

Session code: 2-3-A203

Title: A Comparative Study of the Attitudes of Beginning Teachers to their Work in England and Denmark

Contributer/s: Michael Nicholson

Abstract : Over recent decades there has been an increasing tendency for governments to examine the efficacy of their education systems. In England this has been characterised by increasing central control of the curriculum and the development of consumer choice by parents. Given the short term imperatives that bear down on policy makers in England this leads, in the author's view, to a persistent flow of changing policy directives and direction. The education system in Denmark also faces pressures for change, although perhaps within a different policy making context and for different reasons (Winther-Jensen, 2001). However, the nature of the Danish legislative framework, and the more communitarian characteristics of Danish society, allow for more reflection when considering and implementing change in the education system. In both countries, the policy context in which teacher education institutions operate is being changed by the close connection between the teacher's task in schools and thus the nature and content of teacher education courses.

This paper reports on a collaborative research project between two teacher education institutions. It investigates the attitudes and aspirations of beginning teachers in their final year of training in England and Denmark. A second phase of the study follows up a target sample of newly qualified teachers from the original cohorts and re-examines their attitudes to teaching and the quality of their professional preparation. In addition 'key informants' from both institutions add the perspectives of teacher educators. The paper also seeks to examine any differences to the balance between 'act and discourse' that forms Alexander's definition of pedagogy. (Alexander, 2000)

Michael Nicholson (University of the West of England, U K)

Bibliography

ALEXANDER, R (2000). *Culture and Pedagogy, international comparisons in primary education*. Oxford. Blackwell Publishing

Winther-Jensen, T. (2001). *Changing Cultures and Schools in Denmark*. In Cairns, J., Lawton, D & Gardner, R. (Eds). *Values, Culture and Education*. London. Kogan Page