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TRUST WITHIN TEACHING STAFF AND MUTUAL LEARNING AMONG TEACHERS

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to show the way in which trust within a teaching staff translates into mutual learning among teachers. Using a qualitative investigation of two purposively selected schools representing a high and a low level of trust within the teaching staff, we illustrate that trust is a multi-layered phenomenon which in the context of learning among teachers is not necessarily productive to work with as a whole. We therefore separate trust within a teaching staff into the head teacher's trust in teachers, teachers' trust in the head teacher, overall trust among teachers, and finally trust between specific teachers in a learning relationship. We relate these levels of trust within a teaching staff and the three components of this trust—competencies, relationships, and reliability—to the characteristics of mutual learning among the teachers at the selected schools. We conclude that our data shows that the key relationship influencing learning among teachers is that between the head teacher's trust and trust in the head teacher, which has the greatest impact on whether teachers accept the head teacher's concept of professional development and act accordingly. Overall trust among teachers has an influence on the level of independence of learning interactions and awareness of colleagues' learning but not on shared learning content.

Keywords

trust, learning among teachers, informal learning, professional development, head teacher

Introduction

The topic of this *Studia paedagogica* issue inspired us to reexamine data from case studies on the mutual learning of teachers at Czech schools in terms of trust.[1] We believe that there is good reason to seek a link between learning and trust for at least two reasons. The first is the opportunity to separate one characteristic from the complex range of phenomena which comprise a school (or teaching staff) as a social structure and use it to endeavor to better understand mutual learning between teachers. The second reason is that trust and mutual learning among teachers can be widely understood phenomena and so there is potential to exploit the results of this study in specific practice.

The objective of this study is therefore to show in what way and nature mutual trust within teaching staff translates into mutual learning among teachers. Using a qualitative investigation of two purposively selected schools which show in one case a high level of trust and in the other case a low level of trust within the teaching staff, we illustrate that trust is a multi-layered phenomenon which cannot be described as a monolith and which is reflected in learning among teachers in diverse ways. In our study of trust within teaching staffs, we distinguish three levels of trust: the head teacher's trust in teachers, teachers' trust in the head teacher, and overall trust among teachers. We show that these different components of trust are present at each level in each school. We then relate these characteristics of trust within a teaching staff to the characteristics of mutual learning among teachers at the selected schools. Specifically, we explain whether, and how, various forms of trust translate into learning content, the interdependence of learning interactions and school, and what head teachers and teachers expect from mutual learning among teachers.

Learning among teachers

Mutual learning among teachers has long been a subject of research interest. Usually, however, this is not due to mutual learning in itself, but rather because of the important role mutual learning plays in the working of schools (Lazarová, Pol, Hloušková, Novotný, & Sedláček, 2012). In this case, school

[1] This study is one of the outcomes of Czech Science Foundation project no. 13-07234S, Intergenerational Learning across Social Environments (2013–2016).

is interpreted as a *learning organization* (Fullan, 1995) or an organization in which *organizational learning* takes place (Pol, Hloušková, Lazarová, Novotný, & Sedláček, 2013), as a bearer of *learning culture among teachers* (Haiyan, Walker, & Xiaowei, 2017), as a *professional learning community* (Novotný, Pol, Hloušková, Lazarová, & Sedláček, 2014; Wald & Castleberry, 2000) or a *community of practice* (Printy, 2008). We have decided in this study not to exploit these concepts and the findings relating to them for two reasons. First of all, mutual learning among teachers itself is not usually the essence of the research linked to these concepts. Furthermore, these concepts—to various extents but nevertheless recognizably—reflect or are even directly based on postulating the characteristics of the desired state of learning at school or generally at workplaces, and there is a certain normative desire seen within them. In this study, we aspire to describe and interpret mutual learning using empirical data. In the spirit of analyses based on the constructivist line of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), we thus leave our starting concept open.

We consider learning among teachers to mean those learning processes which take place between colleagues at a given school, whether these are spontaneous (an informal discussion in the staff room) or based on assigned roles and duties (inductions of new teachers, observations, etc.). Mutual learning can take place with the full awareness of both teachers involved, but also when one of them is not aware of the learning situation (Brücknerová & Novotný, 2016). We have defined the mutual awareness of learning as an overt form of learning. An example would be a situation where one teacher is asked by another to explain how to edit a record in an electronic roll book. The second form of learning is defined as a covert form of learning. In such situations, only the teacher who is learning is aware of the learning process, such as when he or she is monitoring how a colleague gives instructions to students. In such cases, the colleague need not realize that he or she has become a source of learning. In the words of Schugurensky (2000), learning among teachers may or may not be intentional, but the learning individual must be aware of it. Unintentional learning, in which the learning individual is not aware of the learning and which falls more within the field of socialization (Schugurensky, 2000), is beyond this study's framework for methodological reasons (Brücknerová & Novotný, 2016).

The content teachers provide one another in mutual learning naturally has a wide diversity and encompass the entire scope of the teaching profession. In a study of cooperation among teachers, however, Little (1990) showed that different content has varying development potential. She recommended distinguishing as to whether teachers' cooperation and related learning involves only the exchange of narratives, materials, and information or whether there is mutual influence through efforts at mutual understanding, the joint seeking of a solution to a specific problem, or the joint creation

of something new. We can also view these two levels of content through Piaget's distinction between accommodation and assimilation, i.e. learning involving assimilation within one's current cognitive schema and learning in which this schema is changed, in this case through social interaction (Brücknerová & Novotný, 2016; Illeris, 2007). The change in existing knowledge structures which distinguishes assimilation from accommodation in learning among teachers is enabled by the teachers' openness to reflection and any reassessment of their own opinions, positions, and approaches (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). We therefore perceive the presence of this reflective aspect to the shaped content as an important dividing line between the two types of learning content in mutual learning among teachers.

Regardless of what content teachers provide to each other during mutual learning, the network of learning relationships at a school can have various structures. In this regard, Kasl, Marsick and Dechant (1997) proposed that one should differentiate between fragmental learning, co-learning, synergetic learning, and constant synergetic learning. For the first structure, within an organization, in our case a school, individual learning is dominant with a minimum of learning in terms of both the exchange of information and its assimilation and its accommodation. In the case of co-learning, there is occasional sharing and assimilation of information, mainly in regard to a specific shared task. In the case of synergetic learning, there is spontaneous dissemination of information and reflection upon it, where inter-individual and group interactions lead to learning based on assimilation and accommodation. Finally, in constant synergetic learning these processes occur naturally and continuously across the entire organization. There are a number of factors which affect what form of learning among teachers occurs at a school. The academic literature mentions in particular a major influence from context of the school and head teacher (Pol et al., 2013). We will first look at the influence of head teachers on mutual learning among teachers and then we will move on to the school's social context, where the topic of this article means we will select only trust at school, specifically trust within a teaching staff.

Head teachers' influence on learning among teachers

The academic literature documents a substantial influence from head teachers on the continuing professional development of teachers (Evans, 1998; Griffith, 2004; Jacobson, Johnson, Ylimaki, & Giles, 2005; Mulford & Silins, 2010; Wood, 2005), which includes learning among teachers. Based on an analysis of focus groups and school head teachers, Bredeson (2000) stated that the influence of head teachers on learning among teachers takes place at four

levels: the head teacher as an instructional leader and learner, creation of the learning environment, direct involvement in the design and implementation of professional development, and assessment of professional development outcomes. Similarly, Mulford (2003) noted the following areas of head teacher influence on learning among teachers: work with vision, objectives, and values; support for the teacher community; and intellectual stimulation. Given the present paper's objective, we will now briefly look at head teachers' influence on learning among teachers in the area of vision and values, because this affects the direction of the school as a whole including professional development, and the influence of a head teacher's work with the community of teachers, as this directly relates to the buildup of trust within the teaching staff.

Youngs (2007) looked at the influence of a head teacher's vision and values on mutual learning among teachers and found that the head teacher's priorities influence learning among teachers. If head teachers' priorities focus mainly on students' behavior and relationships with parents, their willingness to get involved in or facilitate learning among teachers is less than it is when they perceive themselves as being an instructional leader. Cosner's (2009) study of head teachers who excel at school capacity development also reported results in line with these findings. That study found that such head teachers consistently prioritized support for trust within their staff and that a key tool in this work was support for cooperation between teachers. In terms of the quality of conditions set by a head teacher for learning among teachers, it is of key importance whether the head teacher reflects on longevity as an essential component of planning and implementing these processes (Stevenson, Hedberg, O'Sullivan, & Howe, 2016).

We also have a great deal of information on how head teachers influence teachers' learning through how the head teachers work with the teacher community (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). Such influence is both direct and indirect, as shown, for example, by Pogodzinski, Youngs, and Frank (2013): whether teachers in the roles of mentee and mentor meet about curricular issues at least once per week depended on the relationships between the teachers and the head teacher. If these relationships were perceived negatively, there was a statistically smaller probability that that these learning interactions would take place with a frequency of at least once per week. Therefore, head teachers can have a major impact on teachers' involvement in their professional development as well as in their approach to their own professional learning (Bogler, 2001; Pogodzinski, Youngs, & Frank, 2013; Runhaar, Sanders, & Konermann, 2013). Bush and Middlewood (2013) even consider enabling professional development to be a key motivational mechanism which school head teachers have available to them. Evans (1998) considers a well-performed teacher evaluation by a head

teacher to be a similarly important motivational factor for learning and professional development. It should nevertheless be noted that although evaluation is expected from the head teacher as a source of learning within the teaching staff, head teachers' options in this regard are often limited. Kraft and Gilmour (2016) showed that when there were a large number of teachers in a school, it was very difficult to implement instructional leadership at the required depth for all teachers. The same research led to the conclusion that it is naïve to expect that head teachers can be equipped to formulate evaluations and instructional leadership without coaching and mentoring or without themselves receiving feedback on their evaluations from teachers. We can therefore infer that although head teachers' inter-individual development work with teachers may have great potential, under standard school conditions learning within the teaching staff will likely be more influenced by the school's overall social climate, which is something the head teacher is a major co-creator of (Grecmanová, 2003; Ježek, 2004). The school's social climate includes trust, to which we will now turn our focus.

Trust in school

A number of literature reviews have attested to the importance of trust for school life and results. Handford and Leithwood (2013), for example, claimed to have demonstrated that trust has an influence on student results, including results in such specific fields as reading and mathematics. They also noted the importance of trust for engaging the community in the school, and particularly for the school's functioning in general: trust is considered a "lubricant" for processes within the organization and has key importance for the level to which individual members identify with the organization. In addition to confirming the importance of trust for school effectiveness, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1997) also showed the importance of trust for the learning of all participants, the school climate, and the head teacher's authenticity. Finally, a study by Louis (2007) suggests that trust is one of the preconditions for implementing any extensive innovations.

We can perceive trust as a "general confidence and overall optimism in occurring events" in a given context (Tschannen-Morgan & Hoy, 1997). We consider reductions in the sense of vulnerability in others, i.e. ensuring our behavior makes others feel safe, as a key way such trust is built (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Tschannen-Morgan and Hoy (1997) showed that trust is built gradually. The first stage of trust is provisional trust, which is given on the general assumption that the other party wants to develop the relationship and will want to be perceived as trustworthy. This trust will grow if it is

demonstrated that the partner will be rewarded for meeting commitments and, in contrast, will be sanctioned for failure to do so. Knowledge-based trust is a stage of trust which depends on knowledge of a specific person based on longer-term communication and is based on the ability to predict his/her actions. This phase can become identity-based trust, which is characterized by mutual empathy and shared aspirations and intentions. It therefore makes sense to perceive trust as a dynamic quality of life at a school.

Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) used a survey to show that we can empirically distinguish three levels of trust at school. These are trust between the head teacher and the teachers, trust among the teachers themselves, and trust between the teachers and the school's clients (students and parents). In the present paper, we are only looking at trust within the teaching staff, and so we will deliberately ignore the third level of trust, that in regard to clients. The aforementioned authors further showed that the amounts of trust at these levels affect one another, i.e. if we see a low amount of trust at one level then we can also expect lower amounts of trust at the other two levels. There is not consensus on this matter, however, as an older study (Hoy & Kupersmith, 1984) has shown that the head teacher's actions can influence teachers' trust in the head teacher, but does not influence mutual trust between teachers, and vice-versa. We think this discordance can be explained in the fact that trust cannot be perceived as a homogenous phenomenon, but instead one needs to distinguish both its level and different components within it, something which different players may perceive differently in different research studies.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) tried to identify components of trust based on theoretical sources and extensive qualitative research at North American schools. These authors distinguished four components of trust: respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity. Respect is perceived as a recognition of the importance and role of every individual within the school and acknowledgement of a network of interdependencies. Competence means the ability to reach desired objectives within the school. Personal regard for others means a willingness to exceed the boundaries of one's duties for the benefit of others. Finally, integrity represents consistency between what people say or promise and how they act. Hoy and Tschannen-Morgan (1999) contrastingly empirically asserted five factors which they used to describe trust within a school environment. The only one of these factors in common with the previous study is competence. We can consider benevolence (with characteristics similar to regard for others) and reliability (similar to integrity) as partially overlapping with the previous study. The final two areas asserted by the factor analysis are honesty and openness. Handford (2011) based his dissertation on both previously discussed studies,

attempting to illustrate these (and certain other) components of trust through qualitative interviews with teachers and head teachers at Canadian schools with high and low levels of trust. We think one of his most interesting findings is that both head teachers and teachers consistently and clearly perceived competence as a key component of trust.

Comparing the three studies discussed above, we can state that trust at schools consists of the following components:

- Competence: believing that others have the capability to meet their tasks at the quality required, as people in the right post.
- Relationships: believing that others will be helpful and kind in their dealings with people at school.
- Reliability: believing that others will meet their commitments and that there will be accordance between their words and actions.

Based on the above, we can surmise why Price and Molenaar (2015) considered trust a key characteristic promoting learning among teachers. In order for teachers to be motivated to learn from their colleagues, they must trust that their colleagues can teach them something, i.e. must trust their competence. If, as we said at the start of this paper, learning among teachers is to take into account even potential change in knowledge schema, i.e. allow for error, professional failure, or doubt, the second component is required: a benign and supportive relationship framework which allows the learner to acknowledge their vulnerability. Finally, if learning is to be a deliberate, stable, and perhaps long-term process, it is necessary for commitments to be met such that one can rely on a colleague in individual matters and overall (reliability). Therefore, if trust in the teaching staff can be perceived as a developing, internally differentiated phenomenon expressed at various levels, one must ask what influence specific aspects of trust in the school have on learning among teachers. The objective of this paper is to find an answer to this question.

Methodology

The present study is based on two (of a total of five) phases of research into informal teaching among teachers undertaken between 2014 and 2016 (Rabušicová, Brücknerová, Kamanová, Novotný, Pevná, & Vařejková, 2016). The objective of the first qualitative phase of this research project was to describe teaching among students at Czech elementary and secondary schools by mapping and analyzing learning content and interactions which occurred during learning. During this phase, prior to fieldwork we selected schools which differed in external characteristics ascertainable using websites or based on our prior knowledge (school size, municipality size, school involvement in development projects, mention of professional development directly on

school websites). After making contact and receiving consent for our research, we undertook interviews with school management, carried out observations at teacher meetings, and conducted interviews with two to four teachers selected according to other characteristic groups (length of work experience, generation affiliation, role at school, qualifications, involvement in learning relationships) to achieve data saturation in approaches to learning, forms by which teachers learn, and learning content (Brücknerová & Novotný, 2016; Novotný & Brücknerová, 2014). Saturation began to occur after roughly 17 interviews, although a further 3 interviews were completed. These data, including notes, were continuously analyzed through initial and focused coding (Charmaz, 2014).

The second qualitative phase of the research was undertaken through a multiple case study. The objective of this phase was to place the data acquired regarding learning among teachers within the context of specific schools and seek relationships between school characteristics and teacher learning. During this phase, we selected based on previous field knowledge three schools to encompass as wide a range of learning among teachers at school as possible (Creswell, 2012) and added one school (an extreme case in terms of intensive support for the professional development of teachers) from entirely outside our previous sample. Case studies were implemented at these schools (interviews with head teachers, interviews with teachers, study of documents, distribution of questionnaires, observations of teacher meetings). Data were collected at these schools over the course of three months on average, with data collection at the schools frequently overlapping. For each school, a situational map (Clarke, 2005) was drawn which was modified and reworked over time. Notes were made even during the case study phase, including sketches of different relationships and connections (Charmaz, 2014).

From these data and analytical materials, we have selected for this paper data from two case studies, specifically those segments relating to trust in the teaching staff (including trust between the head teacher and teachers). The two cases selected represent schools whose head teachers show a low level of support for learning among teachers. We have undertaken this purposeful sampling in order to more easily separate the influence of supportive measures and the influence of trust itself. Furthermore, according to respondent responses the two schools display different levels of trust in the school. In this regard, this represents a maximum variation purposeful sample which allows us to look at how different levels of trust within a teaching staff influences learning among teachers.

Table 1 presents the basic characteristics of the two schools selected. It is clear that not only does the size of the municipalities differ, but also the size of the institutions themselves. This is also one of the major limits to the

current study, as it would naturally be ideal if the only characteristic in which the schools differed was trust. The vast majority of multiple case studies, however, are affected by this problem (Stake, 1995), and it is closely related to the very essence of the research design.

Table 1
Basic sample characteristics

School	A	B
Staff size	12 teachers, head teacher, deputy	23 teachers, 5 assistants, head teacher, deputy
Municipality size	1,800	400,000
Data analyzed	Observation in teacher offices, participation in 1 meeting, 2 interviews with head teacher, 1 group interview, 8 individual interviews with teachers	Observation in teacher offices, participation in 4 meetings, 2 interviews with head teacher, 1 group interview, 9 individual interviews with teachers

Based on the described data and analysis materials, these cases appear to us to represent instrumental cases which can contribute to expanding our knowledge of the relationship between trust and mutual learning among teachers without necessarily generalizing the matter in any way (Stake, 1995). The selection of cases and subsequent data analysis occurred with the objective of answering the question of how the quality of trust within the selected schools is reflected in mutual learning among teachers. Specifically, this means:

1. Whether and how trust (and its components) are expressed at different levels in the content of mutual learning among teachers, and
2. Whether and how trust (and its components) are expressed at different levels within the structure of learning relationships at the schools.

We answered these questions by reanalyzing the data using focused coding (Charmaz, 2014), which allowed us to reexamine the data with a focus on trust.

Trust at the selected schools and its influence on learning among teachers

In the following data presentation and interpretation, we will first look at the nature of trust in each of the teaching staffs. We will look at key relationships (the head teacher's trust in teachers, the teachers' trust in the head teacher, and trust among teachers), while at the same time describing how individual components of trust manifest. Table 2 presents an overview of the general categories describing trust at the different levels at which we will be looking.

Table 2
Overview of key categories

School	A	B
Head teacher's trust	Emphasis on relationships and autonomy	Emphasis on obedience
Trust in the head teacher	Protector	Aggressor
Trust among teachers	General trust	Isolated islands of trust
Mutual learning between teachers	Intuitive, chance learning, sharing, and practical help	Intuitive, targeted learning, support, and challenges to change cognitive schema

Head teacher's trust in teachers and support for trust within the teaching staff

Trust in teachers' autonomy (School A)

In School A, the head teacher declared his trust that teachers would complete their tasks with competence not just in terms of teaching, but also in responsible preparations for teaching. He trusts that teachers will remain at school for as long as necessary. He allows those who need to leave school early for personal reasons to prepare for teaching through an online space where the necessary materials are shared. The head teacher noted:

> *Anyone who needs to meets up mainly in the afternoon after lessons, and preparations can be done here in the staffroom (…), but I invest a lot in interactive programs, so anyone who needs to work at home for family reasons will often leave straight after teaching their lessons.*

This trust in teacher autonomy is also reflected in trust in professional development. The head teacher trusts that teachers will create their own learning opportunities whenever they feel a need to learn something. If there is something new which teachers need to be informed about, the head teacher arranges a brief informative training, but it is then up to the teachers to find out more about the problem if they feel the need to do so. This is the case, for example, in regards to ICT equipment which is continuously updated, with one of the teachers securing initial access to a new interactive program:

> *Yes, she arranged a special meeting about it and she said everything about it there, but that was just once; that's not enough for me, so then anyone who needed could call on her and she was able to spend lots of time with them.*

Participation in external training displays similar trust in teachers' assessments of their own training needs and their own initiative. This is illustrated in a teacher's response to a question about whether anyone had helped her when

she found out she would be teaching first grade for the first time the following year: "*Not really, more the internet. When I found out I was going to have them, I tried to find some training online so I could fit in at least a little.*" When she found training, the head teacher took it for granted that resources could be found so she could take part in her chosen training course. Thus the head teacher sees his role for supporting teachers mainly in ensuring the proper conditions. The creation of conditions for learning among teachers, and for teaching itself, focused particularly on two aspects: not burdening teachers with unnecessary matters and building a conflict-free teaching staff.

Not burdening teachers with unnecessary matters involved minimizing teachers' duties beyond teaching. Teachers are not put together in working groups to achieve tasks, the school is not involved in projects initiated externally (except for projects administered by the school management with the primary objective of purchasing new technology), teachers are not required to assist with inductions of new teachers, there are a minimum number of meetings, and so on. Not only did the head teacher not introduce additional measures, he also cancelled some existing ones with his deputy. Obligations that have been removed include visiting a colleague's lesson once per semester to find inspiration and supporting new teachers through inductions, as mentioned above. The teachers welcomed the cancellation of these measures (perhaps with the exception of some new teachers who lacked a stable relationship with a mentor) and perceived it as a consolidation of their own autonomy. This is seen in the following quote relating to the obligation to visit a colleague's lesson:

> *It was introduced by the previous head teacher – that we had to visit one another's lessons; it was kind of ordered of us. The new head teacher has not made it an order, but he has said that if we want to then he will accommodate us.*

In this manner, the head teacher has minimized teachers' duties while also declaring that he is in no way restricting their own initiative.

The second area of creating good conditions relates to building a conflict-free staff. This takes place both through personnel changes and through monitoring the climate and holding team building events. Personnel changes involve a clear focus on teachers who would bring conflict to the staff and supporting their departure from the school. Similarly, disposition and anticipated loyalty are key characteristics examined while recruiting new teachers. The head teacher regularly monitors the climate among the staff both through his own informal interviews with teachers and through the deputy making regular informal visits to teachers' offices, something teachers perceive positively as reflecting management's real interest in their work and a confirmation of closeness. One of the teachers described it as follows:

> *So I can say, for example, we have a close relationship with management and the deputy head teacher who comes to see us sometimes and talks about everything with us, or asks what's happening. (…) When she comes and something is dealt with, we all act as one in such work matters.*

This informal method means the head teacher is very quickly informed of even minor problems occurring at the school. This interest in teachers manifests in team building activities which take place roughly three times per year.

The positive climate and enablement of working conditions are perceived as sufficient conditions for teachers to work at a high quality and learn what they need. At the same time, the head teacher clearly declares trust that anyone will help anyone with anything needed. The head teacher does not perceive professional development as a thought-out process leading to specific objectives. Responsiveness is what the head teacher implicitly expects from learning among teachers at school. If there is any problem, teachers will overcome it through helpful relationships at school. If anyone is not able to do something, they should not have a problem going to someone else to ask for help. If the problem cannot be solved in this manner, the head teacher soon finds out and deals with it himself or in collaboration with his deputy. Thus, in School A the head teacher's trust emphasizes the relationship component of trust. The competence component of trust is seen particularly in trust in teachers' autonomy, their own professional assessments, and their own professional motivations. The third component of trust, reliability, is again linked mainly to relationships as it is the helpful atmosphere and goodwill at the school which is to ensure teachers meet their obligations and duties.

Trust reduced to obedience (School B)

In order to understand the context of trust in School B, we must first briefly look at the head teacher's management and organizational style. The management style is markedly authoritarian, as illustrated in such examples as the head teacher's description of how she declares obligations for teachers: "*Like it or not, that's how the school works; the school needs this done now, so you need to just do it.*" In this school, teachers' motivation is primarily external and internal motives are not taken into account, as is clear from when the head teacher describes how she perceives teachers' responses to tasks they are assigned:

> *So asking why you can't do something is very misguided for us. Right now, we need to deal with this particular matter quickly, so yes you may or may not want to. I'm not interested in how, yes, but you know it will then be assessed as part of a comprehensive perspective of you, of whether you're willing to help us or whether you just say 'no, no, no.'*

This response makes clear not just the atmosphere of pressure, but also the lack of interest in the personal perspectives and incentives of individual teaching staff members. The head teacher considers a "*professional approach*"—a mark of competence—to be the elimination of staff members' personal aspects and histories. From this perspective, what she expects is for orders to be carried out. Because following orders is the basic mechanism used in school management that is where that the head teacher's trust is focused. This assumes that she has such a strong mandate that her orders will be carried out, and it is in this way that her vision for school change will also be implemented.

Support for learning among teachers is also given through orders. The head teacher has established a number of measures designed to lead teachers to learn from one another (induction for new teachers, training at a number of levels, sharing of methods). It is again typical of these measures that they do not take into account personal context or the needs felt by the actual teachers, but rather the needs and priorities felt by the head teacher. These activities are assessed in terms of tasks completed and uncompleted, such as through the question of whether a particular presentation took place and the inspection of attendance lists. The head teacher determines the reliability of individual teachers as a key component of trust based on being involved in mutual learning among teachers managed in this manner. Those she perceives as reliable on this basis she then involves in development projects which bring in particular financial benefits. If the head teacher sees a given teacher as unreliable in this respect, however, the following statement from the head teacher applies:

> *Either you identify with it or it's time to leave or change your job. You might be of greater benefit in another organization, but if an employee does not identify with it then I think they begin to be almost a problem.*

Since there are many demands made outside the teaching framework at this school, some teachers really do leave the school due to being overworked and others simply because they do not like the directive style of management. The head teacher does not perceive high employee turnover at the school to be a negative, however, but rather as a natural process of separating the wheat from the chaff. For us, it is important that this separation takes place based on the head teacher's trust reduced to reliability, which in her mind relates essentially to simple obedience.

Forms of teachers' trust in the head teacher

How does teachers' trust respond to the concept of trust relayed by the head teacher? In School A, the nature of the trust in the head teacher corresponds to the head teacher's vision. The head teacher endeavors to arrange favorable conditions for work, and the teachers really do perceive the head teacher as a stable force on which they can rely. In School B, in contrast, the teachers speak more or less negatively of the head teacher, regardless of whether the head teacher sees them as "*reliable*" or "*unreliable*." At this school, the head teacher is perceived as an aggressor with whom some can get on without being injured and others cannot.

Head teacher as protector (School A)

Teachers in School A perceive the head teacher as a person who managed since his arrival (two years previously, following seven years as head teacher in a different school) to stabilize the staff, which had been split into two camps. All of the teachers describe this transformation in the climate similarly: "*These years have been the best they've ever been; I can't remember a time of such tranquility.*" The head teacher is perceived as someone who can deal with conflict, establish borders, and in particular bring catharsis to a difficult situation.

One of the teacher described the head teacher's role as protector against external troubles as follows: "*And there are situations which make the life of school management in particular more difficult because they are the bumper which has to come into contact with such matters.*" Although teachers are given rough outlines of external problems facing the school, at meetings the head teacher clearly and briefly states that the situation will be dealt with and outlines the way in which this will be done. From these reports, there are again clear thresholds beyond which the head teacher will not let negative pressure build up, and we can see his resolution to protect the school and its teachers. In such situations, the head teacher acts as a knight protecting his castle and is deserving of the trust of those defended.

The head teacher is involved in establishing "*tranquility*" among staff (from the teachers' perspective) through minor displays of attention and rituals:

> *Yeah, so we got a cake on International Women's Day from the head teacher. These are just little things but I think it binds the staff together. Or when it was my birthday, everyone at the meeting got some refreshments because the meetings are usually long. So these are things, not written down, which help bring the staff together.*

Trust in the head teacher involves not just his protection, but also his interest in the teachers at a human and personal level, something clearly demonstrated through numerous team building events:

> *We have lots of shared events. Just before Christmas we took a special bus to a wine-cellar and there was a band playing. It was a great event and when we came back the whole bus was singing. So great events like that, yeah.*

Even a bus singing together indicates that the head teacher's objectives in terms of building trust (and probably the climate in general) match well with teachers' perceptions of mutual relationships. The teachers trust the head teacher's competence to manage and resolve any conflicts. They assess his activities supporting the relationship component of trust positively, and direct and transparent communication also results in high assessments of his reliability.

Head teacher as aggressor (School B)

From teachers' responses about the head teacher in School B, it is clear she is perceived by teachers as an opposition, an aspect which complicates their work, and a source of tension in the school and that a large number of teachers are leaving the school. The head teacher is considered untrustworthy above all in terms of her personality (some even speak of her having a personality disorder), something she calls the "*expressions of hotheads*," with teachers perceiving her aggressive behavior, manipulation, and disrespect exceeding the limits of what is allowed of a superior towards an employee. Trust in the head teacher in its relationship component is thus entirely missing. Furthermore, teachers speak of the head teacher as unclear, as they do not understand her requests, or consider them changeable and so see it as impossible to act in the right way, as confirmed by the lack of trust in the reliability component.

It is more as a consequence that teachers' minimum trust in the head teacher is reflected in the area of competence. The head teacher is primarily focused on relationships outside of the school, such as acquiring funding for continuous innovation in ICT, and these are the areas where she expends a lot of energy. She undertakes these activities, however, in isolation from her deputy and the teachers know little about it, or if they do their relationship with it is mainly negative because, as they see it, any further projects would only lead to more confusing requests and subsequent bouts of shouting. Therefore, the teachers do not appreciate the head teacher's development and external activities no matter how well she completes them, and these activities do not increase the teachers' trust in the head teacher's competence. Teachers assess the head teacher's competence on the basis of her management of the staff, which they see as failing, as discussed above, and also at the level of instructional leadership.

The head teacher chose observations as the basic tool for instructional leadership, and something she uses fairly extensively. As a result of the described relationship framework, however, teachers again perceive this very negatively as interference in their own space by an untrustworthy person. W e can see this relationship with instructional leadership in the following response:

> *When some teacher comes along, and I don't want to offend anyone here, in the post of head teacher and this teacher has taught eight years and I have also taught eight years, I can't see the point in that teacher advising me on what I should do differently.*

From this response, it is clear how little respect the teacher has for the head teacher. He does not speak of her as a head teacher, but as a teacher with the same amount of experience, who has—by chance—the post of head teacher. Furthermore, he speaks of feedback as unwanted advice. It is significant that the teacher did not speak about the substance of the post-observation discussion. We can thus assume that the fact that no fundamental trust has been created at a relationship level which would allow teachers to accept feedback from the head teacher means that any such feedback is disregarded, no matter how justified. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the other responses regarding the head teacher's observations always contained a substantive argument as to why the head teacher's feedback was worthless (variously because the head teacher had graduated with a different degree, studied to teach a different level, chose a bad lesson, etc.) without mentioning the content of her feedback, even just in passing, unlike the case in the data for School A and the data for School B in terms of peer advice from colleagues.

The level of trust in the head teacher at School B is derived from the low level of trust at a relationship level. This finding is not particularly surprising as we saw in the previous section that the head teacher has given up on building trust in this field. It would likely surprise her, however, that the teachers' distrust also relates to the other components of reliability and competence. The low trust in the reliability component is mainly caused by her communication method, which is unclear for teachers. The low trust in the field of competence is a result of the fact teachers only assess those of her activities which she herself considers to be of less importance (people management and instructional leadership). In assessing competence in particular, however, the relationship framework expresses itself, leading to the resulting assessments from teachers.

Forms of trust between teachers and their learning

In this section, we bring together a description of forms of trust among teachers at each school with a description of how learning among teachers takes place there. It will help to start by looking at key contexts which will be summarized later across the schools.

General trust and learning in the form of sharing and help (School A)

In the responses in School A, all of the teachers emphasized the general helpful set-up throughout the school. Teachers had no doubt that if they needed assistance anyone they asked would try to help them and would do so as quickly as they could and to the best of their abilities. One teacher who had joined the school a year previously spoke of the set-up within the staff as an exceptional aspect of the school:

> *And what I appreciate the most is the high level of collegiality among us all regardless of specialization and age. Basically, we really do work as one team here, one which I think knows what matters, and we are all pulling in unison. So that's what I appreciate most of all here, because from my previous work I know this isn't always the case.*

Trust at a relationship level then is very high. On the other hand, although there are three sets of family relationships working within the staff, there are not any particularly intensive relationships to be found here which would act in isolation from the others or which would separate these relationships from the remainder of the staff. We can illustrate this state, with everyone interacting with everyone else, through a teacher teaching here in her first year.

> *Because I'm new, I'm basically always asking my colleagues things. Because I teach Czech at a junior level, I might ask the grade 4 teacher where they finished and what the students should know, and I might go to the grade 6 teacher to ask where we should get to. So yeah, I consult here about these (…) more important issues so we don't underestimate something somewhere.*

This generally applied freedom to ask anyone can be seen across the staff and does not relate only to targeted questions on a specific problem. The same teacher described how her learning takes place when she comes across a problem in teaching:

> *There are lots of us in the office, so I usually ask a question to them all and anyone who isn't concentrating on something will answer me. And then I might continue in the discussion. But usually we all end up talking about the matter.*

Thus, on the one hand the learning interaction is characterized by a dense network of relationships encompassing, as far as we have seen, the entire

teaching staff, but on the other hand there is not any particularly intensive cooperation between teachers which would ensure a particular group of people might look at a problem repeatedly, systematically, and perhaps with the option of evaluating any particular process. This may be the result of management (there are no stable working teams), as well as external influences (the small number of teachers, absence of parallel classes within the school, absence of regular teacher observations within the staff).

Teachers therefore have no problem providing anyone with their own material or assistance to complete a specific task or providing suggestions for a solution at a co-learning level. They trust they can complain to their colleagues when students are naughty or when some activity did not succeed in the way they had imagined. Thus, trust here is fairly evenly spread across the staff; teachers respect each other professionally and respect any different perspectives without confrontation. Any mutual differences are not a source of a need to clarify a position or a professional challenge, but rather an impetus for understanding nods. This can be seen in the example of two teachers who commute to work together each day for more than an hour. One of them described their discussions on the journey as follows:

> *Well, sometimes we discuss any matters going on, maybe whether to give someone a note to take home. Sometimes I might think a note should be sent to the parents, but she might not think so. It's probably age related; she's younger.*

This quote makes it clear not just that even when there is an opportunity the discussions about work are not intensive and that even mutual disagreement is not a subject for clarification, but also that teachers can see things differently. Such differences are defended by objective fact, e.g. age. In this school, different perspectives live in parallel rather than in mutually enriching symbiosis – in simple understanding coexistence. Occasional supportive enrichment at a co-learning level is expected from mutual learning, not professional challenges or even systematic development.

Isolated islands of trust bringing learning challenges (School B)

In School B, teachers say that "*relationships here have been very poor for many years,*" from which we might infer that we should find similarly low trust among teachers as between teachers and the head teacher. On closer inspection, however, we see that this is not the case. In terms of trust, there are two groups of teachers here. One group comprises those who have not found a close relationship within the staff or who had a close relationship with teachers who have left the school. These teachers often have chosen a path of non-engagement and a certain distance from events at the school, such as the teacher who said:

> *I told myself, because I have a small child and I want to spend time with him, that I just don't want to be at school all day. It seems pointless to me to spend God knows how many hours at school and spend that time on other children when I could be spending that time with my own children.*

This approach makes it quite clear that he can fairly assertively defend and maintain limits. Perhaps because he is one of three men at the school, this approach works for him. Other teachers in this group are leaving the school or are very seriously considering it, as the following response makes clear:

> *So I'm considering, or, well, it's clear now that I'm finishing here. I've found another school. And essentially one of the reasons is also that I'm looking for someone who can take me forward, who can teach me something new. Here, there isn't anyone of note now from whom I would like to learn anything or whom I get on with well enough to start any project with. That's how it is.*

Of note in this response is the intensively felt absence of anybody close who could also meet the need for professional growth. This need is unmet for this group of teachers, as the teachers see the mutual learning among teachers which the head teacher models through her measures as problematic: "*Our meetings are such that we get together because we have to, and say something, but then it all goes quiet and nothing substantive or anything ever comes of it.*" Thus, this group of teachers perceives a low level of trust among teachers, as can be seen in mutual learning among teachers taking place through formal participation in compulsory professional and development activities which the teachers do not, however, assign any deeper importance for their professional growth.

The second group is made up of teachers who operate at school within very intensive supportive relationships with a high level of trust. These relationships formed either on the basis of previously formally established cooperation (groups within a subject, inducted and inducting teachers, etc.) or spontaneously on the basis of mutual sympathy or professional respect. One fairly noticeable feature of these relationships is that at their core is an interest in the profession and professional growth. One of the teachers describes the formation of a relationship with such characteristics as follows:

> *I often went to speak to her to ask whether a particular student acts the same with her, or if they only do it to me. And that's why we began speaking to each other. And you could see with her class when they went to senior level that her class was obedient. And the kids were nice to each other. And then she might have a really difficult class and again at the end of the school year you could see she did lots of work. And also I like her as a person, of course. If I didn't like her as a person then I probably wouldn't be talking to her.*

This relationship thus shows both trust in a colleague's competence and a close relationship. Over time, discussions can move from specific educational and teaching matters to the school context. If trust in the relationship can withstand this topic and the teachers can find common ground and a joint approach for dealing with pressure from the head teacher and the difficult atmosphere, a very strong alliance can be formed. This alliance does not, however, lead to the relationship becoming merely a way of discussing tactics within the school context, although the teachers do share their strategies and insights intensively. The same level of intensity is focused on professional development; discussion of materials, students, and teaching topics; and resolving specific professional problems. The fact that trust is established in the difficult context of the school means the teachers hold mutual discussions openly and have no problem accepting their own mistakes, insecurities, and training needs. Learning therefore takes place not just at the level of safely sharing of ideas, but also in terms of their approach to students, parents, and each other as teachers. These are issues requiring not merely a great degree of professional motivation, but also a great degree of trust in relationship support and professional competence from the learning partner. This was the case, for example, in cooperation between two teachers – one experienced and one new – in managing discussions with parents:

> Teacher: "*Well, when I met with the parents, for example, she came to the meeting. Well, I was leading discussions, she was leading them, so I learned from her example how to deal with those parents.*"
> Interviewer: "*And did you feel bad when you were sitting down with the parents, being the student's teacher, and then she made some kind of interjection?*"
> Teacher: "*Not at all. It helped me. I always knew she would defend me and support me. I led the discussion, but she made points about it, about the problems, and referred to her many years of experience. But I have to say that in front of the parents she always defended me, of course, but then when it was just the two of us she might criticize lots of things. (…) And I'm still learning from that.*"

Since this type of open professional communication is reduced to a very small number of relationships for each teacher at School B (typically just one really intensive relationship), the teachers in the relationships know the other's problems and stories in great detail and have great personal capacity to focus on them in depth and engage with them emotionally. At this school, learning among teachers is isolated, occurs without the head teacher's support and awareness, and yet is of great importance for the professional development of those teachers lucky and determined enough to find a trustworthy and professionally enriching learning relationship involving open (self-)reflection within an atmosphere of caution. There are also teachers, however, for whom the low overall trust among teachers and low trust in

the head teacher have essentially made it impossible to have any kind of mutual learning they would consider meaningful.

Impact of trust within the teaching staff on learning among teachers

If we compare the state of trust at schools A and B, it is clear that while trust at School A is always strongly supported by school management with an emphasis on relationships and teacher autonomy, management at School B only appreciate reliability, reduced to obedience. The result of this is that there is high overall trust among teachers and trust in the head teacher at School A, while trust at School B expressed in all its components is only present within a number of isolated, though intense, learning relationships. If we compare learning among teachers at both schools, we find that while at School A it occurs within a linked network and persists at the level of sharing, at School B it occurs within one group of teachers only as formally responding to requests and within the other group also at the level of open long-term reflection and problem solving. In this chapter, we will look at what we can infer from these observations about the relationships between trust and learning among teachers.

Trust built by the head teacher and mutual learning among teachers

We described School A and School B as two extreme cases in terms of trust. On a closer examination of trust which the head teachers of these schools appreciate and build, this description is affirmed. While the head teacher in School A considers the key component of trust to be that based on relationships, the head teacher in School B deliberately rejects this component of trust. On this basis, the head teacher in School A automatically links mutual learning among teachers with the establishment of helpfulness, which he considers not just a precondition for mutual learning, but also its guarantee. In contrast, the relationship context of mutual learning among teachers is not perceived as important by the head teacher in School B, and so she attempts to support mutual learning among teachers by setting various obligations and checking that these are completed. These strategies by the head teachers have different effects on mutual learning among teachers. In School A, this involves randomness and non-systematic mutual learning among teachers, as teachers will find helpfulness almost anywhere within the staff. In School B, this involves the superficial fulfillment of tasks assigned in order to support mutual learning among teachers which very often do not have major effects on the professional growth of those taking part.

These characteristics of mutual learning among teachers are also supported by what the head teachers base their competence component of trust in teachers on. In School A, competence is particularly linked with teacher autonomy, i.e. trust that teachers will perceive their training needs realistically and be able to see that these are met. In School B, in contrast, trust in teacher competence is quite low and the head teacher attempts to cover all important areas with her own orders. This perception of competence has fairly direct consequences on mutual learning among teachers. In School A, the high level of autonomy means that certain teachers find the training they need and more or less share everything with their colleagues. However, the head teacher does not have a major vision on which teachers' professional growth should focus, nor present it as something systematic or long-term or something which could be subject to evaluation. Not even the teachers themselves have such a vision. It seems that teacher autonomy at School A has been somewhat overestimated by the head teacher, or perhaps rather that the head teacher's limited perception of opportunities for professional growth is clearly reflected in the perception of professional growth by the teachers themselves. The head teacher's unclear and essentially reactive expectations of possible benefits from learning among teachers is reflected in teachers' minimum awareness of what benefits deeper professional contact with their colleagues could bring them other than ideas for new methods and websites. The head teacher's trust appreciated by teachers, which emphasizes their autonomy, thus can represent a limit in an environment without a clearly declared and shared vision of professional development. On the other hand, the head teacher in School B does have a vision for professional development, but the fact that she also has low trust in teacher competence means the teachers do not identify with the established measures and the head teacher's vision of professional development has no effect.

Paradoxically, we can thus see that even when the relationship and competence components of a head teacher's trust are implemented in completely opposite ways, the forms of learning among teachers do not take markedly extreme forms. Rather we can see that certain characteristics are shared in the two forms of mutual learning among teachers. These are the randomness of mutual learning among teachers and the fairly low level of importance it has in the overall life of the school. In our cases, it is therefore clear that one can learn little about mutual learning among teachers based on information about how a head teacher builds trust, even when such information is quite detailed. We can state, however, that a head teacher having high trust in teachers is does not itself ensure mutual learning among teachers, nor does a very low level of head teacher trust in teachers make such learning impossible.

Teachers' trust in the head teacher and mutual learning among teachers

The two examined schools have in common the fact that there is agreement within the staff in terms of their assessment of the head teacher and his/her trustworthiness, with this assessment again at two extremes. Based on our data, it seems that a key factor in the overall assessment of teachers' trust in a head teacher is the trust they place in him/her in the relationship component. In School B, we saw that when the head teacher is failing in the eyes of the teachers, this can also distort their assessment of the other components of trust. In our data, teachers' trust in the head teacher expressed itself within mutual learning among teachers in whether and how teachers accepted the head teacher's concept of support for mutual learning among teachers. We surmise that if there is a high amount of trust between the head teacher and teachers, the teachers will tend to accept the head teacher's concept of professional development, whatever it may be. When there is a low level of trust between the head teacher and teachers, in contrast, no such acceptance is likely to occur and teachers will either give up on mutual learning among teachers entirely or seek their own ways to implement it independently of the head teacher.

Trust between teachers and mutual learning among teachers

The two schools investigated differ in how trust between teachers at the schools is assessed. The high trust at School A does not, however, automatically result in reflection and systematic learning to work with errors. We think that (other than the aforementioned lack of professional development) this is a result of an emphasis on problem-free relationships linked to an unwillingness to show, or even discuss, different perspectives and thus enter a confrontation. Under these specific conditions, this may be a result of staff fatigue following previous conflicts, but it may also be a component of the school culture which, we think, may be counterproductive for learning among teachers. If differences of opinions and perspectives are overlooked or downplayed, teachers lose one of the potential impulses from head teachers for professional development, as represented by addressing differences (Little, 1990). The high level of trust at School A is likely a missed opportunity, although some may not particularly want to exploit it (due to the strategy to not burden teachers). We can thus perceive trust among teachers more as a supportive force, but we cannot expect that it will turn into a major impulse for learning just on its own. What this high level of trust can ensure, it seems, is a high level of interdependence among learning relationships such that teachers do not shy away from sharing advice and resources, something we described above as co-learning (Kasl, Marsick, & Dechant, 1997).

In School B, in contrast, trust among teachers is assessed as very low, and this corresponds to the fairly unlinked network of learning relationships as well as the fact that overall learning among teachers at the school might be described using the term fragmental learning (Kasl, Marsick, & Dechant, 1997). Regardless of the overall state, however, there are a number of learning relationships whose intensity and complexity in terms of learning content is fairly high. It is almost as if the overall context of distrust has strengthened mutual trust. A lack of trust at this school, however, means that other teachers (and certainly the head teacher) are not aware of these relationships, or their professional and development dimensions are not perceived. The low level of trust among teachers thus not only results in a low density of learning interactions, but also prevents mutual inspiration through mutual learning.

Conclusions and discussion

If we were to summarize our answers to the questions posed above, they would be the following. The trust which a head teacher builds and rewards is significantly expressed in how teachers perceive it. We can also state that the key component determining teachers' trust in the head teachers at both schools is the relationship component. A lack of trust in the relationship component can significantly skew perceptions of head teacher trustworthiness in the other components of trust. Where teachers' trust in a head teacher is high, it is likely that teachers will share and implement the head teacher's vision of mutual learning among teachers. Overall trust among teachers does not influence the content given, i.e. whether they will relate reflectively to current knowledge or whether content acquired will involve information assimilation. While we saw mainly assimilation at the school with a high level of overall trust, both types of content were seen at the school with a low level of overall trust. In contrast, the level of overall trust among teachers directly influences the level of interdependence of mutual learning interactions as well as teachers' awareness of their colleagues' learning. It was also shown that a low level of head teacher trust and trust in the head teacher can lead to tools being selected to evaluate mutual learning among teachers which by their nature cannot say anything about the meaningfulness of the process (attendance sheets, the mere existence of an event).

Therefore, our study generally concurs with the claim that trust among teachers can serve as a lubricant for mutual learning among teachers (Handford & Leithwood, 2013), facilitating processes and increasing their impact. Upon closer inspection, however, we also see that excessive trust in certain mechanisms from the head teacher may act counterproductively and rather inhibit the process. This occurred, for example, in one head teacher's excessive

trust in teacher autonomy and the head teacher's trust in the power of measures which should induce mutual learning. In contrast, mutual trust between teachers served only as a lubricant for mutual learning. In this regard, it was significant that wherever there was acquisition of content containing reflection, the competence and relationship components were significantly valued. In contrast, wherever learning took place at the level of sharing, the relationship component or reliability component was dominant.

The functionality of the analysis, which works with individual components of trust, is in accordance with Kramer's research (1996). Kramer claimed that individual players at school prefer different components of trust. Superiors tend to base their trust on whether an employee completes tasks faithfully (reliability) and well (competence), is motivated to work, and has values in accordance with the organization's values. In contrast, subordinates base their trust in the head teacher more on his/her openness and benevolence. We can confirm the preference of individual players for different trust components. We can also confirm that teachers emphasize the relationship component of trust in their assessments of head teachers' trustworthiness. In terms of head teachers' preferences, however, our data corresponds less well to Kramer's study. We saw not just emphasis from the head teachers on different trust components (emphasis vs. rejection of the relationship component) but also completely different interpretations of what the different components meant for the head teachers (reliability based on relationships and reliability reduced to obedience). These different interpretations within apparently identical categories may support the importance of a qualitative approach in further investigations of trust at schools.

Our study has shown that the relationship between trust at school and learning among teachers is not a direct one, and not even successful support of overall trust at school will necessarily result in more valuable mutual learning among teachers. We have shown that satisfactory overall trust among teachers offers functional support for co-learning, but further increasing this overall trust among teachers need not necessarily have any further positive effect on mutual learning among teachers. Rather, the extreme nature of the case with a low level of trust underscored the fact that trust in other staff members is naturally diverse. This relates not just to the fact that building trust has certain phases which require frequent contact (Tschannen-Morgan & Hoy, 1997), but also to the specialization of teachers, their various roles and functions within the school, and their varied professional and life experience (Brücknerová & Novotný, 2016). Instead of requiring increased trust within a social formation, O'Neill (2002) underscored the need for sensitive differentiation of the trustworthy from the untrustworthy. In the school with a low level of trust, we saw that a low trust environment may make it difficult for teachers to acquire enough data to make this differentiation,

and so wariness can affect even those who under other circumstances would find trustworthy sources of learning. On this basis, we surmise that there is a certain minimum level of trust among teachers at school which if not exceeded will significantly complicate learning among teachers.

Thus, learning among teachers not only requires trust, but also tests it. For learning through co-learning, trust emphasizing the relationship component is enough. For more complex content, there is a greater requirement for trust to meet not just relationship needs, but competence in particular. In our research, this was clearly seen at the level of trust among teachers, and also suggested at the level of the head teacher and his/her competence to support learning among teachers. We therefore think that head teachers who deserve full trust should not merely support trust between teachers sufficient for co-learning, they should also provide teachers with both appropriate autonomy and clear guidance so that teachers can fully exploit their trustworthy (i.e., competent, friendly, and reliable) colleagues to learn from them.

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