
Editorial: Policies for ICT integration in the Northern European countries

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The continuous invasion of more and more advanced technology in schools and training departments has caused increasing concern about its real integration in teaching and learning practices. In many western countries there is an ongoing trend to shifting national educational policies to the regional or even the institutional level.

On the one hand this means the immediate evaporation of missionary zeal like approaches to convince and stimulate schools to further adopt ICT (Information and Communication Technologies). On the other hand it means that school organizations themselves face the continuous challenge of deciding the direction and speed of integrating new media in schools. Some of the national authorities already tend to favour this '*laissez-faire*' approach and start for instance large projects in telematics to further encourage the penetration of 'open and flexible learning projects'. This will bring school organizations into the arena of being calculating entrepreneurs; which begs the question: does ICT essentially increase the quality and the efficiency of teaching and learning?

At the level of teachers and training managers the dominant question is whether or not ICT reduces time pressure and logistic complexity.

It is clear so far that hardware, software and even curriculum-integrated ICT do not provide the entire solution. The reason we decided to sketch a countrywide view of ICT policies is that it shows a wide variety of issues to be aware or ever cautious of as a consequence of ICT integration. We may learn from this diversity and even bring the international community of ICT proponents into a virtual learning organization.

We would like to thank Mrs. Neli Stoyanova who devoted a great deal of time and effort to stimulate the authors to express delicately formulated characterizations on their countries' conduct in respect to ICT in schools.

We look forward to seeing your reactions and conclusions in the many international conferences to come.

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