

Chapter 17

Promoting Evidence-based Policy in Education: The Case of Poland¹

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In this chapter, Jerzy Wisniewski describes the current state of Poland's evidence-based policy in education. He explains that, following the country's accession to EU and the involvement of its researchers in international surveys, this policy has made real progress and is now embodied in the Centre for Social and Economic Research (CASE).

Background

In 1989 Poland initiated changes which may be described as revolutionary. The economic system was transformed through the establishment of free market, as were the principles underlying the State and public life through the implementation of democratic procedures. Only education was changing at a slow pace. This may be explained by two reasons. Firstly, this is the very nature of education which may not be changed overnight. Changes in curricular contents require, for example, new curriculum frameworks and textbooks to be developed and teachers to be trained. The introduction of revised curricula in schools should be coordinated with the educational cycles, with new curricula only gradually replacing the existing ones as successive cohorts are promoted to the next years. Secondly, it was not entirely clear which direction changes and reforms of the

¹ This text is an outcome of a short policy seminar which brought together ten Ministers and Vice-Ministers of Education holding their post in different periods between 1989 (the beginning of the democratic transition in Poland) and the present day. The seminar was organised by CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research. “The CASE Education Policy Seminar” was designed as a stocktaking and trailblazing exercise which would ultimately help to put in place a mechanism facilitating the development of evidence-based educational policy. This initiative was inspired by three factors: a continuing need for the educational reform to be supported with the expertise available; the CERI-OECD project “Evidence-Based Policy Research”; opportunities and financial support provided by the Human Capital Operational Programme financed by the European Social Fund between 2007 and 2013.

² CASE is an independent, international and non-profit institute founded on the idea that research-based policy-making is vital for the economic welfare of societies. Established in Warsaw in 1991, CASE today is an internationally renowned institute drawing on the talents of prominent economists and driving the creation of a network of partner institutions in transition countries. CASE carries out policy-oriented research and development assistance projects, specialising in questions of European integration, post-communist transition, and the global economy.

education system should take. This was combined with a shortage of experts, both within and outside the Ministry of Education, who could propose the direction and agenda for changes.

First reformatory efforts aimed primarily to make schools free from the taint of ideology – to remove it from curricula and textbooks, in particular those for history and the mother tongue. Efforts were made to promote foreign language learning, mainly through the establishment of foreign language teacher training colleges as an alternative to five-year teacher training programmes offered at higher education institutions.

General lines for change in governance were defined, with the responsibility for the administration and financing of schools to be gradually taken over by local authorities. Higher education institutions were granted extensive autonomy.

These changes were taking place in response to immediate needs (filling in “blank pages” in history; tackling the shortage of teachers) or were related to the general direction of changes in the functioning of the State, for example the decentralisation and delegation of powers to local authorities. No comprehensive long- or medium-term strategy for the development of education was developed. The Ministry was not prepared to provide strategic leadership because it served only as an administrator under the previous regime, while the communist party structures were the decision-making nerve centre.

Research base

The research base of the Ministry was weak and had no contacts with the West. Like in other countries of the Soviet bloc, researchers were concerned with “pedagogical sciences”, which meant reflecting on most effective ways to educate a future citizen of a communist state. Fortunately, teachers were not bothered by that work and sought to convey sound knowledge and a reasonable system of values to their pupils.

Higher education institutions did not conduct educational research either, because necessary institutional structures were (and still are) non-existent. Teachers were (and still are) trained in faculties providing programmes and training professionals in specific fields (mathematics, biology, modern languages, etc.). Faculties of education, or “faculties of pedagogy”, focused mainly on training teachers for pre-primary education and initial stages of primary education. Interdisciplinary research was not undertaken, because researchers – locked in the rigid organisational structure of their faculties and departments – failed to see the links between education and, for example, employability, labour market, economy, etc.

In the early 1990s, financial support was made available by the European Community within the framework of the Phare Programme. Phare projects funded in the field of education and training were targeted mainly on higher education and the vocational education and training system. Apart from support for changes in these areas, the projects offered an added value by promoting project methodology as a working method. It forced those involved to define objectives, inputs and outputs, to develop monitoring indicators and tools, and to evaluate the outcomes achieved. The project development process required that links should be identified with the economy and labour market. Most projects involved foreign experts and were implemented in co-operation with foreign institutions. This provided an opportunity to exchange experience, access to research and a channel to follow policy debates in the (then) twelve EC Member States.

From the very beginning of co-operation, experts from the Member States involved in the Phare projects drew attention to the absence of a strategic vision for the development of education linked with economic and social reforms and to the weakness of the research base of the Ministry of Education.

This was reflected, for example, in the report prepared under the Phare/UPET Programme in 1994:

“The key Ministry of National Education (MoNE) departments are neither structured nor staffed to carry out their new innovative and pro-active roles. There is no permanent secretariat working solely on behalf of the Committee for Reform or the Executive Council.

There is no single section within MoNE responsible for ensuring that the decisions of the executive are informed by research, supported administratively, implemented and evaluated.

Outside MoNE there are only two institutions readily available to implement policy: CODN (National In-Service Teacher Training Centre) and IBE (Institute for Educational Research).

While there are outstanding individual Polish educationalists there is no national network of ready expertise available to MoNE. Nor is there a significant budget to buy in such outside assistance.” (Jan Potworowski, “Final Report on Assistance to the MoNE Policy and Evaluation Development”, Phare, Ministry of National Education 1994.)

It is worth noting that, while 12 years have passed since that judgment was made, the Institute of Educational Research has not undertaken yet any work to support the development of educational policy. Despite the introduction of an ambitious reform of the school education system in 1998, including structural changes, curriculum redesign and the establishment of external examinations, the Institute has not contributed on a regular basis, for example, to the monitoring of reform implementation.

OECD and reform

Issues such as the establishment of appropriate structures and a support system for the development of educational policy and, more broadly, a HRD strategy were also raised in the recommendations of the 1995 OECD review:

“According to its major function of basic, initial education and skills formation, the Ministry of National Education should be serviced, as soon as possible, by a strategic unit. Among major permanent tasks the unit should be in charge of:

- a) proposing alternative visions/scenarios of the development of the education and training system;*
- b) developing and maintaining a good statistical indicators’ unit or keeping close contact with such unit;*
- c) synthesising key outcomes of educational R&D and evaluation research and advising relevant units on priority research activities to be implemented;*

- d) *preparing, publishing and disseminating to various stakeholders at regular intervals, an overall state of education and training in Poland which would bring together and interpret quantitative information based on the data so collected;*
- e) *ensuring that, within the decentralisation policy, the above data and surveys would fully cover specific local trends in the framework of broader social and economic development.*

The examiners consider that, faced with such lack of basic information, the Polish authorities should have reacted rapidly in establishing or re-establishing some major “think tanks” which could have helped the various stakeholders to get a preliminary appraisal of the situation and some perspective directions for the future. Several ministerial research institutions were disbanded, even within the Ministry of National Education, but those which survived or developed as independent institutions did not seem to be equipped in terms of human, or even material resources, to cover such a complex issue as the current state and likely future of HRD in a transition society. (Reviews of National Policies for Education: Poland, OECD, 1996.)

Indeed, soon after the OECD reviewers presented their recommendations, a unit to be responsible for strategy was set up within the Ministry of National Education. However, its tasks were actually limited to the design of a curricular reform. It soon became clear that this unit was most vulnerable in terms of consequences of political changes. Following the elections, each time the unit was reorganised, its staff replaced and its remit often changed. The short time span for planning and action – from elections to elections – made it very difficult to develop long-term strategies. The only factor that has remained unchanged, despite changing governments and parliamentary coalitions, is the lack of funds for research.

As mentioned earlier, in 1998 the Ministry designed and implemented a comprehensive reform of the school education system within a very short period of time (several months). Curricular reform was the central part of changes. The Minister established core curricula, and schools were free to choose from curricula available on the market or develop their own curricula. In order to measure learning achievements, a system of national tests and examinations was introduced, covering all pupils at the end of successive stages of education (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education). The responsibility for preparing, administering and marking examinations was given to the newly established central and regional examination boards. In the new structure of the school education system, 8-year primary school and 3-year to 5-year secondary schools were replaced with 6-year primary school followed by 3-year lower secondary school and 3-year to 4-year upper secondary schools. At the same time, the responsibility for the administration of schools was delegated to local authorities. The implementation of the reform was accompanied by changes in the promotion and remuneration system for teachers.

The reform was designed in a very short period of time and, though it built on the work done earlier (including the OECD review of educational policy), its implementation was not preceded by any reliable and comprehensive analysis. Thus it was even more important to ensure proper monitoring of the reform implementation. This task was entrusted to the Institute of Public Affairs, an independent non-governmental institution. Over several years, the Institute produced a number of reports which served more as a basis for public debate than for changes in the policy of the Ministry.

Various papers and reports were also prepared by other non-governmental organisations (*e.g.* Polish Children and Youth Foundation, J.A. Komeński Foundation), on their own initiative and often with support from foreign partners. However, there was no institution or unit to collect and analyse such materials. Neither was there any well-designed system in place to contract research, endorse its findings and ensure appropriate follow-up.

Some hopes for capacity-building were pinned on the involvement of Polish research teams in international surveys such as IALS, IEA Civic Education or, last but not least, PISA. Regrettably, these opportunities were only partly used. Due to limited funding, the Ministry contracted only the necessary minimum set – as defined by the international consortium co-ordinating the survey – of services: developing the Polish-language version of questionnaires, collecting data and preparing a short report. This enabled the experts directly involved in the survey to acquire new important competences. However, the surveys were not accompanied or followed by wider debate on methodology, findings, etc. involving representatives of the research and higher education sectors or prospective users of their findings: policy makers, social partners, etc.

Effect of EU accession

Another chance was offered by Poland's accession to the European Union and the access to EU Structural Funds. Like the programming process for the use of Phare funds in the first years of the transition period, preparations undertaken to use Structural Funds necessarily involved the development of strategies for changes, the identification of objectives and the development of detailed actions plans. However, compared with the support under Phare, the financial resources available were much more substantial. Regrettably, potential opportunities were again limited by external factors. Poland acceded to the European Union at the mid-point of the so-called programming period for the years 2000-2006, and thus had practically only 2-3 years for the implementation of projects. The Ministry concentrated more on effective and fast ways to spend the money than on developing a long-term strategy.

Entirely new opportunities were created by programmes which will be implemented as part of the new Financial Perspective 2007-2013. The preparatory work, including the development of first principles and strategy concepts, started already in 2004. This coincided with the critical debate in the European Union on the Lisbon Strategy and its implementation, which gave an impetus to place more emphasis on educational issues, in connection with the competitiveness of the economy on the one hand and the promotion of employment and greater social cohesion on the other hand.

The Human Capital Operational Programme will be the only programme financed by the European Social Fund between 2007 and 2013, supporting projects which aim to enhance employment and social cohesion, to develop competencies and to improve the quality of the education system. Planned activities include “the implementation of research projects in the field of education”. Moreover, the programme “will ensure co-ordination of data collection, which will make it possible to draw up consistent recommendations for national educational policy”.

[Detailed description of priorities, a working document of the Ministry of Regional Development, 2006]

Agenda-building

At that time, on the verge of implementing the Human Capital Operational Programme, CASE – Center for Economic and Social Research – came up with an idea to use the experience of former ministers in order to propose some solutions and to create a basis for future dialogue and co-operation between those who carry out educational research and policy makers. 15 years experience has shown that a specific “language barrier” was a major obstacle to the development of such co-operation. A team of experienced policy makers with high standing may become a good mediator, translating expectations of decision makers into the language of research topics and, vice versa, interpreting research findings so that they could be embedded in policy decisions. At the same time, the high standing of individual members and the entire team, based on their experience and will to co-operate despite different political backgrounds, ensures effective leadership of the project.

The idea was put into action by the “CASE Educational Policy Seminar”.

The initiative was well received by the present management of the Ministry of National Education. The seminar was attended by two vice-ministers currently in office.

Before the meeting, the seminar participants received a list of key issues for the debate:

- Who is and should be the main user of educational research?
- Is there a need for a brokerage institution providing answers to decision makers’ questions on the basis of analysis of available research findings or through commissioned research?
- What should be the scope of responsibilities of such an institution?
 - Collecting data and information, conducting analyses, preparing (periodical) reports?
 - Running an educational research clearing house?
 - Supervising on-going research and ensuring its quality: methodological standards, international comparability?
 - Conducting research?
 - Tendering for research?
 - Developing terms of reference for research projects and participating in the evaluation of tenders?
 - Carrying out activities to promote the development of research (capacity-building)?
- What should be the thematic scope of its activities?
 - Learning and learners: curricula, methodology, teacher training, learning strategies, self-learning, resources?
 - Governance, management, financing, organisational arrangements, quality assurance?

- Outcomes: school and individual learning achievements, labour market, economy, social capital?
- What should be the status of such an institution? Where should its funding come from? To whom it should report?
- Inter-sector links: the ministries responsible for higher education, labour, health and economy, and the Central Statistical Office?
- Links within the education system: the Central Examination Board, the National In-Service Teacher Training Centre, the Institute of Educational Research, higher education institutions?

Clearly, it was not possible to answer all of the above questions during one relatively short meeting. However, as a result of the discussion, consensus was reached about a number of issues:

- The *research problem is important*. All participants declared their readiness to contribute to the project, to share their expertise with the Ministry of Education which is responsible for strategy development – and “there is no escape from it”.
- There is a need to establish a unit which will act as a (*knowledge*) *brokerage agency*. It should be an independent unit, but closely co-operating with the Ministry. It would propose a list of key issues, identify sources of information, formulate research topics and define the framework for conducting research, and summarise and interpret research findings for policy makers.
- No *new institution* should be created *within the structures of public administration*.
- Such a unit will need to cope with contradictory expectations:
 - to engage in theoretical reflection and to propose practical, readily applicable solutions;
 - to be independent, but serve policy makers, responding to their *ad hoc* expectations;
 - to co-ordinate consultancy services, while not monopolising them.
- The unit *should not carry out research itself*, because this would involve a conflict of interest (contracting institution – service provider).
- The *thematic scope* of the unit’s activities should be *sufficiently wide*, because education is not an end in itself. It serves the purpose of encouraging economic growth and enhancing the competitiveness of the country and its regions, contributes to the development of human and social capital, boosts employability and is a key factor promoting social cohesion. Thus, in addition to the Ministry of Education, the customers of “brokerage services” should include:
 - other ministries, in particular those responsible for higher education, and labour and social policy;
 - regional and local authorities;
 - schools, continuing education providers and higher education institutions.

- It is particularly important to provide *reliable information* which would *inform decisions* as well as *inspire public debate*. Such informed debate may give an impetus to, and exert pressure on, decision makers to take specific action. At the same time, public debate is an effective mechanism for public consultation, legitimising and providing support to reforms proposed by the Government.
- There are numerous reports and publications which are not based on reliable research. In many cases, research covers narrow-scope issues, small social groups or a small number of institutions. It is often based on small research samples selected according to questionable criteria. In times of rapid changes, research findings become obsolete quite rapidly. Moreover, some research topics lose relevance, while others emerge and grow in importance. All this makes it difficult or even impossible to draw general conclusions from partial findings.
- At the same time, as reliable information is not available, decision makers often rely on stereotypes and anecdotic knowledge.
- Tasks of the unit
 - *maintaining the continuity* of educational policy;
 - conducting *ex-ante evaluation of new proposals* from policy makers, based on reliable diagnosis and carried out with regard to their implementation;
 - *assessing the impact* of new proposals on the society, economy and labour market – anticipating “side effects”;
 - *facilitating the involvement of key partners* – local authorities, teachers’ trade unions, NGOs – in the development and implementation of an education strategy;
 - *building public consensus* around the reform agenda. The media and the Internet would be very useful for this purpose.
- Action plan
 - drawing up a list of *key issues* which may set directions for long-term development of education. Clarifying concepts, the language of debate. Formulating questions corresponding to these issues.
 - stocktaking:
 - institutions and organisations which carry out or may carry out educational research;
 - reports, papers, studies, publications, research findings – scope, reliability, relevance;
 - databases;
 - international research and surveys;
 - identifying gaps. Proposing research topics on the basis of key research and surveys.

- The participants recognised the need for internal discussion on educational research within the researchers' community itself. However, according to them, the community is not ready yet to do so.

The unit should blaze a trail in the field, creating and promoting best practice through its activities. Over time, it will become common practice, a routine approach, which will turn into a procedure, and finally a standard – a normal way of supporting the development and implementation of educational policy.

During the discussion, the participants referred to the following passage from Alice's *Adventures in Wonderland*:

“Cheshire Puss” “Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to” said the Cat.

“I don't much care where—” said Alice.

“Then it doesn't matter which way you go”, said the Cat.

“—so long as I get SOMEWHERE”, Alice added as an explanation.

“Oh, you're sure to do that”, said the Cat, “if you only walk long enough”.

Everyone agreed that it did indeed matter which way Polish education was going and that there was no time to walk long enough – because problems to be solved would not wait.

Biography

Adrienne Alton-Lee is the Chief Education Adviser for the New Zealand Ministry of Education's Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) Programme. Her role is to strengthen the evidence-base informing policy and practice in education and to provide medium term strategic advice to government. Dr. Alton-Lee is a Fellow of the International Academy of Education. She was formerly a teacher, classroom researcher, Professor and an Associate Editor of *Teaching and Teacher Education*. She has published in leading educational journals including the *Harvard Educational Review*, the *Elementary School Journal*, the *International Journal of Inclusive Education* and the *American Educational Research Journal*.

René Bugge Bertramsen is the Deputy General Director for the Danish University and Property Agency within the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. Since 1999 he has been involved in reforms aiming at enhancing the quality of the Danish educational R&D system (such as the establishment of the Danish Pedagogical University – DPU – and the R&D centre Learning Lab Denmark). Mr. Bertramsen was responsible for the University Act of 2003 which gave Danish universities a new governance system, *i.e.* boards with external majority and employed rectors, deans and department heads. In 2006-2007 he was responsible for a merger process where government research institutes were integrated with the universities and a number of single-faculty universities were merged with larger multi-faculty universities, including the merger of DPU with multi-faculty University of Aarhus.

Robert Boruch, Professor, University of Pennsylvania (USA). Dr. Boruch is current co-chair of the Steering Group of the International Campbell Collaboration, and principal investigator for the Institute of Education Sciences What Works Clearinghouse, which is designed to be a central and trusted source of information on evidence about what works in education. Dr. Boruch is an elected Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Statistical Association, and the Academy for Experimental Criminology. He has received awards for his work on evaluation policy, randomised trials, and on privacy of individuals and confidentiality in social research. Dr. Boruch's academic background is in psychology, statistics, and mechanical engineering, with degrees from Iowa State University and Stevens Institute of Technology.

Satya Brink is currently Director, National Learning Policy Research, Human Resources and Social Development Canada. She and her team are responsible for developing evidence in support of policy development for lifelong learning for the Government of Canada. This work includes analysis on outcomes for each age group and type of education as well as the impacts of earlier learning on subsequent learning. In her previous post, she was responsible for research on human development based on two major Canadian longitudinal surveys. During this time she and her team produced a major body of evidence based on the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth which influenced major new initiatives of the Canadian government in support of children and their families.

Tracey Burns is a research and policy analyst for the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, OECD, Paris. Previous to this she worked on social determinants of health across the life-span with Charles Ungerleider & Associates in Vancouver, Canada. As a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia, Dr. Burns led a hospital-based research team investigating newborn infants' responses to language. Tracey Burns holds a BA from McGill University, Canada and PhD from Northeastern University, USA. She is the recipient of various awards and honours, including the UBC Post-Doctoral Fellowship, a student-nominated university teaching award, and the American Psychological Association Dissertation Research Award.

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Jane Davidson is the Assembly Member for Pontypridd and former Deputy Presiding Officer for the National Assembly (Wales, United Kingdom). Since October 2000 she has been the National Assembly Education and Life-Long Learning Minister responsible for all aspects of education, training and lifelong learning. Educated at Malvern Girls' College, Birmingham University and the University of Wales, Jane has taught English, Drama and Physical Education. She is also an experienced youth worker and former Cardiff City Councillor. She was a member of the Arts Council for Wales and its Lottery Board, and Head of Social Affairs at the Welsh Local Government Association before her election to the Assembly. Jane has had a keen interest in education and youth work and is enjoying the challenges of the Education and Life-Long Learning portfolio.

Stephen Gorard holds the Anniversary Chair in Educational Studies at the University of York (United Kingdom), and directs the Centre for Research into Equity and Impact in Education. He is currently leading an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)-funded project promoting the use and understanding of randomised controlled trials in public policy (<http://trials-pp.co.uk/>), and was the originator of the ESRC's Research Capacity-building Network. He has published widely about the research process in social science, but his substantive work focuses on issues of equity, especially in educational opportunities and outcomes, and on the effectiveness of educational systems. Recent books include "Teacher supply: the key issues", "Adult learning in the digital age", "Overcoming the barriers to higher education", and "Schools, markets and choice policies".

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Rebecca Herman, a principal research scientist at American Institute for Research (USA), specialises in setting standards for the quality of educational research and reviewing research based on those standards. As the project director for the What Works Clearinghouse, she is responsible for the US Department of Education's flagship project to identify effective educational programmes and practices. Dr. Herman was project director of the *Educators' Guide to Schoolwide Reform*. She provided congressional testimony and many invited presentations on this and related work. Dr. Herman holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in sociology from Johns Hopkins University.

Maria J.A. van der Hoeven is the Minister of Economic Affairs (Netherlands). Maria J.A. van der Hoeven was born in 1949. She was trained as a primary teacher and taught at schools of home economics and junior secondary commercial education. Thereafter she was head of the Adult Commercial Vocational Training Centre in Maastricht and of the Limburg Technology Centre. From 1991 to 2002 Ms. Van der Hoeven was a member of the House of Representatives for the Christian Democratic Alliance (CDA). She has held a variety of social and cultural posts. Ms. van der Hoeven served as Minister of Education, Culture and Science from 2002 until February 2007. She was appointed as Minister of Economic Affairs in early 2007.

David Hogan is currently Professor and Dean of the Centre for Pedagogy and Practice at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. Between 2004 and 2006 he was Vice Dean for Research at CRPP. Prior to that he was Professor of Education at the University of Tasmania in Australia, and before that he held appointments as Assistant and Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He completed his PhD in the history of education at the University of Illinois in 1979. His current research interests focus on the intersections between research, policy and practice, pedagogical theory, curriculum theory and design, the design of knowledge management of innovation systems in schools, multi-level and longitudinal modeling of student outcomes, citizenship and education, and education and social theory.

Bill Kilgallon, OBE, has been the Chief Executive of the UK's Social Care Institute of Excellence since 2003. Prior to that he was Chief Executive of St Anne's Community Services from 1978 to 2002, an organisation he founded in 1971, which works with single homeless people and people with learning disabilities, mental health problems and alcohol and drug problems across Yorkshire and the North East. He was Chair of the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, the largest NHS Trust in the country from 1998-2002 and Chair of the Leeds Community & Mental Health Services NHS Trust from 1992-1998. Bill Kilgallon served as a member of Leeds City Council from 1979-1992 where he chaired the Social Services, Housing and Environment Committees. He has led independent inquiries, including one into alleged abuse in a local authority children's service and one into the management of an NHS hospital for people with learning disabilities.

Hannele Niemi is Professor of Education (1998-) and Vice-Rector for academic affairs at the University of Helsinki, Finland (2003-). She has been Professor of Education in Oulu, Turku and Tampere Universities (1987-1998). She has been a member of the Standing Committee of Social Sciences of ESF, the Council for Society and Culture in the Academy of Finland, and the Scientific Council of the University of Helsinki. She is a Steering Committee member of the British national research programme on teaching and

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Johnny Nilsson is the Former Secretary of State for Education in Sweden.

Andrew Pollard is Director of the Economic and Social Research Council’s Teaching and Learning Research Programme (www.tlrp.org), the UK’s largest coordinated initiative for educational research. As a teacher, his career started in Yorkshire primary schools and he has worked in teacher education or research at Oxford and Bristol Polytechnics and the Universities of the West of England, Bristol, Cambridge and London. He is presently based at the Institute of Education London. Andrew Pollard has published widely, including work on longitudinal ethnography and analysis of social factors in teaching and learning, learner perspectives, and resources for teacher education and school practitioners. He is at present working on an analysis of learning experiences through secondary education.

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Charles Ungerleider is Director of Research and Knowledge Mobilisation for the Canadian Council on Learning. From 1998 until 2001, Dr. Ungerleider served as Deputy Minister of Education for the Province of British Columbia, Canada. Prior to this he was Associate Dean for teacher education (1993-1998) at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Ungerleider has studied and written about educational policy and governance, student assessment, inter-group relations, and the impact of media on Canadian society. His most recent book *Failing Our Kids: How we are ruining our public schools* provides a critical analysis of the state of public schooling in Canada, the key part schooling plays in fostering Canadian values, and how public schools are treated by parents, professionals, and politicians.

Jerzy Wiśniewski is a consultant in education, and public administration and an expert of the Center for Social and Economic Research (Poland). From 2003-2006 he served as head of Strategy and Structural Funds of the Ministry of Education. He was also Director General of the Polish Ministry of National Education at the time of launching the reform of the education system, as well as the head of the International Department of the Ministry of Education and project manager in the Foundation for Public Administration Development. He was a member of the CERI/OECD Governing Board as well as the OECD team reviewing the educational system in Lithuania, advised the Ukrainian Ministry of Education on the reform of the system, and led the team reviewing the VET system in Croatia (with the European Training Foundation).

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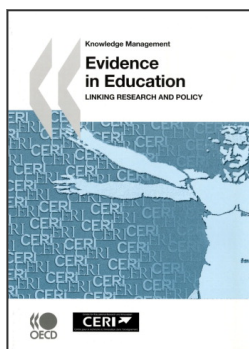
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