

National update: England

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Where were we in 2002?

- Established social science base
- Widespread support in principle for R&D
- But relatively low resourcing ('relatively')
- Some knowledge-management initiatives
- but not system-wide
- Conclusion – headed in right direction but cultural change needed in all communities

Some antecedents a Government perspective

- Late 1990s frustration with education R&D
- Responses began 1999 and 2000:
 - Longitudinal data-collection
 - More policy driven agenda for research, especially by ESRC (the TLR Programme)
 - Research centres to focus effort
 - Attempts to draw together communities to agree on strategic direction and nature of R&D, and boost funding (NERF, EPPI ?)

Trends and strategic developments since 2002

- Consider 4 aspects
 - Overall 'position' of education R&D
 - Government commitment and funding
 - The education research community
 - The practitioner community

.... overall commitment to educational R and D

- Slow consolidation 2002-2007
- Responsibilities devolved, incrementally?
- Because/despite less emphasis on national (English) structures & initiatives? (charitable sectors; partnership working)
- More effort to make evidence more useable for policy and practice
- Growing academic interest in research use

.... policy position and resources

- R&D funding broadly level – but in context of big increases in programme spend
- Policy view of research become more complex (sophisticated ?) – a greater range of types and uses of research
- Evidence more part of VFM judgements – but only ‘part of the mix’
- Still only limited view that research is needed in order to design and deliver effective policies
- Policy engagement varies across sectors

..... the research community

- Less divided now about engaging in policy agenda ?
- Also more accepting of diverse approaches & disciplines (eg syst review?)
- BERA has brought parties together and sought ways to express the voice of educational researchers – a new UK-wide ‘strategic forum’ envisaged

.....engagement of practitioners

- Practitioners perhaps least touched by developments since 2002
- Some increase in research engagement, and better access to research findings (TRIPs, NERF/CUREE bulletins, TLRP outputs, Teachers TV)
- But not yet a critical mass ?

Links between research production and research use

- Much more access to useable evidence
- Overarching structures to pull together and champion key evidence has been resisted
- ...but positive signs of more 'development-linked research' – even though by other organisations, not directly by Government
- Better understanding since 2002 of the many forms of 'interaction' between research evidence and its application

Conclusions the current picture

- Slow but positive progress since 2002
- Less emphasis on structures & initiatives
- Innovation & development more devolved and spontaneous, but common threads
- Relationship between policy-makers, academics and practitioners changing in subtle ways; some culture change
- Future: the nature & purposes of evidence