsättning på utvecklandet av den individuella arbetsplanens inflytande och ansvar.

**Vad är det för kunskap i vill att våra elever ska ha inflytande och ansvar över?**

**Hur kan vi lärare tillsammans utveckla vårt sätt att bedöma elever så bedömningen blir mer formativ?**

I skolstarten lyssnade vi på en föreläsning av xxx, som alla tyckte var bra. Jag skulle vilja bygga vidare på en och även ha en diskussion om bedömning i mellanåldern. Jag tror nämligen att vi ser väldigt olika på kunskap och vi har som ett av skolans mål en gemensam kunskapssyn.

Förutsättningarna gör att det känns svårt att få igång processer i 4-6 arbetslaget och kanske är det främst där som en aktion skulle vara utvecklande.

Kanske måste det föregås av en positiv utveckling av arbetslaget och dess vilja att bli ett samarbetande arbetslag!

Jag känner mig just nu väldigt frustrerad för att komma vidare. Jag trivs med att arbeta med processer och utveckling. Det känns svårt när inte alla har samma ambition till ett samarbetande arbetslag. Jag pratade lite med xxx om att det skulle vara positivt att föreslå en halv studiedag, där xxx och xxx presenterar sitt arbete.



### nummer 13

Jag hoppas Du mår alldeles förträffligt bra, vilket för den delen jag gör nuförtiden då jag ju som bekant har fått med om att starta och utveckla en för xxxs stads del alldeles ny pedagogisk arena i form av frigymnasiet xxx, och det går bla att finna på [www.xxx.se](http://www.xxx.se).

Jag känner mig faktiskt ganska småkompetent av nu s a s *från början* bedriva diversepraktiska aktionslärandeprojekt, och såvitt jag nu kan greppa så efterfrågas det nyfiket efter våra (d v s mina och xxx) aktionslärandeerfarenhetskunskaper bland våra såväl kommunala som icke-kommunala pedagogkollegor i xxxs stad och vi hade tyckt att det hade varit oerhört spännande att samarbeta kring detta och sprida mine och xxx kunskaper.

På xxx Gymnasium, där jag just nu tjänstgör, har vi t ex bestämt oss för att kraftfullt försöka bedriva ett båda progressivt och självkritisk arbete kring *individualiserat/individanpassat lärande* med fokus på *Mänskliga Rättigheter och Hållbar Utveckling*, vilket på många skilda sätt är oerhört spännande, ned-/uppsläende och alldeles nödvändigt i dagens läroplans- och målstyrda skola. Här vill vi att varje individs lärande skall tilgodoses utifrån dennas/dennes behov, livserfarenheter och förkunskaper, vilket ju i sig (milt uttryckt) är en utmaning.

Jag tänker på att i varje pedagogiskt relevant situation, ta tillvara min nu tillvaratagna kunskap inom *Masterutbildningen i aktionslärande*, vilket i sig (för mig) är ett ovärderligt tecken på att jag liksom är på väg någonstans till något som kan räknas som genuina, äkta och pedagogiska möten på riktigt där jag och eleven kan mötas i exakt samma ögonhöjd! Ungefär så.

Bara detta faktum är ju ett faktum *per se* att "gna, om inte all världens, så i alla fall en ansenlig *aktionsforskningsinsats* för att kartlägga, utforska och inte minst häpnas över! Detta att som pedagog helt enkelt få vara med om att skapa en ny pedagogisk horisont alldeles från början med alla miljoner och åter miljoner människomöten. Helt överkligt och på samma gång ett privilegium utan dess like eller hur!?

Jag, (ALF-pedagog) xxx och xxx Gymnasiums rektor, är nuförtiden något sänär bekanta med aktionslärandets grundprinciper i stort som vi ju på ett alldeles förträffligt och för mig meningsskapande sätt fått ta del av genom *Mastersutbildningen i aktionslärande* som xxxs stad erbjudit oss i kraft av Universitetet i Norge och professor xxx. Denna utbildning, kan jag säga, har för mig varit ovärderlig främst ut pedagogisk synvinkel me

## nummer 14

Pliktskyldig och motvilligt skriver jag detta.

År 2001 den 12. september påbörjade fem kollegor på xxx skola aktionsforskningskursen. Tre av dessa lämnade, när krav på inlämningsuppgifter kom och nedsättning i undervisningsskyldighet tog slut.

Sedan ett tiotal år tillbaka hade tankar och funderingar funnits hos mig om hur en god undervisning för högstadieelever i behov av särskilt stöd och/eller xxskolans högstadieelever borde vara. Vad skall den leda till? Hur kan den utformas? I projektform bl.a. på xxxskolan hade jag haft tillfälle att pröva modeller och metoder. Aktionsforskningskursen tvingade mig att tänka hela vägen fram, analysera samlat material och dra slutsatser. Vidare reflekterades över hur undervisningen genomförs idag.

På xxxskola, som är min huvudarbetsplats, har vissa metodiska förändringar kunnat genomföras. I en del sammanhang lästränas elever med helordsmetod och tekniska hjälpmedel (som digitalkamera och dator) används, xxx skolledning visar intet intresse.

Skam den som ger sig!

Den nya gymnasieskola, som skolgruppen inom FUB tillsammans med stadens skolchef arbetat fram, är igång. Undervisningen där vilar på anpassat, teoretiskt kunskapsinhämtande och träning inför ett värdigt och självständigt liv.

Kollegor och jag ser möjligheter att förbättra undervisningen i samma riktning för vår elevgrupp. Istället för att ånyo försöka förändra befintlig högstadieskola, avser vi att starta en ny, fri från all gammal ballast.

Under aktionsforskningskursen förvärvade kunskaper och gjorda dokumenterade och analyserade erfarenheter förutom, hade jag aldrig vågat!

## nummer 15

Än så länge händer inte mycket på xxxskola när det gäller aktionslärande. xx kom ny som rektor Ht-2006 och han var då även rektor för xxskolan., jag hade i stort sett ingen kontakt med honom. xx var med och lyssnade när jag hade ett föredrag för några arbetskamrater som var intresserade att lyssna på det jag hade skrivit om till min masterexamen.

xxx har varit biträdande rektor under nästan hela tiden jag har gått utbildningen. Vi har haft en del diskussioner kring tiden jag hade till mitt förfogande, därför gjorde jag en redovisning för dem i slutet av varje termin och informerade om det jag skulle fortsätta skriva om. xxx var då rektor på xxskola och även han var med och lyssnade. xx har visat intresse för vad jag gjort i mina aktioner och sagt att xxx ska ta till vara på

min kompetens. Nu är det bara så att xx finns inte kvar på xxx skola, hon är rektor på xxskolan.

Eftersom xx har slutat fick jag en ny biträdande rektor from Ht-2007, xxx. I början av terminen hade jag ett möte med xxx och xxx då jag berättade vad jag skrivit om under alla fyra åren. Jag informerade även om de olika konferenserna jag skulle åka på under höstterminen. De fick även information om de möten som vi skal ha i Alfgruppen och om handledning.

Jag har själv börjat med aktionslärande tillsammans med den förskolläraren som jag arbetar tillsammans med i förskoleklassen. Vi läser en bok av Ulla Wagner Samtalet som grund , arbetar med barnen, skriver loggbok och diskuterar för att gå vidare.

Anledningen till att jag inte har hela arbetslaget med mig beror på att det har skett stora förändringar vad gäller personalen. Det fina samarbete vi hade finns inte kvar.

Jag har inte haft någon dialog med någon i ledningen, så jag har tagit kontakt med xxx för att få till stånd en dialog där vi kan diskutera vad jag kan göra för nytta.

För tillfället har jag inte fått något svar från xxx om det är möjligt att starta en dialog och om skolan har någon nytta av min kompetens.

## nummer 16

Det är väl med viss tvekan som jag skriver. Det är lätt att framstå som bitter. xxx skolan var en klart disfunktionell arbetsplats under en stor del av tiden som jag skrev uppsatsen det blir tydligt nu när jag bytt till en fungerade arbetsplats.

När jag skrev min mastersuppsats befann sig xxskolan i ett extremt svårt läge. Skolledningen hade inte grepps om situationen i stort. Lärarna och skolledarna stod allt längre inte bland brandalarm och smällare kraft att intressera sig för skolutveckling. Pedagogiska rådet där jag ingått upphörde. Ett underifrån perspektiv med aktionsforskning hade förändrat läget.

Under våren gick en biträdande rektor in som tf en ny biträdande xxx anställdes. Han såg på skolan på ett nytt sätt som kändes skönt så till vida att vi inte var offer. Tyvärr saknade han förmågan att se i vilket läge skolan befann sig. Hans metod stavades PBS-problembaserat lärande. Ett samverkansavtal med Karlstad Universitet skrevs. Till en början ar han intresserad av min uppsats men det med PBS som skolans problem skulle lösas. Fokus låg långsiktigt när vi lärare skrek efter tydliga regler och konsekvenser. Hans hopp låg i huvudsak hos de nya lärarna som sattes som A-lagsledare. Under våren sökte jag en annan tjänst som jag inte fick, detta kan ha spelat in. Jag var dessutom lokalombud för LR.

Det fanns inget utrymme för att berätta om min uppsats i början av höstterminen som jag hoppats på. Efter flera påstötningar tog jag mig en halvtimme av 7-9 a-lags tid för att berätta om min uppsats och om aktionsforskning. Kollegorna men ingen av de tre skolledarna närvarade. Jag inbjöd också till två timmars mer praktisk diskussion med mentorer. Vi var åtta mentorer som diskuterade mentorsrollen vilket blev ett travligt möte. Jag upplevde väl ändå att aktionsforskningen hade kunnat spela en stor roll på skolan att systematiskt undersöka för att utveckla den egna arbetsplatsen. PBS fungerade inte på en skola i ett så kritiskt läge som xxxskolan. Skolan borde satsat på trygghet arbetsro och lägga ner resurser på att få nya elever till skolan.

Under våren fick jag veta att jag efter nio år inte hade tjänst på skolan till hösten. Mastersexamen sågs konstigt nog ingen merit. Inte heller kom jag ifråga till kommunens ledarskapsutbildning, lönepåslag 300 kr. Jag hade ett möte med xxx om min framtid. Ett trevligt möte som gav hopp men sedan har han lämnat som personalchef.

Tjänsten jag fick är ett vikariat under ett år på xxx skolan. Mottagandet har varit gott och det har på annat sätt varit av intresse vad jag har gjort tidigare. Jag hade inge svårigheter att få ledigt för att åka till aktionsforskningskonferensen i Göteborg i oktober. Jag hade kort informerat biträdande rektor xxx om det uppdrag jag har haft som samordnare med xxx den där termin en. Jag har meddelat att jag gärna håller en dragningsom mitt arbete och vad aktionsforskning är för personalen. Hon tycker att jag kan vänta till våren vilket jag tycker är ok om det bara blir av. Det ägnas som jag har förstått ganska mycket tid åt diskutera kunskapssyn utifrån läroplanskonsulterna Steve Wretman och Helena Moreau. Här hoppas jag i alla fall få spela en framträdande roll. Det hade varit mycket bra om du träffar xxx eller xxx och diskuterar hur jag kan utnyttjas.

