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From Expert to Novice? The Influence of Management by Documents on Teachers' Knowledge Base and Norms

Abstract: The aim of this study is to reveal how teachers experience the effects of management by documents in their professional practice. Approximately one hundred primary school teachers were asked to describe their daily teaching work with special focus on the demands in terms of the production of documentation. The reports were analysed using a “profession theoretical” model which focuses on the following aspects of professional knowledge: recognition, emotional engagement, and evaluation of and responsibility for one’s own work. The results show that the teachers have experienced that the teaching profession has changed because of fixation on results, and fragmentation has resulted in a decrease in the levels of trust and a feeling that the work is boring. The internal pedagogic discourse is weakened because of the presence of an external legal discourse. Management by documents can thus be a factor that causes a professional regression.

Keywords: Management by documents, teacher knowledge and norms, professional regression

In the wake of the introduction of New Public Management, the work that teachers do has changed radically (Jarl & Rönnerberg, 2010; Solbrenke & Englund, 2011; Stenlås, 2009). In a goal- and result-driven school system, it has become more important to manage and document every aspect of the student’s performance. In the Swedish context, these changes in management systems have resulted in teachers’ work being managed, controlled, and standardized by different demands with respect to documentation. These demands entail control and management of teacher’s work processes; this we define as “management by documents.” In this study, our investigation into management by documents is limited to (i) individual development plans (*individuella utvecklingsplaner*) which contain written evaluations of every student and (ii) action plans (*åtgärdsprogram*) for students who are at risk of not achieving the required subject proficiency or competency (National Agency for Education [NAE], 2008a, 2008b). Both technologies, which include a presentation of each students’ performance, are linked to educational programs which are intended to support and ensure students’ achievement of educational goals (Rose & Miller, 1992).

The question that we ask is: How do teachers experience the influence that management by documents has on their work? In Sweden, these changes in management systems and their effects on teachers’ professional knowledge have been discussed

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by politicians, researchers, and by teachers themselves. The decrease in overall Swedish student performance levels in PISA (NAE, 2013) prompted the Directorate for Education and Skills – OECD with a mandate from the Swedish government to analyse the Swedish school system, including the work that teachers perform (OECD, 2015). In the report, it was noted how the growth of the school bureaucracy in the Swedish school system had undermined trust in the teachers' professional competence.

People at all levels observed that there has been a marked cultural shift in the school system, from belief in the professional competence and expertise of educators and a high degree of social trust in their judgments to one of distrust, increasing bureaucratisation of decisions, and uncertainty about expectations under which educators are supposed to operate (OECD, 2015, p. 114).

Using the motto “Let teachers be teachers, not administrators!” several teacher unions have given voice to teachers' dissatisfaction with this situation (Läraryrket, 2016). Teachers claim that they spend 50% of their time on administrative duties, and 2/3 of teachers report that they do not have time to properly execute their teaching assignment (Skolvärlden, 2016). International research shows that teacher is the most important individual factor for student learning. Based on a wide-ranging international overview of the subject, Håkansson and Sundberg (2012, p. 161) write: “The research shows that students who are taught by the most effective teachers enjoy learning benefits four times greater than those students who are taught by the least effective teachers.” Effectiveness is dependent on professional's knowledge, ability, and what they do. What is of importance, in this context, is professionals' knowledge base and norms which include both theoretical and practical knowledge (Grimen, 2008). There is a current lack of knowledge about the effect that management by documents has on teachers' knowledge and norms (Agevall & Jonnergård, 2007; Agevall, Jonnergård, & Krantz, 2017). It is this lack of knowledge that we address in this paper. Our hypothesis is that teachers' knowledge base and norms change when the demand for documentation becomes more marked at school. To test this hypothesis, we interviewed almost hundred teachers who shared their experiences of management by documentation. The responses that were made by the teachers were analysed by using a profession-theoretical model which focused on aspects of their professional knowledge base and norms (Agevall & Jonnergård, 2007; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, 2005).

The aim of this paper is to present how teachers experience the effects of management by documents on their profession.

Management via documentation

The demands for documentation can be put into perspective as being part of a wider discourse—a discourse where documents and documentation represent that which is normal, reasonable, and natural as well as rational (Foucault, 2003; Riles, 2006). In this discourse, documentation becomes a condition for improvement work, quality assurance, and school development. Documentation sets demands and expectations for clearer demarcations of responsibility, a clarification of work processes, and the development of the ability to be self-reflexive. Documentation as a management technology constitutes an important part of the message that pedagogic practice transmits to students, caretakers, teachers, principals, business people, and politicians. Documentation thus fulfills system-related functions in terms of making comparisons (comparability), imposing control, and making selections (Hofvendahl, 2006; Krantz, 2009; Sjöberg, 2011). Changes in school management systems and procedures have been dependant on the profession's (i.e., teachers') ability and willingness to exercise internal control over the school system (Mausethagen & Mølsted, 2015; Sahlin & Waks, 2008). For teachers, management by documents is directly expressed in terms of how documentation, evaluations, and other judgments inform

teachers how the achievement of certain goals and results should take place (Biesta, 2011; Englund, 2012). The fact that teachers must be professional in this area of documentation constitutes professional practice (Forsberg & Lindberg, 2010). In terms of increased accountability and curriculum control, traditional demands placed on teachers (where they previously determined for themselves the nature of their pedagogic work) have changed (Mausethagen & Mølstad, 2015), resulting in a situation where less attention is given to the relational aspects of teacher's work (Mausethagen, 2013a).

The degree to which changes in school management systems have resulted in professionalization or de-professionalization for teachers is debatable (Mausethagen, 2013a, 2013b; Mausethagen & Smeby, 2016). In a comparative study of the education systems in Sweden, Ireland, and Finland, Swedish and Irish teachers (in contrast to Finnish teachers) experienced that an increase in demands for documentation contributed to a decrease in professional autonomy (Houtsonen, Czaplicka, Lindblad, Sohlberg, & Sugrue, 2010). When the demand for documentation is related to an overarching administrative level, many teachers were of the opinion that their work dealt with the development of democratic learning structures to a lesser degree (Biesta, 2004; Eggen, 2010). Brante, Johnsson, Olofsson, and Svensson (2015) show that teacher's autonomy has been weakened. Other studies show that teachers' resistance towards accountability policies and current developments in school management systems is legitimised by moral arguments and by reference to their experience-based knowledge (Mausethagen, 2013b). According to Asp-Onsjö (2012), documentation can establish order and create "truth" from the perspective of those who are in power. She claims that an increase in documentation can, in certain situations, increase teacher's professional influence over parents. Documentation can also cause resistance when the "truth" that documentation creates is questioned by caretakers and students. In an attempt to fend off accusations of being unclear or arbitrary, uncertainty and protectionist strategies can develop within teachers (Krantz, 2009).

Management by documents causes teachers to act in response to external demands and expectations, so as to come across as legitimate (being a professional). But, on the other hand, they also create and support quality improvement processes in the school's operations (being professional) (Hargreaves, 2000; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). In the tension between external demands and internal expectations, feelings of distrust and reliance have to be dealt with so that the school operations proceed in a professional manner (Mausethagen, 2013b).

Analytical framework

Our theoretical point of departure includes the claim that teachers' knowledge base and norms change in response to the effects of prevailing forms of management by documents, and that this change influences pedagogic practices. So as to understand this change, it is appropriate to scrutinize the terms *knowledge base* and *norms* more closely.

Knowledge base and norms are foundational to the functional professional-theoretical perspective which is usually credited to Parson (1939) and Freidson (2001). A profession, with its associated competencies (knowledge base) and responsibilities (norms), should solve certain societal problems. Professionals claim to possess the necessary knowledge and ethical considerations to classify problems, to give direction to their actions, and to be able to evaluate the consequences of their actions (Abbott, 1988). By using their specialized education and training in practice, professions have developed their own theoretical knowledge ("to know that"), as well as context-dependent, experiential knowledge ("to know how to") (Ryle, 1990). Professional autonomy includes both knowledge and norms. In cases where it is suspected that teachers' knowledge base and norms are in a state of change, then it is

necessary to provide a further specification of those aspects which constitute teachers' knowledge base and norms.

This is what we are able to do by using Dreyfus and Dreyfus's (2005) model, which describes the five steps by which knowledge and norms are developed. The first step, a *novice*, characterizes knowledge as consisting of facts in the form of context-free rules. A novice evaluates her work in terms of how well it follows the rules. An *advanced beginner* has begun to recognize and differentiate between different relevant parts in different situations. A person who is *competent* has learned to prioritize and can judge that which is important to a particular situation and experiences a personal responsibility for the choices that are made. A *proficient performer* is heavily engaged, understands, and interprets situations in terms of whether the problem is to be solved or a potential is to be exploited, and is guided by open rules. Finally, an *expert* performer has the ability to perceive and differentiate between more subtle features of a situation or problem, and possesses a level of preparedness, and thus, foresight. An expert teacher also follows the rules, but rules and routines are context dependent. The path from novice to expert allows the practitioner to develop from a position where she merely follows the rules to a place where she can assume responsibility for her work, which entails a series of ethical considerations based on professional judgments (Fritzén, 2007). When routines are replaced by a more profound sense of engagement, norms become intrinsic to teacher's work. Based on Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2005) and theories of ethics at work (Benner, 1993; Freidson, 2001; Polanyi, 1962), Agevall and Jonnergård (2007) identify three aspects (forming a so-called "knowledge triad") which they claim are crucial to the development and maintenance of profession's knowledge and norms.

The three aspects which are crucial for the continued development, maintenance, and further development of the professional's knowledge base and norms are: (i) recognition—the ability to see, to notice, and recognise a situation, (ii) emotional engagement, and (iii) evaluation and responsibility for one's own work (Agevall, Jonnergård & Krantz, 2017, p. 25).

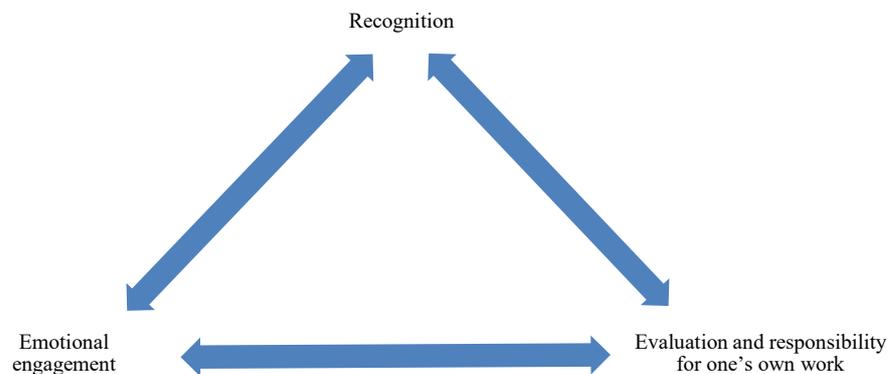


Figure 1. *The knowledge triad. The arrows in the figure indicate that each of the three aspects are dependent on each other.*

Recognition refers to the ability to identify what is demanded by a professional person in a certain situation (Polanyi, 1962). "Recognition can be summarized as a perceptual ability which is grounded on knowledge and experience. We also claim that this ability is related to ethics" (Agevall et al., 2017, p. 27). *Emotional engagement* refers to the subject's willingness to do good work. Polanyi (1962) highlights intellectual passion as a necessary condition for the work done by a professional to be successful. Emotional engagement is closely related to whether a teacher can make independent choices or not. Teacher's autonomy entails that she enjoys the freedom

of action and possesses the ability to act (Agevall et al., 2017). *Evaluating and taking responsibility for one's own work* involves a critical examination of one's work and taking personal responsibility as an inalienable part of knowledge development (Molander, 1993). Taking responsibility requires freedom of action which includes an ethical compass which takes into consideration both the individual and society needs. Englund and Solbrekke (2010, p. 2) state that, "[P]rofessional responsibility gains a specific meaning. It implies a commitment to a body of knowledge and skills, both for the profession's own sake and for use in the service of its clients and in the interests of society." The way in which work is assessed and how responsibility is judged are linked to the possibility of making independent choices. Freedom of action thus entails responsibility and ethical behavior (Svensson & Karlsson, 2008).

Group interviews and qualitative content analysis

Nineteen group interviews with 94 teachers (69 women and 25 men) were conducted. The teachers represented three different schools from three different municipal counties in Sweden. Two of the schools included students from Years 7-9 whilst the other school is an F-9 school. A condition that was common to all of the schools was an expectation from teachers to undergo professional development concerning their ability to document and maintain individual learning plans and action programs. One of the schools stood out in that a large proportion of students had not achieved specified knowledge goals. All teachers at the three schools were interviewed. A majority of the teachers possessed considerable teaching experience in terms of years of service. The interviews were conducted according to how teachers were organized in their respective work teams. The teachers were informed of the purpose of the research project, and they were notified that their participation was voluntary. This research project was approved by the ethics board.

During the interviews, questions were asked about teachers' work plans, their documentation and assessment practices, and about what they thought were the causes behind a decrease in student performance results. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim as 275 pages of 12 point text. Our decision to interview teachers entailed that their view of the organizational context and different institutional levels would come to the fore. This method resulted in some limitations, however. During the group interviews, it is possible that teachers influenced each other. For example, a teacher might describe her own professional work in a favorable light but may take the opportunity to be overly critical of school's management and management by documents. The focus of the interviews was on teachers' descriptions of their own practices, and so we did not perform any classroom observations or read what teachers wrote in the relevant documentation. Notwithstanding this, we were able to receive feedback from the participants. By re-visiting the summary transcripts with the teachers, we were able to reach a higher level of mutual enlightenment and thus, provide even more, supportive evidence for our final conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The majority of teachers who participated in this study possess many years of professional teaching experience; a fact which may have influenced the result of the study. Previous studies have shown that veteran teachers can be more critical of changes in school management when compared to teachers who have just begun their teaching careers. Reference to the contrast between "before" and "now" can be sometimes used to legitimize resistance to a certain development or change (Mausethagen, 2013b).

The analysis of the interviews consisted of three distinct stages. The first stage was a content analysis based on the theory presented in Goodson and Lindblad's (2011) termed professional work life narratives. The second stage examined management by documents as a force that provides structure, in the sense that such management partly controls attention and behavior (Rose & Miller, 1992), and partly influences teachers' relationship with each other, with students, and with parents

(Mausethagen, 2013a). Our ambition was to clarify and interpret the meaning conveyed by the statements uttered by the teachers during the interviews (Bergström & Boréus, 2000), in an attempt to condense the data (in contrast to merely “reducing” or summarizing the data (Miles et al., 2014). The themes that emerged during the second stage of the analysis included “the good teacher,” “autonomy,” “responsibility,” and so on (see also Agevall, Jonnergård, & Krantz, 2017). In the third and final stage, we find the relationship between the concepts that constitute the knowledge-triad. The themes that then emerged (“fixation on results,” “fragmentation” and so on) are both empirically based but also theoretically reconstructed. The extracts provided exemplify the teachers’ experience of how management by documents influences their profession.

From expert to novice?

The overall picture that the teachers painted of the changing demands for documentation was bleak. Only a few teachers thought that the increased demand for documentation gave rise to clarity, not least for the parents:

You have to be clearer [in your work], and if it is documented, then it is easier to follow up on it. You might have a parent who says “I have never heard of this.” But yes, we said this last time, here you are, here it is, written here [in the action plan].

For some teachers, the demand for documentation can give rise to a sense of relief and elevated professionalism, since one can show evidence for what one had done (and the sense that one has “covered one’s back”). One teacher reported: “I think that more standardization would be a good thing. It would be great if we had something printed out in advance.”

However, in general, the teachers were very critical of local school management and of decision-makers at the national level. Some of them argued that the time that was previously spent on planning, lesson delivery, and following-up, was now spent on completing documentation and entering individual results into a specially-designed computer system. Documentation involved in producing individual learning plans and action programs took too much time from their pedagogic work, according to the teachers.

Before the previous series of student development discussions [with each student], I was supposed to enter information for 120 students into the PODB [computer documentation system which teachers use to record individual learning plans and action plans] about what they had done in the subject, how they are performing, and what they should do if they were at risk of not achieving the [course] objectives.

When we consider the knowledge-triad’s three aspects, a picture emerges where the teachers’ knowledge and ethical compass can become threatened.

Recognition

The teachers claimed that they knew a great deal about students without needing all that documentation. One teacher stated that “[we] know what must be done, but we can’t because there was just not enough time.” The time resource that teachers have to spend on documentation, instead of being spent on what they think are relevant issues, has an alternative cost. This causes a shift in goals which influences their ability to use and develop their sense of recognition.

Two aspects involving increasing demands on documentation were identified as important conditions for the use and development of recognition. The first was a strong *fixation on results* and an associated short-term assessment of knowledge. The second was a *fragmentation* which worked against the “whole picture” perspective; something which, according to the teachers, was crucial to student learning.

Fixation on results

With reference to the increase in control- and inspection systems since the 1990s, one teacher claimed that

There have been lots of instructions from the national level that entail that we must live up to the achievement of goals. And we should be prepared when the National Agency for Education or a school inspector comes and asks, “What have you done?” We have created this form, and we have investigated this. It’s in the file, and we have it on paper.

This emphasis on results and performance singles out students who do not achieve passing grades, and poses a challenge for teachers who claim to have the best for their students at heart. According to the teachers, negative side effects of documentation emerge in the form of a stigmatization of students and their exclusion, which leads to worsening relationships with students and their guardians. Some teachers claim that this is “absolutely insulting for the students, they don’t understand what is going on, everything goes over their head.” Teachers report that they have to try to avoid situations where students, in the mass of documents, are treated in an “in-human and insulting manner.” One teacher described the situation as one where teachers should not “break students any more than they are already broken.” The teachers stated that they did not want to contribute to a situation where the student felt bad because student’s feeling of alienation had been documented. The fixation of results can be perceived as standing in opposition to teachers’ knowledge and experience that they have regarding their students’ social- and intellectual development.

The problem is with all the paper drills that come on top of everything. All these forms that we have to mark and fill in. It’s not enough that we write that the student has achieved the learning objectives; we also have to fill in another form which has to be signed. There’s loads of paperwork.

The teachers claimed that the documentation itself might be a factor behind the decline in student performance. It was clearly apparent, according to the teachers, that different people at schools had different norms and values with respect to what was considered to be important knowledge and how it should be documented.

I believe that the students must feel good if they are to perform better, but I have never heard school management speak about how important it is that we work on getting students to feel good. Instead, they say that you don’t have very good results, can’t you fix the results?

According to these teachers, work at school is becoming more one-sided towards knowledge management, results, and measurability, where notions of objectivity, effectiveness, and equivalence take center stage.

Fragmentation

The teachers reported on a lack of opportunities to work together on a particular topic and with a particular group of students.

There are lots of small projects [which demand professional development] and lots of balls in the air which we don't know where they land. We start one project after the other, but without finishing them and without anyone giving us any feedback.

The teachers were critical of the management's lack of understanding of the fact that fragmentation spreads into their teaching and its development, and can thus cause a decrease in student achievement. Fragmentation also causes many teachers to focus their attention on things that they have difficulty in apprehending as having any useful pedagogic function. According to the teachers, an opportunity to establish a perspective of the whole and to take a procedurally and more formatively orientated approach is limited. One teacher said,

I wish I could make [educational] plans and be inspired by others, build on themes about what we are supposed to do. To find more difficult assignments. To plan this [thing] together, to have the time to do something that's fun.

The fact that the school operations are understood as being "fragmented" and that different projects and inputs continually trigger the next make it generally more difficult to evaluate the results of these different contributions.

Emotional engagement

The teachers claim to possess a high level of engagement with the students. They claimed that good teachers were at school primarily for the students' sake. But notwithstanding this particular sentiment, the teachers experienced negative emotions at times when they felt that they could not be busy with what they thought was their primary professional task. *A lack of trust and a job that has become more boring* were two aspects which came to the fore in the interviews with respect to the theme of emotional engagement.

Lack of trust

A feeling of distrust was repeatedly referred to by the teachers. The teachers reported that, for a particular time period, they were forced to document and report on the performance of each student to the school administration as a part of an action plan. "From April [onwards], every Friday, we had to report to the administration block about how much closer Johan and how much closer Stefan are now to a passing grade. We bent over backwards for them." The teachers were critical of the notion that the documents were to "prove" what they had done.

We are chased high and low to improve the grades. Many feel a lot of frustration about this that we are not good enough.... The principal, municipality, and school administration claim that better results are the same as better grades. And from below, parents, and students put pressure on us.

Another teacher argued that the documentation created mistrust and criticism from students and parents, amongst others:

I have never been so careful with documentation as I am now. But at the same time, I have never before been subject to as much criticism as I have this last year, primarily from students and parents. In some way, the more one documents things, the more open to criticism one becomes.

The teachers state that "the good teacher," the teacher who prioritizes her students,

is under the threat of disappearing. The result of such a development, we claim, can lead to a situation where the teacher's professional pedagogic independence runs the risk of being compromised.

Boredom

Part of the general dissatisfaction experienced by the teachers, according to their reports, was their frustration over a lack of resources. The teachers felt forced to spend time on things that they did not believe would make a positive contribution to the students. Consequently, they did not have time for those things that they thought were of importance and "fun" in the profession. They claimed that the heavy workload and the nature of the work led to stress, a "draining of energy," and made work "boring."

I believe that the energy people had 4-5 years ago has been all eaten up, and we feel under such terrible pressure because we are not doing enough, even though we are working as hard as we can. It takes all the energy we have to do the fun things than working more on the theme.

Generally, the teachers reported that with respect to the school's operations, the importance of enjoying work being done, being engaged, and possessing enthusiasm had decreased. For example, the teachers reported that the "fantasy and spontaneity" that a teacher can bring to the classroom now runs the risk of being completely lost.

Evaluating and taking responsibility for one's own work

We identified two approaches concerning evaluating one's own work and taking responsibility for one's work. The first approach is based on an internal evaluation which is informed by the teacher's own quality criteria. The second approach is based on external demands and expectations on what the teacher must do and develop; in other words, this consists of an external evaluation. Questions about responsibility are closely linked to both approaches. We are thus confronted with two (partly contradictory) discourses; namely the *internal pedagogic discourse* and the *externally-grounded judicial discourse*.

The weakening of the pedagogic discourse

The internal evaluations that teachers make add to their knowledge of what constitutes good performances and qualities. The norm that "the student is at the center of the work that is to be done" is, as we interpret it here, embedded in quality criteria which are based on that which constitutes a good teacher and work that is properly performed. One teacher stated that:

[The sharing of] knowledge is left at the wayside. It [all the contacts with other people and the formulation of plans] takes time away from our teaching role.... There is a huge difference between starting work in a school today than what it was 30 years ago when I started. It's not the same job.

So as to live up to the norm of being "good teachers," the teachers claim that they want to have more time to hold collegial conversations where they, themselves, set the agenda. They wanted to spend more time on pedagogic and didactic development. In addition, they wanted more opportunities to work on generic skills and competencies, formative assessment, school's democratic assignment, and their own subject knowledge. They also reported that they wanted to take on more active roles as teachers: to supervise students, instill enthusiasm, demonstrate qualitative differences in students' work, support students, set demands on students, and not allow

students to work so much on their own. The teachers' statements concerning the necessity for more focus on their professional assignment were based on the view that they wanted to spend more time on responding to the question: What are the right things to do? The teachers were also critical of the prevailing situation where no one took responsibility for continuity, the school's vision, the exchange of experience, and thus, the long-term strategies for the school's operations. Against this background, for some of the teachers, it was unclear what the purpose of the work was and what the teachers were supposed to focus on.

We never have time to develop the operations [at the school].... Administrative tasks just become more and more.... More and more time and energy is spent on reporting, action plans, learning plans, IUPs, attendance lists and statistical summaries. I just wish I could have pedagogic discussions with my colleagues.

Even the most experienced teachers felt insecure and claimed that they “fumbled” their way forward and wondered whether they were doing a good job. In certain cases, the teachers reported that there was a conflict in the goals between what they considered to be good work and what the school management was asking for. “I feel that the principal and the school management team's goals are not the same as ours. We have other ideas about what we should do so that the students can succeed.” Whilst the school authorities and the school management focuses on the school's documentation, attention is directed towards the teachers' and the school's accountability. From the teachers' perspective, it becomes more difficult to see how the (internal) work that is done at the school improves the situation and how documentation responds to or stands in any meaningful relation to teachers' active responsibility.

The reinforcement of the judicial discourse

In the teachers' work, the search for externally validated legitimacy seems to be all the more important, along with creating trust in the school operations and dealing with risk. This judicially-orientated discourse emerges because teachers feel that they must be prepared to answer to criticism and deal with opposition. These sentiments are expressed by the teachers in terms of “the parents keep the school and the teachers on their toes,” “you are being watched,” and you should “watch your back.” The teachers thus become careful about what they write because such documentation may, in part, expose them to criticism, and, in part, because students' guardians “read between the lines.” The documentation is very strongly linked to assessments and setting of grades. The result of this is that the teacher's approval and subjective assessment of the students is dealt with a form of distancing, which, in turn, results in a simplification of the documentation. Such a simplified documentation puts collective pressure on the teachers to honor the formulations and assessments that they have made.

[W]e live under the threat that any day of the week you can be reported and exposed with your name and everything in the newspaper—that's what he said in the assembly hall, you know.... There was a lawyer who was here and said: If you haven't documented it, then you will have problems.

The practice of documentation is grounded in the apprehension of external doubts. The teachers find it difficult to reveal their work processes and the students' performance for these purposes, as part of their professional assignment. The question as to why all this documentation must be made is answered with the reply that they have to protect themselves from future criticism and blame. One teacher expressed this sentiment as: “[We must] show that we, at the school, have done what we have done.” By completing their documentation, teachers can prove that they are “loyal” and that they “have a grip on the situation.”

Discussion and some final conclusions

The hypothesis that we wished to test in this study was whether teachers' knowledge base and norms change as a result of management by documents. This study has shown that teachers when they describe their daily work, do experience that their teaching assignment undergoes a change associated with changing management systems and an increase in the demand for documentation. In cases where changes in the teachers' knowledge base and norms are related to the all three aspects of the knowledge triad, and how these three aspects relate to each other, we then observe how these aspects are dependent on each other. "If one aspect of this knowledge triad is influenced negatively, the development, maintenance, and further development of the professionals' knowledge- and norm system is blocked" (Agevall, Jonnergård, & Krantz, 2017, p. 28). Limited emotional engagement can lead to a diminished sense of recognition, which, in turn, can limit the teacher's ability to make independent evaluations, and vice versa. The autonomy of the teacher entails both freedom of action and the ability to act.

The teachers claimed that they possess a sense of recognition about their students and their needs which exists without the need to document it to the degree to which they are forced to. The resources—time being the primary resource—that teachers must use in the production of documents adversely influences their sense of recognition. The teachers want to spend time engaged in meetings with their colleagues, students, and parents with the aim of improving the quality of their teaching. In this study, we note that the teachers report that current developments in this area are moving in the opposite direction, with a concomitant negative influence on their sense of recognition.

The teachers' sense of engagement in their work is strongly connected to their students. Their emotions are negatively impacted upon when they are not able to spend time on what they themselves define as their central professional assignment. In a school which is driven by goals and results, there exists a risk that the freedom to act becomes gnawed away at the edges, with a lack of engagement on the teachers' part as a result. The need to work in a job which does not correspond to one's expectations creates a person-job misfit (Harju & Hakanen, 2016). Being bored at work can lead to consequences which influence the teacher's knowledge and behavior, and their ability to act effectively (Ficher, 1993). If the role of the teacher becomes passive and distanced from the students, then the level of teacher engagement can be impacted on negatively (Loukidou, Loan-Clarke, & Daniels, 2009). One result of a lack of engagement is that teaching sessions become more instrumental in their nature. With respect to evaluation and taking responsibility for one's own work, the teachers feel that they are forced to act in conflict with their knowledge and experience.

Management by documents tends to de-contextualize knowledge and experience, at the risk of losing competencies and thereby limits the ability of teachers to take responsibility for their work (Arfwedson, 1994; Rolf, 1991). Whilst less time is available for pedagogic work, school operations become more singularly focused on the control of knowledge, results, and measurability (Biesta, 2011). Management by documents displaces pedagogic and professional practices from a position where the professionals at the school take their point of departure in a more complex and mutual learning situation to a direction where they are engaged in a simplified and individualized learning situation. Using efficacy and objectivity as catchwords, school operations run the risk of becoming more and more directed towards short-term goals, and these goals become predictable (in contrast to long-term, and somewhat unpredictable goals). The stricter management and control systems described in this paper can limit the teachers' ability to act, resulting in a loss of "fantasy and spontaneity" on the teachers' part, which was claimed to be an important part of their work. When the judicial discourse is reinforced, it is made manifest in the form of increasing criticism from parents, managers, and politicians. The teachers' ability

and willingness to take responsibility for their work is influenced by conflicting goals and different opinions of what constitutes properly executed work. Instead of “helping the student achieve a passing grade,” teachers have to spend time on “writing a document which explains why the student did not achieve a passing grade.” The documentation tends to become a self-legitimizing administrative exercise, where schools cannot live up to what is promised. A lack of trust and misguided criticism clouds the fact that transparency and accountability also contain democratic aspects (Biesta, 2004). We note that management by documents also leads to shifting responsibilities and impacts on the teachers’ sense of professionalism so that they became more contractual; thereby resulting in situations which are characterized by less trust than before (Koehn, 1994). The teachers felt that things that they had agreed to needed to be written down; to have things in black and white. Documentation, therefore, may create a sense of ambivalence in relation to what professional responsibility the teacher has and what responsibility can be allocated to others. However, the acceptance of professional responsibility demands that teachers have freedom of action; something they themselves claimed they lacked at the time of the study. It is apparent that management by documents causes the teachers to act, to a large part, according to external demands and expectations so as to present themselves as being a professional, whilst they wish to be professional in creating and maintaining quality improvement processes in school operations (Hargreaves, 2000; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). According to what the teachers brought to our attention, we also note that the goals have shifted so as to accommodate quality in terms of formal quality controls, which, on occasion, left the teachers feeling inadequate. A large part of the evaluation work which should be done at schools has shifted focus from the teachers’ professional knowledge and ethics to results and regulations in the form of standardized procedures and routines. This has consequences for the teacher’s sense of professionalism in terms of independent assessments that teachers can make of cases within a collegially-exercised knowledge base (Englund & Solbrekke, 2015; Svensson, 2010; Svensson & Karlsson, 2008). If professional responsibility is diminished, then recognition and emotional engagement suffer as a result. This, in turn, reduces teachers’ ability to satisfy the students’ needs.

When teachers’ ability to be engaged is negatively influenced, then their ability to act in a professional manner or to be professional, decreases. This leads to avoidance strategies with respect to taking responsibility and gives rise to a sense of limited personal responsibility. Teachers who may have previously developed levels of expert knowledge are at risk of becoming mere followers of rules (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 2005). As result of this, management by documents, according to our interpretation, can be a factor behind a regression from expert to novice. Now that the bureaucratization of the Swedish school system has been taken note of, in conjunction with worsening school results (OECD, 2015), the teachers’ ability to perform as experts should be encouraged and supported, and the factors which cause teachers to become rule-following novices should be avoided.

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