

TOWARD THE HYBRIDIZATION OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY TO MAKE EDUCATIONAL SCIENCE MORE RELEVANT

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During last decade educational science was faced with a growing demand to strengthen its relevance for policy making and for the improvement of practice (evidence based policy making) and to intensify its collaboration with policy makers and practitioners (creating a triangle of knowledge – research, policy and practice). Accepting this demand asks from researchers to change typical ways of operating and to develop new communities, concepts, and methodologies. In this paper I am going to pinpoint a need for hybridization of quantitative and qualitative approaches as an essential component of upcoming changes. In the first part, I will discuss the strong and weak sides of quantitative and qualitative approaches in terms of production of relevant knowledge for educational science, policy and practice. The quantitative approach is typically considered as the recommended way for producing sound and relevant knowledge that can inform both policy and practice (for example, a randomized controlled trial). The strong side of this approach lies in the fact that it produces generalized and decontextualized knowledge about the impact of different factors on some educational outcomes. However, the very same characteristic might be considered as its key shortcoming. Education policy and practice are highly contextualized activities of different actors who are framed, structured and mediated (not determined) by different sociocultural context, regulations, institutional settings, and interpersonal dynamics between key actors. This is the reason why a quantitative approach cannot be the only source of relevant knowledge neither for policy makers nor for educational practitioners. Thus, it needs to be combined/hybridized in different ways with the qualitative approach in order to be able to bring back contextual aspects of established general and decontextualized knowledge. Following this conclusion, in the second part I am going to present some examples how the two approaches can be hybridized in a meaningful and productive way.