The EEF – an experiment in doing experiments!

Prof. Jonathan Sharples
Education Endowment Foundation and UCL Institute of Education
What we do …

- We support teachers and school leaders to use evidence to inform their decision-making.
- We believe evidence can make the biggest difference in the hands of practitioners.
- We believe that the evidence is best applied in concert with professional judgement.
The EEF by numbers

- **10,695** schools participating in EEF trials
- **34** topics in the Toolkit
- **8,000** heads presented to since launch
- **£220m** estimated spend over lifetime of the EEF
- **90** reports published
- **24** members of EEF team
- **24** independent evaluation teams
- **1,170,000** pupils involved in EEF trials
- **159** project evaluations funded to date
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# The Toolkit - a starting point for making decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>-8 months</th>
<th>Summer schools</th>
<th>+3 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meta-cognition and self-regulation</td>
<td>-8 months</td>
<td>Sports participation</td>
<td>+2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer tutoring</td>
<td>-6 months</td>
<td>Arts participation</td>
<td>+2 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early years intervention</td>
<td>-6 months</td>
<td>Individualised instruction</td>
<td>+2 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>One to one tuition</td>
<td>-5 months</td>
<td>Extended school time</td>
<td>+2 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework (Secondary)</td>
<td>-5 months</td>
<td>After school programmes</td>
<td>+2 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative learning</td>
<td>-5 months</td>
<td>Learning styles</td>
<td>+2 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastery learning</td>
<td>-5 months</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>+1 month</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral language interventions</td>
<td>-5 months</td>
<td>Teaching assistants</td>
<td>+1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonics</td>
<td>-4 months</td>
<td>Homework (Primary)</td>
<td>+1 month</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small group tuition</td>
<td>-4 months</td>
<td>Performance pay</td>
<td>0 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behaviour interventions</td>
<td>-4 months</td>
<td>Aspiration interventions</td>
<td>0 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital technology</td>
<td>-4 months</td>
<td>Block scheduling</td>
<td>0 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and emotional learning</td>
<td>-4 months</td>
<td>School uniform</td>
<td>0 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental involvement</td>
<td>-3 months</td>
<td>Physical environment</td>
<td>0 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing class size</td>
<td>-3 months</td>
<td>Setting or streaming</td>
<td>0 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor adventure learning</td>
<td>-3 months</td>
<td>Repeating a year</td>
<td>-1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-4 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Clear actionable guidance (e.g. NICE)
• Digs deeper into EEF evidence and appropriates it in the wider evidence-base
• Bridges between evidence-based principles/practices and interventions
• A foundation for scale up actions
• 70% of Headteachers aware of the guidance. 40% of all teachers.
Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants guidance report

Published guidance – issued to every school
Guidance Reports

Clear and actionable guidance for teachers on a range of high-priority issues

Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants
Published: 14th November, 2016

Improving Literacy in Key Stage One
Published: 30th September, 2016

Improving Literacy in Key Stage Two
Published: 28th April, 2017

Improving Mathematics in Key Stages 2 & 3
Published: 3rd November, 2017

Putting Evidence to Work - A School's Guide to implementation
Published: 8th February, 2018

Metacognition and self-regulated learning
Published: 26th April, 2018

Preparing for literacy
Coming Soon: June 2018

Science
Coming Soon: Autumn 2018

Key Stages 3 and 4
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Multi-stranded ‘campaigns’ on key strategic issues

School inspection update
November 2016 | Issue: 8

- How do senior leaders ensure that TAs are deployed effectively in line with this evidence?
- Are TAs supplementing the work of teachers or replacing them?
- Is there a well-planned programme of training and support for TAs who deliver out-of-class interventions?

70% headteachers aware of the guidance (NFER, 2015)
Multi-stranded approaches, embedding in existing structures

Interventions fostering changes to decision-making **structures and processes**, by **formalising & embedding** other mechanisms of change.
Why implementation?

1. Access and Awareness
Are teachers able to access appropriate research? Are they aware of it?

2. Understanding and Persuasion
Can people understand the implications for classroom practice? Are they persuaded by it?

3. Translation and Use
Can that understanding be translated to a specific school context? Is it informing changes in practice?

A range of EEF projects – Literacy Octopus, TEEP, Challenge Partners, Hampshire Hundreds etc – show exposure to the evidence isn’t enough.

Additional support to translate conceptual understanding → classroom practice
The ‘Literacy Octopus’ trial

Two multi-armed Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) investigating different approaches to communicating and engaging schools with research on primary literacy

- ‘Active’ vs ‘passive’ dissemination. No impacts on any arm!
- Implications:
  - Communication should be seen as just one strand of a multi-faceted approach to mobilising knowledge.
  - We need to provide better support for translation and adoption back in the school.

(Sharples, 2017. EEF blog - ‘Untangling the Literacy Octopus’

Diagram:

- 780 schools who are interested in improving literacy in KS2
- Randomly allocate to receive one of:
  - 1. a. IEE materials
  - 1 b. Invitation to IEE evidence fair plus materials
  - 2. a. Teaching How2s access
  - 2 b. Teaching How2s access and guidance
  - 3. a. CEM literacy booklet and posters
  - 3 b. CEM materials, and different levels of additional training
  - 4. a. NaTcen and ResearchEd website of information
  - 4 b. NaTcen and ResearchEd conference and online resources
Guidance on processes – e.g. implementation, evaluation – as well as practices
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS BEGINS

- Treat scale-up as a new implementation process
- Identify a key priority that is amenable to change

STABLE USE OF APPROACH

- Continuously acknowledge support and reward good implementation practices
- Plan for sustaining and scaling the intervention from the outset

SUSTAIN

- Use implementation data to drive faithful adoption and intelligent adaption
- Reinforce initial training with follow-on support within the school

EXPLORE

- Systematically explore programmes or practices to implement
- Examine the fit and feasibility with the school context

PREPARE

- Develop a clear, logical and well specified plan
- Assess the readiness of the school to deliver the implementation plan

DELIVER

- Support staff and solve problems using a flexible leadership approach
- Prepare practically e.g. train staff, develop infrastructure

ADOPITION DECISION

- READY
- NOT READY - ADAPT PLAN

DELIVERY BEGINS
Social nature of research use

Uptake of research is based on trust and personality as much as practical usefulness - networks, direct contacts and brokerage are important (Nutley et al, 2007)

Nevertheless, default mechanism is ‘push’ (Davis et al, 2015)
Research Schools Network

The Research Schools Network, a partnership between the EEF, the Institute for Effective Education and the Department for Education.

There are now 22 Research Schools which provide school led support for the use of evidence to improve teaching practice.
Research Schools Network

1. **Communication** – regular communication on new and existing evidence – blogs, conferences etc.

2. **Training** – evidence-based practices or processes

3. **Innovation** – develop and evaluate teaching and learning innovation
Co-creation – Coordinated but differentiated roles

EEF
The ‘what’

Practice partners
The ‘how’

4 As – accurate, actionable, accessible, appropriate

Evidence brought ‘to life’

Reach, relationships and influence with schools

How the evidence applies to practice?

How to apply the evidence in practice?