SV1 report

The aim of my visit in Wales was to find the answer to the following question: What can I do to improve the quality of teaching and working in my school?

The observation of good practices and sharing the experiences with teachers from partner schools and universities as well as learning new methods and some tools which are used to improve the quality of working in Welsh schools enriched my knowledge in this matter and encouraged reflection. All the collected data and the analysis of the materials were an inspiration to look carefully at my own workshop (as science teacher) and other different areas of school reality (as school principal).

Then, other general and more specific questions concerning my school arose:

* Is the quality of school work the result of the work of the principal, teachers and staff or does it depend on students’ potential?
* What are the differences between supervising teachers’ work in Wales and in my school? What are the other things that I can focus on while observing the lessons?
* How to support teachers on their way to professionalism?
* How to organize the learning process in our school to help our students learn effectively?
* To what extend are grades the motivation for our students to plan their own development and achieving better school results as a result?
* What information do the students get from their grades?

There are a lot of questions and we need time to find the answers. To do so and to watch the effects of implemented actions you need your own reflections. It is important to have as many people as possible involved in the process of thinking about teaching and learning. The best option is to have the whole school community involved in this process. That is the reason why during the teachers’ meeting the School No. 36 teachers were not only shown the study visit report. The exercise concerning assessment was presented as well. It was an impulse for self-reflection and for further deliberations about choices of important areas of school work on which we should focus (the supportive role of assessment in the process of learning or the ways of motivating students to learn effectively). The collection of all the documents from the Culture of Learning project was created so all the teachers have a constant and unlimited access to those materials. The teachers were also encouraged to share their experiences through “colleague lessons,” observations and professional dialogue while discussing them. From my own observations and talking to teachers and counselors who teach college students how to become good teachers I know that this kind of lesson is very beneficial because it allows sharing pedagogical experiences with other teachers. Lessons are presented as a way of improving teachers’ workshop and they take into account specific methods used in each group of subjects: humanistic, mathematical and scientific and linguistic. They give the opportunity to learn new or recall some of the previously learnt methods and to share insights. Those lessons are not only beneficial for those who observe them but also for the teacher conducting the lesson because they get feedback from the others. The teacher has an opportunity to analyze their actions and attitudes and to make changes if necessary. It is very encouraging that a few of those lessons have already been conducted and others are scheduled. I gladly participated in a few observations. Each of them provided constructive insights and conclusions. This form of professional development brings benefits both to the teachers who have just started their work and those with years of experience. We cannot forget about the students who benefit from those lessons too and for whom we organize the process of learning.

Because assessment is an important and necessary part of teachers’ work I would like to present a few conclusions about assessing students at school. Our own School Internal Assessment System describes the conditions and ways of assessing and promoting students but its most important role is to support students’ development. How should we act to honestly inform the students and their parents about their school achievements so the given information could be a basis for making decisions about student’s future? The students need information about their work and achievements. Students and their parents claim that the grade itself is not enough. How should the proper assessment look like so the students could use it in their process of learning? What to do to give proper feedback: What did the student do well? What should be improved and how? How should the student develop? Do they make progress? This will be the subject of my research in the nearest future.

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