

On the Interplay Between Educational Research, Educational Policy Making, and Educational Practice:

Which interventions are carried out in practice, why have these been chosen, and how do they relate to educational research and policy?

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Research Motive

*"Education in the Netherlands achieves above-average performance with average financial resources. Yet it is not sufficiently prepared for the future. Basic quality is good, but barriers hold back further improvement and innovation."**

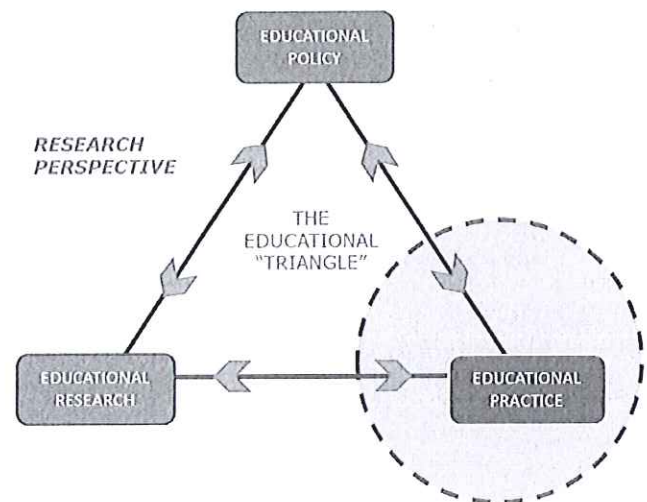
In various studies**, the interaction between the worlds of educational research, practice and policy (the 'triangle') is considered suboptimal when it comes to the shared ambition of improving education. This goes for pedagogical, subject related as well as organizational features of education.

One could argue that an insufficient correlation between (1) the valorisation and dissemination of knowledge, (2) policy initiatives and (3) educational practice will (eventually) lead to a poor social legitimization of education.

Objective

In this study, the reality in Dutch educational practice (primary and/or secondary education) is taken as a starting point: which interventions do professionals carry out to improve (their) education? Why are these specific interventions opted for and with which expectations?

Subsequently, it is studied how these interventions relate to recent educational research (outcomes) and educational policy (initiatives). Where are educational policy and research to be found in the dynamics of every day practice? If at all. Are there any perceptible patterns in the interplay research-policy-practice from the point of view of educational practice? Do or did specific policy measures or research outcomes stimulate, require, hinder, or slow down specific practical interventions?



Results

The outcomes are expected to present new insights in/for:

1. the balance between autonomy and responsibilities of schools, school boards and political authorities;
2. the valorisation and dissemination of educational research outcomes;
3. improving education as flaws in the educational triangle that are currently hampering this are likely to become visible (on both student level as well as that of the educational system).

Approach (multi-method)

I. Field Exploration

In a series of guided conversations research assumptions and ideas are explored among representatives of Dutch primary and secondary education, educational policy makers, and educational researchers. These interviews lead to further insights into research motives, objectives, and approach.

II. Review of prior literature

A review of prior literature on the interplay between educational research, policy, and practice serves as a theoretical framework to narrow down research questions/objectives and to define the exact case study design that will be used.

III. Survey

The data that is obtained from a survey amongst educational practitioners will both be used to reveal possible patterns and relations in the triangle research-practice-policy from practice's perspective as well as to design the subsequent case studies (questions, hypotheses/propositions, unit(s) of analysis, logic linking data to propositions, criteria for interpreting findings****).

IV. Longitudinal Multiple-Case Studies

Multiple longitudinal case studies will provide deeper insight into the motives behind interventions in educational practice and the position of educational research and policy in this reality. The case studies will be based on expected differences in motives and implementation of interventions that follow from the literature review (aiming for literal and/or theoretical replication and triangulation).

Impact

Research into the interplay in the triangle from the perspective of the educational practice is original and complementary to current research. Most often the perspective of either research(ers) or policy (makers) is taken as a starting point. Even though the complexity in educational organisations has increased in recent years***, educational practice – day to day reality in schools – is hardly ever taken as primary focus of research. The interviewees (during field exploration) see a great surplus in the original approach of taking interventions of quality improvement that are carried out in educational practice as the starting point of research.

The interviews show that educational practice is eager to become initiator of policy and research initiatives – much more than is the case in the present situation – and less the indirect object. The recognisability and legitimisation of many educational research and policy initiatives is insufficient from the perspective of the educational practice. The insights that will follow from this research will provide suggestions for policy makers and researchers to improve the effectiveness of the triangle and, herewith, the quality of Dutch education.

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