Change laboratories for all schools in a Swedish municipality – A systematic approach

Maria Spante, Associate Professor
School of Business, Economics and IT
University West, Sweden
Overview of the presentation

• Background of previous collaboration
• Why CL? Why a systemic approach?
• Planning for the systemic approach
• Note to self and scientific ambition
FIND THE DRIVE: ON CO-DESIGNING PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE OF A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT DRIVEN BY MUNICIPALITIES AND UNIVERSITY

Maria Spante¹, Anita Varga², Helena Korp³, Henrik Lind⁴, Lars Jansson⁵, Björn Lindeberg⁶, Ann-Helen Adler Johannesson⁷

¹ University West, School of Business, Economics and IT, (Sweden)
²,³ University West, Department of Social and Behavioral Studies, (Sweden)
⁴,⁵ Municipality of Orust (Sweden)
⁶,⁷ Municipality of Dals-Ed (Sweden)
We will describe our model for cooperation and discusses the potential and challenges of combining expertise and organizational resources of universities and municipalities in addressing complex issues at “ground level.”

The study was based on concern on documented large gender gap in grades in two municipalities, and on a notion held by some principals and teachers that the motivation for school is low for many pupils, especially among low-achieving boys.
Aim of the project

Deepen the knowledge of how the school organisation as well as competences, attitudes and approaches at different levels (from administration to the classroom) affect different pupils’ opportunities for learning and motivation.

The ambition is to increase inclusive education and goal achievement for all pupils in the two municipalities following the Swedish Educational Act §4

1. the school's compensatory mission
2. the school's gender equity mission
3. the school's democracy mission
Collaborative partners
Research environment at University West

The project was elaborated in line with the Center for Child and Youth Studies (CCYS) guidelines for collaborative projects.

The research shall promote interdisciplinary, practice-oriented research focusing on children and youth. The research shall be developed and disseminated both in the scholarly community and in cooperation with regional actors and thus reflect University West's focus on work-integrated learning.

Child and Youth Studies Research University West, Sweden. (https://www.hv.se/en/research/child-and-youth-studies/)
I. Municipality representatives and researcher present the project for pre-service teachers and municipalities

II. Researcher present the project for municipality school board

III. Municipality representatives and researcher present the project for municipalities

1. Researchers and municipality representatives meeting. Question formulation

2. Researchers, municipality representatives and headmasters meeting. Co-design of actual project

3. Researchers visiting schools to present themselves and the project. Voluntary involvement addressed

4. Schools informing researchers who will participate.

5. Teachers and researchers decide when to meet their pupils

6. Springtime one day visit to meet students and get familiar with the school

7. One day workshop with all staff at each municipality. Visiting scholars to present research on gender patterns and motivation. Sharing ideas in shared documents.

8. Analysis of shared documents to get familiar with common ideas and interpretations of problems and possibilities among the teachers.

9. Full week observations in schools (5 schools) and interviews with pupils and teachers

10. Transcription and analysis of interviews and analysis of fieldnotes from observations

11. One day workshop with all teachers. Presenting citations from children and teachers and analysis of observation. Discussions and reflections on these presentations documented and spread in shared documents.

12. Full week observations in schools and interviews with children and teachers. Voluntary participation as before

Etical vetting of the project

I. Municipality representatives and researcher present the project for pre-service teachers and municipalities

IV. Researcher present the project for municipality school board
Model development and professional development

- **Collaborative Research and New Ways of Working Together**
- **Outreach and Anchoring Activities**
- **Societal Impact of Collaborative Research and Insights**
- **Interactive Models for Large Groups**

Research activities: interviewed 179 students (98 girls, 81 boys), 31 teachers, 365 hours of participant observations
Conclusions so far (our co-written paper)

**Potential**
Our mutual experience from the range of roles participating in the project, is that the model for co-designing a project combining competence development arrangements with research activities is a fruitful cross-fertilizing process for knowledge creation and professional learning at the ground level.

Thoughtful use of interactive tools and real-time visual presentations on large screens serve as an inclusive supports in order to achieve active involvement for all and interactive meetings is suitable even for larger groups.

**Challenges**
As a researcher, it should be understood that collaborative research is not the same as classical empirical data gathering where the researcher has access to the field but can conduct data collection without any direct dialogue with the studied organization and individuals.

As an organization, one should be aware that collaborative research is not the same as requested research, where the organization itself sets the rules of the game and orders the research (usually evaluation) as desired.
Final remarks

What if we had met large groups of less motivated participants? Our suggestion here is that large-group models can be used when there is a high degree of certainty that the participants share an idea of relevance for the focus of such a project. If the motivation is largely diverse it might be a risk to use such an embracing model.

The necessity of variety of actors with different expertise is key for collaborative research as work integrated research. If there is low or no variety then another approach than collaborative research should be selected and designed for.
Thank you for your attention

Please contact
maria.spante@hv.se
But what about the grade gap then???
Frustration surfaced, so did motivation!
ORUST (low staff turnover, high rate of educated teachers, highly ranked as being a good place for education, 2nd best in Sweden two years in a row)

It is really frustrating to hear that they got the same result as us despite our high level of educated staff

How come we continually get these results when other municipalities in Sweden clearly do better than us? What are they doing that we are not?

We need new models since the ones I have worked with in suburban areas do not fit here

Together we can do this!

We want to support this effort since we understand that something needs to become different, something needs to change, we want to be better than this
Activity theory and Change Laboratories

Increased awareness of unfairness at all levels (politicians were actually at one point present in our work with the teachers and principals)

Conflicting motives of for example professionalism vs traditionalism "unjust but easy" as in "the boys will be fine and well taken care of" (but what about low achieving girls?)

Expressed need for change at all levels in the municipality

Systemic approach to REALLY and collaboratively try our best to trigger radical change (rather than settle for incremental improvements). Ambition: AT driven research design from the outset (and not only an analytical framework) for transformative agency (as in power in proposing and designing new solutions)

Child and Youth Studies Research University West, Sweden. (https://www.hv.se/en/research/child-and-youth-studies/), still supportive, Prof Emma Sorbring must be mentioned here! [1/3, 1/3, 1/3 financial model]
EXPANSIVE LEARNING AS CYCLE OF LEARNING ACTIONS

1. QUESTIONING
   NEED STATE

2. ANALYSIS
   DOUBLE BIND

3. MODELING THE NEW SOLUTION
   BREAKTHROUGH

4. EXAMINING AND TESTING THE NEW MODEL
   ADJUSTMENT, ENRICHMENT

5. IMPLEMENTING THE NEW MODEL
   RESISTANCE

6. REFLECTING ON THE PROCESS
   STABILIZATION

7. CONSOLIDATING AND GENERALIZING THE NEW PRACTICE
   DEALING WITH NEIGHBORS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Name of school</th>
<th>Nummer of CL participants</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Day, time, week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Henån</td>
<td>22 Teachers, 5 student health workers, (1 Support), 1 principal</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Mondays 15-17 Start 19 august, week 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>Henån</td>
<td>20T, 5SHW, (1S), 2 P</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Mondays 15-17 Start 21 oktober, week 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Ängås</td>
<td>21T, 5SHW, (2S), 1 P</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Mondays 14.15-16.15 Start 13 januari, week 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>Ängås</td>
<td>20T, 1 P</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Wednesdays 14.15-16.15 Start 23 mars, week 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>Varekil</td>
<td>14T, 4SHW, (9S?), 1 P</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Mondays 15-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>Ellös</td>
<td>13T, 5SHW, (1S), 1 P</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mondays 15-17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The CL scheme

1 Facilitator, SR 1
1 Scribe, SR 2
1 Assistant, student

HT2019
CL1 Henån

1 Analytical capacity, SR 3

HT2019
CL2 Henån

1 Facilitator, SR 1
1 Scribe, SR 3
1 Assistant, student

1 Analytical capacity, SR 2

VT2020
CL3 Ängås

1 Facilitator, SR 1
1 Scribe, SR 2
1 Assistant, student

1 Analytical capacity, SR 3

VT2020
CL4 Ängås

1 Facilitator, SR 1
1 Scribe, SR 3
1 Assistant, student

1 Analytical capacity, SR 2

HT2020
CL5 Varekil

1 Facilitator, SR 1
1 Scribe, SR 3
1 Assistant, student

1 Analytical capacity, SR 3

HT2020
CL6 Ellös

1 Facilitator, SR 1
1 Scribe, SR 3
1 Assistant, student

1 Analytical capacity, SR 2

SR= senior researcher

(we are 3)
CL management

- Mirror material from each session
  - Videoclips
  - Photos of what the scribe wrote on the surface

- Each session analysed according to learning actions interpreted in the video material creating a repository (examplified below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time on video</th>
<th>What happened</th>
<th>Useful for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00:05</td>
<td>Xxx</td>
<td>Mirror session on modelling (step 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:22</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>Mirror session Historical analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>....</td>
<td>later analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. QUESTIONING
   NEED STATE
   Tuseday: Analysis of video
   Grounded data for mirror material to next session + for later

2. ANALYSIS
   DOUBLE BIND
   Tuseday: Analysis of video
   Grounded data for mirror material to next session + for later

3. MODELING THE NEW SOLUTION
   BREAKTHROUGH
   Tuseday: Analysis of video
   Grounded data for mirror material to next session + for later

4. EXAMINING AND TESTING THE NEW MODEL
   ADJUSTMENT, ENRICHMENT
   Tuseday: Analysis of video
   Grounded data for mirror material to next session + for later

5. IMPLEMENTING THE NEW MODEL
   STABILIZATION
   Tuseday: Analysis of video
   Grounded data for mirror material to next session + for later

6. REFLECTING ON THE PROCESS
   RESISTANCE
   Tuseday: Analysis of video
   Grounded data for mirror material to next session + for later

7. CONSOLIDATING AND GENERALIZING THE NEW PRACTICE
   DEALING WITH NEIGHBORs
   Mirror from previous study
   Citations
   Statistics

Tuseday: Analysis of video
Grounded data for mirror material to next session + for later
Note to self and scientific ambition

"formative intervention is not only ways to change practice but also to conduct good research”

Avoid that the new model clashes with the overall power structure (as mentioned by Englund)

Contribute to 4 generation activity theory with its systemic approach

Be theoretically grounded through the process
Relativ ungdomsarbetslöshet (18-24 år) per kommun, oktober 2017
(Inskrivna arbetslösa. Andel av registerbaserade arbetskraft.)

[Graph showing the relative youth unemployment rate per municipality in Sweden for October 2017, with three categories: respective municipality, country (Riket), and Västra Götalands län.]
Meritvärdesskillnad är synliggjorda över tid

Observationerna