



Comparative analysis of the role of Nordic governance traditions and school perceptions in the development of progressive inquiry based teaching

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The Nordic model, characterized as a social democratic welfare approach, where principles of inclusion, student-centeredness and equality are key values has been seen as a role model for educational interests and governance internationally. However, the Nordic model is sometimes argued as being almost a myth or an unjustified idea of exceptionalism. It is suggested that a development with larger differences between the countries over time makes it difficult to talk about a Nordic model.

This paper discusses the Nordic educational model based on three Nordic comparative cases focusing on teachers experiences of implementing inquiry based approaches in lower secondary L1-classrooms and of inhibiting and promoting factors in the classroom, among colleagues, in curricula and exams forms and in municipal and national administration and government. Inquiry based approaches are relevant as focus for an investigation of educational similarities and differences between the Nordic countries, as inquiry based teaching in recent years has been a common Nordic focus in research, theory as well as in policy and practice. The aim is to gain deeper insight into the constitutive conditions for implementation of inquiry-based literature teaching in three Nordic countries.

Referring to previous models for comparing generic or subject specific didactic core elements and newer studies in comparative didactics, this paper suggests a thematic model for comparing teaching across contexts, differentiating between didactic practice (the actions carried out by the teacher to promote a certain aim), didactic reality (the frameworks,

principles and laws in a given context) and didactic theory (the history of theory that helps to create a space for action).

The empirical material for the paper include curricula, classroom observations and focus group interviews with teachers. We develop an analysis matrix on the basis of traditions for comparative analysis of politico-administrative systems and of curricular similarities and differences.

At the time of writing, the analysis is not conducted yet. The results will be presented at the conference. We expect to find differences in experiences implementing inquiry based approaches and of inhibiting and promoting factors. We discuss the results of the analyses, focusing on how they relate to national and Nordic traditions. The paper contributes to a more holistic approach to discussing connections across the levels in our analysis matrix, which, among other things, can influence school governance and curriculum development.

The comparative analysis of the Nordic governance traditions and school perceptions contributes to the QUINT ambition by elucidating essential constitutive factors for interpretation and discussion of what quality is in teaching. Progressive and inquiry-based forms of teaching are often emphasized because of their qualities in relation to the desire to promote students' innovative competences. The comparative analysis functions as reflection on the governance realities.