

Abstracts

Introduction

Data in education: from global standardisation to coconstruction?

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Jean-Pierre Véran and Sylvain Wagnon

The contributions in this dossier highlight the impact of major international surveys such as PASEC, but also reveal blind spots in data collected, such as private tutoring. The papers point to the political issues involved in choosing to focus on certain data while ignoring others, and they show what the standardisation of education implies for the professionalism of education players. The dossier explores how involving pupils and teachers as coconstructors in the search for enlightening data opens up new avenues for improving teaching and learning for all.

In France, the need for a shared culture of data production

p. 59

Jean-Marc Monteil

Data and the information derived from processing them to shed light on, or even define educational guidelines, raises the formidable question of their quality, reliability and predictive value in terms of the virtues that are supposed to enrich teachers' pedagogical or educational activity. If certain research findings are to be used to guide professional practice, it is worth having access to the processes by which they were obtained. This article calls for initial and in-service teacher training in France to be more firmly rooted in research and the dissemination of its methods.

Developing and disseminating reliable data to all those involved in education and decision-making in sub-Saharan Africa.

An interview with Abdel Rahamane Baba-Moussa

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Jean-Pierre Véran and Sylvain Wagnon

The language of instruction, pre-schooling and the quality of initial and in-service teacher training – these priorities have been identified in Africa as essential to improving student outcomes based on the results of the Programme for the Analysis of Education Systems (PASEC). This international survey by the Conference of Ministers of Education of French-speaking States and Governments (Confemem) was followed up by pilot actions to implement the levers for progress identified in the survey. This approach requires methodological and ethical rigour in order to involve all the players concerned, from national to local level in a growing number of countries, and thus share a common culture of evaluation and change management, leading to continuous improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

Missing data: what we know and what we need to know about private supplementary tutoring

p. 83

Mark Bray

Recent decades have brought considerable expansion of private supplementary tutoring. This phenomenon is widely called shadow education because much of it mimics schooling. Initially it gained prominence in East Asia, but is now visible throughout the world, with far-reaching implications for economies, societies, and education systems. It promotes learning and provides employment for tutors; but it also demands substantial household expenditures, maintains and exacerbates social inequalities, and can have a backwash on schooling. Despite these considerations, reliable and comprehensive data are scarce. This article commences with a picture that can be drawn from the available data, and then highlights data gaps. It stresses the need for more and better data to aid decision-making not only by governments but also by schools, families and other stakeholders.

Towards a critical culture of data in education in Quebec

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Charles-Antoine Bachand and Stéphanie Demers

This article argues that while the rise of data-driven government and management may have given the impression of depoliticising educational decisions, policies and discourses, data may instead camouflage the ideological aspect of these decisions and disempower education stakeholders. This article examines some of the highly political and ideological processes involved in quantifying human phenomena. The authors show some of the effects of governance by data on education, management of education systems and research, giving recent examples from Quebec. Finally, they explore how data could be harnessed to strengthen the agency of education actors, foster an ethics of data and a critical culture related to it.

From the virtual absence of data to evidence-based education in French-speaking Belgium

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Sonia Revaz and Hugues Draelants

This article examines how the rise of data has unfolded in the French-speaking Belgian education context. It emphasises the distinctive evolution of a system that shifted in mere years from a virtual absence of data to an era of management by numbers and evidence. Historically, data was not drawn upon to regulate education in Belgium. However, a turning point was reached in the 1990s with the development of post-bureaucratic modes of regulation that required quantitative data. Since the mid-2010s, this trend has accelerated with the launch of the 'Pact for Excellence in Education'. This article focuses on the reasons for the data boom, many of which relate to the growing awareness of the unique outcomes of French-speaking Belgian schools in terms of efficiency and inequality.

A new system to collect and use data for school improvement during the Covid-19 crisis in Chile

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José Weinstein and Juan Bravo

In Chile, the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the normal operation of the system for monitoring the quality of education (SIMCE). At the same time, it gave rise to a new system for collecting and using data, the DIA, which can be used flexibly by each school on a voluntary basis. Various novelties introduced by the DIA, such as the inclusion of academic and socio-emotional learning, evaluation three times a year and the immediate visualisation of results by teachers, the new system has spread massively and rapidly as a tool for improving school results. Nowadays, both systems coexist and complement each other, each with its own uses and users.

Pupils as key players in education data in New Zealand

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Brian Annan and Mary Wootton

This article analyses three case studies that illustrate a shift in the use of data. How did an emphasis on applying quantitative standards give way to the use of narrative data to promote student achievement and wellbeing? This shift was initiated in response to a major challenge in terms of equity in New Zealand, where indigenous Māori and Pasifika students, as well as those with special educational needs, are disadvantaged by the education system. Case studies reveal that students, supported by their teachers and families, are raising their expectations, engaging in in-depth discussions about learning-related data and constructively influencing their learning environments. The next step in this process is to consider solutions to other contemporary challenges, by engaging in a time of communal mindful reflection (*Whai Whakaaro*).

References

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Haydée Maga and Anna Polewka