

## **EXPERT IN TEACHING – PROJECT IRIS CONNECT 2012-2015**

# **Project Title**

**How can we help develop student teachers' research competence by means of the data collection and data processing functionalities in IRIS Connect? A pedagogical research and development project at Skive School of Education, VIA University College, 2012-2015.**

The overall purpose of the research and development project is to develop the empirical foundation of teacher education.

The initial phase of the research and development project is a pilot study, which is being carried out in 2012. The present paper serves as a description of this study.

### **Participants**

The pilot study is a collaboration project between Skive School of Education, VIA University College (VIA UC), CFU, Skive (the local teaching resource centre) and the Brighton based company IRIS Connect. Furthermore, a number of placement schools in Skive Municipality will participate in the study in the autumn semester 2012.

### **Project Governance**

The project is organized with a **project manager**, a **project group** and a **project board**. We are in the process of establishing the project board.

## **Project Manager**

Annemette Heine Wullum, Associate Professor at Skive School of Education, VIA UC.

## **Project Group:**

Project Manager Annemette Heine Wullum, Skive School of Education, VIA UC

Associate Professor and Teaching Placement Officer Henrik L. Nielsen, Skive School of Education, VIA UC

Associate Professor Frits Hedegaard Eriksen, Skive School of Education, VIA UC

Secretary in the project group: Annemette Heine Wullum, Skive School of Education, VIA UC

## **Description of the Pilot Study**

### **1. Background**

We kindly refer you to *Bekendtgørelse om uddannelsen til professionsbachelor som lærer i folkeskolen* (the Danish ministerial order on the bachelor of education programme) – especially to appendix no. 6,<sup>1</sup> which describes the requirements in terms of student teachers' research and reflection competence in connection with the bachelor project.

At the moment Danish teacher education is being reformed, and in the context of the present pilot study, it is highly relevant to mention that the Danish teacher education programme as of August 2013 will have an increased focus on practice foundation and practice relevance.

### **2. IRIS Connect (IC)**

Combining video conferencing technology, video streaming, feedback functionalities and a data processing generator, IC appears to be especially useful in terms of qualifying student teachers' research into and reflections on practice. By means of a computer-controlled camera and a wireless sound system, the student teacher can record her own teaching and thus re-create and retain practice. As opposed to other known ways of recording practice, IC enables e.g. peers and teacher

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<sup>1</sup> BEK no. 562 from 01/06/2011.

educators to observe the teaching both synchronously and asynchronously as well as to provide written feedback and/or video message feedback that are inserted as bookmarks in the actual recording. Thus, it becomes easy for the student teacher to retrieve the commented video sequences. Additionally, the program consists of an application that makes it possible to generate customized research and reflection tools to be used when processing and analyzing the teaching recordings. The latter has the potential to make the student teacher's data collection focused and not least manageable.

### **3. Intentions**

The purpose of the pilot study is to research the following questions:

*To what extent can a development of the empirical dimension support the professional focus of teacher education?*

- *How can Skive School of Education, VIA UC support the students' research competence by means of the data collection and communication functionalities available in IRIS Connect?*
- *How can IRIS Connect help support the development of the analytical elements of teacher education and the relation between that which happens at the school of education and that which happens in school practice contexts?*
- *How can the results of the pilot study be used in in-service training and CPD contexts?*

### **4. Assumptions**

The pilot study is based on the following assumptions:

- The student teachers' own empirically founded research will challenge their layman conceptions of what constitutes good teaching and support the development of both diagnostic and didactic competences.
- Using the data collection and data processing tools in IRIS Connect will support both the documentation and the analysis related to the student teachers' own research.

We intend to investigate to what extent our assumptions are correct!

## 5. Aims and Content

The aims of the pilot study may be summarized in three headings:

1. **RESEARCH** into the effect of the use of practice recordings from various practice contexts as well as of IRIS Connect's research functionalities in teacher education.
2. **TRAINING** of the teacher educators at Skive School of Education, VIA UC.
3. **PLANNING** of the next phase of the research and development project.

### Ad. 1:

In the research phase the students' actions in schools as well as at the school of education will be recorded and made the object of analysis in the teaching. Furthermore, the use of live-streamed school-teaching in teacher education will be investigated.

The following concrete practice contexts will be recorded and analyzed:

- Students' micro-teaching in school (students with English as a teaching subject).
- Students' micro-teaching in teacher education (students with English as a teaching subject).
- Students' weekly observation placement (first-year and third-year students with English as a teaching subject).
- Students' teaching placement (students with English as a teaching subject).
- Live-streaming of school teaching as a resource in teacher education (students with English as a teaching subject).

Besides working the IC hardware and software, the teaching will focus on how to process, analyze and interpret practice recordings. One of the main didactic challenges in this connection is to make a teaching plan in which the actual work with practice recordings is made relevant to and integrated in the teaching.

### Ad. 2:

In the course of the autumn semester, all teacher educators at Skive School of Education, VIA UC, will attend a training course on the use of practice recordings in teacher education. The aim of the

course is to prepare the teacher educators for the implementation of the use of practice recordings in their teaching.

The course will consist of hardware and software training as well as teaching that aims to qualify the teacher educators' professional use of practice recordings.

**Ad. 3:**

Concurrent with the research phase and the training phase, the first part of the actual research and development project, which is to be carried out from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2013, will be prepared.

The first phase of the research and development project centers on the following activities:

- Initial implementation of the curriculum requirement in all first-year courses to use practice recordings in connection with the teaching placement (teaching report), to carry out micro-teaching projects in the context of §26 teaching and to use practice recordings in the teaching at the school of education.
- Pilot study concerning the use of practice recordings in in-service training and CPD courses for school teachers.

The preparations in the autumn semester 2012 consist, among other things, of the following activities:

- Fundraising
- Curriculum revision
- Establishment of cooperation agreements with schools that wish to participate in the pilot study concerning in-service training/CPD.
- Establishment of cooperation agreements with another Danish university college and a university college/university offering teacher education in Scandinavia.
- Detailed planning of the implementation phase and the pilot study concerning the use of practice recordings in in-service training/CPD of school teachers.

## 6. Project Activities June 2011-June 2012

June 27<sup>th</sup> 2011

- Webinar presentation of IRIS Connect's hardware and software.

July 5<sup>th</sup> 2011

- Application for funding from VIA's Adhoc-funds.

Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> 2011

- Funding refusal.

July-Nov. 2011:

- Regular contact with IRIS Connect concerning a collaborative pilot study.

Nov. 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> 2011:

- Visit at IRIS Connect, Brighton, UK. Thorough presentation of the hardware and the software as well as discussion of collaborative project.

March 2012:

- Application for funding from VIA UC's Strategic Funds.

March 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> 2012:

- Visit at IRIS Connect, Brighton, UK.

April 2012:

- Planning and carrying out a micro-teaching project with Friskolen in Skive and class EN29. The teaching was recorded, and the student teachers were given access to IRIS Connect.

April 27<sup>th</sup> 2012:

- Granting of funds from VIA UC's Strategic Funds.

## **7. Attention Points and our Experiences so far**

Technically, we have had various challenges – especially with the Development Cameras. However, the challenges are due to local problems, and we expect that our ICT-supporter will solve the problems very soon. It is of pivotal importance that the Development Cameras work on the wireless network, so that the students can use these cameras at the schools in the municipality.

In connection with the micro-teaching project in April 2012, the students recorded their teaching, and the recordings were uploaded onto IRIS Connect. Prior to the uploading, the students were shown how to access recordings on IRIS Connect, how to give feedback/make comments on teaching recordings and how to develop customizable tools for their analysis of the recordings. The students were expected to include analyses of their teaching recordings as data for their final study area product, but only a limited number of them did so. There may be various reasons as to why not a larger number of students used their recordings, but we feel confident that they were not sufficiently prepared. The majority of students did access IRIS Connect to watch their recordings and thus watched themselves in action, but the step from watching to actually analyzing and interpreting teaching actions needs our attention.