

# Dealing with Diversity

a Key Issue  
for Educational  
Management

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Southern Moravia Region

  
Vysočina Region





## Editorial

This book contains selected papers presented at the 14th conference of the ENIRDEM<sup>1</sup> network, held in Brno and Telč, the Czech Republic, from 22 to 25 September 2005. The core theme of the conference was *Dealing with Diversity: a Key Issue for Educational Management*,<sup>2</sup> which is as well the subject of this publication.

It is well understandable that *dealing with diversity* was selected as the central topic of the conference. Such theme is as old as the human kind — and yet always topical. There is no way to avoid diversity, but living with diversity is not easy. Such issue concerns all of us — and yet we often associate it with other things or people. We are facing diversity day after day — but rarely speak of it. We tend to direct our attention to others rather than to face ourselves.

Dealing with diversity is naturally an important subject matter, both in general contemplations and in educational management. Dealing with diversity in educational management permeates in complex ways the educational management theory as well as most of the domains where such management is materialised.

The texts included in this volume of conference proceedings are diverse too. Some authors focus on what can (and should) be identified and emphasised when dealing with diversity in educational management, while others comment on the diversity of various phenomena and processes in such management. Some authors treat diversity explicitly while others have made the topic an implicit but strong motif of their contributions.

In the introductory text, one of the plenary speakers of the conference, *David Oldroyd*, discusses the basic issues associated with the conference theme: he is concerned with what is meant by diversity, asking the question whether education can successfully face the challenges presented by diversity in its many forms and how we can deal with diversity as individuals and professionals. In his search for answers he gives eight suggestions about diversity, reflecting the complexity and multifaceted nature of such phenomenon.

Another plenary speaker of the conference, *Anne Gold*, stresses dealing with diversity as an issue of key values for educational management. She describes the very essence of the most important concepts such as values, diversity and leadership, and reflects upon possible links among them, trying to identify the strategies which educational leaders can use if they work with their own values and lead a diverse society.

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<sup>1</sup> ENIRDEM was created in 1991 upon the opening of the former Soviet block to the rest of Europe. ENIRDEM stands for European Network for Improving Research and Development in Educational Management. ENIRDEM is a truly horizontal network which brings together school leaders, educational administrators, trainers, researchers and consultants in the field of educational management. Its Board of six members (3 women, 3 men, 6 different countries) is usually renewed by one third annually. The Chairperson is the organiser of the next annual conference. The network has no permanent secretariat or institutional base. Its members are engaged in organised networking (annual conference in late September; web-site; joint research and development projects; publication of books, conference proceedings, two newsletters a year) and self-generated activities (exchange of materials; study visits; visiting lectureships; invitations to give lectures and workshops; etc.). Mission statement: “ENIRDEM seeks to improve the quality of educational management, development and research across the whole of Europe. It does it through the initiative and energy of its participants through mutually generated activities within and especially between Central, Eastern and Western Europe.” (for more information see: [www.enirdem.org](http://www.enirdem.org))

<sup>2</sup> For a survey of all the papers presented at the 14th ENIRDEM conference see the collection of abstracts: Pol, M., Ahonen, J., Dunning, G., Ivanova, I., Kaldestad, O. and Malmberg, K. (2005) *Dealing with Diversity: a Key Issue for Educational Management*. Brno, Masaryk University 2005. ISBN 80-210-3821-7.

*Ieva Rocena* underlines the importance of philosophical thinking as a precondition for dealing with diversity in educational management. Analysing the deeper basis for dealing with diversity, she suggests that the basic philosophical concepts and paradigms used when thinking about human beings, reality, knowledge and values are crucial for the dialogue and dealing with diversity. This is why these issues need more attention in educational leaders' training.

*Anita Trnavčević* and *Paul Mahieu* focus on equity and school leadership. They discuss some theoretical views on equity issues, targeting equity in access, and analyse the relevant policy frameworks in Slovenia and Belgium, mentioning a number of important implications for school leaders.

*Chris James*, *Michael Connoly*, *Gerald Dunning* and *Tony Elliott* deal with the disparity among the achievements of students attending different schools as one of the widely surveyed aspects of educational diversity. They comment on the factors that can account for such phenomenon. One can certainly agree with the authors' assumption that this is a significant issue, its valid conclusions offering major implications for the priorities adopted by school leaders and their training and development, which is, after all, another important aspect of this contribution.

*Lenka Hloušková* discusses diversity in regard to school culture. Her short text, originally a poster presentation, offers a model of school culture development representing the relation between school culture and its change. It is a cyclic model, depicting terms, phases and processes of change between two approaches to the specification of school culture. One way of conceptualising school culture is based on the notion of school as the basis for the definition, worded as 'a school *has* a culture'. Another way regards culture as its own basis, wording it as 'a school *as* culture'.

*Eric Verbiest* and *Justina Erčulj* show that just like teachers deal with pupils, school leaders and advisers have to evaluate the capacities of schools and adjust their approach accordingly. The authors of this contribution elaborate an existing assessment tool, known from works of other authors as based on the combination of the idea of school capacity and the stages of school development. They place such attitude into an apt framework for discussion and identification of actions which can bring schools to the next stages of their development. Their approach will be interesting to school leaders and advisers engaged in school development.

*Milan Pol* and *Petr Novotný* identify diversity (and similarities) in management and leadership activities of two basic school (6–15) headteachers. They focus on the headteachers' efforts directed at school quality management. The authors use two relational frameworks, namely the content-level of activities of a school leader whose responsibility is the quality of the school, and the invitational leadership (a concept stressing the management style). They reach conclusions about what is necessary in the career development of school leaders and the school development in the Czech environment.

*Anne Karikoski* comments on headteachers too: she is concerned with their coping strategies in various school-life situations. She presents her research of successful headteachers in Helsinki's schools, focusing mainly on their professional roles, on the constraints that headteachers face in their day-to-day professional lives and on the ways they cope with uncertainty and sudden or unexpected situations.

Another aspect of dealing with diversity in school management is pointed out by *Agris Upenieks*. The author focuses on headteachers' activities related to school development in

order to enhance the education of children with special needs, analysing a case study from Latvia.

*Bohumíra Lazarová* discusses some aspects of dealing with generational diversity in schools. She is interested in elderly teachers, remarking that the concern about their motivation and optimum professional involvement is of economic, social and ethical importance. The author stresses that school leaders can do a lot in this respect. A good and continuously improving school does not merely benefit from the activity of ‘a couple of highly involved people’, but strives to develop cooperation across the school — and across teacher generations.

*Ilze Ivanova* discusses the topic of the relationship between the school and the family, which is a very important factor in the management of diversity in schools. Examples from Latvia are used to touch upon a number of important questions about the roles of the family and the school in their cooperation, sharing knowledge about the child, about the joint responsibility and support for the child’s learning and development at home and school, and about the family involvement in school governance.

Last but not least, *Jana Vašátková*’s paper on diversity in the context of recent requirements on Czech schools deals with the school self-evaluation processes. Commenting on the consequently arising challenges, the author describes how the new approach to school self-evaluation is implemented in Czech schools and how it is supported.

Diversity in the context of educational management is an extraordinarily interesting topic. To deal with it is a must for anyone involved. I do believe that this publication can offer many a relevant insight into such a wide and complex issue.

*Milan Pol*



## DEALING WITH DIVERSITY: EDUCATION'S CHALLENGE IN CREATING HUMAN SOLIDARITY

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*“In my utopia, human solidarity would be seen not as a fact to be recognised by clearing away ‘prejudice’ or burrowing down to hidden depths but, rather, as a goal to be achieved. It is to be achieved not by inquiry but by imagination, the imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers. Solidarity is not discovered by reflection but created. It is created by increasing our sensitivity to the particular details of the pain and humiliation of other, unfamiliar sorts of people. Such increased sensitivity makes it more difficult to marginalise people different from ourselves by thinking ‘they do not feel it as we would’, or ‘there must always be suffering, so why not let them suffer’. This process of coming to see other human beings as ‘one of us’ rather than as ‘them’ is a matter of detailed description of what unfamiliar people are like and of re-description of what we ourselves are like.”*

Richard Rorty (1989) *Irony, Contingency, Solidarity*, xvi

This paper provides some reflections as ‘food for thought’ theme of the conference “Dealing with Diversity”. It explores three questions:

1. What do we mean by diversity?
2. Can education face the challenges presented by diversity in its many forms?
3. How might we deal with diversity as individuals and professionals?

Its content can be summarised in eight propositions about diversity:

1. Diversity is the product of evolution, **a given** for the human species.
2. Diversity is **accelerating** due to globalisation, trans-national migration and ICT.
3. It has **consequences both good and evil** depending on how individuals, groups, institutions, societies, states deal with diversity from **local to global levels**.
4. Individuals require high self-awareness and a capacity for metacognition about **identity** (believing, thinking, doing and having) and **human solidarity**.
5. Education at all levels has an **urgent challenge** to deal with diversity but is **relatively weak** alongside political, social, economic, cultural and technological forces.
6. Nevertheless, education systems and **institutions of learning and their leaders have a crucial role** to play in dealing with diversity at all levels.
7. Releasing individuals’ potential for **tolerance, self-development, efficacy and inter-cultural dialogue** are key tasks for educators and schooling.

8. Recent trends in educational policy and practice have unfortunately **distracted educators** from their crucial role in contributing to **human solidarity** but the **noble profession** must retain its idealism and strive to create a better world.

### Twin towers of diversity

Twin towers have become a negative icon at the start of this millennium. Let us propose ‘twin towers of diversity’ as our context. In 2004 at the ENIRDEM conference Bo Sundstrom introduced us to the “*Rapflex Society*” where rapid acceleration in the order of things fuelled by new technologies requires flexibility of response as never before. Maybe one tower of diversity is this ever faster ‘rapflex world’. The second can be ‘*post-modernity*’, a much-loved theme in recent years of academics of all descriptions. Post-modernity symbolises the loss of certainty and the pessimism illustrated in the titles of recent books such as “The Age of Insecurity”, “The Ingenuity Gap” (between technological change and humans’ ability to keep control) and “The Dark Age Ahead” (Hargreaves, 2003; Homer-Dixon, 2000 and Jacobs, 2005). Parallel forces of globalisation and transnationalism are encouraging some uniformity (the opposite of diversity) while at the same time diversity appears to become more of a problem as cultures, even civilisations, intermingle or clash. The agencies of human solidarity such as the UN or the EU seem increasingly impotent to deal with the consequences of continuing disorder and injustice. Programming of our diverse species for aggressive inter-group competition appears to be the product of human evolution. The events of 9/11 in the USA and 7/7 in the UK were among many other spectacular manifestations of how diverse socialisation and educational experiences lead to beliefs that create animosity between groups and can lead to gross acts of inhumanity.

### Multi-level diversities

Educators and education are about helping learners to ‘make meaning’. Learning can be described as a process of ‘meaning making’ and to be a teacher and educator is indeed a noble calling, for it empowers the learner to develop that most human of attributes — human consciousness, the capacity to learn and develop. Education systems operate at minimally five levels and are populated by at least five categories of key actors as Figure 1 suggests.

**Figure 1: Levels of complexity in education**

<i>FIVE ORGANISATIONAL LEVELS</i>	<i>FIVE KEY ACTORS</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supra-national</li> <li>• National</li> <li>• Local</li> <li>• Institutional</li> <li>• Individual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philosophers</li> <li>• Policy-makers</li> <li>• Providers</li> <li>• Practitioners</li> <li>• Pupils</li> </ul>

One profound current problem for educators is dealing with the impossibly vast explosion of diverse literature emanating from the first four actors listed Figure 1. This literature relates to all five levels of course and within the academic community narrower and narrower specialisation is required simply to ‘keep up’ with the knowledge explosion. Policy-makers are guided by politicians who in many countries have radically imposed market principles and accountability through measurable results — the ‘new public management’ approach. Many

feel that the 'noble calling' of the educator is being eroded and replaced by the reduced vision and goal of 'levering up' so-called 'measurable standards' (see Oldroyd, 2003).

### Education as a system for systems

Another reason why education can be seen as a noble profession is that it is the system that prepares personnel to function in all the other systems that comprise society. It is the trunk of the tree from which all the branches of human endeavour grow. Through the system of education pass all who eventually assume responsibility for every system of an organised society: political, economic, social security, police, military, judica, communications, environment, community, family to name but a few. All are staffed by the graduates of institutions within the education system. Every one of these diverse systems has to deal with diversity and what flows up the trunk from the education system enters every branch!

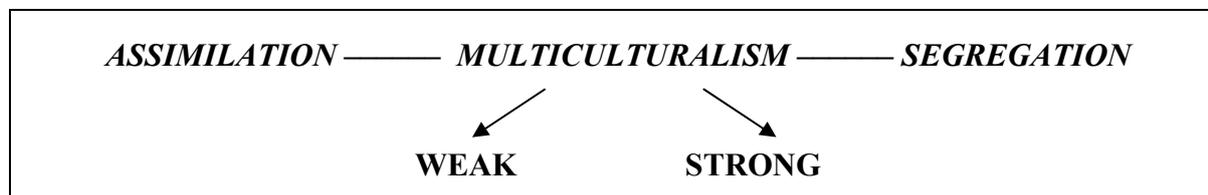
### Forms of diversity

At least ten forms of diversity that have to be dealt with in self, school, systems and societies are: gender, culture, wealth and poverty, social class, language, race, ethnicity, nationalism, religion, sexual orientation. Each of these forms of diversity has a legitimate claim to be dealt with not only in school and university curricula, but also in institutional policy, management and culture and at every level.

### Responses to diversity

In the search for human solidarity the tolerant and inclusive mindset and beliefs of the liberal humanist appears appropriate. All people should have equal rights and opportunities to pursue the good and just life and tolerance of inevitable diversity between peoples should prevail. Secular state-provided educational institutions are more likely to promote such a mindset than are schools that are segregated on the basis of gender, race, religion, social class or any other forms of diversity. Figure 2 offers four categories of responses to diversity that can be applied to societies as a whole as well as to educational institutions.

**Figure 2: Responses to diversity**



Segregation of children into different schools has a long history and surprisingly is again being promoted in some liberal democracies such as the UK where 'faith schools' allow choice of schools on the basis of religious belief. This policy is being implemented despite the effects of segregation in the province of Northern Ireland. This is one of the questionable results of the application of market forces and 'client choice' to the public sector. Multiculturalism takes two forms: *strong multiculturalism* exists where diversity is encouraged in both public and private spheres, for example through 'faith schools', provision of instruction in minority languages and the study of comparative religions; *weak*

*multiculturalism* limits diversity to the private sphere, providing schooling that relates only to the majority culture and leaving adherence to other languages, religions etc. to the private sphere. Assimilation actively discourages the preservation of minority identities. Schools and societies everywhere clearly locate themselves on such a continuum but doing so is fraught with ambiguity and contradictions.

### **The core of the problem of diversity**

Mindsets lie at the heart of the problem of diversity. Mindsets are learned in the process of making meaning and they consist of core beliefs that are programmed into the sub-conscious through the experience of upbringing, socialisation, indoctrination and education. Education and its key actors (see Figure 1) have some powerful competitors in helping individuals formulate their core beliefs. Indeed, the assertion that we can formulate our own beliefs is itself a mindset as Figure 3 illustrates!

**Figure 3: Mindsets though time: three sweeping generalisations**

<p><b>PRE-MODERNITY</b></p> <p>My/our life/lives and core beliefs are controlled by powerful universal forces beyond myself/ourselves. Fate and the will of the metaphysical will determine reality and the future.</p>
<p><b>MODERNITY</b></p> <p>I/we have the human capacity to respond to problems as they arise. A belief in reason and science will lead to the perfectibility of human society.</p>
<p><b>POST-MODERNITY</b></p> <p>I/we create meaning and core beliefs for myself/ourselves and pose new challenges throughout my life. The only certainty in life is uncertainty where chance and chaos rule.</p>

To make a further sweeping generalisation — currently the liberal humanist and post-modern world views are globally in the minority amongst the prevailing forces of pre-modernity and modernity. But it would be hard to argue that education should not assist learners to clarify their values and choose to modify their core beliefs towards a belief in their own efficacy as meaning-makers in the face of uncertainty and towards an emotionally intelligent tolerance for diversity.

### **Working with core beliefs**

In the quotation from Rorty at the start of this paper, he describes human solidarity as a goal to be achieved. Commitment to solidarity is a core belief that is the opposite of fear and distrust of those who are different. Where else but through schooling can the core belief in human solidarity be pursued? And how? He goes on to say that it is a matter of cultivating the imagination, the ability to empathise with the suffering of others; by increasing our sensitivity to diversity and what lies behind it; by seeing others as ‘one of us’ not as ‘them’. In recent years cognitive psychology has progressed in its understanding of how we develop and can change core beliefs. Popular books have promoted ‘emotional intelligence’ (Goleman, 1995) to a wide public. As usual, school curricula find it hard to keep up with such breakthroughs. Too rarely do pupils and students, or teaching staff and school leaders, receive self-

development help based on robust applied psychology, despite the availability and proven impact of new pedagogies and training programmes. A focus in education on the self, 'starting with the way we think, communicate and believe' (meta-cognition, reflective thinking and meta-communication) is long overdue in both school curricula and in teacher training. All problems of diversity start and reside within human consciousness. To deal with diversity we must start with the self.

Figure 4 illustrates a model of the self based on the metaphor of the multi-layered Russian Doll known to most children. The two dolls towards the outside which are seen by other people are the 'Outer Self'; the two invisible dolls deep inside are our 'Inner Self'.

**Figure 4: The four-self model**

<b>OUTER SELF</b>	<b>THE 'HAVING' SELF</b>	Our physical and material self — what we possess: clothes, property, our appearance.
	<b>THE 'DOING' SELF</b>	How we act, especially our verbal and non-verbal communication which along with the 'Having Self' defines our personalities.
<b>INNER SELF</b>	<b>THE 'THINKING/FEELING' SELF</b>	The most important self, our consciousness, which makes us human and which we can use to control the other three selves and much of our lives.
	<b>THE 'BEING' SELF</b>	The 'Soul' or 'Core Beliefs', deep in our sub-conscious minds, which guide our thinking and feeling and with which we define our selves, our self-image and our self-esteem, our 'comfort zones' and our purpose for living.

Whether we are tolerant liberal humanists or exclusivist zealots of a particular ideology depends on our inner selves. The inner self (*our meaning maker*) is where we can, through a process of 'self-talk', imagination and visualisation:

- value our efficacy and capacity to survive in a diverse, risky and hostile world;
- marvel at the power of our human faculties — senses, body, language, learning;
- make choices about and construct (re-programme) our own inner selves in total privacy;
- take responsibility for our *core beliefs*, the way we perceive the world, what we believe about ourselves (*self-image* and *self-esteem*) and others ('one of us' vs. 'them');
- believe that the *locus of control* for choosing how we see, think and act about diversity lies within ourselves.

A 'new pedagogy' and adult training methods based on cognitive science are now providing teachers with tools and techniques for developing the capacity of the inner self to deal with the challenges presented in contemporary life (e.g. Oldroyd, 2005; Smith, 1998).

### **The weakness of current schooling**

Unfortunately schooling and universities largely fail to address the most basic processes of meaning making and on developing core beliefs with respect to human solidarity, human consciousness and human rights. Sadly, educational reform is currently distracted from these

basic pedagogical and psychological tools for coping with insecurity and for dealing with diversity. The obsession of politicians with ‘standards’ and accountability — the world-wide managerial tendencies labelled ‘new public management’ — has diverted attention from the more fundamental moral purpose of education. Nor has schooling much power to make an impact compared, for example, with the power and influence of politics, corporate organisations, the media and popular culture or organised crime.

### **Educational initiatives for dealing with diversity**

Nevertheless, even uphill battles are worth fighting and schools and their leaders can be helped to:

- Give the new pedagogy and adult training approaches relating to emotional intelligence (meta-cognition; meta-communication; inter-cultural dialogue) a central place even though they are difficult to standardise and measure.
- Provide personal models of liberal tolerance, openness and continuous learning.
- Construct a curriculum for making meaning (being, thinking) and taking action (doing, having) about personal responsibility and choice of core beliefs in the face of diversity and other pressing contemporary issues.
- Think ‘outside the box’ of conventional subjects, learning goals and methods, e.g. creative thinking; inter-disciplinarity; ‘human solidarity’ focused on urgent contemporary issues, including dealing with diversity, environmental change, cross-cultural dialogue, globalisation, trans-nationalism, and so on.
- Reverse the negative forces of new public management that have taken control of education policy and undermined the noble purposes of education.

Rorty’s quotation referred to his ‘utopia’ as a place of human solidarity. Utopia still seems far away, but where better to keep idealism alive than in our schools? As an itinerant educational consultant on the edge of retirement I invite my colleagues in the noble profession, with final words from Alfred Tennyson, to keep working for a more tolerant world in which diversity is not only dealt but celebrated.

*“Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.*

*Life piled on life  
Were all too little, and of one to me  
Little remains: but every hour is saved  
From that eternal silence, something more,  
A bringer of new things.”*

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## **DEALING WITH DIVERSITY: A KEY VALUES ISSUE FOR EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

**ANNE GOLD**

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### **Introduction**

This paper addresses the following questions:

- What do these key terms mean: ‘dealing with’ and ‘diversity’? And is ‘management’ a good enough descriptor of the activities needed to work with diversity in a way that educates?
- Defining ‘values’: why am I thinking and writing about values?
- Can values be ‘read’ by others?
- But what about ‘captured discourses’? What external forces and contradictions play on our internal decision-making and core values and understandings?
- Is it possible to recognise when we are being captured? And to resist capture?
- Can we link values, diversity and leadership?
- What strategies can educational leaders use in order to ensure that they are working with their own values when leading a diverse society?

### **Some definitions**

I’m going to begin by spending a short time deconstructing the title the ENIRDEM board has chosen for our conference this year. Apart from displaying a superb ability to use alliteration, I want to congratulate them on their choice of language for the first part of the title. It absolutely captures the complexity and contradictions of the work we are focussing on here, and of the discussions I hope we will have during the conference.

For example, according to just one of my dictionaries ‘dealing’ means:

1. taking action on,
2. treating (a subject matter),
3. conducting oneself towards others, especially with regard to fairness,
4. doing business,
5. apportioning to a number of people,
6. inflicting (as in a blow),
7. selling narcotics,
8. making a bargain, transaction or agreement,
9. receiving a particular type of treatment as a result of an agreement,
10. an indefinite amount, extent or degree (especially in the phrases ‘good’ or ‘great’ deal),
11. the process of distributing cards.

(Collins English Dictionary, 1982)

In this list of definitions, there are positive, negative and neutral dimensions to the meanings. I particularly want to draw your attention to the words: ‘fairness’; ‘good’ and ‘great’ — three words which are deeply values-based. And probably most of us think that selling narcotics and inflicting blows are not positive or educative activities. So the use of the word ‘dealing’ in itself sets up contradictions.

Turning to *diversity*: in each of our societies, our thoughts and arguments about what constitutes ‘diversity’ will have different focuses because of our histories and our social constructs. For example, in London, at present we have to think hard about such issues. I think we are in the process of redefining our nationhood in general and what it is to be a Londoner in particular. This must affect London schools and leaders of London schools will have a lot of work to do about articulating their underpinning values about diversity to themselves and to those with whom they work.

Among us here, our definitions of diversity may include a combination of any of the following sites of difference: gender, race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, class, dis/ability (physical, intellectual, emotional), age, personal attributes and I am sure there are many others that I haven’t either listed here or even thought of. It seems to me that the very nature of the term ‘diversity’ means that definitions shift and change and continually evolve. Diversity is really about the cultural capital that is most valued in our societies, about who defines the dominant cultural capital, and about who can most easily access those key sites of cultural capital. In other words, an understanding of the problems and possibilities around diversity depends on an understanding of power relationships — of how people relate to each other and about who has access to which resources.

Hofstede (1994) wrote:

“... the main cultural differences among nations lie in values. Systematic differences exist with regard to values about power and inequality, with regard to the relationships between the individual and the group, with regard to the social roles expected from men or women, with respect to ways of dealing with the uncertainties in life, and with respect to whether one is mainly preoccupied with the future or with the past and the present.” (p. 236)

There are discourses at work in our societies that ensure the public display of dominant values and references which as educators, it is our responsibility to mediate to the societies we lead. By mediate, I mean understand, articulate, negotiate and if necessary, help to change.

I am sure that we do not all hold the same sets of values as our colleagues, families and friends within our own societies. And internationally, global movements, the changing boundaries of the European Community and our national sociological debates are continually redefining diversity. I do not think this is the place to try to agree or even define our different meanings of diversity. Indeed, we would never agree here on one specific cultural framework, but as educators, we are working within (or pushing the boundaries of) the frameworks which define our national cultural capitals.

Moving on to *management*: I would like to make the suggestion here that in ENIRDEM we talk about *leadership* as well as or instead of *management*. David Oldroyd, Danuta Elsner and Cyril Poster gave us useful definitions in 1996:

*management*: the structure for and process of planning, co-ordinating and directing the activities of people, departments and organisations; getting things done with and through other people;

*leadership*: the process of guiding followers in a certain direction in pursuit of a vision, mission or goals; making and implementing and evaluating policy.

It seems to me that the term ‘leadership’ encompasses ‘management’ but adds spiritual, values and strategic dimensions to the activities of the manager. These dimensions are key dimensions when dealing with diversity. Although it would mean a change of name and acronym for our organisation, I would like to suggest that we find a way of incorporating ‘leadership’ into our description.

### Values

Through everything I have talked about so far, I think there runs the golden thread of values. We can see values in the definitions of ‘dealing’, we know they are deeply embedded in all explorations of ‘diversity’, and ‘leadership’ brings with it a sense of direction which is based on a society or a leader’s values.

Paul Begley (2003) wrote:

“All leaders consciously or subconsciously employ values as guides to interpreting situations and suggesting appropriate administrative action. This is the artistry of leadership.” (p. 11)

For several years now I have been working with leaders in education and I have recently been talking with them about how to make ethical leadership decisions: about how to lead ethically and strategically in organisations that are surrounded by social or political turmoil, and how to ensure that basic human rights are met (for learners and teachers). I am convinced that educational leaders must find ways of making themselves aware of their own values and the ways in which those values influence their relationship to those with whom they work. We don’t need to agree our values with everyone — to have one shared set of values — but we do need to think about them privately at least, and to be aware of the extent to which they underpin all our professional activities. In this way, leadership decisions will be congruent with leadership values, and the leader will be able to explain why such decisions have been taken.

In Gold (2004) I wrote:

“I take ‘values’ to signify the core beliefs about life and about relating to other people that underpin understandings, principles and ethics about education, and here, about the leadership of education. There are different sets of values: the research done on effective leadership shows that different leadership styles and different understandings about leadership can be equally successful. However, the key set of values that drives the decisions of a school leader is concern with an understanding of the nature of power relations. Empowerment, democracy, equity and inclusion are all linked with power distribution and all depend on values and relationships.” (p. 3)

I have been surprised by the fact that educational leaders with whom I have worked have not often found the opportunity to think about the values which for them lead their work in education and in educational leadership. I have asked educational leaders in several countries to think first of all about their underpinning principles about education, and then whether their educational values (because I think these are the same as their values about education) link to the way they lead in education. It is a profound experience to be in a room where several educational leaders are doing this exercise: it is new for many of them, and they are moved

and excited by the questions — it is as if they have been offered an oasis of thoughtful peace in the middle of their professionally frantic days. These underpinning principles offer a basis from which all professional decisions will flow, whether consciously or not. Thus vast decisions and choices, such as the strategic direction of the organisation, professional recruitment and development, syllabi and pedagogies are based on leadership values. And apparently less important activities, such as the regular exchanges of greetings, absences and presences at meetings, where discussions are held, the décor of the organisation and the timing of meetings are also heavily influenced by leadership values.

Another reason for articulating leadership values is that I think we need to ensure that the values in an organisation do not clash to such an extent that they undermine the work of that community. The work of schools in which values clashes are not managed is often overshadowed by discord. And where the school values do not fit or even link in any way to the community's values, the young people are puzzled and distressed, and the parents are often angry. Good leadership finds ways of leading the school community through such clashes to a productive situation where the energy of respectful educational and ethical discussions adds to the educative nature of the organisation.

### **Can values be 'read' by others?**

In 2003, I was part of a group of researchers who were asked by the UK Department for Education and Skills to collect baseline data about school leadership in England. Our research methodology came from the best textbooks: we sent out many excellent questionnaires and then reminded some groups who did not return their paperwork that they needed to do so; we held telephone interviews; we conducted focus group interviews face-to-face and on-line; we did face-to-face interviews and we did case studies. The key data collection technique for the paper to which I am to refer was the case studies: we looked at 10 schools which had been deemed to be superbly led by both the national inspectorate and local inspectors — we wanted to understand what 'good' school leaders and those they led thought about school leadership.

We were really not looking at values, but in writing up our case studies, we were struck by the fact that the values of all the school leaders were clearly visible and on display to us in many activities during their working days. We wrote (Gold et al., 2003):

“Staff within our case studies were working in schools where the principals held a number of clear — and shared — educational values and beliefs. They were principled individuals with a strong commitment to their 'mission', determined to do the best for their schools, particularly for the pupils and students within them.” (p. 136)

For the article, we wrote about four arenas where we thought the values were most clearly visible across the ten schools. We decided that leadership values could be read in the way the leaders:

- worked with, managed and even searched out change;
- paid careful attention to information management within the school — thus keeping staff constantly informed;
- worked very closely and sometimes seamlessly with their leadership groups;
- developed leadership capacity and responsibility throughout their schools.

I do not intend to explain these arenas in detail. I know that some of these examples are localised and do not necessarily translate easily across all our countries. However, I will take one example to show the way in which we thought leadership values shone through the bureaucracy of schooling in a simple and universal way: the way the school leaders all paid attention to keeping staff constantly informed. So, let us follow a line of argument:

- If, as a leader, you agree that knowledge is power — you may wish to give people more knowledge through information so that the more informed their decision-making will be.
- And if you believe that informed decision-making will lead to more committed involvement in the agreed outcomes of the debate and if you agree that committed involvement makes for better practice you will ensure that those with whom you work are carefully and constantly given the information necessary for their best work.

In keeping them so carefully informed:

- You are showing *respect* for them and their professional practice,
  - by listening to what they think about the information and the task to be done,
  - and by making decisions based on what you hear from them as well as what you know as a leader.

Meetings, however large or small, offer a very public display of the value of *respect* (other values are visible there but I want to follow this line of argument about respect). Because discourses are often set up unconsciously or at least in an unexamined way apart from the most sophisticated of micro-political operators, meetings display fundamental attitudes and understandings about power relations. Meetings can set the mood and the pace and the task for the community and will underpin a very basic discourse of respect.

Whether the chairperson of the meeting has thought about the implications for the whole organisation or not, a Foucauldian reading of a meeting tells us that the way in which the person who is leading the meeting speaks, listens, allows or prevents access to the discussion signals their understandings and fundamental beliefs about who is of worth. The discourses displayed so publicly at a meeting set up or reinforce the policing of organisational interactions, so the leader's values are then transported around the organisation. Thus the leader's own values about working with people become leadership values which affect the interactions of everyone else in the organisation.

A leader who understands the visibility of power relations displayed in meetings, and who wishes to spread a culture of mutual respect through an organisation will take all meetings seriously. He or she will therefore pay close attention to:

- how the agenda is shaped,
- who can speak,
- who is heard,
- whose opinions are sought,
- how decisions are made,
- whether consensus is sought.

(Gold, 2004)

In a diverse community, clear signals are sent in this way about who is important, or to be respected or to be heard. I have no doubt that individual and organisational values can be read by others and that it is necessary for leaders to pay attention to this display.

### Captured discourses

Until the Gold et al. article was published in 2003, I had not paid very much attention to the notion of captured discourses and so I did not think it necessary to explore ways of resisting being captured by discourses. I was not working within this theoretical concept, and so I found different and possibly less realistic ways of writing about these issues. When we published the first paper described above — ‘Principled Principals’ — we unwittingly entered an academic discussion about captured discourses. A group of UK based education policy sociologists — including Stephen Ball, Sharon Gewirtz, Nigel Wright and Martin Thrupp had been writing for several years that in England at least, it has become almost impossible to continue to work with values that are independent of the strong national and governmental demands which are having such a profound effect on schooling. Indeed, they write, the values of all those working in education in the UK become captured. In other words, we change our minds about what we think is right because the educational world changes to include new imperatives — new laws, new research, new rules and new ways of arguing about basic thoughts. And as we change our minds, our ways of working are affected.

The policy sociologists point out that in the UK for example, education has been placed at the centre of the political stage. This means each political party’s agenda has put education in a prominent position. So decisions about what to teach, about who can teach it and how they are to be trained, about how to teach, about how to lead the learning and teaching, and about how to train the leaders of the learning are made at a political level, by acts of parliament. And schools or universities which do not match up to government-set targets in these areas, will be publicly named as failing in league tables of results published on the web and in national newspapers. Those institutions will then have fewer learners and teachers applying to come to them and so ultimately they will be closed down because they will become so unpopular.

It takes a very strong educational leader to resist such pressure, were they to wish to do so. One cannot risk leading an organisation in such a resistant way (ignoring the league tables) that it may be closed. The constant flow of legal and training demands changes educators’ views of what is the ‘right’ way to do things — we are captured by the dominant discourse. Much of the UK government’s education agenda may well make for better leading, learning and teaching, but political thinking is not always based on academic research. In a democratic society, politicians have to attempt to either reflect or develop societal expectations about big questions such as education, rather than introduce uncomfortable or unpopular directions that may be informed by experts and their research — they need to be re-elected! So there is the danger that political expediency rather than educationally principled and researched decisions are made about the direction of education. I do not wish to imply that educational experts always know best or are always deeply principled, and I am sure that political expediency is not constantly the main driver for politicians. But this is an explanation of captured discourses in education — this explanation is about discourses captured by political expediency.

Nigel Wright (2003) criticised our research about leadership values in action by arguing that we *were* seeing values in action — we could see what the school leaders believed by how they led meetings, and in what they expected from those they led, and in how they worked with their school communities and so on. But he reminded us that what we could *not* see was the extent to which those values were shaped by the dominant discourses, flowing from the government, about the now commonly accepted ways of being school leaders. We wrote that the leaders were leading in the way they wished to lead. He argued that we could not see the extent to which the leaders were managing values dilemmas and clashes when the ways they found themselves leading were not compatible with their basic personal values. Or indeed

whether their basic personal values were changed by the work they did and the judgements they were expected to make.

I now understand that the school leaders with whom we spent time were probably struggling to resolve dilemmas between their own values, those of the communities they served, those of the teachers whom they led as well as the dominant UK government discourse of effective education. In leading educative organisations that deal well with diversity, leaders will be threading their way through multiple sets of values, in such a way as to allow all to be heard and valued, but to allow worthwhile learning to take place.

How can this threading be managed in such a way as to develop an acute awareness of forceful, seductive or capturing discourses?

### **Is it possible to recognise when we are being captured and to resist capture?**

If it is important to know when we have been captured by a dominant discourse, how can we recognise one enough to make a decision about whether to resist it or not?

I think the stages of the argument here are:

1. The location of our own present educational and leadership values.
2. An awareness of whether they have changed or evolved since beginning teaching or since becoming an educational leader.
3. If they have changed or evolved, an acknowledgement of the main influences on that evolution.
4. An understanding of both the change and the influences — do they match our present values and the organisation's direction?

It is not my intention to stifle change, evolution or improvement. I just think we must be aware that change seems to be accepted as inevitable and is often caused by external demands and influences, either torrentially or in almost imperceptible stages. I suggest that we find ways of examining externally prescribed or imposed change in order to take care that the change fits the direction of the organisation. A captured discourse would be at work if the direction of the organisation were to be totally altered to fit an imposed change.

Even after following the stages above, it may be that one is at ease with the changes, in which case, the capture may be more complete!! It is necessary, however, to have held at least a conversation about the level of agreement. These values discussions can be held with colleagues and the organisation might plan a series of opportunities in which values can be built and shared.

In practice, therefore, in order to build and share values, and to be able to read different discourses, I suggest that attention is paid to:

- The development of effective recruitment procedures, based on principles of social justice and fairness, so that a diverse and committed staff group is selected. This group will be led in a way which will allow real discussion about the direction of the organisation.
- A staff induction programme which is as supportive and enabling as possible, and in which the culture of the organisation is both explicit and open to suggestion for improvement.
- Managing staff meetings well, so that the leadership values on display are the ones the leader wishes the rest of the organisation to see: clear values such as who has a voice

in the decisions that are made, who is respected, and whether the organisation is educative for teachers and learners alike.

- Agreed and active in-house communication systems, so that everyone is clear about the direction and importance of the information flow in the organisation.
- Productive and continuing professional development, so that the organisation is a learning organisation for all.
- The clear development of the relationship between the leadership team and the rest of the organisation — creating a fine balance between ensuring that the leadership team does lead, but that it respectfully listens to and is heard by the rest of the organisation.

These suggestions are based on the outcomes of our research about good educational leadership. We saw them developed by the school leaders we watched and spoke to, in order to keep themselves and their organisations moving in a direction which both developed and reflected their educational values.

### **Linking values, diversity and leadership**

Referring back to my introductory comments about diversity: indicators of values for educators are:

- what counts as worthwhile knowledge,
- the strategies used for teaching that knowledge,
- the dominant cultural capital.

In understanding and then working with the differences in the power relations between the different actors in a diverse classroom, educators display their values. In much the same way that staff meetings are set up to welcome or to silence difference, classrooms and classroom knowledge are contested sites. Classroom observers can see the values of an educational organisation in many ways: by the décor, by the way chairs and desks are placed, by whether the teacher is standing or sitting, by where they position themselves, by how they address the learners and what technology they use for that address, by the resources on hand, by the material to be explored and by many more outward signs. Watching learning and teaching take place, it is easy to see who is valued, and how the teacher works with diversity by their language, their references, and by whom they listen to. There are many different balances to be observed and these balances are defined partly by the culture of the organisation and partly by the values of the teachers.

It is the responsibility of the educative leader to ensure that there is opportunity for constant discussions about diversity and to remember that an ethical way of dealing with diversity is to portray clearly values-led leadership.

I would not set out a methodology for working with diversity here, but I would like to draw your attention to some good writing which raises basic questions about values and diversity. I found the work of Martha Nussbaum (2000) recently, and her work on human capabilities is really important. She has been working towards a universal set of human capabilities, growing out of examples she found in three of the least affluent countries. She was exploring whether she could draw out a lowest common denominator set of human capabilities which 'fit' all humankind. I think this abbreviated list is useful because it offers educative leaders an ethical framework for their work. My summary does not so justice to Martha Nussbaum's work — please do read it in full.

1. *Life*. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length...
  2. *Bodily Health*. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health...
  3. *Bodily Integrity*. Being able to move freely from place to place...
  4. *Senses, Imagination and Thought*. Being able to use the senses... in a way informed and cultivated by adequate education...
  5. *Emotions*. Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves...
  6. *Practical Reason*. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life...
  7. *Affiliation*. *A*. Being able to live with and toward other. *B*. Having the social bases for self-respect and non-humiliation...
  8. *Other Species*. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and the world of nature...
  9. *Play*. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activity...
  10. *Control over One's Environment*. *A*. Political. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life... *B*. Material. Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods) not just formally but in terms of real opportunity...
- (p. 78–70)

Surely education places a key role in developing these competencies: it seems to me that this list of human capabilities should underpin an education system which pays serious attention to the development of young people who are able to make informed choices about their lives. Within a society which encompasses diverse cultures (and in many ways, that is all of us now), many of the qualifying words used above, such as 'good', 'normal', 'effectively' or 'freely' are socially constructed and often captured by normative discourses.

I hope I have made a clear link for values, diversity and leadership: how can an educative leader best lead an organisation so that all the learners and teachers who work there have the greatest access to a universal set of human capabilities? I would like us to work towards 'leading an educational organisation which welcomes and works well with diversity'.

### **What strategies can educational leaders use in order to ensure that they are working with their own values when leading a diverse society?**

This final section is very practical. After threading my argument through our research findings and the writings of people whose work I admire, I am going to offer some very basic strategies which I think offer educative leaders the space to make sense of the world around them. I have already suggested some strategies for the organisation. These suggestions are more personal. They are intended to offer leaders the opportunity to:

- Develop strategies to recognise and understand dominant discourses about leading a diverse community.
- Make sure they set up space to measure these discourses against their own central personal values about how to relate to other people and about leading in education.
- Embed opportunities to develop systems, underpinned by strong principles, which sustain the vision, while continuing to respond where necessary to external demands on leaders in education.

I know that I am making a particularly Anglo-centric (and possibly even gendered) list of suggestions — people working in different cultures and in different settings from mine may well add to it. The list depends on musing, talking, discussing and taking precious time before

coming to final conclusions — in other words, being a reflective leader. I want to suggest that leaders set up strategies such as those which are described below.

***Being mentored and or mentoring others:*** both of these strategies offer the opportunity for ‘learning conversations’ (Brookfield, 1987). These are conversations which work towards the mentored person reaching a conclusion about leadership activities that best fit the organisation, the values, the context and the issues — the mentee is not told what to do — she usually reaches a conclusion as a result of the conversation. In conducting and managing such a conversation, the mentor will not necessarily know the answer or the outcome before it begins — they will learn as much as the mentee. These are rich and productive discussions.

***Not responding immediately:*** responses that are based on considered and values-based judgements are more effective than fast, reactive responses. Such responses take time, but colleagues are usually happy to know that you will respond eventually, carefully and thoughtfully, rather than quickly and mistakenly.

***Reflective writing:*** of course, this suggestion fits certain learning styles better than others, but it offers a quiet space for thought. I carry a small notebook round with me, which acts as an aide memoir (really important as I grow older!), but which also allows me a private space for thought.

***And, thanks to Peter Karstanje, the ‘five whys’:*** Peter taught me that one way of getting to underpinning principles is to ensure that we try to reach a fundamental explanation for our actions. So, if we need to defend a leadership action, we ask ourselves ‘why?’ and then ‘why?’ again, as if moving down to a more profound layer of understanding with each ‘why?’. We continue to ask ‘why?’ until there is no longer another answer, and then we have reached the underpinning principle. We probably need about five ‘why’s’ to reach those basic principles.

I am aware that mentoring schemes in different parts of the world are based on fundamentally different assumptions about the role and nature of mentoring. The key point here, underpinning all the suggestions on my list, is the necessity to look for the opportunity to reach through layers of action and response to get to underpinning values. These opportunities are best found in safe and wise discussions with others. When that is not available, it is necessary to develop strategies which simulate a dialogue, although they occur within one person.

Educative leaders are not always in clear or immediate touch with their underpinning values about learning and teaching and about leading learning and teaching. Indeed, these values often shift or are captured by the current political and educational discourses in which they live. They are usually clearly visible to those with whom they work even if they are not clear to the leaders themselves, so articulating and acknowledging the influences of the values is especially important. In a diverse society, such values will effect the power relations in an organisation and such basic rights as who has access to the resources. However, this paper acknowledges that in order to work educatively and ethically within a diverse community, it is essential to recognise influences on values as well as their effect on everyday practice. It offers some simple strategies for reaching and where necessary, sharing those values.

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## **PHILOSOPHICAL THINKING AS A PRECONDITION FOR DEALING WITH DIVERSITY**

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### **Introduction**

The paper argues that it is crucial to foster philosophical thinking in order to deal with diversity in educational settings. The author considers diversity as one of the features, values and challenges of a democratic, pluralistic and future-oriented society. There are many kinds of diversity one can encounter in educational settings: cultural, gender, ethnic, linguistic, age, physical, mental, behavioural. Usually we pay attention to specific instruments and methods how to deal with individual aspects of diversity. However, the deeper foundation of the management of diversity is dialogical thinking, the principal disposition of dialogue, dialogical relationship. Dialogue as a form of communication usually is characterised by equality, mutual respect and tolerance of its participants. Nevertheless, a dialogue is not merely a successful conversation and discussion, but also a principle of being, existential disposition in this world where one enters, according to philosopher Martin Buber, into 'I-Thou' relationships.

The paper proposes that philosophical thinking is a necessary precondition for establishing a dialogical relationship and a philosophical inquiry, as a dialogical praxis, is one of the instruments and ways to develop dialogical dispositions and thinking skills. Philosophical thinking is thinking that searches for deeper meaning and sense, not superficiality. Philosophical questions and themes connect artificially separated areas of knowledge, integrate them, and help to apprehend the world as a whole. Philosophical thinking is critical and creative thinking, which leads one to think more deeply and to reflect on one's own thoughts. It is characterised by argumentation, a critical attitude and self-correction. Philosophical questions always are open-ended, searching for new answers and dimensions not yet revealed. On the one hand, philosophical thinking is rooted in wonder, but, on the other hand, it nurtures ability to wonder. Wonder, as a disposition, is fundamental for establishing dialogical relationship. Philosophical thinking can be developed through a philosophical inquiry and a dialogue. It is necessary to pay more attention to these issues in the learning process of those who have to deal with diversity in education, including educational leaders.

### **Defining diversity**

Diversity is one of the features, values and challenges of a democratic, pluralistic and future-oriented society. According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, diversity is "when many different types of things or people are included in something" (CALD, 2005). In the Roget's II: The New Thesaurus (1995) diversity is defined as "the quality of being made of many different elements, forms, kinds, or individuals". Merriam Webster Online Dictionary describes it as: "1. the quality or state of being composed of many different

elements or types; 2. the quality or state of being different”. Many-sidedness, versatility is inseparable from diversity.

We can think about diversity in relation to different aspects and contexts. There is biological, political, cultural and social diversity. In the diversity database of the University of Maryland diversity is defined as:

“ ‘otherness’, or those human qualities that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, yet are present in other individuals and groups”.

(Diversity at UMCP, 1995).

Moreover, it is important to distinguish between the primary and secondary dimensions of diversity.

“Primary dimensions are the following: age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race and sexual orientation. Secondary dimensions of diversity are those that can be changed, and include, but are not limited to: educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, parental status, religious beliefs, and work experiences.”

(Ibid)

On the one hand, diversity is an inevitable, *a priori* feature of a human being, world and society, but, on the other hand, it is a value that has to be nurtured and preserved. The antonym of the diversity is uniformity. Uniformity has no potential for development because it is closed, static and monological. Diversity is a value that is crucial for the development and change of both the society and the individual. It is impossible to imagine a completely monolithic culture or society. Diversity and change are features of life and living organisms, including cultures and societies. Similarly, a person cannot develop without others and otherness, and without the diversity they bring with them. A self cannot be created in isolation, in a monological situation without other worlds and ‘horizons’. This means that the only way *to deal* with diversity is *to live with* and *in it*, to respect, interact with and even nurture it. At the same time, dealing with diversity is one of the most complicated processes as it is like encountering different worlds and requires the key ability to recognise the possibility of the otherness, the willingness to get to know it (not to refuse) and also the ability to understand it. *Dealing with diversity in a deeper sense means dealing with oneself.*

### **Diversity in educational settings**

In the educational settings we find different kinds of diversity: cultural, gender, ethnic, linguistic, age, physical, mental, psychological, emotional, intellectual, behavioural. Usually we pay attention to specific instruments and methods how to deal with one or another of them. There are numerous programmes and methods developed for multicultural and bilingual education, adult and life-long education, for working with children with special needs, and with talented and gifted children. Certainly, it is important to develop practical tools for such approaches. However, no approach can be realised without principal respect for the otherness, disposition of dialogue, open-mindedness, dialogical thinking and virtues. Diversity cannot exist in monological settings where a monological mode of thinking and behaviour is practised. Dialogical thinking and relationships need to be established.

### The role of dialogue

In order to understand what a dialogical relationship is, we need to pay some attention to the concept of dialogue. A dialogue usually is understood as a communicative experience in a question-answer form characterised by equality, mutual respect, reciprocity, care and tolerance of its participants. According to David Bohm, one of the most prominent authors on dialogue,

“the word ‘dialogue’ derives from two roots: ‘dia’ which means ‘through’ and ‘logos’ which means ‘the word’ or more particularly, ‘the meaning of the word.’ The image it gives is of a river of meaning flowing around and through the participants.”

(Bohm et al., 1991, p. 2)

Dialogue is speech across, between or through two or more people. However, a dialogue implies more than a simple exchange of messages ‘back and forth’. It points to particular processes and quality of communication, which allows for changing and being changed as a person. It entails a particular kind of relationship and interaction. In this sense it is not so much a specific communicative form of questions and answers, but “at heart a kind of social relation that engages its participants” (Burbules, 1993, p. 19). It entails certain virtues and emotions. According to Burbules (1993) those are:

- *Concern* — To engage with someone in a conversation means not only to talk about a certain topic. There is a social bond that entails interest in, and a commitment to the other.
- *Trust* — We have to trust what others are saying.
- *Respect* — A conversation can happen only if there is a mutual respect for the differences between partners. This involves the idea that everyone is equal in some basic way and entails a commitment to being fair-minded, opposing degradation and rejecting exploitation.
- *Appreciation* — This means valuing the unique qualities that others bring.
- *Affection* — Conversation involves feeling with and for our partners.
- *Hope* — Hope is central to a dialogue. We engage in a conversation in the belief that it holds possibility.

However, a dialogue is not merely a successful conversation, but can and should be understood also as a principle of being, an existential disposition and a mode of relationship in this world. According to the philosopher Martin Buber, there are two types of relationships: *I-It* and *I-Thou*. The former involves distancing, alienating, and perceiving another as an object. Differences are accentuated; the uniqueness of *I* is emphasised. The latter is a real meeting. “*I-Thou* involves a sense of being part of a whole. The ‘I’ is not experienced or sensed as singular or separate; it is the ‘I’ of being.” (Buber, 1958, pp. 24–25) The life of a dialogue involves ‘the turning towards the other’ and genuine dialogue:

“no matter whether spoken or silent — where each of the participants really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them.”

(Buber, 1947, pp. 19–22)

Apart from the genuine dialogue Buber distinguishes two other kinds of dialogue:

- *technical dialogue*, which is prompted solely by the need of objective understanding;
  - *monologue disguised as dialogue*, in which “two of men, meeting in space, speak each with himself in strangely tortuous and circuitous ways and yet imagine they have escaped the torment of being thrown back on their own resources.”
- (Buber, 1947, *ibid*)

Much more often we are engaged in a monologue and a technical dialogue. A genuine dialogue happens when souls meet.

### **Philosophical thinking and dialogue**

Living in a diverse world needs involvement in a genuine dialogue. Problems and conflicts start when we perceive the others as *It*, instead of *Thou*, to use Buber’s words. Thus, dealing with diversity mainly means dealing with oneself: one’s perceptions, beliefs, thoughts, habits, prejudices and assumptions. In order to become involved in a dialogical relationship one needs to develop both self-understanding and understanding of others. It requires deeper understanding about a human being and the world *per se*. It requires asking the following questions:

- Who am I?
- What is a human being?
- Why there are differences in human beings?
- What is the meaning of the above questions?

It requires for a true examination of oneself, of one’s thinking and searching for meaning, placing things in a broader context, recognising relationships among them. In other words, it seems that for the establishment of a genuine dialogical relationship *philosophical thinking* is required. Philosophical thinking is characterised as:

#### **1. Searching for meaning**

Philosophical thinking is concerned with seeking for truth. That means it strives to overcome superficiality, to look deeper and broader at the same time. It combines both personal, intimate communication with the world and stepping back, comprehending the broad picture.

“It is often said that philosophers engage in two basic tasks taking apart — analysing ideas to discover if we truly know what we think we know, and ‘putting together’ — synthesising all our knowledge to find if we can attain a larger and better view of life.”

(Christian, 1986, xvi)

Searching for meaning also means becoming aware of relationships that exist and that can be created to reach new meanings.

#### **2. Critical and creative**

Socrates has said, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” Philosophical questions always are open and unfinished. Philosophical thinking is an ongoing process of examination of one’s beliefs, assumptions and thoughts. Doubts and questioning are a starting point for one who tries to philosophise. Philosophical thinking is highly tentative thinking that searches for reasons, uses criteria, formulates arguments, makes distinctions, identifies assumptions, asks

questions, defines and analyses concepts, explores alternatives and makes judgements. It entails sensitivity to the context, self-correction and open-mindedness. It is a constant creation and recreation of the world.

### 3. Reflective

Philosophy often is defined as thinking about thinking. Reflectivity is a crucial feature of philosophical thinking. Philosophical thinking searches beneath and underlines rules, reasons and criteria of one's thinking.

### 4. Rooted in wonder and nurtures wondering

According to Plato and Aristotle, philosophy starts because of wonder. For Bertrand Russell, philosophy, if it is not able to answer to all our questions, at least it has the power to ask plenty of questions arousing interest about the world. It thus helps to reveal uncustomary and prodigious meanings behind the modest things of the world.

### Wonder in dealing with diversity

From psychological point of view, wonder is “an intellectual emotion that is aroused by something extraordinary, unexpected.” (Izard, 1980, p. 447) Usually when we use the concept ‘wonder’ we understand it as a stimulus, beginning of thinking. Wonder is a temporary emotion that opens the door for a new activity. It is ambivalent, unpleasant and pleasant, because it involves puzzlement, perplexity, uneasiness, some kind of feeling stuck, and a promise for new knowledge at the same time. All genuine thinking and inquiry begin with uncertainty, questioning, and doubt. “All facts from stars to blades of grass, from the death of Caesar to the death of mouse, are for wonder, and thereby, for thought.” (Paget, 1993, p. 116)

However, another important aspect is that wonder fosters ethical attitude to the object of wonder.

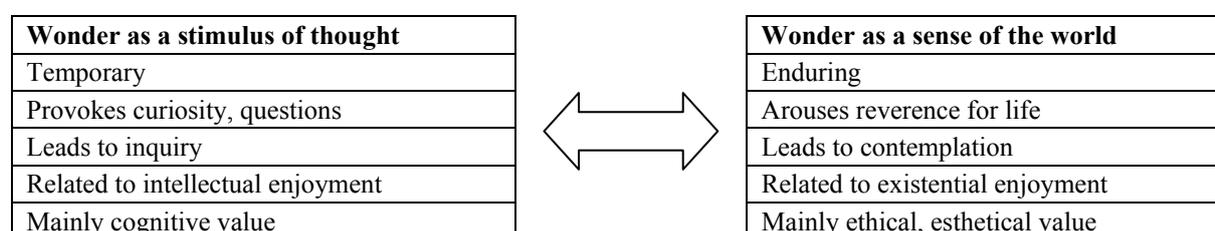
“Wonder is the foundation of values because a wondering encounter is the basis of a non-utilitarian approach to things and persons. In wonder we experience the other as inexhaustible, as the locus of meaning, which are only revealed as we cease to be dominated by the impulse to utilise and possess the other and learn to rejoice in its presence. Reality, given to us in wonder, presents to us as something valuable, having worth, dignity, meaning.”

(Keen, 1969, p. 29)

### Two aspects of wonder

It is possible to distinguish two aspects of wonder and wondering:

**Figure 1: Two aspects of wonder and wondering**



To foster the sense of wonder about the world as a fundamental disposition is to foster the ability to appreciate and respect it. This is the aspect that makes philosophical thinking value-laden and not only critical and creative, but also caring and fundamental to dealing with diversity.

If we think about the question — how is it possible to develop philosophical thinking? — the only possible answer seems to be — to engage in a philosophical dialogue where philosophical thinking is practised. Philosophical thinking can be developed through philosophical inquiry and dialogue that entails reasoning and inquiry, concept formation, meaning-making. (Splitter and Sharp, 1995) Therefore, it is necessary to pay more attention to philosophy as philosophical inquiry in the learning process of those who have to deal with diversity in education, including educational leaders at different levels.

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## **EQUITY AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

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### **Introduction**

Current discussions in politics, education and health care are coloured by the question of equity and equality. ‘Being fair’ and ‘fairness’ seem to be prerequisites in political campaigns, in education and in everyday life. Equity and equality are especially emphasised in educational systems. It would be difficult to find a white paper on education in any country where equity and equality are not a major theme. As Paquette (1998) argues, while being attacked from the Left and the Right and theoretically discussed from many perspectives, equity remains the foundation of public education systems, although it is a controversial, multidimensional and sometimes blended concept. On the one hand, it can be understood as a pillar of modernism in post-modern societies and, on the other, as a post-modern need in an individualised and fragmented world.

The question of equity has been at the heart of current discussions for many reasons. Educational systems world-wide are seeking the ‘best’ model in order to be effective and efficient. In this search for responsive and effective schools, many countries have introduced numerous ‘market elements’ into their policies. Current discussions on deregulation, decentralisation and enhanced autonomy of schools are all associated with the concept of choice, which implies greater diversity, but has certain ‘side’ effects, as well — one of them being the increased segregation of students.

In education, equity can be studied from a variety of perspectives, at different levels of the educational system, and associated with different ‘players’ in the system. In 2004/05, a comparative study of 12 countries was designed and carried out. The findings are to be published in the *Journal of School Leadership and Management* in 2006. The purpose of this paper is to discuss theoretical perspectives on the question of equity, specifically equity in access, to analyse the policy framework in two countries, namely Slovenia and Belgium, and to raise the implications for school leaders.

### **Equity in jeopardy?**

Paquette (1998) argues that “equity in educational policy making appears to be in trouble in the short term and, optimistically, in fundamental transition over the longer term” (p. 58). He provides extensive argument for his claim about ‘equity in trouble’. From one point of view, he associates it with poststructuralist uncertainty and individualist neoconservative politics, which were aimed at renewing the quality of education and which emphasised the need for economic competitiveness in education. From the other point of view, he argues that “schools cannot equalise social benefits, not completely, not directly, a fact which has been widely acknowledged since at least the time Jencks (1972) published his reassessment of the

Coleman (1966) data” (p. 57–58). He, however, points out that schools can make a difference in the knowledge, skills, private lives and values.

Demeuse, Crahay and Monseur (2001) discuss efficiency and equity which seem to be “opposing views” (p. 65). They conclude that “there seems to be a need both to concentrate attention so that desirable change actually takes place with the effective use of additional resources, and to generalise the task of overcoming disadvantages so that it is a national priority, not restricted to isolated ‘compensatory’ measures”. (p. 87)

Taking these two arguments into account raises the question about equity in the competitive education and economic arena(s) where the efficiency and effectiveness are essential and equity seems to be jeopardised or, at the best, taken as a compensatory measure, rather than being the conceptual foundation of education reforms. Although Demeuse, Crahay and Monseur (2001) argue that “there can be no effectiveness without equity — whether as a matter of deep conviction, founded on democratic values, or because a pragmatic report has tied it to studies conducted since the 1960s throughout the world” (p. 87), we can discuss what counts as ‘effective’. Stronach et al. (2002) reflect upon professionalism, pupil assessment, staff training and performance measures which “constitute what we came to call an ‘economy of performance’ expressed largely in terms of quantitative performance measures” (p. 122). Effectiveness is measured, assessed and compared, be it nationally or internationally. Also, equity is measured through different indicators (see Hutmacher, Cochrane and Bottani, 2001; Project Socrates SO2-61OBGE, 2003) which might lead to thinking that equity is a means of increasing the effectiveness in education(al) systems. Following this path leads us to the establishment of effectiveness as the ‘basic rule of an education system’. Dei and Kaumanchery (1999) claim: “Through the rhetoric of cost-effectiveness and bureaucratic efficiency, the ‘official’ agenda for educational change shifts focus away from equity considerations in schooling to those of capital, market forces and big business” (p. 111). Schools in urban areas are becoming increasingly diverse and multicultural and also succumb to the ‘supply-demand’ market forces. Their market position, their values, their leadership and their understanding of equity in a way direct their ‘behaviour’.

Equity of access is a particularly relevant question in multi-cultural, multi-ethnic school environments. We can discuss multi-ethnic societies and multi-cultural communities from many points of view. However, when schools are discussed, the most relevant question is not whether and ‘how much’ schools are multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, but also what policies are in place to ensure the legal right of all students regardless of gender, ethnicity, race etc. to have equal opportunities in accessing education. In our further discussion, we present two cases, the city of Antwerp in Belgium, and Slovenia.

### **Belgium – Antwerp**

Like most metropolitan cities in Europe, in recent decades Antwerp is confronted with a growing number of migrants, especially from Morocco and Turkey, but also from former Eastern European countries and refugees from all over the world. As a harbour city, Antwerp has a culture of openness and tolerance; however, recently we see a change in this culture. This is best illustrated by the rise of the extreme right-wing party that collected one third of the Antwerp votes in the last elections. Also, some incidents and political statements have stimulated an open debate about the multicultural complexity and the role of education as a victim as well as a potential remedy for dysfunctions.

Antwerp has 450,000 inhabitants. There are:

- 51,000 pupils in primary education (aged 3–12);
- 31,000 pupils in secondary education (aged 12–18).

On the basis of nationality and origin, 28 % can be called ‘foreigner’ (‘allochthonous’ as opposed to the opposite ‘autochthonous’), but in the age range of 0–3, they count for 48 %.

Migration, poverty and educational chances are interrelated as can be illustrated by two maps of the city of Antwerp. The first illustrates the relative representation of migrants in different parts of the city, the second the number of pupils that are at least one year retarded; both give a very similar image, so that it can be concluded that migrants are handicapped when compared with the autochthonous population.

In order to guarantee equal educational opportunities for all children, the Flemish government issued the Equal Educational Opportunities Decree (EEO) (Ministry of Flemish Community, 2003). The three cornerstones of the EEO are:

- The right to enrol one’s child in a school of one’s choice. The reasons for refusing a child or referring a child to another school are very limited.
- The creation of local consultative bodies which help to implement the equal opportunities policy locally, and a Commission on Pupils’ Rights which monitors the legal protection of pupils’ rights.
- An integrated range of support provisions which allows schools to develop special needs provisions aimed at deprived children.

Since the EEO Decree, the concept of ‘migrant’ is replaced by the indicator ‘language spoken at home’: children who do not speak Dutch at home are labelled as EEO pupils. The informative value of home language is very high, certainly in combination with other socio-economic variables (Mahieu, 2004). There is an apparent evolution in the definition of ethnic minorities: the focus has moved from the emphasis on ‘nationality’ to the ‘origin’ and today the ‘language spoken at home’ constitutes the defining criterion.

A fundamental reform is the ‘right to enrol in a school of choice’: schools can no longer refuse to enrol children; they have to accept everyone who wants to enrol. Still, there are two cases in which the school is permitted to *refuse* a pupil. First, it is possible that school facilities do not allow for an additional enrolment of a pupil as this would jeopardise the safety of other pupils; second, if a pupil is ‘permanently excluded’ from a school she/he wants to be enrolled into.

Apart from these two situations of refusal, schools are also allowed to *refer* pupils to other schools. But here, too, the possibilities of exercising this right are very limited. If a child needs specific education, care or therapy that is beyond the resources of a school, a school can decide to refer that child to another school. Secondly, a school has the right to preserve the balance between Dutch-speaking and foreign language speaking pupils. If a school has an amount of EEO pupils that exceeds the general city level of EEO pupils by more than 10 %, such school is allowed to refer additional EEO pupils.

The EEO Decree also provided for the foundation of 69 Local Consultative Bodies (LCB) throughout Flanders, each of them focusing on a number of municipalities or a region. In addition to its research and advisory tasks, Local Consultative Bodies also play a mediating and supporting role with a view to ensuring the right to enrolment, as mediators, for example. They will also help find a suitable school for a pupil in case of refusal or referral. To execute this function comprehensively the LCB represents people from its own region:

- the heads and governing bodies of schools and pupil guidance centres;
- the staff of schools;
- parents and pupils;
- local socio-cultural and/or economic partners;
- organisations for immigrants and the poor, integration centres, reception agencies for newcomers, school-based community education.

The EEO Decree provides financial support for those schools that have a significant number of EEO pupils. To be able to define a child as an EEO pupil a child has to meet at least one of the five equal opportunities indicators:

1. At least one of the parents is a barge skipper, fairground worker, circus artist, circus manager or living in a caravan (in Antwerp primary education: 1 %);
2. The mother did not obtain a certificate or diploma of secondary education or equivalent certificate (in Antwerp primary education: 37 %);
3. The child is temporarily or permanently living outside the family (in Antwerp primary education: 1.5 %);
4. The family only receives a replacement income (in Antwerp primary education: 19 %);
5. The language spoken together at home is not Dutch (in Antwerp primary education: 36 %, but in the schools of the inner city it is app. 60 %).

The schools we visited host many EEO pupils. This implies they use governmental subventions in their school to counter the difficulties EEO pupils may experience. The teachers who concentrate on such pupils are referred to as EEO teachers.

### *The Palette*

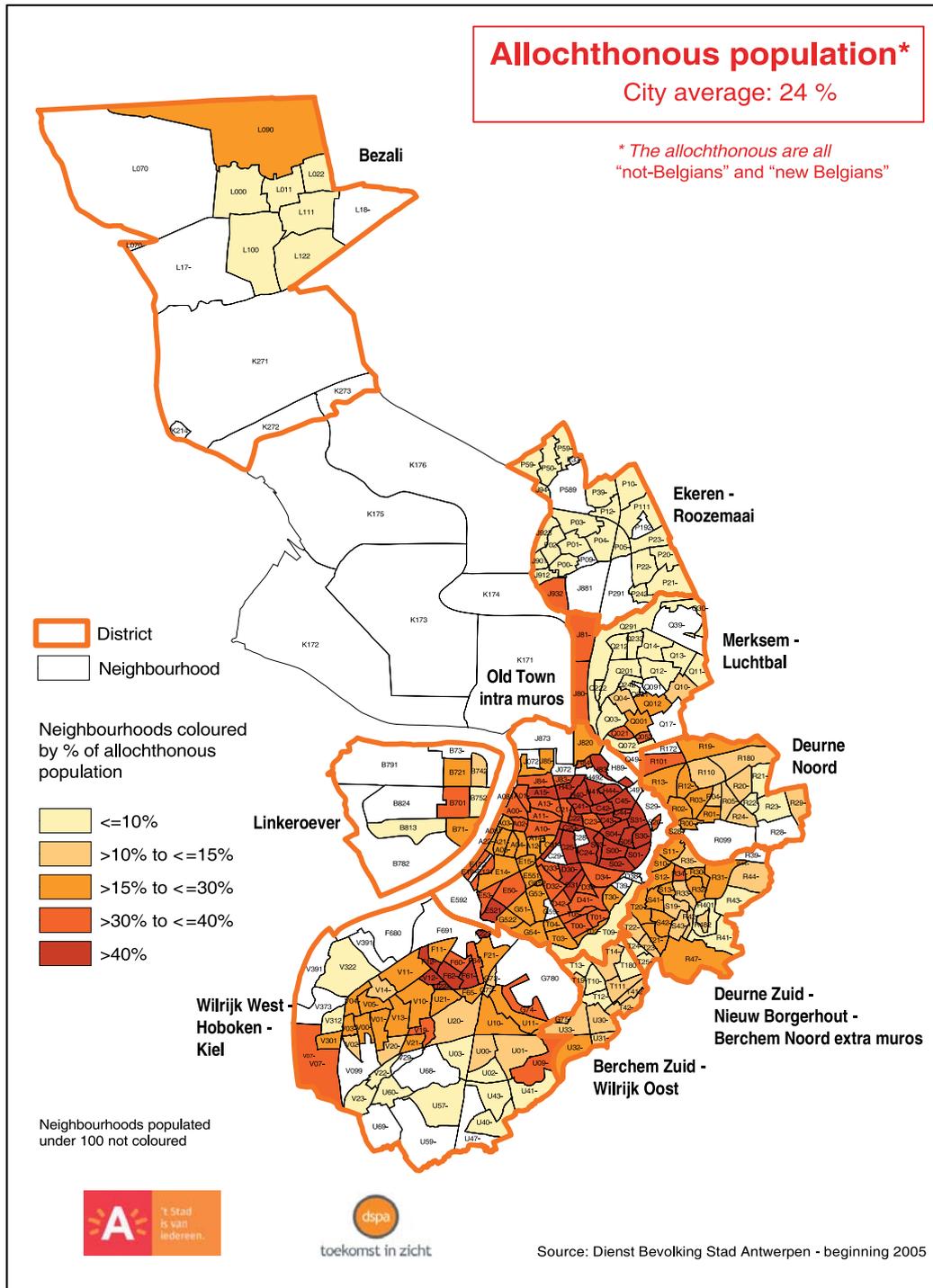
The one school in our study that is multicultural in the sense that there are approximately as many migrant as there are autochthonous children, is The Palette. This school is situated on the periphery of the city of Antwerp. A screening of the immediate neighbourhood shows that more foreign pupils (30 %) are attending The Palette than are living in the vicinity of the school (8 to 9 %). So, the school is quite attractive to non-autochthonous parents and pupils who live further away.

In Flanders the EEO Decree provides extra financial support for schools that have a significant number of pupils who meet the EEO indicators. The numbers (for the years 2001–2002) show that 152 pupils (kindergarten and primary) who meet these indicators attend The Palette. That is 63 % of the entire pupil population. Moreover, in total there are 118 pupils who do not speak Dutch at home (49 % of the pupil population).

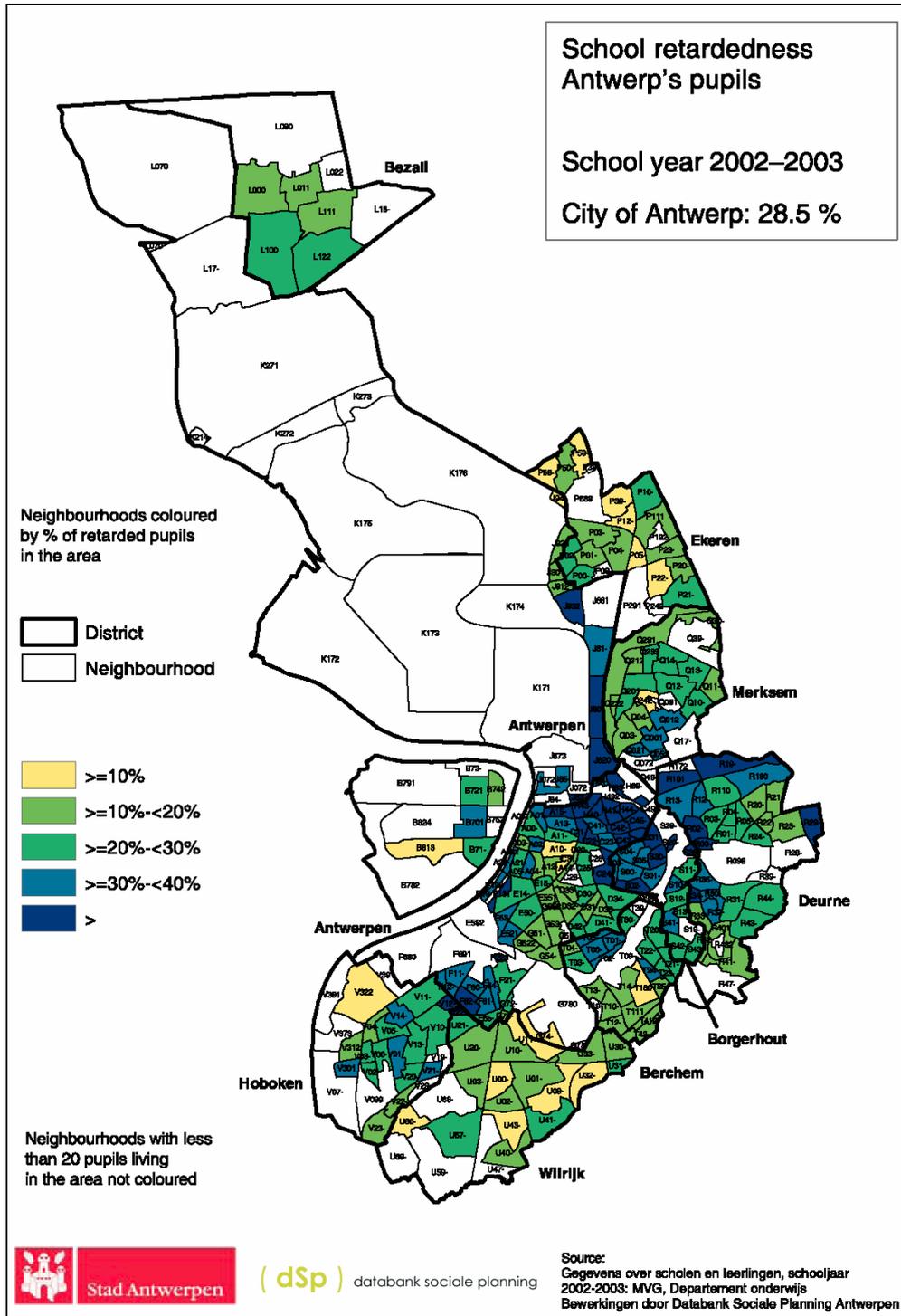
### *The Lighthouse*

The second school we studied is The Lighthouse, a school with a catholic background, located in the North of the city centre of Antwerp. It is an all-girls' school and a boys' school is situated across the street. A number of parents bring their daughters to The Lighthouse and their sons to the boys' school. In the year 2001–2002, there were 380 pupils enrolled in The Lighthouse: 195 in kindergarten and 185 in Primary School. The vast majority of these pupils have Belgian nationality (98 %), however, even though many children in The Lighthouse do have Belgian nationality, they are of another ethnic origin. Furthermore, it was remarked in the interviews that in (very) recent years the school attracts a number of children from ethnic minorities and fugitives. The following data give some evidence as to what has been stated above: 343 of the 380 enrolled pupils do not, or seldom, speak Dutch at home. That counts for

Map 1: The migration index



Map 2: The 'retardedness' index



90 % of the children in The Lighthouse. In addition, 92 % of the pupils in this school meet the EEO indicators.

### *The Arrow*

The third school, The Arrow, is situated in the centre of the city of Antwerp and belongs to the community-organised education network. It has 355 pupils, 258 of whom are enrolled in the Primary School. The figures show that the pupil population of The Arrow is very diverse; moreover, 293 of the pupils do not speak Dutch at home (82 %). One conclusion drawn from these figures is the remarkable evolution in recent years of the ‘composition’ of the pupil population of these schools. Headteachers and teachers state that there is unmistakably a considerable increase of pupils from refugee parents, asylum seekers and families from war regions. On the one hand, this evolution brings along pupils from ‘new’ or ‘unknown’ countries or ethnic origins. The incorporation of such diversity in schools and classrooms is welcomed. On the other hand, however, it becomes much more difficult for school personnel to make long term plans for individual pupils. At present, it happens more frequently than before that from one day to another, children leave the school, sometimes without the teachers knowing where they went.

### **Findings**

The three schools visited are confronted with a very diverse — cultural, religious, ideological — pupil population, which at the same time is often underprivileged. Fortunately, the government provides extra financial support for these schools to counter the difficulties their pupils could experience. Each school can decide, within reason, how to use these funds.

Consequently, one of the objectives of this research was to study how the three schools interviewed spend these funds, what projects they set up, and how they meet the needs of their underprivileged pupils. Do they reorganise, for example, their classrooms and schedules? What are the topics of their large-scale projects? To find out about these initiatives we interviewed teachers, headteachers, parents, an intercultural worker and the chairman of a social organisation.

The EEO had a major influence on the schools: extra funds are available to recruit teachers whose primary task is to concentrate on EEO pupils and give extra attention to these children. The barriers between different school years are often broken down so that the interaction between consecutive years is possible and strict distinction by age is left behind. Schools draw up new forms of classroom organisation with a view to meeting the needs of the pupils. Furthermore, schools set up different projects to teach their children to work and communicate together. But, in contrast with the past, culture or religion is not always explicitly mentioned in these projects. The classroom itself is already multicultural, as is the school, so focusing on these topics is not necessary. Numerous projects are aimed at establishing a closer attachment with the neighbourhood surrounding the school. Of course, schools do not stand alone and are not working in a social vacuum. On the one hand, there is the influence of decisions made by policymakers (like the EEO), while on the other hand, parents and pupils have their own needs and ideas as to what a school should be or offer.

Having examined the effect of the EEO, the parental involvement will now be discussed. The schools studied undertook a number of initiatives with a view to increasing parental involvement (in their schools). Sometimes it proves to be a major success, as in The Lighthouse; however, in The Arrow they did not succeed in setting up a long-lasting parent

board. Some one hundred mothers attend parental meetings in The Lighthouse, but in The Arrow this was not the case. Both schools have a very underprivileged pupil population and similar migrant groups. Therefore, it remains unclear what factors determine whether such an initiative becomes a success story or not. Nevertheless, teachers and headteachers from all schools explicitly mention the enormous gratitude they receive from migrant pupils. “They really cling on to you when you’re on the playground,” stated the headteachers of The Lighthouse. Of course, it is not always sunshine in schools like the ones we visited. Often, the pressure on teachers is very high and sometimes the opinions between parents and school can differ. Nevertheless, all teachers state that the appreciation of pupils and parents is very high.

Until the 1980s, cultural and religious diversity was absent and the evolution from a mono-cultural towards a multicultural society and pupil population is welcomed by both teachers and headteachers. Many among them emphasised the surplus value the multicultural schools can offer, without denying the new communication and cooperation obstacles. They see their schools as a good representation of such societal diversity as well as a good preparation of children for their adult life.

### Slovenia

Slovenia has also been confronted with demographic changes. There has been a significant decline in the number of births as shown in Table 1, which consequently means fewer students and more ‘empty’ space in some schools, in particular primary schools in big cities.

**Figure 1: Natural increase, Slovenia, 2003**

1980	1991	1997	2002	2003	
29,902	21,583	18,165	17,501	17,321	Live births
18,820	19,324	18,928	18,701	19,451	Deaths
11,082	2,259	-763	-1,200	-2,130	Natural increase
5.8	1.1	-0.4	-0.6	-1.1	Natural increase per 1000 population

Sources: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of the Interior — Central Population Register, Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Slovenia

Changes in the Slovenian legislation were also aimed at meeting the following objectives:

- to increase the opportunities for the inclusion of children, young people, adults and individuals with special needs in education programmes at all levels;
- to set up mechanisms to provide equal educational opportunities for socially disadvantaged learners;
- to ensure equal opportunities for both sexes;
- to increase the mainstream inclusion of children with special needs.

The basic principles of the legislation, embraced in the White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, 1995), stress the importance of choice and equity. Article 2 (aims of education) of the Organisation and Funding of Education Act (Ministry of Education and Sport, 1996b) defines, among other aims, also the following:

1. exercising opportunities for choice at all levels of education;

2. assuring equal opportunities for education of children from socially less encouraging environments (backgrounds);
3. assuring equal opportunities for education of children with special needs (p. 3).

Yet, when the Primary School Act (Ministry of Education and Sport, 1996a) and the Organisation and Funding of Education Act (Ministry of Education and Sport, 1996b) are compared to sub-acts, such as the Decree on Criteria about the Design of Public Network of Primary Schools, Public Network of Primary Schools and Institutions for Education and Schooling of Special Needs Students, and Public Network of Music Schools (Ministry of Education and Sport, 1998), the word ‘choice’ disappears, or rather it is substituted with ‘transfer’. ‘Choice’ actually becomes ‘a possibility of transfer’ as every enrolment starts within the assigned catchment area.

The schools have a legal right to refuse an application without any special justification when a child is not from their catchment area. The outcomes of such legislation are loosely defined admission criteria for students ‘out of the assigned catchment area’. The admission process is often implemented through a committee consisting of members of counselling services (psychologist, social worker and pedagogue), the headteacher and the deputy head. The schools are legally given a right to follow their own agenda in terms of selection and admissions of students from other catchment areas.

Paradoxically, the undersubscribed schools also take the position of refusing enrolment, and they do not even have to provide special justification for doing so. Pursuant to the Decree on Criteria, they must enrol students from their catchment area, but they are not obliged to take any students from other catchment areas. We would expect the undersubscribed schools to enrol anybody with a view to filling their empty spaces. Yet, the study of two Ljubljana downtown schools shows that even the undersubscribed schools became selective and found ‘professional justification’ for the refusal of a child (Trnavčević, 2002a). They exercised the said ‘right’ when they wanted to keep the number of students attending their classes at the lowest level possible and when they wanted to have ‘elite’ parents and/or academically successful students — ‘the cream’ (Trnavčević, 2002a).

Equity can be seen as an aim and a consequence of admission policies and practices. It is also related to the treatment that students and parents receive from a school when they ask for transfer. Admission policies and practices are supposed to ensure procedural justice which embraces both equal procedures and individuality of cases (see Winch, 1996). Taking Winch’s idea of procedural justice, making a case of every transfer can mean assuring equity, and the Slovenian legislation enables precisely that kind of procedural fairness. However, making a case from every transfer is a double-edged sword, as manipulations and subtle ‘inequities’ are not prevented — they could even be emphasised. Inequity can hide behind good and ‘professional’ justifications.

National policies address and emphasise equity in access. Catchment areas as geographical zones from where students are drawn are defined at the municipality level. Every school must enrol students from its catchment area and by this stipulation, equity in access is ensured. There exists also a legal opportunity for the transfer of children to a ‘school of choice’. Transfer procedures are defined and stipulated by decrees and acts, yet there is no special requirement for how and what policies need to be in place in schools to ensure equal opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity and similar ‘problems’. The absence of school written policies on admission from other catchment areas can be regarded as a question of power over the admission process. Wells et al. (1999), Dei & Karumanchery (1999) and Paquette (1998) point to power in relation to equity. Wells et al. (1999) discusses recruitment

policies and codes of conduct as subtle tools for the exercise of power. One of the ‘tools’ can also be the absence of policies and reliance on professional judgement of a committee.

In 2002 we conducted a qualitative case study based on group interviews. 18 participants (one group of headteachers attending the leadership course in the National School for Leadership in Education in Slovenia) were asked about their perceptions on equity issues in the Slovenian context. They emphasized values, agreed rules and regulations, respect, fair grading, ‘thick’ information and teacher — student relationship as cornerstones of equity. Only three participants mentioned equity in access and ethnicity did not seem to be an issue for them at all (Trnavčević, 2002b).

In a later qualitative study (Trnavčević, forthcoming) conducted in one school in Ljubljana, participants stated that students had equal opportunities in terms of access, especially because they enrol every student from the catchment area pursuant to the Decree on Criteria. Ethnicity seemed never a reason for refusing a student. Yet, they did mention SES as playing an important role in the lives of students, because students from low SES can be more ‘problematic in schools’ than students from other ethnicities. However, if SES is related to the ethnic background of parents — migrants then we cannot talk only about equity related to ethnicity, but also about ‘cream skimming’ and ‘elitism’, which could be more of an issue than ethnicity itself. Wells et al. (1999) draws attention to new layers of inequality which are not just broad categories of disadvantaged groups. A simple structure — advantaged and disadvantaged — cannot apply straightforwardly to the case in Slovenia. Ethnicity itself is not necessarily a ‘disadvantaged’ category. The school systems that value academic results and marks, foster ‘cream skimming’ and ‘elitism’, and require cultural, social and educational capital of parents and students.

Any school can be described as ‘disadvantaged’ if it is located in a disadvantaged area. In our study (Trnavčević, forthcoming) we found out that the school tries hard to live with the reputation of a ‘yugotrash’ school as well as invests great effort into ‘reducing’ or changing this reputation by doing the same things equally well or better than other Ljubljana Primary Schools. By focusing on reputation, the school might be losing sight of in-school inequalities that are subtle and less visible than ‘external’ reputation. The headteacher’s statement indicating that there is “no segregation by ethnicity” is actually contradictory, as it asserts that some groups of students start talking in their language and “they hang together” or that there is “a curse ‘thrown’ by an individual” or that “everybody says yugotrash”. These could be considered as subtle layers of ethnical tensions that receive no attention. It seems they are a part of school life, yet not specifically addressed and dealt with.

The reputation of the school as a ‘yugotrash’ school, as the headteacher mentioned, indicates also that a transfer from a city centre school to this school would be considered an exceptional case. Yet, the reverse situation — transfer from this school to a city centre school is not an exceptional case; it is a part of the ‘enrolment and transfer’ scenario. At this point, one might speculate that ‘cream skimming’ and ‘elitism’ could only be seen as different, covered or less visible layers of inequity — some parents with valued cultural capital transfer their children to city schools and, as Wells et al. (1999) argue, “parents and students with less valued cultural capital will be dissuaded from applying or enrolling” (p. 198). Whitty (2001) questions whether education policy can challenge class differentials and social exclusion. In Slovenia, education policy is not the only ‘problem’. At the school level, there exists ‘absence’ of policies that might be used at least as a framework for the development of different inclusion strategies and addressing different needs (Trnavčević, 2002a).

However, when a student is already enrolled in a school and comes from a different ethnic background, the question of equity acquires a different shape — mainstreaming or ethnic diversity? As curriculum is mainstream there can be many events organised to address diversity, however the question is whether these events, such as open days, can or could influence inequalities between advantaged and disadvantaged groups. In a way, ‘showing and recognising differences’ gives the impression of high awareness of a school with respect to equity. On the other hand, this ‘show of differences’ does not necessarily imply an ‘act for addressing differences’, which results in poorly developed inclusion strategies. The participating parent in the study (Trnavčević, forthcoming) supports ‘mainstreaming’ as an adjustment to the local culture, although “it is good that students show their traditions on special occasions”. In that case, ethnicity becomes ‘a rarity for exhibition’, rather than cultural identity of young people.

The studies raise more questions than they answer. The following would be worth investigating:

- How does the national curriculum support the mainstreaming?
- What does the extended curriculum provide to students in terms of maintaining of their cultural differences?
- What happens in classrooms, during the ‘after-school time’, and on the playgrounds with respect to equity?

Such investigation could be carried out by means of prolonged observations in the field. We can only conclude that as regards the question of equity related to the ethnic background of the school, more research needs to be carried out also in the community, especially if it has a reputation of being a ‘yugotrash’ community.

### **Conditions for ‘good practice’ in metropolitan (primary) schools**

Based on several constituent studies from the international equity project and our experiences in Slovenia and Flanders, a number of notable characteristics are listed below which typify most ‘good practice’ of schools.

#### ***Insight into the social context***

School managements exhibiting ‘good practice’ know only too well how to explain the position of their schools in a wider social context. A particular problem is almost always put into a wider context and therefore situated in processes of globalisation and urbanisation, and the opportunities and threats originating in economic, cultural and social developments. The position of a school is described in relation to the immediate environment, market developments (including the competitive position of a school) and policy measures guiding such developments.

#### ***A widely accepted culture of multicultural tolerance and cooperation***

However, insight and reflective capacity are not enough to turn the tide. The environment of a school must also be sufficiently open to the values striven for by a school. It is accordingly desirable for a school to be able to refer to a politically or socially legitimised mission statement. This is best illustrated by the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand that celebrates biculturalism in the daily work of a school. In Flanders, the Equal Education Opportunities Decree with its ambitious aim to achieve optimal learning and development opportunities for

all pupils, to avoid exclusion, segregation and discrimination, and to promote social cohesion is used by schools as legitimisation for their own school policy.

### ***Leadership***

The name of the international project “School *Leadership* and Equity” is confirmed in practice: school leadership is the most important factor for a successful opportunities policy of a school. School leaders personalise, represent and spread the culture of their organisation, which is expressed through their daily activities. Headteachers, mainly due to their personalities, promote equality, success and the well-being of all students. The school leadership of the case study schools seems to implement a policy that enhances coordination and balance with a view to better managing the conflicting values. The educators in question seem to involve the process of communication in their activities.

### ***Vision development***

The next common characteristic of ‘good practice’ is that just about all these schools have a written mission statement in which their educational and social ambitions are worded. Flanders has a long tradition in this respect. The mission, strategic objectives and concrete everyday arrangements were formulated in educational projects, schoolwork plans and school regulations, respectively.

### ***Teachers as human resources***

Thus, we arrive to the fifth crucial factor for a successful policy at the metropolitan level. In the Netherlands — but also in Flanders to an increasing extent — one observes the ‘escape by teachers from the city’ who apparently prefer a ‘quiet’ school to an ‘intimidating’ one. Goddard (2004) calls most Canadian schools Triple A schools, i.e. schools of the Anglo-American-Australian axis. We can translate the AAA metaphor perfectly into the Dutch language as the ‘BBB-leerkracht’: the ‘Blanke Belgische Burgerlijke leerkracht’ (white, Belgian, citizen teacher). This implies the desirability of not only the suitable educational components in teacher training, but also of the diversification of the student population undergoing training.

### ***Registration policy and procedures***

The conclusion from general research on effective schools that teachers must believe in the capacities of pupils is all the more significant in the metropolitan context. ‘Positive expectations’ are not only a remedy against the so-called Pygmalion effect, they also contribute to increasing the educational efficiency and job satisfaction of the teachers concerned.

### ***Participation (community involvement)***

Parental involvement is the last, but not least, successful characteristic of schools in the metropolitan context. It appears that immigrant parents are considerably less inclined to participate in education affairs, but that this ‘lost ground’ can be established by ‘positive action’ (such as community development). It has been found that that learning results are partly determined also by the degree of parental involvement. Through the enrolment procedure, parent participation also has a direct influence on school policy. Also, the cooperation between parents and school also contributes to a more efficient approach to any problematic behaviour.

### *An integrated didactic approach*

Obviously, certain aspects must also be given a didactic translation. We observe that progressive ideas that originated in the last century, including those originating in the so-called Chicago school, are once again gaining acceptance. Here, the association of the life and practice in school with the social environment is a crucial aspect. This is most clearly expressed in the concept of the broad school.

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**COUNTERACTING ADVERSITY IN AN ASPECT OF DIVERSITY:  
IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS OF VERY EFFECTIVE  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY  
DISADVANTAGED CONTEXTS AND THEIR ASSOCIATED LESSONS,  
CAVEATS AND QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS**

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**Introduction**

The theme of the 2005 ENIRDEM conference, *“Dealing with Diversity: a Key Issue for Educational Management”* reminds us that considerable differences are often evident between educational institutions. These differences are discernible in — and frequently impinge — upon a wide range of institutional processes, outcomes and contexts. One aspect of educational diversity which has caused much concern has been the disparity between the achievements of students attending different schools. While there is now a substantial school effectiveness literature which presents evidence of the characteristics of effective schools — readers will find a substantial review of relevant research in Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) — there is less certainty about the nature of factors which explain disparities between schools.

One of the more consistent (and disturbing) findings of school effectiveness research is the indication that, on the whole, there is a strong indirect correlation between the achievement of students and the level of socio-economic disadvantage which characterises their home background: i.e. high levels of socio-economic disadvantage are associated with relatively low levels of educational achievement. It is also clear that, while in the UK the attainment of 11 year old pupils at the end of the primary phase of education has improved reasonably steadily over the past decade, rising (as a measure of criteria-referenced attainment in the subjects of English, mathematics and science) from approximately 47 % to 75 % (Welsh Assembly Government, 2002), the gap between the attainment of pupils in schools with higher overall levels of attainment schools and those in schools with lower overall levels of attainment has not narrowed at all significantly. Thus, though most schools have improved, in general, the least successful have made little real progress in catching up with the most successful.

Nonetheless, it is clear that there are primary schools in Wales which have been able to buck this trend: schools which have taken in students from disadvantaged backgrounds and turned them out with levels of achievement which compare very favourably with those of schools in considerably more advantaged socio-economic contexts. The question pursued by the authors of this paper — that of identifying factors which account for this phenomenon — is one of the more interesting and potentially productive facing researchers. Sammons (1999) has suggested that success in securing enhanced student attainment in the primary school phase is not only likely to result in more positive measurements of achievement among 11 year olds

before transfer from primary to secondary education. It will also have beneficial impact upon the attainment of 16 year olds at the end of the phase of compulsory schooling. The question is also significant because valid answers will have major implications for priorities adopted by school leaders as well as for their training and development. The evidence presented in this paper addresses this latter implication.

### **Background to the research study and research design**

The research outlined in this paper was undertaken in Wales in the spring and summer of 2004 in response to a commission from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). This is a body which represents the 22 local government councils or municipalities in Wales. The WLGA required the researchers — academic staff at the Welsh universities of Glamorgan and Bangor — to investigate why some primary schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas were achieving profiles of student attainment markedly better than those which might be expected, given the general tendency towards indirect correlation between socio-economic context and educational attainment.

The research was based on an extensive review of the traits of effective schools derived from effectiveness and improvement literature. The theoretical framework was based on system psycho-dynamics and institutional transformation. Eighteen case studies of primary schools were produced with data collected and analysed from a range of sources. These included interviews with headteachers and members of teaching staff, members of the school's governing body, parents and students. Initial data analysis produced 91 themes which were aggregated into 21 features from which seven main characteristics were derived. The case study sample was drawn from more than half of the 22 local education authorities (LEAs — the departments of local government responsible for provision of education and related services) in Wales. The main characteristics determining their selection were as follows:

The schools were recommended by LEAs as ones which performed especially well in challenging circumstances. The quality and success of their work was thus already acknowledged and validated by a responsible professional agency.

- The schools had gained favourable inspection reports from ESTYN, the autonomous Welsh school inspection service which has a brief from the Wales National Assembly Government to inspect all schools in a regular cycle and to produce and publish reports on the quality and standards of the education they provide.
- The schools manifested consistently high levels of student attainment — all had featured in the upper quartile of Welsh schools for at least three years prior to their selection for the research study.
- The schools were identified as operating in a socio-economically disadvantaged context with reference to the free school meals (FSM) indicator, a measure of the number of pupils eligible — with regard to family income — for free school meals.

Sample schools represented a range of demographic contexts including inner-city areas, inner urban and urban fringe sites as well as rural villages and industrial village communities in the former coal mining valleys of South Wales and the quarrying districts of North West Wales. The sample included schools which provided education through the medium of Welsh, bilingual schools and church schools. The size of schools in the sample varied and included at least one with several hundred pupils on roll and others with only a few dozen pupils. The economic character of Wales has changed markedly during the last twenty years and although the main cities of Cardiff and Swansea have experienced substantial economic regeneration,

most of the former heavy industries of iron, steel, coal and slate have declined, almost to the point of extinction. As a consequence, many formerly prosperous areas now experience high levels of unemployment, or low-paid employment. Family structures have also been affected by general patterns of divorce, remarriage and cohabitation. These factors all influenced the stability and prosperity of the communities served by the case study schools.

The nature of disadvantage in the schools' communities was varied and complex. There were no stereotypes of disadvantage. In some communities, the source of disadvantage was low income levels rather than low employment levels. In others, male unemployment was high, and/or there was a dependency culture, and/or there was a high level of change with families moving into the area and then moving on rapidly to seek work elsewhere. There might be a number of aspects of disadvantage at work simultaneously. As a result, 'disadvantage' had a number of diverse and difficult implications for the schools. Unsurprisingly, however, low income was at the heart of the disadvantage in the schools we studied and was the main criteria for choosing the schools. Low levels of pay may result in a dependency culture, where over time, ambitions, aspirations and goals become deflated. Low employment opportunities may mean that those who wish to find work or seek a higher level of income have to leave their local community. The 'low income/high dependency' culture may bring with it a number of other problems, such as a lack of stimulation and wider experience for the pupils attending the schools.

The headteachers and teachers working in the sample schools had been in post for quite a wide range of periods. Headteachers had served from two years to over twenty years and, while a majority of teachers had worked at their schools for several years or more — giving schools a beneficial element of stability and contradicting the assumption that schools in challenging circumstances tend to have frequent staff changes.

Research interviews with heads, teachers and other members of the school community were typically conducted over a period of a day. While the interviews were essentially open-ended, they were guided by three key questions:

- What is it about this school that enables its pupils to achieve higher standards than might be expected from its setting?
- Why does the school adopt these approaches?
- What examples can the school offer to illustrate what it does to ensure high standards of pupil achievement and attainment?

### **An overview of research findings**

Repeated interrogation and analysis of the interview data eventually resulted in the identification of six 'key characteristics' and an additional factor which the researchers termed the 'central characteristic'. The key characteristics were:

1. Leadership.
2. Mindset.
3. Teaching team.
4. Engagement and commitment of the pupils and their parents.
5. Very efficient and effective organisation and management.
6. Mutual support, validation and valuing on the part of all those concerned and involved with the school.

The central characteristic is the subject of this paper and was defined as follows:

“A productive, strong and highly inclusive culture that not only ensures effective and enriched teaching for learning for all pupils, but actively aims to improve and further enrich teaching for learning for all pupils.”

The remainder of this paper will focus on discussion of this central characteristic but readers who are interested in the nature and influence of the other key characteristics will be able to review evidence on these in James et al. (2006).

### **The central characteristic**

The central feature of the case study schools was their intense concern not just with providing stimulating, challenging and rigorous teaching with the aim of securing high quality student learning, but with undertaking critical, reflective and systematic evaluation and review of teaching with the aim of enhancing as fully as possible its quality and impact and, thereby, its further beneficial impact upon learning. This characteristic was distinguished by a set of underpinning factors as follows:

#### ***Passionate focus on teaching for learning***

The schools worked passionately to ensure effective teaching for optimal pupil learning. While there was a clear emphasis on enabling pupils to attain high scores in SATs (the national assessments undertaken by students at 11 years of age), there was equal emphasis on making sure that the curriculum was broad, balanced and enriched. There was a pupil/learning-centred ethos via which the schools endeavoured to meet every pupil's learning needs. This powerful emphasis on teaching and learning ensured that the schools' cultures were highly productive.

#### ***Meeting special educational/additional needs was very, very important***

The schools worked hard to respond to pupils' special or additional learning needs and deliberately committed resources to this aspect of their work. Early intervention to meet additional learning needs was regarded as crucial. In many cases, the way the schools approached meeting special or additional learning needs was simply to view it as part of the process of meeting the individual learning needs of all pupils. Thus, in a sense, special educational needs were not considered to be all that 'special'.

#### ***An emphasis on the 'basics'***

The schools concentrated on skills and understanding in literacy and numeracy, which were viewed as important foundations for the pupils' learning. The chair of the governing body in one of the schools expressed a sentiment, which was widespread in many schools, that “*There is an emphasis here on the core business, which is getting the basics right, teaching the children well to ensure they get a good start.*” The basics of teaching were important as well as the basics of learning. Respondents referred to a range of teaching methods that they considered were part of sound teaching including, varying the pupils' learning experience, the appropriate use of challenging questions, regular recaps and reviews during lessons and/or lesson sequences, the use of 'advance organisers' (telling the pupils what was going to happen) and sound pupil-teacher relationships. The teaching was therefore thorough and secure.

***The arrangement of classes varied but in all cases had been carefully thought through***

The schools varied in the way they arranged their classes. There were examples of mixed ability classes across the whole school, setting for mathematics and English, and mixed age classes. There was often variation of teaching arrangements within schools as well. The schools appeared to be ready to change the arrangement of classes according to the content of the lesson and the needs of the pupils. So for example, one school was happy to teach mathematics to a very large group of relatively able pupils in the school hall, whilst smaller groups were being given intensive teaching elsewhere. The key messages here are that: there was no common classroom arrangement across the schools that led to them being very effective, or that one arrangement always worked better than any other, or that an upper limit on class sizes will guarantee effectiveness. Ensuring that the arrangement of classes met the pupils' learning needs was the key and it was clear that this had been considered carefully to optimise pupil learning.

***Thorough, collaborative lesson planning***

The planning of lessons and schemes of work was undertaken carefully and methodically. The teachers worked collaboratively in pairs, groups, and even as a whole staff in some instances to plan lessons and schemes of work. Lesson planning was considered important but it was not undertaken obsessively. The emphasis was on excellent practice in the classroom which was where teachers' main energies should be expended.

***Regular assessment of pupil progress***

The assessment of pupil learning was considered very important. Typically, there was a plan of regular assessment, an assessment cycle, across a year-group or the whole school. Different tests would be set each term or annually. There were many instances where the pupils were encouraged to evaluate and assess their own work using the same success criteria as those used by their teachers.

***Continuity and progression in teaching for learning were important***

The schools sought to ensure that their teaching was continuous and linked and that it featured sequential progression. This approach contributed to the sense of consistency and stability for the pupils and increased pupils' confidence. The teachers did not like skimming through work just to ensure coverage. It was important to make sure that pupils' learning had been securely consolidated before they moved on to the further stages of the curriculum.

***Differentiation in teaching for learning was important***

In many of the schools there was wide range of ability amongst the pupils. The schools responded to this diversity with differentiation of teaching for learning and regarded this as a crucial element of their work. There were examples of up to four levels of differentiation of learning tasks in one class. Nursery nurses and other classroom assistants were considered to be important in managing differentiated tasks. The teachers appeared to welcome the differences needs and abilities evident among the pupils and saw the challenge this posed as something that enhanced and added value to their work.

***The schools used a wide range of learning activities and experiences***

Varying the pupils' learning experience, both during lessons and within a lesson sequence, was important. It motivated the pupils and stimulated their interest. New technologies were

much in evidence: for example, interactive whiteboards were used extensively to augment learning. There were numerous examples of educational visits being made by the pupils as well as inputs from visitors to the schools — such as members of the local community, dance groups, bands and poets — enriching the curriculum. This enrichment had a dual purpose in that it both compensated for the pupils' possible lack of experiences of this kind outside school and enhanced learning in school.

### *Target setting for pupils was very important*

The setting of learning targets for pupils was a feature of teaching in all the schools. Teachers used school-based tests to help with setting targets. One school had educational improvement plans for all pupils, not just those with special educational needs. Typically, the pupils were actively engaged in setting their own targets.

### *The pupils were kept busy*

There was a work ethic in the schools — “*Not a minute is wasted*”, said one teacher. Homework was set as a matter of routine, which parents in particular valued. The pupils were actively engaged in and committed to their learning.

### *A strong culture*

All the sample schools had strong cultures. Their ways of working were unyielding and unrelenting and there was total commitment and enthusiasm for the work. Within this feature there were a number of themes.

(a) *The strength of the culture was derived from a range of sources.* In different schools, the culture was underpinned by qualities such as the religious ethos of the school, its teaching through the medium of Welsh, the ideals, aspirations and drive of the headteacher, and/or the collective passion of the teaching staff to get the best out of everyone involved in the school. The deep-rooted culture underpinned the profound commitment to the pupils' educational, moral, spiritual, cultural and social development which was a very significant feature of the schools. In turn, this commitment helped to sustain and strengthen the culture.

(b) *There was a sense of fairness in the way the schools worked.* Parents and pupils appreciated the feeling of justice and even-handedness that pervaded the schools. Those in the schools endeavoured to be fair in the way they operated. It helped to make the schools happy, friendly and rewarding places.

(c) *There was a desire to achieve.* All the schools were characterised by a widespread desire for everyone to do well. This desire linked to high aspirations and expectations for the pupils considerably strengthened the working culture. ‘Doing well’ was an aspiration, an aim and a purpose. This emphasis also represented the drive, determination and motivation present in the schools. ‘Doing well’ might be construed as being competitive — but it was not. ‘Winning’ from the ‘Doing Well’ perspective was construed as a measure of achievement, not as an end in itself.

(d) *A highly inclusive culture.* The schools were highly inclusive in the way they worked. They sought to engage the commitment of everyone connected with them. This feature is threaded through many — if not all — of the various features and characteristics of the schools. The inclusive approach applied especially to the pupils and the schools sought the active engagement and commitment of all of these in order to promote inclusive learning. There was also an inclusive approach to organising the schools. All the staff were included in decision-making about resources and important policy matters and all were valued for their

contributions to the work of the schools. The ethos of inclusivity was also evident in the fact that not only did the schools work hard to involve everyone connected with them in their work, but also to engage the full commitment of everyone connected with them.

### *Continuing professional development*

In line with the schools' commitment to improving their practice, continuing professional development was considered to be very important and there were a number of themes in the data under this heading.

*(a) The organisation of training and development was taken very seriously.* Training and development sessions were typically regular and frequent and the sessions were linked directly to the school development plan as well as to specific initiatives. Sessions were led by staff from within the school, for example, by a subject leader, or by an outside expert, such as an adviser or an advisory teacher. Everyone was involved in school-based sessions, including support staff. When teachers attended external courses, new knowledge was shared effectively. Many of the schools had received grants from the General Teaching Council for Wales to support professional development activities. School development plans typically shaped training and professional development priorities.

*(b) Performance management played a central part in training and development.* Performance management procedures were long established in a number of schools and the work of the teaching staff was a matter of continual review. In many of the schools, all the staff — not just the teachers — were included in formal performance management processes.

*(c) The schools were a learning resource for others.* The schools were used in a variety of ways to support the professional development of teachers generally. Staff from the schools contributed to local authority courses and the schools were used as a resource for the development of teachers from other establishments. In many cases, visitors to the schools' local authorities spent time in the schools to witness good practice. The schools were actively involved in the education and training of new teachers.

*(d) Teaching and learning were monitored thoroughly.* The monitoring of teaching was generally widespread, it was an integral part of the schools' work and it was not viewed as threatening.

*(e) Computers and interactive whiteboards had developed practice.* Typically, the schools were well resourced with 'new technologies' of a range of kinds which were in widespread use in the classes. Their use had enhanced teaching and learning, helped to develop collaboration and had facilitated the sharing of good teaching practices.

### *Changes/Initiatives*

School development initiatives were adopted when the schools thought they could help with specific development needs. The schools felt they were strong enough to resist initiatives which might be detrimental to effective schemes already underway, or which would not be of sufficient benefit to the pupils. The schools were not driven by educational fads or fashions.

*(a) The schools were open to ideas to enhance learning, but were not desperate to try new initiatives.* They were very receptive to innovations which were seen as capable of improving teaching and learning but any changes were considered very carefully before they were implemented to ensure they would enhance the aspects of work.

*(b) New initiatives were dovetailed into existing practice.* The schools were very good at implementing new ideas and ensuring that any innovative approaches complemented existing

good practice. Staff were trained in preparation for the implementation of new initiatives. In one school, the likely workload of staff involved in a new initiative was logged to help the headteacher to judge whether implementing the proposal would be manageable. The schools were not embarrassed about dropping schemes that were not working.

*(c) There was involvement in international initiatives.* Many of the schools were participating in international collaborations and initiatives of a range of kinds. These schemes, such as the Comenius Project, broadened perspectives, widened horizons and enriched pupil learning. There were numerous examples of staff and pupils had visiting European countries through other initiatives.

*(d) Extra-curricular activities.* In all the schools, there were a large number of extra-curricular clubs, classes and activities. The schools considered them to be important because they enriched the pupils' experience which may have been otherwise restricted because of the disadvantaged circumstances of their home backgrounds. Moreover, they also motivated the pupils in other aspects of their learning, and gave opportunities for the pupils to achieve which enhanced their confidence and self-esteem. Extra-curricular activities were used deliberately to enrich the children's' experience and enhance their learning. Extra-curricular activities were not just the province of the teachers. Parents were often involved and in some cases took the lead. The various activities and clubs were seen as a way of engaging parents in the life of the school.

### **Commentary and conclusions**

The research findings identified by the study outlined in this paper (and reported more fully in James et al., 2006) are in tune with principal determinants of school effectiveness recognised, not only by other significant research studies, but by non-research sources. These include the cumulative evidence base resulting from more than a decade of school inspection to a common framework in England and Wales. The central characteristic identified by the study thus provides a set of comparative criteria which school leaders and other interested parties might usefully adopt to evaluate aspects of the performance of individual primary schools. In particular, they offer a repertory of processes and outcomes which may help practitioners assess institutional needs and capacities and formulate targets for development and improvement.

The evidence offers headteachers and others reasonably reliable indicators of the kinds of practices, values and goals which typically characterise effective primary schools, and especially those working in challenging circumstances. However, it cannot present a fool-proof blueprint which, if followed, would guarantee effective operation in all such circumstances. Attempting this lay beyond the remit of the research study. But such an attempt would fail to take account of the idiosyncrasies and complexities which characterise individual schools. Thus, while recommendations for good practice are explicit in this paper, additional issues have to be addressed. Some of these are discussed below in order to (i) offer advice and guidance to those interested in effective primary schooling and (ii) provide an inventory of potentially fruitful questions for further research. The advice and guidance will be especially significant for new or recently appointed headteachers who wish to enhance the effectiveness of their schools.

Knowing what those researched effective schools actually do is not sufficient to ensure that practitioners will be able to promote effectiveness in other specific situations. Practitioners and researchers need to gain more precise knowledge about how schools and their staffs

formulate and negotiate changes. This applies not only to practices and organisation features, but also to culture, climate and the values, assumptions, political stances and philosophical beliefs which shape the organisational mindset.

Giddens (1979) recognised organisational life as a recursive phenomenon. By this he meant that engagement in the tasks and relationships which characterise its day to day operation determine the nature of future tasks and relationships. These in turn, similarly influence people's engagement in those tasks and relationships in an iterative ripple effect. Researchers who study school effectiveness thus need to gain clearer insights into the nature of the recursive processes which shape the culture of schools (those which are effective, those which are becoming effective and those which are relatively ineffective). Such insights will improve the understanding of practitioners working to improve their situations. Practitioners, for their part, need to pay particular attention to identifying and analysing these interactive dynamics. In turn, researchers also need to develop fuller understanding of the kinds of reflection which practitioners apply to their schools and of the validity and reliability of the insights that result. Researchers can thus support practitioners in obtaining more accurate and perceptive understanding of institutional operation and scope for its improvement.

Closely allied to this requirement is the need to understand how leaders of effective schools construct (and, equally importantly, deconstruct and reconstruct as necessary) positive organisational cultures. We should remember that the research project reported here acquired little hard information about the extent to which those institutional culture and climate factors which seem to play a major part in underpinning the success of the schools were inherited legacies or were created by their current leaders. We also know relatively little about the specific processes of vision-building in effective schools, its philosophical and political underpinnings and how it impacts upon effectiveness. This deficiency throws up questions about:

- exactly when and how headteachers worked with their staffs and lay members of their school communities to establish positive cultures and climates by effecting improvement-oriented changes;
- ways in which they used particular questions or yardsticks to analyse prevailing practice and achievement;
- how they identify and prioritise appropriate targets for development;
- the kinds of political, philosophical or value-centred conflict which may have needed to be resolved before effective practice could be established;
- the processes of negotiation, conversion, or reform which facilitated all this.

Additional questions and issues for further research prompted by this study of very effective primary schools in disadvantaged circumstances include the following:

- Whether there is evidence of an ordinal hierarchy of importance among the central and key characteristics identified by the study or among constituent factors of the characteristics.
- Whether the effectiveness characteristics defined by the study apply equally to a wide range of challenging circumstances, or whether particular characteristics prove particularly effective in offsetting certain socio-economic or other adverse input factors. More precise identification of input factors which define the schools as operating in challenging circumstances would be helpful in this respect. The main socio-economic indicator adopted by the study, the FSM index featured a wide banding — 13–50 % FSM — and is likely to embrace a wide range of variation in family circumstances and associated educational effects. It would be interesting to

know more about the specific geographical and demographic character of the schools: e.g. the extent to which their contexts were affected by unemployment, the educational achievements of parents and other adult carers, the size and structure of family groups and the extent to which catchment areas featured long-established or more itinerant communities.

- Like many other studies, the research reported here identified classroom processes and, in particular, heavy emphasis on effective teaching and enrichment of pupil learning, as highly significant influences of school effectiveness. However — and in common with many other studies — it does not identify specifics of classroom pedagogy which may prove especially important in securing this outcome. For example, it identifies differentiation as an important feature in classroom practice, but not the reasons why teachers use particular forms of differentiation. It would also be helpful to gain more evidence about the balance between teachers' promotion of subject-specific and generic skills, knowledge and understanding, and the ways in which these are related to assessment and curriculum planning.

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## A MODEL OF SCHOOL CULTURE DEVELOPMENT

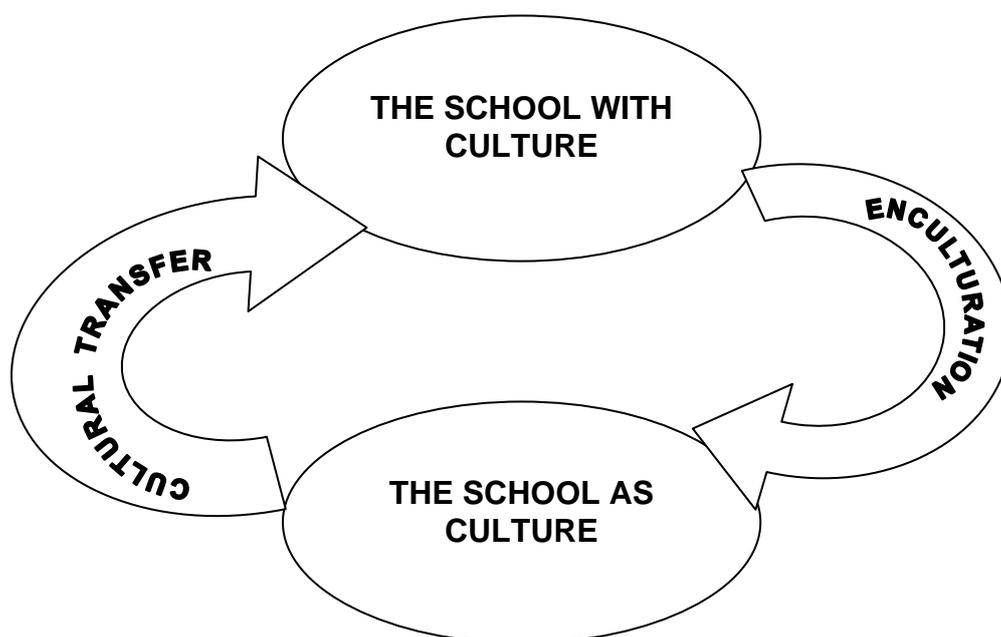
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The model of school culture development presented in this paper expresses the relation between school culture and its change. It symbolises a cyclic model, which depicts, names and phases processes of a change between two ways of specifying school culture. The specification of school culture stems from an analysis of research reports and accounts about research focusing on school culture. The research has been published approximately during the last ten years (included in the references). Analysis of this research was led by the question: ‘how do researchers construct the object of their research — the school culture?’ It emerged that researchers define or try to measure school culture on two different fundamental bases. One way of conceptualising school culture stems from the notion of the school as the basis of the definition and it is defined as ‘a school with culture’. The second way prefers culture as its basis and is named ‘a school as culture’.

Substantial and permanent changes in behaviour and acting, norms, values and school climate, that are different from the original condition, are considered to be the change of school culture (Kelleher and Levenson, 2004). A change in school culture is in practice recognised via acting in a different way than previously. This change is perceived as something wanted (frequently in the relationship with the future) and becomes a part of everyday school life (i.e. it is institutionalised). It means that a change of school culture affects not only individuals and groups within schools, but the school as a whole.

*Figure 1: A model of school culture development*



### The description of elements of the model

The model consists of two mutually connected elements — two ways of defining school culture (a school with culture, a school as culture). Devising the notion school culture as ‘**a school with culture**’ stems from Waller’s proposition

“schools have undoubtedly their own, distinctive culture. There is a complex of rituals of personal relationships, and, moreover, group ways of behaviour and thinking, irrational sanctions and a moral codex which is based on them.”

(in Husén and Postlethwaite, 1994, p. 5207)

Delimiting school culture as a school with culture unwinds from notion of school as a society, where there is something that unites people (*Gemeinschaft*), where people claim their interest, where conflicts, cooperation and competition exist (*Gesellschaft*). The notion ‘society’ (*Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft*) is for the purpose of school culture research divided into several forms:

- the school as a socio-cultural environment;
- the school as a specific organisation;
- the school as a learning environment;
- the school as a community or collectivity.

The school culture is perceived as a positive variant of a human activity and a positive variant of the way a school lives (e.g. an expression that is ‘a cultured manifestation’, ‘civilised behaviour’ etc.) unlike its negative ‘uncultured’. At the same time, the specificity of the way of life and uniqueness of the cultural identity of the school is stressed. In relation to the change it means that it is possible to change and develop a specific way of life and manifestations of people at school. The process of the change is in this case strongly influenced by traditions and social dynamics inside the school.

The second element of delimiting the school culture is called ‘**the school as culture**’. This construct of school culture is created on the base of the proposition “the school is culture” (Dalin, 1996) and it follows from defining culture as a life entity that is perceived rather as a metaphysical part of social processes (e.g. meaning, values, norms, moral ethos) than their reflection or representation. The segmenting of the notion school culture follows from delimiting culture as a complex of cultural elements (or complexes) which are typical of given culture. The elements imprint characteristic shape into the specified culture. The result of segmenting culture can be dividing culture e.g. into general culture and its subcultures or culture and counter-culture (Velký, 1996). Defining culture as a complex of shared norms, meanings, abstractions, notions and priorities is characteristic of school culture. The priorities are specific in their way. When it comes to the relation to the change of school culture, it means that it is possible to change values, norms and priorities. The process of the change is in this case influenced mainly by means of individual perception and shared attitudes of school participants.

### The description of school culture development

The model of school culture development is a cyclical one. Separate elements of the model (the school with culture, the school as culture) are connected on one hand via the process of enculturation, on the other hand via the process of a cultural transfer. These processes secure the transition from one variant of school culture delimitation to the other and in the same time

they express intentionality and purposefulness of the work with a change of school culture when it comes to the school culture development.

The process of enculturation unites ‘the school with culture’ with ‘the school as culture’. The enculturation expresses a transition from a specific way of school life (a cultural identity is included) to the creation of a specific shared value chart of a school in this presented model. Enculturation involves cognition, acceptance and growing into the culture. The result is ‘the school as culture’. School participants themselves become the bearers of the school culture.

On the other hand, the process of cultural transfer unites ‘the school as culture’ with ‘the school with culture’. Cultural transfer concerns new but shared values, norms and meanings, which are considered to be meaningful and influence behaviour at school. A new specific way of life which stems from shared values, norms and meanings is the result of the process of the cultural transfer.

It is possible to use both the enculturation process and the process of cultural transfer in practice (i.e. Dalin, 1996; Chott, 2001). The first phase (both in the process of enculturation and the process of cultural transfer) can be labelled as an impulse towards a change. This is followed by a phase of school culture diagnosis and a reflection of a given condition. In this phase it is possible to identify specific steps according to whether the enculturation process is concerned or the cultural transfer process is concerned. The following phase — planning — arises not only from the given condition, but includes also the notion of the future direction of the school culture development (whether towards the school with culture or the school as culture). The implementation phase (i.e. institutionalisation) ensures durability of the change. The last phase — evaluation — not only appraises the whole process, but this phase should retrogressively be also an impulse for another change.

### Conclusion

This model was created on the basis of school culture research and a school development theory, which operate with school culture. Also included in this model is the experience of those who worked on changes of school culture at individual schools (i.e. Bulach, 2001; Kelleher and Levenson, 2004). Therefore we presume that this model can be useful not only in the research and theory of school culture, but also in school practice as a clue for reflection and self-reflection on intentional and purposeful work with school culture.

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## **BUILDING CAPACITY IN SCHOOLS — DEALING WITH DIVERSITY BETWEEN SCHOOLS**

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### **Pressure or support in school improvement?**

Pressure or support, centralisation or decentralisation, are old dilemmas in school improvement. Nowadays, there is a lot of pressure and central, external steering imposed on schools. For example, we see more influence worldwide of the government on the goals and content of education (by means of standards or a core curriculum). Also the political agenda of the government, for example in relation to multiculturalism, is imposed on schools. Another example of external steering is the so-called implementation staircase. In the Netherlands, standards or attainment targets are elaborated in curricula by the Institute for Curriculum Development and by other agencies; curricula are elaborated in manuals by textbook writers; and many tests are made by the National Institute for Educational Measurement. So the work of teachers in the classroom is steered by different agencies with their own views on education and with different meanings of what counts as good education. Also the inspectorate with their own framework of what counts as quality has a strong influence on the work of teachers, because results are published and because of negative sanctions, such as more rigorous control, if the results are not so good.

### **External steering — effective or counterproductive?**

On the other hand, the effectiveness of a lot of innovations imposed on schools by the government or other external authorities or agencies seems questionable, sometimes highly questionable. In the Netherlands and in Flanders, for more than 25 years policy-makers have emphasised differentiation in the classroom. But the results are minimal. In Britain the famous national Literacy and Numeracy Strategies programme, an example of a large-scale reform, initially showed impressive results. In a 4-year period (1997–2000) literacy and numeracy proficiency increased from 60 % to 75 % of the children who reached a level of 4 or above. But the results have remained at the same level for the last three years and plateaued below an acceptable level. Despite the enormous effort, and the rather narrow focus on numeracy and literacy, there is only a minority of schools deeply engaged in these strategies and the gap remains between the children who are doing well and doing not so well (Barber, 2002; Fullan, 2005).

Another counterproductive effect is the de-professionalisation of teachers. The consequence of strong external steering can be that teachers no longer rely and build on their own repertoire of knowledge and skills. They see themselves more and more as executive professionals, and less as active professionals (Vandenberghe, 2004). According to Jeffrey

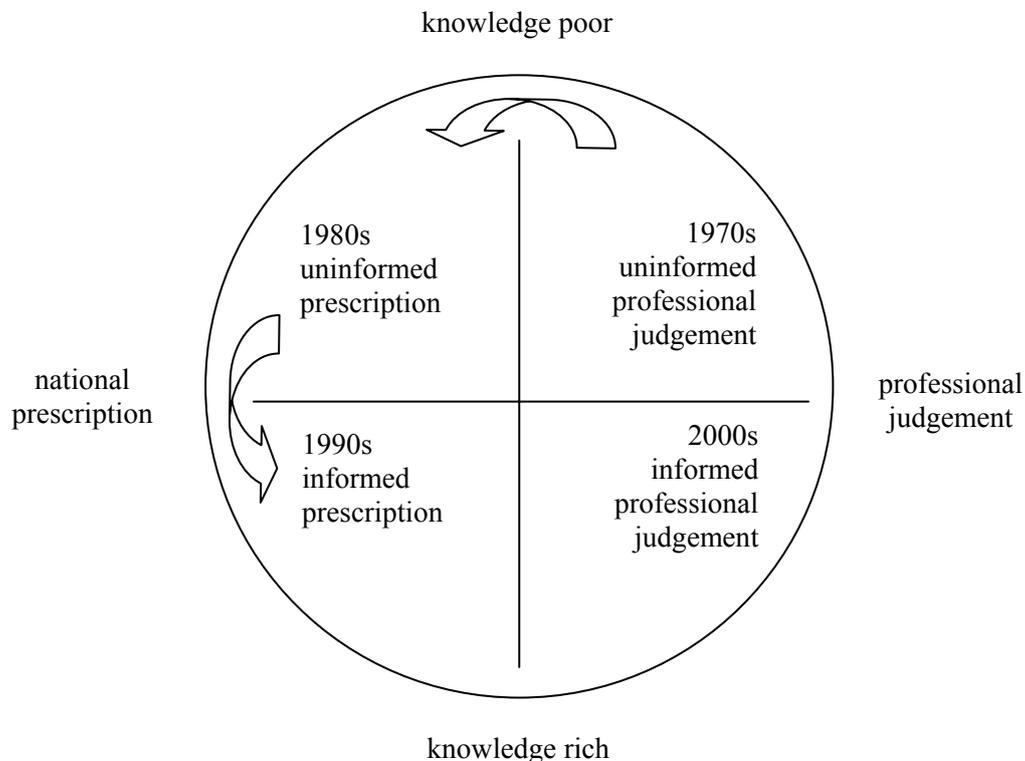
(2002) a humanist discourse prevalent in teacher relations with students, colleagues and advisors/inspectors has been challenged by a performativity discourse. This performativity discourse distances teachers from students and creates a dependency culture in opposition to previous mutual and intimate relations. It creates self-disciplining teams that marginalise individuality and it stratifies collegial relations in place of previous relations where primary teachers sought consensus; and creates dominant, contrived and de-personalised relations between local advisors/inspectors in preference to previous partnership relations.

### **Active professionals for the knowledge society**

The counterproductive effects of a centralised and prescriptive improvement programme are elucidated by Barber, one of the most important advisors of Tony Blair in matters of education and involved in the above-mentioned national Literacy and Numeracy Strategies programme, a programme not without success (Barber, 2002). According to Barber, until the mid-1980s what happened in schools and classrooms was left almost entirely to the teachers to decide. However, at that time no means were in place to ensure that effective practice was identified, disseminated and universally adopted. The profession itself was uninformed. The response of the Thatcher government in the mid-1980s to the evidently underperforming system was to centralise. But, ironically, it too was in no position to prescribe on the basis of real knowledge because the system generated so little good evidence or data. The result was a move from a system of *uninformed professional judgement* to one of *uninformed prescription*.

However, as a result of the reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s — especially the National Curriculum, national testing and independent inspection — the potential for the system to become informed was established. The Blair government used the emerging evidence — as well as international research — to inform and justify its literacy and numeracy strategies at primary school level. In addition it was able to monitor the implementation of policy better than ever before and was therefore able to refine and strengthen implementation as it proceeded. In short, the 1997–2001 Blair government inherited a system of *uninformed prescription* and replaced it with one of *informed prescription*. This worked remarkably well for a while. It was an important and necessary stage but it had a downside: teachers perceived the changes as imposed from outside and worried about the degree to which they could tailor and adapt the government's materials to their own purposes. Moreover, in a fast-moving, large, complex system, confidence, innovation and creativity at the frontline — where the service meets the customer — is of vital importance. Centrally driven policies, however good, cannot by definition deliver these vital characteristics. The response to this problem is an approach which trusts teachers' informed professional judgement and stimulates school-led innovation. So the next shift is from *informed prescription* to *informed professional judgement*. Fullan (2005, p. 8) added that informed professional judgement must be understood to be a collective quality, not just an individual one.

Figure 1 below shows this movement from uninformed professional judgement, via uninformed prescription and informed prescription to informed professional judgement.

*Figure 1: From uninformed to informed professional judgement*

Adapted from Barber (2002)

This approach is more in line with the demands of the so-called knowledge society. As Hargreaves (2003) points out, in these societies we need creative, flexible, independent, co-operative people. It is rather paradoxical if society considers schools and teachers — who have to play an important role in the preparation of young people for this knowledge society — as the opposite: as executive organisations and executive professionals.

### Capacity building is learning

Thus there are good reasons to look for another balance between pressure and support, between accountability and capacity building, when we are thinking about improving schools. It is true that strong connections from schools to the external world and a demanding culture are necessary (Fullan, 2005). But maybe more important these days is to make the internal capacity of schools stronger.

Capacity building is a learning process. There are important analogies between the learning of pupils and the learning of schools. Just as learning is a personal process and nobody (i.e. a teacher), can learn for someone else, capacity building is something a school and teachers can only do themselves. Advisers can only help and stimulate. And just as pupils differ in the level of capacities they learned, so do schools. Social-constructivist learning theory pays attention to the relation between the capacity of pupils and their degree of self-control on the one hand and the degree of external control of the learning process by the teacher on the other hand. The higher the degree of self-control, the lower the degree of external steering should

be. Furthermore, external steering must stimulate the development of the self-control by invoking something like the zone of proximal development as outlined by Vygotsky.

The same goes for schools. Schools differ in capacity as well. In the advisory services to schools we have to promote the self-learning capacity of schools and, at the same time, deal with this diversity. In other words, we have to take into account in our support to schools, that not all the schools are the same and schools differ in capacity. Just as teachers had to deal with diversity and have to adjust their strategies to the diversity of the pupils, school leaders and school advisers have to deal with diversity between schools and must adjust their strategies to the level of capacities of the school. So important questions for school leaders and for school advisers are:

1. How can we evaluate the level of capacities in a school?
2. What can we do in order to move from the present-day level of the capacities to the next higher level?

### **Three capacities and four phases of development**

Our working hypothesis is that the general capacity of the school to develop, to realise and to evaluate its own policy depends on the quality of three specific internal capacities: the personal, the interpersonal and the organisational capacity in the school (Mitchell and Sackney, 2000; Verbiest, 2004; Sackney, 2005). The personal capacity consists of the active, reflective and critical (re)construction of knowledge. This personal capacity develops when teachers and school leaders — trying to improve the results of the pupils — reflect on their behaviour in the classroom and in the school and when they reflect on their implied mental models. It develops when they investigate and try to improve their thinking and acting, using scientific theories and examples of good practices.

Interpersonal capacity consists in the ability of teachers and school leaders to learn together and work together on shared purposes and on the basis of a shared vision. This interpersonal capacity develops when the staff and the school leader (a) share a vision, expressing the improvement of the learning of the pupils; (b) are also learning as a group (collective learning); (c) and share the norms and practices about learning and teaching. Organisational capacity consists of the cultural and structural conditions that create and maintain personal and interpersonal capacity building. Organisational capacity contains structural (financial, organisational) and cultural (a culture of respect, trust and care but also a demanding culture) aspects. Shared and supportive leadership is also an important aspect of this organisational capacity.

It is helpful to view the development of a school as a professional learning community along a continuum. Eaker, DuFour and DuFour (2002) make a distinction in four stages of a continuum: pre-initiation, initiation, developing and sustaining. Each aspect of a professional learning community is described along these four stages. Huffman and Hipp (2003) combine different aspects of school capacities with four levels or phases of development of these capacities. Originally, the authors combine five dimensions of a professional learning community (shared and supportive leadership, shared values and vision, collective learning and application, shared professional practice, supportive conditions) with the phases of school development, described by Fullan (initiation, implementation and institutionalisation). Hipp (2005) adds a fourth (or first) phase: the phase of non-initiation. Hipp (2005) describes each of the dimensions of a professional learning community in the different phases of development. This description leads to a so-called *Professional Learning Community*

*Development Rubric* (PLCDR). Figure 2 shows an example of this elaboration by Hipp (2005):

**Figure 2: PLCDR — Professional Learning Community Development Rubric**

DIMENSION	PHASES OF SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT			
	not initiated	initiation	implementation	incorporation
Shared and supportive leadership.	Leadership is held by school administrators; staff are not empowered around issues of teaching and learning.	Pockets of leadership exist beyond school administrators; staff are nurtured and encouraged to take leadership roles.	Leadership is prevalent across the school; staff share power, authority and responsibility around issues of teaching and learning.	Leadership and decision making are broad-based; empowerment exists around issues of teaching and learning; staff is committed and accountable.

Adapted from Hipp (2005)

We also use these four phases of development and slightly adjust the different capacities, in order to take into account the personal capacity. The Figure 3 shows this combination of the three school capacities with the four phases of development of these capacities.

**Figure 3: PLCDR further adapted**

CAPACITY	PHASES OF SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT			
	not yet initiated	initiated	implemented	incorporated
<b>Personal capacity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>active, reflective and critical (re)construction of knowledge</li> </ul>				
<b>Interpersonal capacity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shared values and shared vision on learning and teaching</li> <li>collective learning and shared practices</li> </ul>				
<b>Organisational capacity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>supportive structural conditions</li> <li>supportive cultural conditions</li> <li>shared, supportive and stimulating leadership</li> </ul>				

In Appendix A is a more elaborated version of this matrix, each cell filled in with a description of the different aspects of the capacities, according to the level of development.

### The evaluation of the phase of development

The *Professional Learning Community Development Rubric* (Hipp, 2005) was designed to be used for school staff to reflect on the school culture and to delineate the progression of specific school level practices that reflect each dimension through each level of change. Such devices are not standardised assessments — but can be used for diagnostic purposes. The

instrument described in appendix A was piloted during a workshop at the ENIRDEM conference 2005<sup>1</sup> by 26 participants (school leaders, consultants, school leader trainers and researchers), divided in four mixed groups. Participants were asked to think about a concrete school and try to apply one or two aspects. The aim of the activity was to discuss applicability of the instrument. The general opinion in the groups was that the instrument can be used for self-evaluation because it can stimulate creative dialogue among staff. According to the participants, tools like the version we describe in appendix A can be used in the first place to make a diagnosis of the level of the capacities of the school and, at the same time, to stimulate a dialogue between the staff. This dialogue in itself can already be a way of improving the interpersonal capacity of the school. The instrument can be used at different times too, to see if there is any progress. There were some reservations about whether different phases can be separated as they are.

### Moving to a higher level

From the perspective of school leaders, advisors and researchers, the question is not only: “In which phase of development are the capacities of the school situated?” An even more important question is “What to do in order to move from the present-day level of the capacities to the next higher level?” We can go a step further and use the tool not only diagnostically. We can adjust the matrix in order to get ideas or suggestions about the second question. We deliberately use the word ‘ideas’ or ‘suggestions’ and not ‘answers’, because the way in which a school can move to a higher level depends on the specific circumstances and possibilities of that school. So it is not possible to give *the* answer to the question of how to move. It is better to formulate some ideas or suggestions that can help schools to move further.

Returning to the analogy between the learning of pupils and school development, we can formulate three criteria the suggestions must meet:

- the suggestions *must take into account the present level of development*. The suggestions must build upon the capacities which have already been developed; that means also that moving to higher levels the school leader or advisor has to recognise that the school and the teachers are already capable to a certain degree and that the role that they play in developing the school can increase;
- the suggestions *must be directed to the next level of development*. The suggestions must be possible to realise, in the sense that the proposed idea is not too far removed from the present situation and can be reached by the school (if necessary and possible with some external support);
- the suggestions *must promote self-directed learning* of the school. Especially in the lower levels of capacity the danger is that schools lean too much on external sources. Although the use of external sources can help a school to move to a higher level, the goal is to improve the capacity of the school so that school can develop, realise and evaluate its own policy. In this sense, the suggestions cannot be too concrete and must leave some space for the school to evaluate the suggestions and to adjust these suggestions to its own situation.

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<sup>1</sup> Verbiest, E., Erčulj, J. (2005) *Building capacity in schools — dealing with diversity between schools*. Workshop at the 14th conference of the European Network for Improving Research and Development in Educational Management. September 22–25, Brno & Telč, the Czech Republic.

Against this background, we expand the matrix in Appendix A, so that there is space for the suggestions on how to move from one phase to another. Figure 4 shows not only the combination of the capacities with the phases of development, but also the combination of the capacities with the suggestions for actions one can undertake to move from a certain phase to the next phase.

**Figure 4: Combination of capacities with suggestions for actions**

CAPACITY	PHASES OF SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIONS						
	not yet initiated	ACTION	initiated	ACTION	implemented	ACTION	incorporated
<b>Personal capacity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• active, reflective and critical (re)construction of knowledge</li> </ul>							
<b>Interpersonal capacity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shared values and shared vision on learning and teaching</li> <li>• collective learning and shared practices</li> </ul>							
<b>Organisational capacity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supportive structural conditions</li> <li>• supportive cultural conditions</li> <li>• shared, supportive and stimulating leadership</li> </ul>							

In the above-mentioned workshop at the ENIRDEM conference in 2005 we asked researchers, consultants and school leaders to describe actions and give suggestions for moving a specific capacity in a school to a higher level. In the workshop a lot of suggestions were made. In Figure 5 one can find some examples of these suggestions.

According to the participants, the instrument can also be used by school leaders to focus on processes (how can we lead the process of school improvement?). In a further stage, these and other suggestions will be tested in research about the development of schools as professional learning communities.

**Figure 5: Suggestions for improving specific school capacity**

<b>Capacity</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>Action</b>
<i>active, reflective and critical (re)construction of knowledge</i>	not yet initiated	initiated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide teachers who show reflective behaviour with information (journals)</li> <li>• stimulate and reward teachers who show reflective behaviour (conference)</li> <li>• invite teachers who show reflective behaviour to tell about in staff meeting</li> <li>• provide teachers who show reflective behaviour with the opportunity to visit other schools or work in external networks</li> </ul>
<i>shared values and visions on learning and the role of the teacher</i>	not yet initiated	initiated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• talking with individual teachers or in small groups, asking about what children must learn, how we know if they have learned and what we do if children do not learn</li> </ul>
<i>collective learning and shared practices</i>	initiated	implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a training programme about collective learning</li> </ul>
<i>supporting conditions — sources, structures and systems</i>	implementation	institutionalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school leader develops with the team a professionalisation programme, connected to the vision and policy of the school</li> </ul>
<i>supporting conditions — culture</i>	not yet initiated	initiated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing knowledge</li> <li>• investing in trust, caring relationships, respect</li> <li>• field visits</li> <li>• reading literature</li> <li>• planning effective team meetings</li> <li>• giving sufficient information by school leader</li> </ul>
<i>supporting conditions — culture</i>	initiated	implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• team dialogue</li> <li>• value-creating process</li> <li>• celebrating success</li> <li>• inter-team work</li> <li>• exchange of experiences</li> <li>• initiating the concept of ‘critical friend’</li> </ul>
<i>supporting conditions — culture</i>	implementation	institutionalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leading innovation projects</li> <li>• learning as a core activity</li> </ul>
<i>supporting, stimulating and shared leadership</i>	not yet initiated	initiated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school management sets up a small management team (or something comparable to it)</li> <li>• person appointed as responsible for disseminating information (giving and receiving information)</li> </ul>

**Figure 5: Suggestions for improving specific school capacity — continuation**

Capacity	from	to	Action
<i>supporting, stimulating and shared leadership</i>	initiated	implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing opportunities for teacher professional development</li> <li>• setting up middle-management teams</li> <li>• team-teaching</li> </ul>
<i>supporting, stimulating and shared leadership</i>	implementation	institutionalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequent opportunities for dialogue among parents, teachers and management</li> <li>• changing responsibilities within teams</li> </ul>

### Conclusion

We have made an analogy between the learning of pupils and the learning of a school. Teachers have to assess the level of capacities of a pupil and have to attune their pedagogical-didactical approaches to this level, in order to bring the capacities to a next level. In this, teachers have to stimulate the self-directed learning of the pupils more and more. This is not always easy for teachers. Their pedagogical-didactical repertoire seems sometimes very restricted and it looks as if they have no alternative for their traditional approach of telling and explaining.

The same goes for school leaders and advisors. They also have to assess the level of capacities of the school and have to attune their approach to this level. Also for school leaders and advisors it seems very difficult to expand their repertoire beyond telling how to do it and a non-directive approach, leaving the school and the teachers to themselves. This contribution tries to expand the repertoire of school leaders and advisors by building on the work of Eaker, DuFour and DuFour (2002) and of Hipp (2005) who combined the idea of school capacity with phases or development in a tool for assessing. We moved a step further by developing this tool into a frame for discussing and finding actions that can bring a school to the next phase of development.

Finally, we point to a pitfall. In general school leaders are enthusiastic about the idea of developing capacities in the school as an alternative approach for external steering. But their enthusiasm often has been tempered by their uncertainty about how to do it. Many school leaders are looking for step-by-step recipes. But the bad news is that there are no such recipes. Not only because there are no general action plans, useful for every school, but also — and more importantly — capacity building requires working on the three specific capacities at the same time. That is because the three capacities depend on each other; they support or hinder each other. For example, collective learning asks not only for individual reflective capacity, but also for organisational capacity such as time and space and a school leader who stimulates and coaches the process of collective learning. In the words of Fullan, when a school asks for help in capacity building, “*we are not offering a menu, but the whole meal*”<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Conversation with Fullan, OISE, Toronto, April 2005

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## APPENDIX A

### CAPACITY BUILDING IN SCHOOLS

<b>PERSONAL CAPACITY: ACTIVE, REFLECTIVE AND CRITICAL (RE)CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE</b>			
<i>Individual teachers reflect on their behaviour in the classroom and in the school, on their implied mental models, and investigate and improve their thinking and acting, using scientific theories and examples of good practices.</i>			
<b>Not yet initiated</b>	<b>Initiated (starting)</b>	<b>Implementation (doing)</b>	<b>Institutionalisation (embedded)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teachers are guided by routines and external directions (i.e. manuals)</li> <li>• behaviour and results of pupils are attributed almost completely to the capacities of the pupils</li> <li>• teachers strive hard to improve their pedagogical and didactical actions</li> </ul>	<p><i>Limited individual reflection.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some teachers reflect on their own on their behaviour in the classroom, asking themselves about the relationship between their behaviour and the results of the pupils</li> <li>• they ask themselves questions about the influence of their actions on the results/behaviour of their pupils</li> <li>• some teachers use scientific insights to analyse and improve their practices</li> <li>• some teachers visit other schools to find good practices and/or work in external networks</li> </ul>	<p><i>Broader aspiration for improvement; use of research to look carefully into one's own actions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• several teachers critically research their own underlying views about education and bringing up children</li> <li>• several teachers see a relationship between results/behaviour of pupils and their own actions and strive for improvement of their pedagogical-didactical actions</li> <li>• a number of teachers systematically (use of data and action research) tries to research the effects of their actions</li> <li>• several teachers use scientific insights to analyse their practices and to improve them</li> <li>• several teachers visit other schools to find good practices and/or work in external networks</li> </ul>	<p><i>Systematic and widespread critical reflection on one's own actions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is a strong conviction that results/behaviour of pupils are mainly determined by pedagogical-didactical actions</li> <li>• one systematically strives to improve the pedagogical-didactical actions</li> <li>• throughout the school research is used systematically (use of data, actions research) to clarify and improve the effects of teachers' actions</li> <li>• scientific insights aimed at improving the practices are systematically spread and used in the school</li> <li>• visiting other schools and functioning in external networks is organised on a school level</li> </ul>

<b>SHARED VALUES AND VISIONS ON LEARNING AND THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER</b>			
<i>Team members and school management share the vision of the school that is strongly focused on improving the learning of the pupils; they support norms of behaviour which guide decisions on learning and teaching.</i>			
<b>Not yet initiated</b>	<b>Initiated (starting)</b>	<b>Implementation (doing)</b>	<b>Institutionalisation (embedded)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is no school vision or it is not being supported (paper vision)</li> <li>• there is a lot of difference in views between the team members about the vision and the values the school stands for</li> <li>• the vision does not focus or hardly focuses on the learning of pupils, on the quality of learning</li> </ul>	<p><i>Values and norms are accepted.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• values and norms are being accepted, but not yet by everyone</li> <li>• a collective process of the development of vision is initiated</li> <li>• visions and values have not been researched fully yet</li> <li>• there is more or less a focus on the learning of pupils, but not everyone has the same opinion about this</li> </ul>	<p><i>Focus on pupils. High expectations.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the vision and values are being discussed and researched by the entire team so that there is a consensus on the vision</li> <li>• the vision and values express high expectations of the learning of the pupils</li> <li>• people tune their views on learning and teaching to each other</li> </ul>	<p><i>Shared vision leads learning and teaching.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a shared vision and values are clearly present in the team</li> <li>• the vision leads the decisions about learning and teaching and about school reform</li> </ul>

<b>COLLECTIVE LEARNING AND SHARED PRACTICES</b>			
<i>Team members share and evaluate information together and co-operate in planning, solving problems and improving the learning of pupils.</i>			
<b>Not yet initiated</b>	<b>Initiated (starting)</b>	<b>Implementation (doing)</b>	<b>Institutionalisation (embedded)</b>
<p><i>Sharing of information. Dialogue.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>team members work isolated, there is no collective learning</li> <li>as a team one does not talk about educational themes, as a team one talks mainly about topics which do not directly relate to learning and teaching</li> <li>there are no clues that team members learn from each other, to improve the quality of learning of pupils, people do not observe each other, one does not share experiences, one does not give feedback to others, one does not act on the basis of what one discusses</li> <li>team members do not evaluate their own functioning</li> </ul>	<p><i>Co-operation. Deep learning. Problem solving.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one mainly talks about matters that do not directly relate to education and talks less about their own teaching and its influence on the learning of pupils</li> <li>subgroups start to make plans to improve their teaching</li> <li>some teachers start teaching each other; they encourage each other, share experiences, observe each other and give feedback on the basis of those observations</li> <li>collective learning is limited mainly to the question of effective actions (how?)</li> <li>individual teachers or subgroups start to implement what they have learned from each other.</li> <li>only those who have just started teaching have mentor- and/or coaching programmes</li> </ul>	<p><i>Application and development of knowledge, skills and strategies.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meetings are organised for team members to work together and to solve problems concerning learning and teaching</li> <li>as a team one discusses the quality of teaching and its influence on the learning of pupils</li> <li>many team members encourage each other</li> <li>many team members observe each other and give feedback on the basis of those observations</li> <li>collective learning processes also concern the underlying mental models and moral considerations that play a role in the actions of teachers</li> <li>team members informally and formally share experiences of new approaches to improve the education pupils receive, team members regularly evaluate their own functioning together with other team members</li> <li>there are mentor- and coaching programmes for everybody on a voluntary basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the team implements newly gained insights in their work</li> <li>the team shares information and co-operates to develop new knowledge, skills and strategies</li> <li>the team systematically discusses the work of the pupils and the teaching practices which have been tuned to them</li> <li>the team looks for solutions together to improve the learning of pupils and carries these plans out systematically</li> <li>the team systematically evaluates its own functioning and corrects this systematically</li> <li>there are formal and informal mentor- and coaching programmes</li> </ul>

<b>SUPPORTING CONDITIONS — SOURCES, STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS</b>			
<i>Consist of possibilities (organisational, financial and material) that enable team members to research practices and to learn individually and collectively.</i>			
<b>Not yet initiated</b>	<b>Initiated (starting)</b>	<b>Implementation (doing)</b>	<b>Institutionalisation (embedded)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sources, structures and systems are insufficient or are insufficiently made use of to promote learning of the team and of the pupils</li> <li>no time is being allocated to interaction</li> <li>there is no policy on professionalisation</li> <li>no attention is being paid to the communication structure</li> </ul>	<p><i>Identification and evaluation of the needs of sources, structures and systems. Professionalisation is mainly individual.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one acknowledges the need of sources, structures and systems that are needed to promote the learning of the team and the pupils</li> <li>the necessary (minimal) instructional aids and technological support is present</li> <li>professionalisation is mainly an initiative of the individual teacher</li> <li>some teachers allocate time and space for interaction, but other things often take priority</li> <li>communication about work is rather more formal</li> </ul>	<p><i>Suitable use of systems and sources. Professionalisation is becoming a policy.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sources, structures and systems are most of the time suited to promote the learning of the team and the pupils</li> <li>one has sufficient instructional aids and technological support and uses them</li> <li>professionalisation is set up in accordance with policy; one takes stock of needs and offers possibilities on an individual and on a school level</li> <li>time and space is allocated and used for interaction by school</li> <li>communication about work is both formal and informal</li> </ul>	<p><i>Maximum use and renewal of systems and sources. Professionalisation tuned to reform.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>innovative practices result in sources, structures and systems that promote the continuous learning of the team and the pupils</li> <li>presence and use of instructional aids and technological support is being organised in accordance with policy</li> <li>the professionalisation policy is being derived from the innovations that one thinks necessary</li> <li>possibilities of interactions for team members are systematically planned and connected to the professionalisation policy</li> <li>one uses a multitude of ways to communicate with each other</li> </ul>

SUPPORTING CONDITIONS — CULTURE			
<i>Comprises respect, trust and positive caring relationships, norms and critical research and improvement in the entire school.</i>			
<b>Not yet initiated</b>	<b>Initiated (starting)</b>	<b>Implementation (doing)</b>	<b>Institutionalisation (embedded)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one does not make an effort to bring respect, trust, safety, recognition and appreciation into the culture of the school</li> <li>• there is no mutual sense of responsibility for the learning of the pupils</li> <li>• there is no culture of continual improvement</li> <li>• team members work isolated</li> </ul>	<p><i>Caring relationships and trust, some individuals support a culture of respect and innovation.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are attempts to bring respect, trust, safety, recognition and appreciation into the culture of the school</li> <li>• some team members are open and trust each other</li> <li>• care and co-operation is found in some team members</li> <li>• some team members constantly aim to improve their teaching</li> </ul>	<p><i>Broad trust and respect. Broad constant aim for improvement. Recognition and appreciation (celebration of successes).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• team members make an effort to bring respect, trust, safety, recognition and appreciation into the culture of the school</li> <li>• many team members are open and trust each other</li> <li>• care and co-operation is found in many team members</li> <li>• many team members constantly aim for improving their teaching</li> <li>• one appreciates and celebrates successes publicly</li> </ul>	<p><i>Taking risk to innovate. Mutual effort to guarantee the culture of trust and respect.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trust, respect and openness characterise the entire team</li> <li>• the team tries to achieve a long-lasting improvement of education based on critical reflections</li> <li>• the team takes care of maintaining the culture of respect, trust, safety, recognition and appreciation in the school</li> </ul>

<b>SUPPORTING, STIMULATING AND SHARED LEADERSHIP</b>			
<i>School management supports and stimulates the teachers, shares influence and authority and promotes and supports team leadership.</i>			
<b>Not yet initiated</b>	<b>Initiated (starting)</b>	<b>Implementation (doing)</b>	<b>Institutionalisation (embedded)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leaderships is exclusively practised by school management</li> <li>• there is hardly support (psychological, concerning content) of teachers by school staff</li> <li>• school staff does not share information with the team and does not involve the team in decision making</li> <li>• team members are not capable or are not given the opportunity of practising leadership with regard to learning and teaching</li> </ul>	<p><i>Supporting of teachers. Inform and ask for advice. Leadership roles for team members.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school management supports the teachers mainly psychologically</li> <li>• school management informs the teachers about important decisions</li> <li>• school management sometimes asks for advice and takes its own decision afterwards</li> <li>• team members are encouraged to take on leadership roles</li> <li>• school management sets up a small management team (or something comparable to it)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Support and stimulate leadership in the team. Sharing of influence, authority and responsibility.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school management supports the teachers psychologically and supports them concerning content</li> <li>• school management stimulates teachers to reflect and to further develop themselves</li> <li>• school management involves the entire team in decisions</li> <li>• team members have influence, authority and responsibility with regard to learning and teaching, throughout the entire school</li> <li>• leadership is noticeable</li> <li>• team members can initiate changes</li> <li>• school management fully and timely informs the team members about important matters, both when asked and uninvited</li> </ul>	<p><i>The entire team is involved in decision taking. The entire team is involved and responsible.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• team members practice their leadership with regard to learning and teaching</li> <li>• team members are involved and responsible</li> <li>• team members have access to key information</li> <li>• the board and other persons concerned accept mutual responsibility of the team for learning and teaching</li> </ul>

## **ON THE CHALLENGE OF DIVERSITY: CASE STUDIES OF HEADTEACHERS AND SCHOOL QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

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### **Introduction**

The paper concentrates on work of two basic school (6–15) headteachers. What we regard as the dominant feature of their activities are the efforts to manage quality in school. The term ‘quality management’ is used to refer to a set of activities leading either to maintaining the existing standard of school operation (provided it is perceived as good), or to change what is regarded as malfunctioning — towards a more suitable state of affairs. We relied on two relational frameworks: the content-level definition of school quality management and the concept of invitational leadership. The two frameworks will be used to analyse the actions of two headteachers, to compare them against each other and to relate the resulting information to the wider context of school management in contemporary Czech society.

### **Relational frameworks**

Leadership is an important aspect of quality management. The available theoretical knowledge concerning leadership is vast and internally differentiated, which is true of both general management and its sub-discipline, school management. Literature on this topic generally agrees that good leadership is a key determining factor of successful school operation and positive change in school (e.g. Day, 2000; Jackson, 2000; Harris, 2003; Harris and Bennett, 2001; Mortimore, 1998; Stoll and Fink, 1997; and many others). There has been disagreement about what exactly constitutes good leadership or what it means to be a good leader. Theory does not lead to consensus — which in principle is impossible to achieve. What is evident is the emphasis on contextual conditioning, i.e. the specificity of each particular situation. Stoll and Fink comment thus:

“Does good leadership mean emphasising continuity, or change? Are good leaders efficient managers, or rather change initiators, educational programme leaders, politicians, facilitators, supervisors, administrators, or moral authorities?”

(1997, p. 101)

And they do not hesitate to answer the question immediately — fully and in line with other authors — “Yes, but what matters is the situation.” (ibid.) The same answer is provided by contingency approaches, which emphasise the real-life situation of the organisation, and therefore the leader, rather than abstract, universal rules (e.g. Morgan, 1986). We have to learn that nothing is predictable and chaos is a natural thing. It has long been argued by management theorists with reference to the theory of chaos that dealing with chaos can be regarded as an opportunity for the organisation and its leadership. The core of leadership

consists in improving willingness and capacity to change, formulating a vision and implementing it in the organisation. Obviously it is a matter of specific circumstances how this is to be done (Peters, 1987).

The very impossibility of consensus about good leadership has led to agreement about several basic requirements for leadership: a good leader is ready for change, flexible, person-oriented, can share leadership, supports cooperation, prefers certain modes of communication and is open towards the external environment.

**The first part of our conceptual basis** for analysing the work of the headteachers was provided by the *content-level definition of work* of a school leader striving to improve school quality management. Based on this assumption, a school leader should especially (e.g. Day, 2000; Leithwood, Jantzi, Steinbach, 1998; Nezvalová, 2002; Roncelli-Vaupot, 2000; Verbiest, 2000):

- have a vision of quality of operation of the institution s/he leads;
- aim at achieving this quality;
- take care that the school concentrates on considering pupils' needs;
- create scope for involving other concerned persons;
- support career development of the school staff;
- develop adequate forms of communication in school;
- handle problems and conflicts sensitively;
- adjust the organisational structure and delegation of powers to the needs of quality development.

These categories of the content-level definition of quality management will also be used in the analysis and comparison of work of the headteachers under investigation.

**The second part of the conceptual basis** of this paper is the concept of *invitational leadership*. Its dominant element is a welcoming attitude towards other people and oneself, a kind of 'invitation' (Day, 2000; Harris, 2003; Stoll and Fink, 1997). The concept stresses the importance of processing the 'invitation' cognitively. Human behaviour is a product of how a person views the world — each person endows sensory stimuli with meaning as part of a conscious process. "These meanings are far beyond the reach of sensory receptors, involving individual experiences such as feelings, desires, aspirations and ways of regarding oneself, other people and the world" (Purkey and Schmidt, 1987, p. 27). Each person, even a school leader, makes conscious decisions about how s/he will behave — based on his/her perception and understanding of things (e.g. the theory of mental models — Craik, 1943; Ross, 1990). Therefore what a leader may perceive as a favourable environment or an 'invitation' need not be interpreted in the same way by other people; they may regard the same environment as unfavourable or even hostile. Purkey and Novak (1990) discuss *invitation* and *dis-invitation*, describing the positive and negative interaction and their subjective cognitive processing that contributes to the process of shaping self-perception of people and therefore also attitudes and behaviour.

In child-rearing and education a preferred model of *invitational leadership* is discussed, centred around four elements: optimism, respect, trust and intentional supportive activity (Stoll and Fink, 1997). Optimism is based mainly on trust in people and their potential to learn and grow. Respect is associated with acknowledgment of human individuality. Trust relates especially to a belief of the leader that cooperation is feasible. And finally, support means that a leader encourages other people to take initiative in an efficient way (Day, 2000).

A good school leader is drawn by his/her beliefs and cognitive processing of situations towards decisions of a certain kind. S/he operates based on an 'inviting' attitude — no matter whether s/he assumes the role of a manager, facilitator, advisor or change initiator with regard to the perceived needs of the organisation (Stoll and Fink, 1997).

We regard both conceptual bases as compatible, complementary and mutually interactive. We will therefore attempt to present them in discussing headteachers' activities in relation to school quality initiation and management. We will review what headteachers do or do not do in this respect and why, and try to capture the connections between the content and style of school quality management efforts.

### **Methodology**

The surveys that gave rise to the two case studies presented in this paper were undertaken in 2003 (Headteacher A) and 2005 (Headteacher B). The former was part of a research project called "Czech School Culture and Strategies for its Development" (Czech Science Foundation, 406/01/1078). The latter was part of another project called "Democracy in Czech School" (Czech Science Foundation, 406/09/0609). The data collected in both surveys have already been published (Pol et al., 2005; Pol and Novotný, 2005). Only selected evidence from both case studies is used for the purpose of analysis and comparison of the content and style of work of the two headteachers, using a qualitative approach. The main methods of data collection were:

- semi-structured interviews with the headteachers, a number of teachers and representatives of other parties participating in the operation of both schools (parents, the municipality etc.);
- observing of the schools in operation.

Both case studies share a number of features. They concerned headteachers of basic schools in small towns with a population of approximately 2,000 (School A) and 3,000 (School B). School A has 340 pupils and 25 teachers; School B has 350 pupils and 23 teachers. Both headteachers are mathematicians but their second specialisation is different (physics with Headteacher A and sports with Headteacher B). Both headteachers were recruited from outside their schools and this is their first headship. They completed the currently highest qualification training for headteachers of schools in the Czech Republic after taking their posts (Service studies II). Both found a good deputy head from among the school staff, with whom they get along well. Both headteachers came to their schools with an intention of changing the existing situation, innovating, and improving the quality of a number of aspects of school operation. A number of respondents have reported that both schools were stagnating. Striving for quality had not been an explicit part of the school agenda.

There are, however, a number of respects in which the two headteachers differ.

### **The content-level of quality management in work of the headteachers**

#### ***School vision and quality***

Vision is by no means a simple concept and in schools can be studied only indirectly — which was the case of the two headteachers, too. The school vision of Headteacher A has a clear focus on pupils and their needs; the school he would like to see is a school with efficient staff improving their qualifications continuously and interested not only in their subjects, but in the development of the school as a whole, a school that reflects the general public demand

(formulated somewhat vaguely by the headteacher) for provision of training to people that will be an asset to the society both in present and future.

As for Headteacher B, his vision is that of a well-organised school with rules available and understandable to everybody. He is of the opinion that the school should live for children and try to reach every single pupil; its operation and rules are to be centred around children, not adults. His vision also clearly involves a close link to the external environment, namely the municipality.

Despite some partial differences in emphasis, both headteachers share a broadly acceptable vision of school quality and its management, whose focus is primarily on the pupil and also on the adults in the school, and also on achieving harmony between school operation and the external environment. The difference consists mainly in how the two headteachers view the external relations of their schools. While Headteacher A does not consider the relations between the school and its immediate environment (parents and the municipality) to any greater extent and tends to stress the broader context, the external focus of Headteacher B is explicitly on the municipality (and parents) which are the pool of pupils for the school; the broad social demand is not an explicit component of his vision. The vision of Headteacher A accentuates the future more significantly (he mentions explicitly the time span of twenty years) while the vision of Headteacher B is rather situational and tends to accentuate the existing state (his answers stress activities and tasks to be completed in the near future; he does not mention more distant future). The visions of both headteachers nevertheless implicitly and partly also explicitly express their belief that change is needed in their schools.

### *Striving for quality*

Innovative efforts and/or particular change tend to be stronger and more often than not also more successful in those schools where quality of work and the potential need for change are discussed explicitly. Headteacher A emphasises the strategic level and uses mainly formal tools (documents prepared by himself; meetings where he informs the staff of the desired objectives of further efforts for development of the school and the teachers; written guidelines he prepares for everybody else). These tendencies are however not viewed universally by all teachers and other adults associated with the school as genuinely supportive activities. Headteacher A views critically the groups of adults with whom he is not getting along well, but does not search for ways of dealing with the disagreement.

The supportive activities chosen by Headteacher A reflect his priorities and his assessment of the situation inside the school. He has a certain doubt about work productivity (especially among teachers) and chooses to rely on comparisons with criteria originating outside the school (e.g. comparisons of pupils' performance). The people in the school do not understand these comparisons very much and are not especially enthusiastic about them. These criteria of quality change frequently and are not consistent with the measurement tools used in the school. Headteacher A often uses supervisory class visits, trying to provide the teachers with feedback on their teaching as far as he is able to. He presents his idea of quality in very negative terms, largely by pointing out phenomena that he perceives as problematic. Headteacher A is therefore trying to discuss the issues of school quality, but — as the teachers report — does not present his ideas attractively enough. His presentation of these issues tends to breed conflict and there is a lack of agreement between him and a number of teachers.

The specific efforts of Headteacher A were aimed at the very core of school operation. First he strengthened the formal position of children by putting through explicit inclusion of children's rights in the School Code. Then he tried to come up with some new impulses in

order to make school operation more efficient, on the one hand by developing a number of important programmes and other documents that had been missing in the school till then (e.g. a Long-term Plan of School Development), on the other hand by putting more emphasis on advanced in-service education of teachers. He also, with little success, emphasised the issues of school development by organising and chairing internal teacher workshops focusing on reflection and joint discussion of the school's future. The change supported by the headteacher targeted neither the parents nor the municipality. Neither provided him with major stimuli for cooperation.

Headteacher B strives for quality, too. His style is based on his immediate and visible presence in the school, on support, direct communication with people and agreement directed towards creating scope for other people so that they can work on their tasks independently. This approach makes the teachers view their headteacher as an open, supportive and also caring person. Headteacher B has a clear primary focus on the present or near future.

His idea of quality is associated with good performance of individual pupils, competence of teachers to handle the tasks they are charged with, and a good public image of the school. When defining good teacher work, he applies specific requirements, which are subsequently understood and accepted by people in the school. This interpretation of quality is communicated both inside and outside the school. The headteacher tries to influence quality by his active participation in change. He develops sets of measures to improve individual aspects of school operation and tries to apply them to other adults and children in the school and supports initiatives in this respect among other teachers. He spends much time on communication about these issues with people in the school and around it.

As far as specific change is concerned, Headteacher B attempted to improve the public image of the school and cooperate with the municipality and pupils' parents. These efforts however consisted largely of activities directed at making the internal life of the school, especially teaching and class-work in general, more efficient using ways understandable to the public. Among other things, he enhanced the teaching of information science (with support from the municipality). He also strove to enhance delegation of tasks inside the school (e.g. through subject and other committees, but also through specific school projects) and increase the awareness of information inside the school (based on the core of a future electronic information system of the school, but mainly notice boards, bulletin boards, lists of teacher and pupil responsibilities outside and inside classrooms and throughout the school — in combination with better informal communication). His efforts were also directed at involving parents in the school's activities to a greater extent. He established a new parent representation in the school (although his expectations regarding its activities were not matched by what was achieved) and attempted to involve parents more in teacher-parent meetings (he instituted, with little success, the practice of meetings of the teacher-parent association chaired by selected parents). The school underwent a crucial test when the main building was reconstructed during his tenure. It had to operate temporarily in several other buildings, which affected the process of change itself and put specific demands on the leadership processes.

Explicit efforts of the headteachers aimed at quality management and change initiation are evident in both cases. These efforts resulted in a need to introduce a new explicit protocol and rules. Headteacher A first attempted to get the staff define the rules in joint discussion, but did not succeed. He therefore started to rely fully on external criteria, which are however not absolutely consistent and keep changing. This has resulted in a situation when the teachers do not fully understand what the headteacher really means by quality. Headteacher B uses

criteria developed within the school (based on his, but also other teachers' ideas) and people essentially agree about them. He has achieved a broader understanding of what targeting quality means.

The priorities of the two headteachers therefore differ to some extent. Headteacher A has focused his innovative efforts mainly inside the school, on pupils and teachers, and has been attempting to find support among the broader community of professionals in education beyond the scope of the municipality. The change he has initiated hardly concerns work involving parents and municipalities. The focus of Headteacher B seems to be more balanced: he focuses both inside and outside the school. It is important that in both cases the innovative efforts are centred around the key process in school — learning and teaching. The change described above may, in a certain sense, be understood in terms of intentional supportive activities on the level of strategic management and school leadership; its implementation then leads to, especially in the case of Headteacher B, a number of other, more or less successful intentional supportive activities on the operational level, with a more subtle focus on everyday school life. One positive link can be traced in Headteacher B's clear orientation to the present or near future (the steps contributing to the change are not too big and are therefore more likely to succeed — and they are quite frequent) and the other positive features are the atmosphere, his management style and the way Headteacher B is perceived by others — teachers are convinced of his optimism, support, respect and trust towards them.

### *Pupils as the main focus of change*

Having a vision, speaking about the change that is needed and striving to achieve it is important. At least as important is the question of what particularly the change should focus on. Schools should be concerned primarily with the pupils' well-being. There are many aspects to focusing on pupils. The question is not only to which extent the child's needs are considered, but also how much real scope for participation in learning, teaching and other aspects of school life each pupil is given. The answer to this question is not always positive: in a number of important aspects pupils often tend to remain 'outside the school gate' — schools are places dominated by adults while pupils rather accept passively what has been decided by the adults. We do not wish to oversimplify — there is of course much legitimate scope for adult decision-making in schools. But the scope for true participation of pupils is often insufficient.

Both headteachers are explicitly pupil-focused and have initiated some significant change in this respect. These changes focus upon instruction, but also on creating self-governing pupil organisations at the school level (A) or on the class and school levels (B). Headteacher A has initiated a pupils' parliament in his school while Headteacher B provides external support to the parallel, but not always fully coordinated structures of pupils' class self-government in individual classes on the one hand and the school parliament at the school level on the other. The parliament is supervised by its initiator, the deputy head. Headteacher B has initiated a large annual joint event participated in by both teachers and pupils, who nominate the "pupils of the year" — those pupils who have performed very well not only in terms of school results and not only in the 'main subjects'.

There are however differences in the focus on the pupil between the two headteachers. Although their statements do not differ very much, our analysis of their statements has shown that what they mean is not the same thing. Headteacher A is an advocate of 'putting the child in the centre' — talking to him/her, trying to identify his/her needs and respect them. Headteacher B, on the other hand, has taken the position that the role of the school is to 'take care of the child' — while it is basically assumed that we know what the child needs and we

should be ready to give it to him/her. Headteacher A has not found any substantial support for his approach in his school — unlike Headteacher B.

The intention of Headteacher A to search for individual pupils' needs and making them a starting point for school's activities is extremely demanding in terms of teachers' professional skills, time and methods of work. It involves risks that teachers seem to be aware of implicitly. This approach is analogous to the one Headteacher A used with the teachers. He wanted to take their attitudes as a starting point and used seminars in the initial period of his tenure for this purpose. The problem seems to be not with the intention, but with the method of implementation. The approach applied by Headteacher B is less unusual and involves smaller risks. His attitude to pupils is, in a sense, analogous to how he approaches teachers and other adults in the school.

In consequence, both schools are characterised by the dominance of an adult culture with some features of an educationist culture (Pol et al., 2005). Headteacher A has been trying to establish a focus on the pupil inside an adult culture, perhaps even despite it (Pol et al., 2005). To do this, he uses methods that cause misunderstandings between him and some other adults. Headteacher B does not oppose the culture of adults that prevails in his school. He is convinced of the need to establish order and discipline so that the pupils can receive good care and this is why he introduced the information system directly linked to the activities of children and adults in the school. There is a general agreement between him and the other adults in the school about how to approach children and work with them.

Both schools keep providing — for different reasons — scope for relatively significant involvement of pupils, especially beyond classes as such, but evidently in arrangements defined and controlled by adults.

### *Creating scope for participation of other parties*

Schools expect to involve pupils' parents and representatives of the broader public in school life in a meaningful way. Both headteachers are aware of this but each deals with the issue in his own way. Headteacher A has an inward orientation within the school. His aim has been to create conditions for what he perceives as good teacher work and to motivate teachers to strive to improve the school's work in class and beyond the classroom. The disagreement between Headteacher A and some of the teachers about the school's struggle for quality has led to a situation when some teachers do not take advantage of the scope for individual initiatives. Scope for participation was offered to them in a form which they do not find attractive enough. For example, the internal seminars focusing on school development and teacher education and training organised by the headteacher disregarded how teachers perceived and interpreted this offer. The school addresses pupils' parents in a traditional way. It is usually only on special occasions (theatrical performances, trips) that parents are invited to the school beyond the usual meetings of the teacher-parent association. The headteacher's communication with the municipality and business organisations is scarce and relatively strained. He has not been planning any significant change in relations with the external environment.

Headteacher B regards increasing teacher involvement and enhancing relations with pupils' parents and the municipality as a priority. As far as teachers are concerned, he has been relatively successful thanks to the style he has chosen and the fact that their views of what constitutes desirable educational practice are basically the same. In this respect, Headteacher B accentuates good operation of formal parent representation and the system of teacher-parent association meetings. He communicates with the municipality on the basis of the town school

board and other formal and informal structures frequently and with great success, especially with the head of the municipality school board, who often comes to the school.

As far as creation of scope for activities of third parties is concerned, there are relatively big differences between the two headteachers — they are underlain by the above-described differences between their visions but they are also closely related to the headteachers' individual styles of work. While Headteacher B is generally more aware of the importance of this area and has been relatively successful in introducing some major change, Headteacher A has not been a successful innovator in this respect. He is aware of this, judging from his statements, but his situation seems to be more complicated because the municipality has other priorities than the school. Although the context should not prevent the headteacher from striving to achieve his goals, it can certainly pose some significant obstacles. Headteacher A is to be expected to analyse the external relations, identify potential obstacles and adjust his style of cooperation with the municipality to this information.

### *Support for career development of school staff*

Career development, especially among the teaching staff in schools, is generally regarded as one of the prerequisites for school development (e.g. Lazarová, 2005). It may be supported in different ways. Neither headteacher underestimates this aspect — both have incorporated it into their strategy of change. It is interesting to follow how differently they approach the issue and which results they have been able to achieve.

Headteacher A, who perceives his teaching staff as a hard-working, but not very efficient team, regards further education of teachers as a clear and explicit priority. He values those activities of further education which are consistent with his educational values, tending to prefer long-term over short-term activities, believing that the former may be expected to lead to change. He believes that the results of further education of teachers should have a greater impact than simply the use of a certain teaching new method by a certain teacher. His expectations are high and perhaps even unrealistic from the point of view of some teachers. They sometimes tend to resist the pressure for career development from the headteacher. Some of them refused to take part in the in-house course organised by the headteacher.

Headteacher B does not stress the importance of further education of teachers explicitly (but does not question it either). He makes a number of small, but consistent steps to assist teachers' improvement, mainly within in the school (in their 'home' environment, at work). These help teachers to motivate each other through cooperation and informal communication, in their teaching and in extra-curricular activities. He informs them fully (sometimes in rather formal ways) about their work and operation of the school.

It seems that unlike Headteacher B, Headteacher A has not been successful in turning his intentions regarding further teacher education into reality. Headteacher A is trying to model teacher career development in his school on contemporary needs and recommendations of a broader educational policy while fulfilling his ambitions of a 'modern leader'. He supports forms of education currently regarded as more efficient (Lazarová, 2005) and would like to see his teachers transformed (which is, however, hardly possible). Moreover, he has not discussed with them their own needs versus the needs of the school. His actions are in consequence in conflict with the context of his management — his expectations surpass the needs of the teachers themselves by far. Headteacher B acts in a subtler way. His behaviour may be regarded as a combination of less of an ambition to become a 'modern leader', but more respect to the contemporary period and the school's tradition as well as the teachers' needs.

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*Communication with school staff*

Communication of headteachers with school staff is a crucial factor determining their leadership. There are important differences in this respect between the two headteachers under analysis. Headteacher A spreads information through formal, 'paper' channels, manages the school 'from his desk', does not feel strong at informal communication (increasingly, due to the failure of his effort to initiate broader cooperation in the school). This is also how he is perceived by others, in contrast to his patronising, but relatively popular predecessor, still remembered by many of the teachers. This results in a lack of communication between him and other people both inside and outside the school.

Headteacher B prefers direct communication, manages the school 'while walking around the building', builds relations with emphasis on the professional, but to a certain extent also personal level. He is perceived as demanding, active, interested, willing to listen and ready to deal with issues in a way that leaves everybody satisfied. The differences between the styles of communication of the two headteachers are evident and there is no doubt that it is Headteacher B who is more successful in communication with school staff and people outside the school.

Communication is related to the key elements of the concept of invitational leadership in a significant way. Headteacher A has an air of a person somewhat disappointed by not having been understood by a number of the teachers and the broader public regarding what he wanted to implement for the sake of the pupils and the school. As far as his attitude towards pupils is concerned, he is an educational optimist; on the other hand, his belief about the developmental potential of adults in the school is wavering. He is aware of some of his weaknesses and does not believe he can get rid of them. He has not been successful in getting through to a number of people in the school and around. Headteacher A is dissatisfied and even considers resignation. We believe that he did strive to implement the concept of invitational leadership implicitly — he was trying to invite teachers as well as pupils to formulate the vision and certain rules of school life in a joint discussion, to learn together. Several failures seem to have deepened his scepticism about cooperation with teachers and have left him pessimistic. Since invitational leadership is based on optimism and trust, the lack of these qualities in Headteacher A became a problem. One major cause of the communication problems seems to be that Headteacher A has not yet succeeded in discussing with the teachers their ideas about cooperation within the school and school development.

Headteacher B succeeded in exploiting the potential of the teachers and the school (rather intuitively, without deeper analysis). His starting point was the existing potential of the teachers and the school: he accepted it and, respecting the potential and its limitations, is striving for school development. How Headteacher B interprets the context is very similar to the interpretations of the teachers and other adults in the school and around. Optimism, an atmosphere of understanding and trust are then readily available. Headteacher B believes that adults in the school can work 'as they are expected' and tries to encourage them to do so sensitively and often intuitively. He believes his task is to harmonise the processes and relations in the school and has been successful in doing so. He values well-informed staff, adherence to rules, discussion, agreement and compromise. He is trying to communicate to people that he respects them and they accept his efforts positively. There is harmony between them.

Both headteachers have introduced a change in communication in their respective schools, using two different styles, which have received different acclaim and have thus opened

different possibilities for cooperation on school work quality with people in the school and around.

### *Handling problems and conflicts*

Problem and conflict handling represents a sensitive area of management in each particular school. This is where a sense of safety, the emotional setup of the participants of school life, their devotion to the cause and their willingness to cooperate begin. Here, too, we have found that the approaches of the two headteachers differ significantly.

Headteacher A believes in agreement about the formal rules of school development, which he develops mostly himself. He is however not always able to communicate these rules to others adequately. We must admit that despite our efforts to understand the circumstances leading to these rules, we do not have enough data to be able to understand them well. The issues are of a personal and relational nature, which are hard to see into from the position of a stranger. Headteacher A clearly strove to develop these rules together with the others first, but his efforts met with certain obstacles. It seems that in parallel, Headteacher A tended himself to develop crucial school documents that had been missing and present them to others for discussion/approval. The teachers, but also the Deputy Head are, however, only vaguely aware of the existence and contents of these key school documents. These documents go far beyond operational issues. If some points included in them are reflected in the 'everyday life of teachers and the school', there is an imminent risk of conflict. The headteacher sometimes perceives these conflicts as personal, but his communication about them does not reflect the fact. He tends to avoid conflicts and sometimes even ignores them. He says that the main subjective reason is his lack of self-confidence in conflict situations. In some cases, however, the reasons are 'objective'. The Deputy Head plays the role of a filter between the headteacher and most teachers, which is why the headteacher learns about many problems too late or does not learn about them at all.

Headteacher B emphasises explicit rules as a means of preventing problems and conflicts in the school. It is usually him who creates these rules or cooperates on their creation (e.g. with the trade union) and communicates them to the others (sometimes negotiates their acceptance). He requires the teachers to develop similar rules on the class level. Although problem-solving procedures are not always transparent, the teachers and other adults in the school regard this method of work as acceptable. The headteacher prefers to deal with conflicts (or rather potential conflicts as he says) immediately, through direct communication with people, aiming at agreement if possible. He values harmony between people and the ability to reach compromise and takes care that conflicts do not become too personal or do not turn into open confrontation. The teachers appreciate this.

Headteacher A is basically trying to get along with people, no matter that his relations with some of them are not too good. It can hardly be said that Headteacher A is trying to change in this respect — he is aware of this weakness of his, but is not trying to get rid of it. He fails to consider the existing habits associated with working together in the school and pressure for the teachers to pursue activities regarded by some people in a different light. Thus he is mistrusted and is viewed as a person who does not show enough respect towards others. As far as trust is concerned, Headteacher A is not willing to face conflicts and deal with them consistently and is rather sceptical of his critics. He shows little trust in others and himself. This seems to be at the root of his tendency towards passivity as far as dealing with conflicts and problems is concerned. Headteacher B seems to bring to his school what it can accept, without necessarily having analysed the situation in a rational way. The teachers and other

people in the school and around are people he is willing to and can reach agreement with — the ability to respect people is undoubtedly one of his strengths.

Headteacher A has no constructive opponent in the school or outside who might help him to reflect on and adjust his approach. The Deputy Head is always eager to agree which does not help the headteacher very much in his situation. Those teachers who oppose one or another of his plans now and then are not constructive opponents either. There is no constructive opponent outside the school either. As far as Headteacher B is concerned, the presence in the school of an internal opponent, the trade union representative, as well as of an external 'critical friend', representing the municipality, is positive. Headteacher B is able to communicate constructively with both. While Headteacher A is exposed to a virtually constant risk that some conflicts or problems that are ignored might deepen (such as quality of work and relations among teachers in the lowest grades), Headteacher B has the situation basically under control.

### *Organisational structure and delegation of powers and authority*

Organisation of school life including delegation of powers and authority in the school are other important factors in supporting school quality management. Both headteachers have embarked upon relatively significant change in this respect.

Headteacher A expects his staff to take initiatives and be active and he continues to perceive the existing state of affairs in the school as not good enough. He attempted to motivate the teachers and other school staff by changing the formal structure. He and the Deputy Head, who manages operational issues, are the Top Management. He established a new formal structure, the Extended Management, to whom he appointed selected teachers and other staff, but the expected effect has not been achieved. The members of the Extended Management team report that the agenda more or less imitates what is later discussed at general meetings. Headteacher A revived subject committees and has been supporting their role. Here too, it seems that Headteacher A has not been successful in creating conditions for consensus of adults based on understanding of what he really means when talking about school development and the related tasks of teachers and other staff. The result is that Headteacher A has been running the school essentially alone on the strategic level, assisted by the Deputy Head on the operational level very significantly and with the help of the teachers.

Headteacher B, too, expects his staff to take initiatives and has tried to put through all sorts of new measures since he came to the position. He trusts his teachers within the sphere of their direct activities. He and the Deputy Head are the Top Management (the Deputy Head is heavily oriented towards operational matters) while the broader management consists of various committees established by the headteacher as needed. Headteacher B has increased delegation of authority to subject committees and other committees (e.g. the janitor is the head of the non-teaching staff).

It seems that neither of the headteachers is opposed to decentralisation of power and delegation of tasks, the aim being school quality improvement. It is however the headteachers' primary approach to management that determines the result. While Headteacher A has created — especially on the level of broader management — a rather formal organisation without much internal or external dynamism (except for the subject committees), there is a more flexible organisation structure, which is better suited to delegation of authorities and power, in the school led by Headteacher B.

Thanks to the trust and successful supportive activities on the part of Headteacher B, the staff are willing to take up initiatives even beyond the scope of common teacher tasks. This would

be appreciated by Headteacher A, too, who is however often unable to convince people to participate in more original events ‘to his taste’ — despite the fact that a number of leisure-time activities’ clubs and other out-of-school activities are running at the school to general satisfaction thanks to the teachers. We regard this as evidence that the teachers understand practical issues and their role very well, but as soon as they are to talk about more abstract issues (such as the vision) Headteacher A is not able to talk the same language as many of them. This provides one of the potential explanations for the relative failure of Headteacher B.

### Discussion

The discussion relates to findings about the relational frameworks of quality management and leadership style (invitational leadership). Both headteachers came to their managerial positions with a considerable degree of enthusiasm, a relatively clear and positive idea about what the school’s work should be like and willing to pursue a number of specific activities designed to take them closer to their respective ideas of a good school. The situation in both schools required change and both headteachers may be regarded as the key initiators of change in their respective schools. Differences between them arose from the specific situation of the school. This is natural — schools do differ from one another. Further differences are due to the style chosen by each headteacher and their use of that style.

Headteacher A emphasises a long-term, strategic perspective. This involves communicating issues that may be perceived by others as not specific enough, intangible, unrealistic, and therefore unimportant or unattractive. This implies the increased importance of style — but headteacher A is not very good at adopting the style of invitational leadership. His ambitions are high in relation to school quality, but the implementation of his ideas is complicated by the situation within the school and outside it. He is unable to deal with the situation by adjusting his leadership style. He has not inspired necessary trust in all of his staff, is not regarded by everybody as a person sufficiently respectful of others, his actions do not show enough optimism and his activities are not universally viewed as supportive. None of this makes him stronger; on the contrary, it deprives him of the self-confidence he needs so much to make further necessary steps.

A closer look at School A suggests some content-level discrepancies between the requirements of particular situations and the behaviour of Headteacher A. Cooperation with pupils’ parents, the municipality and the broader public is missing from his agenda of change from the outset and his efforts to develop a firm common platform for cooperation with teachers in the school fall short. The agenda of change of Headteacher A is too narrow in terms of the real needs of the school as a whole — despite his vision, which is more balanced as far as the main areas of school work, its internal and external relations are concerned. Headteacher A pays little or no attention to some areas of school work. He does not venture where he does not feel supported, although it often seems necessary. This is not tolerable in the long run given the situation his school is in. On the other hand, he takes up unnecessarily some activities which might be delegated, stressing that he and the Deputy Head provide the teachers with ‘above-standard operational services’. Ideally, the context should not stop the headteacher’s efforts, even if it complicates them and makes the goals more difficult to achieve. Headteacher A should analyse all main areas of school operation (including those he has not been much involved with), reflect potential obstacles posed by the environment and integrate the findings of this analysis into his style of work.

The lack of success of Headteacher A’s efforts to act in line with the school quality management goals (our first relational framework) is in part caused by weaknesses in the

‘soft’ characteristics of his work and his style of work (the very essence of invitational leadership). These weaknesses are, in consequence, reflected in the degree of his success in school leadership and quality management in those things to which he chooses to attend. He is not willing and/or able to enter direct interaction and open polemics with his adversaries from among the teachers and/or be involved in conflicts and deal with problems.

The situation of Headteacher B is different. His focus is mainly on the present and the near future. He does not advocate too ambitious and managerial ideals and does not push things ‘at all costs’. This makes him easy to understand; he talks to the point and as his style is acceptable to the teachers and other adults in the school and around, his actions involve less risk of failure. He is consequently viewed as relatively successful and this is also how he perceives himself. What remains an open question is his smaller emphasis on long-term school development (the strategic level of his management is rather covert — Headteacher B tends to act intuitively in this respect). However, since a number of key decisions are made having achieved consensus with the key participants of school operation, it may be expected that if the deficit in long-term planning starts to show, it is likely to become a matter of a broad discussion and the chances that it will be dealt with successfully will be good. The path to a relative success does not seem to be blocked in this respect. Headteacher B fits the situation in his school well — by his ideas about quality, the strategy he has selected and the style of managing implementation. He inspires trust and respect, has an air of optimism and his actions are regarded as supportive. His relative success gives him self-confidence. Thanks to being in harmony with the situation in the school, Headteacher B has been successful in meeting the requirements of quality management, too. He is better at reflecting the requirements and potential of the situation of the school, is self-confident as far as his chances of dealing with the situation are concerned and he works hard to do so. He is relatively strong in what constitutes the core of invitational leadership, which makes him relatively successful in putting through change and managing quality in all main areas of school operation — depending on what he regards as important.

### Conclusion

Success in school leadership and management depends on many factors. One of them certainly is what one emphasises with respect to school leadership and management, whether his/her content focus is consistent, to which extent s/he is able to strike balance between continuity and change towards the desirable quality of the multifaceted school operation in cooperation with others. In sum, the key factors are the content and the style.

Style, although it may easily be underestimated, is one of the internal prerequisites for success of the content-level work of the leader — including leaders striving to manage quality in school. Despite the fact that the theme of communication and human relations in school may seem banal, looking at the two cases above, they seem to be at the core of the matter. Communication and human relations within our first relational framework seem to have a profound effect on all other categories. If the school leader can form relations (no matter if intuitively) and choose appropriate forms of communication, s/he will basically be better able to cope with other categories of the content-level of school quality management. Psychology has in recent decades when explaining intelligent behaviour seen intelligence pragmatically, as an ability to succeed and be useful to self and others. Terms such as emotional intelligence, practical intelligence and success intelligence have become common (e.g. Gardner, 1999; Goleman, 1997; Perkins, 1995; Sternberg, 2002). It is not enough to master the concept of management on a rational level; what is needed is to employ it successfully on the emotional

and/or relational level. Put in other words, the requirements include the components newly added to the concept of competence (using one's knowledge and skills). We are basically talking about the core of the concept of invitational leadership, which is one of the components of the conceptual basis of this paper.

The way a headteacher copes with the requirements of invitational leadership (our second relational framework) thus represents a significant condition for successful work of a headteacher on the content-level (the first component of the conceptual framework). A deficit on the emotional level (style) tends to be more evident than a deficit on the rational level (e.g. in the concept of quality management content level).

This fact leads to a number of consequences for the potential support to headteachers' efforts in managing their schools in conditions involving a high degree of autonomy and coping with the dichotomy between stability and change. Headteachers must be helped in self-improvement and in strengthening their potential to lead others convincingly (a good mastery of personal and school quality management). Self-confidence and trust enhanced by cooperation and success in invitational leadership then provide a basis for decisions about school development priorities. Support to school leaders should therefore be based mainly on a search for and identification of their real individual needs, not on sets of information for technical and administrative operational management (although this aspect, too, should not be neglected) developed from outside, without respecting people and contextual conditions. If we identify real and individual needs, we prepare the way for heads to change their own working styles sooner and more easily. This is the basis for improving their performance. In present conditions, everybody sharing the responsibility for school staff professional training faces a great challenge.

External counselling for heads and schools is a helpful form of support. Headteacher A (School A) might appreciate support concerning e.g. human relations management and implementation of change in school; Headteacher B (School B) might benefit from support concerning quality management content (e.g. vision, strategic management etc.). But besides basing his/her support on external analysis, a potential consultant would have to reflect the needs of people in the school.

Although innovativeness is a significant feature of a successful headteacher, not every headteacher pursuing innovation is necessarily successful, not even when the situation in the school clearly calls for change. Leadership is a complex process of multi-faceted interaction with the internal and external environment of the school in which the self-concept of the leader plays an important role. Our findings provide evidence of that. The two relational bases outlined above can thus be used effectively as a tool. We have proved that it is useful to view management processes through the optics selected for that purpose — so that school leadership can subsequently be supported in a meaningful way.

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## HEADTEACHERS' COPING STRATEGIES — HOW TO SURVIVE LEADING A SCHOOL

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The aim of this study is to investigate how successful headteachers manage their professional roles, what kind of obstacles they encounter in their daily work and how they cope with uncertainties and unexpected situations during their school day. Previous studies indicate that both successful leadership and good learning results are characteristics of a good school. Thus, improving leadership might improve learning results as well. Creating a school culture is intimately connected to leadership development. Accordingly, the connection between school culture and learning results is significant in determining the characteristics of a good school. That is why the role of the headteacher is enormously important. The headteacher is the creator of the school culture.

Five comprehensive school headteachers in Helsinki were observed and interviewed. The headteachers had from three to twenty-four years of school management experience. The length of the observation periods was three hours at a time. The purpose was particularly to look beyond the headteacher's activity in order to understand what was achieved by certain actions in various practical situations at school. After each observation period the uncertain situations the headteacher had met were discussed and interpreted in a short interview. In addition, after the observations the headteachers participated in a semi-structured interview that reviewed themes emerging from the observational data. Furthermore, headteachers evaluated their own leadership skills by means of a self-assessment questionnaire. Although analysis of the data continues, preliminary results are presented in this paper.

### Introduction

Over the last decade much attention has been paid to school leaders and their leadership styles. It is widely recognised that successful school leadership depends on more than just technical skills and academic intelligence. In other words, successful leadership needs something besides academic degrees. In recent years the role of a school headteacher has become more and more important because school units have more power and responsibility than ever before. To succeed in leading a school, leaders have to deal with more complicated and various issues than before. The need then is to learn why some headteachers are 'better' than others, even though their basic course work and examinations may be the same. On the other hand, why are some headteachers seen as charismatic leaders? Does this charisma have something to do with their personality? To what extent is leadership affected by personality? Finally, if the headteacher's personality and social skills do contribute to successful leadership, how can headteachers improve these areas or is it even possible to do so?

During the past few years, many researchers have written about 'distributed leadership'. They emphasise *how* school leadership works instead of *what* is necessary for successful leading. To understand both *how* and *why* is essential in understanding leadership. The challenges facing educational leaders have changed considerably and thus the knowledge and skills

needed to succeed have also changed. The question emerging, therefore, is whether it is sufficient to study leadership in a technical, rational way or whether there is also a need to connect with inner experience and move beyond individual activity. We have come to the point, where it is not sufficient merely to know the theory; it is also necessary to know how and why headteachers act as they do in their daily work. The distributed perspective focuses on leaders' thinking and action *in situ*. In my study I have tried to clarify this perspective by observing the headteachers in their daily work.

### **My research**

I started this research by observing and interviewing five comprehensive school headteachers in Helsinki, three men and two women (I was applying the Peer-Assisted Leadership method). The purpose of the observation was to look beyond the headteacher's activity to discover what she/he achieved by her/his operational model. After each period of observation, uncertain situations were discussed in a short interview. After all observations, the headteachers participated in a semi-structured interview that reviewed themes emerging from the observation data. In addition to the observations and interviews, other data were gathered from a reflective self-assessment questionnaire. The headteachers answered questions connected to their own behaviours and feelings. I used a questionnaire designed by Pentti Sydänmaanlakka, who studied human resource management and wrote a book about intelligent leadership. Thus my research investigates, on the one hand, how a good headteacher manages and acts in her/his role and, on the other hand, which kind of difficulties headteachers encounter in daily working life.

It is also interesting to investigate the relationships between leaders, followers and situations to analyze how headteachers function in interacting with leaders and followers and how much situations affect leadership. My goal is to identify and analyse actions at the micro-level and compare them with the actions at the macro-level. However, due to the fragmentary nature of leadership in schools, micro-tasks often appear to have little connection either with one another or with the school's instructional goals (Lee, 1987). Thus, the research challenge in understanding leadership is to reconstruct, through observation and interviews, whatever links exist between the macro-functions and the micro-tasks of school leadership (Goldring and Rallis, 1993).

At present, I am still analysing the collected material. The aim of my research is to describe school leadership on the practical level. The purpose is not to compare different leadership styles to each other or to search for the 'best' leader, but simply to describe how these headteachers can control uncertainties and sudden situations during the school day. In addition, I am trying to find some kind of coping strategies that could be a precondition for good leadership at the school level.

I have proceeded from several assumptions. First, the headteacher's personality has something to do with successful leadership, above all, the ability to interact in purposeful, motivational and participatory ways. After all, so-called good leadership is a function of the headteacher's daily behaviour and activity in the school. What kind of school culture is she/he able to create and to what extent does she/he succeed in motivating her employees and important interest groups to do their best to achieve her/his vision? No matter how much leaders know about leadership styles or strategies or communication and so on, their success ultimately depends on themselves — how they act and how they feel. Everyone watches the leader. Emotions affect how people work, feel and act. That is why it is very important to

recognise the domains of leadership and learn coping strategies. That is the key: how to lead people, get the best out of them and motivate them to struggle for common aims.

My second assumption is that situations affect a headteacher's performance, including where the school is located, the socio-economic background of the pupils and the resources. One successful leadership style does not suit every school. One style may succeed in one school but not in another. Besides, 'good leaders' are not always alike in all respects. In fact, it is not even possible to find individuals with all the good qualities of leadership. On the other hand, there are many good leaders who cannot be measured by these qualities at all. That is why the importance of compliance is obvious. Because of the headteacher's personality and local differences, the school cultures may be quite different but still work well.

Third, I presume that 'followership' — a shared, 'stretched over' leadership — is another key issue in leading a modern, successful school. Thomas J. Sergiovanni pointed out in his book *The Principalship — A Reflective Practice Perspective* what it means to be follower and what it means to be a subordinate are very different. Subordinates respond to bureaucratic authority and sometimes to personal authority. Followers, by contrast, respond to ideas. You can't be a follower unless you have something to follow. He also suggests that the headteacher's job is to provide the kind of purpose for the school that helps followership to emerge. She or he then provides the conditions and support that allow people to function in ways that are consistent with agreed-upon values. At the same time, the headteacher has a special responsibility continually to highlight the values, to protect them, and to see that they are enforced. The true test of leadership under these conditions is the headteacher's ability to get others in the school to share in the responsibility for guarding these values (Sergiovanni, 1995).

It is true that the sample of my research is quite small — only five headteachers. But I am observing them attentively from different points of view: observing them on the job, then interviewing each, and finally analysing their self-assessments. Thus this provides a relatively deep analysis.

### **Current status of the research**

I have now gathered all the necessary material and have begun the analyses. So far I have analysed only the self-assessments. The purpose is now to compare and complete the findings with the analysis of the observations and interviews. Here are some conclusions based on the self-assessment data. These conclusions will be enriched with data gathered in the observations and then in the interviews. After that, I will supplement knowledge of headteachers' actions and strategies with information gleaned at the practical level.

*Figure 1: Self-assessment of headteachers — by gender*

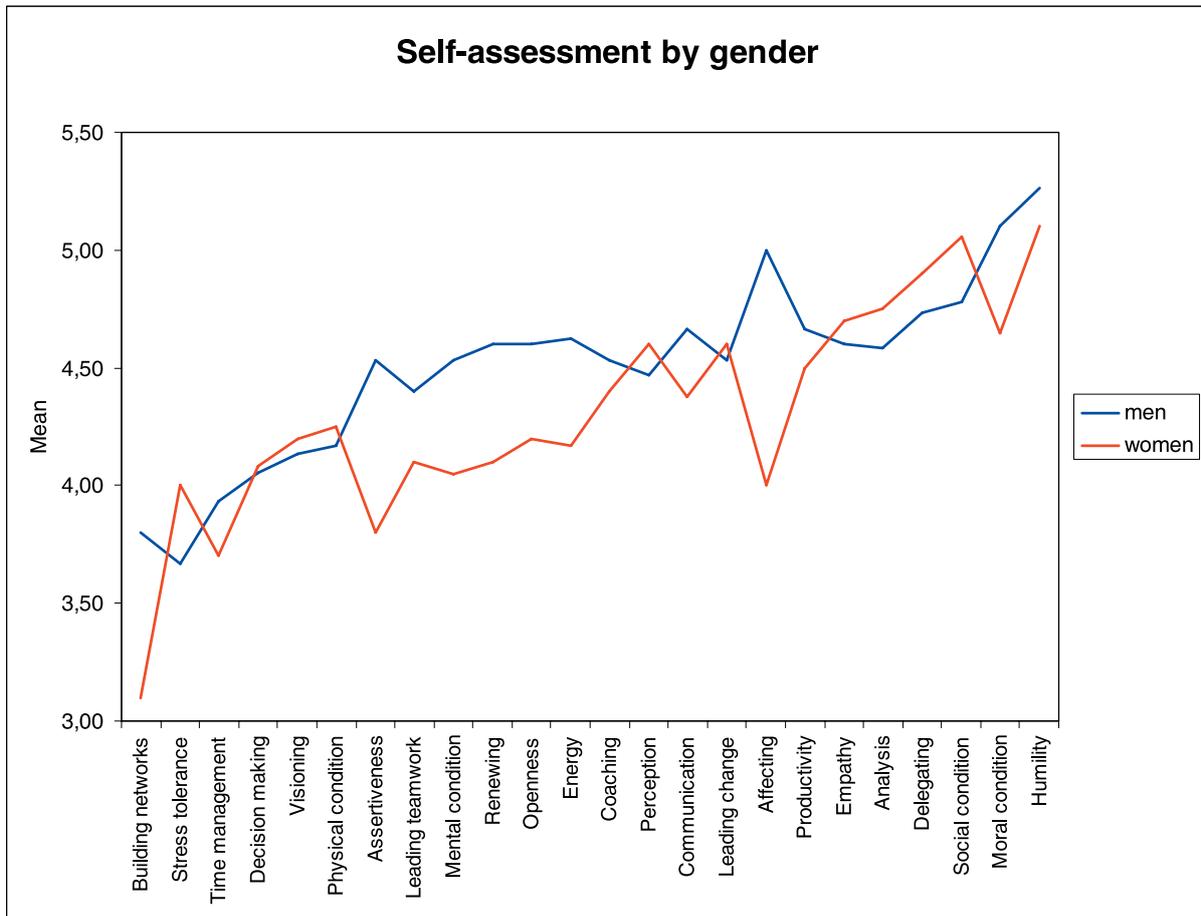
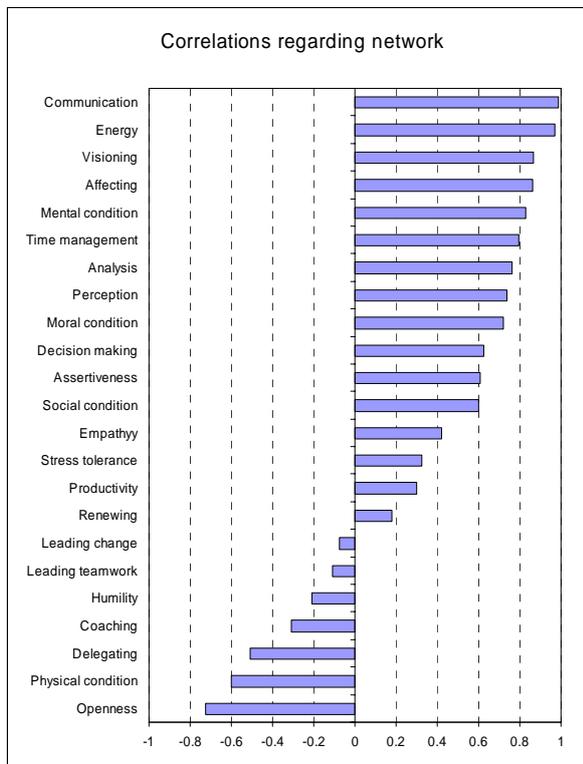
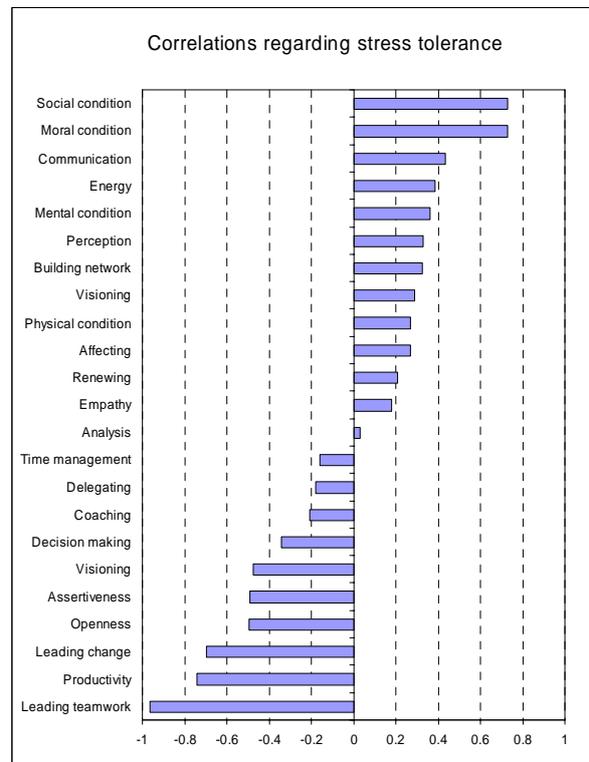


Figure 1 illustrates how the headteachers assessed their good and bad features. The Figure suggests that women especially feel that building networks is their weak point. On the other hand, every headteacher regards her/himself as a humble person. Both women and men feel that their stress tolerance is not very high, but women seem to be a little stronger than men. Time management is also a problem for everyone. A big difference between men and women shows up in assertiveness as well in leading team work, mental condition, renewing, openness and energy. Affecting also differs between men and women. The self assessment shows that it is easier for men. In assessing their social and moral condition and humility both women and men place them at the top.

Figure 2: Self-assessment of headteachers — competences



According to Figure 2, women regard themselves as worse than men in most areas. Is this because men have more self-confidence or because women are more self-critical? Women are more accustomed to criticise — and being criticised by — their actions. In any case, the features that women assess as strong in themselves are empathy, delegating, leading change, perception, time management and social and physical condition. As we can see, men are better able to affect, to build networks, to lead teams and to renew themselves. Men also have more energy and better mental condition than women. We might ask whether these results reflect traditional roles and attitudes.

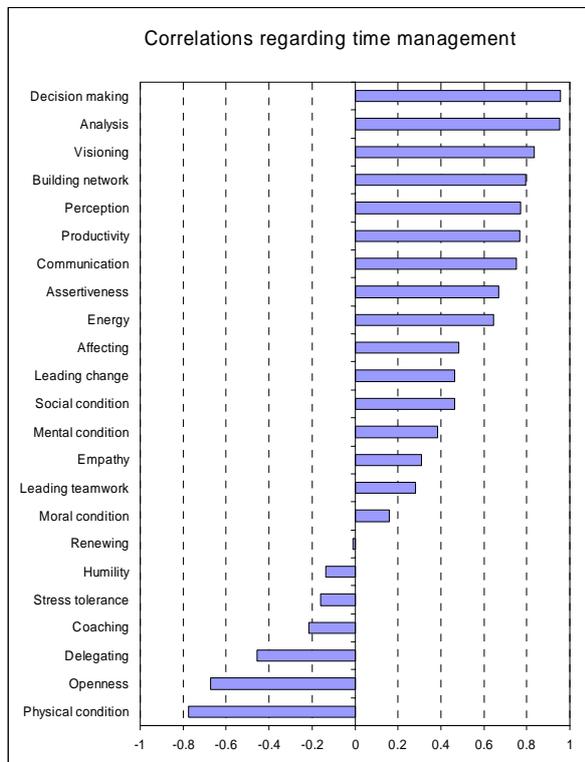
**Figure 3: Building networks****Figure 4: Stress tolerance**

In Figure 3, building networks correlates positively with communication, energy, visioning and affecting. Would it be possible to presume that men are a little better at building networks, because they have more energy (power) than women? However, my intention is not only to find differences between men and women but also to find the challenges and weak points of leadership in general.

Building networks correlates negatively with physical condition and openness. The better the headteachers were at building networks, the worse was their physical condition. Perhaps they were so busy with net building that they did not have time for physical exercise. We can also see that the better the headteachers were at building networks, the less open they were.

Figure 4 suggests that the better the headteachers tolerated stress, the better were their social and moral conditions. On the other hand, stress tolerance correlated negatively with leading change, productivity and leading teamwork. So the better the headteachers were at tolerating stress, the weaker they were in handling teamwork, productivity and change.

**Figure 5: Time management**



**Figure 6: Assertiveness**

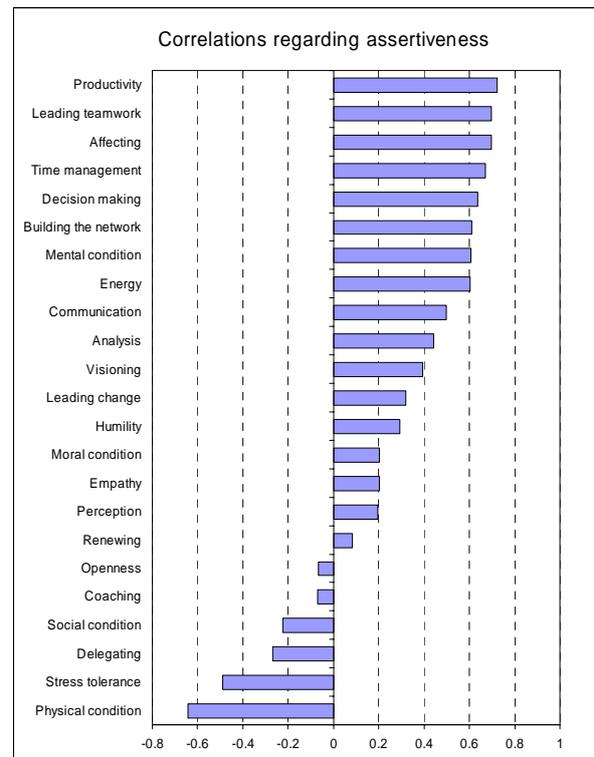
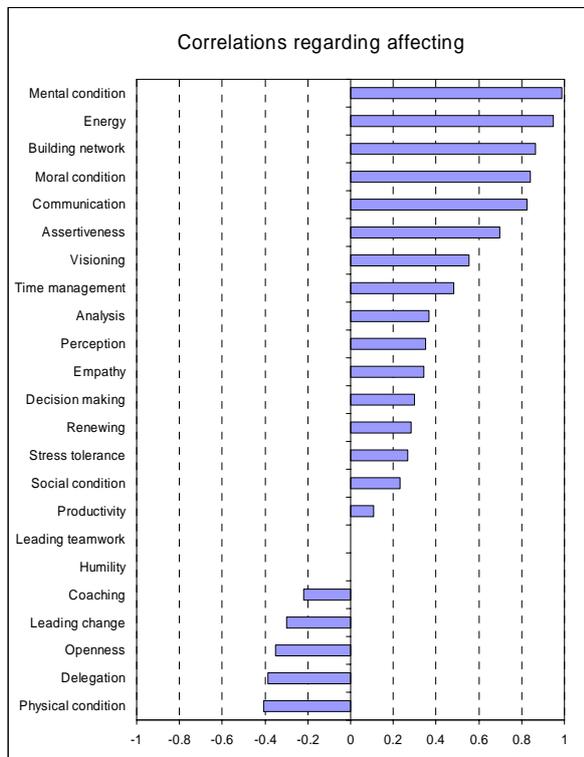
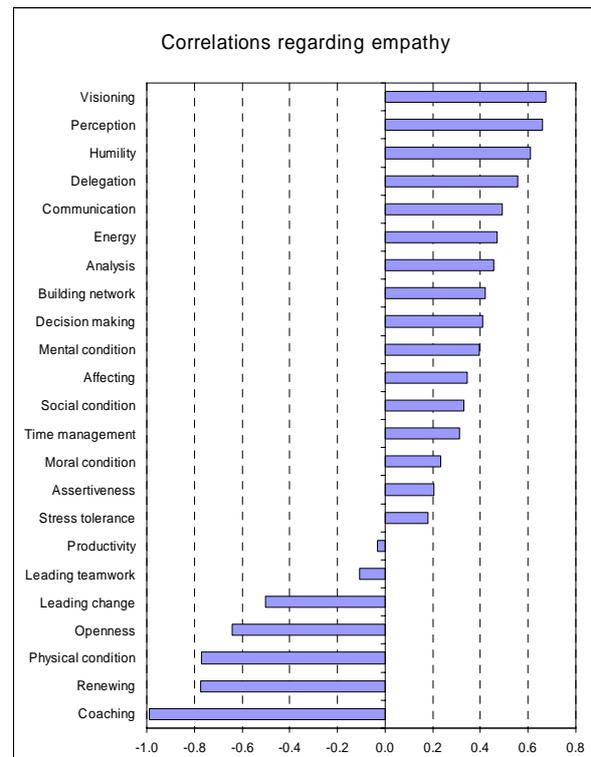


Figure 5 shows that the better the headteachers were at managing time, the better they were in decision-making, analyzing, visioning and building networks. And vice versa: the better they were managing at their time, the worse was their physical condition and the less open they were.

Assertiveness is a very important feature in leading a school. It contributes to good leadership. The more assertive the headteachers were, the more productive and affective they were. Further, the more assertive the headteachers were, the better they succeeded in leading their teams, time management, decision-making and building networks. Also their mental condition and energy were at the top. On the other hand, the more assertive the headteachers were, the less they tolerated stress and the worse was their physical condition.

**Figure 7: Affecting****Figure 8: Empathy**

In Figure 7 we can see that the more affective the headteachers were, the better was their mental condition, energy, building networks, moral condition, communication and assertiveness. We can also observe that affecting is a positively correlating feature — it does not correlate significantly negatively with anything.

Empathy is generally connected with feminine features. That is why I wanted to show this figure. In Figures 1 and 2 we observe that women rated the feeling of empathy at a higher level than men. The more the headteachers felt empathy, the better they were in visioning and perception. They were also humbler and succeeded better in delegating. A surprisingly strong negative correlation was found between empathy and coaching. The more the headteachers felt empathy, the worse they were as coaches.

### Comments

These few findings about headteachers' self-assessments show some of their weak points. Building networks, tolerating stress, time management, decision-making and visioning were considered the most difficult aspects of their work. Yet it is a fact that modern leadership is based on these skills.

So far, I have found that building networks is regarded as an important part of school culture, but it is often considered a school's duty. Cooperation with 'outsiders' does not come easily. However, the headteachers said that networks between colleagues (districts) and the nearest surroundings (church, kindergartens) were good, but something more was still expected.

So what kind of coping strategies do headteachers use to tolerate stress? One claims that she never loses her temper, even if there are five or six issues going on at the same time. 'One

potato at a time' was her motto and 'then forward'. She also emphasised that humour and a good laugh now and then relieve many tense situations. Generally, all headteachers agreed on the importance of humour and laughter in their daily working life.

Time management is something that bothers the headteachers continuously: how to divide time between bureaucracy and practice? How to deal with managerial issues and daily life at school? Cooperation with staff, social workers, parents and society has become more and more important in school life. It is obvious that the headteachers need new competencies and skills and especially time to succeed. The headteachers acknowledge the importance of participating in the daily life of the school — being with pupils, instructing, motivating and supporting teachers, communicating and interacting, building followership — but the question is how to do these things while paperwork increases daily. Since headteachers are increasingly involved in a complex society consisting of many different individuals, it is vital that they have the skills to deal with different problems. They must know something about human beings — about feelings, thoughts, motives and expectations and, above all — about themselves. Headteachers must be analytical and reflective about their own capabilities. Are they leading their schools effectively? What kinds of competencies are needed to improve?

### **Distributed leadership**

Many modern researchers have written about distributed leadership (Bossert et al., 1982; Leithwood et al., 1997; Spillane et al., 2004; Gronn, 1999; etc.). Distributed leadership means that the headteacher shares the headship, gives responsibility to teachers, solves problems through collaboration and teams, communicates openly, knows the staff and uses their expertise, encouraging them to express their feelings about school management. However, the most important issue is to get the staff involved in school development and the school's values, mission and goals. Only then is it possible to speak about a good school.

I think distributed leadership, including building followership, could be the solution to the problem of leadership. It would give headteachers more time to spend with the daily life of the school. Openness is the spirit of our time. When weaknesses and problems are solved through collaboration and decisions are made by common consent, headship is on the right track. The trust in responsibility and commitment on both sides — teachers and headteacher — is a good base for effective headship. This quotation provides, in conclusion, a rationale for the distributed leadership perspective:

“Our distributed perspective suggests the need for more complex approaches to studying the expertise of leaders. From a distributed perspective, expertise is not simply a function of a leader's thinking and mental schemata. Viewing skills and expertise exclusively as a function of individual traits, styles and schemata obscures how what leaders do is a function of their situation. A 'person-plus' as distinct from a 'person-solo' perspective (Perkins, 1993) is necessary in order to understand leadership expertise as something extending beyond the mind of individual leaders. Studies of leadership expertise must investigate how, and the extent to which, the expertise essential for the execution of particular leadership tasks is stretched over different leaders as well as over the tools with which they work. In other words, investigating purposeful activity in its 'natural habitat' is central to understanding leadership expertise. We do not mean to suggest that the distributed perspective developed here offers the only fruitful frame for a study of leadership practice,

though we are convinced it offers substantial theoretical leverage in studying leadership activity.”

(Spillane et al., 2004)

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## **HEADTEACHER'S ROLE IN THE ORGANISATION OF WORK WITH PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

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### **Introduction**

Pupils are different as are their families. In order to ensure effective teaching and learning for all pupils, the headteachers have to improve the organisation of the educational process, by using new knowledge and skills in the educational management. The article focuses on the headteacher's activities that relate to developing the school to enhance the education to children with special needs — children with physical and mental illnesses, with physical defects, handicapped children with relatively light health disturbances (both chronic and acute), pupils with social and psychological problems, as well as talented pupils.

### **Past and Present**

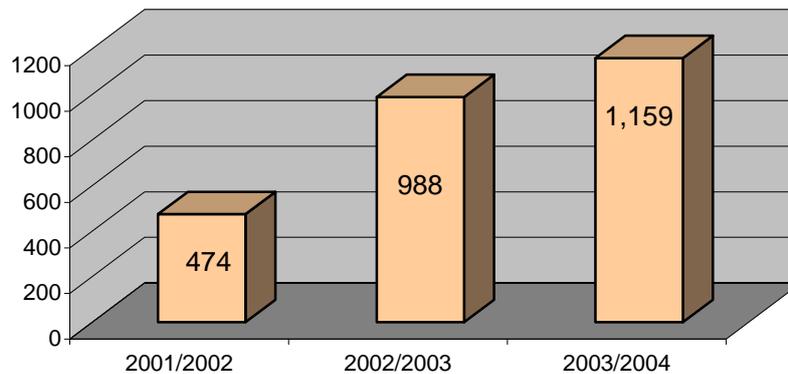
The situation in Latvia's educational institutions, especially in schools of general education, has radically changed since the 1980s in line with changes taking place in the social and political life in Latvia and the rest of the world. Latvia has again turned from an occupied country, incorporated into the Soviet Union, into an independent and democratic country. The political changes, which have taken place and which are still going on, have effected each educational institution and the educational system as a whole. The attitude of society has changed towards many questions connected with the educational process. One of the essential features in the process of transition into a democratic country is the integration of children with special needs into schools of general education. Different kinds of preparatory work are required to make general education accessible to such children. For this purpose it is necessary to adjust the premises of general educational school for children with special needs and to ensure further professional growth of the educators at school. A system must be developed to ensure appropriate co-operation of all the teachers and the specialists, such as educational psychologists, special educators, social educators, speech therapists and medical workers in the educational process.

During this period a transition has taken place from the command economics of the Soviet Union to social market economics, beginning with the regaining of this country's independence. The latter has caused society to become more differentiated and the number of people living in poverty has increased. Educational institutions are obliged to solve different problems connected with the education of children whose parents have been impoverished. The provision of warm dinner, clothes, educational aids and transport expenses is only the more visible and easier to solve problem of poverty, provided that the educational institutions and local governments have enough finances at their disposal. The hardest problems caused by the social political changes can be solved only with the help of specialists, such as psychologists, medical doctors and others.

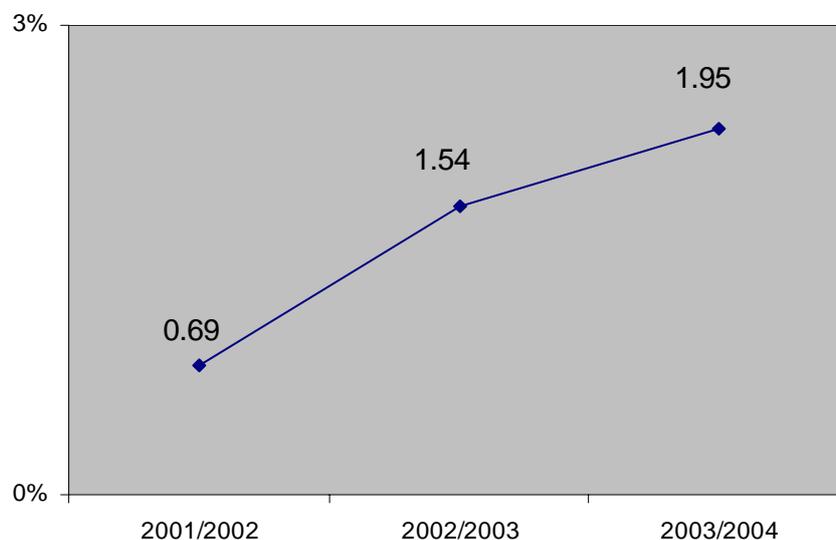
The greatest problem in Latvia is that universities train teachers mainly for work with healthy children whose physical and psychological development corresponds to their age and who have an average family. However, it is not always like that in practice. Therefore the responsibility of the leader of an educational institutions is to ensure that the work of the institution is adequate to meet the needs of society. New functions appear in the work of headteachers of educational institutions, and they have to play new roles.

The number of pupils who have difficulty in to acquiring basic education is increasing and, consequently, the number of pupils repeating the year is also increasing. This is evident in the data from the Department of Education, Youth and Sport of Riga City Council about pupils repeating the year (Figures 1, 2) and those who did not receive certificates of basic education in Riga city (Figure 3).

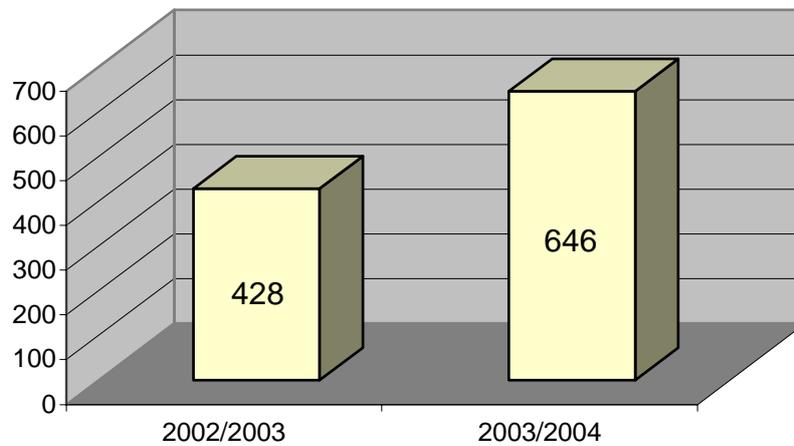
**Figure 1: Dynamics of pupils repeating years in schools of general education in Riga (forms 1–8)**



**Figure 2: Dynamics of pupils repeating years in schools of general education in Riga (% of the total number of pupils in forms 1–8)**



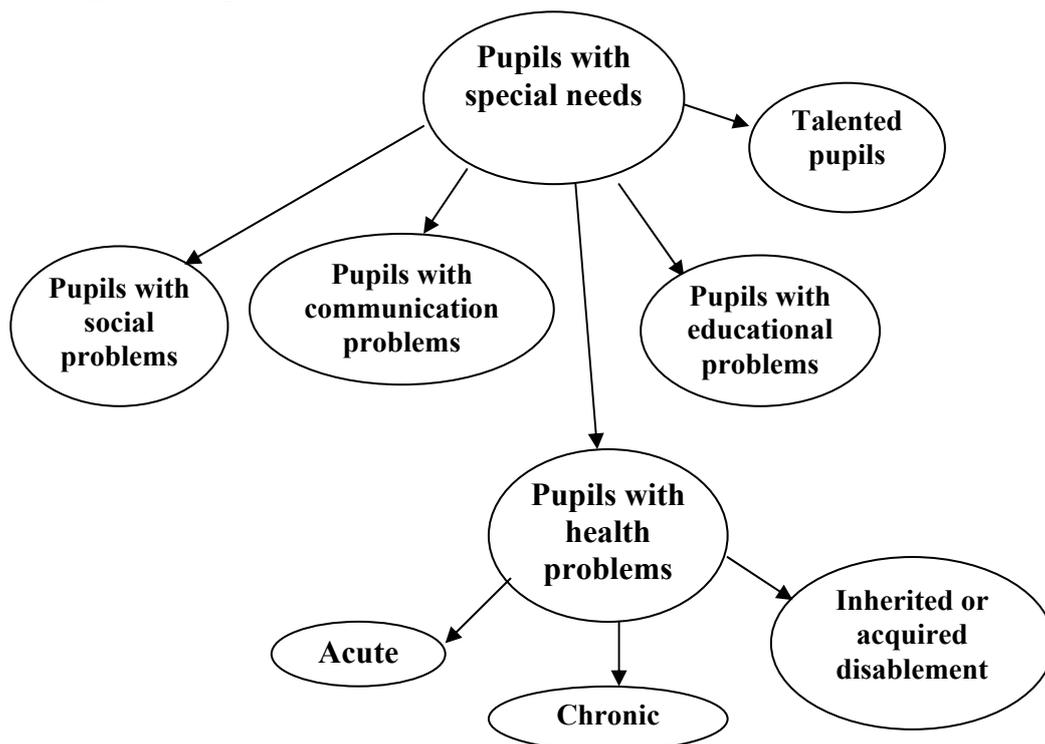
*Figure 3: Number of pupils not receiving certificates of basic education in Riga*



The pupils' health also causes problems. Facts show that because of illness 986 pupils of form 9 were freed from all final examinations and 757 from tests in sports in Riga in the school year 2004/2005. In relation to school leavers of form 12, 615 were freed from all examinations and 1,105 were freed from tests in sports. There are a great number of pupils who receive education at home because of illness. There were 1,245 such pupils in Riga in the school year 2004/2005.

All the above-mentioned groups of pupils together can be called pupils with special needs (Figure 4). The author proposes a definition of 'pupils with special needs' based on principles of educational management as headteachers should perform likewise to ensure appropriate educational process and assistance for such pupils.

*Figure 4: Pupils with special needs*



Definition: pupils for whose educational process it is necessary to have special schools, an educational and assistant staff — psychologists of education, teachers, speech therapists, special educators, social educators, medical workers and others — in order to secure an optimum education process and effective results in education by means of appropriate short-term or continuing special activities.

In order to solve the problems of the above mentioned pupils headteachers of the educational institutions have to perform special planning, organising and coordinating functions. Special consultations for pupils, parents and teachers have to be arranged if there are no such specialists on the staff of the educational institution. According to the laws and regulations of education there is envisaged one psychologist per 600 pupils, one social educator per 600 pupils, one speech therapist per 500 pupils, a medical worker (a nurse) per 500 pupils and one special tutor per 700 pupils. The social educator should be financed by the local government, the Ministry of Education and Science or private body, whichever has legal responsibility for the school. The other specialists are financed from the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science like all other educators. As the majority of general education schools in Latvia have fewer than 500 pupils, the work with pupils with special needs is complicated. It requires well-considered activities, appropriate to the situation, that are ensured by the headteacher of the educational institution. Three approaches to this challenge are evident in Latvian schools:

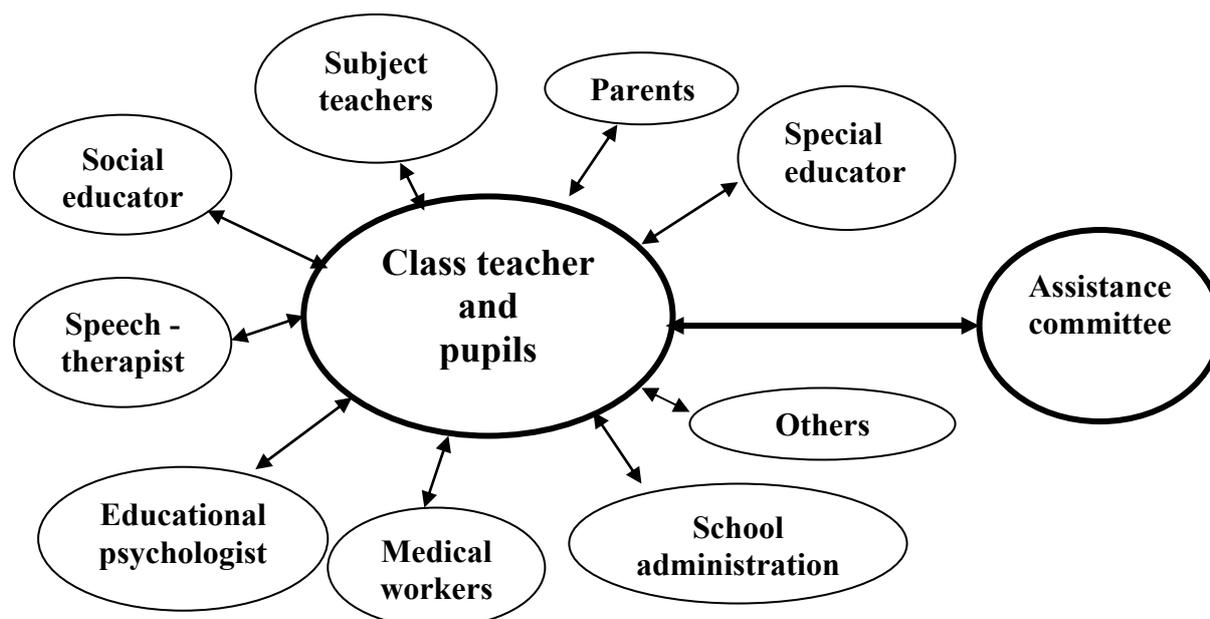
1. There are support educators at schools — educational psychologists, social educators, special teachers, speech therapists — to work with pupils with special needs. Their number in schools is determined by laws and regulations, according to which the number of the support staff depends on the number of the school pupils.
2. In general education schools in Riga city special support staff commissions have been formed, which coordinate, ensure and support the cooperation of educators with the teachers, the administration, the parents and the corresponding institutions in the solution of the problems.
3. Within schools pupils' support units and centres have been established which render great help to pupils with special needs.

The first variant is most widely implemented. It requires the extension of the headteacher's functions and role in the achievement of effective results in education. The headteacher's role in planning, organising and coordinating teaching and learning is increasing. In supporting special needs pupils the role of the form teacher becomes more important because assistant specialists cannot quickly become acquainted with all the pupils in the school. It is much easier for the class teacher who is in close contact with the pupils and their parents, and there is also co-operation with subject teachers. The role of subject teachers in the solution of the problems of pupils with special needs does not diminish but, on the contrary, increases. Their responsibility is to consult and help the class teachers state the problem, to provide or organise help. In case of need the specialists help the subject teachers to understand the pupils and choose adequate teaching methods.

This work in Riga general education schools has been successful since the formation of the assistance staff committee. The committee coordinates the diagnosis and investigation of pupils' educational, social and psychological needs. It defines the adequate kind of educational and social educational assistance required and analyses and summarises the experience of the school in organising the education of pupils with learning difficulties. It co-operates with state and local government educational-medical commissions and guarantees the provision of special education in school. The class teacher's activities are also important

in this approach. The class teachers study the pupils working with them every day and state and solve the problems in co-operation with the pupils' parents, the subject teachers, the specialists, the administration and others. The assistance committee provides appropriate help to the class teachers. In case the problems cannot be solved in the school, the committee organises co-operation with other local governments or state institutions (Figure 5).

*Figure 5: Assistance system*



If there are many pupils with special needs at school and there are adequate specialists, as well as adequate materials and suitable premises, a unit or centre of pupils' education and development is formed in which the pupils with special needs are rendered significant and extensive assistance.

### Conclusions

As the number of pupils with special educational needs is growing the functions of the headteachers of schools of general education are extending and their role is growing to organise effectively the education process in order to make education accessible to everyone by integrating pupils with special needs in school. In doing this headteachers face the following challenges:

1. to pay great attention to investigating and diagnosing pupils' educational, social and psychological needs, in order to identify pupils with special needs;
2. to create a database of pupils with special needs and use it for educational and additional purposes;
3. to make well-considered job descriptions for the teaching and assistant staff;
4. to include in job descriptions of the assistant staff (educational psychologists, social educators, speech therapists, medical workers and special educators) the responsibility for raising class and subject teachers' proficiency in relation to special needs pupils;

5. to coordinate co-operation among class teachers and the subject teachers, the class teachers and the assistant staff, among the assistant staff;
6. to motivate the staff to work with pupils with special needs;
7. to plan, organise and stimulate the professional growth of the teaching and the assistant staff in accordance with the situation at school;
8. to organise the reconstruction of the premises to make them convenient for the use of pupils with special needs;
9. to ensure the financial and material resources needed for successful work of pupils with special needs, as well as for the suitability of the classrooms.

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## MOTIVATION IN LATE-CAREER TEACHERS

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The teaching profession is beset with dilemmas and characterised by a variety of professional situations. Being a teacher requires constant readiness for change, innovation and life-long learning. The profession is regarded as stressful both physically and psychologically. It is, nevertheless, often viewed by teachers as a life-long mission (e.g. Havlík, 1999) to which they are devoted till retirement, without obtaining any dispensations.

It is likely that the needs, expectations, professional attitudes and therefore also the status of an elderly teacher differ from those of a young or middle-aged teacher. Teachers at the onset of their careers are paid due attention while other age categories of teachers do not attract the attention of experts to such an extent. Teachers over 50 nevertheless represent a considerable share of the teacher population — more than 30 % of teachers in the Czech Republic are over 50 (Průcha, 2002) and the tendency towards population ageing observed throughout Europe naturally pertains to this profession, too (Keeping, 2004).

This paper is an introduction to the topic *Teachers in the Late Stage of Their Career*. Huberman (1989, 1993) specifies two late stages of teacher career: the stage of “serenity, affective distance” and “conservatism” (after 25 years of experience) and the last career stage of “disengagement — serene or bitter” (after 34 years of experience). We distinguished between 3 groups of (basic school, 6–15) teachers in our research: with up to 10, up to 20, and over 20 years of teaching experience. The last stage of teacher career is thus roughly defined by age over 50 and at least 20 years of teaching experience. This theme has gradually surfaced as an interesting subject deserving more attention in a research project focusing on examination of selected psychological aspects of further education of teachers. This is why I deal predominantly with theoretical considerations related to the process of ageing and its consequences both in general and with respect to the teaching profession. I mention some aspects of motivation in elderly teachers, supplementing the whole treatise with some research results.

### **Examining late-career teachers: the doubt around and the justification**

The intention to provide late-career teachers with useful professional support implies the need to understand the specific circumstances of their professional lives. Examination of issues relating to late-career teachers can, nevertheless, provoke a great deal of doubt and reservations of methodological, economic as well as ethical nature.

- Is it meaningful to search for common characteristics shared by teachers who have spent a number of years teaching, or is their personal and professional experience so specific as to escape generalisations?
- Late-career teachers do not seem to form a majority of staff in schools and are therefore not the driving force in their schools. Would it perhaps be more useful to concentrate on the more numerous group of the most productive teachers?

- When the process of ageing is being characterised, a number of handicaps, drawbacks and risks reflected in the personal and professional lives of people in the role of employees are mentioned. It is naturally drawbacks rather than merits of the elderly age that attract attention. Is it not therefore politically incorrect to point out the characteristics of late-career teachers, paying them attention the teachers do not really wish to attract? They might feel stigmatised as ‘less able’ or even ‘risky’ individuals who require special considerations.

Another perspective suggests that the need for providing late-career teachers with specific support is justified and should not to be overlooked:

- Personal and professional needs of elderly people keep changing and it is humane and ethical to consider them and thus contribute to these people's professional and personal well-being.
- Professional and personal satisfaction is reflected in people's relations that in the case of teachers include relations with colleagues, pupils and their parents. Concern about teacher satisfaction is one of the tasks of school management.
- Teachers approaching the end of their professional career can be found in every school and approaches such as “There is nothing to be done with these people, let's just wait till they retire,” are unethical and unproductive. The reasons for resentment (including in elderly) teachers are easily recognisable and can be influenced (Lazarová, 2005).
- Teachers who have been in the profession for a long time have rich personal and professional experience. It would be uneconomical to leave it unrecognised and idle and not to take advantage of it for the sake of development of the profession and to the school's benefit.

How to keep teachers motivated and professionally apt till the very end of their careers is an issue dealt with in specific ways by a number of schooling systems (Eurydice, 2004). There is no single optimum pattern of providing support to late-career teachers. This delicate topic has also been dealt with in specific ways by psychology. Our understanding of developmental psychology and of the teaching profession may be useful when examined in the context of the requirements imposed by the contemporary period and society, leading to a discussion of the potential risks, but also forms of support and use of the rich potential of late-career teachers.

### **Redefining the teaching profession: challenges for elderly teachers (and not only them)**

The teaching profession is a profession involving specificities and dilemmas that can be challenging to teachers in all stages of their careers. Besides the frequently mentioned characteristics of the teaching profession relating to the performance in the profession as such (e.g. Štech, 1998; Vašina, 1999), there are also phenomena and situations arising due to the turbulent period, which require teachers (especially senior ones) to change their established cognitive and operational stereotypes, attitudes, opinions and skills. These circumstances are numerous and include above all:

- The changing structure of children's knowledge, skills and intelligence.
- Progress in information technologies has been influencing the development of cognitive functions and learning processes in children. A teacher whose processes of learning and understanding in her/his youth were stimulated in a radically different way can hardly understand what they are about.
- The attitude of the public, children and their parents towards school.

- Democratisation of the society has brought about significant shifts in public attitudes and opinions towards norms, ethics, law, upbringing, education, school and the teaching profession itself. Critical capacity has been on the rise and child-adult, pupil-teacher and parent-teacher (and other) modes of communication have changed in a major way.
- Pressure for extending the teacher role.
- With school becoming autonomous and new insights into teaching being available, change in the profession becomes inevitable and new tasks emerge, such as participation in projects, empirical research, participation in school management, supervisory work, lectureship, reflecting upon the teaching practice, work in associations and professional organisations, organisation of events for children and their parents etc.

The risks brought about by the period, which can potentially result in a loss of self-confidence and motivation, growing scepticism and imminent resentment in elderly teachers are numerous. If the teachers are not able to face them, then teaching quality diminishes and it is above all the children who are afflicted.

### **The process of ageing and its consequences for performance in the teaching profession**

The general assumption is that, given the increasing experiential basis, the standard of educational work should grow (Pelikán, 1991). Increasing age does enhance professional experience, but the process of ageing itself involves not only physical, but many times also psychological problems, which are reflected in professional performance.

#### *Physical, sensory and cognitive change*

Physical and sensory deficit is most apparent (even to external observers) and elderly people are aware of them. They are able and willing to talk about them rather than about psychological change. I am aware that my description of psychological change in advanced age is based, among other things, on facts from developmental psychology associated with 'old age' no matter that late-career teachers are mainly in the 'advanced adulthood' stage (Vágnerová, 2000). The change associated with the process of ageing is however continuous and much of it is manifested as early as in adulthood depending on the individual. The change that affects performance in the teaching profession most can be summed up as follows:

#### *Physical change*

The physical requirements of the profession depend on the style of teaching, the school level (grade) and the subject taught (specifics of elementary school teachers, physical education teachers etc.). Every teacher who does not sit at the desk walks many kilometres a day. S/he spends many hours standing or sitting on bad chairs. After around 40 (there are individual differences) muscle tissue starts diminishing rather significantly and illnesses of the locomotive system set in. Movement may become unpleasant, which often leads to a change in teacher's behaviour. The change may involve less movement around the classroom, less willingness to participate in physical activities along with pupils (or colleagues), to travel etc. The sick rate and the need for physical rest increase.

#### *Sensory perception change*

The teaching profession is very demanding in terms of sensory functions (hearing, sight) and voice. Sensory function deficits are typical of ageing as early as in its early stages while the

voice starts getting weaker later on. Perception quality may diminish and ‘misunderstandings’ and errors occur more frequently. The teacher must make a greater effort to cope with individual pupils and the whole class. S/he gradually learns to exploit the so-called “adaptation mechanisms” (Vágnerová, 2000), which help her/him to find ways of coping with these handicaps. The teacher adjusts her/his teaching and communication with pupils so that s/he hears and sees well and does not have to strain her/his vocal cords too much. Pupils often — quite paradoxically — profit from this as the teacher leaves them more scope and gives them more opportunities to cope with problems.

#### *Change in cognitive processing*

Biological ageing of brain structures and sensory deficits lead to gradual change in perception, memory, attention and thinking. Theories which are trying to explain and evidence the effect of ageing on cognitive change are equivocal. Slowing down of neural impulses leads to a ‘brightness deficit’ (change especially in fluid intelligence) and consequently also longer reaction times (see Stuart-Hamilton, 1999). Thanks to the compensatory effect of life-long experience, some areas of cognitive activities may be slowed down less than others. The teaching profession is a profession with substantial emphasis on further education and professional improvement and it may therefore be assumed that a teacher who keeps learning and innovating has got a lot of memory training, which helps her/him slow down cognitive process deterioration.

Reviewing what one has learnt on a daily basis establishes indestructible memory traces and only a negligible amount of information is lost from long-term memory. There is also substantial evidence that long-term memory in the elderly and the young has the same capacity and what deteriorates is just recall and coding. The problem is therefore the control of memory processes rather than memory itself. Elderly people are however less confident about having retained information correctly. It is to be said for them that they usually do not forget about their tasks any more than the young. It is nevertheless evident that motivation and responsibility also contribute to that (Stuart-Hamilton, 1999).

As far as teachers are concerned, it is important that unlike fluid intelligence, *crystallised intelligence* does not get impoverished. A number of aspects of language and ability of expression may remain uninhibited till very advanced age. What attracts a lot of attention is age versus situational complexity. It seems that an elderly person is able to process stimuli just as well as a young person, but cannot process too many stimuli simultaneously. Problems are caused especially by requirements for the so-called “split attention” (Salthouse, 1985; Stuart-Hamilton, 1999). This may be crucial to the teaching profession as when working with class, the teacher is exposed to many simultaneous stimuli and has to deal with extremely ‘complex situations’ in terms of requirements for cognitive processing often very fast.

This list of potential effects of change on the physical, sensory and cognitive area of performance in the teaching profession is by no means complete and exhaustive. However, it is evident that some of the types of change mentioned above may be a complicating factor in the very demanding profession.

#### *Change in the personality, relations and attitudes*

As the teaching profession is viewed as rather rich in psychological stress, teachers’ psychological health is being emphasised. Developmental psychology identifies and describes a variety of changes ‘typically’ occurring in the psychological life and/or personality of an ageing person. Also stressed is that this change is linked to the lifestyle and physical condition

of the teacher. The types of personality change mentioned in association with most ageing processes are as follows:

#### *Change in self-concept*

Ageing persons' self-concept and/or self-perception get changed, especially as far as the *self-esteem* component is concerned. Elderly people tend to be less self-confident, more apprehensive (especially following failure) and often feel they are not 'up to' starting new things and changing established stereotypes. However the more they succumb to stereotypes, the more their self-esteem drops (Ward, 1977). A lack of self-esteem may intensify comparisons with younger colleagues. An elderly teacher is confronted with the flexibility and enthusiasm of people entering the profession with a different knowledge and experiential basis. Young people have often travelled abroad, (usually) have good foreign language skills, are computer-oriented etc. Their pre-graduate knowledge and skills and therefore also the starting basis are radically different from those of people who have just turned 45. This changing self-concept may lead even to a negative self-image in elderly teachers, acquired helplessness and scepticism plus the "I'm not OK, you're not OK" life attitude. Elderly age is associated with a decrease in neuroticism, which contributes to a peaceful and balanced attitude, but also involves a great risk of apathy and indifference (Tišanská and Kožený, 2004).

A majority of teachers are women — there were 84.5 % in Czech basic schools in 2001 (Průcha, 2002), who usually have to adapt to role-switching between woman, wife and mother, or accept the role of a grandmother etc. Elderly women are completing one stage of their *female role*: their biological and social transformations are more evident and requirements posed by the family are becoming less important. These circumstances make women search for new goals and redefine their role. Women often become more self-reliant, more independent, more dominant and are increasingly oriented on self-assertion (Říčan, 1990). Becoming relatively independent may present women with more career opportunities and more opportunities to turn their attention to career development.

#### *Change in interpersonal relations*

The needs, interests and evaluation criteria of elderly people are different from those of younger people and elderly people also pay attention to different components of behaviour. Social and cultural life is often inconsistent with their motivation factors and therefore elderly people cease to appreciate it. Their person-to-person relations are consequently changing, too. Their reserve, alienation and sometimes also nervousness, irritability and anxiety associated with the expected retirement are intensifying (Cumming and Henry, 1961; Stuart-Hamilton, 1999).

Elderly people are increasingly introverted and their attitudes to social life change. Elderly people often save energy to be able to use it exclusively for the benefit of their closest people; their social network is becoming patchy. They do not make friends so often and prefer safe and stable relationships. Their need for social contacts has been saturated, which gets reflected in their relations with friends, but also colleagues from work, superiors, children etc. Elderly people also tend to be less open and more cautious. Their poorer self-esteem often enhances their criticality and tendency to punish, which may breed conflicts and misunderstandings. One important factor contributing to successful adaptation to advanced age is anticipated social support (Tišanská and Kožený, 2004). The same authors have come up with empirical evidence of the hypothesis that it is especially more introverted elderly people who face difficulties in searching for and finding it. Ability to get (or seek and accept)

social support depends on the personal profile and individual experience of the person, on how s/he interprets social reality.

Educating the next generation and passing on one's experience are however important in middle age, late middle age and old age, too (Vágnerová, 2000). This natural inclination has been little taken advantage of in teacher working contexts yet (see below).

#### *Change in attitudes towards work*

As the age for retirement is becoming more imminent, one's attitude towards the profession and its subjective importance usually change, too. Elderly people go for real values and do not care so much about ambitions. The attitude towards profession and job-performance may take various forms in elderly people — from excessive work efforts (even workaholism) to burnout, loss of confidence in one's abilities and a sense of meaningfulness of one's work (Alan, 1989). Factors influencing quality of professional life include attitude of elderly people to problem-coping, self-esteem, confidence in one's competence and expectations with respect to one's further course of life. A long-lasting conflict between one's efforts and subjectively unsatisfactory results may lead to a burnout and indifference towards one's profession. It is precisely the burnout syndrome and general teacher health that is duly given the greatest attention in research in education and psychology.

#### **Research on late-career teachers**

Although career situation of elderly teachers is rarely at the centre of research interest, examination of the continuum of teacher career from the educationalist and sociological point of view has attracted attention of a number of experts (such as Berliner, 1994; Havlík, 1999; Huberman, 1989; Levin, 2003; and others). The last stage of career is usually referred to by terms with rather negative connotations: *conservatism and burnout* (Huberman, 1989; Průcha, 2002). Topics such as *psychological health, tiredness or burnout syndrome* in teachers in the Czech Republic have attracted long-term attention of many authors such as Eger, Čermák (2002), Langová and Kodým (1987), Řehulka and Řehulková (e.g. 1999, 2004), Paulík (1999), Vašina (1999), but usually not in the context of teachers' careers, age, circumstances of working in the school and potential for development and its use. A lack of deeper analysis of the last stage of the teaching career has already been pointed out by Průcha (1997). What is it, then, that we know about the work of teachers in schools who are in the last stage of their careers?

Growing age and duration of teacher career is associated with a trend towards intensification of health problems (Paulík, 1999). Research in Sweden has revealed that the sickness rate is 3 to 4 times higher among teachers over 60 than among teachers in the younger age group (OECD, 2003). Emotional burnout is most severe among teachers around 50 with teaching careers of 17 years or more. Increasing age exacerbates the risk of burnout in teachers and increased incidence of classic phobia can be observed (Daniel, Sarmány-Schuller, 2000). These teachers' subjective sense of physical and psychological weariness and stress is increasing and their willingness to spend time with children is diminishing (e.g. Průcha, 1997).

Huberman (1989) points out the growing self-doubt in these teachers and their diminishing self-confidence in the career stage characterised by composure and emotional distance (i.e. in teachers with work experience of 20 to 30 years). Huberman also notes an increased tendency towards reflection associated with a drop in ambition and investments into the career

approaching its end in these teachers. Huberman (1989) on the other hand sees elderly teachers as characterised by greater credibility, efficiency and peacefulness.

The change of self-concept towards increasing self-doubt has been evidenced by research demonstrating a drop in the sense of personal success in ageing teachers (Daniel, Sarmány-Schuller, 2000). Women teachers complain of rough and unmotivated pupils increasingly and their ambition to cope with these pupils decreases, which gets reflected in their self-confidence and ambition to prove they are good professionals. Their subjective sense of being responsible decreases, too. Research done in the Czech environment demonstrates that increasing age brings resistance towards taking up responsibility for potential pupils' failure and a tendency to see oneself as the initiators of one's own success (Mareš, Skalská, Kantorková, 1994).

Elderly male teachers show an increased risk of reduced involvement and desire for rest. They are more frequently disgusted with both pupils' parents and their superiors, disappointed with having made considerable efforts without any positive results to be seen (Průcha, 1997). There are authors who have noticed elderly teachers are increasingly detached from their pupils due to the growing generational gap (Huberman, 1989). The same author perceives some teachers even as increasingly negative and showing little tolerance towards young teachers and pupils. It is, on the other hand, natural for elderly teachers to pass their experience on to their younger colleagues, but they are often not expected to do so in their school environment — among other things probably due to their growing relationship problems and introversion. Late-career teachers operate in a field of force: they are able and often ready to pass on their experience and take care of the young on the one hand while needing social support from their colleagues — due to their 'handicaps' — on the other. They are often unable to ask for this support in an appropriate way and may even tend to refuse it.

Berliner (1994) has focused on analysis of educational 'mastery' in teachers. He divides the teaching career into the following stages: *novice*, *advanced beginner*, *competent*, *proficient*, *expert*. As the terms suggest, these are the levels of educational 'mastery' teachers should achieve step by step as their professional career proceeds. The assumption is that an experienced teacher in the late stage of her/his career will mature to the level of an expert teacher. According to Berliner, the typical features of this kind of teacher are fluid and flexible thinking and action and an ability to spot and analyse a problem fast. Despite the fact that elderly teachers are reported to show increasing conservatism, rigid thinking, scepticism of reform, and dogmatism (e.g. Huberman, 1989), research shows that elderly teachers cannot be regarded as worse teachers. No clear correspondence between the length of teaching experience and pupils' results and/or standard of educational work has been found (Pelikán, 1991; Průcha, 1997).

Considering our research focus, we were interested in research findings concerning attitudes of elderly teachers towards their further education. Hustler (2004) analysed the circumstances of further education of teachers (needs, attitudes, resistance etc.) in Great Britain and the conclusions of his extensive research present some data and interpretations concerning the generation of elderly teachers and their professional improvement. Hustler reports that elderly teachers (over 55) are more likely to complain about lack of time for further education, pointing out the burden of their profession hindering their access to further education. They are, on the other hand, better informed of opportunities in further education than their younger colleagues and their educational needs are somewhat different. They often prefer training in information technologies and feel more strongly that further education does not fully respect their educational needs. They sometimes even report that further education is 'forced upon

them by their superiors', meeting the needs of the school and the schooling policy rather than their own needs.

Some teachers are advocates of an unrealistic nostalgia of the good-old-times type even with respect to further education, showing little enthusiasm about the new forms of organisation of further education. Elderly teachers have more doubt about the direct effect of further education on their teaching and are more ready to express their feeling that they need more time to adjust and implement the new theories in class work. Despite a certain shift in educational needs and growing scepticism towards further education, research suggests that elderly teachers are willing to improve their qualification just like young teachers and do not show a lack of involvement as it might seem (Hustler, 2003; Lazarová, 2006). Zelinová, too, demonstrates that late-career teachers are not the group most resistant to change; greater resistance has been traced among teachers in mid-career (Zelinová, 2004).

### **Late-career teachers in a Czech-based research**

I will present some results from our research — Czech Science Foundation project, Grant no. 406/03/0700, Psychological Aspects of Further Education of Teachers. For more information see the website of the Czech Science Foundation and published literature presenting its partial outputs (e.g. Lazarová, Prokopová, 2004; Lazarová, 2006). The research examined some circumstances of further education among basic school (6–15) teachers, for the sake of comparison. The results suggested many significant features differentiating between younger and older teachers as far as their attitudes, expectations and educational needs were concerned; there are nevertheless some specific features typical of late-career teachers that can be pointed out so that their interpretation can be attempted and hypotheses for further research can be formulated.

Interviews with headteachers and organisers of further education for teachers (following a questionnaire survey among teachers) have revealed spontaneous complaints over resistance of especially elderly teachers ("They do not care any more."). Despite this, respondents radically disagreed with equating elderly teachers with teachers not improving their qualification (Lazarová, 2005). The most significant differences observed between attitudes and opinions of younger and older teachers can be summed up as follows:

- Elderly teachers appreciate training outside the school to a greater extent (mean 2.91 in the youngest group; 3.38 in the oldest group — on a 5-point scale).
- Teachers in the professionally oldest group claim more frequently that they are able to discuss their work-related problems with colleagues (mean 3.51; mean the youngest group was 3.09).
- Late-career teachers claim more frequently than their younger colleagues that they meet with their colleagues at school regularly to discuss some educational/teaching situations (the youngest group 2.75; the oldest group 3.27).

Results of the survey suggest especially differences in perception of atmosphere of cooperation in the school differentiating between younger and older teachers. It however remains an unanswered question what the different age groups of teachers refer to by the term 'cooperation' and which forms of cooperation they prefer. Some paradoxes point to issues that need to be clarified: older teachers are more ready to regard the school environment as cooperative and feel more satisfied about the status quo, but they prefer training events held outside the school itself. Their younger colleagues would appreciate more cooperation within

the school, but are simultaneously more inclined to have doubts about the possibility of internal cooperation. They are also more positive about reflections upon practice.

It seems, to elderly teachers, non-structured and unplanned consultations and spontaneous discussion about work-related problems are a sufficient and appropriate form of cooperation with their colleagues. These discussions typically occur in school corridors and offices any time teachers have a few free minutes (Pol and Lazarová, 1999). These teachers do not miss deeper reflection (by peers, in groups etc.) as they do not have much experience with it and they moreover find it — due to their age and growing introversion — unpleasant and subjectively threatening. Reflection upon practice can reveal weaknesses and suggest opportunities for change, which elderly teachers may find harder to take. Training outside the school has a tradition of its own, does not interfere with established stereotypes and is safer as it does not involve the risk of comparison with colleagues from the same school. Elderly teachers are also insignificantly more likely to claim that it is always the teacher who bears the responsibility for educational success. This is another piece of evidence that elderly people in the teaching profession need more safety and are more reluctant to take responsibility for failure. Attitudes of elderly teachers towards further education as well as their educational needs are influenced by their rich experience with different forms and efficiency of further education. The disproportion between simplicity of educational theories and complexity of their own teaching practice felt many times over contribute to their scepticism.

Younger teachers, who are better acquainted with alternative forms of professional skills development and methods of reflection upon practice, may regard the ‘office culture’ of peer support (Pol and Lazarová, 1999) as insufficient. They do not have too much personal experience regarding further education, are more ashamed of their professional shortcomings and are more convinced (sometimes perhaps even with a pinch of naive enthusiasm) of the positive effect of further education in practice. It is then only natural that they are more inclined to call for openness and advanced methods of cooperation within the school itself, and for better organisation and transparency.

It thus seems that in order to motivate late-career teachers and enhance their satisfaction at work, it would be reasonable to focus on getting to know their ideas about cooperation and peer support better, to discuss their educational needs, readiness to pass on their experience, take up responsibility etc.

### **Measures to motivate late-career teachers**

Measures directed towards motivating teachers until the very last stage of their career can be taken on two levels:

- of educational policy;
- of school/school management (Keeping, 2004).

I intentionally do not discuss the possibilities arising from the first level in order to focus on tasks for school leaders inspired by the issues under discussion. The process of ageing and its consequences for performance of the profession (and the teaching profession more than any other) is a major psychological issue requiring considerable sensitivity, empathy and tactfulness.

Both the lay and educationalist public seem to share the traditional mistrust of abilities of elderly teachers (and elderly people in general) often bordering on ageism, especially among

young teachers, parents and school leaders. The consequence is the tendency not to continue to involve elderly teachers in processes of change in schools. Such behaviour is short-sighted, socially destructive and uneconomic. An opportunity always exists to use the relative independence of elderly teachers, their relative freedom from the confines of their families, loyal attitude towards their schools (Vágnerová, 2000), experience, patience, reliability, balanced attitude and educational potential.

Research, on the other hand, does suggest resistance to change and a lack of trust in change among many elderly teachers. Some elderly teachers sceptically refuse offers of their colleagues for cooperation (out of fear of potential failure, excessive load etc.). The offers then usually stop coming. There is the question to which extent headteachers (especially the younger among them) are able to understand the specifics and behaviour of elderly people, to understand and respect their needs and motivate them to cooperate. How do school leaders understand resistance to change among their elderly colleagues and are they able to influence it?

Although Czech schools do not have any legal support yet as far as handling late-career teachers is concerned (career development, concessions and adjustments to work tasks etc.), they are not entirely disempowered. Support to elderly teachers leading to optimum use of their educational and experiential potential for the benefit of the school make can take the following forms:

- **supporting cooperation** (between generations) — repeated specific offers, clearly structured forms of cooperation (such as cooperation on developmental projects etc.);
- **assistance in identification of educational needs** — identification and offer of suitable forms of qualification improvement, emphasis on ‘safe’ forms of further education (e.g. within associations etc.);
- **work duties adjustment** among elderly teachers, more ‘indirect work’ — support to supervisory and tutorial programmes in school, education of elderly teachers in this etc.;
- **social support** to elderly teachers.

It is evident that the measures listed above are closely associated with creating a positive atmosphere in the school, organisation of further education and management of cooperation within the school.

### Conclusion

It is to be expected that the share of elderly teachers in schools will continue to be significant in the future. Concern about their motivation and optimum professional involvement is of economic, social and ethical importance. School leaders can do a lot: provide elderly teachers with necessary social support, help them identify their educational needs, contribute to the development of inter-generational cooperation and support the development of supervisory work in schools. There are schools where elderly teachers cannot face fast change while failing to get adequate, acceptable and unthreatening social support and peer help. There are, on the other hand, schools where it is precisely late-career teachers who are the driving force of change, who are a model to their younger colleagues, involved in international projects and who take part in further teacher training in the Czech Republic and abroad. Besides reflecting their personalities, their involvement is undoubtedly supported by the climate these teachers work in on a long-term basis. A good school which keeps improving does not benefit just

from the activity of ‘a couple of highly involved people’, but strives to develop cooperation across the school — and across teacher generations.

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## **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS — SCHOOL AND FAMILY — AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN MANAGING DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL**

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### **Introduction**

Families have a major contribution to make to children's education. The family knows the child best. Because of that it is very important to build close partnerships between the school and the family. This text examines the problems of cooperation between the family and the school in sharing knowledge about the child, the role of professionals in learning about the child at school, the use of different ways of sharing knowledge about the child, shared responsibility and support for the child's learning and development at home and school, family involvement in governance, and finally the issue of parents as activists. Examples are taken from the experience of schools in Latvia.

The *Education for All* (EFA) movement is, as its name suggests, concerned with ensuring access to at least basic education for all.

“Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs and therefore if the right to education is to mean anything, education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented, to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.”

(UNESCO, 1994)

Like *Education for All*, inclusive education is about ensuring the rights to education of all learners, regardless of their individual characteristics or difficulties, in order to build a more just society. In the transition to inclusive education, managing of diversity is not simply a technical or organizational change. Managing diversity is about removing barriers and increasing educational opportunities. This does not happen through legislation or organisational change alone, but it is an ongoing process.

Practice in each national system will be different, depending on the background and traditions of the country. Countries have to be prepared to analyse their own situations, identify barriers and facilitators of inclusion and plan a process of development that is appropriate for them. Because of that, it is necessary:

1. to initiate change,
2. to adapt administrative structures,
3. to mobilise resources and to find new ones.

Management of diversity, including all children in a school, is an acute problem in many countries, and there are similarities and differences in ways of so doing. Similar research of building partnerships between school and family was carried out by researchers Milada Rabušicová and Milan Pol in the Czech Republic in the 1990s. Their results, relating to

school and family relationships in the new social climate, are similar to the results of the research carried out in Latvia at that time. It confirms that there are general tendencies that countries are putting on the agenda in order to find more reasonable ways of solving problems.

### **Grounds for inclusion**

The move towards inclusive schools, where we need to manage diversity, can be justified on a number of grounds:

1. *educational justification* — the requirement for inclusive schools to educate all children together means that they have to develop ways of teaching that respond to individual differences and thus endeavour to benefit and satisfy all children and their families.
2. *social justification* — inclusive schools are able to change attitudes to difference by educating all children together and form the basis for a just and non-discriminatory society.
3. *economic justification* — it is likely to be less costly to establish and maintain schools which educate all children together than to set up a complex system of different types of school specialising in different groups of children. If these inclusive schools offer an effective education to all their students, then they are also a more cost-effective means of providing education for all.

There are many institutions, centres, associations, social partners, families taking part in the management process of this diversity in education. Families provide the major contribution to children's education. Partnerships can only be built if both professionals and families themselves respect this contribution and understand the part they can play in making it a reality. A starting point is the recognition of children's rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It is also meaningful for the education if the child is really and fully included in the family. Only then it is possible to include the child in education and society. Families sometimes experience great distress and pain when they realise that the child has some difficulties in learning, behaviour or some other particular problems. It may lead to problems in the relationship with the child within the family. In these cases the school, different centres and class teachers can encourage contact between the family and the child, as well as between the school and the family. It may help to relieve the stress, rebuild hope and enable the child to experience the family, and the school as well, in a positive manner.

It is also important that the child be supported in learning and development at home. Children will learn more successfully if there is a harmony between expectations and opportunities to learn at home and at school. Cooperation with the school in sharing knowledge about the child is an essential factor in including the child in education and society in general. Families know their children best. They have seen the development of the child since birth. Their knowledge includes information about abilities, activities, relationships, attitudes at home, his or her wishes and views on different problems. Class teachers working in the school cannot acquire this knowledge without the support of families.

### **Assessment of the students**

In order to learn more about the children, it is possible to use different tools for the assessment of the child and their learning. These tools may consist of a simple checklist which describes the child's achievements and difficulties in a range of fields:

1. gross motor development,
2. fine motor development,
3. communication and language development,
4. cognitive development (thinking),
5. self-help skills (daily living skills, life skills),
6. school-related learning (e.g. behaviour, language, reading, writing, numeracy),
7. social development,
8. emotional development,
9. sensory problems.

Such checklists can be completed on the basis of the teacher's daily contact with the child, and achievements can be recorded as they occur. The class teachers may use questionnaires, interviews, records of discussions, and observation of the children.

Class teachers, working in close contact with the school psychologist, medical doctor, subject teachers, administration of the school or support centres, can learn a lot about the child during the lessons, in the breaks and while conducting out-of-class activities. The aim of research and assessment of the pupils and their families is to ensure an individual approach for every child. The information received helps in making decisions, coordinating the actions of the pupils and families and giving support to the pupils. If pupils are assessed continuously in terms of their progress through the curriculum, then emerging difficulties will become apparent long before they become serious. The assessment also helps to discover different talents and gifted pupils.

### **Early assessment**

The early assessment of child's difficulties is very important so that timely interventions can be made. 'Early' in this sense does not simply mean in the child's first years. It also means that difficulties have to be identified before they have developed into serious problems. This can only be done in cooperation with families. Early assessment and intervention in this sense should:

1. minimise the impact of any difficulties,
2. reduce the need for costly programmes of rehabilitation and remediation,
3. make it more likely that the pupils's needs can be met in the mainstream class.

Early assessment and intervention are particularly important in the formative years of life, the school years and the transition phase. A common problem is that many teachers in schools wait until there is some clear evidence of educational failure and then attempt to act. In order to avoid this, it is necessary that:

1. Teachers are familiar with usual patterns of child development and should be able to identify any significant deviations from these patterns.
2. Teachers co-operate with parents to get information from them about their child's development, skills, interests and difficulties.
3. Teachers are able to use simple research instruments.

4. Teachers work closely in teams with health and social work personnel so that they can seek advice from them or refer children to them when necessary.

It is also very important that teachers realise that students have different abilities and talents that they may not be related to school curriculum. Class teachers in partnership with families, subject teachers, and psychologists should organise support the system for students.

### **Support for students**

Support includes everything that enables learners to learn. In particular entails those resources which supplement the ordinary provisions of the class teacher. The most important form of support is that which is provided from the resources which are at the disposal of every school:

1. children supporting children,
2. teachers supporting teachers,
3. parents as partners in the education of their children,
4. communities as supporters of schools.

In many situations there will also be support from teachers with specialist knowledge, resource centres and professionals from other sectors. Support has to be delivered holistically. Services and agencies have to work together rather than in isolation from each other. In school, the class teacher will become the coordinator of this support.

One of the first tasks in building effective support is to mobilise those resources which already exist in and around schools. The strategies that are commonly used to increase this effectiveness include:

1. child-to-child support in which students work collaboratively within the classroom and are able to help each other with their work,
2. teacher-to-teacher support in which the staff of a school work collaboratively to decide how best to meet the diverse needs of their students,
3. differentiation in the classroom and school.

Developing school-based teams is of great importance in managing diversity and building partnerships in school.

### **Parents as activists**

In Latvia, in many cases, parents function as activists in some kind of national parents' association of the parents. Such associations work in each region. They help school boards and schools to find better contacts with communities, other educational establishments, support centres and marginalised families. School boards act as a part of the support system to implement the aims of the education and the personality development.

The education system recognises that families have a right to be involved in the decisions that are made about their children, whether or not this is protected in legislation. For instance, parents can be invited to meetings at school where the situation of their own child is to be discussed. This ensures that decisions are taken on the basis of all available information. It also enables the family to act as advocates for the rights of the child in the decision-making process. Parents' meetings are organised on two levels — school and class. A class board of parents usually becomes the support for the class teacher to settle different problems in learning, teaching and relationships between school and community.

### Levels of cooperation

Class teacher's cooperation with the families may be on:

– *individual level*

1. communication using phone, internet, letters;
2. answers to the questions;
3. invitation to school;
4. individual consultations;
5. home visits.

– *class level*

1. meetings;
2. consultations;
3. discussions;
4. lectures.

– *school level*

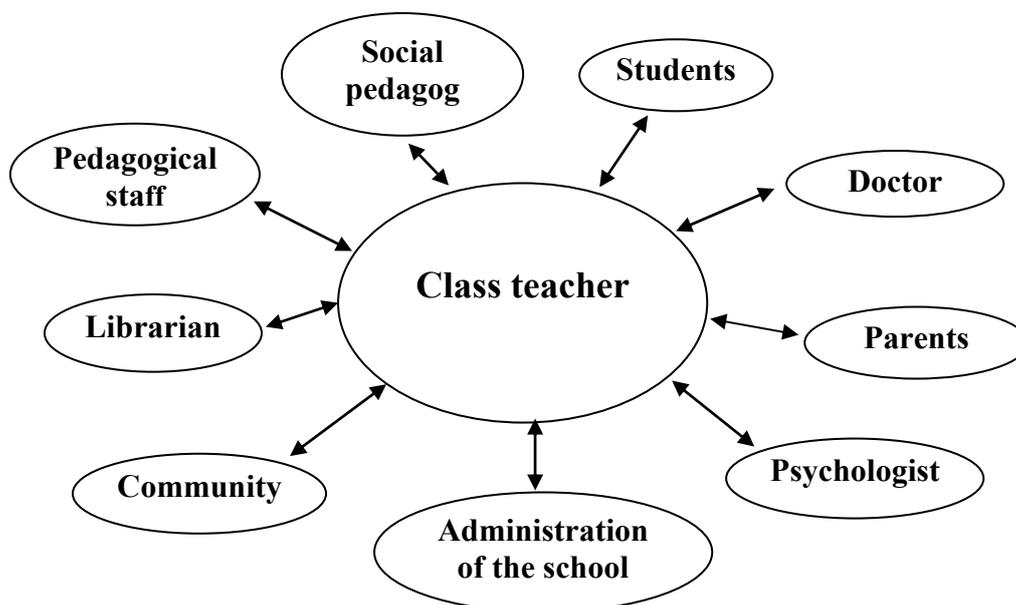
1. family evenings (parties);
2. festivities;
3. excursions, hiking;
4. sport activities.

Class teachers use both verbal approaches (discussions, instructions, situation analysis, explanations, telling) and practical methods (excursions, sport activities, birthday parties and role plays) in the work with pupils and their families.

### Partnership

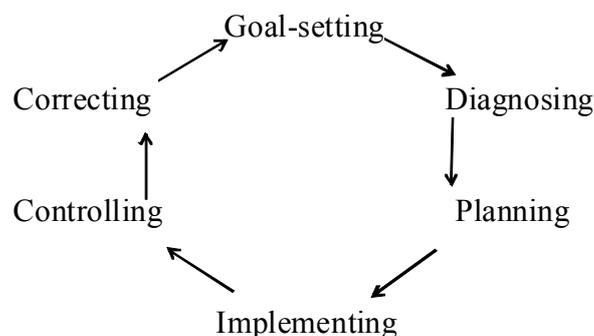
In Latvia, the class teacher co-ordinates the cooperation of different partners as depicted in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Class teacher's partnership**



The class teacher has to fulfil different pedagogical functions such as: diagnosing, planning, organising, managing, educating, controlling, correcting, assessing and evaluating. The class teacher's working cycle can be depicted in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Class teacher's working cycle**



All the activities of the class teacher are directed to the improvement of the students' support system, to give them the possibility of more effective learning.

### **Attitude of the students towards the work of the class teacher**

It was important to ascertain the attitude of the students towards the work of the class teacher. 97 students from the ninth year of 5 schools in Riga responded to statements in a survey of their experiences. The statements are ranked according to the frequency of answers:

1. I know that the teacher will help.
2. It is important for me to know the view of the teacher.
3. I know that I can trust the teacher.
4. I know that the teacher will understand me.
5. I know that the teacher will support me.
6. I am glad to hear the teacher's advice.

Clearly the students in the five schools involved trust their class teachers.

### **The views of parents**

At the same time, parents gave their assessment of cooperation with the school.

**Figure 3: Cooperation with school**

	<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Bad</b>
Year 1–4 (105 parents)	33	60	12
Year 5–9 (112 parents)	24	59	29
Year 11–12 (102 parents)	25	57	20

The results show that in this case these schools have satisfactory cooperation with parents. At the same time, in these schools, about half of teachers consider that the parents are not interested in cooperation. The practical results in five schools showed that parents whose

children have no problems come to school regularly, and are interested in innovations in teaching and learning. It means that greater attention should be paid to children with problems and their families. Schools should find new forms and methods of involving these families in the common goal, educating and assisting the child.

The research was also focused on parents' expectations from the school, their satisfaction with the class environment, the forms and methods used by the class teacher, and on the possibilities of cooperating with communities and medical services. The results were discussed in the meetings of school boards. The following conclusions were reached on areas for improvement:

1. widen the focus from some to all students at schools,
2. encourage teachers to see students as learners,
3. give greater autonomy to teachers,
4. use more individual ways of working with parents,
5. provide more support from local administration for changes in education,
6. pay more attention to differentiation in schools.

During the last ten years great changes have taken place in our society, and correspondingly in education as well. Schools and families have experienced these changes. These concern the distribution of power between the school and family and the structure of the relations. School more than ever has become the mirror of the society with all its changes. Because of that the school and the family need to find new ways of cooperation.

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## **DIVERSITY — ONE OF THE CHALLENGES FOR SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION**

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### **Introduction**

This paper deals with the issue of self-evaluation in Czech schools. The findings of two school case studies investigating the implementation of self-evaluation into two basic schools (pupils aged 6 through 15, primary school and lower secondary school) lead the author to identify several problematic areas that leaders of Czech schools have to face.

Czech education and its system underwent a considerable number of changes in the last two years. Some were fundamental and significant, some less so. Others were ambitious, yet their impact was less visible (the ideas were nicely stated but their realisation in practice was superficial); many changes still remain to be introduced. The great variety of changes and also various approaches to managing them means that diversity is probably the best word to describe the current situation of school self-evaluation. I do not intend to explain what school self-evaluation is or could be (this was done e.g. by Morrison 1993, MacBeath 2000, Altrichter et al. 2004) or to search for detailed recommendations or predictions for putting school self-evaluation into practice. As a researcher, I have had the chance to work with schools, to do two long-term case studies (8 and 12 months) exploring the issue of implementing self-evaluation processes into the work of two Czech schools (Vašťatková, 2005) so I am aware that diversity can be a positive factor. Nevertheless, I would like to raise the question of whether too much diversity (diversity in the system, in the paradigm, in terminology, in school approaches, in readiness, in people's perception) can cause great harm and block the positive potential of school self-evaluation.

### **Diversity in the system and in the paradigm of education**

An overview of the main changes that took place after 1989 and provided a broad social framework for the operation of Czech schools will help to explain two of the above-mentioned categories of diversity: diversity within the system and in the paradigm. Since the 1990's, school systems in various European countries have been undergoing the process of decentralisation, which also means that the responsibility for education has been shifting from the former central level to lower levels: to the level of regions, municipalities, and especially to particular schools. This holds true for the Czech Republic as well. Czech schools have been given a great deal of autonomy and have thus become fully responsible for their work in various fields. They got the opportunity and later the obligation to become legal entities and thus to become grant-maintained schools. Schools took advantage of this opportunity. It brought them more independence and also more responsibility. Nevertheless, their curricula at that time still remained to a certain extent centrally-planned.

In order to promote the accountability of schools and the development of good-quality school management in these circumstances, various systematic steps have been taken. For instance, in 1995, the amendment to the Law on State Administration and Self-government in Education imposed the obligation on all schools to carry out self-evaluation in the form of compiling annual reports on their activities. Annual reports thus became a duty for schools. However, they were mainly of statistical importance. (In reality they were only description of events organised at or by a particular school during the previous period).

In 2005, a new School Act in the Czech Republic (the first in two decades) also changed the functioning of schools in various ways. It introduced the so-called framework curriculum programmes, school governing bodies and compulsory school self-evaluation. The freedom of schools was thus enlarged even in the educational field. With this act the reform of school curricula was launched and it was implemented by introducing the concept of the framework curriculum (state-provided) and the school curriculum (the state-provided curriculum elaborated by schools themselves). The aim of this curricular reform is, among other things, to change the paradigm of education in Czech schools, e.g. to shift the focus of education from transmission to more active ways of learning. Trying to achieve this stage places a new demand on schools and their leaders — to work according their own school curriculum. For the first time ever in the modern era, Czech schools and their teachers are expected to act autonomously. They are expected to search for ways how to integrate the traditionally-designed teaching subjects and to develop a curriculum through staff co-operation. Despite many criticisms (the lack of time, no previous or systematic preparation, no public campaign, insufficient resources and more), this measure can bring significant changes to schools and their understanding of ‘how to work together’ in order to succeed.

Decentralisation brings with itself not only the need to manage the quality of education down to classroom level, but also to monitor more frequently the process of education and, in particular, its output. However, in the Czech Republic there are no final state examinations or nationwide tests at the moment (except for some private ones), and apparently, there are only simple national quantitative indicators but no official performance standards. (Some standards are provided on national level by the governmental organisation called The Institute for Information on Education, but they are mostly of a statistical nature.) The need of schools to have at their disposal some kind of standards to refer to is shown clearly by their interest in national tests carried out on a commercial basis. Schools (or their owners) have to pay to become involved in these tests and they do it on a large scale. The new School Act introduces compulsory testing of students twice during their time at basic school (i.e. during compulsory education) and also final state examinations after upper secondary schools though, no state examinations have yet been made available (e.g. ‘final school-leaving examinations’ have been at preparatory stage for more than 8 years now). A mechanism for good assessment in education needs to be developed. A new Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring of Educational Outputs is planned. It should provide a broader range of national standards and develop and conduct national surveys and also serve as an advisory body.

The main external institution for evaluating schools, the Czech School Inspectorate, has also been going through a period of change. The position of the inspectorate within the whole educational system has been shifting. It is changing from a controlling body to one which performs more consulting and monitoring activities; it is shifting its attention mainly towards the educational output. The inspectorate has to follow a framework for school inspection, which is published and made available to all schools. However, according to this framework, the concept of quality is rather general but should in the future become more transparent and specific.

To sum up, changes of the Czech educational system and of the educational paradigm (see Figure 1) resulted in a diversity, including a discrepancy between the need for, the indispensability of self-evaluation for autonomous schools and the duty imposed by the law to perform school self-evaluation.

**Figure 1: Changes of the system and the paradigm of education**

<b>PAST</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>
Centralised system (responsibility at its centre).	Decentralised system (schools as autonomous units with great responsibility).
The concept of quality set by the state and controlled by the inspectorate, i.e. the evaluation of schools mainly external.	Various concepts of quality (state, school founders, parents...) checked by different bodies and largely based on school self-evaluation (including reflections of different stakeholders), i.e. a joint methodology combining internal evaluation by the school and external evaluation.
Czech School Inspectorate controls inputs and processes; negative results of evaluation followed mainly by sanctions.	Czech School Inspectorate focuses more on the outputs and processes and serves as consulting body too; negative findings seen primarily as a challenge, an opportunity to improve.
Educational programmes relatively fixed.	A variety of school educational programmes.
<b>Old paradigm:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers 'deliver' the content of the curriculum: teachers transfer, students receive.</li> <li>• Focus on limited facts.</li> </ul>	<b>New paradigm:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers 'develop' school curricula: reflective teaching, students learn actively.</li> <li>• Focus on learning to learn.</li> </ul>
Informed parents.	Participating parents.
School 'and' society.	School 'in' society.

### Diversity in terminology

According to the new School Act and also as a result of the gradually introduced obligatory framework curricula for particular educational levels, schools are expected to perform their own self-evaluation in order to cope with new demands and requirements. In fact, self-evaluation has become a new duty for all Czech schools. However, in each of Czech strategic documents of the new millennium this new duty is formulated and named differently — e.g. the National Programme, 2001; long-term plans at state and regional levels; materials from the inspectorate (see also Prášilová and Vašátková, 2005). The terms used rank from *evaluation and assessment at schools*, *internal (inner) evaluation*, *schools' own assessment*, *self-assessment* to *autoevaluation*. The novelty of self-evaluation and the diversity in naming it calls for a more detailed theoretical explanation and examples. By autumn 2005 only a few very basic informational texts on the issue had been published, using again various names and clarification.

### Diversity in the approaches of schools

School self-evaluation is quite a new concept but not one which would be absolutely foreign to Czech schooling — there have been some minor attempts to carry out self-evaluation, several pilot projects have been run. Nonetheless, in quite a number of schools a more systematic and participatory approach is still to come. (This is also confirmed by thematic

inspections performed by the Czech School Inspectorate in the last five years — see Appendix 1.) The view of school as a complex system is new for some teachers (conclusion of two school case studies, Vašátková, 2005).

Despite the fact that some schools can be regarded as ‘progressive’ or ‘up-to-date’, a large number of them are in fact only beginning to change their work styles. Dozens of self-evaluation experiments at schools have been registered, although they mostly seem to be isolated initiatives. Research findings prove the diversity of approaches among school heads. A study was conducted in March and June 2005, using a questionnaire as a main instrument. Altogether 168 respondents (headteachers and their deputies) took part in this study. They can be called ‘volunteers’, as a large number of others refused to answer in writing any questions concerning the topic of school self-evaluation during various workshops on this issue. Out of these ‘volunteers’, 59 (i.e. 35 %) were ‘completely lost’ and were prepared neither personally nor as an organisation for any meaningful school self-evaluation at all. In some schools, there was a feeling of being overwhelmed by the logistic, economic, and operational demands and other tasks connected with the school as a whole — people claim that they lack time and sometimes even energy to work more intensively on the ‘inner life’ of the school, on education itself. School self-evaluation is just extra work for them. As regards readiness, motivation (examined according to the ADCOM model — Folaron, 2005) seems to be the weakest point. Compulsion is not enough for meaningful self-evaluation (see Vašátková and Prášilová, 2005).

To sum up, there is generally a lack of practical experience with this ‘new style of work’ and also a lack of Czech-language scholarly literature especially in the field of self-evaluation. Great time pressure from the ministry and scepticism among practitioners who are not prepared, result in a rather complicated situation.

There are also other uncertainties concerning the issue of school self-evaluation currently among the school inspectorate, by school establishing entities, by school boards, as well as the school community and society in general.

### **Diversity in people’s perception**

At the beginning of this text, I tried to outline the overall situation — to show the inventive steps that schools will have to make. A growing pressure on the self-evaluation processes in schools can be expected. Lack of preparation is an urgent problem because not enough discussion between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, research institutes and other bodies have taken place. A clarification of mutual expectations is needed. (This situation is a consequence of other factors as well — undue urgency, lack of experience, low level of readiness on almost all levels on the part of those who should realise the changes, frequent alterations of staff in key positions of the system, and consequent frequent alterations of priorities.) New ways of communication with social partners at all levels of administration and management should be established. There is a lack of support for everybody who is expected to perform new tasks or to do old tasks differently (headteachers, teachers, parents, local community groups etc.). The systematic support of the efforts of schools to develop autonomously is definitely not efficient. At the national level, the concept of INSET or further teachers’ training should be developed as soon as possible along with transparent and specific educational standards.

Schools should use self-evaluation to write their ‘school stories’. They themselves have to decide who exactly tells the story, to whom, for what purpose and in what medium. In

addition to schools themselves ‘readers’ or ‘the clients’ — parents, the community, and the whole society — must be better informed. Traditional views, the lack of public campaign supporting the curricular reform and other changes, the lack of communication among different groups of stakeholders — all this results in yet another form of diversity: the diversity of people’s perception. Some have had the chance to experience the benefits of meaningful school self-evaluation, many have not.

### Conclusion

This text has touched upon several important problems concerning school self-evaluation which is an issue gradually becoming more visible in the Czech Republic as the working style of schools has to change quite radically. School self-evaluation is another step on the way to make meaningful use of the autonomy given to Czech schools. However, as this paper also points out, schools are in a complicated situation because this field represents a great challenge for anybody involved (a lack of motivation, skilled school staff, a lack of access to relevant training and information, counselling, monitoring and evaluation of self-evaluation efforts...) — in sum, too much diversity. There is little time for dealing with this diversity in a meaningful way. To tackle this, schools have to start to help one another, learn from each others’ experience and also from abroad, both on a formal and on an informal level. To be able to make use of the positive potential of school self-evaluation, international cooperation and projects could offer tremendous support for Czech schools. Various projects on the topic of school self-evaluation have already been run, e.g. the two-year Socrates project *Bridges across Boundaries: cross-disseminating quality development practices in Southern and Eastern Europe* that involved some current ENIRDEM members (e.g. Milan Pol, the Czech Republic; Tibor Barath, Hungary) and also other participants from various countries (Austria, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Switzerland and also the UK as John MacBeath of Cambridge University was the senior project leader).

The only thing that is certain about any change regarding Czech school self-evaluation is that it means that something is going somewhere. Where exactly? Nobody knows (there is just an idea, a plan), the only thing that is for sure is that things will be different than in the past... A young student, Serena, once said: “When we all stop rushing around doing what we are doing and begin to think about it, together we could make a better school.” (MacBeath et al., 2000). This is the sentence that comes into my mind when I think of school self-evaluation, and not only in the Czech Republic.

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## Appendix 1

Annual reports of the Czech School Inspectorate:

- 1999/2000 — The weakest point of schools is their supervision activity. Most schools do not have efficient systems of internal supervision — they lack their own instruments for assessment... Annual reports of schools are only descriptive...
- 2001/2002 — Most schools do not have internal systems of evaluation. Their analyses are rather superficial and formal; schools rarely eliminate drawbacks...
- 2002/2003 — The supervision of educational processes at schools is not systematic; there is nearly no internal evaluation...
- 2003/2004 — Systematic self-evaluation (focused on educational processes) is missing at schools. Schools are interested in it but they are not able to put it into practice. If there are any results of self-assessment activities, they are not taken into consideration in further school work...



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