

Abstract

The aim of this study was to gain increased knowledge about professional development of teachers in Reykjavik's compulsory schools.

The professional development of teachers in Reykjavík's compulsory schools is guided by the city's employee policy as well as being provided for in the Basic school law and in collective agreements. It is stated in the strategy of the educational authorities of Reykjavik, that professional development of human resources is a significant instrument in the progress of the learning community. Many scholars have maintained that the learning community, as a concept, is a common denominator for professional development, student progress and improvement in schools.

In the school-year of 2001-2002 the managers of the compulsory schools in Reykjavik participated in a course in making, a six step professional development plan for their staff. In this study, teachers and principals in the three schools were surveyed in order to find out their attitudes towards the use of such plans. In addition, teachers' attitudes were explored with regard to the usefulness of different learning methods that are commonly used for teachers. The findings suggest that the procedure to design professional development plans has partially established itself in the three compulsory schools. The findings also show that with current professional development plans, only the minority of the teachers have their need fulfilled for professional development. Most of the teachers consider mentoring, self-directed learning and group-work to be the most useful ways of learning.

Hopefully the findings will be useful as a tool in the discussion of the various methods of teachers' professional development and it's importance in school improvement.