

Formative evaluation of the Project Education of the 4 to 8 years old

Dr. Franziska Vogt
Institute for research in teaching and learning
University of Teacher Education St.Gallen PHS^G

CIDREE Pre-Conference
Education of the 4 to 8 year old – re-designing school entrance phase

15th November 2007, Aarau

Formative evaluation: Aims and objectives

Aims

- Formative aspect: providing information for the project leaders for adjustments or improvements.
- Evaluating the project: teachers' and parents' acceptance and perceptions of outcomes as a basis for policy decision (how to structure schooling for 4to8).
- Describing the development of a new form of schooling for 4to8: practices and resources.
- Exploring: research based interpretation of effects, i.e. what defines high quality foundation stage teaching, what explains good outcomes in academic achievement or learning motivation?

Objectives

- Providing results based on empirical research to inform policy decision on foundation stage.
- Inform education of 4 to 8 year old children in Switzerland based on empirical research, independent of foundation stage versus kindergarten/year 1 and 2.

Design

- Design of the formative evaluation of the project foundation stage 4to8 in Switzerland (see attached graph).

Longitudinal study 2004 – 2009

The evaluation is designed as a longitudinal study over three to four years: After 3 months of starting with the project, after 2 years (corresponding with the end of traditional kindergarten), after 3 or 4 years before moving to traditional year 2 or year 3 primary school. Certain questions are asked three times.

Examples for longitudinal items: Parents' views on the child's well-being at school; foundation stage teachers on the hypothetical question whether they would choose to teach foundation stage again.

Variety of research methods

- Questionnaires for parents and for teachers: Comparisons in time, between project classes and control classes (kindergarten and year 1 and 2 of primary school), between the two models of foundation stage (3 versus 4 years of foundation stage) and sub-groups of the sample (i. e. foundation stage teachers with kindergarten training compared with foundation stage teachers with primary school training).
- Group interviews with teachers: Teachers are asked to discuss crucial aspects of the project and are invited to voice their concerns and opinions.
- Teaching observation and video-based interview: a lesson is videographed and observed through a member of the evaluation team, focussing on specific aspects (team teaching, individualisation, differentiation). The researcher selects sequences as impulses for a recall of teachers' cognitions and a reflection in an interview with the two teachers involved.

Example: Variety of research methods in researching 'team teaching'

Research project

Quality of education in the new foundation stage

- Franziska Vogt, Christa Urech, Grazia Buccheri
- Supported by Swiss National Science Foundation (DORE)
- Qualitative case studies (best practice)
- Multi level analysis, linking learning outcome and teacher variables.

Information

Summaries of first evaluation results (in German only):

http://www.edk-ost.sg.ch/home/projekte/grundstufe_basisstufe/berichte/evaluation.html

Report planned for spring 2008, final report in 2010

Contact

Dr. Franziska Vogt
 Institute for research in teaching and learning
 University of Teacher Education St.Gallen
 Notkerstr. 27, CH-9000 St. Gallen
 Tel: +41 71 243 94 80
 franziska.vogt@phsg.ch
 www.phsg.ch

Project design

