



EUROPEAN NETWORK ON TEACHER EDUCATION POLICIES

XXII. ENTEP Conference in Uppsala

I.

The ENTEP Meeting, November 15-18, took place during the Swedish Presidency of the European Union and the conference on “Gender Differences in Educational Achievement” in Uppsala, Sweden.

Background

The conference dealt with gender differences in educational outcomes in the final years of compulsory school (in Sweden years 7–9), upper secondary school, higher education and adult education where studies show considerable differences between the educational achievements of boys and girls. The aim of the conference was to increase awareness among decision makers of the consequences of gender differences in educational achievement, why gender differences arise and, if possible, various ways to address them.

Participants at the conference were decision makers, researchers and international organizations from all over Europe.

Conference

The Minister for Higher Education and Research, Dr Tobias Krantz, held an opening speech in which he addressed specific issues concerning gender differences in educational achievements. Studies show that teachers tend to allow boys to dominate in the class room, while accepting that they work less hard and take less responsibility in school. At the same time girls tend to spend more time and effort on their schoolwork and are more attentive. Obviously school staff is simply unaware of the fact that they themselves reproduce gender stereotypes in their behavior towards the children. Dr Krantz is also of the opinion that all governments can and should do something about this problem, which is often less complicated than one would imagine. He also mentioned that boys are limited by their own perception of what a boy ‘should’ be. Boys also discriminate each other when for instance giving power to a small group of boys allowing them to decide what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’.

The following speaker was Adam Pokorny from the European Commission (DG EAC) who spoke about the importance of a knowledge based society that is built by all and not only by



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specialists. In this context Mr. Pokorny compared figures of boys and girls on issues of early school leaving, upper secondary completion LLL participation and reading.

Although girls in general were among the high achievers in many ways the audience found the low scales for boys in reading competences rather shocking.

Agneta Stark, Vice-Chancellor of Dalarna University College, pointed out during her keynote speech that education today is not a competitive advantage but rather goes without saying for those who want to be 'in the game'. More women than men choose this path and men are falling behind. – When girls did badly in school in the past, it was argued that the problem was to be identified within the girls; when boys do badly in school today, school is obviously held more responsible for this deficiency.

Anna Ekström, Chair of the Committee for Gender Equality in School, Sweden, started off the second day of the conference on Gender Differences in Educational Achievement with observations that higher grades achieved by girls in school are nothing new. What *is* new is that in recent years girls have started to make more use of their higher grades by taking up desirable and traditionally male programmes in higher education rather than just traditionally female programmes, such as nursing or pre-school teaching. This has led to discussions about girls outperforming boys or boys underachieving in school. She also raised the issue of how women's dominance in higher education will affect the future labour market. Since the labour market is constantly changing,

particularly bearing in mind the increased demographic challenges posed by an ageing population and the need for a more knowledge-intensive labour market, there will be of course be room for both - men and women - in the future labour market.

Ms Ekström therefore did not think this would necessarily mean that 'newly feminized' professions will experience a decline in status or that men would somehow be pushed out of the labour market. She emphasized that the differences among girls and among boys were much greater than the differences between the two groups. If we constantly stress the differences between girls and boys, there is a risk of reinforcing stereotypical gender roles, she made us aware of. "It's important to see the differences between girls and boys without getting hung up on them." Similarly, there is no reason to feel sorry for girls or boys collectively. What we must do is strive to see all children and all pupils in school in terms of their individual abilities and wishes.

Pamela Sammons, professor at the University of Oxford, then outlined recent findings from research on school and teacher effectiveness and studies of successful school leadership on what factors help promote better outcomes for students.

The Minister for Integration and Gender Equality Nyamko Sabuni closed the conference by giving a short review on highlights so far and thanking the participants and the speakers.



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Workshops on gender perspectives in teacher education

Discussions at one workshop at the conference on Gender Differences in Educational Achievement that concluded on Wednesday 18 November in Uppsala focused on *gender perspectives in teacher education*. Professor Mike Younger from the University of Cambridge said that the majority of beginning teachers he has spoken with feel that gender differences in achievement are a problem. Among the reasons for viewing the differences as a problem are that poorer achievements by boys can affect girls' education or have a negative impact on boys' self-image.

Prof. Younger also presented various myths about boys and girls in school, such as *learning in different ways*. "We must take what we have learned about gender issues and integrate it completely into the teacher education agenda – this is a shortcoming in the UK at the moment," he said and received support from both Swedish and Finnish participants, who have experienced similar phenomena.

Elina Lahelma, Professor at the Department of Education, University of Helsinki, Finland, elaborated on gender awareness as a challenge for schools and teacher education in Finland as well. A project is therefore currently under way to increase awareness of this topic in teacher education at all Finnish Universities.

The moderator, Fredrik Bondestam, PhD at the Centre of Gender Research, Uppsala University, Sweden, added that

even Swedish programmes neglect to integrate gender studies into teacher education. He feels that teachers need broad theoretical knowledge of gender issues, but they must also be able to transfer their knowledge into practical use in their day-to-day work.

In order to do so, Dr Bondestam suggested teachers should try out new methods and find new models, and see what happens when they test them at school.

II. ENTEPE internal meeting

1.

In preparation of this conference a small **thematic working group on "Preconditions for the Doctoral Phase, the so called third cycle within the Bologna Process"** has been active since the Bucharest conference this year. Per Klingbjer reported for this group.

Under the working title "Connections between teacher education, teacher career evolution and doctoral programmes" ENTEPE had agreed that the ENTEPE-meeting in Uppsala should further focus on this issue and it was seen to be interesting to explore this more in depth.

One entrance in order to strengthen teachers' driving force for a qualified professional development could be the linkage between professional



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development programmes (such as doctoral programmes) and career paths in school. It was intended to see how teacher education systems connect with a PhD or other kind of doctorate (e.g. professional doctorate) in the different Member States.

The thematic working group had planned to have a short country report (homework) from all the participants in the ENTEPE-meeting in Uppsala. Therefore the following questions were sent around and the national situation was to be discussed within the internal ENTEPE meeting.

Questions

1. Describe how the general academic career paths run in your country. Is there any "professional doctorates"?
2. Describe how the teacher education connects up with a PhD or other kind of doctorate (e.g. professional doctorate) in your country. Is there a possibility for direct entrance to doctoral programmes after the teacher education? If not, what are the additional entrance criteria after the teacher education to the possible doctoral programmes?
3. Does a PhD or other kind of doctorate (e.g. professional doctorate). in educational sciences or in a single subject such as history (or the didactics of the subjects) lead to a more qualified position as a teacher or in related fields?

4. Is there any state initiative to support qualified professional development at doctoral level for teachers?

The outcome of this discussion and further work in this context will continue in the autumn meeting of ENTEPE in Belgium, probably summarising outcomes and analyses of the current situation and connected problems in member states.

2.

Paul Holdsworth could not be present at this conference and therefore summarized the latest news from the European Commission for ENTEPE members.

- In October 2009 the Cluster "Teachers and Trainers" held a very useful Peer Learning Activity in Lithuania which was designed to answer the question "**What are the policy conditions for the successful implementation of classroom practice in Initial Teacher Education?**" this PLA produced a detailed set of ideas for consideration by policymakers wishing to improve the effectiveness of the practical element of Initial Teacher Education. Once they have been approved by the Cluster, these proposals will be available on the Europa website (http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc836_en.htm).
- The Cluster also held a Joint Seminar with three other Clusters, focussing on the crucial question



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of **pupil assessment**. Given Member States' commitment to ensuring that all citizens acquire the 8 Key Competences, what are the implications for the ways in which learners are assessed? Prof. Dylan William of the Institute of Education, London, gave a fascinating keynote. The effectiveness of current Teacher Education programmes in preparing teachers to use both summative and formative assessment techniques in an appropriate way to enhance learning is a key question to be addressed.

- The Cluster's first Policy Handbook – concerning advice for policymakers on the **Induction of beginning teachers** – will be finalized by the end of the year and published as a European Commission text in early 2010.
- The following work programme for Peer Learning in 2010 / 2011 might deal with policies on: 'Quality Control in CPD', 'School leadership', 'The Education of Teacher Educators' and 'The Selection of Applicants to be Teachers'. As ENTEP members know, these are all issues that Ministers have highlighted as priorities for action in the coming years.
- Concerning the Teaching and Learning International Survey **TALIS** the Commission has cooperated closely with the OECD and invested 1 Mio Euro. Amongst

other issues this study provides a brand of new sources of data for policymakers dealing with teacher professional development. The results will be closely scrutinised by ENTEP members, also because of the (sometimes paradoxical) picture they seem to paint. If the survey is repeated in the future years, it could provide data to feed a European Indicator on teacher CPD.

(http://www.oecd.org/document/0/0,3343,en_2649_39263231_38052160_1_1_1_1.00.html)

- The European Commission has cooperated closely with the Swedish Presidency of the European Council who organised an informal Ministerial Meeting in Goteborg in October. This was the first time that a whole Ministerial meeting has been dedicated to discussing the professional development of teachers and school leaders. Many high quality presentations were made, including by Michael Barber (co-author of the Mc Kinsey report on top-performing education systems); (presentations are available on video here: http://www-se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/9/23/informal_meeting_of_education_ministers). The quality of debate was high and there was broad consensus about the importance of stepping up joint policy work; these are the issues that were highlighted by the Presidency after the meeting:



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- comprehensive induction programmes for all beginning teachers,
- establishing a European network on the continuing professional development of teachers and school leaders,
- promoting teacher exchanges and placements abroad,
- ensuring high quality training provision for all school leaders,
- creating a European arena to exchange research evidence and good policy practice on the professional development of teachers and school leaders, and
- extending to all Member States policy cooperation and peer learning work within the Open Method of Coordination.

To give effect to this consensus, the Swedish Presidency will ask the Education Council later in November to approve Council Conclusions on “the professional development of teachers and school leaders”. If these Conclusions are approved, it will mean that the issue of teacher education has been subject of Council Conclusions in three consecutive years, an indication of political importance that is now attached to it. It is expected that the Commission will be asked to report back to the Council about how their Conclusions of 2007 and 2008

have been implemented across the EU!

3.

In the following part of the internal ENTEP exchange representatives reported on latest changes and developments in their countries, especially considering the current topics of interest.

In **Luxemburg** Teacher Education for Primary School teachers had started 4 years ago with the BA and 240 ECTS. The first are now leaving University and have been mobile at least for one semester within their studies. The MA degree is being prepared in the framework of CPD, starting in 2010.

In the **Netherland** there are 31 institutes for Primary School teacher training and the qualification for teachers in this sector is under discussion now. There are national examinations for subject knowledge in Teacher Education in general.

In **England** there are strong efforts into marketing teaching. Generally two pathways are offered for the profession: the MA for second level and the BA in subject matters plus MA in teaching. After the MA in the subject there is an Induction Phase (half at University and half at school). Selection of applicant is an issue under discussion as well are social skills in the profession and the competences for primary school teachers.

Also in **Lithuania** a process of reform is under way, implementing an induction



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period. In **Cyprus** the Education Reform is in progress and currently the establishment of leadership academies is in the main focus. Induction and upgrading the level of induction is a crucial topic as well. In **Denmark** the national framework in TE is changing. Since 2007 teacher education for primary and lower secondary level is being improved. In Flanders some kind of orientation examination for student teachers is introduced. If they fail, they are advised not to enter.

At the same time it is intended to attract teachers from other academic fields as it is the case in most Länder in **Germany** as well.

Similar to Luxemburg, **Spain** is developing new TE programmes. There shall be blended learning courses and an online course focussing on key competences. Bilingual projects with integrated curriculum approaches are planned as well.

Sweden has been introducing an induction period quite soon. There is a CPD package in progress and 300 Mio Euro are being invested between 2007 and 2010. Teachers in service are allowed to take off for a year and go abroad and their salary is paid during that period. A programme on research schools, also doctoral programmes for teachers are offered and so far 10 schools are participating.

Romania is also intending to strengthen the induction period and the present Definitivare will be included within the Bologna system. In **Slovenia** the implementation of the Bologna Cycle structure has lead to a compulsory MA degree in TE except for Kindergarden.

Finland invests much more money in in-service training for teachers now and is also developing an induction period. School leadership and ICT are high on the agenda. There is also an approach for strengthening the role of teachers in the innovation of social issues and an evaluation of the Bologna Process implications is planned for 2010/2011.

In **Austria** there is a dispute about the workload of teachers and the public image of this profession in this context. Like observed in England as well the financial crisis seems to attract more students to the profession, but there is no specific instrument for a real selection, although some institutions offer extended interviews. For primary school teachers the BA degree is offered within a three year programme. There is a vision to develop an MA degree for language teaching and testing.

In the field of **teacher education at Universities in Austria** an orientation phase with coaching possibilities is offered to see if the study programme is right for the beginning students. Like in Germany the Bologna architecture is strongly criticised by students due to the tight module structure. Another analogy with Germany is the problem what path to choose after the BA level. In connection with this issue salary scales will have to be newly regulated which is a political issue.

Other ENTEPE business

In October, the members of the coordination group will have their regular meeting before the second ENTEPE conference where the representative from



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the country hosting it will be a temporary member of the coordination group (Trinidad De Haro from Spain).

The following points are to be discussed:

- Formulating the internal working topic for the next ENTEPE meeting
- The role ENTEPE can play in the context of the Spanish conference and the working theme ENTEPE could contribute to according to the topics interesting for Spain as the Host country.
- New topics for ENTEPE to focus upon in the next conferences: doctoral studies within the Bologna structure with a special focus on TE and consequences for teachers professional development as a new strategic guideline within the European Teacher Education Area;

Recent changes within ENTEPE membership

Prof Bartolo Campos, the visionary and founder of ENTEPE (after an initiative of the Portuguese Minister of Education in 1999), retired from his work at University and also left ENTEPE as the Portuguese representative.

ENTEPE highly appreciated his support, his visions –mainly in the beginning years – but also later on newly representing his

country in ENTEPE- his valuable contributions to the work of the network as well as his personal engagement in promoting ENTEPE's future objectives. We again thank him for a very interesting and challenging Conference when Portugal was hosting the ENTEPE meeting in Lisbon during the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union in autumn 2008. (Coordination Notes November 2008).

The members of ENTEPE express their great respect and empathy for Prof Campos' valuable and internationally visible work within Teacher Education and the connected European reform processes and cordially wish him a healthy time ahead.

At the moment Poland, Slovakia and the French Community of Belgium are not represented in the network, and memberships of Malta, Italy, the Czech Republic and Latvia are inactive.

A special welcome was addressed to the new representative of Spain, Trinidad De Haro, who was present at the Uppsala meeting. ENTEPE also highly appreciates the invitation to Madrid for the coming up Conference in spring 2010 under The Spanish Presidency of the European Union and is looking forward to this occasion of exchange.

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