Extended Teams in vocational education:
Slow starters but worth the wait

Marco Mazereeuw (NHL)
Susan McKenney (UT/OU)
Iwan Wopereis (OU)

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Introduction

• Connections between student workplace learning and formal education is a source of frustrations
• Multiple causes and often related to communication problems
• Extended Teams (ETs) are seen as a potential solution for the connection problems (Nieuwenhuis, Nijman, Kat-De Jong, De Ries, & Van Vijfeijken, 2011)
• ET: vocational teachers and workplace supervisors share responsibility for the quality of education and thus cross boundaries

This study

• Searches for knowledge about the performance of ETs on a micro-level
• Followed five ETs during their three years of collaboration
• Focuses on changes over time:  
  – How the teams perform  
  – How individual team members are influenced
• Contributes to knowledge on how such teams can be supported in and outside their organisations
Theoretical framework

Team development

- In team relationships, collaboration and shared views
  - Communities of practice (Brouwer et al., 2012; Wenger, 1998; also see Wenger-Trayner et al., 2015)

Professional development

- In knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and activities of its members
  - Professional growth (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; also see Beverborg, Sleegers & Van Veen, 2015)

Dimensions of team development

(Brouwer et al., 2012)

- Relationships and interactions (*mutual engagement*)
  - Identifying with team members and activities;
  - Allowing multiple perspectives;
  - Sharing responsibilities;
  - Realising social ties;
- Repertoire in collaboration (*shared repertoire*)
  - Building on each others contributions;
  - Regulating interactions;
  - Role taking and the degree of flexibility;
- Collective understanding (*joint enterprise*)
  - Agreement about the domain and objectives;
  - Having a common ground in concepts;
  - Using agreed upon / each others knowledge.
Professional growth
(Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002)

External domain

External source of information or stimulus

Personal domain

Knowledge, beliefs and attitudes

Domain of practice

Professional experimentation

Salient outcomes

Domain of consequence

Enactment
Reflection

Research question

How do ETs and their members function during the three years of cooperation?

• In which dimensions of team functioning do ETs exhibit changes during the three years of cooperation?
• What is the nature of these changes?

• In which domains of professional growth do team members exhibit individual professional growth during the three years of cooperation?
• What is the nature of these changes?
Selection and procedures

- Multiple case studies (Yin, 2009):
  - Ten meetings in the project (4, 3, 3)
    - ETs shaped their educational interventions and evaluation through workshops and team discussions
    - Led by trainers / researchers of the project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Secondary Vocational Education (SVE)</th>
<th>Higher Vocational Education (HVE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Edu-SVE</td>
<td>Edu-HVE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Eco-SVE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Tec-SVE</td>
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Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Dimensions of team functioning</th>
<th>Domains of professional growth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire (Q)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview with individual team members (II)</td>
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<td>Focus group interview with each team (FI)</td>
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<td>Team conversations during meetings (TC)</td>
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Year one: Q II FI
Year two: Q II FI
Year three: Q TC TC TC
Analysis team functioning

- Primary codes: assigning dimensions of team functioning to meaningful units
- Clustering units per code, per team, per year
- Axial coding: assigning indicators to units
- Valuing per indicator of the dimensions (↓→↑)
- Searching for patterns in changes

Analysis professional growth

- Primary codes: assigning domains and relationships (reflection / enactment)
- Clustering units per code, per team member, per year
- Axial coding: searching for changes in answers to similar questions
- Searching for patterns in changes of different team members
Results

• Team functioning: changes in
  – *Mutual engagement* (relationships and interactions)
  – *Shared repertoire* (in collaboration)
  – *Joint enterprise* (collective understanding)

• Professional growth: changes in enactment and reflection on
  – *External domain*
  – *Personal domain*
  – *Domain of practice*
  – *Domain of consequence*

Mutual engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Identifying with team</th>
<th>Allowing multiple perspectives</th>
<th>Sharing responsibilities</th>
<th>Realising social ties</th>
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</table>

• Overall development in mutual engagement is visible
• Especially ‘allowing multiple perspectives’ displays growth
• Perspectives appear to be context-bound (school-workplace)
Shared repertoire

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building on contributions</th>
<th>Regulating interactions</th>
<th>(Flexible) role taking</th>
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- Overall little development in a shared repertoire
- The regulation of interactions barely develops
- Besides this, regulations strongly depends on the project organisation
- Responsibility of the regulation seems to depend on the context (school-workplace)

Joint enterprise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement on domain and objectives</th>
<th>Common ground in Concept</th>
<th>Agreement on the use of knowledge</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Overall development in joint enterprise is visible
- Specifically agreement on domain and objectives develops slowly but sustained
- Particularly practical and context specific concepts and knowledge are being shared
Project provides knowledge about workplace learning

Changes in perspective on other context, own share and the complexity of the relationship school and workplace
Professional growth

- Project provides knowledge about interventions and research
- External source of information or stimulus
- Domain of practice
- Professional experimentation
- Enactment and reflection in ET!
- External domain
- Knowledge, beliefs and attitudes
- Personal domain
- Changes in perspective about student performances in “the other context”

Professional growth

- Project stimulates sharing the results of research
- External source of information or stimulus
- Domain of practice
- Professional experimentation
- Enactment and reflection in ET!
- External domain
- Knowledge, beliefs and attitudes
- Personal domain
- Changes in perspective about student performances and feasibility
- Domain of consequence
Conclusions team development

- Overall development in **mutual engagement** is visible
- Especially ‘allowing multiple perspectives’ displays growth
- Perspectives appear to be context-bound

- Overall little development in a **shared repertoire**
- The regulation of interactions develops barely.
- Besides this, regulations strongly depend on the project organisation
- Responsibility of the regulation seems to depend on the context

- Overall development in **joint enterprise** is visible
- Specifically agreement on domain and objectives develops slowly but sustained
- Particularly practical and context specific concepts and knowledge are being shared
Conclusions professional growth

• Future enactment based on reflection is especially stimulated by experiences in the own context
• However, experiences in the ETs also influence the reflection and eventually the enactment of team members. This can result in changes in:
  – perspective on the other context and their own share;
  – student performances in “the other context”;
  – student performances and feasibility;
  – obstacles possibilities in the own organisation.

Discussion

How can ETs be supported in their struggle to cross boundaries?

Please feel free to share your opinion.
I will respond with experiences and lessons learned from our project