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Departing from Tradition: Innovation and Accountability in Two Primary Schools in Denmark and the USA

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Departing from Tradition: Innovation and Accountability in Two Primary Schools in Denmark and the USA

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Departing from tradition: Innovation and accountability in two primary schools in Denmark and the USA

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## Traditional Schooling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textbook driven curriculum</td>
<td>Similar to USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole-group instruction</td>
<td>Authority driven “discipline”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on teaching</td>
<td>Classes based on age of pupil, not subject-specific proficiency of the pupil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher-directed learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Isolated knowledge and skill development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students as passive recipients</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desks in rows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual recall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why depart:
Theory & philosophy influencing change

1. Constructivist viewpoints
2. Gardner - Multiple Intelligences
3. Dunn & Dunn - Learning Styles
4. Piaget, Vygotsky, Dewey
5. Developmentally Appropriate Practice
Constructivist viewpoints

• Neuropsychology and Cognition
  ▫ Deconstructivist move from normalization to positive psychology
  ▫ Brain and behavior
  ▫ Paradigm shift

• Brain based research and practice
Gardner- Multiple Intelligences

_Meaning_ emerges when pulling these together:

**Cognition**
- Language
- Music
- Math Logic
- Visual spatial
- Body Motor

**Emotion**
- The Inner self
- The other

Linguistic, Musical, Logical/Mathematical, Spatial/Visual, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Naturalist, Existentialist
Dunn & Dunn- Learning Styles

Environmental – Sound, Light, Temperature, Seating

Emotional – Motivation, Task Performance Responsibility, Structure

Sociological – Self, Pair, Peers, Team, Adult, Variety

Physiological – Perceptual, Intake, Time of Day, Mobility

Psychological – Global, Analytic, Right/Left Dominant, Impulsive, Reflective

Drs. Ken and Rita Dunn, St. John’s University
Piaget, Vygotsky, Dewey

- Piaget - cognitive construction of knowledge
- Vygotsky - social structures influence on cognitive processes
- Dewey - pragmatic approach to learning
Developmentally Appropriate Practice

• Definition

• Principles

- developmental domains
- predictable sequences of growth
- individual variations
- impact of early experiences
- predictable process of development
- influence of social and cultural contexts
- active learning
- heredity and environment
- play as a vehicle for development
- opportunities to practice newly acquired skills
- demonstration of different modes of knowing and learning
- learning in the context of a community
A model for departure: Multiage

I. In Denmark

II. In USA
The pedagogical and organizational pillars at Hellerup School are:

- Working with projects – problem and product orientation, disciplinary and interdisciplinary, democracy in between the participants, the exemplary principle
- Working styles – respecting and valuing diversity
- Individual student plans and portfolios
- Year plans in the home areas
- Autonomous/self steering teams
- The line in the everyday of the youngest grades – school and recreation
- Evaluation and documentation
- School-home cooperation
USA

The main features of the program include:

- Nongradedness
- Multiage grouping
- Developmentally appropriate practice
- Child–centered learning
- Integrated thematic instruction
- Team teaching
- Community involvement
- Parent involvement

With emphasis on building a sense of community
The journey towards innovation: Physical environment

1. Small group areas
2. Large group areas
3. Work centers
4. Flexible space
Small group areas

USA

Denmark

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhdqWXi2x3I
Large group areas

USA

Denmark
Work centers

USA

Denmark
Flexible space

Denmark

USA
The journey towards innovation: Active learning

1. Teacher practices
2. Student expectations
3. Innovative experiences
Teacher practices

Denmark

USA
Student expectations
Innovative experiences
The journey towards innovation: Accountability

1. Student assessment
2. School assessment
Student assessment

Assess Prior Knowledge, Formative (On-going), and Summative (Concluding) Knowledge

Individual Plans - leading to Authentic Assessment

Portfolio Assessment Reflection and Planning for Next Steps
School assessment

- Terra Nova Standardized Testing

- 2007 - named a SMART Showcase School by SMART Technologies.

- 2005 - one of 30 schools in the nation to be named a Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School by Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence, Inc.

- Intel Scholastic 2005 School of Distinction Award (winner in the elementary teamwork category)

- 2001- recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School of excellence by the United States Department of Education. The intensive application process included reflection upon all accomplishments since the school's beginning in 1994. It was truly validating to receive a site visit and then to be recognized as the only Blue Ribbon School in Tennessee at that time.

- 2001 - won the Tennessee State Board of Education’s Parent Involvement Award for the 1st District. It's PATRIOTS (Parent Action Team Reinforcing and Integrating Opportunities To Succeed) logged more than 9,500 volunteer hours, the majority of which involved direct contact with the students.

- Since opening in 1994, Washington has had ten system-wide Teacher of the Year awardees.
School assessment

4th grade grades reported and compared
Grades are compared with other schools
Hellerup is 235 of 1617 – compared in 9th grade
Transfer of these “best practices” into other schools
Challenges

• School system support of the program
• Community support of the program
• Flexible groupings
• Differentiation of instruction
• Curriculum integration
• Teacher collaboration and team building
• Authentic assessment
• Active learning
• System wide curriculum mapping
Successes & Motivation
Moving from Traditional to Non-Traditional Designs

Innovative Education in the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century

- Educational environment designed around knowledge of how children learn and develop
- Students that love to learn
- Parent involvement
- Collaborative teaching and learning
- Appreciation and recognition of individual strengths, interests and needs
- Continuous learning
- Trust children to be responsible learners
- Application of knowledge
- All learners learning about themselves as a person
- Learners knowing their strengths and ways to contribute to society
The main reason to continue to “Depart from Tradition”

Children – Our Global Future