Principals Cooperating to Assess Classroom Practice

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Abstract

There are several systematic ways of collegial learning directed towards teachers. However, there are few assessed methods concerning the principal's classroom observations, and even fever of principal's cooperating to develop methods. This paper relates the results from an ongoing study, focusing on principals working together to enhance pedagogical development by assessing teachers' classroom practice through systematic observation and feedback. The research focuses on finding methods for the intended cooperation. A group of principals met in ten sessions over a year to develop and try out methods for classroom observations and feedback to observed teachers. The group of principals and the researcher gradually worked their way towards integration of practical experience, theoretical ideas, and goal orientation, resembling the methods of learning studies. The switching between the analytical, creative and producing group sessions with peers and supported by a researcher, and the practical testing by observing and giving feedback to teachers, proved to be an effective system to produce working tools that the principals found meaningful. The project altered the way the participating principals perceived observation and feedback as tools for pedagogical development, from being skeptical to seeing it as a vital development tool. The cooperative dialogue seems to have supported the integration of a deeper understanding of what are essential pedagogical qualities. There also seems to have been a fruitful parallel process when the principals met their teachers in feedback.

Introduction

There are several systematic ways of collegial learning directed towards teachers. However, there are few assessed methods concerning the principal's classroom observations, and even fever of principal's cooperating to develop methods. This paper relates the results from an ongoing study, focusing on principals working together to enhance pedagogical development by assessing teachers' classroom practice through systematic observation and feedback.

The ideas of assessment and feedback as teaching, learning, and thinking tools, and of learning by group dialogue, have socio-cognitive connotations (Dysthe, et al., 2002, Lindström, 2008). It implies that we learn and think in context, as members of a community, in interplay with others. Lev Vygotsky (1978), a seminal thinker in the area of socio-cognitive theory, considers our minds as shaped in dialogue with others. Our ability to understand the world is limited to the intellectual tools, offered by the culture, the chief tool being language. Understanding always requires some kind of response and dialogical exchange, and self-consciousness and perception of the world is created in interplay with others. Thinking and awareness can be explained as ongoing inner dialogue. Vygotsky argues that all higher order thinking skills appear on two levels: First on an interpersonal or social level, and then, and

later on an intrapersonal or individual level. From this view, dialogue between teacher and principal, between teacher and students, and among principals, teachers, or students, is crucial in the development of higher levels of thinking, and in developing of new practices and habits.

Swedish principals have, as is the case in many other nations, a responsibility stated by law (SFS 2010:800) for developing the pedagogical professionalism of their school organizations. This undertaking is highly connected to the idea of high quality school education as a promoter of a good future society, one of the themes of the ICOT 2013. Traditionally, teacher development programs are built on activities such as lectures or courses, or in emphasizing the desired goals and outcomes by information. None of these methods has proven effective when it comes to changing the actual behavior of staff (Ekman, 1999, Sandberg & Targama, 1998). A change in professional behavior calls for more complex and thorough systems. By systematic and repeated confrontation with the components of the system, the goals and ideas will eventually become an integrated part of the understanding of staff members, and will then have an impact on the actions in practice.

Teachers have several systematic ways to go about collegial learning. 'Lesson studies' are directed towards improving a teaching and learning process by the cooperative work of a group of teachers, planning a lesson together, observing the actual outcome of the plan by visiting a colleague performing the actual lesson or by filming it, then in group revising the plan and again testing it in action (Lewis & Hurd, 2011). The method is common in Japan, and is now spreading throughout the world, as means for teacher teams to improve on their professional competence.

The 'learning study' method was built on the lesson study idea. Here, the teacher teams also cooperate with researchers, using research and theories to develop the lessons and the plans (Gustavsson, 2008). A central idea is the variance theory, introduced by Professor Ference Marton (Marton & Booth, 2000). Learning is always about something specific and the teacher must focus on this particular learning object in teaching. Somewhat simplified one might say that the student must grasp and separate certain critical aspects of the learning object in question to gain understanding and to learn. Understanding is attained by experiencing a variation of aspects of the same learning object. In a learning study, the lesson plan is designed to let the student experience such a variation (Holmqvist, 2006).

'Collegial feedback' is used in several schools for teachers to improve the professional practice (Bjørndal, 2005, Einarsson et al., 2002, Pihlgren, 2004). Differing from lesson and learning studies, collegial feedback can be used to cover a broader variety of the teacher's professional practice: processes concerning relations in classroom, the learning environment, and student interplay. Several methodical variations are at hand, all based on agreed observational criteria, often specified in rubrics and matrixes. In some cases the feedback is based on a written report presented by one of the colleagues in the teacher team. Proceeding from the recorded events of the lesson, the colleagues discuss strengths and possible improvements. In other cases one teacher will visit another teacher's lesson and make

observations from specific criteria. The visitor and the host then meet in dialogue for feedback.

In his classic book "Educative assessment", Grant Wiggins (1998) introduced using 'rubrics' as a means when assessing certain student performances. Rubrics are identified criteria, extracted from specific standards, which will point to important characteristics of the assessed performance or product. The rubrics are preferably presented in a matrix, easily readable to teacher and student. Using rubrics has proven both effective and valid, especially when assessing areas of knowledge and competence, where the assessment includes the final product and the process (Lindström, 2008, Lindström et al., 1998): When assessing the complex pedagogical environment of the classroom – where a multitude of actions and events affect the teaching and learning outcomes – processes, products, and spatial criteria and their combinations must be considered (Anderson & Kratwohl, 2001).

'Response' as feedback of (notably written and creative) work is today common in university education, in high schools and in compulsory schools. Response is most commonly exercised at some stage in the working process and aims at developing the final product (Dysthe et al., 2002, Hetland et al., 2007, Wiggins, 1998). By getting help during the process, the producer realizes how the product is perceived by others, where its strengths and weaknesses lie, and hence, what needs to be worked on.

An important part of the principals' task to develop their schools pedagogically will inevitably be to visit the classrooms to assess the quality of the teaching going on. However, this can be done in a more or less systematic fashion (Pihlgren, 2003). The principal might drop in for a quick glance, or might stay to make an observation, using systematic criteria, and meeting the teacher after observation for feedback and dialogue. Observation and assessment of work performance followed by feedback is one way of improving staff performance. Coaching and mentoring often improves when implemented as a group activity (Andersson & Persson, 2002, Pihlgren & Fröman, 2009). However, the outcome of learning in group settings is dependent on the establishment of an open and allowing atmosphere, combined with a mutual intention towards methodical search and analysis of what is at hand (Pihlgren, 2008).

Method and question

This first study was conducted during 2011/2012. Six principals of six schools, colleagues working in a municipality outside Stockholm, participated in a project aiming to develop the understanding of methods for pedagogical development by assessing teachers' classroom practice through systematic observation and feedback. Some led pre-schools and elementary schools, some middle and secondary schools and some were responsible for organizations working with all grades in compulsory school (K-9). The schools varied considerably in sizes, from less than twenty teachers to more than a hundred. The length of experience as principals varied, from a couple of years to several decades.

The project was supported by the school supervisors of the municipality, who also picked the principals to the project. The main criterion was that the participants shouldn't be involved in

another major development project at the time. All six principals approved to participate in the project and in the research and also stayed on the project throughout the project period.

The group met in sessions with me as researcher for 2, 5 hours, ten times during a year. Assignments were carried out in the time between meetings: classroom observations with feedback to teachers, and text reading.

The project was recorded for research purposes by notes taken after each session on the work process and of the group's discussions. The participating principals were interviewed at mid-term and at the end of the project, when they also answered a written inquiry.

The question addressed in this first study was:

How can effective systems for principal's observation and feedback on teachers' classroom practice be created, tested, and improved by group dialogue in ways that the participating principals will find meaningful?

Results

In sessions, the principals in the project worked over the year to create and refine methods and rubrics of assessment, which could improve classroom practice by being used for registering observations and for giving feedback in dialogue with the observed teacher. They used the produced material in their schools in classroom observations and feedback meetings between sessions. Part of the project was to invite the principals to discuss and cooperate while creating and refining the assessment material. My role as facilitator in the sessions focused on supporting a positive dialogical atmosphere, on picking reading material to allow mutual references in discussion, and to support an analyzing and critical reflection by asking questions and introducing theoretical ideas. This aimed at creating a cooperative setting for analytical and critical reflections, where the principals could possibly learn and develop their thinking about what constitutes a pedagogically successful classroom environment.

A repeated working order was established after the first meetings. The session would start with participants sharing experiences made from the observations and feedback dialogues taking place between sessions. Each principal would recapitulate an observed situation, what comments in the matrix this had rendered, and reflect on this with help from the colleagues questioning. In some cases the lesson had been filmed and the group watched parts of the film, chosen by the observing principal. This was followed by a discussion of the text read by all, and by the researcher presenting extra material, theoretical ideas and research results as support. The matrix would then be discussed and revised. This was repeated at least three sessions, before the matrix was considered ready to use and publish.

The project resulted in two completed matrixes (see appendix A and B). The first matrix intended to visualize the knowledge, skills, and abilities addressed in an observed school lesson. The second matrix was intended for use in leisure-time centers, afterschool activities within the principals' jurisdiction. The leisure-time center is a part of the Swedish school system, and attended by most children age 6-9 years. This matrix was intended to make visible the intentions – formal, informal, and not planned chaotic/creative dimensions – of

activities within the leisure-time center curriculum. A matrix to follow up observations in a pre-school environment was also produced by one of the participating principals, and shared with the others and tried out. To support the feedback dialogue, charts presenting what might be registered in a best practice as opposed to a novice practice, was produced. This was revised in sessions in the same manner as the matrixes.

A suggested working order when observing and giving feedback was produced as a result of the experience which the principals gained from practice. The feedback dialogues would preferably start with the principal meeting with the teacher before observation, explaining the content of the matrix. The teacher would then be asked to state the intended teaching goals and this would be discussed in relation to the matrix. The principal would then observe the lesson. Afterwards, they would meet for the feedback and dialogue, where the teacher would be asked if his/her goals were reached, and the principal in dialogue would recapitulate the made observations.

Table 1. *Working order for the principal giving feedback*

1. Preparing meeting (principal and teacher):
    - The matrix is presented by principal
    - The teacher presents the plan for the lesson that will be observed
2. Observation (principal visiting teacher's class):
    - Observe the lesson, note the different actions and events in the "Lesson sequence" chart
    - Make notes of your analysis in the matrix (use the arrow chart as help if needed)
3. Meeting after observation with feedback, preferably the same day (principal and teacher):
    - Ask the teacher if he/she considers the aim of the lesson to be reached
    - Recapitulate in dialogue your observations, using the matrix and notes
    - Ask the teacher if he/she has the same impression of the lesson and its outcome
    - If you like – leave of a copy of your notes

In the first session I suggested different observation targets: student activity and democracy, discipline and order, lesson planning, ongoing learning, student/teacher interplay, meta-cognitive actions, and so on. The group settled on exploring learning, and specifically how abilities were fostered in the classroom. Later, when the leisure-time center activities were explored, the group turned their focus to the teacher's intentions, as well as the curricular goals. Two research anthologies were read and discussed in sessions during the project and were chosen to support the group focus (see Jensen, 2011, Nielsen et al., 2011). Other articles and research material focusing on subjects raised by the group's discussion were added when needed.

The project work and its results were presented by the principals at a conference, where their fellow principals in the municipality were present, and the produced material was made accessible on the municipality web-site for all to use.

In the beginning of the project, some principals were rather reluctant to engage themselves in the systematic observations. They had other needs they pointed out, needs that would be filled by coaching sessions rather than experimenting in the classrooms. After some negotiation,

they agreed to participate if some time would be spent on their every-day problems. This was done during the first sessions, but the interest for what was explored during observations and feedback soon took overhand. My intention was to make the participants film the observed lessons, to make the discussions more valid, using the idea of lesson and learning studies. The filming met with massive resistance, and I had to let go of the idea. Later in the process, some participants suggested filming, and also filmed some lessons. As it turned out, watching the film sequences did not have the big impact on the dialogue that I had anticipated. The retold experiences of each principal were rich enough to produce insights and ideas to create and revise the material.

An example of how the work could proceed during a session is shown in this extract from my notes taken after session 3. The group is trying out and revising the first matrix (Appendix A). Elsa (all names are pseudonyms) has related her observations and showed her matrix notes from a primary school lesson:

"It showed a well structured lesson up to a point in the middle, when it broke down in disorder. The group discussed what had happened and also how this could be compared to the well structured lesson that Gudrun had related. This resulted in two conclusions. The commotion occurred when the students should go from teacher's introduction to students' painting, as the teacher had not prepared the material and this caused queuing. Compared to Gudrun's teacher, who seemed to have the entire lesson planned in advance, Elsa's teacher did not foresee more than the introduction. /--/ Kim commented that this was comparable to what we had read in this session's chapter: The informal message of the painting lesson is different than the formal content. The discussion led to revisions of the matrix: We decided to specifically highlight the teacher role in different situations, and particularly stress the importance of planning and preparing the setting."

The ideas probed in this discussion, mainly focusing on the planning competence of the teacher, were later picked up in session seven, when the group was discussing what to focus on in their observation of leisure-time centers. As shown in Appendix B, they chose to concentrate on the teacher's intentions, highlighting the formal, informal and chaotic/creative learning dimensions.

Individual differences in experience were sometimes shown in the dialogue, but seem to be less dependent on the principal's time of working as a principal. Different personal experiences from education, pedagogical interests, and the size of the organization contributed to fuel the dialogue and helped the group penetrating problems and ideas. The content in dialogue shifted with time. In the first sessions, practical conditions often were the topic – whether principals of small units would have time to make the observations, and whether a principal with a certain teacher education and subject area would be considered believable when giving feedback. Later, these discussions grew scarce and the group focused on more complex subjects – how it is possible to trace that learning is taking place, what constitutes a good learning environment and how it is created and maintained, and what are the essential factors that good teachers address and others don't. However, it was from the session notes

hard to say if the progress is due to a learning process taking place, or to the group getting to know each other, the researcher, and the working process.

The interviews and the written inquiry showed that all participating principals were satisfied with what was accomplished and they considered the time in the project well spent. They had noticed the gradual change in session focus, from every-day coaching to the observations and feedback, and considered this to be for the better. They pointed out that the project had opened up new possibilities for them to develop their staff. They were satisfied with the extensive pedagogical search that had been part of the group dialogue and at mid-term wished to continue by focusing the following sessions on introducing collegial feedback among their staff, which also was done, parallel to working with the second matrix (Appendix B.). Individually, they pointed out that the group discussions had helped them to see important quality aspects of what to look for in the pedagogical context, when observing. This had led to a deeper understanding of what constitutes quality in the classroom. These quotes are extracts from the answers of three participating principals:

"I consider working with the matrixes in classrooms most valuable. I had low expectations when we started but the work has helped me to find a way to discuss "close-up" pedagogical situations with my teachers. /--/ The group discussions have been really rewarding, to see that one is not alone with problems, but also to find solutions to problems in what others have done or what we have concluded from reading and discussing ."

"I consider myself pretty well oriented in pedagogical theories but this work has showed me how I can use this in practical school development, on the classroom floor. It has led to a great interest among the teachers and we have now introduced collegial observations."

"I realized some things that I haven't really considered when I have been giving feedback before: the importance of the setting, the shifting role of the teacher… I look more closely for these things now, when I am visiting."

As a researcher I noted that I was over-prepared the first sessions, presenting ideas that the group had no or little use for at that stage. Gradually I learnt to listen to the group and to adapt my contributions to questions raised by the group's discussion. For example, I introduced material on how to work with teachers in collegial feedback the second session. It met with little or no interest. However, when I introduced the same material in the ninth session, many of the participants had planned on starting collegial feedback sessions among their teachers and the interest was high.

Conclusions

This part of the research came to focus on finding methods for the cooperation that was intended. The group of principals and the researcher gradually worked their way towards integration of practical experience, theoretical ideas, and goal orientation, resembling the methods of learning studies. However, instead of choosing a specific learning object beforehand, the group in dialogue settled on an observation area that they, from present experience, considered being of particular importance and as such presenting some difficulty

to their teachers. This was a necessity: the principal could not be sure of what the observed lesson would focus on or what would be important to point out in dialogue with the teacher. The switching between the analytical, creative and producing group sessions with peers and supported by a researcher, and the practical testing by observing and giving feedback to teachers, proved to be an effective system to produce working tools that the principals found meaningful.

The project altered the way the participating principals perceived observation and feedback as tools for pedagogical development, from being skeptical to seeing it as a vital development tool. The cooperative, interpersonal, dialogue seems to have supported the intrapersonal integration of a deeper understanding of what are essential pedagogical qualities. There also seems to have been a fruitful parallel process when the principals met their teachers in feedback. This will hopefully be elaborated from the forthcoming study.

The study will be continued in spring 2013, when a new group of principals will enter a one year project. I am told that there is a great interest in participating, due to the goodwill of the now participating principals. Apart from refining the project process, the forthcoming research will focus on the dialogical group process and how it develops by recording and analyzing the sessions.

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Appendix A. Matrix for observation of classroom practice: Knowledge, skills, abilities

KNOWLEDGE New knowledge, insights, discoveries	Subject content Subject knowledge	
	Curriculum core values Democracy, social abilities, equality, and the central perspectives: historical, environmental, international, ethical	
Didactic teacher role Plans and carries out every part of the process with focus on the learning of every student, points out goals and assessment, uses interplay and student active methods		
SKILLS Training on the student's reached level	Knowledge related Theoretical skills: read, write, count, etc.	
	Competence related Practical skills: paint and draw, do laboratory work, carpentry, baking, note taking, etc.	
	Social Speak in a group, wait ones turn, be considerate, etc.	
Coaching teacher role Have prepared the setting and activities so that every student can navigate on his/her own, meets the student's level and helps him/her onward		
ABILITIES Uses and communicates knowledge and skills in an effective and appropriate way to interpret, synthesize, make connections, and see alternatives	Analyzing Draw conclusions, interpret, value, analyze	
	Creative and entrepreneurial learning Create new ideas, questions, inventions, esthetic objects etc.	
	Communicative Mediate, develop, reason, argue etc.	
	Meta-cognitive Analyze how one thinks, learns, creates etc.	
Exploring and problem posing teacher role Poses problems and inquiring questions, gives time for creativity and refection, initiates analysis, points to meta-cognitive methods and techniques		

LESSON SEQUENCE:
Start

Core

Ending

KNOWLEDGE New knowledge, insights, discoveries

←--→

The lesson presents curriculum stated subject knowledge, as well as one or several of the following areas: democracy, social abilities, equality, and historical -, environmental - , international - , and ethical perspective. The teacher has thoroughly planned the lesson progression and carries out each sequence with a focus on the learning of every student. The teacher points to goals and assessment. Interplay and student active methods are used.

The lesson presents few curriculum stated subject knowledge content OR to many areas without visible connections. It seems not planned/partly planned OR the teacher has problems letting go of the plan when something unexpected occurs. The focus is on the taught material or social harmony rather than the student's learning. The goal is unclear. Interplay and student active methods are not used OR are used in a way that doesn't guarantee safety and order.

SKILLS Training on the student's reached level

←--→

Students are asked to practice knowledge related, theoretical skills like reading, writing, and counting AND/OR competence related practical skills like painting and drawing, do laboratory work, carpentry, baking, taking notes, etc AND/OR social skills like speaking in a group, waiting ones turn, being considerate, etc. The teacher has prepared the setting and the activities so that every student can navigate. The teacher adapts to an active coaching role and meets every student's level and helps him/her onward.

The lesson trains few, none OR too many different knowledge related theoretical skills, competence related practical skills AND/OR social skills. The teacher has not adequately prepared the setting and the activities, so that context and activities contribute to disorder, pauses, or hesitation. The teacher takes a passive role OR relapses into a didactic role, even when this is not necessary.

ABILITIES Uses and communicates knowledge and skills in an effective and appropriate way to interpret, synthesize, make connections, and see alternatives

←--→

The lesson addresses an analyzing process (students draw conclusions, interpret, value, analyze) AND/OR a creative and entrepreneurial process (students create new ideas, questions, "inventions", esthetic objects). Students use communication (mediate, develop, reason, argue) and meta-cognitive reasoning (analyze how one thinks, learns, creates) The teacher poses problems and inquiring questions, gives time for creativity and refection, initiates analysis, points to meta-cognitive methods and techniques.

The lesson addresses few or no analyzing, creative or entrepreneurial processes OR students' free creating/own experiments are not systemized or generalized. The students are not encouraged to communicate OR the communicative space is used by sub-groups. Few or no meta-cognitive discussions take place.

Appendix B. Matrix for observation of leisure-time center practice

		Formal learning dimension Result and working process is governed by the teacher	**Informal learning dimension** Working process is governed or supported by the teacher	**Chaotic/creative dimension** Neither result nor working process is governed by the teacher
Leisure-time pedagogy as identity development Support and enhance social and emotional competence	Play			
	Students' influence and participation			
	The social interplay of the group			
Leisure-time pedagogy supporting the school curriculum	Curriculum related abilities analyzing, entrepreneurial, communicative, meta-cognitive, concept oriented, information handling			
	Practical and esthetical exploring content			
	Thematic and subject integrated content			
Learn in and about leisure	Childrens' culture and play			
	Learning to find cultural and leisure-time activities			
	Good future habits: health, culture, interests			
Setting/space, and structure	The sequences are planned and apparent, and the shifts to new activities are effective			
	The setting/space is prepared to support formal and informal learning			
	Routines and structures support learning and order			

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE:

Start

Core

Ending

The role of the teacher (didactic, coaching, exploring/problem posing)

Formal learning dimension
Result and working process governed by the teacher:
+ The teacher presents games and tasks where the aim is clear. Activities are focused on supporting the students' identity development by self knowledge, influence and making choices and through the social interplay of the group. Goals, processes and methods are planned by the teacher and are performed in accordance with the plan. The results are as planned.
OR:
- The teacher controls the activity, without giving the students opportunity to influence the content. The goal is disciplining, fostering or moralizing rather than development or learning.

Informal learning dimension
The working process is governed or supported by the teacher:
+ The teacher has planned the setting or the activities in a way which will give the students opportunity to investigate, experiment, and cooperate, and thereby understand themselves and others better, influence the content and make their own choices. AND/OR: the teacher participates in student initiated activities and play, by supporting students and processes that need support to be productive.
OR:
- The teacher observes and makes the students' activities possible but does not challenge or support interplay.

Chaotic/creative dimension
Neither result nor working process is governed by the teacher:
+ The teacher leaves to the students to govern their play and activities, as one method, mixed with activities in the formal or informal learning dimensions, and/or with the intention to let the students explore their own boundaries and possibilities.
OR:
- The teacher leaves the students entirely to their own play or activities, where learning goals and outcomes are uncertain, impossible to assess and where the result might be that students feel bad, are excluded, or are affronted.

Formal learning dimension
Result and working process governed by the teacher:
+ The teacher presents activities, where the aim is clearly connected to curriculum bound subject knowledge, and one or more of the following: democracy, social interplay, equality, the central perspectives: historic, environmental, international, or ethical. The activity develops analyzing, entrepreneurial, communicative, and/or meta-cognitive skills. The teacher has carefully planned and performs every sequence with a focus on the learning of every student. The teacher stresses goals and assessment. Interplay and student active work forms are used.
OR:
- The teacher controls the activity, without giving the students opportunity to influence the content. The activities show no or little connection to the curriculum or the students' interests and/or exposes traditional school methods.

Informal learning dimension
The working process is governed or supported by the teacher:
+ The students investigate, experiment, and cooperate to develop their abilities on curriculum bound subject knowledge and the teacher supports by creating opportunities, observing, participating, and supporting when needed to enhance learning. Meta-cognitive discussions support the learning.
OR:
- The students investigate but on areas that has no or little connection to the curriculum and the attempted abilities. The teacher observes rather than challenges. There are few/no meta-cognitive discussions.

Chaotic/creative dimension
Neither result nor working process is governed by the teacher:
+ The teacher leaves to the students to govern the activities with the aim to train them in finding their own ways to learn.
OR
- The activities are not planned, not focused, and without visible aims. The learning goals and results are uncertain, impossible to assess and the results might be something completely different from what is stated in the curriculum or plans.

Formal learning dimension
Result and working process governed by the teacher:
+ The teacher organizes activities, where the aim is to teach students to find meaningful leisure activities now and in the future. The activities are planned and carried through with the teacher as a guide. The students participate in choosing and forming the activities.
OR:
- The teacher controls the activity, without giving the students opportunity to influence the content. Choosing activities are done in a routine fashion.

Informal learning dimension
The working process is governed or supported by the teacher:
+ The students have the opportunity to try different leisure activities in a variety of settings, and by their own choice and wishes. The teacher supports by preparing and organizing opportunities and assesses and improves the activities constantly, from the students' abilities and wishes.
OR:
- The teacher lets the students choose but does not challenge to new, and brave choices, or to a variety, OR accepts routine (gender) choices.

Chaotic/creative dimension
Neither result nor working process is governed by the teacher:
+ The teacher leaves to the students to find what they want to do in order to enhance their ability to find and choose their own leisure activities.
OR:
- The teacher leaves the students to find their leisure activities by themselves, so that a productive result cannot be guaranteed.

Formal learning dimension
Result and working process governed by the teacher:
+ The teacher has organized the setting, space and structure in ways that support order, by planning goals and methods in advance and by anticipating the conditions needed to reach the goals. The shifts between different activities are planned and effective.
OR:
- The setting/space is not or poorly organized for learning activities. The shifts between different activities are not planned and are left to the students to cope with without guidance. It is hard to see clearly defined and planned sequences with start and finish.

Informal learning dimension
The working process is governed or supported by the teacher:
+ The teacher has, by planning the setting/space and the activities over time, and by making the system visible, recurrent, and easy to decode for the students, created possibilities for the students to take responsibility for their own investigations, experiments, and learning.
OR:
- The setting/space is poorly and/or too organized or static and does not support investigation and experiments.

Chaotic/creative dimension
Neither result nor working process is governed by the teacher:
+ The setting/space is not planned for any particular activity but still rich in opportunity, giving the students the occasions to explore and use their own creativity.
OR:
- The order is not upheld, and the teacher has no visible systems and/or the setting/space in itself creates disorder.