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ABSTRACT

The degree to which schools cooperate with parents on the individual child level is investigated in this paper. The first chapter reviews the literature of empirical data and concludes that teachers and parents generally limit cooperation to obligatory rituals. The second chapter examines the extent to which pedagogical reasons enhance cooperation and argues that optimal school performance can only be achieved through cooperation. In the last chapter three types of conditions hindering cooperation are identified: structural, subjective, and training. The most effective way to increase parent-teacher cooperation is through a restructuring of the power imbalance between the two groups. Balance of power is most effectively achieved in private, free, or alternative schools, which provide the best examples of pedagogical parent-teacher cooperation. Appendices include a summary of empirical data and a model for parent-teacher interaction. (30 references) (LMI)

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## How Open is the Public School? 1

### On Cooperation between Teachers and Parents

#### Abstract

The law requires that the school be open to cooperation with parents. Does the school meet this requirement? The first chapter summarizes the empirical data concerning this question. They show: On the average, teachers and parents limit their cooperation to obligatory rituals. Since they are content with this situation, the question in the second chapter is asked, whether there are pedagogical reasons for intensifying cooperation. The result - optimal school performance can be reached only through cooperation - raises the question why schools do not open themselves in a pedagogically more satisfactory way to parent participation. The three classes of conditions - structural, subjective and educational conditions - constitute the main idea in the last chapter: What is to be done to improve the cooperation between teachers and parents for the benefit of the pupils.

In 1805, some 184 years ago, a young teacher named David Traugott Kopf took on his first teaching assignment "in the first days of the month of November" in the Sorbian village of Kackrow.

I would like to start my lecture by relating to you what he wrote in his autobiography. Our colleague goes on to say that he reported to the mayor immediately after his arrival in Kackrow. The mayor had the nightwatchman call the community together and he then gave a speech. He challenged those gathered, among other things, to treat the new schoolmaster with love and to be hospitable to him. The mayor familiarized Kopf with his duties and rights. Afterwards each member of the community greeted him - "and the meeting was then adjourned". And now I quote: "On Monday all the school children were introduced to me: (...) A short examination made it obvious to me that each individual child would require special attention since not one of them could read.; (...) The parents were able to perceive that my spirit was troubled over the children's lack of knowledge, since one of the court jurymen grasped my hand and called to me: "Do not be dismayed Schoolmaster, we will support you to the best of our ability, we'll send our children regularly to school, and make them spell diligently in the evening. It will work out." This consoling exhortation had a mighty effect on my troubled heart; I began my instruction on the following day with greater joy. That jurymen who had spoken to me in such a consoling manner, was the man in whose house I was to hold school for 14

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days. His living room was among the best in the area although it was not very light inside and the floor was not planked. Under one bench were brooding geese, not far from the door stood feeding troughs with swine fodder and scalding-tubs for the cattle. Near the bed, which was decorated with flowery curtains was a bench for spinning since five women, quite advanced in age, were the first objects which I found in the teaching room. These women assured me that they loved the Word of God and therefore always spun in the school.

My host set up his rope-making apparati since he wanted to observe my instruction while turning his ropes...)

These preparations could well have discouraged me right at the beginning if I had not been sustained by the conviction that everyone, showing themselves to be engaged and participatory here, only had my best interests in mind (...). And so I opened my school. (...) The lack of knowledge and awkwardness of my pupils made it necessary for me to take each individual child in hand, and reading instruction had to be the main thing. (...) Within a few days I was able to place the children in groups based on their knowledge of the alphabet, spelling, syllabism and mechanical reading. (...) (I) challenged three women who could read quite well, as well as my host, to help me during the reading lessons. (...) I found willing hearts, and promoted immediately the three women and the host as monitors.... I and my host taught the boys, and the three woman took it upon themselves to teach the children of their gender how to read as quickly as possible. Things progressed at a desirable pace. The last time I held school in this house of which I had become most fond, (...) the preacher entered the room (by surprise) and was (rather awed) to see me surrounded by one male and three female assistants. At first he was not able to decide whether this was in earnest or in jest; but he was clever enough to let us continue bustling about in order to gain time to make a correct judgement. After a pause, he turned to the mayor and said: "Dear Mayor, advantages are for those, who know how to use them". (Kopf 1836, p. 83 ff).

This account seems like a fairy tale to me. You probably have a similar reaction. How many mayors today drum the community together when a new teacher arrives. How many teachers think of greeting the parents of all their pupils even before school starts; and how many teachers find curious and eager-to-learn members of the community seated among their pupils at the beginning of instruction? And even if that were the case, would they then immediately arrange for group instruction, accept the adults' offers to help and implement them in the classroom and at home as teaching aides? And if they did do that, what would happen when the inspector showed up? Would he judge the situation in the sense of: "Advantages are for those who know how to use them?".

I am now in the middle of my theme: "How open are schools

today?", more specifically, how open are schools for parents when they want to go inside to work there with the teachers, and how open are the schools for teachers when they want to go outside to work with parents outside of the school. I have broken up my lecture into four subject areas: (1) How open are the schools for parents and teachers or: How do teachers and parents cooperate with each other? (2) How is the demand for opening up the schools and for cooperation between parents and teachers to be judged in light of the research? (3) What is the explanation for the current degree of openness in the schools or what is the explanation for the present relationship between parents and teachers? (4) What should we do - what can we do? I am not going to get into the kind of parent/teacher cooperation that deals with problems in the classroom, schools or the educational system. I am going to deal only with the kind of cooperation where the individual child is the focal point.

### 1. HOW OPEN IS THE PUBLIC SCHOOL?

If we had more time, I would carry out an experiment with your imagination: I would ask you to close your eyes, to relax..., to relax some more, and then to imagine yourself relaxed in a normal school, to walk and look around in your mind: After looking around long enough, I would ask you to return here and relate everything that you saw. I assume you would have seen a great deal and would have had a great deal to tell. However, I do not believe that any one of you would have also seen parents in this phantasy school or that you would have observed mothers and fathers feeling at home seated among the pupils and teachers, observing the lesson or even participating in the lesson or even participating in the lesson. Or that you would have seen teachers for two hours in order to pay home visits. I am sure of this because I carried out this experiment with 70 students from one of my lectures: None of them discovered parents during their walk.

Is the picture of a school without parents accurate? For a long time parents have had voting rights, there are institutionalized teacher/parent committees, parent/teacher evenings, individual parent/teacher conferences.

I have, out of necessity, briefly summarized here what German and Austrian empirical research has found out. I have omitted all details in Fig. 1.

[ Fig. 1 ]

I summarize: In light of these data, today's schools are accessible to parents but there doesn't seem to be a "welcome" sign hanging over the door. Accordingly, cooperation is largely limited to obligatory rituals which do not lead to intensive counseling on the central pedagogical problems. The data do not lead to the conclusion that a true partner relationship is

taking place. The parents appear to be more in the service of the school than the teachers in the service of the parents .

The last two points contradict each other: The attitudes towards the legal situation and towards everything which takes place are on the average positively colored. However, the emotional distance between parents and teachers seems to be great indeed. If teachers and parents are generally satisfied with the prevailing state of affairs, if the school is open in principle, but parents actually want almost as little to do with teachers as teachers do with parents at least as long as everything runs normally -, then where is there a problem? Since I still have half an hour left to speak, you can surmise that at least I see a problem. And with that I come to the second part of my talk.

## 2. WHY SHOULD PARENTS AND TEACHERS WORK TOGETHER?

The responsibility for the learning and living worlds of the schoolchild rests with two authorities which consider themselves relatively autonomous; the family and the school. It is often argued that the two worlds differ strongly from each other. In the family the child lives and is only incidentally in school. In school experts "teach" systematically according to a fixed curriculum. One assumes thereby that both worlds have little to do with each other and, particularly, that more is learned in school than in the family.

There is much wrong with these wide-spread assumptions: (1) Much more is learned in the family than in school. (2) The psychological laws by which learning takes place in the family and in school are not different from each other: for that reason (3) parents are also "teachers". (4) The interdependence of both authorities is great. Let me clarify these theses in the following diagram:

[ Fig. 2 ]

(1) In both learning worlds, the respective "teachers" give the children an opportunity to learn: They initiate learning processes, i.e. interaction of the child with some type of "learning task". Whether this takes place according to an explicit or "secret" curriculum, whether systematic or unstructured, is less important than assumed.

(2) Parents have many more opportunities to "teach" than the school: They are responsible for about 80% of the time of a young person up to the age of 18, the school is responsible for about 20% .

They also "make use" of this time, although with qualitatively great differences. Much more is learned in the family than in school, particularly, the younger the child or schoolchild is. (Griffore/Boger 1986; Jelinek et al. 1975; Clarke 1984; Scott-

Jones 1984).

(3) The learning processes or learning results in the different learning worlds are strongly dependent on each other. After all, parents and teachers work with the very same child. Through their efforts, one picks up where the other leaves off. In other words: Whatever goes for father and mother within the family, also goes for parents and teachers: They can move in the same direction and help each other out, they can ignore each other's efforts or they can work against each other.

What does this mean for the school? It means, first of all, that children starting school vary considerably in meeting the prerequisites which are relevant for school: Today we know that these differences are strongly tied to the different educational conditions at home and, to a certain extent, to the performance of parents as teachers. The teaching performance of parents naturally does not change with the start of school. It continues to have an effect: Many parents are intensively involved and talented in promoting the development of their children, others are not at all or are completely inept.

The effects are considerable: When the school ignores the previous and present learning conditions at home, the St. Matthew Effect has a merciless impact: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given". The disparity between good and poor pupils becomes greater from school year to school year. The "performance gap" gets bigger and bigger (Walberg et al. 1980; Smith 1968) .

These findings have been known in Germany and Austria for some time. However, they hardly have had the effect of teachers approaching parents and trying to work with them more intensively. In the USA this was different. The answer there was: (1) compensatory education before starting school; (2) (more conscious) inclusion of parents in the learning process (above all, within the framework of compensatory education) during the schooling period of the child.

Regarding (1): In reference to the effects of compensatory education, I would just like to remind you briefly that, above all, such measures bring about long-lasting effects which aim to improve the interaction between mother and child: The compensatory or pre-school education of the child has less of the desired effect in the long run than the schooling of the mother in reference to her behavior as an educator or her dealing with the child (Bronfenbrenner 1974).

Regarding (2): The inclusion of the parents "as teachers" during school has two focal points: First of all, (2.1) to enable the parents to be better teachers and educators "at home" such as within the framework of compensatory education: either with work which traditionally is left to the family, or with school work where the school expects the cooperation of the parents.

Secondly, (2.2) to draw in the parents in order to make the instructional work of the teacher easier. There have been studies on both approaches:

Regarding (2.1): In attempts to help parents become better "teachers" at home, parents were given special training sessions on: how to play with their children, how to motivate their children about school-related activities. They were informed about desirable learning or educational principles - how they should praise, punish, listen, help, ask, motivate... - they were helped in practicing these behaviors. Through these training sessions, they were supposed to acquire a higher degree of educational competency.

I would like to limit myself here by presenting to you the result of a so-called meta-analysis; a particularly valid and informative way of summarizing the literature. In the analysis of Graue et al. (1983) with which we are dealing here, there were 29 controlled field experiments. All these experiments investigated if and how the training of parents had an effect on school performance or relevant school-oriented behavior or on corresponding attitudes.

The effects of the training measures were positive in all the experiments: The effect size was on the average .70. This measure indicates how strongly the average performance of the experimental group differed from the average performance of the control group. I do not want to go into the statistical meaning of this, but rather compare the effect size of .70 with the average effect of classroom conditions, which are very important for us. There are effect sizes greater than .70 (for example, "systematic reinforcement", mastery learning", "learning time of the pupil"). I would like to direct your attention, however, only to the instructional conditions, which have less of an impact than home interventions: There are, for example (Fig 3):

[ Fig. 3 ]

The inclusion of parents in schoolwork in the broadest sense is a comparatively effective measure and, from a pedagogical viewpoint, must not be neglected. We can look at this another way: If these data are correct, then they indicate that we have put an' are putting our efforts at improving instruction, to some degree, if not on the wrong horse, then on a real lame one.

Regarding (2.2): Concerning those types of cooperation which rather serve to support the teacher, I found (with one exception: Barth 1979) only individual studies. These studies were, in part, only somewhat satisfactory. I briefly summarize the findings in Fig. 4.

[ Fig. 4 ]

The following can be derived from Fig. 4:

1. Cooperation has positive effects, nevertheless, there are, to some degree, great differences in the forms of cooperation.

2. Cooperation which is based on the fact that teaching and learning are better at home, which is geared more to the traditional tasks of the parents, is more effective than cooperation which is geared to the tasks of the teacher. It is consequently more effective when teachers work their way into the family with a specific goal, instead of just letting the parents help out with organizational problems in the class or school.

3. the more professional educators and parents work together in situations relevant to school performance, in other words, work together performance in all areas. Looking back to our colleague Kopf in 1805, these findings are not particularly original: Kopf actually did everything which I have cited. So why don't teachers do it today? Why don't they open the doors of the schools and the classrooms in such a way that the parents can feel welcome and can profit as home educators? Why don't they go out in order to help the parents and to get all the information they need for their work as teachers? How can they do justice to the individual child, how can they promote their development optimally if they don't know their living and learning world outside the school?

### 3. WHY IS THE SCHOOL DOOR ALMOST CLOSED?

There are numerous reasons why schools do not truly open themselves to such opportunities in pedagogical cooperation, that the home and the school show relatively little interest in each other or even avoid each other, and these reasons are for the most part as old as our present-day school. Let me mention six reasons which I find important:

(1) First of all, the relationship between the home and the school is historically bound: About 200 years ago, when the reigning monarchs (Landesfürsten) began introducing mandatory schools in their own interest, it was against the will of most of the parents. The parents had no say in the matter, only obligations, namely, to send their children to school and to pay for it: either directly or, as is the case today, indirectly through taxes (Kreuzer 1977). (2) In the state schools back then, the teachers were also dependent in every respect and had to swallow whatever was dished out. They had no influence on the school supervisor who was originally a clergyman appointed by the state. They tried to emancipate themselves. Later in the 19th century, when the state wanted more and more to force back the influence of the church on the school, they were able to win over the state as an ally (Leschinsky/Roeder 1983). They wanted to become "servants of the state" in the state schools.



However, not only to free themselves from the ecclesiastical supervision of the school, but also to obtain the power in school for themselves (Müller 1981, p. 76). The "Teachers' Odyssey" (Bungardt 1965) had, after a long battle for the teachers, just as happy an ending as the classical odyssey.

However, in view of today's school, this ending is not so happy. Because of the victory of the teachers in their fight for emancipation, we now have instead of state "schooling institutions", not the pedagogically desirable "Pupil-Parent-Teacher-School", but rather the "Teacher-Teacher-Teacher-School" (Dietze 1976, S. 345). In order to maintain the status quo, many teachers today oppose the demands of the parents - and the state is their accomplice.

(3) A third condition which makes cooperation between school and home difficult is the state's division of responsibility for the socialization of the children. For the learning processes there are two ministries responsible: the Ministry of Culture and the Family Ministry. Related to this is the fact that kindergarten does not function as part of the school system and that strengthens the parents' fear of the school threshold.

This division promotes further a narrow, stifling perspective (Schrebergartendenken) in the respective educational and research institutions: Instead of broadly-based theories, "theories" of "the school", "of education (Erziehung)", "of instruction (Unterricht)", (and) of kindergarten education" ... were developed and taught so that often the language of these theories gave the impression that the learning processes in the respective pedagogical fields were essentially different or did not have<sup>1</sup> anything to do with each other. An analysis of eight well-known instructional models shows that none of these takes extra-curricular learning conditions into consideration. (Haertel et al. 1983). That means: None of these models requires teachers to leave their classrooms for instructional purposes - or to let someone in. The current-day (school) theories further contribute to the fact that teachers learn very little in their professional training about learning in the family and how it influences their work. In any case, students preparing themselves for the teaching profession today learn little in their studies about education at home and about how they can work 12 together with parents.

themselves as experts responsible for the learning of the children who have been entrusted to them. They consider themselves solely as teaching experts. When teachers do feel responsible for the learning of their students, they limit their responsibility to learning "in their subject area". Whatever is learned in other subject areas is, according to their self-assessment, not in their area of responsibility. For that reason, the major difficulty is not only cooperation with people who work pedagogically outside the school, but also cooperation with colleagues in their own school.

This pedagogical self-assessment of the majority of teachers is reflected in their subjective theories. I would like to briefly mention one subjective theory: The theory of how teachers explain "performance deficiencies" and "discipline problems": For performance deficiencies they hold mainly the personality make-up of the pupils responsible, for discipline problems they hold mainly the parents responsible (Medway 1979). Based on this explanation, teachers see their responsibility consisting solely of challenging the respective "responsible" pupils or parents in a private conference to close the gap or to show more discipline - without advising about concrete pedagogical measures.

(5) Holding to the traditional division of responsibility between family and school (and thereby the minimal cooperation) contributes to the fact that cooperation almost always costs something. For parents, going to parent/teacher meetings or to parent/teacher conferences is burdensome enough because of the time involved, but above all they find the encounter or confrontation with the teachers often unpleasant. A mother said to me a short while ago: "The worst thing about school is the parent/teacher conference days" (compare comment

3). For the same reason parents try to convince themselves that everything is fine - and avoid entering the school. The same applies to teachers: First of all, working with parents creates more work for them which apparently produces no tangible and few intangible rewards. Teachers can not experience through the prevailing minimal intensive cooperation can be very rewarding, not only for the children but also for themselves personally.

(6) Finally, parents and teachers often have truly unfavorable notions about and expectations of each other: They accuse each other of everything imaginable, misjudge each other, reproach each other, have conflicting expectations (summarizing Macbeth 1984, p. 44 ff.). Of course, negative attitudes not only cause teachers and parents to stay away from each other; they are also a result of insufficient cooperation - it is a perfect vicious circle.

To summarize, there are three kinds of conditions that make cooperation more difficult:

1. Structural conditions: The school constitution or the rights of the state, teachers and parents which define the constitution.
2. Subjective conditions: The attitudes and subjective theories of the parents and teachers.
3. Training conditions and the breadth of the objective theories. In my opinion, whoever wants to see a change in the level of cooperation between teachers and parents, has to

change something in these conditions. Is that possible?

#### 4. WHAT SHOULD WE DO, WHAT CAN WE DO?

I believe, the difficulty in changing grows, in view of this summary, from the bottom up. I would therefore like to begin with a question dealing with the condition that is easiest to change - teacher training - namely, what can be done if one wishes pedagogically more productive cooperation between teachers and parents.

##### (1) On Teacher Training Conditions

If one wants cooperation, then teachers must not be trained only as teaching experts in certain subject areas. They have to be trained as experts who have in view the entire development of the children entrusted to them; they have to learn to feel a shared responsibility for all learning conditions. Otherwise teacher training will continue to defy a central regulative idea of pedagogy: the demand to provide optimal developmental conditions for children and young people.

This implies that teacher training should not continue to be allowed to rest on the already-mentioned stifling horse-blinder theories. And this is also not necessary: There already are theories which deal with global development and with learning in all learning worlds: I am thinking here of teaching and learning theories, development theories, interaction theories and diverse socio-psychological theories. If teachers are trained on the basis of such theories, they can, in my opinion, finally become what they actually want to become: **Pedagogues**. They would no longer need to call a psychologist when they have "educational difficulties" and they would be able to work pedagogically together with parents.

##### (2) Subjective Conditions

If the relationship between parents and teachers is to change, then teachers have to take the first step. The reason: Teachers are in a stronger position, they are on the average better informed, they can generally express themselves better. However, the prerequisite conditions are not favorable: Teachers with traditional training lack, for reasons that I have already pointed out, motivation and pedagogical competence. Even where these conditions are favorable and the teachers dedicated, the problem remains that teachers assess the amount of work involved to be generally greater than the yield when working with parents: How many contemporaries would work on a long-term basis only for volunteer wages?

I find it therefore worth mentioning that there are teachers who, in spite of unfavorable conditions, do work together with

parents considerably beyond the obligatory ritual portrayed in Fig 1. These teachers invite parents to participate in classroom instruction, allow them to enter the classroom at any time unannounced, plan all class activities with the parents, make an effort to put on parent/teacher meetings that are original, informative and meet the needs of the parents, meet regularly to discuss pedagogical issues, and visit the parents of new students at home (BMUK 1986).

Why do these teachers work so actively with the parents? I suspect they do it because they see the necessity for it. And that means they do it from a professional standpoint. This standpoint does not ask first about personal benefit and disadvantages, about how time-consuming it is and then about who is going to pay the overtime. It is, as Macbeth puts it, oriented toward the 'selfless' solution to professional problems (Macbeth 1984, p. 207). As far as that goes, the amount of parent involvement can be seen as an indicator of the faculty's degree of professionalism or looking at it another way: Increasing the professionalism of the faculty could bring up the teachers' level of extra-curricular activity in the learning of their pupils (Dietze 1976, p. 340; Macbeth 1984, p. 218).

### (3) Structural Conditions

Nevertheless, the most lasting influence on the opening of the school doors would be possible, in my opinion, through a change in the existing imbalance of power between teachers and parents. Teachers have in every respect the longer end of the stick compared to parents: I only need to remind you that parents exert absolutely no influence on the employment, evaluation, dismissal or payment of the teacher; that teachers are employed for life, strongly organized in unions, possess the monopoly on grades, participate in paid advanced teacher training courses during school time etc., etc. (Dietze 1976, p. 344 ff.). Parents have no say in the matter - and for that reason they have submitted to the school or to a large extent adapted themselves to the conditions (Kob 1963; Krumm 1987). The so-called class interests (Standesinteressen) - the "hard-won rights" (wohlerworbenen Rechte) - "forbid" the teachers from making changes in this imbalance. Under the banner of "pedagogical autonomy" they have reached almost total victory over the church, the state and - as much as was required -, over parents; nevertheless, this was not a pedagogical victory, but rather a class victory (Standessieg) and therefore the doors of "public schools" are not really open.

If the optimal development of children and young people demands pedagogical cooperation and such cooperation requires equality or a balance of power between parents and teachers as a prerequisite, then "pedagogical autonomy" can only mean the autonomy of the "school community". And by that I mean the autonomy of the community of pupil, parents and teachers. The realization of the idea of an "autonomous school community",

which Dörpfeld (1863) and later all educational reformers and today's alternative educators strove for and are striving for (Keck 1979) failed in regard to the "state school" due to the resistance of the coalition of state and teaching-body - and today it continues to fail for the same reason.

The idea of a balance of power is realized best in private, free or alternative schools (Krumm 1987); for that reason the best examples of pedagogical cooperation between parents and teachers are found here (Sandfuchs 1979) - and parent involvement is not limited to baking cakes, gathering teacher opinions, organizational support, functioning as a deputy sheriff, fund-raising or committee work (Henderson et al. 1986).

In order to avoid any misunderstandings, I want to emphasize in conclusion, that it is not my desire to see teachers become as dependent on parents as parents are dependent on teachers today: At about the same time Kopf was operating his "community school", August Hermann Niemeyer expressly appealed to the conscience of parents who had employed a "private tutor" in their homes:

"If parents, who have chosen private tutors (...), wish for them to reach the highest level of effectiveness of which their office is capable: then they must first not neglect, through noble treatment and long-lasting participation, to do everything which (the tutors) have the right to expect if they are to happily and joyfully pursue their profession. The most important points are: 1) establishing and maintaining respect; 2) decent recompense for work; 3) wise cooperation in education and instruction; 4) fairness in demands (Niemeyer 1832, p. 304 f.).

Niemeyer then expounds on these "most important points" - and I regret that I can not present to you here how bitter the lot of many private tutors was due to their pitiful dependence. However, as Niemeyer wrote his admonition, Süvern demanded (in Paragraph 56 of his Bill of Laws for Instruction; in Giese 1961) that the teachers in the public state schools should be "loving and understanding" in dealing with parents. Why then? Even in 1834 parents were complaining: "The whole house is tied up in fetters when parents show concern about the progress of their child in school" (based on Müller 1981, p. 78) and today the mother of a Salzburg high school student expresses her feeling of helplessness with the sentence: "I have a hostage at the school."

I mean the pain, the irritation and the worry which one side inflicted upon the other - and though to a lesser degree - still inflicts is also an expression of the imbalanced power situation and the virtually unchangeable forced relationship of the current-day centrally administrated school system (Lith 1985; Blankertz 1987).

Whether any change takes place in the present structures depends

mainly on pedagogically and democratically disposed politicians and teachers. Perhaps they can follow the example of the Kackrow community and its schoolmaster David Trautgott Kopf, should they wish to make today's schools truly open autonomous community schools.

### Comments

1. Lecture presented at the convention of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaften (German Society for Educational Research) in Saarbrücken 1988 (invited address). Published in German in the Zeitschrift für Pädagogik 1988 34, 1988, (5) 601-619.

2. The data in the overview show only averages around which are often great deviations. And further: As insufficient as the German-language empirical literature on teacher-parent cooperation is compared to other areas, there is of course more known than can be presented in the summary. There are many complaints about the research situation on parent-teacher cooperation or the relationship between home and school: For example, Schwarz (1983) is of the opinion that the problem has only been "sporadically and unsystematically" empirically researched, there are only several individual experiences. Macbeth (1984, p. 239) believes there is relatively little research among the Common Market countries.

3. In qualitative studies a more negative picture is painted: "In many schools there is an open or hidden guerilla war going on ..." (Neumann 1979, p. 99). Or: "Parents have practically no right to determine policy and hardly any voice in school matters. The only thing the "feudal" state-run school administration (obrigkeitsstaatliche Schulverwaltung) concedes is, at the most, a yearly voting mechanism empty of content.. [...] As long as parent involvement in the school is limited to raising and managing contributions, searching out and removing dangers on the way to school and being helpful to the school administration, no one should be surprised when parents start to get sick of rendering these help services, to turn away from the school ..." (Ruschel 1983, p. 478 f.). The governor of Salzburg writes: "I know parents who take sedatives before they go to parent/teacher conferences" (Salzburger Landeszeitung Nr. 26, 1986). Macbeth (1984, p. 53) comments that in the United Kingdom, parent/teacher conference day is called "cattle market" at which the teachers sit at tables in the hallway and parents stand in line in order to be able to exchange a few words with the respective teachers". There are also "really personal conferences".

4. The estimates differ regarding the amount of time both authorities are responsible for, depending on whether the entire time up to the age of 18 is taken into consideration or only the

school time, the entire day or only the waking hours. Nevertheless, in all differences: The family is responsible at least on the average for considerably more and more time than the school. There are many studies on the use of time in school - for learning or for other things (for example, Peterson/Walberg 1979; Denham/Lieberman 1980). The literature about the use of (learning) time in the family is on the other hand sparse. This reflects the assumption that "school" and "family" in view of learning are assessed differently. Since teaching and learning are not the main purpose of the family, the use of learning time varies much more in the family than in school. Therefore, it would be even more relevant to research the use of time in the family rather than in school. See Hill/Stafford 1974 for a report on the great difference in time spent with children in middle and lower-class families.

5. The language of nursery teachers contains, for example, a larger portion of cognitive demands than that of the mothers. Nevertheless, mothers speak much more with their children which is why the children were exposed to twice as many cognitive demands per hour than in school (Tizard et al. 1982).

6. In the field experiments of these two authors, it is clear that the "gap" can only be closed with the help of the parents. Of course, the school can try to balance out the divers family conditions and Bloom, for example, attempts to do just that with his concept of "mastery learning" (Bloom 1976). But even he is not successful with all students. Although the Bloom Concept has been known in the Federal Republic of Germany for quite some time, most teachers teach according to the "watering-can principle" (Gießkannenprinzip) - and just that allows the divers family conditions to have a stronger effect.

7. In an earlier article, I gave the effect of home interventions a rating of .50 (Krumm 1987, p. 71-74). When I wrote that article, I referred to a study by Walberg (1984) - he carried out the above-mentioned meta-analysis with Graue. At that time, I did not have access to the original study. In this study, deviating from Walberg's summary of 1984, the effect of home interventions was rated at .705 (see Graue et al. 1983, Table 2, p. 355).

8. Of course this average deviates by .70 (SD = .748). For this reason Graue et al. have been trying to find the factors which influence this deviation. Of the many analyses, which they conducted I would just like to mention that home interventions had a great effect not only in kindergarten but also in the fifth grade and that they were effective not only in lower-class families but also in families of the upper-middle class (Graue et al. 1983, p. 357).

9. Also Stearns and Peterson (1973) found that involvement of parents as "employees" or "decision makers" had no effect on the performance of the students. "Only" the parents themselves

profited. Remedial instruction (Förderunterricht) within the school showed no lasting effects except for those children whose mothers were included directly in the instructional process - a finding that supports the observations of Bronfenbrenner (1974) in pre-school compensatory education (Fantini 1983, p. 318). It therefore matters that parents participate interested in any kind of improvement in performance. Also Leler (1982, p. 173) is of the opinion in his summary of an analysis of 30 studies that the effect of parent involvement is greater the more intensively the parents are involved in the learning process.

10. The means that the state school board and faculty implement in order to keep parent influence at a minimum are legal hurdles (Verrechtlichung) and beaurocratization of the school (Corwin/Wagenaar 1976; Hollister 1979). Beaurocratization is not, as one often reads, a cause of insufficient cooperation. A further means of exercising power is the right of the teachers to use grades to open or close the doors to opportunities in the future.

11. The Austrian Ministry of Education distributed a volume in one of its publication series on "Family and School" (Ecker/Zahradnick 1987). One half of the publication is dedicated to the family, the other half to the school. Not one word mentions the possibility that both institutions could have anything to do with other. Significant is also the fact that subjects such as "education", "instruction" or "learning" are hardly touched upon in the section on families, but are central issues in the section on schools.

12. An analysis of course offerings in pedagogy at German universities and other post-secondary institutions in the academic year 1982 shows that terms like "teacher", "student", "school" and "instruction", predominate. In contrast, terms like "child", "parents", "family" or "teacher-parent-cooperation" are seldom found (Krumm 1982).

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**Fig 1: How Open are Schools Today? Summary of Empirical Data**

1. Do teachers go out of the school? **NO**

- + house visits only to a minimal degree
- + when teachers want something from parents, they have them come to them
- + Information-System: written, child, by phone  
Frequency: 2x on the average per year

2. Do parents go into the school? **YES**

- + 20-60% visit parent/teacher conference days
- + 50% go to the two parent/teacher evenings
- + 33% made use of teachers' office hours
- + about 50% of the parents take the initiative for conferences
- + classroom visits are rare
- + cooperation in instruction is minimal

3. How well do parents and teachers cooperate? **Unpleasant/Insufficient**

- + most of the time in the classroom on child-size seats
- + individual contacts last 10-15 minutes
- + waiting time beforehand: 34 minutes
- + the teacher does most of the talking

4. Nature of the cooperation? **One-sided/Superficial**

- + "performance", "discipline", "school career"
- + seldom offers for help at home although the parents are interested in such
- + only "pupil problems", no "child problems"

5. Attitude toward cooperation and characteristics of cooperation? **GOOD**

- + "legal aspects of cooperation", "partner", "course of the conversation" and "result" are rather well-rated by parents and teachers (except in problem cases)
- + little desire for change
- + teachers believe they dedicate 6% of their work to parents. They consider about 15% to be pedagogically desirable.

6. Emotional distance of teachers and parents from each other? **Rather great**

- + parents and teachers confess to fears of being "touched" by each other
- + parents feel the school is too beaurocratic
- + parents have more confidence in doctors than in teachers
- + parents do not dare to say anything negative about their children
- + teachers do not want to be told what to do

(Sources: Klaus-Roeder/Heszler 1977; Gehmacher 1979; Bruel/Knake 1978; Ilf 1981; Thomas 1985; Melzer 1987; Krumm et al. 1987)

**Fig. 2: Teacher-Parent Interaction**  
 (referring at any given time to a problem (Pr))

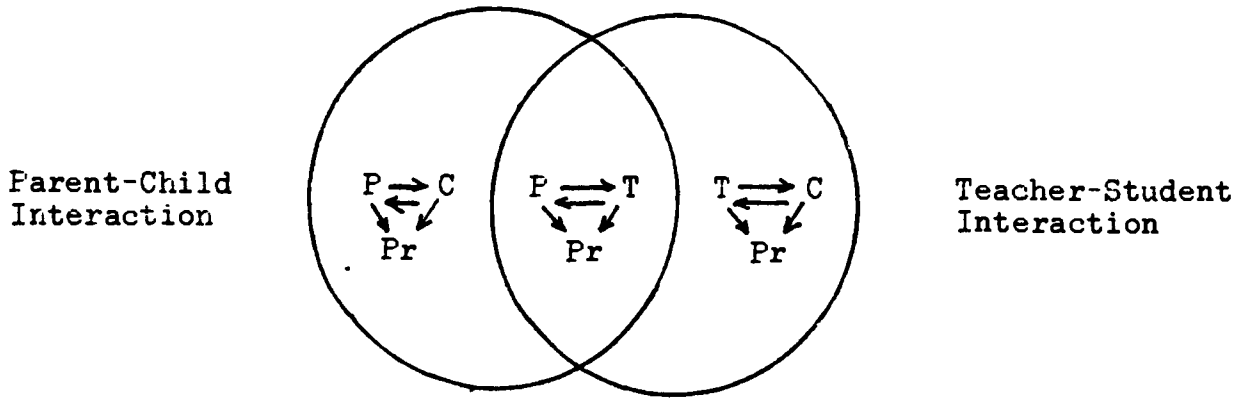


Fig. 2: The Worlds of Parent-Child-, Teacher-Pupil-, and Parent-Teacher-Interaction, each Referring to Problem Pr. The difference in the size of family and school is supposed to symbolize the difference in the relevance to learning. The size of the intersection - the area in which both authorities share the responsibility for the problem - was and is often defined differently by parents, teachers, educators and politicians responsible for educational policy.

**Fig. 3: The Effect of Home Interventions (= .70) Compared to the Effect of Selected Instructional Conditions**

Class climate	.60
Peer teaching	.60
Promotion of gifted & talented	.47
Homework, which is	
not corrected	.28
corrected = .79!	
Teacher expectations	.28
Advanced organizers	.23
New curricula	.18
Homogeneous groups	.10
Class size	.09
Programmed instruction	-.03
Open instruction	
cognitive performance	-.09
affective performance	.20

Sources: Graue et al. 1983; Giacona/Hedges 1983; Walberg 1984; Goldring 1987.

**Fig. 4: Effects of Different Forms of Cooperation in the School**

	Positive effects on	
	Performance of the Students	Confidence of the Parents
1. Cooperation with (external) school problems (help of the parents with activities, excursions, collections, library, etc.): (Kessling/Melagrano 1983)	no	presumed
2. Participation in parent/teacher evenings Co-administration (Thomas 1985)	no	presumed
3. Class visits (Snea/Bauer 1985)	no	yes
4. Assisting in instruction (Keeling/Melagrano 1983)	yes	yes
5. Parents as contractual partner (and as sanctioning authority at home) (Barth 1979)	great	great