



**PRESS NOTICE – For release Monday 2 July**

**THE INNOVATION UNIT CALLS FOR MORE TEACHER INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION R&D**

Lord Puttnam will today launch an Innovation Unit publication calling for more education research and development in general and for greater teacher involvement in R&D. Written by former Demos Director, Tom Bentley, together with Sarah Gillinson. **“A D&R System for Education”** makes a number of recommendations for the two newly formed education departments - the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and also for the government’s new National Council for Educational Excellence, which the Prime Minister himself will be chairing.

The recommendations include the following:

- Funding a series of ‘lead user’ partnerships, in which clusters of schools known for excellence in specific kinds of knowledge (such as student mentoring, natural sciences, languages, community-partnerships) are given the opportunity to innovate and become involved in developing, testing and promoting new practices generated both by strategic policy AND by the system at large.
- Conducting horizon scanning exercises to inform education policy.
- Showing greater commitment to basic high quality research in areas related to education and establishing a National Evidence Centre.
- Creating a strategic framework for D&R to draw together work already happening in the education system.

The publication draws on what we know about innovation and research within education and in sectors like healthcare, information technology and pharmaceuticals. It also examines what we are learning about the importance of users and collaborative development in generating and spreading innovation in other sectors from manufacturing to social care. In effect, this signals a shift from Research and Development (R&D) to Development and Research (D&R) and the publication calls for greater support for the involvement of teachers and school leaders in this process.

The authors, Bentley and Gillinson, commented: “Approaching innovation in the right way can help build a broader, stronger community of support and contribution around our existing educational system. The challenge is to build the foundations of a system that would support it, and then to pursue them consistently and rigorously over time.”

Mike Gibbons, Chief Executive of The Innovation Unit said: “We believe that all agencies involved in the education of children and young people can benefit from this approach which does two things. First, it ensures that the professional creativity of staff working in education is engaged and then used to improve the whole education system. Second, through this process it enables the education system to respond more effectively to the personal needs of individual learners.”

**The launch will take place at**

**The Innovation Unit at 28-30 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0TT**

**on Monday 2 July 2007 from 6 pm – 8 pm.**

For more information contact:  
The Innovation Unit on (020) 7259 1368  
or [press@innovation-unit.co.uk](mailto:press@innovation-unit.co.uk).

# innovation

## Notes for Editors

- The Innovation Unit is one of the country's leading organisations for innovation in education. It acts as a catalyst for change drawing on talent from both the public and private sectors to improve education and other related services. The Unit combines the expertise of teachers and school leaders with the ambition of policy makers and is working on a range of projects. The largest of these is the “Next Practice” programme in which the Unit supports schools and local authorities as they take forward their own cutting-edge ideas to improve education.  
[www.innovation-unit.co.uk](http://www.innovation-unit.co.uk)
- Lord Puttnam CBE is, among many other roles, Chair of education innovation charity Futurelab and founding chair of NESTA – National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts.
- Tom Bentley is Executive Director for Policy and Strategy in the Department of Premier and Cabinet in Victoria, Australia. He is also Director of Applied Learning at ANZSOG, the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, based in Melbourne. He was Director of Demos, the think tank, from 1999-2006. He writes in a personal capacity.
- Sarah Gillinson is Deputy to the President of the New York Public Library, advising on policy, developing R&D strategy and building a performance and evaluation framework for the city's 90 public libraries. She was formerly a senior researcher at Demos. She writes in a personal capacity.