

The NAFOL conference: October 22 – 24, 2018:

Validity and Value of Teacher Education Research.

Keynote – Title and Abstract

The issue of relevance in researching educational leadership

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School leadership, teaching and learning in schools are highly contextualized in time and space. This makes the relevance of educational research hard to establish. Moreover, relevance is easier to recognize in retrospect than in prospect and considering the wide array of actors involved in education, raises the question: relevant for whom and for what?

With issues of relevance in mind I will present key findings based on a major research endeavour in which I have been involved since 2002. The project, known as the “International Successful School Principalship Project”, (ISSPP) has developed an extensive body of research across more than 20 countries about the work of school leaders who are recognized as being successful. These findings will be discussed; I will point to some methodological shortcomings, and suggest some alternatives.

A main argument is that our thinking of validity and value of educational leadership research needs to be complemented and informed by research which focuses on recent changes in the political economy. These macroeconomic transformations have been variously referred to as neo-classical, neo-liberal and fast capitalism, and have been accompanied by new forms of governance which have challenged the idea of public education severely.