

School- University Knowledge Exchange Schemes

Workshop 2 (and 8 still to come)

Points arising from a survey, case studies, theoretical modelling and workshop discussion:

Key points from the studies

1. There are many kinds of school-university knowledge exchange in many countries
2. There are useful models and theoretical perspectives to help understand the schemes.
3. No single model suits all situations
4. Need to start from the actual situation as it is (in schools and university)
5. It takes time, you need to go slowly
6. Trust between actors is necessary for success and must be earned
7. The many cultural and professional differences between the communities need to be accommodated
8. Uncertainty needs to be distributed between the actors , not just held by researchers
9. The same practice applied in difference schools can produce different results

Key points from the workshop discussion

First session

1. The concepts of “disseminating research” and of “spreading good practice” are both flawed one-way transmission images (AM). We are talking about mutualities or small communities of researchers and practitioners working together in a two way dialogue. Perhaps “knowledge exchange” is also a bad metaphor (PS) – it not just knowledge it’s also attitudes, practices, cultures; it’s not an exchange it’s more of a collaboration.
2. School improvement and CPD go hand in hand (AKS)
3. People don’t like to change (PS)
4. Production and use occur on one area- co creation (TT).
5. Regional level is needed as well as municipal and national (Eli)
6. “Evidence-based” concept needs to be replaced with “evidence-informed” to recognise the agency of teacher/policymakers (Eli, Phillipa)
7. Add in learning theory to our perspectives – for teachers’ learning - see systematic review by Robinson (Phillipa)

8. There are tools for using evidence – need to develop and test and promote
9. Extra time is rarely available to teachers and will not be in the long run. Use of research evidence must become an aspect of professional practice (Petra)
10. The interests of teachers and researchers need to be aligned in any specific collaboration – choose your topic carefully (AM)
11. Need to see the competences of the two groups as complementary (Eli)
12. Need to work on building trust (Eli)
13. Researchers can play several roles e.g. training in analytic methods, challenging norms

Second session

1. In Ulm initiative:
 - a. start from actuality – different religions, parents municipalities
 - b. used professional coaches/ counsellors initially to help practitioners engage with researchers
 - c. developed handbook of key issues and developed 7 steps for practitioners
 - d. uncertainty is hard for political organisations to handle
 - e. producing guidance is hard to reconcile with “no one size fits all” (Louise)
2. In Maastricht initiative:
 - a. Based on public health approach
 - b. Share knowledge – develop research agenda – dialogue and collab – translate and dissem
 - c. Dialogue comprises: Exploration; Illustration; Explanation: Translation
 - d. Dangers:
 - i. Difficult to let go of org routines - make environment safe for people to break out of routines
 - ii. Blur if too many small projects, but if too small, limited visibility
 - iii. Easy to lose the goal in the excitement of collaboration
 - iv. Policy keeps shifting - so hard to justify long term funding

Discussion

1. Evidence is just information- needs a brain to turn into knowledge (PS)
2. All actors have some role throughout, but each needs to lead when their particular expertise is most important. All need to extend beyond their normal roles. (AKS, AM)

Messages to EIPPEE plenary

Key messages for potential planners, funders, promoters of school-university schemes:

1. School-university (and municipality/regions) partnerships are seen as beneficial by the wide range of people we have met in universities, government, teachers, unions, municipalities
2. However, we are not aware of robust evaluations of impact of such schemes yet
3. Schemes seem to be effective when:
 - a. They start from the actual situation in particular schools and then reach out to research evidence and/or co produce it
 - b. Time is taken and attention given to building trust over time
 - c. The competences of different players are seen as complementary not competing
 - d. A broad concept of knowledge is used, including practice-based
4. Some start because of a crisis, some because of charismatic local leaders.
5. There are insights from theory and practice that could help in designing new schemes
6. There is not likely to be any single model for these partnerships. Various approaches are effective in various ways.