

Swedish School Leaders Go Online

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ABSTRACT

Swedish school leaders are gathered in a pilot project called *School Leaders Online*. To build a nation-wide Online Professional Community, *Swedish National Agency for School Improvement* implemented threaded forums as a tool for school leaders to share experiences about their common topics and work practice. Qualitative methods are used in order to show that participation in an informal learning setting is dependent on how school leaders negotiate meaning of their conditions at work, common topics for constructing knowledge and the capabilities to appropriate threaded forums. One conclusion will explain the importance of using several online tools in learning experiences.

Keywords

Online professional community, school leaders, negotiation of meaning, implementation, threaded forum

INTRODUCTION

The main task for school leaders is to organize and manage the pedagogical activities at local schools or a district of schools (Ekholm, Blossing, Kåräng, Lindvall & Scherp, 2000). Besides managing and giving support to teachers, they have to maintain several social contacts. For example, they follow directions from the school board, listen to the wishes from parents, and of course, they share the social contacts with the pupils. Based on work overload in combination with limited support and time constraints, school leaders share similar conditions at work (ibid). Their main activities should be focused on pedagogical issues, but most of their actual work is to handle administrative tasks (ibid). Their activities are described as numerous small and various tasks. These have to be solved in short time schedule. School leaders give priority to three areas of demand; *pedagogical*, *social* and *administrative* tasks (Ekholm, et al., 2001; Dalin, 1982).

In contemporary times, school leaders meet new demands in school improvement which require them to enhance their skills about IT, and especially the internet (Aurell, 2002). For example, Swedish school improvement includes the implementation of IT for organizing class schedules and working schemes for teachers. School leaders have to keep up with strategies to support teachers in their construction of the pupils' individual learning plans and portfolios. School leaders are key persons for the improvement of both learning activities and the construction of an infrastructure that facilitate the common work. IT becomes a tool for organizing these activities. The report from NCSL (2004) claims that, for the last ten years, collaboration among leaders has been growing more than ever before, and the factor is the increasing use of online communities. Online communities are social arenas for learning, built on relationships and continual activities among people, who participate as learners. They share the interest in common topics through building rules, norms and routines constructed through memberships (Carlén & Jobring, in press). Implementation of IT does not automatically generate in successful organization at work. When existed activities in school leaders' work have to be changed, they need to negotiate about how to use IT as a collective.

To improve the skills of IT and to encourage the exchange of experiences and construction of knowledge among school leaders, the *Swedish National Agency for School Improvement* started the pilot project *School Leaders Online* during the autumn of 2004. The purpose of the project was to organize new collaborative activities in online environments and to use the computer more of a communication tool, rather than just as an administrative device. By implementing a technical platform called NordSkol, Swedish school leaders were able to communicate through threaded forums. The organizer of the pilot project started to build a nation-wide online learning community of school leaders on basis of informal approach in learning. Bowskill (2004) define informal learning as a social activity where meanings and practices are shared and situated as projects that can be developed as intentional self-directed learning networks.

The aim of this study is to describe and explain how Swedish school leaders negotiate about meaning of IT, when implementing a technical platform for their exchanges of experiences and knowledge building. This study will explore the capabilities for school leaders to appropriate and use threaded forums in order to understand

how they change their work practice when communicating online. Even if school leaders already use e-mail to communicate with their colleagues, they do not automatically find it easy to adapt other asynchronous tools for communication and collaboration. When several research projects examine and report healthy on-going activities in discussion forums, additional research is necessary to examine when participants do not use the tools as they were expected. Rogers (2000, p. 384) asserts that "Not all communities are effective in carrying out their tasks; some communities work together effectively while others splinter and struggle to accomplish their goals". There are several issues that organizers have to confront when building online professional communities (Schlager, Fusco & Schank, 2002). When the organizers of the project School leaders online confronted technical problems in the beginning, a decision was made to continue this study in order to explore the negotiation of meaning of IT. Organization of collective discussions in online mode is about the creation of an agreement in which all participants create meaning together in their online activities. The participants have to understand the idea of making contribution in online discussions explicitly for others, rather than just communicate in peers through e-mail. They have to be able to value their own knowledge and ideas for other to comment. The issue for implementing any communication tool is the involvement of the participants own social practice (Schlager et al., 2002). Besides the *work practice* of school leaders, *common topic* for discussion and the participants' capabilities to *appropriate tools* will be features that act as focal points when building online communities. These three themes will later be used for construction of an interview guide and even as a framework for presenting the result.

The disposition of this paper start to present the pilot project of School leaders online in comparison to the British project called Talking Heads in order to direct the attention to the Swedish attempt to construct a nation-wide online community for school leaders. Then, a sociocultural perspective on learning and theories on communities of practice will act as an approach for understanding the issue of using negotiation of meaning for understanding school leaders' work practice, communication of common topics and appropriation of threaded forums. Finally, some conclusions from the pilot project will be formulated into strategies. Even strategies in a continual research approach will be formulated. At the very end, a short presentation of new projects for Swedish school leaders will be presented, that are related to the examined project in this study.

School Leaders Go Online

The organizer *Swedish National Agency for School Improvement* planned the pilot project on basis of an earlier project called *IT for school leaders*. That project aimed to enhance the skills of Swedish school leaders to use computers on a daily basis at work. School leaders online was designed as a pilot project that continued the effort to support school leader's use of computers for learning how to communicate and collaborate in online environments. The project was expected to become a support for constructing new social networks between school leaders. However, building online professional communities will not be examined as a solution. The building of an online community for school leaders can be one of many strategies that can change the work conditions for school leaders.

To some extent the Swedish pilot project were influenced by the British project and online community for head teachers called *Talking Heads*. In this section, both projects will shortly be explored in order to understand how implementation of communication tools is appropriated by Swedish school leaders. There are several issues that can be explored in the amount of participants and within several organized online activities. Talking Heads started with over 1300 members (Bradshaw, Powell & Schank, 2002) compared to the project of School leaders online which involved about 100 members. The condition for constructing a critical mass of members differed between the two pilot projects. Another issue is that the British participants took part in several online events (ibid.). In the Swedish project, the participants had mainly one task to solve, which will be presented further on. In the Swedish project the participants were divided into sub-communities, in which they took part in less organized activities than were the fact within the British pilot project. Although, the Swedish pilot was managed by two project leaders who organized the online activities in support of facilitators within each sub-community. The facilitator's task was to support the school leaders in their discussion of common topics, and even give support on technical issues. These tasks were divided between the facilitators as areas of responsibilities.

Although, the informal approach in the Swedish pilot was to make it feasible to start discussions on their own, instead of being forced to solve already formulated tasks. However, the informal approach in learning was also established in Talking Heads. Bradshaw et al. (2002) claim that guiding and managing an informal project is a complex task, depending on the self-directed approach that is required for a successful learning experience. In these projects, they have to organize their activities on basis on how they become able to create meaning of building social networks. Bradshaw et al. (2002) claim that one reason for starting Talking Heads was to overcome the feeling of isolation among school leaders. In the Swedish school leader online, this was not an issue. Most of the Swedish participants had already built their local social networks of colleagues and the potential advantage was to support School leaders to extend their social networks. The pilot project started with

a physical meeting in order to introduce school leaders to the ideas behind the project. During one of the two occasions, the research project was explained and accepted among the participants.

The content for discussion became an essential issue for the development of social networks, since the participants have to be guided in new forms of activities in which learning is not directed into a traditional course. The idea was to give the participants time to reflect and formulate their own goals, rather than on basis of the first project, learn how to use IT in their daily work. The participants formulated their own task from predefined topics. There were four comprehensive topics to choose from; (1) Know what's right – about values and IT-related jurisprudence, (2) Development of School – learning organization and pedagogical issues, (3) Facilitate the work – pedagogical and organizational values, and (4) Understanding technology – intertwined pedagogical discussions about IT. The choice of a single topic could be seen as the common interest for every sub-community. Each sub-community was created on approximately ten participants in one sub-community.

Sub-communities with participants from both locally geographical distance and more dispersed settings were followed in the study. Within the technical platform, there were both open and closed arenas for the participants to discuss their ideas. One specific group of school leaders joined the project as a communal and local community. They already knew each other as colleagues. This means that the conditions for their participation were quite different from the other sub-communities in the project, because they actually met continually every second week in physical environments. There were about 15 school leaders from the locally geographical community who were divided into two sub-communities in the online forums. Their common purpose to submit to the project was to enhance their knowledge about IT and together create a system specification for a forthcoming implementation of an educational platform related to their activities at their school districts. The respondents common topic can be found in the area of number four. They all shared the same agenda for practicing their work at the local schools. First, they started their discussion in peers.

All participants use computers, intranets and the internet in a daily routine. Most of the school leaders had previous experience of different technical platform and intranets. This also affected the organization of activities later on. The new challenge for the participants was to use the computer as a collective communication tool. The school leaders used a technical platform NordSkol in which they interacted by using threaded forums in asynchronous mode. By using asynchronous communication, the participants could send messages to each other in written text independently of time and whenever they had the time. By using threaded forums, the discussions between the participants are structured in a way that can be viewed as threads. The main question is structured with the answers indented under each other. Whenever participants want to place their comment, they get a thread in connection to that point in text where they respond in the discussion earlier. They also had the possibility to up-load documents in order to pursue the exchange of work related material for discussion. For example, recorded video files were used as triggers to start a dialogue between the participants. For this study, the Swedish project only reflects a small part of the activities that was organized in the British project. The projects have to be viewed under different settings. The projects shared the same idea of constructing and managing new form of social networks.

SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNING

From a sociocultural perspective, learning is an on-going process that is not only related to the online discussion of a single topic (Carlén & Jobring, 2005). Learning is about how people communicate, organize and participate in social environments by using physical and intellectual tools for mastering their activities (Säljö, 1999; Wertsch, 1985). The examination of individual and collective activities as communicative acts and the appropriation of tools are essential to understand what people learn under cultural and historical conditions. Within a social perspective, people learn even if a project does not fulfill its goals. The main question is about what they learn and how their activities are negotiated within the collective.

Appropriation is a process of negotiation in which people successively become more proficient by using tools (Säljö, 1999; Wertsch, 1985). When using the terminology within a social practice, people become legitimate peripheral participants (Lave & Wenger, 1991). To only master computers and the internet will not be an adequate knowledge in order to become a member of an online community for professionals. It is about being able to talk about their shared practice through the tools they use at work, activities they do as a collective, which are in online communities mediated through the networked tools that are appropriated by the members. In social contracts, such as netiquette and FAQ, participants read and write themselves into memberships. Participation can both be explicitly or implicitly formulated between the participants. What becomes important when taking part in online environments is how the participants create meaning in their collective endeavors to implement and use communication tools to enhance their exchanges of ideas (Wenger, 1998). The challenge is to find the characteristics in the learning processes in order to understand those actions and contextual aspects in which individual and collective changes their ways to perform activities in the world and their understanding of

the world, those situations in which they transform both themselves and their environments (author's translation, Säljö, 2005, p. 20–21).

Negotiation of Meaning in Communities of Practice

School leaders can be understood as a community of practice, which means that they create their identities of being a school leader through the construction of social relationships together with other school leaders. A social practice is described by Wenger (1998) as a process in which people experience the world as meaningful. People create meaning when talking about their abilities, both individually and collectively, when they experience life and the world. Learning can be understood as changing participation in changing social practice (Karlsson, 2004). Wenger (1998) argues that participants have a mutual engagement for a negotiated joint enterprise and over time, they develop a shared repertoire. Human engagement is a process of negotiation of meaning (ibid.). Common experiences in negotiation of meaning are constituted both as an interpretation and action. Negotiation is not pre-existing, but rather historical and dynamic, contextual and unique (Wenger, 1998). "Meaning exists neither in us, nor in the world, but in the dynamic relation of living in the world" (ibid., p. 54). To use the negotiation of meaning as an analytical tool, the process has to be explicitly formulated in the relation of what people negotiate about. Thus, attempts to study negotiation of meaning can make it feasible to understand how school leaders participate and describe their engagement as productive of meaning in the concept of reification. Reification is a concept to create experiences into "thingness". In this paper, one argument is that IT becomes important to explore, because of the changes such implementation will bring when people start to mediate their talk through communication tools. What becomes explicit in threaded forums is the result of the member's participation. Although, there are several activities which takes place outside the online forums which have to be considered, when examining the attempts to implement communication tools. In this study, the focus of negotiation of meaning will be on two levels – individually and collectively. By using negotiation of meaning as an analytical tool, this study will make us understand the importance of examining the pre-conditions for implementing communication tools in work practices.

METHODS

Observation, interviewing and document analysis are the main tools of data collection that is useful to qualitative researchers (Mann & Stewart, 2000). Observation as a method for understanding online communities is frequently used in conjunction with some form of interviewing (ibid.). The observation of explicit online activities has to be based on background of the common ways that school leaders use computers for solving administrative tasks, but also how they together organize their postings. An informed consent by the participants in which they agreed to take part in this study, made it feasible to start the observations in the threaded forums. The first aim when starting to explore the pilot project was to get an in-sight of the respondent's online activities when discussing common topics. The data material is constructed by observations of the activities in the threaded forums. The focus was to observe what they talk about and let the participants interact without any interruption by the researcher asking questions in their text based conversations. The conclusion of the observations of the online activities was formulated into questions which could explore the way participation decreased in the discussion forums. Most messages were posted within a period of four months. When it became obvious that they shared problems to engage as participants in threaded forums, it also became impossible to interview them in online mode. The main decision was to continue to explore the locally based sub-community, since the reports from the other sub-communities shared the same problems (i. e. not as much of activities in the threaded forums).

On basis of the familiarity with the research area, a semi-structured interview became a central support in research. The approach of using an interview guide organized into specific thematic areas involves open-ended questions performed in conversations rather than standardized interviews (Mann & Stewart, 2000). The decision to use semi-structured questions was based on the intension to be open for the respondents answer, and act on basis of what they bring up as experiences of using threaded forums. The constructed interview questions related to the construction of meaning of threaded forums in connection to three themes such as *work practice*, *knowledge building* and *appropriation*:

1. Work practice – organizing of school leaders' online activities will be examined as an integrated part of the work practice.
2. Knowledge building – the common topic of their online discussions will be examined in connection to what they talk about and how they create reifications.
3. Appropriation of threaded forum – the organization of the communication tools that have been implemented for their online activities.

The three themes become essential to understand how online activities can be explained as contextualized in school leader's work practice. The selection for choosing respondents was made randomly. Data collection was based on interviews in physical settings with six of the participants in the locally geographical sub-community. All respondents had left postings in the threaded forums. Interviews have been organized personally with each and every one in order to keep the rule of anonymity. On basis of informed consent, interviews with the participants were booked. The interviews took place in physical settings, by visiting the respondents at their work place. All interviews were recorded on an MP3-player and later transcribed. In addition to the excerpts from the interviews, data material from the online conversations, notes were also taken from participating at an evaluation meeting with the facilitators, and also, evaluation material from the sub-communities has been used as material for constructing data. The analysis of the data material was made on individual and collective parts of negotiation of meaning of the mentioned themes. Since the data material from the observation from the threaded forums was not enough, interviews were of importance for explicitly explaining school leaders creation of meaning.

THREE THEMES IN NEGOTIATION OF MEANING

As already introduced above, the three themes will guide the presentation of the results and explain on what basis school leaders construct meaning of their work practice, their appropriation of threaded forums and knowledge about the topics they discuss. Both individual and collective arguments for organizing online activities have been considered.

Negotiation of work practice

Emma: "I think this is interesting, if you look, look on how to organize the comprehensive goals in school, of course, we do the same things all of us. I think that is fascinating. Everybody is doing... It doesn't matter if I meet someone from Piteå or elsewhere, we are doing the very same thing [as school leaders]."

The quotation above explains the awareness of the work practice that school leaders share in common subjects and tasks. School leaders constitute a social practice in which they all share common ways of doing things, even if they work in distributive settings. The implementation of threaded forums did not result in a simple change of activities. Using threaded forum means that new extended activities have to be organized, that changes the participants' awareness of doing things together.

Since the pilot project was not organized as a traditional course, the comprehensive idea to take part as a community of local school leaders was based on their talk about formulation of a specification for implementing a technical platform in their work practice. The task for communicating about the common topic was not really understood by all participants. In order to give priority to their own collective participation, they have to understand what their discussion will lead to explicitly. The fact that the respondents already knew each other and met frequently, made it problematic for them to extend their social network since the idea was to talk about their predetermined topic. However, the myth of the single school leader working alone is not longer considered true. This becomes explicit in the study when several respondents express the actual meetings and the importance to meet colleagues from different social networks. Although, the conditions at work constraints their engagement to just chat. They do not even log-in to the online discussions after working hours. This means that they set up priorities for their online participation.

Even if they all agreed upon the need to discuss the construction of a specification for implementing a platform in their own work practice, time constraints was formulated as the issue that also set collective constraints for taking part in the discussions. None of the respondents are members in similar discussion forum outside their profession as school leaders (i.e. online interest communities). Therefore, they are not familiar to communicate in explicit online forums. During one interview, the issue about publishing ideas in written text was discussed. Anna explained that she felt embarrassed to write to her colleagues in text based conversation, because she were scared to use the wrong words. Mistakes in grammar and spelling were not commented by the participants in the threaded forums, even if there were several such mistakes in the online discussions. Anna explained later on, that her colleagues would probably not even care. In the threaded forum, the content for discussion was the essential issue for discussion between the participants. Less socializing procedures (i.e. talk about off-topics) was established among the participants, because of the division of participants into peers. This resulted in less activity. When they already contributed to the talk in peers, they visited other peers to read their contribution, but they did not feel they were allowed to comment, because this had not been negotiated between them. Even if the technical access was open, there was no negotiation of social access to join each others activities. In addition, activities with the other sub-communities in the pilot project were of minor focus. Using the threaded forum had to support the building of social relationships with other colleagues outside their own communal school district. The process of socializing became secondary. Construction of social relationships has to be

negotiated between all members, not only by a few participants in order to emerge in activities that can result in collaborations and discussions that they find meaningful. In one case, there was no answer in the conversations between the peers.

Dependent on two issues, threaded forums did not support their communication in asynchronous mode. First, they already use e-mail for discussing their work practice. Using another similar asynchronous tool, which also required the procedure to log-in became a problem. Not only because they forget their passwords, but also the difficulties to log-in, because of the bad server capacity of the technical platform. The respondents experienced that these problems took time from their ordinary work. After a period of three months the participants did not bother to log-in to the threaded forum, because the problem has been negotiated as an explanation to not participate in the online activities. The second issue is that the asynchronous mode does not support their working pace as school leaders. Therefore, other communication tool such as the telephone is essential for their problem solving. However, only asynchronous tools support the publication of ideas for others to share.

The work practice is constructed by the participants themselves. Being a school leader is reflected by each of the participants in belonging to the practice through their participation in the pilot project. However, the use of threaded forums is not about transferring the work practice to online settings. Rather, it is about integrating new tools for the construction of activities which they can use to broaden their social identities as school leaders. Therefore, building online school leader community does not have to focus on just one single online project. For exploring the negotiation of meaning of IT, the content for online discussion has to be explored.

Negotiation about knowledge on topics for discussion

The work to create the specification for implementation of a technical platform has to be organized by the participants. Emma explains that the actual use of a technical platform will be to organize the contemporary intranets that they use, into one single platform. However, since they already have routines for using e-mail, they have to negotiate on how they will use the technical platform. In their ambition to learn more about IT, they joined the project together to find strategies in order to communicate about issues that they do not normally managed at their meeting in physical setting. The school leaders of the local geographical sub-community formulated three terms to discuss; *communication*, *information* and *documentation*. Their aim was to talk about the issues that are prominent for using IT. The three topics could conduct the talk about constructing a specification for implementing a technical platform in their forthcoming work. However, these topics emerged into an analytical level which did not support their understanding of being able to contribute in the construction of a system specification. Anna explained that the topics for discussion became too abstract for her, because she did not have enough knowledge about communication. She explained that talking about communication has to be related to specific pedagogical methods on how to communicate. Therefore, the online discussion did not end into any documents for collective knowing about what the future implementation will bring to their work practice. They have to understand why they discuss a specific topic, and how they can use the knowledge in their work practice. Neither did all respondents know how they could contribute in the work to implement the technical system. This can be reflected in the work practice to engage in authentic problems in which they need to negotiate the concrete benefits of their engagement.

In sum, structuring the discussions about common topics has to be formulated on a collective level in order to find a way of using the knowledge in their individual work as pedagogical leaders. They have to open the discussions with several topics to discuss, and then, because they have to be able to reflect and comment their colleagues postings to create a dynamic discussion. The participants have to create their own categories in order to find engagement. Online discussion can be related to the concept of appropriation of tools.

Negotiation about appropriation of threaded forums

At the beginning of the project, the participants had problems to log-in to the technical platform since the platform itself did not have enough server capacity. Since they expressed anxiety to take part, the frustration of not being able to handle the technology was widespread during this period. One respondent expressed that the project should not start before the technical platform was able to serve the planned online activities. More experienced computer literate school leaders did not argued the same way, because they said that technical problems come along with the use of computers. All respondents knew who they could contact when problems emerged. They did not put questions in the technical platform. They did not discuss their frustration of using the threaded forums to find out and understand the different levels in the threaded forums. In addition, technical problems made them aware of their need to negotiate about how to continue their work with constructing a specification for the work practice implementation of IT. One idea was to facilitate each member in the individual learning process about IT in forthcoming workshops. The technical issues supported their work to register of what skills and knowledge each school leader needed to become more proficient in using IT.

Because of the many sub-areas in which the school leaders could meet, they did not understand the levels of the discussion threads. Individual difficulties to overview the threaded forums did not support their online activities. Johanna described that the reason for her not to take part was her lack of understanding what the colleagues were talking about during the physical meetings, since not having appropriated the terminology about IT.

Johanna: "I haven't asked neither. I can't show them how ignorant I am. That's the problem, you have to ask if you want to know.[...]I have always thought that I 've been able to do a good job[...] I have been the pedagogical leader – that one they ask for. So I lean myself towards that. While I'm not, ehh, prominent when it comes to using the correct terminology. If they implement computers, so will, I feel, then I keep silence".

In contrast to participants with less knowledge on computers and the internet, there were respondents with long experience of using IT. Anders did not want to take the attention from the others with his skills of using IT. Marginalization was found on self-directed levels that affected the online participation negatively.

Another issue will be explained in the concurrence between several existing communication tool and technical platforms. Appropriation of threaded forum did not support their conditions of continual meeting and use of e-mail. Since they had the opportunities to meet face-to-face, they solved their problems at the physical meetings. The organization of appropriating new tools is to develop strategies for online communication on basis of how they already communicate. All of the participants in the local geographical sub-community shared the routine to open their mailbox "the first thing in the morning". Communicating by e-mail is explained by the respondents as much easier, than logging in to the technical platform. One strategy for implementing IT could be to continue their use of e-mail, but within the construction of an e-mailing list for all colleagues to take part in. The stage to communicate on a collective level involves the meta-knowledge to understand what becomes worth to share in discussion, besides to discuss their construction of the specification and process to implement new technical platforms at work.

CONCLUSION

The difficulties to implement threaded forums for school leaders were based on several issues. The negation in order to changing their existing work practice resulted in less online activities. The idea of appropriation of IT is essential for how participants negotiate as a collective. Implementation is not only about organizing activities through the use of IT or within online environments. In such perspective, the phase of implementing IT and building of online communities are different. The project of School leaders online evolved to be a project of implementation. However, the participants have increased their ownership to build an online community on basis of their common experiences. The process of ownership of the specification will lead them towards their goal. In this study, negotiation of meaning of using IT for sharing experiences about common topics has been connected to three themes. To understand the implementation of threaded forum in an informal setting, the driving forces in the project and decisions for using certain tools has to be explored further.

In order to negotiate meaning, they have to formulate their own changes, in which IT can support their talk about school improvement. Because of the difficulties to use threaded forums as a meeting place, complementary tools for discussion can bring other form of talk. Talk about the technical platform and other communication tools became very essential for continuing the work to learn about IT. The use of synchronous media such as instant messaging can be a complement to already appropriated tools. Building online communities include not only a single communication tool or meeting place. Instant messaging better reflect the work practice of school leaders, because they solve problems in a fast tempo. School leaders are very much aware of their common practice. Building online professional communities is not about to finding the right technical platform. Rather, it is to construct opportunities on basis of existing activities at work in which school leaders can extend their meetings and discuss in nation-wide forums. To continue the work of school leader's use of IT, several other sub-communities have to be examined in order to understand the distributive settings between other participants in the project of School leaders online. One question that remains is the examination of the conditions for implementing IT for work practice in which the participants are not used to discuss in online modes.

The pilot project School leader online is finished, but the experiences have resulted in new projects in which school leaders have the opportunity to talk to each other in online environments. One on-going project is called *The Dialogue – exchanging experiences between school leaders*. The communication tool for that project is a discussion forum which can be easily viewed by the school leaders. Another similar forum is the *Hot seat*. This forum is influenced by the British project Talking Heads, in which prominent politicians can answer questions about new directions for managing Swedish schools. The idea of building online community for school leaders have to be seen as several projects which can be linked together. However, building online communities for school leaders is not a project that is easily constructed, because it is a never finished.

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