

Partners' Workshop 12-13th June 2018

UCL Institute of Education, London

Highlights

Background

Partners in the EIPPEE network met in London in June 2018, to share challenges and opportunities they had become aware of through their work. Eighteen participants came from ministries, agencies and universities in seven European countries: Belgium, Denmark, England, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and from the OECD in Paris. The following is brief overview of some of the points that were made. For more detailed information contact the organiser: Andrew Morris, a.i.morris@ucl.ac.uk

Producing research reviews

When setting up research studies intended to be useful in practice and policy, the questions need to be developed in dialogue between researchers and users. In drawing conclusion at the end of a review of research, it is not helpful to users if they are too broad, holistic, global, normative and abstract. Richer material often lies deeper inside primary studies than the quantitative findings that form the basis of a synthesis. To be useable at classroom level, statements of findings need to be specific. Blandness may be one cause of the rejection of research evidence.

David Gough described a project to evaluate the *What Works Centres* in the UK offered the evaluation tool as potentially useful in other countries.

Using research reviews

Systematic Reviews need to be “translated” for practice. This involves deciding what the key points for users are and framing them in the context of use. When guidance is commissioned based on reviews of evidence, users need to be involved. The process of interpretation of findings is subjective but needs to be defined and transparent, like the research process itself.

The use of evidence needs to be mediated, but this task need not lie solely with the researchers or commissioners, but with the various professional and regulatory bodies that support the education service. Examples of this type of collaboration can be found in healthcare systems.

Teachers are increasingly being perceived as professionals and, as such, need to draw on both their practical experience and evidence from research. Hitherto, the intrinsic motivation of a minority of research-aware teachers has been relied upon for feeding research evidence into practice. It is time extrinsic motivation was also

built in, to reach the majority, through incorporating expectations of research use in professional standards and inspection requirements.

Teachers are not trained in how to interpret evidence; much will depend on their world view. There is a danger of practitioners using highly accessible, evidence-based products in an over-simplified way.

Infrastructure

Comparison with sectors in which use of research is more developed, reveals how patchy the infrastructure to support evidence-use is in education. In healthcare, for example, not only are rigorous primary studies and secondary syntheses of them common, but there are also institutions and procedures for producing guidance from them, for practitioners and policymakers. There is in effect an ecosystem which includes processes for establishing priorities for useful research, structures for engaging users in interpretation and connectivity between evidence producers and the professional institutions that regulate and improve standards of practice.

In education, some structures and processes remain to be built, and many connections need to be forged. We need an ecosystem that includes accessible dissemination, research training professional development, career paths that include research use. Bigger research projects and multidisciplinary research teams are needed with 'dating services' between researchers and teachers.

The ecosystem can be developed from examples of effective institutions and processes that already exist in many countries and by studying the ecosystems that already exist in other sectors, such as healthcare. Perhaps we need a public panel model, like the International Climate Change Panel.

The 'post-truth' environment

Is there a backlash against evidence? How do we reinforce the relationships and structures that matter? We need to penetrate the new broad questions posed by the 'post-truth' environment. We live in a world of increasing information and decreasing attention. There's a tendency today for evidence to be used in a 'weaponised way'. To communicate research effectively, a good narrative is needed as well as good evidence. The role of the media is important in this. Aristotle's 'art of rhetoric' adds the credibility of the speaker and the emotional quality of speech to the persuasiveness of evidence itself.

Many of the changes we wish to see require changes in culture – at individual and institutional levels. Although this is often a slow process, widespread changes in behaviour may occur once the 'early adopters' have been convinced. It's not so much a paradigm shift, more a 'different game in town' - and we need to connect with it.

Information about the participants and inputs to the workshop are given below.

Andrew Morris, London Organiser, June 2018

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Programme

DAY ONE (room 604)	
Introduction	12.30 arrival
	13.00 Sandwich lunch
	13.30 Welcome and introductions
	13.40 Update on actions from previous meeting
Challenge 1	14.00 Challenge 1 (Solvi Lilljeford, Norwegian Knowledge Centre)
	14.15 Discussion groups on challenge 1
	15.00 feedback and general discussion
	15.15 TEA BREAK
Challenge 2	15.30 Challenge 2 (Rien Rouw, Netherlands Ministry, seconded to OECD)
	15.45 Discussion groups 2
	16.30 Feedback and general discussion
Presentation	16.45 Update from the Ed. Endowment Foundation (Jonathan Sharples)
	17.05 questions and general discussion
	17.30 finish
	19.00 assemble at UCL IoE reception area for walk to restaurant
	19.30 dinner at Navarro's restaurant
DAY TWO (room 675)	
	9.00 Arrival and coffee
Challenge 3	9.15 Challenge 3 (Tracey Burns, OECD)
	9.30 Discussion groups on challenge 3
	10.15 Feedback and general discussion
	10.30 TEA BREAK
Presentation	10.45 What Works Centres in England: a Review (David Gough, UCL IoE)
	11.00 Questions and general discussion
Review and Planning	11.30 Reflections on the workshop and suggestions for future topics
	12.00 Plans for Autumn Event
	12.30 finish

Challenge 1 (Solvi Lilljeford, Norwegian Knowledge Centre)

Using Systematic Reviews in Practice: The example of middle leaders in school

Challenge 2 (Rien Rouw, Netherlands Ministry, seconded to OECD)

From pockets to structures: towards the institutionalisation of knowledge mobilisation practices

Challenge 3 (Tracey Burns, OECD)

Reclaiming the role of evidence and experts in a post-truth world

Participants

Andrew Morris

Anneke Wilmers

Caroline Gijssels

David Gough

Eva Minten

Helena Bergmark

Jan Tripney

Jesper de Hemmer Egeberg

Jonathan Sharples

Karoline Fredriksson

Kristin Børte

Linda Ekström

Rien Rouw

Rosanne Zwart

Rowan Zuidema

Sieglinde Joritz

Solvi Lillejord

Tracey Burns