

## Focus group discussion in Ängelholm October 11<sup>th</sup> 2018

### **About the Swedish school in general**

*For the Swedish participants:*

Is it possible for you to give students the education that you would like to give them (if you free to do what ever you wanted in school)? What is restraining you to be the perfect school?

*For the guests:*

Let's say that you were Minister of Education in your country for one day and completely free hands on Monday next week. Based on experiences– what you would change first based on experiences this week? That is - what things in the Swedish approach of teaching could update and improve educational purposes/outcomes for the students at your school? Would all parts of the way of teaching in Sweden be applicable in your country?

### **Student centred vs teacher centred methods – general**

*Observation: Students also autonomous and do not need their teachers all the time.*

How can you increase the students' motivation and support their independence in the classroom, in order to have a more student centred approach?

How can either the individual teacher or the school organization prevent student autonomy from causing discipline?

How do the teacher manage mixed ability classes when the teaching is more student centred? How can you work with talented kids?

*Observation: The science lesson about salt and lice was authentic, very understandable for the students. The group was small and the use of digital microscope was interesting to the students. However, there was not anything about theory or hygiene*

Regarding what knowledge forms (facts, understanding, skills, familiarisation, personal development, social development) is teaching with more student-centered approaches more efficient? Regarding what knowledge forms is more teacher centred methods better?

How much do you as a teacher have to prepare for a lesson to be well-organised if it's student centred? More or less compared to if it's more teacher centred? Maybe you have to prepare in a different way? Is it good to be spontaneous and leave the original lesson plan (for example to mix "lice and salt")?

*Observation: A math lesson where students worked individually in their books and autocorrected their calculations.*

What if the cheat? What are the challenges in assessing and grading students when they work more student centred and individualized or in groups?

Many guests' observations describe a warm atmosphere and students that do their tasks without teacher have to "push them". How is this possible?

## **ICT**

*Observation: The students were presenting information about English landmarks. They did it as a role play and were recorded with a camera.*

In what way can ICT be used to improve the teaching, besides the students just using the computer as a typewriter?

In some school systems Computer Science and ICT is organized as a separate subject. How is it in your countries? What would be the pros and cons?

The students at Errarp's school have had their own computer for the last five years and so and much focus have been put on ICT. Looking back on this period, what advice can you give to schools, which in a few years will become more and more digitized?

To your experience, in what learning situation is ICT and e-learning efficient? Is there situations where it isn't?

To your experience, how does e-learning and computer usage affect the student creativity?

## **Bilingual methods**

In what ways could ICT assist the usage of bilingual methods in the teaching?

Using English to teach other subjects is unusual in Sweden. What are the benefits of using bilingual methods? Perhaps it could be used more in Sweden - or maybe it isn't necessary the same way here?

## **School organization**

Is the teachers of the same subjects organized in some way at Errarp's school? In the region? Nationwide? Do you have regular meetings? How about in the other countries?

How much in-service training do you have per year? How about in the other countries?

The last decade there have been many school development projects implemented in the Swedish schools, many of the instigated by the government and almost obligatory for schools to take part in. Share your experiences from these to the guests!

Observations describe different practical subjects with well-equipped classrooms and small groups. In Sweden the students have more practical subjects (about 30 % of the hours), as well as more practical parts in otherwise theoretical subject such as science. What are your reflections of the Swedish division between more practical teaching and more theoretical? Pros and cons?

## **Special needs**

*Observation: I have seen authentic learning during science class where teacher demanded from students to research themselves.*

How do weak students catch up with strong students in this form of teaching and how does the teacher manage both kind of students?

What happens if some student does not acquire knowledge. Does that student repeat class in Sweden? What about in the other countries?

In Sweden, the focus of special needs education have had very little focus on gifted students and solely focused on students with learning difficulties. Why is this? What about the other countries?

## **Entrepreneurship and authentic learning**

To your experience, how does e-learning and computer usage affect the student creativity?

In crafts and arts, for example student produce stuff. What about producing stuff that the students could sell in a Swedish school – could it be done?