How to cope with challenges in research?

Lessons learned by teacher-researchers

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Welcome

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Programme

1. Introduction: research team of Da Vinci College
   - Goals research team
   - Studies performed by this team
   - Challenges in performing research at school

2. Presentation: research to student portfolio
   - Student portfolio
   - Three levels in research

3. Group discussion on challenges of performing research

4. Presentation on challenges of performing research
Research at Da Vinci College

“By performing research in your school, you get to know your school more and more”

“Research in schools contributes to the creation of a research attitude with those who are involved”
Research at Da Vinci College

Research team

- 4 teacher-researchers
- assistant researcher
- coordinator research
- external researchers

Performing research every Monday afternoon
Followed a training to become teacher-researcher
Research at Da Vinci College

Research team since school year 2007-2008
- Project Expedition Dare Share Do 2007-2010
  External researchers: ILO (University of Amsterdam)
- R&D SLOA project 2011-2013
  External researchers: ICLON (University of Leiden)
Research at Da Vinci College

Tasks:

- To perform studies, for example:
  - Implementation of digital student portfolio
  - Operation of internal communication in school
  - Effect of innovations on student skills and behaviour
  - Effect of working in professional teams on teacher skills
Research at Da Vinci College

Tasks:
- To spread the research attitude towards other teachers, teacher-in-training and students

How?
- by offering colleges
- by providing guidance if needed
- by providing the good example
Challenges in research

However, this situation was not reached in one day.

What kind of challenges do you think we have met in the past few years?

Think about challenges to integrate research into our school.
Challenges in research

List of possible challenges:
Challenges in research

Challenge 1:
There is not enough time and money to perform research in schools by teachers

Solution:
Try to get subsidy
School leaders should facilitate teachers
Challenges in research

Challenge 2:
Teachers are not educated as researchers

Solution:
Put on a sollicitation procedure
Follow a training to become teacher researcher
Work together with external researchers
Challenges in research

Challenge 3:
Teacher researchers perform their research in an isolated fashion

Solution:
Make pairs of teacher researchers
Try to get a shared afternoon to perform this task
Challenges in research

Challenge 4:
Research gives a new dimension to a school

Solution:
Communicate a lot on research: newsletter
Give colleges on “what research is about”
Challenges in research

Challenge 5:
Performing research comes with another rhythm than teaching

Solution:
Build in a moment of transition, e.g. roundtable = starting point of the afternoon
Research at Da Vinci College

Success factors

- School leaders give support: they facilitate teacher researchers, support funding requests, guarantee research in policy documents
- Give feedback to clients and others involved; this contributes to school development
- Inform stakeholders in and outside the school about research: plan, implementation and outcomes
Case study: Digital Student Portfolio

School goal: to be a transparent and open school within the society that helps students to develop their personal qualities

Portfolio goal: to give students and teachers more insight into their specific talents (defined as roles and competencies)
Case study: Digital Student Portfolio

Levels of research:

1. Project description
2. Description of implementation
3. Consequences for student or teacher
Case study: Digital Student Portfolio

Level 1: project description

The design of the portfolio includes:

- A blog
- An overview of the eleven competencies en roles
- An explanation on the definitions and use of the portfolio
Case study: Digital Student Portfolio

Level 2: description of implementation

What do we have available:

- 3 researchers (approximately 13 hours a week in total)
- Deadline: one year to complete the research
- Instruments: interviews, questionnaire, observations, mini test, learner reports and rubrics
Case study: Digital Student Portfolio

Level 2: description of implementation

What encompasses our research:
• Students: 5 classes (first and second year)
• Teachers and mentors

Research goal:
To gain insight into the implementation of the digital student portfolio in the first and second class
Challenge 1:
You have limited resources and time: how do you make sure that your research design is not too large?

Our solution:
• Preferably work from experience and plan ahead
• Otherwise start small and work from there
Case study: Digital Student Portfolio

Challenge 2:
With a multitude of things going on at school: how do you make sure that you can reach your respondents?

Our solution:
• Preferably use face-to-face communication
• Use proper instrument, like an online questionnaire
Case study: Digital Student Portfolio

Challenge 3:
What to do when the response is low? You only get back 30% of your questionnaires

Our solution:
• Emphasize the relevance of your research and the importance to the respondent
• Otherwise contact the respondent directly
Case study: Digital Student Portfolio

Challenge 4:
But what to do if the preliminary results reveal that the implementation of the portfolio is low?

Our solution:
• You shift focus to find out the causes and possible solutions for this low implementation
Case study: Digital Student Portfolio

Challenge 5:
How can you be sure that you have the right research method when you do not know the exact problem?

Our solution:
• Make a selection of the representative respondents
• Use open methods (like depth-interviews)
Case study: Digital Student Portfolio

Challenge 6:
How do process and analyze your 12 depth-interviews in a limited timeframe?

Our solution:
• You do not write out every word, but categorize the results with a predetermined list
• Or use software to categorize and analyze
Case study: Digital Student Portfolio

Challenge 7:
The distance to your own research is very small. How do you guarantee the independence of your research?

Our solution:
- Work in groups and check each others work
- Avoid interviewing friends
Case study: Digital Student Portfolio

Challenge 8:
How do you communicate the results of your research effectively to your client?

Our solution:
• Provide practical recommendations
• Present the results in a final report and oral explanation
Case study: Digital Student Portfolio

Any questions?