



Report from two case studies Karmøy, Norway

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Karmøy's contribution to SEEDS

Introduction

A system of quality about evaluation is being developed in the municipality of Karmøy under the authority of the Director of Education and Culture. Early in 2005 a pilot project was implemented on external evaluation at two schools. The work on evaluation has been continued in the spring of two primary schools and one lower secondary school. Andreas Holvik, Per Fagerland and Linda Velle Sjøen were all involved in the evaluation of one school each as part of an evaluation team of three persons. In October 2006 a similar evaluation was carried out at five new schools

The experiences so far have undoubtedly been positive. The evaluation teams have had a close contact and a continuous dialogue with the schools that were evaluated. The schools have also completed self-evaluation. Teachers as well as school managers have expressed that the process has been very informative for them as they have been given support about their good practice and also appreciated that they have been told that there in some instances is a potential for improvement.

We do not have tradition for external evaluation in Norway and are therefore engaged in a further development our own system of evaluation so as to be more able to give as good support as possible ensuring quality in schools. At the moment we have carried out some adjustments with regards to the contents on criteria and indicators and in the questionnaire. The adjustments are based on the experiences we have done and the input from Karmøy in the SEEDS project in the spring of 2006. As an example we have included indicators and questions that deal more directly with the learning outcomes and the visions about learning than we had seen before. This has clearly got a connection to the views and opinions we have received through working in the SEEDS-project

A written report has been completed and prepared for each school in connection with the school evaluation. We have chosen only to draw the attention to some points that we are of the opinion will be of interest to present to the members of the SEEDS-project. In this report we present an overview of the original criteria and indicators and we also give an example of a questionnaire by focusing on the questionnaire that was given to the teachers.

We focus in what degree our schools are learning organizations and how they can be developed further in this respect. Central bullet points in the SEEDS-project with regards to Citizenship have been participation, rights, responsibilities and relationships. All these dimensions are central in the development of learning organizations. In connection with SEEDS we have chosen to focus on examples of what we found at the two primary schools. At primary school A we have chosen to show examples with regards to criteria 2 and criteria 4. At primary school B we chose to see where the schools stands with regards to the development of the school as a learning organization.

Overview of criteria and indicators

In the mandate that was given the evaluation group it was decided that focus for the evaluation should be **adapted learning**. With regards to the schools we refer to we are speaking about pupils in the 5^t, 6th and 7th form, 10.12 years. Through the work achieved in the pilot project five criteria about adapted learning have been developed. For each criteria there are 4-8 indicators to achieve the criteria. The evaluation teams have based the criteria on:

- a. The participants' interpretation of official educational documents such as acts of parliament, laws and curriculum
- b. Conclusions viewed from pedagogical theory and pedagogical research
- c. Their own experience through many years' experience in education
- d. Areas of priority in the Departments of Education and Culture in Karmøy

Criteria and indicators - adapted learning

1. The teacher must be visible as a clear leader with excellent abilities to teach and advise
2. The teaching must adapt to each individual pupil's ability to learn
3. The teaching varies between individual work, working in pairs, working in groups and learning together as a class
4. The pupils receive feedback during the work they do and when it has been completed in a structured teacher-pupil face-to-face dialogue
5. The parents are actively involved with regards to the learning of their child and its' development at school

Criteria no.1

The teacher is visible as a clear leader with excellent abilities to teach and advise.

Indicators

- The teacher clearly marks the start of an activity, when an activity changes during a lesson and the completion of a lesson- both in body language and how he or she speaks (volume of voice).
- The teacher proves he/she is confident in the subject and presents the contents in a varied and engaged manner.
- The teacher manages to create composure in the class and concentration in the work that is being carried out.
- The pupils seldom raise clarifying questions after the teacher has introduced and informed about the work that has do be done.
- The teacher manages to solve conflicts and has the ability to correct unwanted behaviour. He or she manages to correct in a very good manner without having to change his or her teaching
- The teacher invites the pupils to collaborate in taking decisions, but he/she must take the final decisions when necessary
- The teacher sees and helps the individual pupil and at the same time has a good view on what is happening in the group/class.
- The teacher is aware of using humour in his or her teaching and manages to create confidence and a good atmosphere in the group/class

Criteria no.2

The teaching is adapted to each individual pupil's ability to learn.

Indicators

- The pupils are given exercises and challenges that both are differentiated with regards to the amount of work and pace
- The pupils are given differentiated learning aims
- The pupils receive an education which is adapted to their learning stiles and strong sides (MI)
- There is an emphasis to stimulate the pupils in developing their own learning strategies
- The work plan is prepared so that it will challenge both girls and boys, well-functioning pupils as well as pupils who are struggling with their school work
- The pupils are not afraid to start with their work plan or other exercises.
- The pupils are allowed to influence the choice of contents, working methods and materials
- The pupils receive exercises that they can fulfil within a reasonable agreed time limit
- The pupils are challenged to set themselves new learning aims

Criteria no.3

The teaching interacts between individual work, working in pairs, working in groups and learning together as a class

Indicators

- The pupil has access to and is allowed to use a working-place which enables him and her to quietness, concentration and individual work
- The pupils are given the possibilities to collaborate and cooperating by working together with one or more fellow pupils.
- When the learning situation is organized in pairs or groups, pupils get the possibilities for language collaboration, discussions and support in increasing their knowledge in subject areas
- The pupils get experiences of togetherness, for example through song, music and formulating themselves in the subjects
- The pupils are allowed to express themselves orally and share in their fellowship by retelling about their adventures, experiences and what they have learnt
- The teacher puts an emphasis to have a nice and a balance between individual work, working in groups and learning in a class

Criteria no. 4

The pupils receive feedback about the work they have completed in a structured teacher-pupil face-to-face dialogue.

Indicators

- During the school day the pupils are given feedback on their work in the way that the teacher gives concrete help, comments, corrects and advises
- The teacher moves around, has an overview in the work of the pupils and ensures that it is not the same pupils who always receive help and response
- When the pupils have finished his or her work plan/tasks the teacher always gives oral or written feedback.
- Time is set aside for structured pupil-teacher talks with every pupil once a month.
- During the talk the pupil and teacher discuss individual aims and how one should carry on with the work to achieve these aims
- The school has a plan on how the portfolio for each pupil should be organized
- In collaboration with the teacher the pupils decide what of their work should be included in the portfolio.
- The portfolio has a positive starting point and puts an emphasis to develop the pupil's development and learning
- In the portfolio one lays a lot of importance on stimulating the pupil to think critically by evaluating their own work

Criteria no.5

The parents are actively involved with regards to the learning of their child and its' development at school.

Indicators

- The parents are regularly informed about their child's learning and development
- The school's Web site is updated regularly and gives parents good information about life at school
- The parents are engaged actively in the collaborative work at school with regards to their child's learning and development, both in each subject as well social and interpersonal development
- The parents are included in the adjustment of aims, contents, working and evaluation methods
- The portfolio is used actively in the talk between the pupil/teacher/parents

The methodology of the evaluation work

An important starting point has been to assure that we had enough access to information and views from different sources and different actors in the school environment through the use of different and varied methods, both written and oral (methodology triangulation).

The different evaluation groups have all used observation, questionnaires, inter-views and informal conversations

Quantitative methods were used to collect information for parents and pupils. A questionnaire, based on the present criteria, was designed. The aim was to get a greater variety in the answers than would be possible just by making interviews during the week the evaluation team were present in the school. All the pupils aged 10-12 years of age took part in the questionnaire

Qualitative methods were used to get a greater understand of the theme adapted learning, specially by using *interview and observation*. The contact teachers in the three age groups were interviewed. Time, 90 minutes, was set aside for each age group. The management (head teacher and deputy head teacher) were interviewed with a time limit of two hours. The members of the pupils' council in the age group 10-12 were interviewed as a group interview. An interview guide was created, this was common for all the evaluation teams.

During the evaluation week the age group was also observed. The evaluation teams split themselves into the different groups and activities and could freely move around in the classrooms, group rooms, special rooms, the school libraries, the staff rooms, the outdoor areas etc.

Presentation of the schools

To give the members of the SEEDS group an impression of the schools we would like to give a short presentation of the two primary schools and present some of the positive parts the evaluation teams discovered in the schools

School A

School A is a two-parallel school localized in a large rural area in Karmøy. The schools has a head teacher and a deputy head teacher and has 267 pupils aged 6-12.

Strong parts of the school

- The school has aimed at giving the pupils an extended offer with regards to physical activities. Pupils have every day one hour of physical activity. The school is going to develop this further. The outcomes so far seem positive and the school itself are willing to share their experiences with other school in Karmøy.

- The school has a library and a library, and as far as we could observe, this seemed to have a positive influence on the learning outcomes as well as the environment with its number of varied activities
- The school has developed a positive collaborative climate with regards to the parents. The school's work plans has every week a special column with information to the parents. The questionnaire to the parents also proved that the greater part of the parents were of the opinion that their children attended a good school. Several teachers expressed that *"parts of the adapted learning via the telephone"*. We also noticed that many teachers were clever in establishing contacts with the parents with regards to giving positive feedback to the parents as well as when the teachers needed help from the parents when there some problems in the class
- With regards to he pupils who need extra help the school collaborates with The Educational Psychological Advisory Services (PPS) and have begun an exciting ICT-project for these pupils
- .The climate in the school appeared to be good. The teachers remarked:
- *"There is an open door policy to the school management"*. As far as we have been able to observe the school had no serious behaviour problems among the pupils.

Findings at school A

Criteria no. 2 *"The teaching is adapted to each individual pupil's ability to learn."*

Indicators	What we discovered
The pupils are given exercises and challenges that are differentiated with regards to quantity and tempo	We discovered that the pupils ere given exercises and challenges that were differentiated with regards to quantity and difficulty, We discovered that "ought to/should" plans were used as well that exercises of different degrees of difficulties were split into red, blue and yellow exercises. We also discovered extra exercises with a greater degree of difficulty. In the interviews the teachers expressed that they also were conscious about adapted learning with regards to the clever pupils. The pupils' council, on the other hand, were of the opinion that it was the slower-learning pupils that received most help and they also expressed a wish to have more teachers in the classroom.
The pupils are allowed to work with different learning aims, aims that the pupils and teachers collaborate on.	We discovered examples in the work plans which emphasized different learning aims. Through interviews with teachers and the pupils' council, questionnaires aimed at pupils and parents confirmed that the pupils to a very little degree had any influence on what and how they should learn. The work plans seemed to have a mixture of aims on what to do and aims of learning.

<p>The school underlines a varied education that meets the fact that pupils have different learning styles</p>	<p>Both school management and teachers said that they, to a very little extent, focused on learning styles. We observed, however, that to a certain degree, the teaching was aimed using different elements of learning styles. Even if teachers told us that they did not know very much about the theory of learning styles between 80 and 90 percent of the pupils answered that they were allowed to being taught in the way they learnt best.</p>
<p>Emphasis is put on stimulating the pupils to develop their own learning strategies</p>	<p>We discovered that one of the classes worked with learning strategies based on Carol Santa`s "learning to learn". Otherwise it seemed as if little emphasis was put on learning strategies in most of the classes. Both management and teachers told us that they had been to courses about learning strategies, but that not much of this was focused now.</p>
<p>The work plans are created so that they challenge both girls and boys, specially gifted pupils as well as pupils who are struggling with their school work.</p>	<p>A majority of pupils answered in the questionnaires that they worked according to a plan that was relatively difficult. The evaluation team did not evaluate if the work plans were specially adapted with regards to gender. However, one can say that such a way of working with a lot of written work seems to fit girls better than boys.</p>
<p>The pupils are involved in choosing contents, the way of working and materials</p>	<p>In the answers of the questionnaire there was a large group "don't know"- answers among the pupils. The pupils are split into two equal parts in this question. In one of the classes the pupils were asked to mark how much they enjoyed working using a work plan. Neither interviews with teachers nor with pupils indicated that the pupils were allowed to influence the choice of contents or materials. Through the two days we observed the teaching we saw that the pupils, to a high degree, were allowed to choose if they should work alone or in pairs. So with regards to ways of working it seemed as if the pupils had a great freedom if they wanted to work alone or together with another pupil. In one of the classes the teacher used some of the pupils to help other pupils. Through the interviews with members of the pupils' council we were informed at the PE lessons a good part of the pupils had the possibility to make decisions on what tasks to carry out.</p>

Criteria no. 4**The pupils receive feedback about the work they have completed in a structured teacher-pupil face-to-face dialogue.**

Indicators	What we discovered
During the school day the pupils get feedback about their work through the teacher giving concrete help, commenting, correcting and advising.	As far as we could observe the pupils got adequate feedback during lessons. We also noticed that the teachers were aware of helping all pupils as much as possible.
The teacher moves around the classroom, has a good overview of the work the pupils are doing and makes sure that it is not the same pupils who receive support/response all the time.	Some teachers moved about in the classroom and were on the offensive, others were more stationary
When the pupil has completed his or her work plan/work tasks, the teacher always gives oral or written feedback.	We observed that teachers put an emphasis on giving the pupils feedback when the pupils had completed their work.
Time is set aside for individual face-to-face talks with each pupil – once a month	The school has made time available for structured face-to-face talks where the pupil receives feedback, guidance and advice. We observed only one such talk and therefore do not have enough data to say something definite how these talks function In the interviews with the teachers it was stated that it was difficult to keep up the talks regularly because of illness. The impression we got through the one teacher-pupils talk we observed could imply that the teacher-pupil talk to a very little extent was structured on established patterns such as social development, how one learns, learning outcome and focus on learning aims.
The school has a plan on how working with a portfolio should be organized.	We discovered no documentation that this was the case. Management told us that they had discussed designing a common plan, but that this would come gradually.
During the teacher-pupil talk they discuss individual aims and how the pupil shall continue working to reach these aims.	The management said that they put focus on this. However, the work plans did not appear to have indications that the school had come so very far with regards to individual aims for the pupils.

	<p>In the questionnaire both pupils and parents answer that the pupils receive good advice and follow-up in the various subjects. Some of the pupils' answers could indicate that the schools puts a greater emphasis on pupils enjoying themselves at school than the aspect of learning. One of the pupils said <i>"In the individual talk with the teacher I get the possibility to say how my daily life at school is"</i>. This was confirmed by other pupils as well.</p>
<p>Together with the teacher pupils are allowed to choose what the contents of their portfolio should be</p>	<p>The school has prioritised digital portfolio. Much of the time has been used to scan different pupil's work. One of the older pupils had as a task to help the youngest pupils with this and putting their work into the digital portfolios. The evaluation team does not have enough information to evaluate to what extent it was the pupils who picked out the work that should be scanned and put in the digital portfolios</p>
<p>The portfolio has a positive starting point and emphasises showing the development and learning of the pupils</p>	<p>In the interviews the teachers gave an impression that "there was still a way to go" before they had learnt how to use the portfolio as something more than just a method of documentation</p> <p>The questionnaire to the parents showed that many of them had not answered this question. One could have the impression that the school had got through to the parents on what a portfolio is and what it can be used for.</p>
<p>In the portfolio emphasis is put on stimulating the pupils' ability to critical thinking by self-evaluating their own work</p>	<p>This lacked. The school has emphasized the technical part of digital portfolio. We found no indication that the teachers emphasized that they should use portfolio to stimulate the pupils' ability of critical thinking.</p>

Recommendations on the follow-up work to be done

With regards to the focused theme Adapted learning the evaluation team would recommend that the school should focus on or more of the following areas:

- Classroom leadership
- Learning strategies and learning styles
- A greater element of pupil participation and decision-making
- Portfolio
- Work plan with clear and differentiated aims for learning

School B

School B is a school for pupils 6-12 years, 316 pupils and is situated on the mainland of Karmøy near Haugesund. There are two classes for each age group. The school is in a rural area with a fantastic outdoor area which is very inviting for play and learning. The school has a head teacher and deputy head teacher at management level.

Strong parts of the school

- The school has an outdoor area which has been well-prepared for versatile and varied physical activities and play. The school has a lot of equipment such as a lavvo (Sami-style tent), apparatus for gymnastics, different climbing equipment, areas for different ball games and a nice wooded area that the pupils can use.
- A lot of emphasis has been put on making the buildings and outdoor area to be functional in creating an active and safe arena for learning. It is well set out and easy to find one's way around. In the entrance part of the school one gets the impression that one is most welcome through pictures and presentations of the staff and that many pupils' products are exhibited. A lot of work has been done to secure quality with regards to aesthetics and the pupils seem to be proud of contributing with their products.
- The school seems to emphasize collaborative initiatives. The first day of level 2 (7 years) performed with costumes, singing and music. Another important part of the school is K-day where pupils aged 10-12 one day a week (four lessons) work with projects related to art and design. Three teachers who have special qualifications within the area of art and culture are responsible for these projects. In these projects there is a high demand to quality and there are numerous exhibitions at the school from the K-day activities. These give the school a special dimension that all in the school are proud of.
- The climate at school B seems to be good and we got the impression of an open and a wish among the staff to collaborate. Several teachers emphasized that the management had an "open door"-policy so that they always felt welcome. The management has, in very few cases, had to be contacted in concrete discipline affairs in the classes.

Findings at school B

The school as a learning organization

In Norwegian education there has been a long tradition to focus on the learning aspect of the pupils. To secure that the schools shall be a learning organization one must focus on learning at all levels in the organization, also with regards to the staff.

At school B both the management and the staff spoke about developing a sharing culture between the teachers in the school. We saw several examples that this school was on the right path in this respect during our evaluation week there.

Examples on themes that the school discussed where the whole staff was gathered was the introduction of portfolio and carrying out the teacher-pupil talk. Some teachers presented for other members of staff how they worked so that they could learn from each other. Through interviews all the teachers gave an impression that they experienced this as very constructive and that it had a great degree of element. This school has also completed their own questionnaire among the staff asking them to what extent they felt that their school is a learning organization. Criteria and indicators of what distinguishes a learning school were prepared.

The questionnaire had as its' main focus learning aspect of the teachers. Three criteria were prepared with between 11 and 14 indicators for each criteria.

- Criteria no.1: The school has a culture for learning
- Criteria no.2: The school has a good system to research their own practice.
- Criteria no.3: Pupils and parents are involved in the development of the school

Looking at the answers to criteria no.1 it seemed as if there was reasonable degree of support among colleagues and also a confidence among the staff to ask each other for help and to take initiatives. The school has created arenas where there was a continuous professional development for its' staff. The lowest score in this criteria was on the issue of teacher going to a course or network meetings shared this with his or her colleagues. Here there was a great potential for improvement to develop a culture of sharing with each other what one has learnt, what aims one should have and what one should try out in the classroom when one has learnt something new.

The school scored highly on the question if they had a good system to research the school's practice (Criteria 2). The school had a lower score in the follow-up to what results they had in their research. The management of the school could also become better in the preparation and completing systematic research into of practice in the school. The greatest potential for improvement was under criteria no.3 about the involvement of pupils and parents in areas of development which has to do with the learning of the pupils as well as how they enjoy school. With regards to pupil participation the pupils could be more involved about evaluation of their own work and have influence on the degree of tasks, aims and contents of their work. The pupils should also be more involved in the preparation of the teacher/pupil/parents individual talk and be more active in carrying out the talk.

INTERVIEW WITH TEACHERS

Structured interview - teachers.

1. How would you describe the pupil group 10-12 years? (3-5 bullet points). What challenges does this give you as teachers regarding Adapted learning?
2. To what extent do you have an impression that the pupils enjoy themselves at school? Could you give some indicators of this? Is there a difference between boys and girls?
3. Do you have an impression that there are some pupils who dread going to school? Examples of school refusal? Documentation?
4. What concrete initiatives have been taken with regards to creating a good learning environment in the group?
5. How would you describe your role as a leader being a contact teacher? (Degree of security, being clear, inclusion, showing care, have discipline)
6. To what extent do you have focus on the teacher role? Could you give some indication of "the good teacher"? (Being active, encouraging, supporting, advising, enable the pupils to stretch him/herself, pedagogical and professionally qualified). To what extent do you discuss such ideals in the staff?
7. What do you put in the term "Adapted learning" (TPO)? (Compare to our curriculum plan L 97 which mentions four kind of adaptation: To the individual, to gender, to local environment and to language).

What plans do you have for adapted learning and what concrete initiatives do you carry out in the pupil group so that all pupils will get adapted learning (For example organizational initiatives as timetabling, team teaching, groups and different forms of pedagogical differentiation).

To what extent is there an emphasis that all pupils get challenges based on each pupil's abilities (maturity, level, ability, tempo (Documentation)

8. To what extent is there a variation in the educational work (work plans, group work, work in pairs, individual work, collaborative learning) and ways of teaching (effectuation, listening, pupil activity, creative work, practice and repetition).
9. To what extent have you as teachers put focus on how work plans should be? Are there common rules for each age group? To what extent is there room for pupils and parents to have influence. Please give examples.
10. In what way do you give feedback on the work that has been carried out at home and at school?
11. To what extent are you engaged that all pupils (both the slow-learners and the gifted) shall receive challenges based on their own abilities?