

Previous ECERS

- ⇒ 2013: Istanbul
- ⇒ 2012: Cádiz
- ⇒ 2011: Berlin
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Conferences before 2000

- 1999: Lahti
- 1998: Ljubljana
- 1997: Frankfurt
- 1996: Seville
- 1995: Bath (joint BERA/EERA)
- 1992: Twente, 22- 25 June

ECER 2011, Berlin

The European Conference on Educational Research 2011 took place at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany.

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Conference Dates

Emerging Researchers Conference	12 - 13 September	Monday- Tuesday
Main Conference	13 - 16 September	Tuesday - Friday

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Schools' ownership of curriculum and their self-evaluation: Findings from two European regions



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Conference: ECER 2011, Urban Education

Network: [3. Curriculum Innovation by Schools and Teachers](#)

Format: Paper

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Session Information

[03 SES 10 A, Implementing Curricular Change](#)

Paper Session

Time: 2011-09-15
15:00-16:30

Room: JK 31/227,1 FL., 30

Chair: Jan van den Akker

Contribution

Schools' ownership of curriculum and their self-evaluation: Findings from two European regions

Assuming that, despite the feeling that "it appears that centralized control of curriculum will remain the dominant *motif* in curriculum policy-making" (Kennedy, 2010, p. 15), research on centralisation *versus* decentralisation of the curriculum in a wide range of countries suggests that, overall, "some progress has been made" in the consolidation of school-based curriculum development (Kennedy, 2010, p. 16). According to Marsh (2010), "there are promising examples [of school-based curriculum development] emerging in many countries despite the tightening central control exerted by central authorities" (p. 295). This growing tendency to accept the idea of schools as curriculum agencies has been accompanied by an increase in the adoption of teacher evaluation and school evaluation measures in many countries, which has been interpreted by some authors as a means of strengthening control while praising schools' and teachers' curricular autonomy. Krejsler (2005) views this relationship between autonomy and evaluation in education as part of a wider phenomenon whereby a large portion of the public sector has been increasingly subject to changes "characterised by a decentralisation of decision-making as well as centralisation in the form of broad descriptions of aims and goals for public service that are controlled at the output level through quality assessment by a major expansion of detailed auditing and (self-)evaluation measures" (pp. 350-351). In order to deepen our understanding of the relationship between school-based curriculum development and school evaluation, it is important to conduct empirical research on the extent to which school evaluators focus their attention on curricular issues. This is especially important in the specific case of schools' self-evaluation, considering that the extent to which self-evaluation teams in schools emphasise curricular issues can be a good indicator of their level of ownership of the curriculum. Accordingly, some studies on that issue have recently been conducted in the Azores, Portugal (Sousa & Roldão, 2009; Sousa, 2010). The researchers found that reflection on curricular issues has been "little visible" in the self-evaluation reports produced by the schools of that region (Sousa & Roldão, 2009, p. 79). Through this paper, we intend not only to discuss the results of the analysis of more recent self-evaluation reports produced in the Azores, but also to compare those results with results of the analysis of self-evaluation reports produced by the schools of Nord-Trøndelag County, Norway. This comparison will be facilitated by the fact that the model of school self-evaluation being used in both regions is an adaptation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), which has been used as a self-evaluation tool by a wide range of public institutions across Europe, including schools. This tool was created in 2002 by the EU ministers responsible for public administration, in the context of the Innovative Public Services Group (IPSG). In 2010, an overall European CAF version specific to the education sector was approved by the IPSG and published. These developments of CAF clearly illustrate the above-mentioned subordination of educational policy to changes in the public sector at large (Krejsler, 2005).

Method

Although the CAF model pre-determines nine criteria that identify the dimensions of the institution's operation that need to be considered (e.g., leadership, strategy and planning, key performance results...), self-evaluation teams that use it in schools may emphasise the issues that they consider more relevant. If schools have ownership of the curriculum, then one of those issues should be the school's curricular policy and practice, despite the fact that the CAF model does not include any explicit requirement directly related to the curriculum. In order to find out the extent to which curricular issues are indeed taken into consideration by self-evaluation teams, we are analysing the self-evaluation reports produced by the schools from both regions in 2009. In addition, we are analysing the reports issued in Nord-Trøndelag County in 2007. Reports produced in the Azores in 2007 have already been analysed and that analysis has already been discussed in other papers. The technique of analysis implies marking every passage of the text that is, directly or indirectly, related to curricular issues, by mentioning decisions on what to teach, how to teach it, when to teach it and how to know the extent to which it has been learnt.

Expected Outcomes

We are working with the hypothesis that we will find some differences in terms of the visibility of curricular issues in the processes of schools' self-evaluation being implemented in the two regions. We expect to be able to interpret the findings in terms of curriculum ownership at the schools' level. In addition, if the existence of those differences is confirmed, we expect to comment them in the light of differences in curriculum policy in those regions and in the countries they belong to. Finally, we intend to discuss differences, if any, between data from 2007 and data from 2009 in both regions.

References

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Sousa, F. (2010). Avaliação de escolas: De obrigação burocrática a instrumento de melhoria [School evaluation: A bureaucratic burden or an opportunity for improvement?]. Paper presented at II Colóquio sobre avaliação de escolas, Angra do Heroísmo.

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