HOW TO BREAK THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE PARADOX IN HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP?

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Goal oriented parental involvement to contribute to academic achievement, especially for children at risk, is socially relevant. Desforges (2003) claims that there is a lot of knowledge concerning achievement through parental involvement (e.g. Desforges, 2003, Henderson & Mapp, 2002), but how to apply this knowledge is insufficiently clear. How can we support schools to use the knowledge that is already available? Desforges argues (pp 90-91) in favour of studies which enables us to design and improve practice.

Design Science Research (DSR) can be an useful approach to bridge the gap between research and practice. This type of research provides practitioners applicable solutions concerning field problems instead of general scientific recommendations that are not tailor-made for practice. In DSR the researcher actually intervenes in the intended field of application to test the developed solutions on pragmatic validity. By testing the solution in several cases the question of transferability can be answered. Management implications, utility of the design and feasibility of the implementation aren’t byproducts but key issues. While aiming at solution oriented knowledge for specific contexts, DSR contributes to (mid-range) theory. (van Aken, 2007). The researcher is a designer and advisor at the same time (van Weert & Andriessen, 2007). He tries to explain why in an intended Context, a certain type of Intervention may be used to invoke the expected Mechanism to deliver the desired Outcome (CIMO logic: Denyer et al, 2008).

In the PhD research done on ‘Parental Involvement in secondary education’ a cluster of interventions, meant to improve school-parent partnership in order to contribute to a decrease in school dropout, is designed and tested in the field. This DSR is used as an example to the breakthrough in the knowledge paradox. The main issues that are studied in this paper are: 1) how can DSR contribute to actually improve home-school partnership by applying scientific knowledge? 2) is there a surplus value when we look at theoretical assumptions e.g. the perception of adolescent invitations on parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997/ Walker et al. 2005/ Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005) in a CIMO way?

Keywords: knowledge paradox, Design Science Research, Cimo logic, secondary education, parental involvement, school dropout.
References:


