



Den 10. nordiske læreruddannelseskongres:

Relationen mellem læreruddannelsen og skoleudviklingen

21.-24. maj 2008, Islands Pædagogiske Universitet,
Reykjavik, Island

Abstrakter



1908100ÁR2008

Session B6

The Constant globalization of Educational Policy

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Change constantly happens in social context. Most of it is wild and uncontrollable by human intervention. Educational reforms are tentative attempt to control history and tame social change. Ruptures in history of teacher educational and attempt to school development in Iceland can provide gateway into globalizing trajectories in educational structures. Their manifestation can be perceived indication of educational policy making at each place and time. This paper looks into the history of education in Iceland from late 19th century into the 21st century. It traces continuities and discontinuities in discourses on teacher education and school development. It casts doubt that Globalization in society and education is a new trend. This paper encapsulates the authors four distinct research projects. One recorded the emergence of modern public education in Iceland at the turn of the 20th century, formal establishment of teaching profession and gradual development of state educational. This modernization in an isolated place was molded by international context of ideologies, economics and politics of that era. The Second explored the formal coordination of the public educational system and reforms of teacher education aligned with the state formation of new independent Iceland immediately following the Second World War. The Third analyzed the introduction of curricular reconstruction, teacher education and school experiments under the auspice of economic and educational policy making in the 1970s. In that period paradigm shift can be implied; educational objectives, economic management, technical solutions etc. The Forth project analyses a series of educational reforms in Iceland towards the turn of the 21st century. In this period reforms are carried out in a shadow of Europeanization and Globalization. The policy is uncertain, but catchwords can be traced; freedom of choice, privatization, qualification framework, quality control and standardization.

Teacher's intercultural competence – how professionals are educating towards cultural diversity as a generic part of teaching profession?

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The aim of the project is to raise awareness of cultural diversity of professionals and identify areas and contexts in which cultural diversity is of manifest relevance for teachers in teaching and learning processes in schools and classrooms. An important issue is to discuss how the professional community can be educating towards cultural diversity as a generic part of the teaching profession in terms of growing, connecting and maintaining traditions through education. Northern educators and students continue the work to reshape their educational systems, especially the postsecondary educational institutions. In Northern contexts Indigenous knowledge can be an example of how culture continues to play a significant role in educating the next generation in living a good life. In northern college and university classrooms traditional teachings and languages are playing an increasing role in existing and emerging educational approaches. The goal is to discuss what this means and how northern Indigenous values and cultures, including traditional knowledge, are respectfully and responsibly included in postsecondary education, and to learn in developing teachers multicultural competence. In this case - what do we need to know in order to talk about Indigenous knowledge systems and teachable moments? How malleable are postsecondary institutions to a multi contextual knowledge?

Some Reflections on Intercultural Communication in Higher Education

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The policy of Södertörn School of Higher Education aims at facilitating university access to young students from non-academic backgrounds. Furthermore, it embraces an intercultural approach. Interculturalism can be defined as an interaction in a multicultural context that aims at the construction of bridges among different individuals or institutions, so as know and understand others and to learn to deal with differences. The current paper deals with the results of a pilot qualitative study carried out during 2005 in the Teacher Education Program in Södertörn Högskola University (Maria Borgström, Ana Graviz). Our main objective is to analyze the implementation of intercultural communication in heterogeneous working groups in which students of different gender, social class, age and ethnic backgrounds participate. The students involved in these groups must communicate and cooperate to achieve a common goal. The current work is based on filmed group interviews in which four groups participated. Out of the 24 students involved, four were male. Their ages ranged from 23 to 55. The continuity of these groups allows for a process of socialization through which students develop common codes that help them function in the context they are immersed, in this particular case, that of the university. In this process, the personal traits of the group members constitute fundamental factors.