Innovative Transfer Processes regarding Regional School Development

*Using Research as a Catalyst*

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Outline

- Setting the Scene
- Arenas of Policy Enactment – Actors and Tensions
- Regional Perspective – Organisational Field as Framework
- Research as Catalyst: Results and Effects of Intervention
- Discussion
Regional School Development

- The region is a relevant level when it comes to development in the educational system. (cf. Berkemeyer 2010)
- Having a regional perspective fosters transition processes which are supportive for all system levels. (cf. Emmerich 2010; Altrichter 2015)
- How to be aware of regional specific needs? (Otto et al. 2015)

1. **Who are relevant actors if it comes to enactment and further regional school development?**

2. **What could be a catalyst of a common regional school development process?**

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**Setting the Scene**

**Regional School Development**

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**Modellregion Bildung Zillertal**

**Schools:** 25 primary schools, 7 New Middle Schools, 3 vocational schools, 2 special education schools, 1 upper secondary school  
**Students:** ca. 4100  
**Teachers:** ca. 400  
**School Authority:** 1 Inspector responsible for all primary, middle, vocational and special education schools and 1 inspector responsible for the upper secondary  
**Teacher Training:** Teacher Education College Tirol
“Enactments are collective and collaborative, but not just in sense of warm fuzzy sense of teamwork, although that is there, but also in the interaction and inter-connection between divers actors, texts, talks, technology and objects (artifacts) which constitute ongoing response to policy, sometimes durable, sometimes fragile, within networks and chains. There are [...] negotiations and translations which go on at the point of connection over time and space.”

(Ball et al., 2012, S. 3)

- School leaders
- School authority
- Teacher professional development programs
Arenas of Policy Enactment: The Actors

Change agents

“runs the school”

Responsibilities

- Leadership and management
- Quality management
- School and curriculum development
- Human resource development
- Public relations management

→ Compared to other countries: little autonomy

OECD, 2016; Schratz, 2016
Arenas of Policy Enactment: The Actors

Intermediary institution between “education policy” and schools

Responsibilities across schools
  • Leadership, planning and coordination for the respective area
  • Contribution to organizational and personnel development
  • Quality assurance (SQA)
  • Consultancy and conflict management

Responsibilities with respect to individual schools
  • to observe all relevant areas of educational effectiveness and quality (“school inspections”)

Balancing act between support and control

Altrichter, 2017
Arenas of Policy Enactment: The Actors

“Translators” (Ball et al., 2012, p. 49)

- Prepare reforms for practitioners
- Make use of research and evidence

➔ Important role for processes of teacher professionalization

Provider: mainly Universities of Teacher Education (PH)

- Planning of training events ...
  on the basis of policy needs (ministry) and requires surveys due to observations of recent trends in coordination with local school authority

Müller et al., 2017
Arenas of Policy Enactment – Actors and Tensions

Tensions:
Lack of evidence-informed decision making, of need orientation and of coordination

Whole state in mind, policy needs

Teachers have trainings

Responsible for the region – but development of each school in mind (SQA)

Common need

Regional Perspective

School Authority – PSI

Regular conferences – new reforms and interpretation of it

In-Service Trainer

Own school in mind

School Leaders
Regional Perspective – Organisational Field as Framework

**MACRO-PERSPECTIVE**
Environment as institution; social expectations, rational myths

**MESO-PERSPECTIVE**
Organizational Field
Collective rationality, socially constructed reality of organizations

**MICRO-PERSPECTIVE**
Organizations as institutions
Social actions according from the individuals of an organization

**MACRO-MESO**
Organizations in Society

**MESO-MESO**
Relations between Organizations

**MICRO-MESO**
Individuals and Groups in an Organization

Sandhu 2012
Regional Perspective – Organisational Field as Framework

“By organizational fields we mean those organizations that, in the aggregate, institute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services and products.” (DiMaggio and Powell 1991: p. 64ff.)

- ‘lacking patterns for change and transformation’
- ‘actors in the field were given equal powers’
- ‘Communities of organizations – homogeneity’

“a community of organisations that parttake of a common meaning system and whose participant interact more frequently and fatefully with one another than with actors outside the field.”

(Scott 2008)

“centers of debates in which competing interests negotiate over issue interpretation.”

(Hoffmann 1991, p. 351).

organizational fields are formed around certain questions or issues
Regional Perspective – Organisational Field as Framework

**MESO-PERSPECTIVE**
Organisational Field
Collective rationality, social-constructed reality of organizations

**MESO-MESO**
Relations between Organizations

**MICRO-MESO**
Individuals and Groups in an Organization

**MESO-PERSPECTIVE**
Organizations as institutions
Social actions according from the individuals of an organization

Sandhu 2012
Research as Catalyst – Regional Data

Characteristic of Scientific Support

- School development tasks
- Single school support
- Universities of Teacher Education

School Authority (PSI)

Region/ all Schools

Scientific Support

School

regional in-service training
Research as Catalyst

School Authority and Research

- Multi sources of information\(^1\)
- Need-oriented development topics (*reconceptualization*\(^2\))
- Coordinated and synergetic actions (*initiated professionalization of school leaders; required development goals;*)
- New awareness of research

Practice and Research

- Local level
- Link research to school development
- Facilitator for networking
- Increasing awareness of existing information sources
- Support for translation issues
  - Use of standardized tests

NOVUM

- Jourfix meeting (every 6 weeks) between scientific support and school inspector
- Jourfix with coordinator for in-service teacher trainer
- Data from all seven schools
- Research findings regarding certain topics

- Low accountability
- Using a development tool which is now mandatory (SQA)
- Feedback from the schools
Research as Catalyst

Limitations and further research questions

• What impact does the new collaboration have for students learning?
• How do the actors see the research intervention in the system?

NOVUM

✓ Professional Learning Networks were created (bottom-up)
✓ Shared professional in-service trainings and topics

Changing culture in in-service trainings and within the school authority

- Regional development
- Common goals for schools
- Perspective changing
- Fostering collaboration
- Specific regional needs facing
Thank you
References


