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DANISH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION 2012



ODENSE KOMMUNE

RAISING ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL LEARNERS
QUALITY IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (RA4AL)

Raising achievement for all learners – rationale and key issues

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13th - 15th June 2012, Odense, Denmark



European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

Outline

- To set out a rationale for the work on RA4AL
- To explore some key issues to inform discussions at the conference



Rationale

- Education systems need to change due to economic, social and personal imperatives
- A high number of learners across Europe are disaffected, underachieving and leave school early with few, if any qualifications (or valued learning?)
- Many initiatives have been tried –but the impact, in particular in relation to equality has been limited



‘ If school is to be reconfigured as an effective apprenticeship for a lifetime of learning, it needs rich descriptions of how real-world learning actually occurs, and it needs to look for ways to narrow the gap between those practices and the learning methods that they employ day after day with their students.’

Lucas and Claxton (2009)



Rationale

- RA4AL is not a policy initiative but an ethical imperative
 - High price of school failure for individuals and for society
 - Need to include all learners and develop a more socially just education system taking values and aspirations into account as well as research evidence



Challenges

- Bringing about more holistic and coherent approaches to education
- Moving away from standardisation to greater personalisation
- Improving teacher education and school leadership
- Moving to greater collaboration and community involvement
- Improving accountability mechanisms



Holistic and coherent policies

- Revisit core purpose of education
- Develop shared terminology and understanding of key concepts, shared values
- Acknowledge diversity and use it as a 'lens' for transformation of education/ other services
- Plan for long-term sustainable change not short term, stand-alone initiatives – coordination not inconsistency



From standardisation to personalisation

- Macdonald's or Michelin star menu?
- Requires vision and innovative forms of school organisation - learner groupings, use of time, curriculum, allocation of staff and resources
- Listening to learners and valuing their inputs, seeing learners as active participants in assessment and learning
- Support for learning not to 'fit' learners into existing system



Improving teacher education and school leadership

- Examine recruitment, retention and appointment of teachers from diverse backgrounds
- Research the effectiveness of routes into teaching, organisation, content, pedagogy to develop areas of competence for inclusion (Profile)
- Develop the profession of teacher educators
- Ensure good (inclusive) models in practice schools



Greater collaboration and community involvement

- Collaboration:

- In school, between all staff and learners, learning as a co-operative enterprise
- With parents and community – using experience and expertise
- With range of services – social, health
- With other schools in local area
- With ‘networks’ of professionals/ organisations to support professional development



Improved accountability mechanisms

- Children don't count if they aren't counted....
- Value-added – 'fair' measures
- Sensitive use of data with qualitative information
- Indicators for inclusive education – what does 'quality' look like?



What did you learn in school?

- To accept what you were told without question?
- To compute without understanding?
- To copy notes quickly?
- To memorise and transcribe information in tests?
- To sit still?

How well do such outcomes prepare learners for the 21st Century?



Wider skills

- Literacy, numeracy, digital literacy
- Foreign language competence
- Citizenship, social skills
- Self-management, organisation
- Reflection, self-evaluation
- Critical thinking, problem –solving
- Resilience, persistence



Democratic education: Knowledge, rights, participation, encouragement

Nine universal desires (Pearl, 1997)

- Security, comfort
- Competence
- Belonging
- Meaning, usefulness
- Hope
- Excitement, creativity



What in the pursuit of quality really matters?

..or what kind of education for what kind of world?

‘If your goal is to create a human being who is loving, capable of showing deep caring for others, alive to the spiritual and ethical dimensions of being, ecologically sensitive, intellectually alive, self determining and creative, there are ways of restructuring education to foster this kind of person.’

Lerner, M.(2000) Spirit Matters p224



“ We are all different colours but together we can make a rainbow...”



Young Views on Inclusive Education
European Parliament Hearing, Nov 2011



Our Conference Rapporteur...

- Will keep an accurate record of key messages
- Synthesise issues in line with the conference aim – to identify factors that will improve the quality of inclusive education and support the raising achievement of all learners
- Comment on the strength of views and ‘common ground’ between countries that we can learn from



Seminar sessions

- Provide a way of exploring initiatives and approaches to improving the quality of inclusive education
- To help identify key factors that support raising achievement for all learners by providing different perspectives (researcher, inclusive education, mainstream policy makers) and following discussion some 'analysis' of important issues for future work

