From Lone Wolf to Team Player: Co-constructive Cooperation between Teachers in perLen Schools

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Research Problem: Schools with personalized learning concepts (perLen schools) develop their teaching based on didactics, organizational aspects, and the cooperation between teachers (Prain et al., 2015). Intensive and co-constructive cooperation is an important success factor in the development of teaching and schools (e.g. Bonsen & Frey, 2014). Co-constructive cooperation involves joint problem-solving by teachers who apply their individual knowledge to build up collective knowledge (e.g. Gräsel, Fußangel, & Pröbstel, 2006). This research is a part of perLen – a longitudinal research project on schools with personalized learning concepts in Switzerland.

Research Questions: (A) How far have teachers in perLen schools reported about co-constructive cooperation? (B) In which objects teachers are cooperating co-constructively in all perLen-schools?

Methods: The perLen research project used semi-structured guidance interviews in 10 case schools during three years to gain insights from school leaders (t1) and teachers (t1, t2, t3). The data is analyzed through a structural content analysis (Kuckartz, 2016). The code system was deductively constructed based on the forms of cooperation developed by Gräsel et al. (2006) and Keller-Schneider and Albisser (2013). It was also inductively adjusted.

(A) Types of Cooperation Reported by Teachers and School Leaders (Number of Coded Segments)
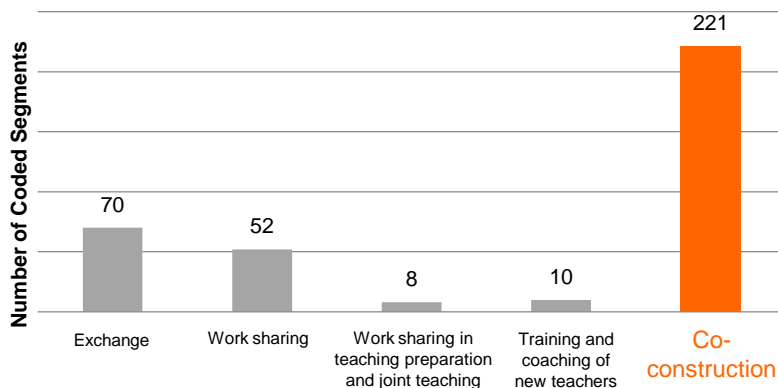
Note: One coded segment is a coherent textual passage of the transcribed interviews of five words that have been assigned to a code. The dataset includes a total of 361 coded segments.

(B) Co-Constructive Cooperation Objects of all PerLen-Schools

1) Planning, implementation, and evaluation of teaching and school development
2) Consense-making through the unification of teaching and learning forms, learning content, learning objectives, learning coaching, and evaluations
3) Discussion about pedagogical questions wherein the teachers deal with different perspectives and their own actions
4) Systematic discussion (e.g. collegial consulting) of the learning and social behavior of learners

Conclusion: In contrast to research findings on traditional schools (e.g. Gräsel et al., 2006), the interviewees report a high proportion of co-constructive cooperation. In addition, there are two central functions of co-constructive cooperation: (1) co-operation in day-to-day-teaching and (2) cooperation for teaching-centered school development. For both, competences are required, which are associated with a team player.

References

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