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NETWORK A MEETING RECORD

Network A Plenary Meeting
March 19-21, 2003, Washington, D.C.

Participants

Helmut Bachmann, Austria
Jürgen Horschinegg, Austria
Christiane Blondin, Belgium (French)
Luc Van de Poele, Belgium (Flemish)
Michael O’Gorman, Canada
Jerry Mussio, Canada
Pavla Zieleniecova, Czech Republic
Jørn Skovsgaard, Denmark
Pirjo Linnakylä, Finland
Thierry Rocher, France
Gérard Bonnet, France
Jochen Schweitzer, Germany
Benedek Péter Tóta, Hungary
Gerry Shiel, Ireland
Ryo Watanabe, Japan
Fernando Córdova, Mexico
Paul van Oijen, Netherlands
Jules Peschar, Netherlands
Anne-Berit Kavli, Norway
Glória Ramalho, Portugal
Guillermo Gil, Spain
Anna Barklund, Sweden
Erich Ramseier, Switzerland
Dominique Rychen, Switzerland
Jason Tarsh, United Kingdom
Mariann Lemke, United States
Eugene Owen, United States (*Chair*)
Andreas Schleicher, OECD Secretariat
Jay Moskowitz, Network A Secretariat
Maria Stephens, Network A Secretariat

Presenters and Observers

Irwin Kirsch, ETS (ICT)
Rich Tobin, AIR

Regrets

Wendy Whitham, Australia
Chiara Croce, Italy
Myungjoon Lee, Korea
Iris Blanke, Luxembourg
Lynne Whitney, New Zealand
Vladislav Rosa, Slovak Republic
Anita Wester, Sweden
Sevki Karaca, Turkey

Summary of Major Outcomes

- Regarding the long-term data strategy, the Network A Secretariat will work with the OECD to draft a paper that summarizes members’ comments and concerns regarding the data strategy for PISA beyond 2006. It is envisioned that this paper would evolve into a full-fledged strategy paper, as it is revisited at subsequent meetings.
- The Network A Secretariat will make a final revision of the indicators for *Education at a Glance* 2003 and submit them to OECD (with a copy to Network members) in April. The

Secretariat will also revise the framework for organizing indicators, per members' comments, and use it in thinking about future indicators. Over the summer, members will receive a more formal proposal for indicators for *EAG* 2004.

- Regarding development work on the framework for assessing ICT literacy, the draft framework will be discussed at the BPC in Mexico City, and the expert group will proceed with their meeting planned for April 3-4 in Princeton, New Jersey. The OECD Secretariat will send a letter to Network A members requesting the additional funds necessary to complete the feasibility study over the summer. Network A members were requested to explore the possibility of contributing (additional) funds to this activity.
- Regarding the Network A/C Task Force on Teaching and Learning, the Network A Secretariat will draft written comments on behalf of Network A for input to the next Task Force meeting in May 2003. Members are requested to share any additional comments on the framework with the Network Secretariat by mid-April.
- Members' comments on the TOR for PISA 2006 will be shared with the BPC and, based on the outcomes of that meeting, be incorporated into the final TOR, which will go out for tender later in April.
- The proposed dates for the next meeting in Lisbon, Portugal are: Thursday and Friday, October 16-17, 2003 for the Network A meeting, and the following Monday through Wednesday, October 20-22, 2003 for the BPC meeting.

Welcome and Introduction

Eugene Owen opened the Network A meeting and thanked members for their cooperation in traveling to Washington. He then welcomed new participants, including: Jürgen Horschinegg from Austria, Pavla Zieleniecová from the Czech Republic, Paul van Oijen from the Netherlands, and Anna Barklund from Sweden, as well as Gérard Bonnet from France and Dominique Rychen from Switzerland. He also gave regrets for: Wendy Whitham from Australia, Chiara Croce from Italy, Myungjoon Lee from Korea, Iris Blanke from Luxembourg, Lynne Whitney from New Zealand, Vladislav Rosa from Slovak Republic, and Sevki Karaca from Turkey.

Discussion on Long-Term Data Strategy

The first day of the meeting was devoted to discussion on the Network's long-term data strategy. Eugene opened the session with an introduction to the two papers in the briefing book, and a call for a round-table to get a sense of the issues at hand and of countries' interests and concerns. This record summarizes the issues raised during this round-table and throughout the subsequent discussions.

At an overarching level,

- Members tried to focus their discussion and distinguish between the long-term strategy as it relates specifically to the future of PISA and the long-term strategy as it relates to INES broadly and the special role of Network A regarding the latter. Although this distinction is

not yet entirely clear in discussions and in documents about the long-term strategy, it is an important distinction to keep in mind as the topic is revisited.

- Two major “sources” were identified for informing the development and articulation of the long-term strategy:
 - The DeSeCo frame of reference for key competencies; and
 - The priority areas identified at the Dublin sub ministerial meeting: (i) quality of outcomes, (ii) role of teachers, (iii) tertiary education (vis á vis the “internationalization” of education), and (iv) social cohesion and equity.
- Final, several overriding questions or issues were identified:
 - What data do we need to be measuring in 2010 and beyond, what skills will students need, and what does a quality education system look like?
 - What experiences can we build on?

At a more detailed level, the following comments related to the long-term strategy.

- Several members voiced an interest (as mentioned previously) in using DeSeCo as possible framework for establishing new domains.
- Several members shared different suggestions of how the Network should think in new ways about the long-term strategy. For example:
 - Guillermo Gil suggested thinking about new models for collecting information (e.g., not relying exclusively on the methodological traditions of university-based research but perhaps also incorporating approaches that are more typically used by school inspectorates);
 - Anne-Berit Kavli and others suggested that we need to think carefully about which domains we will need to be measuring for the years 2009 and beyond and how these might differ from what is important currently;
 - Glória Ramalho cautioned against limiting ourselves at the outset to only that which we think is politically feasible;
 - Luc van de Poele suggested that future assessments should explore methods of measuring learning that are linked to innovative teaching, and he suggested that the literacy concept could be “modernized” to reflect this;
 - Jay Moskowitz suggested that the long-term strategy should consider the range of the population (in terms of skill or proficiency) on which information is desired, reminding members that an assessment such as PISA does not discriminate well at the extreme upper and lower ends of scale and that this might be an area the long-term strategy could explore.
- Gérard Bonnet and others reminded the Network that there are/should be a diversity of sources to inform or fulfill the different elements of strategy (i.e., that it does not have to rely exclusively on PISA or on OECD).

- Several members desired more coordination among different data providers (such as OECD and the IEA).
- Several members thought that longitudinal studies building from PISA were an appropriate potential avenue both for validating PISA as important measures and for better gaining better explanatory information.
- There was interest in including information about teachers in the long-term strategy, both in terms of information from and about them (e.g., as suggested by Jochen Schweitzer and others) but also considering teachers as an audience for information, the notion of teachers as policy makers (e.g., as suggested by Pirjo Linnakylä).
- Several members suggested differentiating in the long-term strategy among core international activities, optional activities that might be undertaken by a cluster of countries (e.g., a regional approach), and optional activities that are best suited to a national approach. A related and often-made point was that the value-added of an international approach should be major criteria in developing and articulating the long-term strategy.
- With regard to domains of interest in the future:
 - Some countries were highly interested in ICT; others had only a moderate interest;
 - A few countries were highly interested in foreign language.
 - Many countries were highly interested social competencies.
 - A few other countries also expressed some interest in cultural, ecological, and/or creative competencies.

The following comments related to the long-term strategy specifically related to PISA:

- There was wide support for PISA and for maintaining the target population of 15 year-olds and limited support for expansion to a younger age group.
- The relevance of PISA's core domains (reading, mathematical, and scientific literacy) and cross-curricular competencies was reaffirmed.
- Several members advised that there is a need to better understand what PISA measures, with members identifying different information needs, such as about:
 - how PISA relates to national structures, assessments, and curricula;
 - the differences in age- versus grade-based options;
 - the correlations between domains, as high correlations might provide an opportunity to be more targeted in measurement – eliminating some measures and adding others of higher interest; and
 - how PISA is different from other studies.
- There were several tensions surrounding the future of PISA. On one hand, there was an interest in new domains and in increasing PISA's explanatory ability, but on the other hand, there was a concern about overburdening PISA. While some countries strongly prefer

keeping PISA “slim” and streamlined, other countries are equally interested in expanding PISA in ways that would bring it closer to schools.

- A number of countries supported the idea of increasing time between cycles (e.g., to 4 years) for reasons that ranged from lessening the burden on schools, spreading out the costs of implementation, and increasing time to analyze/use the data that do exist and to better plan for future analyses. At the end of the discussion, Andreas noted one tradeoff in extending the cycle: the possible loss of momentum and interest. One other member mentioned the possible impacts on the availability of trend data from minor domains (i.e., if the cycle were extended *and* the major-minor structure were to be rethought). Overall, however, many countries were still largely supportive of an extension.
- At least two members noted the importance of better understanding what the utility of PISA data has been (i.e., if and how it was used and to what benefit) in the first three cycles.
- Finally, it was noted that the long-term strategy should encourage that the measurement of CCCs (e.g., with regard to the self-regulated learning in particular) moves from self-report attitudinal measures to direct behavioral measures.

In conclusion, Eugene described the role of Network A vis á vis the PISA Strategic Development Group (SDG), as well as next steps. He noted that Network is focused mainly on the long-term, broad strategy, including but not limited to PISA, whereas the SDG is focused exclusively on PISA – both in the medium-term (e.g., 2006) and long-term (e.g., 2009 and beyond). He noted that the Network A and OECD Secretariats would work together to ensure communication between the two groups. With the OECD Secretariat, the Network A Secretariat will draft a paper summarizing this first discussion and beginning to move toward a strategy. This paper will be revisited and discussed at the next meeting.

Update from INES and OECD

Following the wrap-up of the discussion on long-term data strategy, Andreas Schleicher took the floor to give updates from OECD. During his presentation, he addressed the conceptual framework for INES, the INES program of work, the proposed new funding mechanisms, and recent events related to Networks B and C and the Technical Group. (See attached presentation for details.)

EAG Indicators for 2003

Maria Stephens then took the floor to provide an update on the current status of indicators for *EAG* 2003, to solicit members’ comments on the draft PIRLS indicator for *EAG* 2003, and to describe a draft framework for thinking about future *EAG* submissions. On the first topic, she noted that comments on the revised indicators had been received from about 7 countries, and that most of the comments were fairly specific and had already been taken into account. However, two more broad comments were: (1) a lingering concern from a few members about the multiple measures of engagement in reading (including interest in reading) used in the chapter; and (2) some concerns related to the accessibility of the language of the indicator on profiles of self-

regulated learning, but at the same time a great deal of interest in this indicator. Furthermore, these comments were given in light of the potential need to cut one indicator.

As such and assuming that the PIRLS indicator would be accepted, she proposed that the two indicators on self-regulated learning be combined. This would avoid duplication of the “front-matter”, or explanatory, information and reduce the Network’s submission to 5 indicators. To answer the concern of possible overload of information in this indicator, she suggested eliminating the analysis on interest in reading, which would also address one of the lingering concerns, as well as an analysis on gender, which is well covered in the final indicator. This indicator also would be updated in light of the most recent version of the relevant thematic report. Members had no objections to the proposal.

On the PIRLS indicator, she noted that it was added at the request of OECD and prepared in cooperation with Boston College, as the data were under embargo until April 8. Jason Tarsh requested that the indicator note the correlation of results between PIRLS and PISA. Paul van Oijen requested that there be clarification/documentation of what is meant by “formal schooling.”

On the framework for future *EAGs*, she noted that the document attempts a new way of thinking about how to organize and plan the Network’s yearly submission of indicators. She noted that it presents a matrix, organized by important topics mapped to the INES conceptual framework and by data sources (subjects and populations). The idea is that the framework could be used to help provide a rationale for the indicators that get chosen and could serve as a map against which the Network can check that it’s covering the range of topics and sources desired. In particular, she called members’ attention to the specific suggestions for indicators for *EAG 2004* and then asked for comments.

Regarding the framework, it was suggested that each of the INES work areas should include a focus on trend. It also was suggested that trend should also include indicators on “growth” as indicated by synthetic cohort studies. Andreas also suggested that future indicators that draw upon multiple studies should provide careful and good explanations about possible differences in results.

In conclusion, it was agreed that the Network Secretariat would revise the indicators for *EAG 2003* by early April and would send a more specific proposal for indicators for *EAG 2004* over the summer.

Presentation on ICT Literacy Framework

In the afternoon, Irwin Kirsch gave a presentation on the progress of the ICT expert panel to develop a draft framework for assessing ICT literacy in PISA 2006. He gave his talk in three parts: on the development of the framework, on the components of the framework and draft items, and on the proposed feasibility study. (See attached presentation for details.)

Members were generally complimentary of the progress made and supportive of the framework as a good basis for future development work for PISA. More specific comments included:

- A note that there was a slight disjoint between some elements of the definition (e.g., related to interest and attitude and the phrase ‘to participate effectively in society’) and whether or not (or how) they are proposed to be captured in the assessment;
- A question about how the framework fits in with any literature on existing ICT assessment;
- An interest in knowing how technology impacts the task at hand;
- A concern that reliance upon automatic scoring would lead to too narrow a focus on the technical aspects of ICT literacy;
- A suggestion that the current framework emphasizes the Information aspects, over the Communication aspects of ICT;
- A suggestion to more fully consider the wide use of technology for personal and recreational purposes;
- A question about what is perceived at the upper end of the scale of ICT literacy (e.g., highly specialized use of ICT or applied use of ICT in subject domains); and
- Questions about how the ICT assessment would relate to assessments in other domains, particularly in scientific literacy, and how it might inform the future (e.g., computer-delivered) administration of PISA.

Jürgen Horschinegg also informed Network A members that 12 Austrian schools are currently piloting a web-based testing instrument using the 2003 PISA-assessment (as an additional sample). A report on this pilot project will follow in autumn this year.

Other questions related to operationalization. For example, members asked about the testing time and sample sizes envisioned, platforms used, and any conflict with SITES M3. In answering the first two questions, Irwin could not be explicit, but suggested the testing time would be no longer than that for the PISA main assessments. With regard to platform issues, Irwin noted that for comparability’s sake, the assessment would have to be administered via laptop computers standardized with a simulated web environment and word processing and similar packages developed especially for PISA. Ryo Watanabe fielded the third question, noting that funding for SITES M3 had not yet materialized and that there likely would be no conflict.

With regard to the feasibility study, the main issue under discussion was cost. Andreas noted a shortfall of at least 340,000 Euros to cover the costs of the feasibility study, and requested that members who had expressed a strong interest in this area try to solicit additional funds at the national level to support this work. Members asked if it was possible for the feasibility test to be scaled back in scope or pushed back in time, in order to cope with the financial issues. Irwin and Andreas suggested that scaling back the feasibility study would be too much of a compromise in terms of future risk. To the question of time, Andreas suggested that delaying implementation of the PISA-ICT component until 2007 or 2008 would make the endeavor too complex and burdensome on countries and the Secretariat both operationally and organizationally, but some

members thought this might be the best way to proceed if funds could not be raised in the short term.

In summary, the OECD Secretariat agreed to send a letter to Network A members officially requesting additional funds for the feasibility study and noting the good progress of the panel. Members agreed to explore the feasibility of making (additional) financial contributions.

Draft Framework on Teaching and Learning

To open the final day of the meeting, Gerry Shiel made a presentation on progress with the Network A–C Task Force on Teaching and Learning. He reminded members that the second draft of the conceptual framework had been shared with Network A in October 2002 and that members' comments had been taken into consideration at the Task Force's subsequent meeting in November 2002. The present (third) draft of the conceptual framework will be discussed again at the Task Force's next meeting in mid-May in Copenhagen, in conjunction with the Network C meeting.

In commenting on the current framework, members' shared their support for the framework, as well as some concerns and areas for additional attention. In general, members liked the "ecological" frame in which teaching and learning are considered and appreciated the holistic perspective. The framework was described as a "good map of the territory." However, they also noted the disjoint between the literature review section/list of variables and the final section on possible methodologies. Members discussed at length different ways to bridge the two sections, i.e., how to prioritize among the variables listed in the first section to inform the section on methodologies. From the Network A perspective, several members noted that the most interesting areas of the framework were in the interaction between teaching and learning (e.g., the heart of the chart). Others thought (not incompatibly with the former) that priorities should be set by an emphasis on those factors that relate to student outcomes and that lessons from PISA might be one source for identifying which variables are likely to be important. It also was noted that system-level variables are most useful for explaining cross-country differences, prompting at least one member to suggest an interest in the interaction of teaching and system level variables. More broadly, members hoped that future versions of the framework/strategy would make a more clear distinction about its purpose – whether it is for research or indicators.

Other, more specific concerns or comments are noted below.

- Many members advised that the framework/strategy should take into account the sensitive nature of some of the data that could be collected and possible difficulties of soliciting it in teacher surveys.
- One member suggested that the framework also should consider collaboration of teachers within schools and with the community at large.
- The value-added of international comparisons also was reiterated as an important criteria in formulating the strategy.
- It was suggested that the distinctions between general and subject-specific could be clarified throughout the framework.
- The framework's potential usefulness as an aid for teacher preparation was noted.

Also during the discussion, Jochen offered to provide information from a video study of foreign language teaching in Germany at a future meeting.

In summary, Eugene said that the Secretariat would prepare comments on behalf of the Network and represent them at the next Task Force meeting in mid-May in Copenhagen. Network A members were invited to provide any additional comments to the Secretariat [by mid-April].

Terms of Reference for PISA 2006

Andreas then gave an update on the current status of the TOR for PISA 2006. He began with an overview of the structure of the TOR and then summarized the main concerns that had been shared to date about the TOR. (See attached presentation for more details.) Outside of a few notations for corrections and several questions, members' comments mainly centered around the optional components:

- Though there was high interest in the foreign language option in some countries, there also was some reservation about the limited way in which it would be assessed and concern from the OECD Secretariat that effort was being expended in tendering for an option that was not likely to materialize. It was suggested that the EU study of foreign language might be a better source for this information.
- Several members also were concerned about the inclusion of the science video study component. They were unsure about how it came about, and some viewed it as a fishing expedition that would compromise the credibility among bidders of the TOR as a whole. One member also noted that, in terms of qualitative studies, case studies would be better suited to PISA than would video studies.
- Regarding dissemination, at least one member noted the component is not focused on the tasks that would be of highest interest – namely, in facilitating coordination among countries, rather than in facilitating communication of results within a country.

Summary and Next Meeting

In conclusion, Eugene reviewed the major decisions taken at the meeting (a summary of which can be found at the beginning of this document). The proposed dates for the next meeting are: October 16-17, 2003, in Lisbon, Portugal, with the BPC meeting following on October 20-22.

Eugene thanked members for their cooperation and hard work, and the meeting was adjourned.

Attachments

Updated Network A contact list
National Coordinators contact list
INES Program of Work
Copies of Powerpoint presentations on INES, ICT, and TOR
Summary report of Dublin sub-ministerial meeting