

# REFORMING PHYSICAL EDUCATION FROM THE BOTTOM UP – THE ART OF (MIDDLE) MANAGEMENT IN TIMES OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSITION

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## Aim

Physical Education (PE) continues to develop across the world – being informed by new ideas and going through phases of change (Thorburn, Jess and Atencio, 2011).

In Scandinavia a number of recent reforms have resulted in a rather decentralized model of curriculum management in relation to PE, together with a strengthened focus on learning outcomes and performance measures (Annerstedt, 2008). In one Scandinavian country, Denmark, such trends most probably will be consolidated even more via the implementation of the latest educational reform dealing with primary and lower secondary schooling.

## Theoretical background

Leadership and strong management will be needed at the local and individual school level to make the most of this process. An important component in optimizing the continued reform process is that middle managers (e.g. school principals and heads of department) have the ability to lead members of staff (e.g. teachers, pedagogues and technical staff) through periods of major organizational change. The basic benchmark for managers, as the ones mentioned, is whether they succeed in driving the reform forward by formulating overall objectives and aims in terms that makes sense and provides clarity for relevant groups of employees. The art is finding the right balance between promoting real changes and keeping the company – for instance the individual school - working. Middle managers are seen as the lynchpin of such change processes – because their performance is decisive for the level of alignment of local units with executive decisions (Lüscher and Lewis, 2008).

Against such a background this presentation deals with a particular *relation*, namely the one between employees and their immediate manager, in a particular stage of an organizational change process, namely *transition*. The article draws on theories from social- and organizational psychology and communication in relation to change and transition (Bridges, 2003; Rogers, 2003). Special attention is given to one particular social agent – so-called middle managers.

## Methodology

The methodological approach is similar to a systematic review – summarizing the available evidence on a given topic. Publications for final review are included on the basis of explicit criteria.

## Results and discussion

The ambition is to point out how the mentioned relation in the mentioned phase can promote or hamper further advancement of, in this case, an educational reform leading to a major restructuring of PE as an integral part of primary and lower secondary education in Denmark.

## References

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