

VODENJE

v vzgoji in izobraževanju 2|2015

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Allan Hoyle and
Mikko Salonen

Espoo and York Region: A Story of International Learning

This article discusses the learning of school leaders and teachers, with the main focus on collaborative learning within professional learning networks and communities. It reviews a case of collaborative learning at the international level involving two local school districts, one in Finland, the other in Canada. Their cooperation is an example of a partnership between two successful communities as an opportunity for shared learning, increased success and well-being of their students. The paper starts by describing both school communities which, despite the distance, share their understanding of learning; all their collaborative learning was imbued with the realisation that all students are ours and should not be divided into yours and ours. The visits saw the participation of heads, teachers and students. The article explains how knowledge exchange, the shared development of teaching and learning practice, and the formation of a professional learning community took place between the partners. It outlines the cooperative learning of students who now share their interests and passions through social media. This jurisdictional learning therefore surpassed conventional cooperation and evolved into collaboration with the exchange of ideas and mutual support for such learning within the professional learning community. Throughout this shared process of learning, despite the distance in time and space, all participants kept uncovering differences and similarities between the cultures and underwent the same experiences. The conclusion outlines future partnership steps, the benefits that the partnership brought for students, and assesses the budget in regard to the benefits that this type of learning brings.

Keywords: leadership, school partnership, collaborative learning, professional learning communities, interculturality

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Zora Rutar Ilc
and Blanka
Tacer

How to Improve Communication Skills and Climate through Peer Coaching

This article highlights the main coaching principles and skills, their use for the purpose of collegial support (collegial or peer coaching), our coaching training programme, various forms of testing the use of coaching skills in school practice, and the effects these practices have at the level of building communication skills and climate development. The effects of training were identified in two ways: (1) By means of comparison between a pre-test and a post-test, which were both based on a questionnaire exploring the communication skills of participants in the collegial coaching training; (2) By a qualitative analysis of participants' reflections on the use of coaching skills with the

focus on the changes they had noticed in regard to their communication skills. Indirectly, through reflections and conversations, the effect that the use of collegial coaching skills had on the climate within the circle of participants as well as within the environments where these skills were being used, was also observed. This way, it has been established what forms of collegial practice have been used by these teachers in practice following the completed training, and what the results are.

Keywords: collegial or peer coaching, teacher professional development, coaching in education

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Polonca Kenda **Parental Care and Investment as Evaluated by Students, Parents and Teachers**

Students' success and learning depend on all the factors that contribute to the education process. Primarily, these factors include teaching staff, school leadership policy and collaboration with families. The first part of the article analyses theoretical bases and support provided for individual stakeholders within the education process, while the second part depicts a study carried out at an elementary school set in the country. The study results indicate the usefulness of knowing family dynamics when planning school collaboration with families. The study employed a questionnaire on parental care and investment, examining the evaluation of parental care and investment through the replies of students, their parents and teachers. The result analysis was carried out by means of a *t*-test for independent samples. The results have shown that students attributed higher scores to their parents' care and investment than their teachers and parents did. Particularly notable is parental care shown by mothers who, based on the results, have an edge on fathers when it comes to establishing closeness with students.

Keywords: parental care, parental investment, family, school, teaching staff, working with students

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Tatjana Ažman,
Vesna Žerjal,
Ana Strmčnik,
Mateja Kočar
Močnik,
Martina Kenda,
Lucija Markelj
Jensko, **Building Partner Collaboration with Parents:
An Example of Good Practice**

Collaboration between schools or kindergartens and students' parents is always highly pertinent to practice and constantly brings new challenges. This is because such mutual partnership requires continual effort, learning about it, and improvement. The article will reveal the reasons for collaboration between parents and schools or kindergartens, explain partner collaboration as understood by the authors,

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and define the basic principles that lead to establishing this partnership. Ten examples of good practice will be recounted, which have emerged as a result of practice improvement in the field of parent-school collaboration or which were already part of everyday practice in schools and were only presented by the members of teaching staff in the process of experience sharing.

Keywords: school, kindergarten, parental collaboration

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Mojca Lužnik
and Nataša
Durjava

Developing Good Techniques for Observation and Documentation of Child Development and Progress

While searching for new opportunities for quality work with children, Kindergarten Tržič has sought to expand its work in the field of observing and documenting child progress. Understanding child development is one of the key elements that enable good preparation for our education work. We wanted to go beyond the kind of work that builds on developmental milestones, and delve into the developmental process planning of our education work. Every educator already employs certain strategies developed for the observation and monitoring of child development. Through expanding our work in this field, we encounter and test new strategies, upgrade the existing ones and, at the same, time deepen our knowledge in the developmental psychology of pre-school children. Our work draws on reading the relevant literature, engaging in team work and mutual support. Our educators are provided with guidance on the meaningful use of materials gained through observation, all of which in turn facilitates children's insight into their own progress and promotes effective planning for educational work, reflection on one's own work and kindergarten-parent cooperation.

Keywords: observation, recording, reflection, child, progress

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Mutual Learning for the Promotion of Critical Thinking: The Experience of the Leadership for Learning Programme

This article describes our experience of collaboration within the programme of Leadership for Learning. Our topic of choice was to encourage critical thinking and collaboration among teachers, who help develop critical thinking skills in their pupils or high school students. As schools build on different background experience, we tried to incorporate our programme in the regular activities of our schools. We all agreed on introducing or continuing the practice of peer observations, as these promote collaboration and simultaneously stimulate the

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progress of reflection on one's own work. During workshops, teachers decided which critical skills they intended to promote in their elementary or high-school students, and presented these skills to their colleagues. This paper outlines the bases for our activities in the programme, work progression and three actual cases of work done in schools. It concludes with our findings on what was gained by teachers and what by head teachers in this programme.

Keywords: head teachers, leadership for learning, peer observation, critical thinking

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Alenka Bašelj

The Effect of Cooperation on the Learning Success and Inclusion of Roma Students in Education System

This paper explains the importance of establishing a solid mutual relationship and cooperation between a teacher and their Roma student, especially when Roma parents do not take part in the education process of their child or when the teacher is unable to cooperate with them. The article highlights different reasons behind the poor involvement or collaboration of Roma parents with schools or teachers, it discusses the legal basis and directions for working with Roma students, the various forms of providing learning support to Roma pupils, and the competencies of an effective teacher. It brings to the foreground the importance of a fulfilling relationship as fundamental for good collaboration. It describes the forms of behaviour that create such a relationship as well as the positive results of good relations or cooperation which manifest as the improved learning performance of Roma students and their more enduring inclusion in the education process.

Keywords: Roma students, relationships, learning success, inclusion in the education process, collaboration

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