

KITT LYNGSNES

Nord-Trøndelag University College, Department of Teacher Education., Norway

**CLASSROOM PRACTICE IN SCHOOLS ACHIEVING HIGH RESULTS
AT NATIONAL TESTS IN NORWAY****Abstract:**

Standardised testing have become a common practice in most schools systems. In Norway, national tests are held in the 5th, 8th, and 9th grade in reading literacy, numeracy and English. Research point to the extensive focus on the tests, and how these testing regimes effect teaching and classroom activity (Berliner, 2011; Biesta, 2009). School achievement as in such standardised tests can often be explained by factors related to socioeconomic standards. Despite this, some schools in lower socioeconomic areas manage to achieve good results as well.

The study presented in this paper, took its starting point in schools in lower socioeconomic areas where pupils, during the last three years, had achieved good results in the national tests. This might imply that these schools have succeeded in developing a classroom practice, which gives a good learning outcome for multiple pupils. The aim of the project was:

- to describe and analyse classroom practice in schools which, over time, have succeeded in achieving good results in national tests
- to identify conditions in such schools which are significant for the teachers' classroom practice and, thereby, in the learning outcome of the pupils.

Taking the point of departure in Kemmis' (2009) theoretical concept 'practice architecture', the project studied the practice itself, the understanding which is woven into the practice and the conditions for practice that exist in the school.

The research strategy was case studies where each school constituted a case (Yin, 2009). Data collection methods were classroom observations and interviews with headmasters, teachers and pupils in seven schools in four provinces.

The key results of the study show that these schools do not "teach to test". Test results are used to develop classroom practice through a collective oriented school culture characterized by collaboration, reflection and a strong and motivating leadership.

References

Berliner, D. (2011). Rational responses to high stakes testing: the case of curriculum narrowing and the harm that follows. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 41(3), 287-302.

Biesta, G. (2009). Good education in an age of measurement : on the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education. *Educational Assessment Evaluation and Accountability*, 21(1), 33 - 46.

Kemmis , S. (2009). Understanding professional practice: a synoptic framework. In B. Green (Ed.), *Understanding and Researching Professional Practice* (pp. 19-28). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Keywords:

national tests, classroom practice, case study