CoReD
Collaborative Redesign with schools

Case Study: School Development Evaluation Tool – Compulsory School of Bolungarvik

About the School

Location	The school resides in a fishing town on the north-western coastline of Iceland.
Students	Around 120 in the 1. to 10. grade of compulsory schooling, spanning the age from 6 to 15 years.
School premises	A late 20th century building with a sport hall, swimming pool, health centre and town library on the premises.
School context	A township of approximately 1.000 inhabitants.
Type of activity	Group reviews at a meeting with all staff members.
Stage in design process	Preparatory – A first step of reflection on potential changes in the environment for teaching and learning.

Tool

School Development Evaluation Tool:
https://www.ncl.ac.uk/mediav8/cored/files/School%20Development%20Evaluation%20Tool%20in%20English.pdf

The town Bolungarvik on the north-western coastline of Iceland. – Photo: https://gs.bolungarvik.is/.

About the School Development Evaluation Tool

The tool has a twofold purpose: Firstly, teachers and school administrators can apply the tool to facilitate and enhance the professional discourse on school policy and / or evaluation of school practice. Secondly, the tool can be applied to consider and review developmental changes in school practice. It´s professional basis is rooted conceptual ideas about individualized learning, democratic teaching practices, student centred schooling and the school as a learning community.

See here: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/mediav8/cored/files/School%20Development%20Evaluation%20Tool%20in%20English.pdf

Method

Staff members present at a general staff meeting were divided into three teams – Participants were fewer than usually, due to difficult weather conditions, so teachers from the middle and adolescent grades formed a joint group, while teachers from the youngest grades made up a group of their own. The third group included staff members in supportive roles and a developmental therapist. Three strands of the School Development Evaluation Tools were reviewed and here are the findings regarding the third strand, the learning environment.

The groups were asked to define how far the school had come in terms of school development along the lines laid out in the tool, but approached their task in somewhat different ways, as mentioned in the tables that follow. They got three questions to keep in mind: What is good or going well and should be done more often? What is not good or going well and should be stopped without delay? And finally, what needs to be done to bring environment or practice to fifth and highest stage defined in strand three of the evaluation tool?

Findings

Teachers of students at the youngest age level

Teachers of grades 1 to 4 found the learning environment to be at the third stage, as defined by the *School Development Evaluation Tool.*

Organisation of school building	Stage 2 The school buildings were divided into classrooms and few contained or closed spaces. Open spaces were being used when needed, there was some flexibility in offer on the premises.
Workspace of students	Stage 3 Some classrooms had been divided into workspaces with students moving from one space to the other within that classroom.
Learning materials and the visibility of student work	Stage 2 Little variation in learning materials, but project work of students visible on the premises.
School library	Stage 1 A contained or closed school library, books and other materials were only available for lending; opening hours were limited.
Technology	Stage 3 Students had access to laptops and tablets. Wireless network connections in all classroom spaces.

Teachers of the youngest grades regarded collaboration at that age level as very good, while ties to teachers of art and crafts could be strengthened. The library could be opened more often to facilitate student access to books. To get to level five they felt they would have to take up new methods, get more funding, change their perspective or views, allow for more professional reflection and keep receiving continued professional support.

Students at the youngest age level, in grades 1 to 4, were 48 when the evaluation took place.

Findings continued

Teachers of students at the middle and adolescent age levels

Teachers of grades 5 to 10 approached their task somewhat differently. They tried to determine where they were at and where they wanted to be. They did not always find the fifth level defined by the *School Development Evaluation Tool* interesting or desirable.

	Where are we?	Where do we want to be?
Organisation of school building	Stage 3 Part of the school building is laid out with spaces that are open and / or of varied sizes. This allows for some flexibility in school practice.	Stage 4 Open spaces at all age levels offering varied possibilities in workspaces.
Workspace of students	Stage 3 Adolescent students were said to move between spaces within the areas assigned to their age level, while students at lower age levels were seen as being on the first stage defined by the tool.	Stage 5 Workspaces within the school were said to allow students to choose where they carried out their work depending on their tasks. They neighbourhood was also considered a venue for learning.
Learning materials and visibility of student work	Stage 2 The teachers regarded their access to varied learning materials as good to some extent. Student work was considered visible.	Stig 4 Variety in learning materials and student work clearly visible.
School library	Stage 1 Contained library, books and other materials only available for lending, opening hours limited.	Stage 4 School library and computer lab integrated and unified. Information centre placed at a centrally located school secretary and frequently visited by students.
Technology	Stage 2 Limited digital equipment, mostly desktop computers. Wireless network connections in every location. Limited student access to tablet computers.	Stage 4 6–10 tablets for each age level. Desktop computers in study labs. Wireless network connections in every location as before.

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Findings continued

Other staff members (supportive staff, school workers and a developmental therapist)

The team tried to determine the current situation and point out ways to improve the learning environment.

	Where are we?	How can we get better?
Organisation of school building	Stage 1 School buildings were seen as divided into classrooms of similar types and sizes allowing only for minimal flexibility.	The building was seen as limited in terms of offering all kinds of opportunities. It could, however, be used more effectively, for instance by providing constantly updated information about the availability of free spaces.
Workspace of students	Stage 2 Students mainly in the same room most of the school day. Workstations allow them to move between areas within the classroom.	By making better use of open spaces.
Learning materials and visibility of student work	Stage 2 Learning materials sometimes varied, but generally not diverse enough.	Project work made more visible and regularly put up for all to see. More freedom and manoeuvring space for creative work.
School library	Stage 1 Contained school library, books only for lending, opening hours limited.	
Technology	Stage 3 Students have access to laptops or tablets. Wireless network connections in every classroom.	Two or more laptops or tablets in every classroom.

The team considered teamwork at the school good but wanted to take it further, to make better use of spaces and technical equipment, for instance by posting a time schedule by every classroom door. Rather than feeding students with information, teachers should be careful to make good use of questions coming from students to ignite discussions in class. To get to the fifth and uppermost level the staff would have to review teaching methods in art and crafts and get more funding.