

Creation and utilisation of educational knowledge

The gap between educational *practice* and educational *research* should be reduced. The Education Council believes that researchers, teacher trainers, educational consultants and teachers should join forces to put research outcomes into practice. The Minister should therefore provide a stimulus for cooperative initiatives.

22 April 2003

The Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy (AWT) has previously published proposals for improvement, focusing on purely scientific research. The Education Council is now also putting practice-based educational research and the user side (the schools) under the microscope. The recommendations complement each other well.

Form knowledge communities

The Education Council advocates the creation of 'knowledge communities'. These would allow researchers, intermediaries who disseminate research (teacher trainers, policymakers, teaching consultants) and users of the outcomes (school leaders and teachers) to work together. Exchanging knowledge leads to better, more usable and surprising results. Teachers, for instance, could lobby for more practice-based research.

A knowledge community should have to meet an established set of criteria in order to qualify for funding. This means there should be a single point of contact for coordination. The progress and results of the knowledge community should also be subject to supervision. On the research side, this role could be adopted by the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). On the practice side – the schools – the Education Inspectorate would be the logical choice. The supervisors could also raise awareness of the good examples set by the knowledge communities.

Give teachers time and freedom

The Education Council would like to see teachers who have some affinity with research to be given the opportunity to take part in a knowledge community, or to develop in a role as the staff member responsible for translating research into practice at the school. The school leaders will need to provide teachers with the time and freedom to do this, for example, by allowing the teachers in question to devote 10% of their time to improving expertise. This should become a compulsory task for school leaders, and teachers should be encouraged to avail of the opportunity.