Betwixt and Between - on the Interstices of Educational Research and School Improvement in a Time of School Reform

The seminar invites researchers and practitioners to engage in the discussion of how researchers conceptualise and practice the relationship between research knowledge and development of practice - with a focus on educational leadership. The occasion is the visit of Viviane Robinson, whose research-based model of student-centered leadership is currently being widely distributed amongst school leaders in Denmark. Therefore we have invited Viviane Robinson to engage with a range of distinguished researchers within the field of educational leadership, who explicitly work with relating research to practice development.

The ambition is to invite the participants into the 'engine room' of research and to share reflections and considerations of core issues within research as a practice. In an era of reform requesting not only 'evidence-based knowledge, but also 'evidence-based practice', we would like to engage researchers from different positions and perspectives to reflect on how their research reflects, but also transforms ideas of evidence-based knowledge and its relations to practice. In a time where research is requested to perform 'certain knowledge', we would like to open up for the qualified reflections of 'un-certainty'. Both in relation to the production of research knowledge, but not least on the nature of relating research knowledge to practice development.

These perspectives will be addressed through the following themes:

• How do researchers think (differently) about the relationship between research knowledge and practice development? Which concepts are used?
• How is this relationship reflected in the methodological design of research and the ways to present research in different forms in order to facilitate and engage in the development of practice?
• Are certain research questions and methods encouraged and others abjected?
• What are the potentials, the limitations and the pitfalls that we try to work with and work around?

Furthermore we would like to also raise the question of critique in relationship to the practical and political field of education and particularly educational leadership:

• How do we think about our engagement as researchers within the field of educational leadership
• How can we discuss the ambitions and engagement that drives particular forms of research in relationship to practice?
• Is there a space for critique within research of and for practice? Can research be both 'hopeful' and 'suspicious'?
Program

9.00 - 9.15  Welcome and introduction
Søren Buhl Hornskov, LOL/UCC

9.15 - 9.30  'Betwixt and Between' – introduction to the theme of the seminar
Helle Bjerg, LOL/UCC

Session 1: 'Best evidence is not best practice' – so how do we think about translation – and its limitations

9.15 - 9.45  Bridging the Gap through Research Translation: The Leadership Best Evidence Synthesis
Viviane Robinson, UACL/AC

09.45 - 10.05  How may research based school data and evidence concerning education and school leadership inform the development of leadership practices – the experience from the “Learning Leadership Programme”
Lars Qvortrup, LSP/AAU

10.05 - 10.25  Coffee break

10.25 - 10.45  Practicing Leadership across Borders: The Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning”
Marsha Modeste, WCR/UW

10.45 - 11.05  Researching and improving leadership: An experimental study
Lotte Bøgh Andersen, KORA/AU

11.10 - 12.00  Moderated panel discussion

12.00 - 13.00  Lunch

Session 2: Research in the field – or how do we work around researching and improving practice?

13.00 - 13.30  Bridging the Gap through Direct Engagement with Practitioners
Viviane Robinson, UACL/AC

13.30 - 13.50  How can school leaders by engaging in Open-To-Learning conversation contribute to enhance teachers’ level of reflection in conversations about the students’ learning
Ann Berit Emstad, NTNU

13.50 - 14.10  ‘Putting education back into the education of school leaders’ - Findings from a study of leadership education
Elvi Weinreich, LOL/UCC

14.10 - 14.30  Coffee break

14.30 - 14.50  The accidental potential of research informed thinking technologies
Dorthe Staunæs, IUP/AU & Helle Bjerg, LOL/UCC

14.50 - 15.30  Moderated panel discussion

15.30 - 15.45  Closing remarks