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### Connecting practice-based research and school development. Cross-professional collaboration in secondary education

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# **About the author**

## **Short biography**

Wouter Schenke works as a researcher at Kohnstamm Institute, University of Amsterdam since summer 2010 and as teacher educator at the Institute of Teacher Education (ILO), University of Amsterdam since summer 2014. He studied human geography at Utrecht University and attended the teacher education program at IVLOS, Utrecht University. He began his career in 2006 as teacher in geography at Da Vinci College Kagerstraat in Leiden. From 2007 until 2014 he coordinated research in his school. His current research interests in education are organizational aspects of practice-based research in schools, cross-professional collaboration between school practitioners and researchers, teacher research, and professional learning communities.

## **A journey from teacher to researcher**

On my journey from teacher to academic researcher in education I have noticed several personal changes. I like to reflect on these changes, as an opportunity to inspire others, but also for myself to have a better understanding of the researcher that I am today.

### **Rooted in practice**

My motive as a researcher is rooted in practice: I started my career as a teacher in geography. Right from the beginning as a teacher I had the idea and wish to combine this work with performing research. Just one year later a great opportunity came along, which in retrospect meant the start of a life-changing experience: being research coordinator in my school of the project called ‘Expedition Dare, Share, Do’. We started a new research team of teachers who developed into teacher researchers. During the following years we began stimulating colleagues to become research engaged and be involved in small-scale research activities. In the meantime I became experienced as a teacher, for instance as a mentor of students. After a few years my curiosity and hunger for performing practice-based studies, organizational learning, collaboration with the academic world was not stilled yet; actually it just got started. Fortunately in summer 2010, my chance came along which I grabbed with both hands: an opportunity to work as an educational researcher to study R&D projects in schools. I began

working at Kohnstamm Institute, University of Amsterdam and a few months later I officially started my PhD.

### **Identity as researcher**

For several years I combined the two jobs that I had: I worked for two days as a teacher at my school and coordinated the teacher research team on Monday afternoon, and the other three days I worked as a researcher. I quickly adjusted to this new rhythm of my workweek, although combining two jobs was not easy. I was actually crossing boundaries between the educational field and academic field (see Chapter 3 on the issue of boundary crossing). My learning mechanism can be characterized as *transformation*. Becoming a researcher came with new manifestations, such as other outfits and different vocabulary. It also brought me a different, broader view on the field of education. I learned new research knowledge (e.g. theoretical frameworks), practiced other research skills (e.g. analyzing large amounts of interview data), and experienced a more profound research attitude than I had before. School leaders and teachers working in innovative and research-engaged schools took interest in the findings of my PhD-study. At the same time I noticed that educational researchers were interested in my experiences as teacher, teacher researcher and research coordinator, and therefore I gave quite some presentations on these issues as well. Another example of transferring practice-based knowledge to the research field was my recommendation at my research institute for integrating some pedagogical approaches at research meetings to increase the interactivity between presenter and listeners.

Performing the study on the R&D projects, being part of Kohnstamm Institute and the community of researchers at the university changed my professional identity. In the beginning of my PhD, when people asked me: 'What is your job?', I answered them: 'I am a teacher. And I work as a researcher'. I can still recall the moment when this question was asked again after two years of working on my dissertation, I answered for the first time without any purpose: 'I am a researcher and I work as a teacher as well'.

### **Finding new routes**

In the final year of my dissertation I decided to quit my job as a teacher. Combining both jobs felt harder to do than the years before and it was time for a new step. This decision brought new opportunities, such as my temporary move in the spring of 2014 to Stanford University, California, of which I would not even have thought as a teacher. From summer 2014 on I started working at the Institute of Teacher Education, where I educate teachers with commitment. One year later my dissertation is finished and I remain active as a researcher at Kohnstamm Institute.

My drive as an academic researcher is to encourage as many practitioners to learn from research and researchers to learn from practice. Based upon the findings of my PhD, I suggest school leaders, teachers, and researchers, advisers, and supervisors to find each other in cross-professional collaboration and aim for a research-engaged community in which all will be able to learn from each other.



# Publications

## Peer-reviewed publications

Schenke, W., Volman, M.L.L., van Driel, J.H., Geijssel, F.P., & Sligte H.W. (2012). Cross-professionele samenwerking in de context van ontwikkelen onderzoeksprojecten in het voortgezet onderwijs. [Cross-professional collaboration in the context of research and development projects in secondary education.] *Pedagogische Studiën*, 89, 350-363.

## Papers in press

Schenke, W., van Driel, J.H., Geijssel, F.P., Sligte, H.W., & Volman, M.L.L. (in press). Characterizing cross-professional collaboration in research and development projects in secondary education. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*.

## Papers in progress

Schenke, W., van Driel, J.H., Geijssel F.P., & Volman, M.L.L. (in revision). Boundary crossing in R&D projects in schools: learning through cross-professional collaboration.

Schenke, W., van Driel, J.H., Geijssel F.P., & Volman, M.L.L. (submitted). The interplay between practice-based research and school development through cross-professional collaboration in secondary education.

This chapter is based on Schenke, W., Geijssel, F.P., van Driel, J.H., & Volman, M.L.L. (in preparation). Encouraging and integrating research engagement in schools: the school leaders' perspective.

## Other publications

Admiraal, W., Kruiter, J., Lockhorst, D., Schenke, W., Sligte, H., Smit, B., Tigelaar, D., & de Wit, W. (submitted). Affordances of teachers' workplace learning in secondary schools.

Schenke, W., Sligte, H., Emmelot, Y., Buisman, M., Admiraal, W., Meirink, J., & Smit, B. (in preparation). *Scan professionele leergemeenschap in het voortgezet onderwijs: een meetinstrument*. [Scan professional learning community in secondary education: a measuring instrument.] Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Kohnstamm Institute, University of Amsterdam.

Schenke, W., Geijssel, F., van Eck, E., & Volman, M., in cooperation with van Driel, J., & Sligte, H. (2014). *Werken op dezelfde golflengte. Scholen en onderzoekers werken samen aan onderzoek*. [To work on the same wavelength. Schools and researchers work together on research.] Utrecht, The Netherlands: VO-raad.

- Pater, C. & van Driel, J., in cooperation with Geijsel, F., Volman, M., & Schenke, W. (2014). *Professionele leraren. Opbrengsten en inzichten uit praktijkgerichte onderzoeksprojecten van de VO raad.* [Professional teachers. Results and insights from practice-based research projects of the Dutch Council for Secondary Education.] Utrecht, The Netherlands: VO-raad.
- Schenke, W., & Galjaard, S. (2010). *Leraaronderzoekers en onderzoekende leraren. Hoe onderzoek naar innovatie bijdraagt aan de professionaliteit van leraren.* [Teacher researchers and research teachers. The contribution of research on innovations to professional development of teachers.] *Kluwer Navigator Onderwijs*.

### Conference contributions

- Schenke, W., Volman, M.L.L., van Driel, J.H., & Geijsel, F.P. (2014). *Learning of Professionals Due to Boundary Crossing in R&D Projects in Schools.* Paper presented at the Conference of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), Philadelphia, PA, 3-7 April 2014.
- Schenke, W. (2014). *Learning of Professionals in Schools; Creating New Settings for Professional Development.* Symposium organized at the Conference of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), Philadelphia, PA, 3-7 April 2014.
- Schenke, W., Volman, M.L.L., van Driel, J.H., Geijsel F.P., & Sligte, H.W. (2013). *R&D-projects in schools: opportunities for cross-professional collaboration between researchers and schools.* Paper presented at the Conference of the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI), Munich, Germany, 27-31 August 2013.
- Schenke, W., Volman, M.L.L., van Driel, J.H., & Geijsel F.P. (2013). *Wat leren schoolleiders, docenten en onderzoekers in ontwikkel- en onderzoeksprojecten op scholen van elkaars werelden? [What do school leaders, teachers, and researchers learn from each other's world in research and development projects.]* Paper presented at the Educational Research Days (ORD), Brussels, Belgium, 29-31 May 2013.
- Schenke, W., Volman, M.L.L., van Driel, J.H., & Geijsel F.P. (2013). *Boundary crossing: Learning of professionals in R&D projects.* Poster presented at the German-Dutch ISCAR Symposium, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 22 February 2013.

- Schenke, W., Volman, M.L.L., van Driel, J.H., Geijsel, F.P., & Sligte, H.W. (2012). *Cross-professionele samenwerking: overkoepelend onderzoek naar ontwikkel- en onderzoeksprojecten in het VO.* [Cross-professional collaboration: overarching study on research and development projects in secondary education.] Paper presented at the Educational Research Days (ORD), Wageningen, The Netherlands, 22 June 2012.
- Schenke, W., Volman, M.L.L., van Driel, J.H., & Geijsel, F.P. (2011). Bridging the gap. *Op zoek naar typen samenwerking tussen onderzoekers en scholen.* [Bridging the gap. In search of types of collaboration between researchers and schools.] Poster presented at the Educational Research Days (ORD), Maastricht, The Netherlands, 8-10 June 2011.
- Schenke, W., Regensburg, M. & Sikkema, R. (2011). *How to cope with challenges in research? Lessons learned by teacher researchers.* Paper presented at the European Association for Practitioner Research on Improving Learning (EAPRIL), Nijmegen, The Netherlands, November 2011.
- Schenke, W., Ros, A., Verhoeven, S. Volman, M.L.L., van Driel, J.H., Geijsel, F.P. (2011). *Tension in Research: how to reach scientific as well as practical goals?* Paper presented at the European Association for Practitioner Research on Improving Learning in education and professional practice (EAPRIL), Nijmegen, The Netherlands, 23-25 November 2011.
- Schenke, W., Sligte, H., Walraven, M., & Lockhorst, D. (2010). *Research instruments as tools for the professional development of teachers.* Paper presented at the European Association for Practitioner Research on Improving Learning (EAPRIL), Lisbon, Portugal, 24-26 November 2010.
- Schenke, W., Schellings, G., & van der Voort, M.J. (2010). *Enlarging teachers' professional development. Teachers examine innovative school projects aimed at stimulating learners' talents.* Paper presented at the European Association for Practitioner Research on Improving Learning (EAPRIL), Lisbon, Portugal, 24-26 November 2010.

## Lectures abroad

- Schenke, W. (2014). *Teacher research. A contribution to changes in schools.* CSET speaker series 'Pondering Excellence in Teaching'. Lecture as visiting PhD student at Stanford University, Stanford, CA, 21 May 2014.
- Schenke, W. (2011-2014). *Onderzoek de school in: Expeditie Durven Delen Doen en SLOA-projecten.* [Research in school: Expedition Dare, Share, Do, and SLOA-projects.] Guest lecture at Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium, December 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014.



## **Papers in this dissertation and contributions of co-authors**

### **Chapter 2 is based on:**

Schenke, W., van Driel, J.H., Geijsel, F.P., Sligte, H.W., & Volman, M.L.L. (in press). Characterizing cross-professional collaboration in research and development projects in secondary education. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*.

### ***Contributions:***

Wouter Schenke is the first author of this paper. He reviewed literature, collected and analyzed data, and drafted the initial manuscript. The research team further consisted of Monique Volman (project coordinator) and Jan van Driel and Femke Geijsel (project leaders of the study), who were the supervisors of Wouter Schenke. The research team collaboratively conceptualized and designed the study. As a form of audit, the research team discussed all the steps in the process of analysis and its outcomes, and where necessary the primary data were rechecked. The supervisors contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the data, and reviewed and revised the manuscript. Henk Sligte, senior researcher at Kohnstamm Institute, made a contribution in co-designing the study and in collecting data.

### **Chapter 3 is based on:**

Schenke, W., van Driel, J.H., Geijsel F.P., & Volman, M.L.L. (in revision). Boundary crossing in R&D projects in schools: learning through cross-professional collaboration.

### ***Contributions:***

Wouter Schenke is the first author of this paper. He reviewed literature, collected and analyzed data, and drafted the initial manuscript. The research team further consisted of Monique Volman (project coordinator) and Jan van Driel and Femke Geijsel (project leaders of the study), who were the supervisors of Wouter Schenke. The research team collaboratively conceptualized and designed the study. As a form of audit, the research team discussed all the steps in the process of analysis and its outcomes, and where necessary the primary data were rechecked. The supervisors contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the data, and reviewed and revised the manuscript.

**Chapter 4 is based on:**

Schenke, W., van Driel, J.H., Geijssel F.P., & Volman, M.L.L. (submitted). The interplay between practice-based research and school development through cross-professional collaboration in secondary education.

***Contributions:***

Wouter Schenke is the first author of this paper. He reviewed literature, collected and analyzed data, and drafted the initial manuscript. The research team further consisted of Monique Volman (project coordinator) and Jan van Driel and Femke Geijssel (project leaders of the study), who were the supervisors of Wouter Schenke. The research team collaboratively conceptualized and designed the study. As a form of audit, the research team discussed all the steps in the process of analysis and its outcomes, and where necessary the primary data were rechecked. The supervisors contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the data, and reviewed and revised the manuscript.

**Chapter 5 is based on:**

Schenke, W., Geijssel, F.P., van Driel, J.H., & Volman, M.L.L. (in preparation). Encouraging and integrating research engagement in schools: the school leaders' perspective.

***Contributions:***

Wouter Schenke is the first author of this paper. He reviewed literature, collected and analyzed data, and drafted the initial manuscript. The research team further consisted of Monique Volman (project coordinator) and Jan van Driel and Femke Geijssel (project leaders of the study), who were the supervisors of Wouter Schenke. The research team collaboratively conceptualized and designed the study. As a form of audit, the research team discussed all the steps in the process of analysis and its outcomes, and where necessary the primary data were rechecked. The supervisors contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the data, and reviewed and revised the manuscript.

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## Practice-oriented publications related to this study

The Dutch Council for Secondary Education published the following practice-oriented publications related to this study:



Schenke, W., Geijssel, F., van Eck, E., & Volman, M., in cooperation with van Driel, J., & Sligte, H. (2014). *Werken op dezelfde golflengte. Scholen en onderzoekers werken samen aan onderzoek. [To work on the same wavelength. Schools and researchers work together on research.]* Utrecht, The Netherlands: VO-raad.

Pater, C. & van Driel, J., in cooperation with Geijssel, F., Volman, M., & Schenke, W. (2014). *Professionele leraren. Opbrengsten en inzichten uit praktijkgerichte onderzoeksprojecten van de VO raad. [Professional teachers. Results and insights from practice-based research projects of the Dutch Council for Secondary Education.]* Utrecht, The Netherlands: VO-raad.



Pater, C. & Volman, M., in cooperation with van Driel, J., Geijssel, F., & Sligte, H. (2014). *Talenten ontwikkelen voor de toekomst. Opbrengsten en inzichten uit praktijkgerichte onderzoeksprojecten van de VO raad. [Developing talents for the future. Results and insights from practice-based research projects of the Dutch Council for Secondary Education.]* Utrecht, The Netherlands: VO-raad.

## Overview of schools and research and advisory institutes (in Dutch)

### Secondary schools

2College, Tilburg  
Atlas College, Hoorn  
Bataafs Lyceum, Hengelo  
Bonaventuracollege, Leiden  
Burg. Harmsmaschool, Gorredijk  
Comenius Lyceum, Amsterdam  
Corlaer College, Nijkerk  
CS De Hoven, Gorinchem  
CSG Prins Maurits, Middelharnis  
CSG Reggesteyn, Nijverdal  
CVO Rotterdam  
IJburg College, Amsterdam  
Johan de Witt Scholengroep, Den Haag  
KS Etten-Leur  
Marcanti College, Amsterdam  
Merletcollege, Grave  
Montaigne Lyceum, Den Haag  
ORS Lek en Linge, Culemborg  
RGS Slingerbos/Levant, Harderwijk  
ROS Rijnland, Lisse  
Sondervick College, Veldhoven  
Stad College, Almere  
Stad en Esch, Meppel  
SG Huizermaat, Huizen  
Stichting Carmelcollege, Hengelo  
UniC, Utrecht  
Vrije School Zutphen  
Zernike College, Haren

### Research and advisory institutes

KPC Groep  
Universiteit van Amsterdam  
Universiteit Twente  
Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen  
NHL Hogeschool  
Universiteit van Amsterdam  
Oberon  
KPC Groep  
KPC Groep  
Expertis  
KPC Groep  
Universiteit van Amsterdam en APS  
Universiteit Leiden  
AO Consult  
CINOP  
Artédúc en Van der Burgt Computer Educatie  
Oberon en Universiteit Utrecht  
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam  
Universiteit Leiden  
Universiteit Leiden  
Technische Universiteit Eindhoven  
Oberon  
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen en NHL Hogeschool  
Universiteit Leiden  
KPC Groep  
Hogeschool Utrecht en GameOn  
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen  
NHL Hogeschool



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In the last decade, a rise of research and development (R&D) projects in secondary schools in the Netherlands can be observed. In these projects, school leaders and teachers are engaged with researchers, advisers, and supervisors in various sorts of research and development activities. R&D projects in schools create the opportunity to connect practice-based research to school development through cross-professional collaboration. The results of the studies presented in this dissertation indicate that there is not one single type of cross-professional collaboration in R&D projects. The professionals shaped collaboration in different ways as a consequence of the variation in their reasons for collaboration, divisions of roles and tasks, and communication structures in the projects. Most school leaders grasped the opportunity of the R&D project to encourage research engagement in their school: Teachers discussed research results and reflected on the meaning for school practice. At the same time educational researchers developed a practice-engaged research approach, by being aware of the complexities of educational practice and thinking along with decision-making processes on teaching and learning in school.