### Self-evaluation - a way off ensuring quality of teaching



### Kurt Ernst, chairman, Danish Private School Association. Introduction:

It seems to be a kind of parallel movement/understanding: The external inspection is growing, and therefore it's important that the internal does the same.

More external and more internal inspection!

#### **But IMAGINE**



What if inspection was changed to a pedagogical and cultural proces which as it's most important function was the development of the school.

What if

EVALUTION BECAME ANOTHER WORD FOR EVOLUTION.

## Kurt Ernst, chairman, Danish Private School <u>Association</u>. Introduction:

In 2010, the Danish parliament adopted a new law concerning methods of inspection to ensure the quality of teaching in the Danish private schools (free independent schools).

The law aims to professionalize the inspection of private schools.

It also provides an opportunity to ensure the quality of teaching through systematic self-evaluation.

But first we had to make a model for this self-evaluation or should I say SELF-EVOLUTION-SYSTEM.

SIMONE DALSGAARD was one of the key players in the development of the model.

It is this self-evaluation concept, which is the focus of the presentation today.

### The making of a model for self-evaluation



### Self-evaluation - a way off ensuring quality of teaching



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#### **Background:**

- Trained as a teacher
- 12 years of teaching experience at the elementary school level.
- Degree in management (management of organizations, personnel management, organizational communication, team and network management)
- 4 years of management experience in a private school.

#### Main areas as a consultant:

- Education: developing the quality of teaching, evaluation of teaching, inspection of private schools teaching
- Personnel management, work environment
- The school as an organization (structures, processes and cultures)
- Students with special needs
- Conflict management: Students and Parents areas
- Political interests and communication
- Speaker, trainer of inspectors for private schools

### Danmarks Privatskoleforening



#### **Self-evaluation** - a way of ensuring quality of teaching

- 1. Requirements for the self-evaluation
- 2. Why choose self-evaluation?
- 3. The self-evaluation process
- 4. The self-evaluation mandatory topics
- 5. Self-evaluation and the school as an organization
- The effect of self-evaluation



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In 2010, the Danish parliament adopted a new law concerning methods of inspection to ensure the quality of teaching in the Danish private schools (free independent schools).

The law aims to professionalize the inspection of private schools.

It also provides an opportunity to ensure the quality of teaching through systematic self-evaluation.



The legislation opened up the possibility that private schools could perform self-evaluation to ensure the quality of teaching as an alternative to external inspection.

It was a requirement that the self-evaluation should be systematic in content and process.

Schools would therefore have to do self-evaluation based on a model that was approved by the Ministry of Education.

But such a model would first have to be developed.

The Danish Private school Association therefore started an effort to develop a model that could be approved by the Ministry.

In addition to the ongoing conversations with the Ministry, we also gathered a group of school headmasters that we used as a focus group for the project.

Eventually we had a model that was approved and that we could present to schools.

# The making of a model for self-evaluation



# Requirements for the self-evaluation

The self-evaluation model ensures that a school's self-evaluation can provide

- The schools parents
- The schools board
- The Ministry of Education
- the opportunity to assess whether the school meets the key requirements for teaching as free independent schools in Denmark.

There are 10 focus points or topics that schools must evaluate in a cycle of three years.

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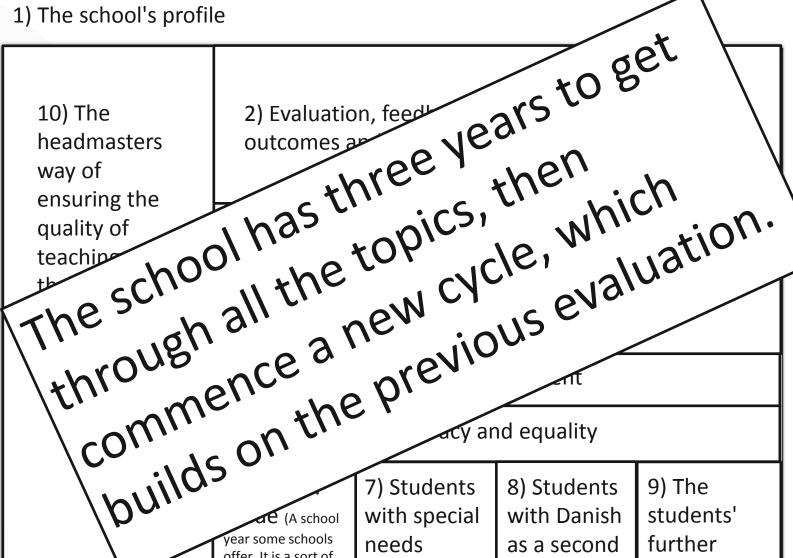
#### 1) The school's profile

10) The headmasters way of ensuring the quality of teaching and the development of teaching.

2) Evaluation, feedback, student's general learning outcomes and learning effects

3) The school's learning objectives: curricula

- 4) Students' personal development
- 5) Freedom, democracy and equality
- 6) The 10.
  grade (A school year some schools offer. It is a sort of halfway between primary school and further education)
- 7) Students with special needs
- 8) Students with Danish as a second language
- 9) The students' further progress in the education system



12

further

system

progress in

the education

as a second

language

needs

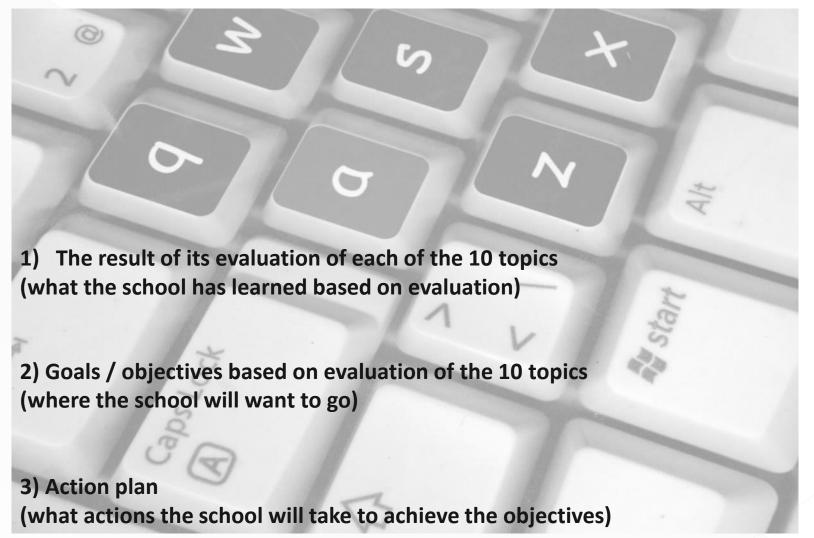
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halfway between primary school and

further education)

The fact that self-evaluation is a legitimate form of inspection means that schools must publish the results on its public website:



Requirements for the self-evaluation

#### Why choose self-evaluation?

The choice to use self-evaluation is decided formally by the school board and of school parents.

We have from the outset given the advice to schools, that they should only choose self-evaluation if they were interested in evaluating and developing the quality of teaching.

Self-evaluation requires time and resources.



The Ministry of Education has in the first months of 2015 evaluated the effects of the law on inspection of free independent schools.

The consulting firm Rambøll has carried out the evaluation work for the Ministry.

This has led to an extensive and interesting report about the effects of self-evaluation and about the selfevaluation model.

One can, for example, read why schools have chosen self-evaluation rather than an external inspector:

The majority of schools argue that it is the best way to work with the quality in teaching.

It is a tool for innovation and quality development. Self-evaluation does this systematically.

Self-evaluation provides a framework for the dialogue on key topics among the school's teachers.



The Rambøll report

#### At school management level self-evaluation:

- Provides knowledge and insight into the relationship between the actual teaching and students' learning processes.
- Creates a basis for adjustment of objectives and actions in relation to the school's priorities.
- Enhances the school's educational and professional management.
- Ensures and develops the quality of teaching.



#### The Rambøll report

#### At the school board level self-evaluation:

- Meets a need to be able to act on firmer basis
- Meets a need to ensure more uniform processes
- Meets a need to make improvements
- Meets a need to show that the school does what it says it does
- Meets a need to be clear and transparent

# When a school chooses self-evaluation it also chooses transparency.

It's like holding a mirror looking at yourself - and invite everyone else to look in the mirror too.



### The self-evaluation process

The school has three years to evaluate the 10 topics / focus points in the self-evaluation model.

Each theme must be evaluated on the basis of a specific process.



#### Phase 0. Planning phase.

In this phase the self-evaluation process is planned, involving the school management and / or the coordination team.

# a) Purpose and quality objectives are formulated for the evaluation process. For example:

- Methods
- Process management
- Communication

#### b) Preparation of the study phase. For example:

- How to determine the status at the school around the topic?
- How to answer the compulsory questions, which are part of the self-evaluation model? By whom and how?

#### c) Preparation of evaluation and assessment. For example:

- Who evaluates? Necessary skills or experience?
- Assessment criteria: Which criteria should be used to assess?
   Selection of indicators, signs, criteria for success.



#### Phase 1. Study and status.

Based on a number of specific questions that are given as part of the self-evaluation model the school is studying its own standard practices.

The data collection can take the form of structured dialogue, observation, questionnaires and other descriptions.



#### Phase 2. The evaluation.

Based on the school's study of its own standard practice - based on the answers to the compulsory questions – the school can start to evaluate the point of focus / topic:

- Are we doing, what we say we do?
- What are we happy with in our standard practice?
- What are we doing well?
- Are we doing as well as other schools we compare ourselves with?
- How is our standard practice in relation to the latest evidence-based knowledge in the field?
- What could be improved in our standard practice?



#### **Phase 3. Results. Interpretation of results.**

Reflecting on the results of the evaluation in relation to the context:

What has the school learned based on the evaluation?

Is the school's current standard practice in line with the school's vision of what is good quality?

#### Phase 4. Goals / Objectives.

Based on the evaluation, the school may have learned that there is something it does well and wants to continue doing.

It may also have learned that there is something that it deems necessary to improve?

What is the school's objectives based on the evaluation?



#### Phase 5. Action plan. Development of standard practice.

To reach the objectives, there may be areas the school considers needing special attention.

It may also be necessary to make concrete actions.

How can the school achieve its goals /objectives? What actions must be taken to achieve the objectives? Who is going to do something and when? When will the goal be reached?



#### Phase 6. Communication - documentation.

This phase focuses on internal and external communication and publication of results, goal setting and action plan.

The result of the quality evaluation (phase 3, 4, 5) is published on the school website.



Phase 1. Study and status. Phase 6. Phase 2. **Communication** -The evaluation. documentation. Phase 5. Phase 3. Action plan. Results. **Development of** Interpretation of results. standard practice. The self-Phase 4. evaluation Goals / Objectives. process ©Danmarks Privatskoleforening 2015

Some of the mandatory topics in the self-evaluation model



## 1. mandatory evaluation topic The school's profile

It is optional for schools in which order they will evaluate the individual topics in the model.

However, it makes perfect sense to start with the topic: The school's profile.

#### It gives a clear picture of some core areas of the school:

- The school aims / values
- School organization
- The school subjects, number of lessons, teaching progression and learning objectives
- Number of teachers
- Number of students (pr. class)
- The school's offers on tests and exams



It has proven to be a very valuable topic in school selfevaluation.

We had not imagined the importance of it, when the model was developed, but now it is rather obvious.

Self-evaluation of the school's profile grabs the core of the school –especially a free independent private school.

It is

the school's purpose, the school's values, the school's ethos,

that distinguish it from the public schools and from other free independent schools.



Self-evaluation involves the spoken and non-spoken values.

Values form the basis for identifying evaluation criteria.

It is necessary to clarify the school's values and priorities, or parts thereof, so that they can form the basis for selfevaluation.

Statement from a self-evaluation-school about working with topic 1:

Are we doing the things that we say we do?
We must learn to ask critical questions about whether we actually practice and meet the school's values.

New employees - and constant changes make self-evaluation a meaningful tool to put some of these discussions in system".



#### 2. mandatory evaluation topic

## Evaluation, feedback, student's general learning outcomes and learning effects

This topic is one of the most important of the model from an inspection point of view.

It involves six sub-topics each requiring an evaluation:

- a. The school's evaluation methods.
- b. Involvement of students in evaluation.
- c. The involvement of parents in the evaluation.
- d. The collaboration between teachers and knowledge sharing.
- e. Information on learning outcomes.
- f. The students' academic level.



#### a) The school's evaluation methods

The school has to answer:

Which evaluation methods does the school use to evaluate students' learning outcomes?

It may be common tests, exams and assignments at school?

It may be student logbook that creates reflection and documentation of learning?

It may be other methods that provides a status and sets new targets in relation to academic achievement?



### There is probably no school that evaluates student achievement based on guesswork?

The self-evaluation model requires that school study itself:

- Which evaluation methods are used systematically at the school?
- Which evaluation methods are used in each subject/class, etc.?

Then the school must self-evaluate its use of evaluation methods.

Is the school happy with its use of evaluation methods?

Or is there room for improvements?

Evaluation, feedback, student's general learning outcomes and learning effects

#### b) Involvement of students in evaluation

How and how often does the school involve the students in evaluating their own learning outcome?

Many methods of evaluation or assessment tools involve students.

Research shows that feedback - from teacher to student and from student to teacher gives a high learning effect.

The school must look at its own practice in this area too and evaluate.



#### c) Involvement of parents in evaluation

How and how often does the school involve parents in the evaluation of their children's academic level and general benefit of their education?

It is all about giving a useful and professional feedback.

Parental involvement is also about:

- what parents can do
- what the school can do
- what the student can do

to create positive development.



#### d) Cooperation between teachers and knowledge sharing

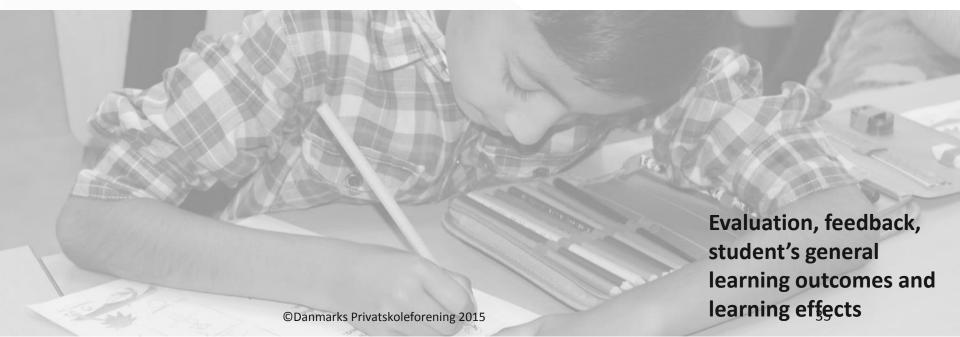
How is teaching organized and planned?

How does the cooperation between teachers work?

How is knowledge shared?

Remember the self-evaluation process:

Study schools standard practice – Evaluate – Learn – New goals – Action plan – Communicate



#### e) Information on learning outcomes

The school must regularly inform parents and students about the student's learning outcome.

School / home conversations is often a starting point for this information, but it can also happen via student plans, mark sheets, etc.

The school and its teachers must be able to provide an objective and professional feedback on students' learning process.



#### f) The students' academic level

Is there a more important and interesting question for a school than whether students actually learn something?

So: Are the objectives achieved?

For some schools the studies that form the basis for this evaluation is made on the basis of the given term marks, test results and test scores.

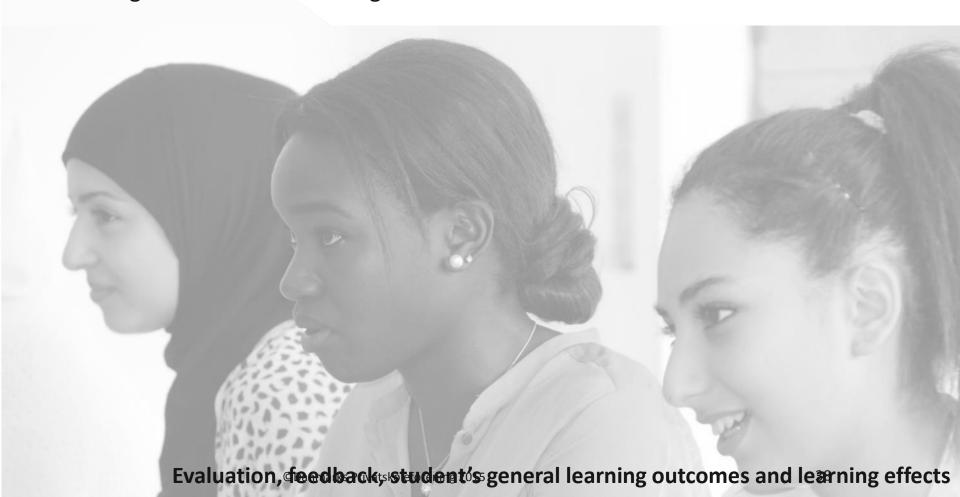
Schools create statistics and look at their own performance against other schools' results and national results.

Again: They study themselves and then they evaluate.



Statement from a self-evaluation-school about working with topic 2:

"The teachers' have worked with the feedback concept and has gained insight into the importance of the way they choose to give their feedback. We will conduct a student survey on the student's involvement in evaluating their own learning outcomes."



### 3. mandatory evaluation topic The school's learning objectives and curricula

A Danish free independent private school may choose to follow the public school objectives in whole or in part.

It can also formulate its own educational objectives.

These must be of at least equal quality as public school objectives.

The self-evaluation of educational objectives and implementation is also important in the model.

It involves three sub-topics each requiring evaluation:

- The school's educational objectives (Curricula)
- Educational objectives in the specific teaching
- Are the educational objectives being achieved?

A free independent school must ensure that there is a clear link between the teaching that takes place at the school every day, and the objectives and plans the school has for teaching:

- How is the school's teaching practice in relation to the use of the public school's objectives or own set of educational objectives?
- How is educational objectives incorporated in the curriculum and in everyday teaching?
- How is the educational objectives reflected in the specific teaching of the individual child/student

#### The school's educational objectives must be a part of the actual teaching:

Does this happen through the teacher's annual plans, weekly plans, lesson plans, plans for each student?

Does this happen through conscious involvement of students in the objectives to be achieved?

Does this happen through objective-based teaching, so that the goal of teaching is the fundamental element in the preparation of the teaching?

learning objectives and curricula

The school's

#### Self-evaluation topic 3 can be the start of a journey.....

- ... where the school observes and evaluates the school's educational objectives from overall plans....
- ....to the teachers' annual plans and weekly plans....
- .....on to plans for each lesson and to the education of each student.....

Statement from a self-evaluation-school about working with topic 3:

'Self-evaluation has put us in a process focused on objective-based teaching.

We must recognize that we have not been good enough to evaluate student learning outcomes and to involve students in the evaluation".

The school's learning objectives and curricula

# 4. mandatory evaluation topic The student's personal development

The topic evaluates the school's work with students' personal development.

The focus is here on how schools

- organize teaching so that it promotes personal development
- how the school in its other activities promotes personal development.

Schools often focus on three areas in the evaluation:

- Desire to learn more
- Ability to learn in different ways
- Opportunity to learn together with others

#### Focus-points:

# 1. The student's desire to learn more:

Well-being, learning environment, challenges, meaningfulness, motivation

#### Study examples:

How does the school, actively support students' physical well-being and work environment?

What actions have been taken at the school so that teachers have a true picture of students' well-being?

# 2. The student's ability to learn in different ways:

Differentiation

#### Study examples:

How does the school support the academically weak students' curiosity and desire to learn?

How does the school support the academically talented students' curiosity and desire to learn?

# 3. The student's opportunity to learn together with others:

Being with others, community and democracy.

#### Study examples:

What educational activities at the school supports students' ability to identify, use, understand and manage different emotions?

What educational activities at the school supports communication and social forms that can promote students' ability to handle conflict? Statement from a self-evaluation-school about working with theme 4:

"It has paved the way for action plans for the educational environment in each class from 4th to 9th grade".



### 5. mandatory evaluation topic Freedom, democracy and equality

The purpose of this theme is to gain insight into how the school prepares students to

- live in the Danish society with freedom and democracy,
- as well as developing students' knowledge of and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights,
- including gender equality

It is a legal requirement that students in a Danish private independent school must receive an education that prepares them to live in a society of freedom, democracy and equality.

Children's mindset is based on the values that they knowingly or unknowingly have acquired.

The school must evaluate how it prepares students for freedom, democracy and equality

- in the teaching,
- in other school activities and
- in the contact with each student.

There are several approaches to the evaluation of the school's work with freedom and democracy:

- The schools formulated and expressed values
- Intentions of teaching
- The contents of teaching
- The teacher and the teaching methods (pedagogy didactics) in education
- The organization of teaching
- School activities and culture

Statement from a self-evaluation-school about working with topic 5:

"We have established a brand new student council with far greater responsibilities than before".



#### 10. mandatory evaluation topic

The headmasters way of ensuring the quality of teaching and the development of teaching.

The purpose of this topic is to gain insight into how school management ensures the quality of teaching.

Recent research ("Educational Leadership," Ramboll / UVM) shows that it has a positive effect on students' academic achievement when school management:

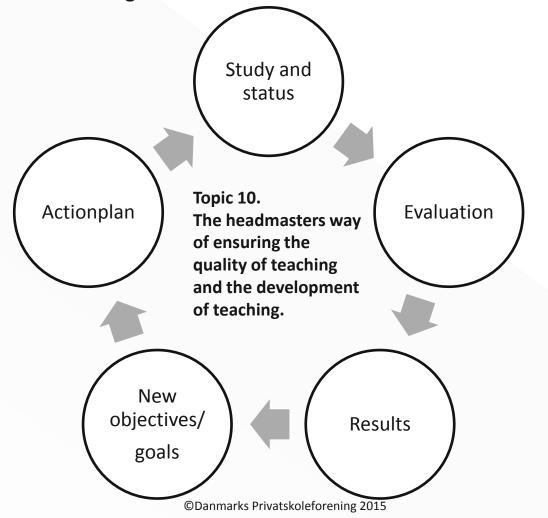
- moves close to the learning situation and engage in teaching
- gets involved in the development of educational content, methods and practices
- focus on continuously developing the school's professional capacity, for example by upskilling the teachers



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Self-evaluation in itself is a tool for school management to ensure the quality of teaching.

Through self-evaluation it is possible to form a broad picture of the quality of the teaching and other school activities.





Statement from a self-evaluation-school about working with topic 10:

"The school management now spends more time observing teaching.

Self-evaluation has provided a more nuanced basis for the school's development."

The headmasters way of ensuring the quality of teaching and the development of teaching.

# This is a very short time-out to reflect on what you have heard in the presentation until now ... The presentation will continue shortly....

Tell the person sitting next to you what you think......

Is there anything specific that has surprised you?

What do you imagine that systematic self-evaluation could do for the schools you know?

What do you think about the possibility of using self-evaluation as an inspection form?

What do you think about some of the mandatory subjects in the self-evaluation model?



#### Self-evaluation and the school as an organization

The objective of self-evaluation is primarily to ensure and develop the quality of teaching.

It is the intention that the self-evaluation will help to preserve what works and create change, where things could be better.

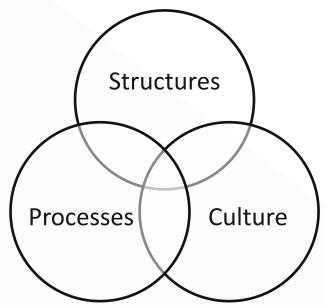
It turns out that self-evaluation not only creates change in the context of schools teaching, but also in the school as an organization:

- The school is changing to cope with the self-evaluation process.
- And the school is changing as a result of the self-evaluation.

Selfevaluation
and the
school as an
organization

An image of the school as an organization could look like this. It consists of structures, processes and culture:

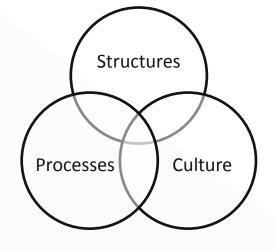
The organization's structure can be described as the frameworks in the organization, for example, the organizational model, management structure, working plans and distribution, meeting structure, etc.



The organization's processes can be described as movements and flows, such as **collaborative processes**, **strategies**, **decision processes**, **information flows**, **communication**.

The organization's culture can be described as the organization's self-understanding, for example values, norms, basic assumptions, conceptual understandings and roles.

Selfevaluation
and the
school as an
organization



A change in the organization - as the introduction of self-evaluation is — will have an effect on organization's structures, processes and culture.

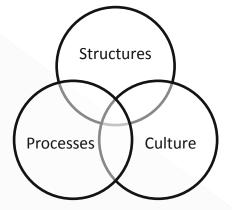
This we can learn by listening to the testimonies from schools that have chosen self-evaluation:

#### **New Structures:**

"We have changed our entire meeting structure".

"Self-evaluation led us to hiring a new head of department".





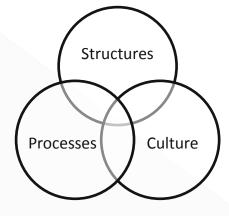
#### New collaborative processes:

"We have introduced peer-coaching and the opportunity to attend and coach each other in teaching and class management".

"There is now a closer and more direct cooperation between the board and the teachers as they work together on some of the topics"

"Teachers have been included in the work in groups, teams and individually. We are working with self-evaluation in all types of meetings".

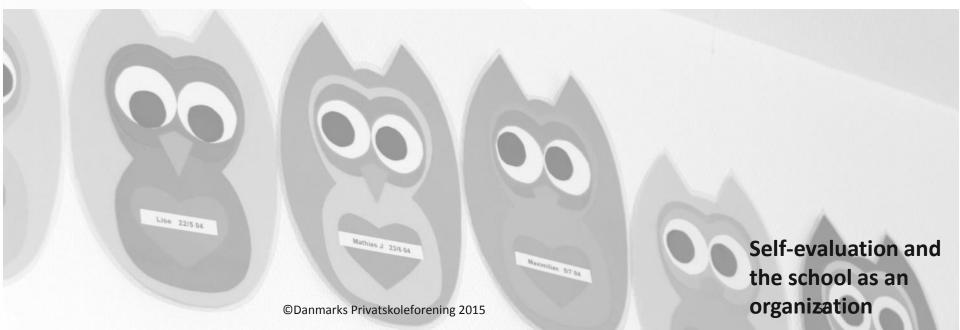
Self-evaluation and the school as an organization

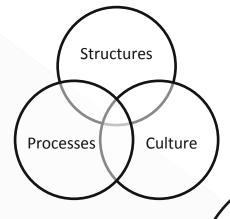


#### New workflows:

"Self-evaluation helps us in a more systematic way than in the past to put some things on the agenda in the management team and among teachers".

"Our development processes have become more transparent and systematic".

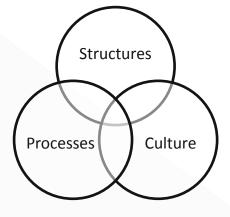




#### New forms of communication:

"Self-evaluation is a form of self-narrative. We discuss and describe our standard practice in a variety of areas". "The result of self-evaluation is available on the school website, this is a new communication channel for us".

Self-evaluation and the school as an organization



#### New cultures:

"Now it's suddenly okay to talk about each other's teaching".

"The basic values are brought up for discussion in a different way than before. Now more people are participants in the interpretation process".

"We did not have a culture of evaluation before we started on self-evaluation". Self-evaluation and the school as an organization 58

#### The effect of self-evaluation

As mentioned previously, The Ministry of Education has in the first months of 2015, evaluated the effects of the law, which was passed in 2010 on inspection of free independent schools.

The consulting firm Rambøll has carried out the evaluation for the Ministry.

This has led to interesting conclusions concerning the impact of self-evaluation.



The evaluation shows that schools generally are supportive of the benefits of selfevaluation.

89% of schools report that they in a high or very high degree experience that **self-evaluation supports the general work with the quality** of the school.

75% of schools report that they in a high or very high degree experience that **self-evaluation creates greater ownership of the inspection of the quality of teaching** (than what they have experienced in the past with an external inspector).

68% of schools report that they in a high or very high degree experience that **self-evaluation encourages teachers to evaluate, assess and adjust teaching** more than they did previously.

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The Rambøll Report

The Rambøll Report

The effect of self@evaluation

A headmasters opinion:

"Through self-evaluation, we forced ourselves to ask critical questions about our practices, critical issues that we avoided before because they were too difficult. It has become legitimate to say that what we do here is not good enough. Everyone can see it when we shine the light on it. Then we find a new way of doing things....".



Schools see positive to the effects of the law, which was passed in 2010 on inspection of free independent schools:

78% of schools report that they believe that **self-evaluation has strengthened the quality of the inspection** with the free independent schools.

75% of schools report that they believe that **self-evaluation has enhanced the quality assurance** of school education.

68% of schools report that they believe that **self-evaluation has increased transparency** in the inspection of the school education.

64% of schools report that they believe that **self-evaluation has increased school managements and the boards responsibility** for the school's core business.

The Rambøll Report

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The effect of selfevaluation

#### A board member's opinion:

"With the external inspectors' statement as a tool for the board, it is difficult to point to specific measurable and useful things. It is more a story of how the inspector has seen examples of teaching. It gave no overall picture. But you had to rely on the statement.

Self-evaluation is more structured, so it is easier for the board to ask about the results when each item is reviewed".



Case studies and focus group interviews show that there is general consensus that self-evaluation helps to promote the quality of teaching.

#### The respondents especially point out that self-evaluation:

- Complements the existing tools intended to ensure the quality of teaching.
- Ensure the quality of teaching in a in a systematic way, for example creating individual student plans, annual plans, curricula.
- Legitimizes the school management's professional conversations with teachers about their teaching and legitimize observation of teaching.
- Reduces the perception of observation of teaching as a control measure.
- Allows for discussions among school management and teachers, for example about "what is good teaching".
- Identifies challenges in the school in relation to the content and methods of teaching, teachers' skills, etc.

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#### A teacher's opinion:

"I quickly supported the idea to implement self-evaluation, because I personally think that involvement, openness and commitment among employees are more important than any inspector who comes to visit occasionally.

An external inspector is in my opinion the easy solution, but also the one where you do not learn anything.

There are so many development opportunities in self-evaluation, for example in relation to knowledge sharing and peer-review."

Both school management and teachers indicate that self-evaluation is meaningful when it has a development perspective and have a tangible impact on teaching, which ultimately leads to enhanced learning outcomes for students.



#### I advise schools in the various stages of self-evaluation:

#### **Decision Phase:**

Deciding between self-evaluation or external inspector

#### **Information Phase:**

- What is self-evaluation?
- How is the self-evaluation model constructed?

#### **Start-up phase:**

- How to introduce self-evaluation in the organization?
- Who should be involved in the self-evaluation process?
- What topics will be appropriate for the individual school to start with?
- How do you create an evaluation culture?
- How do you create ownership of the self-evaluation process?

#### **Ongoing phase:**

- How should individual elements of the selfevaluation model be interpreted?
- How can a school study and evaluate the different topics?
- How can schools communicate the results of the self-evaluation?



#### Essentially, I see it as a school association task:

To strength schools work with quality teaching

To inform about the possibility of self-evaluation

To develop the model

To advise schools that has chosen self-evaluation

To pass on the knowledge of self-evaluation and its effect

To preserve the ability to choose self-evaluation

To use self-evaluation results to lift various political issues



The free independent private schools conducting self-evaluation want to signal that they take care of and take responsibility for the quality of teaching.

As school organization we want to support them as much as we can because:

It is in society's interest to get educated skilled citizens who have the right skills and knowledge to succeed in the future.

It is an important political signal for the free independent school sector that we can produce good academic results, so we can get political and financial support for our project.

As a private school sector, we must compete with and provide an education at least as good as the public school.

Self-evaluation - a way off ensuring quality of teaching

But first and foremost because we - as private independent schools - take responsibility for the student's education when we welcome parents and students in our schools.

#### **Quality teaching!**

We owe it to parents and students!

