

## **FWF-Project: School Quality and Teacher Education Symposium accepted for AERA 2020 San Francisco**

### **Title: School Improvement Through Research-Engagement In Different Contexts**

- Organiser: Roland Bernhard
- Chair: Katharine Burn
- Discussant: Maria Teresa Tatto

#### **Objective of the symposium**

The objective of this symposium is to bring together different insights into the relationship between school improvement and the use of research by teachers and headteachers in England, Austria and Italy. Recognition of the powerful role that research can play in developing and improving the quality of teaching raises questions about the ways in which high-quality research reaches the practice of schools and informs teachers' professional learning. Different answers to this question are explored by all the papers within this symposium, which illustrate powerful forms of collaboration intended to mobilise research within and across different types of institution in different contexts.

#### **Overview of the presentation**

The focus of this symposium is inspired by findings from one of the studies reported within it (paper 1) that use of research to inspire and inform practice has played a very important part in the success of highly effective and improving schools in England. Thus, the first paper (paper 1: Roland Bernhard/Katharine Burn/Pam Sammons: Research-Based School Improvement: How Highly Effective And Improving Schools In England Apply Research) identifies how leaders have themselves used research to underpin both their school improvement and professional development strategies. In England, university-school partnerships play an important role when it comes to ensuring that research reaches practice.

Paper 2 (Chris Brown: School/University Partnerships: A Case Study of a Proposed University Training School in England) presents a case-study based on documentary analysis of the plans for one such partnership, using detailed analysis of one proposal for a University Teaching school in order to outline what an outstanding partnership might comprise, as well as the potential benefits of such an approach.

Paper 3 (Katharine Burn/Eluned Harries: Sustaining Teachers' Research Engagement: The Role Of A Research Champion Within A University-School Partnership) explores an alternative approach to university-school partnerships by examining one school's experience within a local knowledge exchange partnership forged between the state-maintained schools within one local government area and the research intensive university located at its heart (University of Oxford). Central to this partnership is the role of a designated Research Lead within each school (referred to as a "Research Champion") – a designated teacher in each 2 partnership school who acts as a conduit between school and the university in promoting teachers' research engagement and facilitating collaborative research

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### **Overview of the presentation (continuing)**

In Paper 4 (Ulrike Greiner/Roland Bernhard/Christian Wiesner: Learning In Initial Teacher Education From School Leaders: Processes Of Knowledge Transformation) the symposium returns to the views of the senior school leaders in effective and improving English schools and compares them to the views of Austrian principals – particularly in relation to the role that they attribute to the use of research in school improvement and professional development. The researchers then examine how the insights generated through this comparative process are understood and used by prospective teachers in a series of focus group discussions as a first step towards exploring how a knowledge of senior leaders' views of research use might be used in initial teacher education to foster beginning teachers' continued research engagement.

Paper 5 (Monica Mincu/Claudia Mandrile: Improving Schools Through School To School Support In Italy: Results From A Randomised Control Trial) examines how research-based knowledge is shared within a school-to-school network in Italy, and how this process contributed to school improvement in Italy.

### **Significance**

Recognition of the powerful role that research can play in developing and improving the quality of teaching raises questions about the ways in which high-quality research reaches the practice of schools and informs teachers' professional learning. Different answers to this question are explored by all the papers within this symposium, which illustrate powerful forms of collaboration intended to mobilise research within and across different types of institution in different contexts.

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### **Project School Quality and Teacher Education funded by the Austrian Science Fund**

The project School Quality and Teacher Education (SQTE) is based at the School of Education at the Paris Lodron University of Salzburg, and it is partly being conducted within a Visiting Research Fellowship at the University of Oxford, department of education. The project examines how head teachers and teachers in highly effective and improving schools in England understand and develop school quality and how their experiences and knowledge can be made useful for quality development in schools and curriculum development for initial teacher education and continuous professional development in Austria and England. In this context, special attention is given to schools with a high proportion of disadvantaged students and with pupils who don't speak English as a first language in the city of London ("London effect") and in the so called "cold spots" or opportunity areas in England.

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