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Perceptions of Technology Education. A cross-case study of teachers realising technology as a new subject of teaching.

Department of Physics, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway.

Abstract

The thesis reports a cross-case study of how a sample of Norwegian teachers participating in a curriculum development project (Teknologi i Skolen) on technology teaching interpret and realise technology as a subject of teaching. The curriculum project is inspired by the subject Design & Technology in England and Wales, and is hence an example of transfer of ideas across national borders. The study has been undertaken by means of interviews with teachers and classroom observations, and reported in terms of what the teachers see as aims for the subject, how they interpret the nature and content of the subject and how they relate it to Science and other subjects in the curriculum. The teachers' views and realisation of technology teaching in Norwegian classrooms are compared with perspectives on technology and education and specifically with aspects of the subject Design & Technology in England and Wales. It is shown how teachers adopt certain aspects of new ideas presented to them rather than the whole rationale of Design & Technology in an interactive manner, interpreted in terms of theory related to teachers' professional frames for teaching.

The cultural influence on how ideas on technology education are interpreted and realised is highly evident in the results of the study. Reflecting the educational ideology in the Norwegian curriculum, the teachers interpret technology as cross-curricular teaching in meaningful context rather than a subject with its own basis of knowledge and identity. Further, teachers place technology teaching in a frame of practical independency rather than related to industry and commercialism, reflecting the dissimilar history and national identity in Norway and England respectively. These broader cultural frames appear to be more important for how the teachers have approached technology teaching than their subject background, which has elsewhere been anticipated to create a bias in teachers' interpretation of technology as a school subject. The study illustrates the importance of teachers' interpretations for how new ideas are realised in schools, and how these interpretations are deeply rooted in the educational and cultural context. This is relevant to consider for the further development of technology in Norwegian schools as well as for understanding education and the transfer of educational ideas more generally.

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ISBN: 82-471-5225-8
Contact: berit.bungum@ils.uio.no
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