Social-Cognitive Outcomes of Teachers’ Engagement in Community of Practice
Evidence from Finnish Basic Schools

UCEA 2010, New Orleans
29th Oktober 2010

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The Research Context - Finland

- Finland has been the world’s number-one performer in the OECD/PISA studies.
- Finnish basic school system boasts some of the narrowest achievement gaps in the world.
- A well-cited reason is the high standard of the teacher profession: Social status, professional expertise and societal trust in teachers’ work.
- Does professional autonomy transform into teacher isolation – or into a collaborative school culture?
- It has been suggested that Finnish teachers are in a gradual process from separate entrepreneurs to team-orientated professionals (Kärkkäinen, 1999).
Theoretical Framework

Community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger, Snyder & Mc Dermott, 2002)

Organizational Commitment

Defined as “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982:27).

Associated with loyalty, identification and involvement

Teachers’ sense of impact

A self-belief that their work can influence positively on the students’ learning behavior as well as on the work of their teacher colleagues (Short, 1994)

In the “conceptual neighborhood” of Bandura’s (1986) self-efficacy construct
Community of Practice (CoP)

- Knowledge domain
- Community of Teachers
- Shared practice

- Local (Close-knit group)
- Distributed (Core group with external linkages)
- Mutual Engagement
- Joint Enterprise
- Shared Repertoire

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Research Model

- External Engagement in Community of Practice
  - H1
- Internal Engagement in Community of Practice
  - H2
  - H3
  - H4

- Organizational Commitment
- Sense of Impact

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Results

External Engagement in Community of Practice

Internal Engagement in Community of Practice

Organizational Commitment

Sense of Impact

H1

H4

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### Table 1: Result of exploratory factor analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2</th>
<th>Component 3</th>
<th>Component 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Organizational Commitment)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I praise my school to my friends as a great workplace</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very glad I chose this school as my workplace</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work in a school where pupils are prioritized</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I care a lot what happens to my school</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mutual Engagement)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I regularly discuss about the issues relating to my subject with teachers not belonging to my subject group</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I discuss teaching methods regularly with the teachers outside my subject group</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I discuss about the pupils’ performance (classroom behaviour, homework, exams, grades) with the teachers outside my subject group regularly</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We regularly compare grading practice outside my subject group</td>
<td>-71</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sense of Impact)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that I can influence as a person other teachers and pupils</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I can influence other teachers and pupils through my actions</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I can influence positively on pupils through my work</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I help the pupils to grow into skillful learners</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Shared Repertoire)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I discuss regularly about practices related to pupils’ exams with my subject group teachers</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others often encourage me to try new teaching methods</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consciously work to plan the contents of the subject I teach with other teachers</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often receive suggestions for teaching material from the teachers in my subject group</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>