COMPETENCE PROFILE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT (CPSM) –

AN INVENTORY FOR THE SELF-ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

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Zusammenfassung. *The Competence Profile School Management CPSM (German: KompetenzProfil SchulManagement; KPSM) is the first online-based self-assessment in German language, which has been designed to fit the school context and is based on psychometric principles. It offers participants the possibility to reflect their strengths and weaknesses in different capacities requirement areas of school leadership; and to compare their individual results with peers from the school context, thus gaining valuable information on their individual profiles when planning their professional development and careers. After sketching the theoretical and empirical background, the article presents information about the aims and purpose of CPSM, the tool's development, its test scales and test formats.*

1. Introduction

The pivotal role of the school leader as a factor in effective schools has been corroborated by findings of school effectiveness research over the last decades (Moos & Huber, 2007; Huber & Muijs, 2010a; Huber, 2010b). School improvement researchers have also demonstrated increasing recognition of the importance of school leaders for all stages of the school improvement process (see Huber & Muijs, 2007; Huber & Muijs, 2010a; Huber, 2010b). The school leader is most often cited as the key figure in the individual school's development, either blocking or promoting change, acting as the internal change agent, overseeing the processes of growth and renewal. Moreover, the school leader's role has to be seen in relationship to the broad cultural and educational contexts in which the school is operating. Since schools are embedded in their communities and in the particular national educational system, and these in turn are embedded in the particular society, schools and their leaders have to cope with, to support or otherwise react to the social, economic and cultural changes and developments taking place. Schools, and consequently the expectations on school leaders, also change as a result of more subtle and indirect forces in society – social, political and economic changes – that are gathering pace across the world. Moreover, direct changes in the educational system have a particularly strong impact on the school leader's role (see Huber, 2004; Huber & Mujs, 2010).

In most countries, the tasks and structures of schools and of the education system are changing. These change processes strongly influence the leadership of schools (see Huber, 2004, 2009). On top of traditional tasks, new responsibilities emerge. Being a school leader means fulfilling diverse and complex tasks which are connected to professional and personal demands. It is the "fit"

between job characteristics and a person's skills, attitudes, and ability to learn (potential) that matters.

Consequently, more and more attention is being given to the role of school leaders in creating the conditions for an effective school. There is broad international agreement about the need for school leaders to have the capacities needed to improve teaching, learning, and pupils' development and achievement. For these reasons, it is essential to select and develop suitable individuals for school leadership positions. To establish and modify appropriate selection processes and training and development opportunities has become a major focus of professionalization tendencies in many European countries.

Given that certain characteristics, abilities and attitudes of leadership tasks become increasingly important when having to cope with school leadership tasks, teachers do not receive feedback to them on a regular basis. A teacher has a fairly good idea about how much time he or she has to invest for the lesson preparation. Nevertheless, a teacher probably has no clue about (for example) his or her readiness to criticism compared to that of colleagues. We lack standardized and scientific tools which serve as an orientation for teachers interested in school leadership or for reflecting on personal strengths and weaknesses for experienced members of school leadership teams. In this context, self-assessments can make a useful contribution.

There is good reason to support future school management personnel in its orientation as early as possible. While selection is often seen as a one way process of an institution selecting suitable candidates, the overall quality for all parties included is influenced by first of all being able to attract the right candidates and to help people get an idea whether the new position will suit them. Therefore, supporting processes of orientation and self-selection are equally important.

These processes are or can be integrated into systematic means of professionalization (see Huber, 2004). The professional development of teaching personnel has changed in the last years. At present, internationally, continuous professional development (CPD) does no longer solely rely on classical course formats, self study or practical approaches, but also on other learning opportunities and approaches to learning such as professional learning communities, the portfolio approach, and self-assessment/feedback tools. In all these measures - particularly if they are linked - emphasis is put on transfer, reflection and the exchange of what has been learnt with one's colleagues. Application- and action-orientation are central in order to achieve the sustainability desired or required.

CPD has to take over a diagnostic function much more explicitly that it becomes more needs-oriented and differentiated to the individuals taking part. Moreover, this can promote the individuals' motivation to participate more actively and to learn, that is, for instance, to acquire knowledge, link it with the prior knowledge base and try out new ways of behaviour to broaden the spectrum of options of acting. So far, however, elements of self-assessment and feedback have not been integrated sufficiently. In order to provide demand-oriented offers, prior knowledge, subjective theories, attitudes, expectancies, goals and the motivation of the potential participants have to be inquired into. They are the starting point for the conception of CPD and the learning approaches have to be linked to them. It is highly recommended that participants go through a self-assessment for an individual potential analysis in order to receive a feedback on relevant requirement areas and requirement dimensions. Formatively used, the tool provides a good starting point for identifying areas which need improvement and for planning CPD (in terms of a needs-assessment).

An ideal type of continuous professional development takes various learning opportunities and approaches to learning into account (Fig. 1 see also Huber, 2009a).

Course formats: Course formats are part of the basic methods of continuous professional development. Used innovatively, they take into account that „learning" in terms of modifying

one's patterns of behaviour and thinking is to be comprehended as inspiration and information, reflection and exchange, experiment and realization.

Self study: Self study, too, is a format of continuous professional development that has been made use of for a long time. In self study methods, the respective topics of the seminars are prepared and explored. ‚Good' printed study material is up to date, mirrors the state of the art of academic discourse and comprises authentic documents taken from the practice, provides the participants with basic and background knowledge, but also with practical transfer support.

Practice: Some CPD programmes offer various opportunities of directly integrating the practice in their studies. Of course, practice is always the starting point and goal of CPD measures, particularly when they are needs- and practice-oriented, but it is also a very interesting learning place in itself. The idea is that the real working context as clinical faculty alone comprises the appropriate complexity and authenticity necessary to lead to adequate learning processes. Working on individual projects, classroom observations, shadowing and, mentoring provide the opportunity to work on complex problems taken from the practice.

Professional learning communities and networks: Professional learning communities and networks are central components in situated learning opportunities and provide chances for an intensive reflection on one's own action and behaviour patterns. By that, teachers are likely to start from their individual cognitions and beliefs, which control their behaviour patterns, and from their subcjective theories, and modify their ways of acting accordingly. Increasingly, professional learning communities and networks become a fixed part of CPD programmes. If teachers are integrated in learning communities and networks outside of their own schools, there is a higher possibility to widen their view and thus, change processes are supported.

Portfolio: At the beginning of their continuous professional development, the participants often start a portfolio. The portfolio is suitable to combine teaching and learning with self-evaluation. It documents the development process and supports the individual's professional development planning.
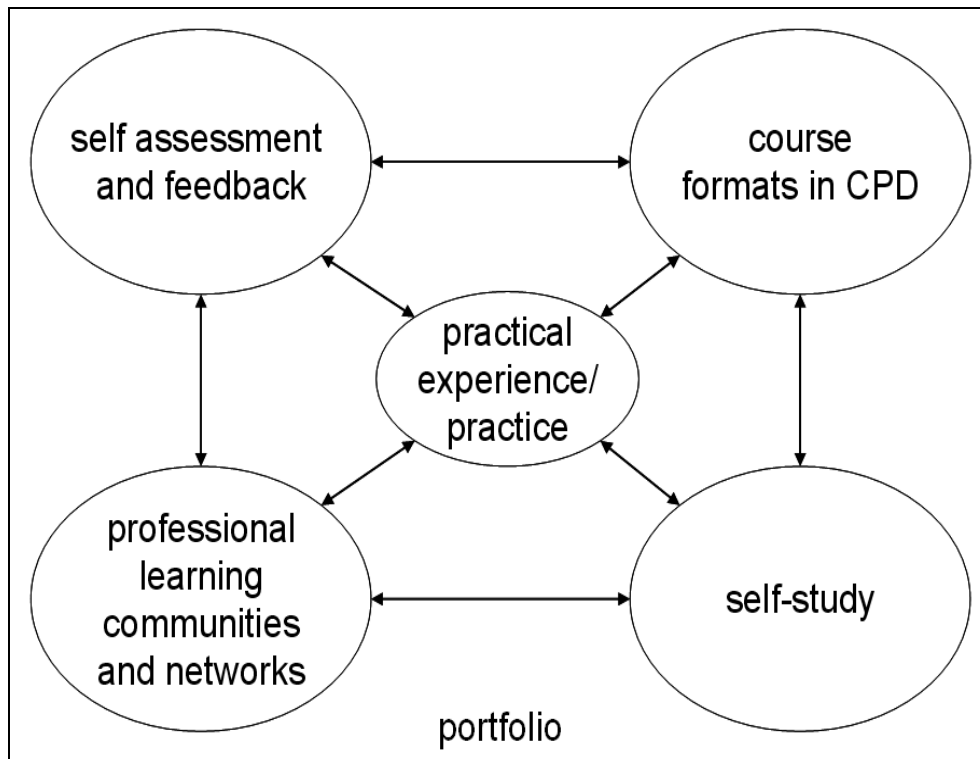
In all these measures - particularly if they are linked - emphasis is put on transfer, reflection and the exchange of what has been learnt with one's colleagues. Application- and action-orientation are central in order to achieve the sustainability of learning desired or required. However one aspect is missing, which is the part of assessment-based feedback. This may not be underestimated as an important learning approach.

Self-assessment and feedback: It is highly recommended that participants go through a self-assessment for an individual potential analysis in order to receive a feedback on relevant requirement areas and requirement dimensions. Formally used, it provides as a needs-assessment a good start for planning CPD.

The professional development of teaching personnel has changed in the last years. Here, two preconditions are essential: On the one hand, CPD has to take over a diagnostic function much more explicitly. So far, however, elements of self-assessment and feedback have not been integrated sufficiently. In order to provide demand-oriented offers, prior knowledge, subjective theories, attitudes, expectancies, goals and the motivation of the potential participants have to be inquired into. They are the starting point for the conception of CPD and the learning approaches have to be linked to them. On the other hand, sustainability has to be drawn attention to much more strongly. How can the step from knowledge to action and the transfer from theory and practice be successfully made? How can be realized at school what was learnt? Hereby, the practice-orientation of CPD plays an important part.

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more explicitly. So far, however, elements of self-assessment and feedback have not been integrated sufficiently. In order to provide demand-oriented offers, prior knowledge, subjective theories, attitudes, expectancies, goals and the motivation of the potential participants have to be inquired into. They are the starting point for the conception of CPD and the learning approaches have to be linked to them. On the other hand, sustainability has to be drawn attention to much more strongly. How can the step from knowledge to action and the transfer from theory and practice be successfully made? How can be realized at school what was learnt? Hereby, the practice-orientation of CPD plays an important part.

Figure 1 : Approaches to learning in CPD including portfolio (see Huber, 2009a)

Another source for the importance of self-assessments derives from the field of human resources development. Even the scope of the best training is limited. As it is known from research on person-job-fit, training effects will be restricted if an individual's motives, values and interests do not correspond with the requirements of the position he or she is going to hold. So far, we have lacked opportunities for teachers and school leaders to find out whether they fit to the personal demands of the modern school leadership role. tInternationally, there have only been very few tools specially designed for the school context that permit to check the person-job fit regarding a leadership position. The Competence Profile School Management (German: KompetenzProfil SchulManagement; KPSM) is the first online-based self-assessment for school leadership in German language. So far, around 1100 participants have taken part in CPSM.

2. Aims and Purpose of the Self-Assessment CPSM

The aim of CPSM is to offer a potential analysis for school leadership which serves as an orientation for teachers who are interested in school leadership tasks or as a basis for clarifying personal strengths and weaknesses for newly appointed or experienced members of school leadership teams.

The results of the self-assessment represent a person's self image regarding personality aspects and a person's cognitive abilities. The results are always seen in relation to a relevant reference group. The resulting profile thus enables participants to answer the question: Where do I have to place myself regarding the posed demands compared to others? Therefore the self-assessment offers participants the possibility to reflect, on an objective basis, their own strengths and weaknesses in the different requirement areas for school leadership.

Why do participants benefit from the self-assessment?
▪ It serves as an orientation tool to observe one's own self-perception from a different perspective.   ▪ It offers the chance to compare one's motives and abilities with those of relevant peers.   ▪ It provides a basis for reflection on personal strengths and weaknesses.   ▪ It serves as a stimulus to discuss issues of educational leadership.   ▪ The results may prompt participants to ask for specific feedback.   ▪ The results may serve as an impulse to assess one's own demand for education and training.

Table 1 Benefits of the Competence Profile School Management (CPSM)

3. Development of the Tool

The first version of CPSM comprises 30 dimensions, which are grouped into six job requirement areas. The job requirement areas and assigned requirement dimensions have been deducted from:
- Theoretical work (theories of school leadership; see Huber, 2004b; 2005b, 2005c; Moos & Huber, 2007),
- Studies of the job profiles of school leadership (in the German speaking context, see Huber, 2003, 2005a, 2007, 2008b; Huber & Schneider ,2007), and
- Reviews of international studies from the field of school effectiveness and school improvement (see Huber, 2004, 2008a; Huber & Pashiardis, 2008; Huber, 2009b, 2009c; Huber & Muijs, 2010a; Huber 2010b).

Furthermore, we followed the principle that it is important to consider different kinds of information when trying to predict or assess the aptitude for any given job and its related job requirements. As we know from job-fit research it is important to take into account actual knowledge and abilities, the potential to learn (cognitive capacities) as well as personal characteristics such as job related attitudes and motives. Even though it was decided to not measure actual leadership knowledge, the CPSM tries to integrate the different perspectives of cognitive abilities and personality dispositions (see section on test formats).

The tool was developed in cooperation with eligo, experts in web-based aptitude testing, led by Wottawa, chair of methodology, diagnostics and evaluation of the psychology department at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany. Based on the requirements of educational leadership positions, suitable testing scales were chosen from the eligo portfolio of existing test scales. If necessary, items were reworded to fit the school leadership context; new items were added to broaden or adapt concepts. In the end, 30 testing scales made it into the pilot study, which was conducted in Germany in fall 2007.

The scales underwent various pre-tests with experts and potential users in three different ways, one in paper version, e.g. with selected scales to improve them, one as a cognitive interview to see what the participant is thinking doing the test, and finally one in real situation where the participant was doing the test web-based and was asked to write down notes on a spare sheet for a feedback after the testing.

After data analysis of the pilot data, the actual second version of the tool (CPSM 2.0) contains 24 job requirement dimensions (test scales) grouped into six job requirements areas (the respective test format is indicated in brackets and explained in the next section):

4. Test Formats

Using the statistical procedures of meta-analysis, Schmidt and Hunter (1998) aggregated results across different studies of over 85 years of research into the validity of different selection methods. The main conclusion is that cognitive ability tests have consistently been found to be the best predictors of job performance (validity coefficients in the order of 0.51 for predicting job performance). Moreover, they found that the inclusion of a personality test or other measures in the selection procedure, alongside cognitive ability tests, further improved the prediction of job performance. These findings and others indicate that successful job performance is dependent on a variety of factors including a wide range of different kinds of abilities and personal characteristics (not just general mental ability and not just personal attitudes or motives). This principle of including different sources of information as well as using different test formats guided the development of the CPSM tool. We integrated achievement tests to focus on various forms of cognitive ability as well as different personality measurements.

4.1 Achievement tests (AT)

In achievement tests participants are supposed to strive for their best possible performance. Achievement tests often focus on specific abilities for instance the ability to think abstractly, concentration, or the ability to think deductively in connection with diagrams and texts. By means of objective criteria, achievement tests measure the performance of the participants while they are doing certain tasks within a certain time.

In the CPSM tool we integrated five different achievement tests, all focusing on various aspects of cognitive abilities: an in-basket format to assess planning skills; a test on deductive reasoning in relation to processes (process thinking) two verbal oriented tests on deductive reasoning skills (analytical thinking and analytical text comprehension); and a test that focuses on the general intellectual skill of speed of thought.

Personality tests intend to measure the characteristic pattern of behaviour, thoughts, or feelings of a person. Test scores are seen as indicators for the individual degree of the intended personal trait (e.g. sociability, leadership motivation, or team orientation). Several test formats are available to measure personality traits. CPSM uses the classical questionnaire format (Q) as well as a motive grid (MG):

4.2 Questionnaire format (Q)

The participants conduct a self description. They evaluate how far a given statement concurs with their own experiences and attitudes. Thereby, they opt for a rating on a scale from 0 to 100.

4.3 Motive grid (MG)

The motive grid is a situational testing procedure (following Sokolowski et al., 2000) to measure different basic motives such as the affiliation motive, power motive and achievement motive with regard to their hope and fear components. Situations or professional settings are presented by means of a drawing and a brief heading together with standardized statements as it is known from the classical questionnaire format. The participants estimate, how they would judge such a situation, respectively, how they would act in such a situation; the participants opt for a rating of given statements on a scale from 0 to 10.

5.   Administration of the CPSM

Being an online-based tool, CPSM provides participants the liberty to conduct the assessment at any place. It includes a password protected access permitting a singular conduction. It provides a procedure without third person observation or third person knowledge; all entries are transmitted in encoded form. The duration time varies from person to person.

Since the self-assessment is conducted on a computer, the duration times represent the time of being connected with the tool online and may include interruptions (e.g. phone calls). The presented times, therefore, stand for the maximum duration of the conduction. Furthermore, Future participants are expected to have their time required for conduction reduced by around 20% due to the reduced number of test scales in the actual version of the tool.

Right after finishing the self-assessment, the participant gets an email on how to download the personal feedback report (password protected). The feedback report comprises extensive feedback on all of the six requirement areas with the 24 requirement dimensions. It includes explanations of how to read the report, understand the test scores, interpret one's test scores (percentile rank), and a description of the individual requirement dimensions. With the formative purpose of the tool in mind, the report doesn't provide a summative score or statement about a person's actual fit to take over a leadership position. Rather the feedback texts describe possible advantages and disadvantages that come along with the personal score in a given test dimension. Thus, it is still up to the personal reflection to integrate the results into an opinion (with help of workshop exercises, a coach or trainer if wanted) on how close a fit with a leadership position might be.

6.   Results of the Pilot Study: Standardization and Psychometric Measures

The pilot study with a norm group consisting of 396 participants was conducted in Germany in 2007 and 2008 within the Thuringian development programme for teachers interested in school leadership. The participation in the self-assessment was carried out in the first module of the first phase (i.e. the orientation phase) on a voluntary basis. It had to be enrolled in separately, and the participants paid a small fee. The participants received a data protection notice which guaranteed that the results of the self-assessment were not relevant for the participants' career. They are also assured that the feedback report serves as information for individual evaluation purposes only and is not shared with authorities within the school system or elsewhere. The pilot study included 30 test scales of which 24 were kept in the second version of the tool: CPSM 2.0.

Details of the sample and the results of the pilot study including psychometric data will be published in the journal "Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability" in autumn 2010.

7.   Results of the Evaluation Study

All the persons that had been invited to participate in the self-assessment pilot were explicitly invited again via email to provide feedback on their perception of the self-assessment. Among them were persons who had not finished the self-assessment or had not even started it. The questionnaire focused on the participants' experiences, the information about the self-assessment they had received beforehand, the test administration, the results and their usefulness, and further professional perspectives and development planning. Besides the rather technical issues of the tool or procedural aspects, the key aspect of the usefulness of such a tool relates to its social validity and acceptance. Therefore, the emphasis was put on issues of the expected and experienced usefulness of the results.

Details of the sample and the results will be presented at the conference (including a detailed report in German) and published in "School Effectiveness and School Improvement. An

International Journal of Research, Policy and Practice" in winter 2010/11. If interested, please send an email to the author of this paper.

8.   Resumé and Looking ahead

In view of the demands on school leadership personnel and their relevance for the quality and development of schools, issues of their selection, qualification and professionalization are becoming increasingly urgent. Teachers interested in school leadership expect support concerning responses to questions of their person-job-fit, such as in which requirement areas of the aspired position they already have enough potential at their command and where they still have needs for development. The Competence Profile for School Leadership (German: KompetenzProfil SchulManagement; CPSM) is the first online-based self-assessment in the German language that has been specially adapted to the school context and developed according to psychometric principles. A special focus is also given to its social validity and acceptance in the field. So far, around 1100 participants have taken part in CPSM.

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