Chapter 1 Reflective Questions – Orientation

1. What different groups of people and organisations are there in your context who a) generate and b) use evidence to improve education?

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2. Would you say that evidence-informed education is 'divided' in terms of how evidence is understood and used? If so, what causes differences in approach and ethos? If not, how would you describe the consensus on what evidence is and how evidence should be used?

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3. How would you characterise/define/group different ways of understanding and using evidence? Do you recognise the 'What works' (WW) and 'Educational Effectiveness and Improvement' (EEI) distinction made in the book? Who else and what other approaches are there? In what ways are evidence-informed education groups similar and different?

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4. The book describes high-quality evidence as being usable, relevant, rigorous, cogent and coherent. Are these the right criteria? What do you look for in evidence that has the best potential to improve education?

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5. In the mid-1990s, Hargreaves made several serious criticisms of education research in his Teacher Training Agency (TTA) lecture. To what extent do you think these are still true today? What has changed in the last 30 years?

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6. We pose numerous questions which connect to the debate following the TTA lecture which we think are still relevant. Which of these questions do you think is the most important? Which do you think is the most/least challenging to answer?

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7. The book describes a general 'flatline' in educational standards in developed education systems. But it does argue that there are many examples of success to be found and the issue is mostly one of sustaining and scaling improvement. Do you agree with this generalisation? What do you think are the best examples of successful programmes, practices and policies that we should look to as examples of successful improvement?

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