

# Evidence-based Policy Research: Implementation, Scaling Up and Sustainability

Tom Schuller  
CERI/OECD

OECD/ESRC/DfES seminar, London July 2006

## Seminar goals

- Illustrate issues to do with implementation, scaling up and sustainability
- Review/reflect on conclusions/lessons from the EbPR series
- Identify possible next steps and collaboration (OECD, country)

## Background

- 1995 report: *Educational R&D: Trends, Issues and Developments*
- Knowledge Management: reports on innovation in knowledge-based economies
- 2002-6: national reviews of educational R&D: NZ, England, Mexico, Denmark, Switzerland

### General points:

- Low levels of educational investment
- Low capacity
- Weak research-policy links

# EbPR: chronology

- Washington DC, March 2004
  - Experimental design, Randomised Control Trials, definitions of robustness and rigour
- Stockholm, January 2005
  - General links between policy and research
- The Hague, September 2005
  - Brokerage agencies: functions and achievements
- London, July 2006
  - Implementation issues and conclusions

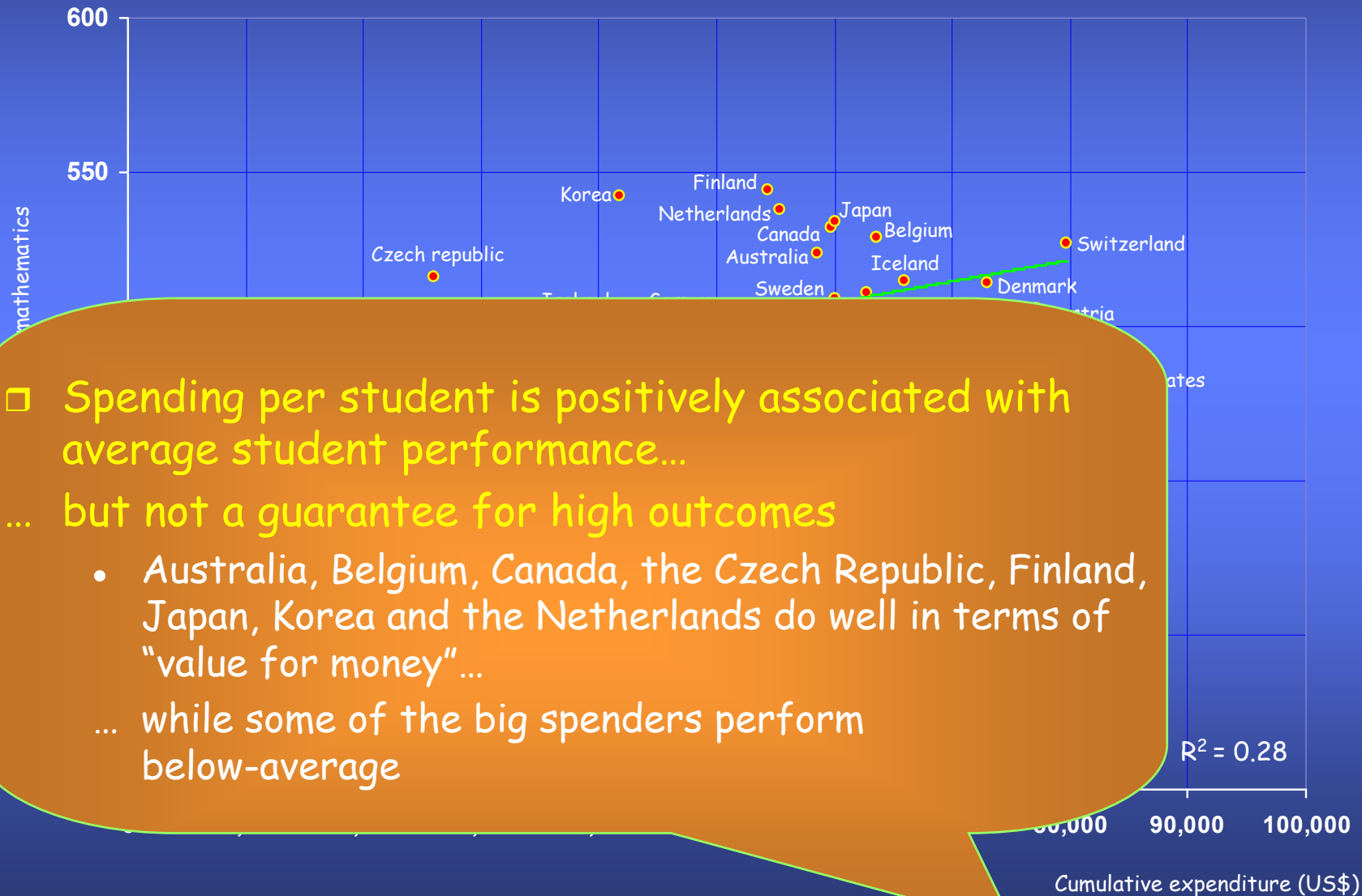
## Making an Impact: key questions

- ❑ Implementation: how to move from knowledge to action
- ❑ Scaling Up: how to move from case to system
- ❑ Sustainability: how to maintain innovation over time
- ❑ Plus: Triangulation/Cumulation: how to develop complementary knowledge sources

## Why the interest? Key drivers

1. Validation issues
  - a. Legitimacy of politics/policies
  - b. 'Knowledge' explosion: scissors effect?
2. Effectiveness and efficiency
  - a. Focus on outcomes
    - PISA 2?
  - b. The power of treasuries
    - Public expenditure and competing priorities

## Student performance and spending per student



□ Spending per student is positively associated with average student performance...

... but not a guarantee for high outcomes

- Australia, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland, Japan, Korea and the Netherlands do well in terms of "value for money"...

... while some of the big spenders perform below-average

## PISA: Governance of the school system

- In many of the best performing countries
  - Decentralised decision-making
    - School autonomy
    - Involvement of stakeholders in decision-making at school

[NB School Leadership]
  - The provision of standards and curricula at national/sub-national levels is combined with advanced evaluation systems
  - Process-oriented assessments and/or centralised final examinations are complemented with individual reports and feed-back mechanisms on student learning progress
    - Formative rather than judgmental assessments

[NB: What Works: case studies on good practice]

# PISA Professional teacher development

## □ In the best performing countries

- Teacher training schemes are selective
- The training of pre-school personnel is closely integrated with the professional development of teachers
- Continuing professional development is a constitutive part of the system
- Special attention is paid to the professional development of school management personnel

⇒ Teachers seen as knowledge workers

## EbPR: Methodologies and epistemologies

### Methodological debate:

Scientific ideal(s) vs best available

Warfare, mutual invisibility or complementarity

### Capacity building:

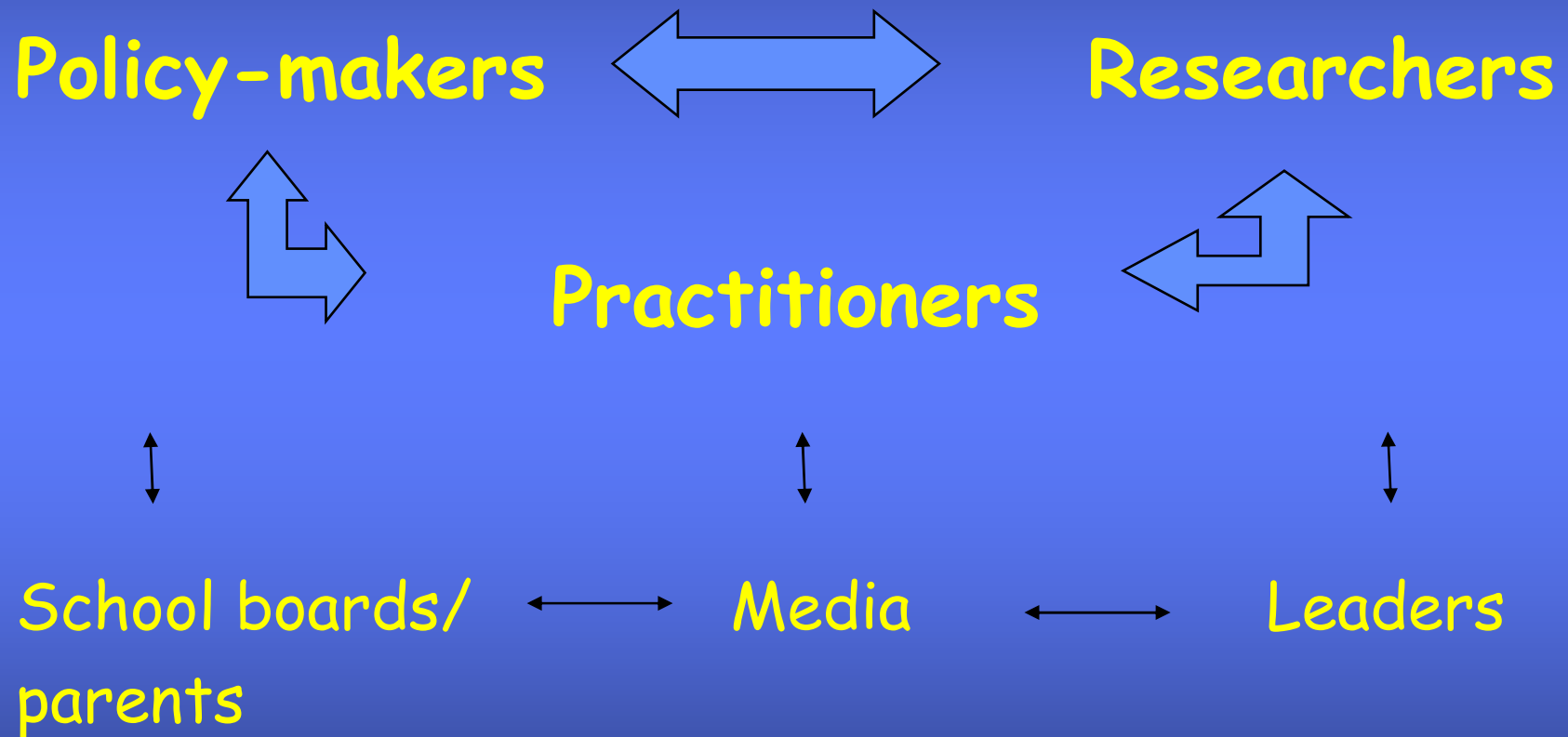
- deepening vs broadening
- producers and consumers
- external/rival contributors
- concentration?

### Questions

What forms of capacity are most in need of strengthening?

How and by whom should this be done?

# Knowledge user-producer networks



## Brokerage agencies

### Issues/functions:

- Dissemination: publications, internet, presentations
- Promoting interactivity
- Legitimizing rigour/quality
- Developing cooperation/trust

### Questions

Rationales: what are the different functions and of brokerage agencies?

Effectiveness: what are their achievements to date?

## Innovation Reviews (start 2007)

### Objectives

- Common analytical framework
- Analysis of planning, implementation and evaluation of innovation
- Possible indicators/scorecard

### Determinants of innovation dynamics

- Knowledge base
- Social capital: networks, trust and information
- Time perspective: pace of change

# Innovation Reviews (start 2007)

## Possible Theme : Brokerage

### Process

- identify 3-5 countries
- agree focus
- common framework and criteria

### Scope

- Brokerage in general and/or formal agencies?
- Top-down and/or bottom-up orientation/capacity building?
- Different models and methodologies
- Evaluation of effectiveness
- Integration of other Ministries/fields

## Evidence for the Future: The Education Horizon

- ❑ A regular, high-profile output produced every 2-3 years
- ❑ Drawing on extensive range of OECD and other sources
- ❑ Synthesising and updating trends
- ❑ Setting/suggesting a medium-term agenda for policy and policy research
- ❑ Debate: F2F, Delphi and web-based
- ❑ What kinds of evidence?

## Can we agree?

- *"there is no single best method for or type of evidence-based policy research; the key is for the research and policy communities to deploy appropriate combinations of approaches and methodologies which match the characteristics of the policy issue under consideration, and to have the capacity to select, implement and evaluate these combinations."*

Qs: Examples of such combinations?  
Lessons?