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NETWORK A MEETING RECORD

Network A Plenary Meeting October 10-11, 2002, Prague, Czech Republic

Participants

Wendy Whitham, Australia
Helmut Bachmann, Austria
Christiane Blondin, Belgium (French)
Luc Van de Poele, Belgium (Flemish)
Michael O’Gorman, Canada
Jerry Mussio, Canada
Lubomir Martinec, Czech Republic
Jørn Skovsgaard, Denmark
Thierry Rocher, France
Pirjo Linnakylä, Finland
Jochen Schweitzer, Germany
Gella Varnava-Skoura, Greece
Benedek Péter Tóta, Hungary
Gerry Shiel, Ireland
Iris Blanke, Luxembourg
Myungjoon Lee, Korea
Ryo Watanabe, Japan
Arnold Spee, Netherlands
Jules Peschar, Netherlands
Lynne Whitney, New Zealand,
Glória Ramalho, Portugal
Vladislav Rosa, Slovak Republic
Guillermo Gil, Spain
Anita Wester, Sweden
Erich Ramseier, Switzerland
Giray Berberoglu, Turkey
Mariann Lemke, United States
Andreas Schleicher, OECD Secretariat
Claudia Tamassia, OECD Secretariat
Jay Moskowitz, Network A Secretariat
Maria Stephens, Network A Secretariat

Presenters and Observers

Irwin Kirsch, ETS (ICT)
Dominique Rychen, SFSO (DeSeCo)
Laura Salganik, AIR/ESSI (DeSeCo)
Jim Stigler, LessonLab (Video)
Rich Tobin, AIR (TOR)

Regrets

Friedrich Plank, Austria
Chiara Croce, Italy
Fernando Cordova, Mexico
Eva Schøyen, Norway
Lorna Bertrand, United Kingdom
Eugene Owen, United States

Summary of Major Outcomes

- The Network A Secretariat will re-draft the terms of reference for the ICT development work and establish an expert group to undertake the work, which will include both conceptual and technical aspects related to both the assessment of ICT literacy in 2006 and the consideration of using ICT for assessment of subject domains in later years. The expert group should include the various institutional actors already involved in ICT assessment endeavors, such as ETS, IEA, Max Planck Institute, EU, etc.)

- The Network A Secretariat will revise the indicators for *Education at a Glance 2003* according to members' input: (1) the indicator on the PISA-IALS link will not be included in this year's draft but will be reconsidered for 2004; (2) the current indicator on students' learning strategies and styles will be replaced by an indicator drawing upon the thematic report on self-regulated learning and will be prepared by the team working on the thematic report; and (3) the editorial comments on the remaining three indicators will be implemented. A revised draft will be sent to members' for their comments in early January 2003.
- The draft language for the TOR for 2006 will be revised according to Network A (and BPC) members' comments. The revised draft TOR will be circulated for written consultation with Network (and BPC) members' prior to the BPC meeting in Mexico City in March 2003, at which time the BPC will provide final comments and approval.
- On a related point, there will be a special session on long-term strategy around the Network A meeting in Mexico City. The Network A Secretariat also will consult with the Chair to determine if it is necessary to hold a preliminary strategy sub-group meeting prior to the Mexico City meeting and will provide members with more information once that is determined.
- The proposed dates for the Mexico City meetings are: Thursday and Friday, March 20-21, 2003 for the Network A meeting, and the following Monday through Wednesday, March 24-26, 2003 for the BPC meeting. The date for the long-term strategy discussion is to be determined but will likely occur on the weekend in between the two meetings.

Welcome and Introduction

Jay Moskowitz opened the Network A meeting, expressing regrets from Eugene Owen, who was not able to attend the meeting. Eugene continues to recuperate and work from his home and looks forward to rejoining the Network at the next meeting. Jay then welcomed new participants, including: Helmut Bachmann from Austria, Myungjoon Lee from Korea, Iris Blanke from Luxembourg, Vladislav Rosa from Slovak Republic, and Giray Berberoglu from Turkey.

Update from INES and OECD

Claudia Tamassia took the floor to give a presentation on updates from OECD. During her presentation, she addressed organizational changes at OECD, new and forthcoming publications from PISA 2000, recent events related to Networks B, C, and the Technical Group, and activities related to non-member countries (e.g., WEI). (See attached presentation for details.)

During and following the presentation, the floor was opened for questions. Of note, Arnold Spee asked if the OECD would consider publishing the theoretical work related to the information presented in *Education at a Glance* and *Education Policy Analysis* on the web, an idea that was supported by Erich Ramseier and others. Other members asked questions about, and noted the importance of, coordination with the EU and IEA.

Follow-up on ICT Literacy Planning Discussion

The Network then had a follow-up conversation, which was not on the original agenda, on the presentation given by Irwin Kirsch on the previous afternoon on a new framework for assessing information communication technology (ICT) literacy and his guidance for a similar activity in PISA. (See attached presentation for details.)

Jay began by summarizing the key point of the presentation that developing a framework for assessing ICT literacy would have somewhat atypical and extensive requirements compared to other similar efforts, including not only conceptual work but technical work as well. He noted that although a scope of work for an expert group existed – having been prepared by the Network A Secretariat over the summer – it could be redrafted to reflect this. He opened the floor to members to discuss if and how they wanted to proceed in this area. Many members shared comments, including:

- An agreement that this effort requires more work before being turned over to the contractor than analogous efforts had required;
- The overall sense that we need empirical results along the way to make informed decisions;
- The need to coordinate with the existing efforts such as work at the EU and the Max Planck Institute;
- The desire to think ahead to 2009 and consider a pre-pilot test in using ICT to deliver subject-area assessments (e.g., reading literacy);
- The implications the above would have on the composition of the expert group;
- The acknowledgment that there is risk involved, but that at the same time there may be political costs in some countries if that risk is not taken;
- The support for the idea of building decision-making milestones into the scope of work; and
- The need for the framework to identify its similarities to and differences from other studies.

Jay proposed that the Network A Secretariat should redraft the scope of work for the expert group in a way that would: be goal-oriented; draw on the idea of milestones; build in both conceptual and technical work; look to incorporate the limited set of institutional actors in this area in the expert group (e.g., IEA, Max Planck Institute, EU, ETS); and include some small-scale feasibility testing. Members agreed with this proposal and underscored the criticality of getting this group started as soon as possible.

EAG Indicators for 2003

Maria Stephens then gave an overview of the draft indicators for *EAG 2003*. She noted that the indicators in the chapter deviated slightly from the original list discussed at the May 2002 meeting in reaction to the final draft for *EAG 2002* and in consultation with OECD, but that they

aimed to reflect the general consensus in drawing from the thematic report on reading literacy, the CCCs, and CivEd with a significant focus on gender across the indicators. She also noted that the indicators based on the reading literacy thematic report, though they had been modified slightly to fit the indicator format, did not differ from the story lines as presented in that report. She noted that this may be something members would want to consider and that this also might be impacted by the recommendations made by the BPC editorial group, which had met earlier in the week.

In going through the five indicators, she called attention to key issues for discussion. With regard to Indicator 1, should there be additional charts on IALS results alone to justify/explain the link and should *EAG* present the data more neutrally without reference to a “cut-off” at Level 3 (as the BPC editorial group had just recommended for the thematic report as well)? With regard to Indicator 2 on reading profiles, she asked if there were suggestions for how to better present the data graphically? With regard to the indicator on learning styles and strategies, she asked if members wanted to proceed with the development of this indicator or consider replacing it with information from the CCC thematic report, a draft of which just became available to the BPC editorial group. In summary, she noted that the indicators were a work in progress and turned the floor over to Jay for members’ comments.

Discussion mainly proceeded on the indicators in turn. First, though, at a general level, Jerry Mussio asked about the possibility of developing a conceptual framework to inform indicator selection in the future. Arnold Spee and others also were concerned that countries were not having full opportunity to review the indicators that OECD substituted for Network-approved indicators and asked for a formal response from the OECD on that matter. With regard to the first indicator:

- With regard to the issue of the “cutoff,” it was agreed that Indicator 1 should be revised as the thematic report would be, with no discussion of Level 3 as a “minimum” level of literacy.
- Anita Wester questioned the appropriateness of disaggregation to the 16-25 year-old age group, given that for some countries that cell size may not support analysis.
- Lynne Whitney suggested that the language comparing PISA students with the younger IALS participants should be more carefully worded so as not to imply that the IALS-PISA link is a study of change.
- Erich Ramseier, Luc Van de Poele, and Pirjo Linnakylä were concerned about the comparisons more generally. Luc suggested that the indicator explain more about differences in the two frameworks and Pirjo suggested that these framework differences could in part account for the gender differences described in the indicator.
- Thierry Rocher suggested that there was not a compelling interest in placing PISA on the IALS scale and including it in *EAG*. Jules Peschar noted in a similar vein that the indicator should do a better job of explaining why this link was undertaken – to compare patterns across the two studies.

- In the end, consensus emerged that this indicator should not be included in *EAG 2003* but rather be considered for *EAG 2004*, with a more careful consideration of the points raised above.

On the second indicator, Erich Ramseier questioned the value-added of this indicator considering the third indicator also addressed engagement in reading and in a more substantial way. Gerry Shiel suggested that some of the strange anomalies in the results could be accounted for by the nature of the questionnaire items, which had focused on voluntary, rather than all, reading. With regard to the third indicator, Pirjo Linnakylä noted that the Technical Notes provided the definition of engagement that was used for the international report, rather than the one that was used for the thematic report and for this indicator. Anita Wester and Wendy Whitham suggested making this distinction more apparent in the main text of the indicator and asked for an analysis of the differences in results using each of the indices. With regard to Indicator 4, Jules Peschar supported the suggestion that this indicator be replaced by information from the thematic report on self-regulated learning and offered to draft an indicator for this purpose. He also recommended that the CCCs be referenced in the introduction to the chapter, and Christiane Blondin noted that the chapter should indicate that the CCCs are optional so as to explain the reduced number of countries in the text and tables. Finally, with regard to the indicator on gender differences, Erich requested that the text provide more explanation in reference to the CivEd Study, which currently appeared too isolated. He also suggested that the final draft carefully review the treatment of gender in the fifth indicator vis á vis the other indicators.

In sum, members agreed to hold off on Indicator 1, replace Indicator 4, and make edits to the other three.

Brief Update on Network A Book

Maria Stephens then gave a brief update on progress with the Network A book. She informed members that the contract with Routledge Falmer had been negotiated and signed over the summer and that all authors had been contacted and agreed to contribute their updated chapters – for a total of ten chapters in the volume. She noted that about half the chapters had been received at this point. She expected to be able to turn the final draft manuscript in to the publisher in November/December, with a publication date of 6-8 months later, should everything go smoothly. She noted that the publisher continues to be very positive about the project.

Presentation on TIMSS/TIMSS-R Video Study

In the afternoon of the first day, Jim Stigler gave a presentation on the video studies in TIMSS and TIMSS-R, which included information on background, motivation for the studies, challenges and benefits to using video, and the types of results that can be expected. He also demonstrated the software that has been developed to use and analyze the information collected. (See attached presentation for details.) The members were very appreciative of the presentation and asked many questions, especially in light of the new activity to develop the framework on teaching and learning.

Draft Framework on Teaching and Learning

To open the second day, Jay gave a brief update on progress with the Network A–C Task Force on Teaching and Learning. He reminded members that a first draft had been shared with both Networks in May 2002, and that members had provided comments urging a stronger focus on classroom- and individual-level factors that lead to teaching and learning. Over the summer, the Network A Secretariat revised the framework according to those comments as well as those from Network C members and the extensive and helpful written comments of the members of the Task Force. The next meeting of the Task Force will be November 20-21 in Berlin, following the PISA symposium. Erich Ramseier noted that there had been good progress from the earlier version, but suggested that the framework should also include information on how systems and schools group students (e.g., tracking/streaming policies). Jochen Schweitzer also thought it would be useful to include information on parents' role in school functioning. Gerry Shiel noted that the job of the Task Force in November will be one of prioritization and also suggested that PISA might be a source of information for elaboration of the “actions of learning” section of the framework.

Terms of Reference for PISA 2006

Rich Tobin then gave an overview of recommendations made by a Network A subgroup on the TOR for PISA 2006. He noted mainly the key recommendation of the group, which was to break the TOR into 5 distinct scopes of work (SOWs). In doing so, he also noted additional changes that had been recommended by the BPC earlier in the week. He also described the proposed timeline – with approval of the TOR in March 2003, the letting of the TOR in April 2003, and award of the contract(s) August through October 2003. Jay also provided some background as to why the recommendation for multiple SOWs was made: to access more expertise in the wide ranging components of PISA 2006, in spite of potentially increased managerial complexity.

In the ensuing discussion, a few questions were asked about the scope of work for the possible foreign language component, which appears at this moment to have less than the required number of countries to be an international option. Lynne Whitney suggested that the evaluation criteria should incorporate prior experience related to collaboration, since this is a key element of the proposed structure. The issue of reporting also received a fair amount of attention, with some members sharing concerns that the TOR should establish better connections among OECD, the contractor and countries and better mechanisms for dealing with problematic situations, especially during report writing.

Members also shared concerns about the arrangements for translation – with Guillermo Gil noting the importance of taking into account variations within language groups or countries and Christiane Blondin wanting to ensure that national level competencies are not lost. The OECD/Network A Secretariats will prepare a draft for written consultation of members prior to the meeting in Mexico City, where countries will be asked to give guidance and approval for the finalization of the TOR.

Related to this discussion, Jay noted the TOR subgroup had suggested that there be an additional day at the Network A meeting in Spring 2003 devoted to long-term strategy issues. Jay said that

plans for this were in the works, and he noted that he also would consult with the Chair about the possibility of a preliminary meeting of the group prior to the Spring meeting.

Presentation on DeSeCo

Jay then introduced Dominique Rychen, from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, and Laura Salganik, from the Education Statistics Services Institute, to make a presentation on the conclusion of the Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo) Project. Their presentation reviewed the main conclusions of the four-year DeSeCo project and implications of the DeSeCo work on future assessments. (See attached presentation for details.)

Members congratulated Dominique and Laura on the accomplishments of the DeSeCo project team and were pleased to review the final framework/strategy. At the same time, however, they noted the challenges in operationalizing its elements. In responding to a question about how DeSeCo might inform PISA and ALL, Laura noted potential links to the ICT literacy framework, input on the second round of PISA, and input on planning future adult assessments. This raised the issue of potentially working towards common frameworks for young adults and adults, which Andreas opined was an imperative for coherence in future activities. Related to this, it was suggested that the long-term strategy subgroup should think about both PISA and adult assessment.

Other Projects

Jay then gave brief updates on other international studies.

- *Adult Literacy and Lifeskills (ALL) Study*: Preparations are underway for the main data collection in 2003. Participating countries will next meet in early 2003 in the United States to discuss scoring.
- *Progress in Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)*: The first round of PIRLS is nearing completion. In September, the PIRLS Reading Development Group met in Paris regarding scale anchoring. Final national PIRLS data should be sent to countries in early November. National Research Coordinators will then meet in Istanbul in early December to review draft international report, which is tentatively scheduled for release on April 8, 2003.
- *Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)*: Data collection for TIMSS 2003, which includes grades 4 and 8, has begun in some Southern Hemisphere countries. For Northern Hemisphere nations, data collection will begin in Spring 2003. Two TIMSS NRC meetings are scheduled for 2003: (1) Bucharest, Romania (March 17-21, 2003) for scoring training; and (2) South Africa (November 10-14, 2003) for review of table shells and proposed report outline. About 51 countries are participating in the grade 8 study and about 27 are participating in the grade 4 study. Importantly, TIMSS 2003 grade 8 results will be released in early December 2004, which also is when OECD would most likely release PISA 2003 data.

Claudia Tamassia also gave a brief review of PISA and the BPC meeting earlier in the week, for those members of Network A who are not also members of the BPC. She noted that:

- OECD and the BPC editorial group will work to get the thematic report on students' social background in line with the original proposal;
- Instruments are being finalized and questionnaires are being worked on;
- National Project Managers will be meeting in Australia later in October;
- There will be a display of national reports at the PISA symposium;
- The science framework extension committee will meet in Paris in December and invitations should be out soon; and
- OECD is working on a glossary of definitions and important terms from PISA 2000.

Summary and Next Meeting

In conclusion, Jay reviewed the major decisions taken at the meeting (a summary of which can be found at the beginning of this document).

Jay thanked Lubomir, Martin, and Lucie for their hospitality and warm welcome in Prague; Jim Stigler, Irwin Kirsch, Dominique Rychen, and Laura Salganik for their presentations; the members for their participation, as always; and the OECD and Network Secretariats for their work and support. The proposed dates for the next meeting are: March 20-21, 2003 in Mexico City, with the BPC meeting following on March 24-26.

The meeting was adjourned.

NOTE: Photographs of the BPC and Network A meetings can be found on the Internet at:
http://www.uiv.cz/Foto/page_01.htm.