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# APPROACHES TO ASSIST POLICY-MAKERS’ USE OF RESEARCH EVIDENCE IN EDUCATION IN EUROPE

Increasing the use of evidence in education policy is an explicit objective of many national and international policy-making organisations including the European Commission and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. It is also a growing concern for researchers as a consequence of the decision by many funders and commissioners to require verification of research impact as a condition of funding.

The breadth of what is considered evidence is wide; it can include expert knowledge, statistics, stakeholder consultations as well as research-based evidence. In talking about evidence, this paper refers specifically to the latter, that of research evidence. In referring to research, the paper employs a broad understanding that encapsulates all types of research, whether qualitative or quantitative, primary research or synthesised. The term ‘users’ is employed here to refer specifically to policy and policy-makers and as such, in examining the user-focussed approaches across Europe, focuses explicitly on those approaches that are targeted towards the individuals and organisations that are involved with developing, determining or applying policy in the area of education at national, federal, regional or local government levels. The paper adopts a broad understanding of ‘policy-makers’ to include non-departmental public bodies[[1]](#footnote-1) such as the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

Research evidence is just one of many factors that affect policymaking with other considerations such as political priorities, the availability of resources and other contextual factors important. When most people think about (research) evidence informed policy, they think about a mechanical process where research informs policy directly (Gough & Elbourne, 2002). More common, but harder to identify, is the indirect, unconscious or indirect use where research evidence influences the beliefs or attitudes of decision-makers. This has been described in some of the literature as the ‘enlightenment’ or ‘endarkenment’ effect (Nutley, Walter, & Davies, 2007; Weiss, 1979). Both of these can have immediate and delayed effects on policy-making and may represent conscious or deliberate use of research or instances of unconscious use in which policy-makers are not aware that they are drawing on research evidence.

There is now a growing body of literature focussed on the issue of evidence informed policy and practice. This literature examines many aspects of the evidence-to-use process including the different actors, processes and mechanisms involved in the production, use and mediation of research. Within this literature is much focus on the different approaches to increasing research evidence use amongst policy-makers. These are often divided into: ‘push’ strategies that focus on the production and communication of research evidence; ‘pull’ strategies that address the needs of potential users; and, ‘mediation’ strategies that have the overt purpose of bringing researchers and users together to facilitate greater interaction between them for example, meetings and conferences (see section one). Despite increasing numbers of studies showing that approaches that focus exclusively on producing and communicating research evidence are largely ineffective; these types of strategies comprise the majority of efforts to increase use of research evidence in policy-making. Conversely, relatively little attention has focussed on addressing the needs of potential users as a means to increasing research evidence use. This paper argues that user-targeted interventions are necessary to increase the use of research evidence in decision-making. Although there are many factors that affect whether it is used in policy-making, research evidence cannot be used if users are not receptive to it or to using it. Nor will it be used if users do not have the skills to be able to find, use and understand it. Furthermore, the use of research evidence within policy is contingent upon the particular context/s in which such users work, for example the personal and political interests, ideologies and institutions or structures of these organisations (Lavis, 2006; Levin, 2004; Stewart & Oliver, 2012). This suggests that focusing on the needs and capacity of users is vital to any attempt to increase the use of research evidence in policy and practice (Lavis, Robertson, Woodside, McLeod, & Abelson, 2003; Levin, 2004, 2009). The paper outlines the different approaches that have been taken across Europe to increase evidence use by focusing on the needs and contexts of policy-makers. These approaches were identified as part of a survey conducted within the European Commission funded project: Evidence Informed Policy in Education in Europe (EIPEE)[[2]](#footnote-2) (Gough, Tripney, Kenny, & Buk-Berge, 2011), which identified the range of approaches that were used to link research evidence with policy-making in education across Europe. This survey is not exhaustive nor does it provide an accurate classification process. However, it does contribute to our knowledge and understanding about the range of activities and mechanisms that are being undertaken across Europe to connect research evidence with its use. Using findings from the existing literature on evidence informed policy and practice, the paper draws out the implications of these approaches to address the needs of users for international cooperation in this area.

The paper is divided into four sections. Section one reviews the existing literature on evidence informed policy and practice. It outlines the activities and the mechanisms that have been identified cross-sectorally to connect research evidence with policy and/or practice. Section two explains in more detail the methods used to identify the different approaches to assist policy-makers’ use of evidence across Europe. Section three describes the range of user-focussed approaches that have been employed across Europe to achieve evidence informed policy. Section four analyses these approaches in order to draw out any implications for international cooperation. It reveals those areas of overlap between the efforts of different agencies or countries and, using the existing literature on the effectiveness of different ways to increase the use of research evidence in policy and practice, sets out areas of potential learning for Europe.

### SECTION ONE: THE LITERATURE ON EVIDENCE INFORMED POLICY AND PRACTICE

The literature on evidence informed policy and practice is both extensive and diverse. Covering all areas of public policy ranging from health, criminal justice and the environment, the literature focuses on a range of different aspects of the research-to-use process. Much of the existing literature examining the different strategies to increase evidence use within policy and practice has been conducted outside of Europe and in sectors other than education. For example, in Canada, much research has been undertaken by the Research Supporting Practice in Education (RSPE) programme at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto ([www.oise.utoronto.ca/rspe/](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/rspe/)) (Levin, 2004, 2009; Levin, Sá, Cooper, & Mascarenhas, 2009). Similarly, in healthcare there is much research on the effectiveness of different resources and strategies to increase the impact of research evidence upon decision-making (Bero et al., 1998a; Chambers et al., 2011; Grimshaw et al., 2001; Harris et al., 2011; Oxman, Thomson, Davis, & Haynes, 1995; Thomson O'Brien et al., 2000).

In describing the different strategies that can be used to encourage evidence use within decision-making, the literature makes an implicit distinction between those approaches focused on the production side (‘push’ strategies), those addressed towards users (‘pull’ strategies), and those targeted to mediation. ‘Push’ strategies are those focusing on producing, communicating or disseminating research evidence out to potential users and include activities such as publishing newsletters or producing research summaries or policy briefs. It could also include activities that undertake research such as research projects. ‘Pull’ strategies focus on encouraging demand for the uptake of research evidence by addressing the needs of potential users and the organisational and political contexts that shape their use of evidence. These strategies could include activities such as training policy-makers or practitioners in how to find, use or understand research evidence or the use of experts in decision-making. Mediation strategies on the other hand involve activities such as seminars, conferences or networks designed specifically to bring researchers and users together. This is variously referred to in the literature as ‘knowledge brokerage’, ‘mobilisation’ and ‘exchange’ (Landry, Amara, & Lamari, 2001; Lavis, 2006; Lavis, Ross, McLeod, & Gildiner, 2003; Nutley et al., 2007; Walter, Nutley, & Davies, 2003a). In the recent analysis undertaken by Gough et al, 269 different examples of activity were identified across Europe in education while Walter et al identified nearly 200 single interventions within criminal justice, health, education and social care sectors (Gough et al., 2011; Walter et al., 2003a). Using the findings from the EIPEE project, this paper will use the conceptualisation of 27 different activity types, organized into eight overarching categories put forward by Gough et al (2011).

#### Table 1: Types of activity connecting research with policy and their overarching categories[[3]](#footnote-3)

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| --- | --- |
| *Overarching category* | *Types of activity* |
| Advisory | Advisory/monitoring groups/committees  Experts  External consultancy |
| Capacity building | Training |
| Information services | Bibliographic databases/libraries  Other web-based information services |
| Interpersonal networks and events | Informal relationships  Meetings (incl. seminars/conferences)  Networks |
| Research outputs | Analytical reports  Newsletters  Specialist journals  Summary reports of research/policy briefs |
| Research and analysis | Government-related/public bodies  Ministry internal analytical services/departments  Professional organisations  Research centres/units/institutes  Research programmes  Research projects  Systematic reviews  Think tanks  Other types of activity |
| Staffing arrangements | Secondments/internships  Staff roles |
| Strategy, investment and development | Funding  Marketing  Programme of work |

Underpinning these activities are nine mechanisms which enable them to achieve evidence informed policy and practice[[4]](#footnote-4). It should be noted that these categories are parallel to one another rather than hierarchical and may not be mutually exclusive in reality (Walter et al., 2003a). These categories are not universal and mechanisms are used to varying extents in different sectors and across different countries.

#### Mechanisms to achieve evidence informed policy and practice:

* Accessibility: making research evidence more easily available or usable.
* Relevance: the production or commissioning of relevant research evidence to inform decision-making.
* Education: development of knowledge, skills and/or awareness about producing, communicating, finding, understanding and/or using research evidence.
* Incentives/reinforcements: changing attitudes/behaviour by the control of external stimuli.
* Social influence/persuasion: changing attitudes/behaviour through the influence of others.
* Facilitation: provision of technical, financial, organisational and/or emotional support.
* Seek and/or interpret: seeking out and/or analysing/interpreting research evidence.
* Interaction/collaboration: enabling two-way flow/production of information and knowledge.
* System focus: focusing on the interactions and relationships between different actors and institutions involved within evidence-to-policy system as a whole.

These mechanisms are focused upon different aspects of the evidence-to-use system and as such, are concerned to different extents with ‘pushing’, ‘pulling’ or ‘mediating’ research evidence into the decision-making process.

### SECTION TWO: A NOTE ON METHOD

This paper presents a selection of findings from the survey conducted as part of the European Commission funded ‘Evidence Informed Policy in Education in Europe’ (EIPEE) project. This survey identified 269 activities linking research evidence with policymaking in education in Europe.

Although offering an important contribution to knowledge and understanding about the range of activities and mechanisms being undertaken to increase the use of research evidence within policy-making, the survey was not exhaustive. Consequently, the frequencies of different activities reported are only indicative. Moreover, limitations in the data collection methods employed by the survey mean that it is unlikely that all qualifying activities were identified (see Gough et al 2011: 7, 29). Therefore, the data presented in section three should not be used as an exact measure of activity within individual countries.

### SECTION THREE: APPROACHES TO ASSIST POLICY-MAKERS’ USE OF RESEARCH EVIDENCE IN EDUCATION IN EUROPE

The survey undertaken by Gough et al (2011) identified 52 activities predominantly concerned with the use of evidence in policy-making. This represents one fifth (or 19%) of the total (269) activities identified that linked research evidence with policy. This contrasts with 67% (181) activities predominantly concerned with the production and/or communication of research evidence (Gough et al 2011: 44). Within this, 11 different types of activity were found. These are presented in Figure 2 below in terms of the (five) overarching categories to which they pertain.

##### *Figure 2: Activity types (by overarching group) predominantly concerned with research use (by percentage)*

Most activities targeted towards addressing the needs of decision-makers in education in Europe focused on building or developing capacity. These types of activity constituted nearly a third of all activities in this area. This was followed by activities focused towards the staffing arrangements of users (such as those concerned with job roles) at 21%. Further information about the types of activities that were found within each of these categories within the context of evidence use is provided below.

* Advisory:Within the overarching category of ‘Advisory’, the survey identified activities including ministries’ use of experts (particularly those from academic backgrounds). The use of experts was identified both at an individual level (where individual ‘experts’ were brought in by ministries to advise them on research) and at a more collective level where panels of experts and other advisory type bodies were created in response to requests from policymakers. Such activities incorporate the use of official bodies such as Commissions of Inquiry or Select Committees that use research to investigate and scrutinise specific issues.
* Research and analysis:The types of ‘research and analysis’ activities that were found within the context of research use included research centres offering capacity building training for decision-makers; and ministries with internal analytical departments that actively sought and/or analysed/interpreted research evidence in order to inform decision-making. Also identified were think tanks that typically focused on the development of practical policy-making solutions based on sound evidence, thus blurring the boundaries with policy-making.
* Interpersonal networks and events:Within the category of ‘interpersonal networks and events’, the survey found the following examples. First, networks that organised workshops and other training events (including bespoke training). Second, breakfast meetings held by a group within a national parliament to bring together politicians and experts from academia and elsewhere to discuss particular issues. Third, informal relationships between decision-makers and academics; and fourth, meetings organised by ministries to which key academics were invited.
* Capacity building:Activities under this category comprisedworkshops, courses and other training events including professional development activities. The latter emphasised the importance of ‘learning’ in enabling evidence informed decision-making. Identified activities also comprised a ministry that set up a specific competency framework (and accompanying training module in evidence informed policy-making) which all staff was required to complete to build internal capacity and ensure that all staff had the necessary skills to find, use and interpret relevant research evidence.
* Staffing arrangements:Within this category, examples of secondments were found in which researchers and/or policymakers were transferred from their regular organisation for temporary assignment elsewhere (for example researchers working within government organisations and decision-makers working within academic units). These were used principally to facilitate the development of skills and knowledge exchange. Also identified here were the recruitment of staff with experience (past or present) of academia and/or research into ministries; and the active support of ministry staff in acquiring research skills.

#### Mechanisms enabling activities to address the needs and context of policy-making

In terms of the particular means that these activities sought to achieve evidence informed policy, the survey identified five mechanisms operating within the context of evidence use. These are the mechanisms of education, facilitation, interaction/collaboration, seek and /or interpret and social influence (see Figure 3). Education is the most common mechanism, followed by the mechanism of seek and/or interpret. In contrast, the mechanisms of interaction/collaboration[[5]](#footnote-5) and social influence are the least common mechanism employed, constituting only 12% of all user-focussed activities. Facilitation is the second least mechanism with 17% use however; this is nearly half the amount of the next most common mechanism: seek and/or interpret.

##### *Figure 3: Mechanisms used to enable evidence informed policy and practice that were predominantly concerned with evidence use (by percentage)*

#### Actors responsible for setting up and managing on a day-to-day basis activities addressing the needs and context of policy-making

Five different types of actors were responsible for setting up and ultimately controlling the continuance of these activities (see Figure 4). This included:

* academic organisations/universities;
* national governments or government-related organisations;
* international government/government-related organisations;
* research organisations that were neither university- or government-based; and
* non-research organisations that were neither university- or government-based.

The type of actor responsible for setting up and ultimately controlling the majority of activities assisting policy-makers’ use of evidence were national governments, which comprised nearly 70% of the total. International governments or government-related organisations were responsible for setting up 12% of activities, while academic organisations or universities set up 10%. A further 10% were set up by a combination of actors while research organisations that were neither university- or government-based set up 6%. In contrast, non-research organisations that were neither university- or government-based set up 2% and it was unclear which type of organisation had set up 4% of the activities.

##### *Figure 4: Type of organisation responsible for setting up and ultimately controlling the continuance of the activity (in percentages)*

This picture changes slightly when we look at the type of organisation running/managing the activities on a day-to-day basis (see Figure 5). Although national governments or government-related organisation still occupies the majority (50%), academic/university organisations comprise 29%. Research organisations that were neither university- or government-based were responsible for managing 8% of activities while international governments or government-related organisations managed 6%. Again, 10% of activities were managed by a range of organisations and it was unclear who managed 8% of activities. These findings suggest that after setting up activities (perhaps through funding or other means); national and international governments devolve responsibility for the day-to-day running or management of some of these activities to other types of organisations. They also suggest that although non university- or government-based research organisations set up activities linking research evidence with policy, they do not engage in the day-to-day running of these activities.

##### *Figure 5: Type of organisation responsible for setting up or managing the activity on a day-to-day basis (in percentages)*

### SECTION FOUR: POSSIBILITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN ASSISTING POLICY-MAKERS’ USE OF RESEARCH EVIDENCE

In order for us to see where existing efforts are being focused more clearly and to reveal any areas of overlap or gaps across the efforts of different agencies within Europe, it is necessary to examine which types of activities are being set up and run on a day-to-day basis by the different agencies involved. Figure 6 shows that the majority of user-focussed activities are not only set up, but also managed on a day-to-day basis, by national government/government-related organizations. No other actor does this. Academic/university and international government/government-related organizations are only responsible for setting up two types of activities: capacity building and interpersonal networks and events. Research organisations that are not based in either universities or governments are only responsible for setting up capacity building and advisory types of activities, while other non-research organisations not based in universities or government are only responsible for setting up capacity building type of activities. A mixture of actors set up three types of activities: staffing arrangements, interpersonal networks/events and research and analysis; and it was unclear which type of actor/s set up some capacity building and advisory activities. Capacity building activities are the most common type of activities set up by all of the different actors with only the mixed group not responsible for setting or ultimately controlling this type of activities. In contrast, staffing arrangements and research and analysis types of activities are the most uncommon types of linking activities set up.

##### *Figure 6: Type of activities (by overarching group) set up and existence ultimately controlled by actor*

##### *Figure 7: Type of activities (by overarching group) run and managed on day-to-day basis by actor*

This changes slightly when analysing the actors responsible for the day-to-day management/running of activities (Figure 7). First, both national governments/government-related organisations and academic/universities are the two actors responsible for managing all five overarching types of user-focussed activities identified in the survey. This contrasts to Figure 6 in two ways: (1) only national governments/government-related organisations were responsible for the setting up and ultimate control of all overarching types of activity and, (2), academic/universities were responsible for setting up/ultimately controlling only two overarching types of activities (capacity building and interpersonal networks and events).

Second, as Figure 7 shows, academic/universities run/manage the most capacity building activities even though the majority of these activities were set up and are ultimately controlled by national government/government-related organisations.

Third, although responsible for setting up and ultimately controlling capacity building activities, non-research organisations not based in universities or governments do not have responsibility for the daily management of these types of activities (or any other type of activity).

Fourth, research organisations not based in universities or government set up and ultimately controlled capacity building and advisory activities. Yet, as Figure 7 shows, they also assume responsibility for managing some research and analysis type of activities. Two types of actors have responsibility for setting up and ultimately controlling more overarching types of activities than they do for running or managing on a day-to-day basis. For example, a combination of actors set up and ultimately controlled staffing arrangement, interpersonal networks and events and research and analysis activities, yet they do not have responsibility to run or manage the research and analysis activities. Similarly, in addition to being unclear on who set up some capacity building and advisory activities, it is also unclear which actor runs or manages some examples of interpersonal networks and events activities. International governments/government-related organisations set up and manage the same types of activities as shown in both Figure 6 and 7.

What does this imply for how these actors are seeking to assist policy-makers to use evidence? In other words, what mechanisms do these activities draw on to achieve their objectives and how is this distributed by actor (in terms of both those activities they set up and ultimately control and those types of activities that they run or manage on a day-to-day basis)? As Figure 8 shows, mechanisms are employed by actors to different extents. For example, as the biggest provider of user-focussed activities with the biggest responsibility for day-to-day management, national government/government-related organisations employ the most amount of mechanisms overall. However, the most commonly used mechanism by this actor is seek and/or interpret. This contrasts to the other types of actors who concentrate on mechanisms of education to assist policy-makers (including international government/government-related organisations). Both national governments and academic/universities make use of all five mechanisms identified in the policy-making context. International government/government-related organisations make use of only three mechanisms (education, interaction/collaboration and social influence), research organisations not based in universities or government make use of only two (education and seek and/or interpret) and other non-research organisations based outside of universities and government only draw upon the mechanism of education.

##### *Figure 8: Mechanisms used to assist policy-makers’ use of evidence (by actor)*

### CONCLUSION

There are many implications arising from the analysis presented above. These are organised into four categories: country, actor, activity and mechanism.

#### Implications for European countries

The EIPEE survey did not identify linking activities specifically focused on the needs and contexts of users in eight eligible European countries. Furthermore, only 14% of activities had ongoing active work with international partners or were formally focused internationally and only 6% of activities had partners or were formally focused exclusively within Europe. While we need to be careful in interpreting these results due to limitations of data collection methods (see section two), these findings suggest that more effort could be made to raise awareness of the importance of user-focussed interventions as a means to achieving evidence informed policy. In addition, the results suggest that more attention could be given to building capacity to enable actors to implement and manage such interventions in the eight countries where no such activities were identified. Furthermore, more attention could be given to cross-country collaboration and learning in the establishment and operation of such activities, particularly within Europe where there is little active collaborative work.

#### Implications for types of actors involved in setting up or managing activities to assist policy-makers’ use of research evidence

EIPEE findings on the types of actors that were responsible for setting up and managing these activities on a day-to-day basis reveal the dominance of national government/government-related organisations. This is a positive sign that suggests that European governments are taking calls for evidence informed policy and practice seriously. However, it may also put such efforts at risk given the uncertainty and instability of many national economies and the retraction of many national governments from the provision of much of public policy and civil society. This may lead to a reduction in the number of linking activities national governments/government-related organisations are able to set up and/or manage on a day-to-day basis. It may also affect upon the abilities of other types of organisations (including academic/universities and those based outside of the university and government sectors), that are recipients of national government funding. This suggests that other types of actors such as international governments/government-related organisations, commercial organisations and those funded by other sources (such as not-for-profits, other non-governmental organisations and charities funded outside of the state sector could assume more of a role. Equally, there is much scope for collaboration across these different types of actors in the provision of user-focussed activities. The input of these actors need not necessitate both the setting up and management of these activities because this can vary between different actors as the findings show (see Figures 6 and 7). Thus, while one actor may take responsibility for setting up an activity, responsibility can be devolved to another actor for its running and management.

There may also be a role for actors to become more involved in different types of activities. While the survey indicates that national governments/government-related organisations and academic/universities are involved in the running or management of all five overarching types of user-focussed activities (even when not necessarily responsible for setting them up), some actors focus on specific types of activities and do not employ a diverse portfolio of activities for this purpose. It is unclear whether this is because of resource limitations, weaknesses in capacity or unwillingness and thus action could be taken in all of these areas.

#### Implications for the type of activities implemented to assist policy-makers’ use of research evidence

The EIPEE survey found five of a possible eight overarching types of activity. Some of this is to be expected as certain overarching categories of activity pertain specifically to particular areas of the evidence-to-use process. For example, we would not expect much representation of research outputs category to be found in those activities focussed on assisting policy-makers as these are addressed more to the production, presentation and dissemination of research evidence. Equally, the activities within the overarching category of strategy, investment and development pertain more to the evidence production and systems level then they do to the context of evidence use. Nevertheless, we may have expected some activities to feature here. For example, the survey did not find any examples of external consultancy (overarching category: advisory), government-related public bodies or professional organisations (overarching category: research and analysis) that assisted policy-makers in using evidence. This combined with the finding that nearly a third of user-focussed approaches comprised capacity-building activities, suggests a lack of awareness about the range of activities that can be used to assist policy-makers in using evidence or, a lack of knowledge and/or skills in how to set up and run such activities. If this is the case then there is clearly a role for the greater dissemination of the knowledge provided through the EIPEE project and the funding of further activities (both research and capacity building) in this area[[6]](#footnote-6). However, it may also be a consequence of a lack of participation from certain types of actors in undertaking such activities. In which case, more effort could be targeted to raising levels of interest, willingness and capability of these actors in engaging in such activities.

Implications for the particular mechanisms used to assist policy-makers’ use of research evidence

Five mechanisms to achieve evidence informed policy and practice were identified within the context of evidence use. These are the mechanisms of education, facilitation, interaction/collaboration, seek and /or interpret and social influence. Notable by its absence is the mechanism of incentives/reinforcement. The use of this mechanism evidence to assist practitioners in using evidence has been widely documented within the health care field (Grimshaw et al., 2001; Hanney, Gonzalez-Block, Buxton, & Kogan, 2002; Oxman et al., 1995; Thomson O'Brien et al., 2000). The EIPEE findings show a reliance of the mechanism of education in achieving more evidence use within policy-making. Given the widely documented need for capacity development within policy-making this is both unsurprising and welcome (Green & Bennett, 2007; Nuyens, 2007). Although caution should be given to application of the results from other sectors to education, we should also consider the evidence available from both education and other sectors that shows that increasing the interaction and collaboration between researchers and users is extremely effective in increasing the likelihood that evidence is used (Cordingley, Baumfield, Butterworth, McNamara, & Elkins, 2002; Cousins & Simon, 1996; Huberman, 1990, 1993; Lavis et al., 2005; Nutley et al., 2009; Walter et al., 2003b; Walter, Nutley, & Davies, 2005). Moreover, it may be also worth considering evidence that shows the effectiveness of employing more than one mechanism to increase the use policy-makers use of evidence, what is referred to in the literature as multi-faceted (or multi-component) interventions (Bero et al., 1998b; Boaz, Baeza, & Fraser, 2011; Grimshaw et al., 2001; Nutley, Percy-Smith, & Solesbury, 2003; Nutley et al., 2009; Walter et al., 2003b, 2005).

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1. For a definition of non-departmental public bodies see (Cabinet Office, 2009): 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Evidence Informed Policy in Education in Europe (EIPEE) project operated from March 2010 until April 2011. EIPEE was a collaborative project involving 18 partners from across Europe. As part of the project, an email and telephone survey was conducted with 104 country and regional Ministries of Education and a further 14 individuals and 14 organisations working in this area across Europe. This survey aimed to identify the range of approaches that were used to link research with policy-making in education across Europe. Although not exhaustive, this survey provides a valuable resource for anyone wishing to know more information about the types of activities taking place across Europe. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Taken from Gough et al 2011: 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. It is worth noting that the conceptualisation put forward by Gough et al draws upon the work of (Nutley, Walter, & Davies, 2009; Walter et al., 2003a; Walter, Nutley, & Davies, 2003b; Walter, Nutley, Percy-Smith, McNeish, & Frost, 2004). See Gough et al 2011: 84-86 for more information about the relationship between these conceptualisations. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The identification of linking activities using the mechanism of interaction/collaboration may be somewhat surprising given that this mechanism focuses on achieving a two-way flow of information between researchers and users and may therefore be expected within the context of mediation. It features here because although activities were identified that focused on bringing decision-makers into contact with researchers, these activities did not have the explicit purpose mediation or brokerage. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For example, the subsequent European Commission funded Evidence Informed Policy and Practice in Education in Europe (EIPPEE) project (see [www.eippee.eu](http://www.eippee.eu)). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)