

ECER2009 - Geir Karlsen Paper

Evidence, quality and relevance in educational research: the S-TEAM project,

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At ECER 2007 Robert Slavin claimed that educational research is in the same position as medicine 100 years ago - promoting an optimistic view that evidence-based research could contribute to a breakthrough in the large and important areas of human life that are affected by education. In S-TEAM we have responded to an EC call to disseminate innovative methods (IBST) in science education "which have proven to be effective and efficacious". I will discuss some resulting challenges concerning the basic moral and ethical elements of education which could oppose a narrow and one-sided interpretation of education as a tool for the knowledge economy. From this point of view, I suggest a neither/nor position, showing the need for quality in educational research, but without becoming hostage to a hegemonic 'research optimism' connected to claims for evidence. Not least, I argue that we should emphasize double-loop-learning processes, thus providing another standard for research which includes elements of ethical and moral obligation. Some of the theoretical framework derives from Hannah Arendt and Martin Buber. I will finally discuss how indicators and instruments could affect quality and enhance the potential of learning processes, by drawing on philosophical concepts coupled with empirical educational research.