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Chapter 8

Perspectives on accountability in education: local democracy versus national regulation

Jenny Gilbert, Pentti Moilanen & Sakari Saukkonen

Introduction

Neoliberal forms of accountability favour evaluation of schools and privilege ranking through performance indicators. A key international indicator is PISA (Programme for International Students Assessment; <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/>). It records the performance of 15/16 year olds in mathematics, reading and science and produces league tables of countries. Finland's PISA scores were high in 2009; although they dropped in 2012, they are well above OECD average. Scores for England, incorporated in UK figures, have remained at OECD average. Consequently, Finland has been held as an exemplar for English education, referenced frequently in the UK White Paper *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010). We should note that the population of England is roughly ten times that of Finland and the demographics of the two countries differ considerably; England is multi-ethnic and multicultural while Finland has a homogenous culture.

For our adopted methodology, we drew upon our experience of education as teacher educators in England and Finland. We exploited secondary sources to identify and explore factors holding teachers and schools to account in each national education system. We compared England's policy and practice with that of Finland. In the English case, we explored the types and governance of schools, the *National Curriculum*, the testing and inspection regime and the status of teachers. In the Finnish case, we investigated evaluation, national and local curricula and tests, the role of parents and the responsibility of the teaching profession. Following this analytical method, we adopted a synergistic approach to compare the two educational systems holistically (Checkland, 1981).

In Finland there is strong focus on the self-evaluation of schools and education providers, together with national evaluation of learning outcomes. There is an annual student test, either in mother tongue/literature or mathematics. The Ministry of Education and Culture evaluates other subjects and cross-curricular themes. Municipalities and schools receive their results for development purposes. In contrast, the inspection of English schools follows an approximately three yearly cycle, with poorly performing schools receiving annual inspections and schools judged against regularly modified inspection criteria. Schools are graded on the basis of classroom observations, staff meetings and prescribed data including test scores.

Results are made public. Inspectors are not expected to take a developmental role, although reports include recommendations for action.

Perspectives on accountability in England

To understand accountability in England we explore three features; the educational structure, the curriculum with its associated testing regime and thirdly, the inspection process. The educational structure, the school organization, its funding and governance form the landscape on which the accountability regime of testing and inspection is erected. Since the 1988 UK Education Reform Act (ERA) the structure of the English education system has experienced regular modification plus sporadic seismic shifts in direction, as a consequence of government directives. In England, one will find selective grammar schools, from the 1944 Education Act, comprehensive high schools dating from the 1960s and many academies established within the last five years. The academy project has radically changed the nature of the English system. As Finn (2015:5) says with regret:

No more would English education, as it had been since 1870, be a national system locally administered.

Students are registered for qualifications that are constantly adjusted and occasionally transformed, making comparison of 16 year olds' performance between year groups difficult. Nevertheless, schools' examination results are compared across regions, between schools and over time. These statistics alongside schools' inspection outcomes are used, ostensibly, to provide parents with the market information to make choices. This appears to be evidence of democratic process.

School structure and organisation

Until 1993 all maintained schools, primary and secondary, were controlled by the local authority (LA), funded and overseen locally. The prevalent model was the comprehensive secondary school with 164 selective grammar schools remaining from the previous 'tripartite' system (Eleven plus exams, 2016). Under ERA legislation, Local Management of Schools allowed schools to manage aspects of their budget or to convert to Grant Maintained status and opt out of LA control. Few schools converted to this status and the new Labour Government abolished them in 1998. A similar Conservative Government initiative, City Technology Colleges were sponsored by private companies; few sponsors came forward and only 15 remained when the government changed in 1997. The legislation, however, endured and was used by the Labour Government to establish City Academies (Chitty, 2014). These sponsored academies were replacements for failing schools; by 2010 there were 203 (BBC News: Education and family, 2015a). The incoming Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government of 2010 embraced the term academy and modified the character slightly (Chitty, 2014) claiming them as the schools of the future. Any

school can now elect to become a convertor academy, although priority is given to those graded ‘outstanding’. In June 2015 (BBC News: Education and family, 2015a) there were 4,676 academies with several hundred more anticipated; currently more than half of secondary schools are academies. They are funded directly from central government and have certain freedoms not awarded to maintained schools. They need not teach the *National Curriculum* nor appoint qualified teachers, though most choose to do so (DfE, 2016). They can set their own term dates and teaching day and can determine some admission criteria. Under the academy model it is also possible to establish a new ‘free’ school, normally founded by parents or faith groups.

LAs retain the responsibility for the remaining maintained schools within their area and for managing school admissions. Given the powers devolved to academies the LA has limited control over school numbers and cannot influence the location of a new free school. This has led to mismatches between the supply and demand of school places in some regions. Financial cuts after 2010, together with the reduction in maintained schools, has resulted in the disappearance of LA subject advisors. Despite the appointment in September 2014 of Regional School Inspectors to monitor academy performance and support poorly performing academies, the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (2015:3) expressed concerns that the DfE ‘...presides over a complex and confused system of external oversight.’

While exploring the state system of education, one cannot omit the influence of the independent (fee-paying) sector that includes prestigious English public schools. While the proportion of children attending independent schools is small, 5.3 percent (the Independent, 2015) their alumni are more likely to attend elite universities. The high proportion of members of parliament with a public school education and an Oxbridge degree is testament to the conundrum at the heart of the British widening participation project.

The case for the creation of academies is threefold: increased autonomy for the school, school improvement, and increased market choice for parents. While academy status does afford greater autonomy, many schools are nervous about changing status, for they are still measured by the same performance indicators as maintained schools. For example, they tend to adopt the *National Curriculum*. It is too early to judge whether the change of status does lead to school improvement. While parents have a 95 percent chance of gaining a school place at one of their first three school choices, their first choice cannot be guaranteed. In 393 schools, pupils will only be accepted if they live within 500 metres of the school (BBC News: Education and family, 2015c). It is not uncommon, particularly when families move, for their children to attend different primary schools. The rhetoric of market choice does not match up to the reality and the transfer of schools’ accountability from the LA to the state has attenuated the local democratic process (West et al, 2011).

Curriculum

The *National Curriculum*, also introduced under the 1988 ERA, provided the platform upon which accountability through inspection could be constructed. Kelly (1994:1) describes the preceding report that spells out the aims of a common curriculum to:

...develop the potential of all pupils and equip them for the responsibilities of citizenship and for the challenges of employment in tomorrow's world (DES, 1987a:2).

A common curriculum aimed to raise standards, match competitor countries, ensure that all pupils experienced a broad and balanced curriculum and have equal access to a '...good and relevant curriculum' (Chitty, 2014:2). Crucially, it would ensure that schools were accountable and parents could judge the progress of their child against national targets. The ERA also set up a Task Group on Assessment and Testing that recommended criterion based assessment to serve multiple purposes (DES, 1987b). It would be formative and diagnostic, enabling teachers to judge the next steps for pupils; be summative to record pupils' progress systematically; and be evaluative. Teachers were already using assessment for such purposes, but crucially a national testing regime allowed comparison of schools and LAs across the country.

The *National Curriculum* was accompanied by many documents and directives, generating a new language: key stages, attainment targets, levels of attainment, SATs. Pupils were tested at ages seven, 11, 14 and 16, using Standard Attainment Tests (SATs), with the final stage judged by GCSE examination. Initially tests were held and reported at all four stages, but in 2008 a fiasco with outsourcing the marking of the age 11 SATs led to the re-marking of many of the papers (Chitty, 2014) and was a factor in the abolition of SATs for 14 year olds. SATs for 7 year olds were replaced with teacher testing though recently there have been intimations of reinstatement. The *National Curriculum* was introduced under a Conservative Government and the Labour Government (1997) intervened further and launched *the National Strategies for Numeracy and Literacy*. With these initiatives we see a shift from defining what will be taught, to determining how it will be taught. Perhaps the most radical example is the obligation, introduced in 2010, to teach reading using Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP; Childs, 2013), a prescriptive method accompanied by several competing commercial reading schemes. This initiative has been policed through Ofsted inspection of primary schools and initial teacher training providers. In 2010 one university was given a fail grade and one of the recommendations was to ensure that all trainee teachers could teach effectively using SSP.

Alongside the *National Curriculum*, there have been constant changes within the national secondary examination system. Students are often 'guinea pigs' as new qualifications are introduced. Comparison of performance across cohorts becomes problematic. A recent development is the judgement of a school's performance using

the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc) that measures the percentage of 16 year olds obtaining grades A*- C in English, Mathematics, Science, a foreign language and a humanity. Ebacc is not a qualification, ‘... merely an additional device for measuring and ranking school performance’ (Burn, 2015:55). Not only has this led to ranking of subjects but it can generate prudent selection of pupils to study Ebacc subjects, denying those unlikely to achieve a C grade access to the subject.

Inspection

Until the early nineties, inspection of schools was carried out in a low key manner by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate (Chitty, 2014). Inspection was privatised under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and Ofsted was created as an independent body to inspect schools (Earley, 1998). Secondary schools were the first to be inspected in 1993 (West, Mattel and Roberts (2011). From the outset the initial Chief Inspector of Schools, Chris Woodhead, assumed a high profile in the media, making statements that were not greeted well by teachers (Earley, 1998). The current Chief Inspector, Sir Michael Wilshaw, appointed in 2012, also courts attention and can be critical of teachers, although he is currently stating that there is problem with teacher supply hence disagreeing with Department for Education statements (The Guardian: education, 2015). Until recently inspections were outsourced, however, in September 2015 this was brought in-house. In the process only 60 percent of the 3000 inspectors were re-appointed (BBC News: Education and family, 2015b). This led to cries of a purge, suggestions that inspectors had been substandard and Ofsted inspections unsound.

In 2012 the Ofsted framework for inspection of schools, further education and initial teacher training was radically changed with a shift to a risk-based approach. The previous ‘satisfactory’ grade was reclassified as ‘requires improvement’ thus joining ‘inadequate’ as a fail grade. Associated with this were tougher conditions; teacher training providers graded ‘requires improvement’ are re-inspected the following year and de-accredited if they are not graded good or outstanding (Gilbert, 2013). This has resulted in the closure of several universities’ teacher training provision. Meanwhile ‘outstanding’ providers are inspected less frequently, though a poor performance indicator can trigger inspection. Adjustments to judgment criteria and shorter notice of an inspection visit have accompanied this change. Schools are informed the day before the visit and universities are informed on Thursday for an inspection the following week. In just over a working day the university must set up meetings of university and school staff and contact placement schools to arrange for students to be observed. This visit does not form the sole judgement of the university. During school inspections newly qualified teachers are observed and their performance is linked to the university that trained them, this can impact on the grade and timing of the University’s next inspection. School performance tables and Ofsted grade are published online and most estate agents link each house to the local schools, an indicator of the importance of school location in England. While heads of academies

have greater autonomy than their colleagues in maintained schools their choices are still guided by these ‘powerful external mechanisms’ (Harris & Burn, 2011). The panopticon of accountability and inspection operates under the guiding principle that regular revision of procedures and standards will lead to school improvement. The result is that schools and universities spend a high proportion of their time responding to the bureaucracy associated with new rules.

From 2016/17 secondary schools will be judged by a new accountability measure, entitled Progress 8. It is a value-added method whereby pupils’ performance, from entering to leaving secondary school, is compared. A 33 page booklet (DfE, 2016) describes a complex system that allows each school to generate a grade. The new indicator aims to encourage schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum but it may produce unintended side effects when combined with existing indicators. The individual student can suffer in the pursuit of overall school success. Through Progress 8 the UK seeks to rise up the PISA tables, seen as an important indicator of global economic standing. England has moved from the meritocracy of a post war binary, selective education with an elite university system, to a widening participation agenda accompanied by mass higher education. The purpose of education will always be contested, but there is no doubting the primacy of the economic demands of the workforce and the emphasis on ‘...harnessing knowledge to wealth creation’ (Chitty, 2014:208).

Teacher professionalism, parents and school councils

In Finland the element of trust in teachers’ judgement is writ large although Hannus and Simola (2010) argue that national level control over teachers is emerging in the form of a centralized national curriculum. The status of teachers in England is lower than those in Finland and many other countries. Teachers’ individual autonomy has diminished over the years with the advent of a national curriculum and a constricting inspection regime. Its lowest ebb was the period (2010-2015) when Michael Gove was Secretary of State for Education. Teachers were regularly criticised and blamed for most of the social ills of the country. Gove reserved his most severe criticism for the group he labelled the ‘Blob’ and ‘enemies of promise’; it included so-called militants within the teaching unions and academics running teacher training courses in universities (Simons, 2015).

Under the 1997-2010 Labour government, there was a growth in policy agencies (Hodgson & Spour, 2006). One of these agencies, the General Teaching Council for England, was the professional body for teaching from 1998. It required teachers in maintained schools to register and it awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). It was abolished in 2012 and many of its responsibilities transferred to the Teaching Agency, an executive agency of the DfE (Lightman, 2015). Shortly afterwards, a set of professional standards for teachers was introduced that includes expectations of trainee teachers. These designated standards allow the university and school training a

student teacher to judge their ability to teach. Unlike most European countries, including Finland, where graduates register for a two year masters programme in order to become teachers, English graduates take a one year Post-graduate Certificate in Education, two thirds of which is spent in school placement giving limited opportunity to engage with educational theory or pedagogical development. In 2012 'School Direct', a new system to train teachers was introduced; applicants are recruited to a school and the school selects a university with which to work. This is a continuing move away from university trained teachers to school trained teachers.

We complete this section on accountability in English education by considering parental influence. School Governing Bodies have a strategic role that includes monitoring and evaluating schools. They have been part of the educational landscape for many years and include teacher, parent and community representatives. The Education and Inspection Act 2006 introduced Parent Councils but they have not been popular and remain similar to long-standing Parent Teacher Associations, mainly fund raising bodies. School Councils that include elected student representatives are commonplace even in primary schools and are a useful way to encourage students to engage in the democratic process.

Perspectives on accountability and evaluation in Finland

The neo-liberal reform wave includes accountability and assessment practices. The majority of industrialized nations carry out school inspections. They form the core of integrated education policies in several countries; the OECD reported in 2011 that inspections are implemented in 24 of 31 countries (Rönnerberg, 2014). The State of Texas was a pioneer in using school measurement and incentive devices and many European countries, such as England, have followed this path (Christophersen et al, 2010). Finland, however, has taken a different route. Until the early 1990s, school inspection in Finland was administered by regional authorities; then municipalities were given more autonomy and responsibility. This led to the current situation where schools have considerable freedom in determining curriculum content and employing distinctive pedagogical practices. An ethos of autonomy and trust has replaced the shadow of inspection (Sahlberg, 2011). However, following the perceived collapse of the PISA results in 2012 (Sahlberg, 2015) there have been demands for more direct control of schooling (Hannus & Simola, 2010). However, no new educational policy has emerged but there have been public funding cuts and increasing stress on competitiveness and excellence (Simola, 2005).

A de-centralized Finnish school system does not mean a lack of quality assurance, performance evaluation and accountability. While no overall body holds responsibility, the Finnish Education Evaluation Center is an independent government agency responsible for the national evaluation of education (<http://karvi.fi/en/>). It carries out large-scale evaluation studies and case studies focused on different fields. In addition, many municipalities carry out their own evaluations and there is a

marginal market for consultancy firms assessing the current state of schooling. Additionally, the National Board of Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture have much to say. There has never been standardized large-scale testing in Finland, with the exception of the traditional matriculation examination at the end of upper secondary school. Over the decades trust has been invested in the country's highly qualified teachers, judging them effective professionals capable of ensuring that pupils reach learning goals without the imposition of national inspection procedures. It is often stated that Finnish schooling as a whole is based on trust (Sahlberg, 2011; 2015).

Alternative mechanisms of accountability

While the neo-liberal inspection and testing culture has not reached the shores of Finland there are accountability mechanisms in place. The World Bank recently published a country report on school autonomy and accountability in Finland (World Bank, 2012); it identified five different aspects of autonomy and accountability. The five categories are interdependent, and form three composite categories: participation of the school council in school governance; assessment of school and student performance; and school accountability. These categories describe the landscape of Finnish evaluation systems and accountability processes.

Parents have access to school management *via* school councils. While theoretically this gives them the potential to evaluate and influence schooling, the report states and we Finns know well, that school councils have a minor role. They do not track and evaluate schools or teachers. From an accountability perspective, the school council seldom interviews the teachers or principals. The council is more like a discussion forum for those rare parents willing to take part in school governance.

With regard to assessment the *World Bank Report* (2012) states that Finland has well-organized and well-functioning systems for assessing school and student performance based on trust. Individual schools and teachers have considerable freedom to choose appropriate methods to assess their students. This freedom is set within a framework of national and municipal protocols and instructions. Nonetheless, there is variation in assessment practice and this is accepted. The national core curriculum outlines performance criteria for each grade and subject, but there is no common test taken by students. Student and teacher discuss how a student might meet these criteria and sometimes parents are involved. In this kind of evaluation climate, it is unsurprising to find that only 15 percent of schools are annually inspected (World Bank, 2012).

Evaluation mechanisms do have an effect on Finnish schooling; there is a tradition of periodic sampling of learning outcomes. Evaluations are carried out nationally by the National Board of Education and the Finnish Education Evaluation Center. Meanwhile, the Finnish Institute for Educational Research has developed its profile as 'the home of PISA-studies'. In the Finnish domestic debate over education the "PISA-

card” is frequently played and PISA evaluations influence the way schools position themselves. Official national statistics are gathered and municipalities have their own mechanisms for evaluating schools. So according to the World Bank report schools’ accountability to stakeholders is well established in Finland (World Bank, 2012). Nevertheless competition and a market approach have arrived. Parents are showing interest in a school’s status and when they can choose a school for their children, then we see greater differentiation of performance, ethnicity, and socio-economical background in schools (Hannus & Simola, 2010).

Teachers perceive their work as wide-ranging, set within the context of the Finnish welfare state, a relatively homogenous population, and an isolated and oddly self-sufficient culture. This span embraces collective nation building, includes pride over achievements in the fields of technology, sports, and culture and, perhaps most importantly, the idea of ‘leaving no Finn behind’. Our actions are not only for individual success but for the success of all Finns; that is why every child, pupil and student really does matter. As competition and demand for excellence is on the rise the question is how long can this ethos persist?

National core curriculum and local curricula

The Finnish Board of Education is legally responsible for establishing the common foundation for Finnish schooling. We have a national core curriculum for all stages from pre-school to upper secondary education. Most of the key aspects of schooling like the subjects taught, minimum and maximum number of school hours and general guidelines for pedagogy are prescribed. However, there is freedom for local municipalities to refine that curriculum. Basic education in Finland is organized along comprehensive lines; it comprises grades 1 to 9 with a slight distinction between primary level (grades 1 to 6) and lower secondary level (grades 7 to 9) (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). This distinction is diminishing and is not as clear and straightforward as it was once. After basic education almost all students apply either for a general upper secondary school or a vocational school. Because of the nature of the national core curriculum, every municipality, and normally every school, needs to produce a local curriculum and many schools join forces and produce a joint curriculum with limited variation to satisfy different needs and abilities in the schools involved in the co-production. This local curriculum is based on each community’s premise, needs and resources. Theoretically, there can be significant variation in the translation of subject content into pedagogical action. In practice, the national core curriculum is followed for many aspects.

High quality academic teachers – fact or fantasy

Pupils in grades 1 to 6 are taught mainly by class teachers whose major subject at university is educational science; meanwhile grade 7 to 9 pupils are taught by subject teachers who have majored in their teaching subject. Subject teacher qualifications to

teach grades 7 to 9, and general upper secondary school, include a Masters degree incorporating at least 60 ECTS credits of pedagogical studies and a thesis (Räihä et al, 2012). While comprehensive schoolteachers in all grades belong to the same academic profession and claim to share the same concepts and theories of education as their professional foundation, Räihä et al. (2012) claim that teachers are often unable to define what is meant by the ambiguous concept of theory, let alone explain how it underpins their work. Although Finnish teachers form an integrated academic profession, this does not mean that Finnish teaching is always based on educational theory. Practical didactics and everyday wisdom play a significant part in teaching (Räihä et al, 2012). We have a paradox: in Finland we rely heavily on the competence of teachers, and this is the main reason for the culture of trust. However, this confidence may arise from a strong tradition of school and teacher involvement in nation building (Simola, 2005) rather than being grounded in teachers' academic expertise.

Accountability - a relevant concept in Finland

To conclude our brief journey into accountability in Finnish schooling, we reach some tentative conclusions. In the light of the Finnish welfare state and the political constellation surrounding the school system, we contest the notion of accountability. More suitable concepts could be responsibility and trust. Accountability in the Finnish context relies heavily on our welfare state heritage. We have built a culture based on the collective perception that we are all in this together. In principle all Finns are rowing in the same direction. This is enabled by the homogenous population and culture, and we Finns tend to obey laws and feel safe within hierarchies (Simola, 2005). In this context we believe that we are taking action for ourselves and for society. If, as teachers, we take responsibility it is because we believe it is for the best, for the children, for us and for the nation. In a school culture where trust is a central pillar, teachers can feel pride and joy when acting as responsible citizens.

During the last few decades, evaluation and ranking systems have been introduced in Finland, as in many other OECD and EU countries. This 'Big Brother' mentality is lurking around the corner and may even have entered the halls of education. However, we contend that in Finnish schooling the notion of accountability has a soft, even tender, interpretation. There may be change as political power and balance fluctuates but we do not see a rapid change in the basic assumptions underlying Finnish schooling. It is possible to do a good job, have high quality teaching and learning, without inspecting each small aspect, without large scale standardized testing and without centralized, in many cases ritualistic, quality assurance and accountability systems.

Comparative views from Sweden, Norway and Australia

Finland's Scandinavian neighbours have chosen different paths in terms of accountability mechanisms. In Sweden school inspection was reintroduced in 2003, after a period of soft self-evaluation. Since 2008, inspection has been carried out by a separate agency, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Lindgren, 2015). Inspection activities consist of four processes: regular supervision; thematic quality audits; licences and applications; and certification of complaints. In the Swedish case the usage and production of knowledge is seen as a high-stakes matter for schools. Reputation and economy are at risk and credibility in inspection activities is crucial. It is evident that policy makers place confidence in inspection as an instrument of government (Rönnerberg, 2014). In contrast the Norwegian attitude towards accountability is more familiar to Finns. Turbulence surrounds Norway's policy with pressure to adopt more intensive accountability procedures. Norway has been a reluctant reformer, but during the early 2000s accountability tools emerged in education; including tests, value added indicators, publication of school results and decentralization of governing body responsibility (Christophersen et al, 2010). Accountability systems have not been approved for the Norwegian education sector but accountability devices are in operation through Norway's local quality assurance systems. As a whole the Finnish accountability system with decentralized bodies of responsibility is much closer to Norway than to Sweden.

Australia's legacy as a British colony leads to similarities between the Australian and English education systems. However, in Australia there are more fee-paying schools including Catholic independent schools that are heavily subsidised by state and federal government (Australian Education Union, 2015). Australia's 2012 PISA scores ranked higher than the UK though lower than Finland. However the PISA data for Australia also reveals very poor performance by one particular group, the indigenous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Dreise & Thompson, 2014). Australian education has been shaped by neo-liberalism and market choice though it is some way behind the UK. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA, 2015) developed the national curriculum in 2008 (O'Meara, 2011), together with the national assessment programme and national tests that include the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). Since 2010 outcomes from these sources have been reported alongside socio-economic data about schools on the My School website (ACARA, 2015). This data is publicly available; parents can refer to it to aid selection of a school for their child. In cities this has resulted in the enlargement of school catchment areas and some secondary pupils traveling long distances to school. However schools are no longer inspected. Surprisingly, in 2009 Australian teacher unions (The Australian, 2009) proposed a return to the earlier system of state level inspection asserting that the compilation of league table alone stigmatises schools.

Conclusions

In comparing Finland and England we have identified contrasting approaches to accountability. On the one hand, in Finland we have a devolved approach to curriculum development and evaluation, with local autonomy and democracy. Teaching is a high status profession warranting a high degree of trust; teachers receive a longer education with more emphasis on theoretic and pedagogic study. Finland has greater social cohesion and social justice. On the other hand, in England we have a prescriptive, centralist approach to curricula with instances of government intervention. We have national testing and high stakes inspection processes alongside publication of performance indicators. As a result of these factors, exacerbated by changing models for teacher education, we have a lower status workforce and difficulty recruiting to certain subjects and posts.

Governments like to ‘cherry pick’ aspects from countries scoring highly in PISA and add them to their solutions. This approach generates unintended consequences because the system is not considered holistically. One method of acknowledging the importance of an integrated system is to adopt a metaphor to describe it. One metaphor, that illustrates the two education systems, is likening the English system to the mass production of widgets and the Finnish system to craft manufacturing. To ensure consistency in English mass production the product is strictly specified with routine quality control measures; faulty goods are melted down and recycled. The workforce receive adequate training for repetitive conveyor belt production and there is a resulting high turnover of staff. Most of the population buy the mass-produced product but a small percentage buy a product elsewhere. Meanwhile, in the artisan craft practice of Finland, the professionals are well trained and well paid, they input to the design of products, they self-evaluate and constantly improve their outputs. Their product is inevitably more expensive but customers recognise the quality of a local artefact created by an experienced, professional expert.

England represents the epitome of the global education reform movement, stressing testing of literacy and numeracy, competition between schools and market mechanisms in education (Lingard, Martino and Rezaei-Rashti, 2013; Sahlberg 2010) whereas Finland has contrasting policies. Education systems comprise multiple components and stakeholders; causal mechanisms are difficult to discern, the key outputs that emerge at the level of the whole system, the emergent properties (Checkland, 2000; Lingard & Sellar, 2013) are often unintended consequences. There are anecdotes of English schools turning down less able pupils on the ground that ‘this isn’t a suitable school for them’ when the school wishes to maintain its high performance indicators. Goal displacement, teaching to the test and cheating are other side effects (Lingard & Sellar, 2013; Wolf & Janssens, 2007). The nature of the indicators is of crucial importance. When funding and reputation are tied to performance measures there can be perverse results (Lingard & Sellar, 2013). Although public performance indicators aim to guarantee educational quality poor school grades result in mediocre reputations, and cause those parents who can, to avoid the school. Under right wing market mechanisms this is encouraged; parents

lacking social and cultural capital are much less likely to be in a position to move their children, enabling ‘sink schools’ to emerge.

West, Mattel and Roberts (2011) propose a typology of accountability comprising professional, hierarchical and market. Other writers use similar models contrasting comparative, top-down, one-dimensional (hierarchical), accountability with horizontal (professional) accountability of schools to their communities and *vice versa*. Professional accountability considers the wider community context, and the purpose of schooling, while hierarchical accountability focuses narrowly on what happens within schools and denies the impact of structural inequality, laying all responsibility at the feet of teachers (Lingard et al, 2013). Market accountability, based on test scores and inspection grades, has replaced more educative, professional accountability in many countries (Hardy, 2015; Lingard et al, 2013).

There are, of course, unwanted systemic side effects in the Finnish case. The quality of evaluations within municipalities varies and national evaluations are not always followed up (Committee for Education and Culture of the Finnish Parliament, 2002 cited in Simola et al, 2013). Lapiolahti (2007) states that municipalities have different starting points and there is inadequate support for their evaluations. The provision of in-service teacher training and encouragement for pedagogical development demands additional resources. Unsurprisingly, education officers within municipalities, wish to retain autonomy over schooling in their district (Rannisto and Liski, 2014). However, most municipal education strategies focus on curriculum content and knowledge transmission; pedagogical development and the learning experience are scarcely mentioned (Rannisto and Liski, 2014). These critical comments imply that good results in international evaluations are not the result of the pedagogy of Finnish schools. According to Sahlberg (2010) it is the emphasis on social justice and the moral purpose of schooling that influences the outcomes of education. Social justice includes having high educational expectations of all children.

Finally, we should ask what level and type of accountability is appropriate to a democratic society. The government of a nation state is held to account through the ballot box. However, key public services should also be accountable. In a neo-liberal society many of these public services are privatized but nevertheless these services must still be accountable. In England the education system is strictly held to account through performance indicators and inspection, league tables and ‘naming and shaming’. Teachers and school management, held to account, spend much time calculating how best to manipulate their performance indicators in a competitive system, resulting in unwanted side effects for their students. Meanwhile the Finnish system respects local democracy and uses evaluation to feed back to individual schools so that they can use the data to formulate actions. The English system is transparent yet focuses on employing ‘the stick rather than the carrot’. The Finnish system yields much better PISA results. ‘Cherry picking’ odd elements of the Finnish system, as proposed in the UK *White Paper* (DfE, 2010), assumes cause and effect

without evidence to support the relationship. Instead, by taking a systems approach, exploring means of accounting to the citizens within two entirely different cultures we reveal one based on professionalism and trust and the other relying on transparent, repetitive quality control. If the English wish to emulate the Finns, it will demand a culture change.

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