



# Mind the gap

Linking research and practice

John Oversby, Reading

# What is the problem?

- Perceived notion that researchers output is not helpful, and can not be found!
- Perceived notion that teachers do not value research.

# Previous research

- The gap first reported by Dewey in 1903 and continuing ever since
- Most of the studies focus on Nursing!
- Interventions include Journal Clubs, Professional articles

# Bridging the Gap Between Research and Practice - Davis S (2007)

Davis SH (2007) Bridging the gap between research and practice: what's good, what's bad and how can one be sure? Phi Delta Kappan 88 568-578

## **Problems with researchers**

- Many of us have simply lost touch with the day-to-day complexity of human interactions in schools.
- Academics often write for the wrong audience.
- Academics frequently use “hit and run” tactics.
- Academics can be an arrogant bunch.
- Not all research is good research.

# Bridging the Gap Between Research and Practice - Davis S



## **Problems with practitioners**

- The seductive power of silver bullets and gurus.
- Exaggerated attributions of causality and misconceptions about chance.
- Presumed associations in different contexts.
- Wishful thinking for success.
- Generalizing from nonrandom and small samples.
- Generalizing from perceptions and self-reported data.

# Bridging the Gap Between Research and Practice - Davis S

## What to do

- Empirical research looks at only a part of the picture
- Useful evidence comes in many forms, not only quasi-experimental
- Anecdotal evidence can be useful, even if it is not research!

# The Gap Between Research and Practice Revisited - Korthagen FAJ (2007)

Korthagen FAJ (2007) The Gap Between Research and Practice Revisited  
Educational Research and Evaluation 3, pp. 303 – 310

- Need for researchers and practitioners to build joint communities
- Human beings are fairly inflexible and resistant to change.
- A cognitive stance is not enough, feelings and emotion play an essential part.

# The Gap Between Research and Practice Revisited - Korthagen FAJ (2007)

## What can be done?

- Develop partnerships between universities and schools (Professional Development Schools)
- Instigate teacher research
- Individual coaching and mentoring (a professional mediator)
- Self-study research by teacher educators on how they bridge the gap - insider research



## A literature review

# Broekkmann & Van Hout-Wolters (2007)

- Broekkamp, H. & Van Hout-Wolters, B. (2007) The gap between educational research and practice: a literature review, symposium and questionnaire, *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 13, 203–220.
- 1. Educational research yields few conclusive results
- 2. Educational research yields few practical results
- 3. Practitioners believe that educational research is not conclusive or practical

# Community of Professional Practice

Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. (Etienne Wenger, 2006)

# A problem

I can explain it to you  
but I can't understand it for you.

## Formation of a teacher researcher group

- A group of new teachers and mentors requested a group to continue a research ethos in their everyday work.
- John Oversby invited to convene the group

# Teacher-researcher group principles

- Respect for research-based evidence
- Respect for each other independent of experience and employment
- Critical approach to existing research aimed at improved understanding of research evidence and research methods
- Encouragement to take part in research in the classroom

# Moving on or outward

- Extensive work on chemical formulae and equations
- What are notebooks for? The views of pupils, teachers, senior management and parents
- What is revision? Is revision effective?
- What is effective homework?
- Modelling:
  - In ecology
  - In explaining sound

# What next?

- Reproduction - workshop at ASE (5.Jan.13) on how to set up a science teacher-researcher group through metacognitive modelling
- Network of groups to maintain sustainability if one fails