

Author/Autor: Audunsdottir, Ingibjorg (ingibj@unak.is). University of Akureyri, Iceland

Title/Título: How can teachers and schools develop and improve their methods for better collaboration?

¿Cómo pueden los profesores y los centros docentes desarrollar y mejorar sus métodos para una mejor colaboración con los padres?

Topic: Strategies and methodologies to promote family-school-community partnership

Estrategias y metodologías para promover la cooperación entre las familias, los centros docentes y las entidades sociales comunitarias

Presentation time/Día de presentación: Session in English. Thursday 15, 4:00-5:30 p.m. Room 2, Third Floor

Sesión en Inglés. Jueves 15, 4:00-5:30 p.m. Sala 2, Tercer Piso

Abstract

What can be done when collaboration with parents is not the way it should be? This paper is about an action research that took place in a small school in northern Iceland. The study began in the spring 2002 and was completed in the spring of 2004. The developmental project was based on the ideas of Dr. Joyce L. Epstein. An action team was started right from the beginning. It included: school administrators, teachers, parents and pupils as well as myself, the researcher. This action team was responsible for the work process. It developed and organized the implementation of the collaboration which all the teachers of the school participated in. I, the researcher, had two roles: school consultant as well as researcher for the duration of the project. The first year of the study was used to collect data and to assess the existing collaboration between schools and families. After that the planning of the work schedule between the school, the families and the community started. The work schedule covered three years. While the developmental project was ongoing much discussion and project work took place between the school staff and parents. Many projects received very positive statements in the final assessment from parents and teachers. The projects that received most attention were the home visits from teachers to pupils, the work of attending teachers in the upper grades (8th to 10th) and positive statements about pupils. Formative and summative assessment showed that Epstein's working process is indeed applicable to Icelandic elementary schools that want to examine their collaboration with families and community and adjust it to the need of those involved.