

Collaborate

Collaborative teaching: sharing best practice

Partners

Q PROJECT



MONASH
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May 2021



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This Collaborate research summary explores:

-  how high-quality relationships and collaboration are crucial to support educators to keep abreast of new evidence, critique and interpret evidence, and ultimately use evidence in their practice.
-  the role of leadership in facilitating effective collaboration, especially when it comes to analysing, experimenting with and implementing evidence in practice.
-  evidence-based approaches schools and early childhood services can use to collaborate and promote the use of evidence, including Professional Learning Communities, professional learning networks and teacher inquiry processes.

Introduction

Evidence use is “emerging as a largely social process, with interaction and relationships being key factors in determining how evidence gets used and applied in practical settings. Having the opportunity to discuss research [and evidence] helps practitioners gain a deeper understanding and sense of ownership of the findings, and in doing so, enables evidence to be integrated more relevantly and sensitively in professional settings”.

— Sharples, 2013, p. 18

Both in Australia and overseas, educators are increasingly expected to use quality evidence to inform their teaching practice. Evidence can help educators understand where students are in their learning, choose appropriate teaching strategies and interventions, monitor student progress, and evaluate their teaching effectiveness (Masters, 2018). Social processes play an important role in encouraging and facilitating the use of evidence in education (e.g., Rickinson & Edwards, 2021).

Studies focused on evidence-engaged schools have highlighted various social factors that can help educators engage with different evidence. These include evidence-related relationships with colleagues, other early learning centres/schools, professional associations and universities (e.g., Coldwell et al., 2017; Dimmock, 2019; Godfrey, 2016); opportunities to engage with experts both within and outside the school environment (e.g., Dimmock, 2019; Henrick et al., 2017); trusted relationships, particularly with school leaders (e.g., Brown, Daly, & Liou, 2016); and collaborative and inclusive ways of interrogating and using evidence (e.g., Supovitz, 2015).

What is evidence?

As the [Australian Education Research Organisation \(AERO\)](#) identifies, there are many types of evidence in education. These include: research evidence (academic research which uses rigorous methods to provide insights into educational practice); and practitioner-generated evidence (evidence generated by practitioners through their daily practice).

This publication uses the term 'evidence' to refer to information gained from various sources such as policy and curriculum documents, research articles, reports and books, professional publications, guidance and summaries, professional learning and conferences and ideas from other schools or communities of practice, among others. We use the term 'research' when we are referring specifically to the use of evidence generated through academic research.

Why is a greater understanding of the social nature of evidence use important for teachers and school leaders?

At the base of excellent teaching are excellent relationships – with colleagues, both within the learning environment and externally; with parents and carers, students and the broader community; with leaders, experts, advisors and mentors; and with system leaders and

researchers. Good relationships between the school and the wider community are an important component of school success. These relationships can help drive evidence use among educators. Furthermore, collaborative processes and school management approaches can make evidence-informed practice an ongoing, school-wide practice (Godfrey & Brown, 2019). Overall, evidence-informed teaching is a “collaborative, not isolated, occupation” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 15).

We aim to identify the ways in which high quality relationships and collaborations are crucial to improving the ways in which educators keep abreast of new evidence, critique and interpret evidence, and ultimately use evidence in practice. It highlights the importance of supporting and upskilling teachers and school leaders to understand and strengthen their evidence-related relationships and collaborations as part of school and education system improvement.

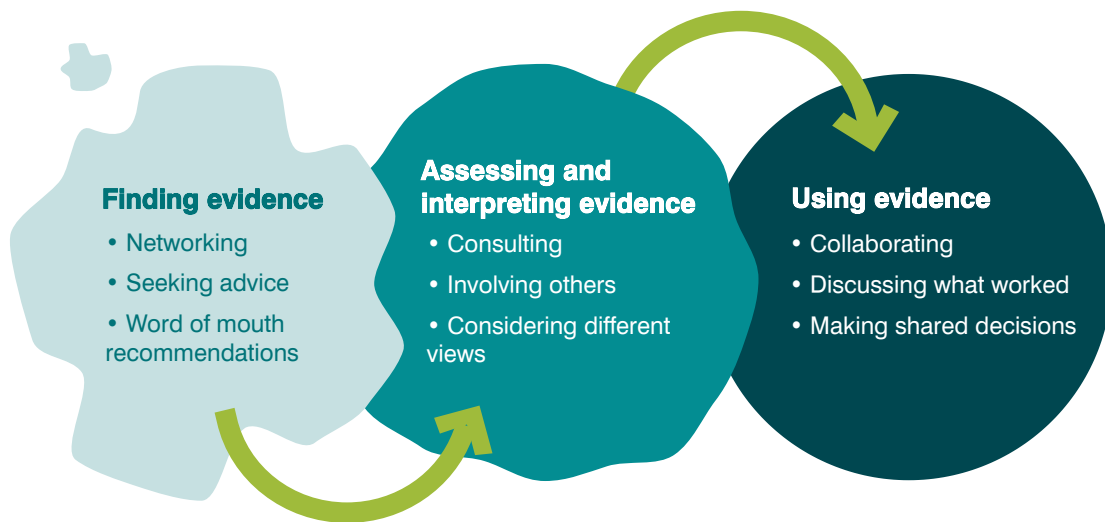
What is Monash Q Project?

A partnership between Monash University and the Paul Ramsay Foundation, the Q Project is a 5-year initiative to understand and improve high-quality use of research in Australian schools. The project involves close collaboration with teachers, school and system leaders, and researchers across Australia.

The Q Project’s Quality Use of Research Evidence framework emphasises ‘relationships’ as an important enabling component of using research **well**, drawing attention to ‘the interpersonal processes and connections that are required to thoughtfully engage with, and implement, appropriate research’ (Rickinson et al., 2020, p. 6). It also notes how research-engaged relationships are shaped by school leadership, resources and infrastructure, as well as open, trustworthy and participatory school cultures.

This collaborative piece between the Monash Q Project (Q Project) and AITSL draws on the findings of the Q Project’s first survey of Australian educators. Between March and September 2020, 492 educators from 414 schools across NSW, SA, VIC and QLD responded to the survey which focused on educators’ awareness of, attitudes towards and uses of **evidence in practice**. We highlight initial practitioner insights into the different social processes that underpin and shape how evidence is used in practice. The findings demonstrate teachers and school leaders draw on and value social processes and relationships when finding, assessing and using evidence (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Social processes associated with finding, assessing and using evidence



AITSL Spotlight

The importance of engaging with high-quality research and evidence has been explored in an edition of AITSL's Spotlights, *Informing teaching: navigating and translating education best practice*. You can read this Spotlight.

🔗 <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/research/spotlight/>

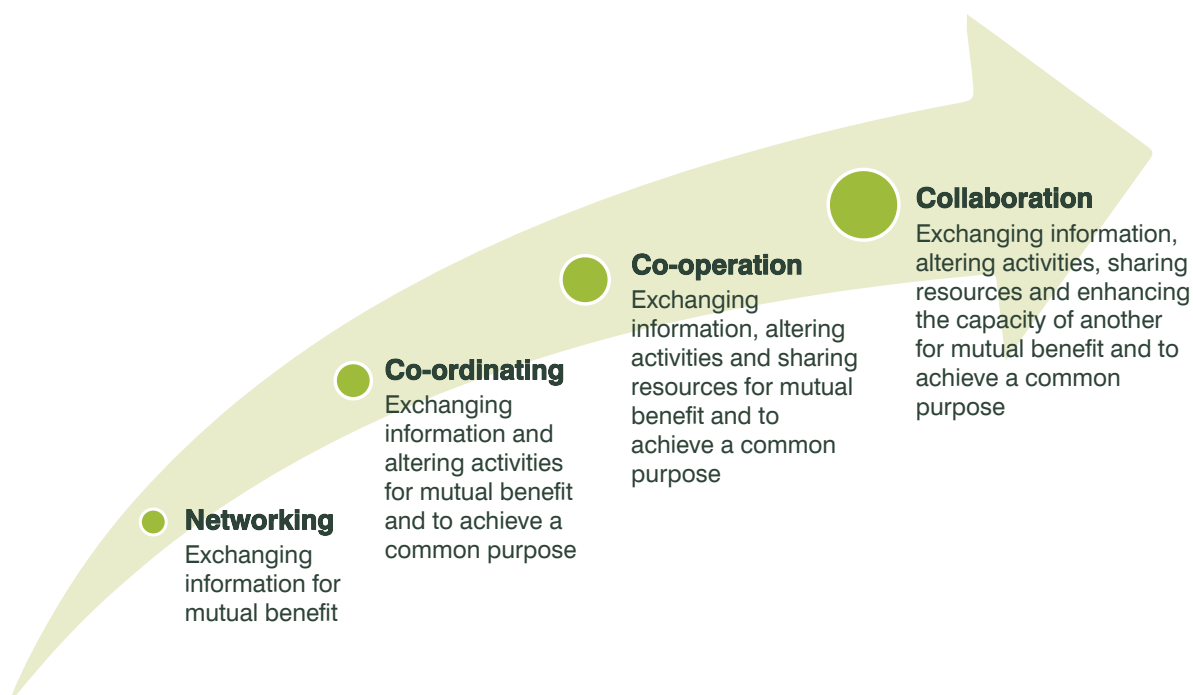
A framework for thinking about the social nature of evidence use

Efforts to improve the use of evidence in practice and policy internationally have involved different approaches, one of which has been 'relationship models' (Best & Holmes, 2010). Relationship models focus on knowledge sharing through partnerships and networks among individuals who have common interests. Through these approaches, the effective use of evidence is facilitated by relationships that are underpinned by a clear commitment to collaboration and shared learning.

One way to think about collaboration between professionals including educators is in terms of a continuum (Himmelman, 2002). At one end of the continuum sits 'networking' or simple information exchange, while at the other end sits 'collaboration', involving not just information sharing but also practice change, resource sharing, capacity building and shared purpose. In between these two extremes are the intermediary processes of 'co-ordinating' and 'co-operating' (see Figure 2). Where the work of a group of educators might sit on such a continuum is shaped by a variety of factors, such as the extent to which they share goals, are committed to shared tasks, identify with the team and feel the need to be included, are dependent on each other to deliver shared tasks and goals, and perceive their achievements as shared accomplishments (e.g., Little, 1990; Vangrieken et al., 2015).

This way of thinking about collaboration is helpful because, as will become clear in the following sections, the use of evidence by educators seems to involve movement along the continuum, depending on the task at hand. For example, ‘finding’ evidence seems to involve more light-touch, informal, networking-type processes, whereas ‘analysing’ evidence and then ‘implementing’ evidence seems to require more involved and structured co-operating and collaborating-type processes. Thinking about collaboration as a continuum therefore can help leaders craft targeted interventions to support educators’ improved use of evidence in practice.

Figure 2. An illustration of a collaboration continuum (adapted from Himmelman, 2002)



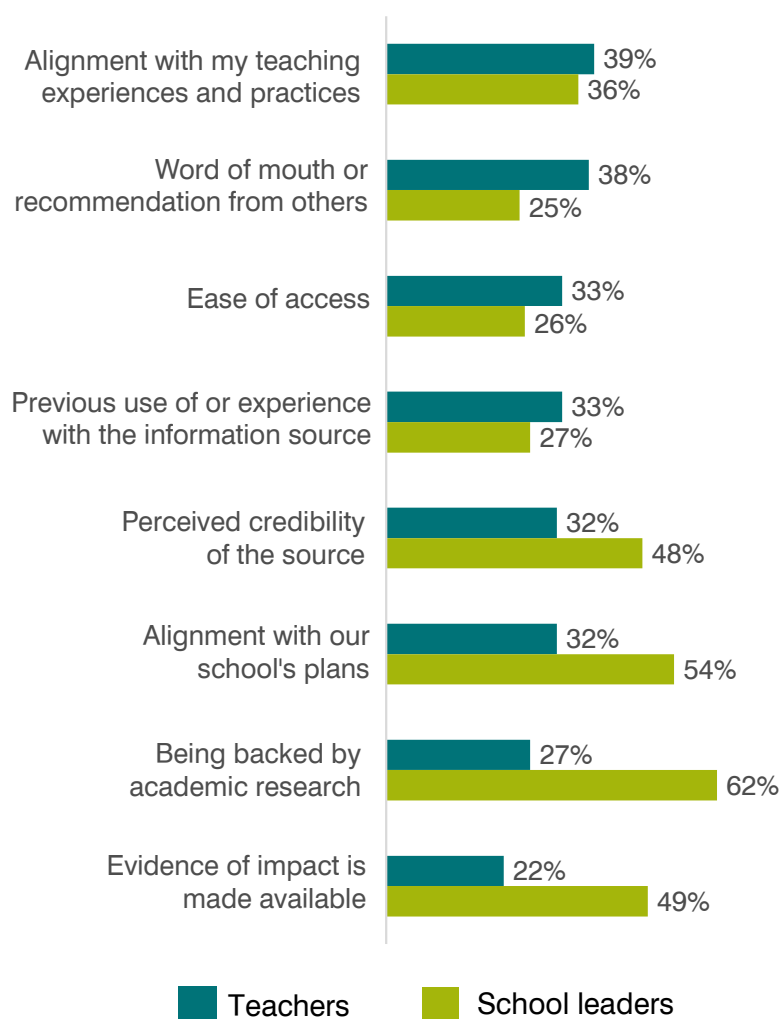
Finding, locating, identifying

For educators to use relevant and appropriate evidence in practice, they first need to be able to find and access it. Two thirds (65%, $n=318$) of educators involved in Q Project’s survey indicated that, ‘when confronted with a new problem or decision, they look for research that may be relevant’. The same proportion (65%, $n=318$) indicated they ‘know where to find relevant research that may help to inform their teaching practices’.

“I [find and] read research and often cross-examine it with other experts. I reflect on [the research and] my practice and consider what I can change or develop... often sharing [views] with other colleagues.” – Middle leader, Catholic Primary School, Queensland

When describing the myriad of ways in which they sourced evidence, Q Project respondents used language such as “networking”, “sharing different sources with others”, “seeking advice”, “relying on others’ previous use and experience”, and “taking recommendations from colleagues”. These different approaches were reflected in educators’ responses when they were asked what had influenced them to use certain information over the past 12 months. Overall, one third of educators ranked ‘word of mouth or recommendation from others’ in their top three influences (34%, $n=120$) (see Figure 3). Social processes also influenced the use of research in particular, with more than one quarter of educators ranking ‘the research was recommended by colleagues and/or school leaders’ as one of their top three reasons for using it (27%, $n=93$).

Figure 3. What influences teachers and school leaders to use information sources? ($n=492$)



Q Project respondents described their social processes of finding and accessing evidence in ways that would seem to locate these at the left of the collaboration continuum described earlier (see Figure 2). Their interactions seemed largely motivated by information and resource exchange, sharing of experiences and ideas, and fulfilment of others’ requests or needs.

This finding represents an important insight for school and system level leaders. Educators rely on opportunities to talk or connect with colleagues to find and access evidence. They often prefer to be recommended evidence by their colleagues, underpinned by the understanding that their

colleagues would only recommend evidence they found to be useful or relevant to practice themselves (Williams & Coles, 2007).

Using the idea of a collaboration continuum, the Q Project's findings suggest that these social interactions do not need to be overly formal or strongly organised for educators to gain value from them (Bush, 2000). To find and access relevant evidence, teachers and school leaders need to have access to different social, professional and school networks, both internal and external to their own school environment, as well as formal and informal.

“We visited [or looked to] other schools to see their programs...[always] connecting research to [our] context [and] engaging with the research in discussions with [our] colleagues and other leaders.” – Senior Leader, Catholic Secondary School, Victoria

We came across the research through “networking with other schools [and seeking out] a variety of sources [including] university and professional recommendations [and] external agencies who are elite in their niche.” – Teacher, Government Secondary School, New South Wales

Attending professional development events is a form of networking. These opportunities allow educators to engage with new evidence, including evidence that has already been successfully trialled or implemented in similar contexts. Within their own school context, educators can socialise this evidence with their colleagues to establish a school-wide understanding of it and how it could be implemented in their context.

Research was identified through “professional development for all teachers, [with] collaborative discussion [then with] middle leaders, [whose] feedback [was] sought [about the research] and implemented with their agreement.” – Senior Leader, Independent P-12 School, New South Wales

“Teachers refer to notes and research from professional learning, [as well as] the theories that underpin their work as they work together ... When I hear my teachers talking about their work using the [research-based] language and sharing what they have been looking at, I know they are using research evidence well.” – Senior Leader, Government Primary School, South Australia

Establishing school-university partnerships can also provide ways for educators to locate and engage with relevant evidence (e.g., Godfrey, 2016). University partnerships can help to supplement and enhance educators' evidence-related skills and capacities (Judkins, Oliver, McCrone, & Inniss, 2014) via teacher education opportunities, professional development, 'critical

friend' advice and information sharing, as well as internships (OECD, 2013). Close to two thirds of the educators (62%, $n=303$) involved in the Q Project's survey agreed they would like 'opportunities to work with researchers to help with their own learning'.

Our school has “critical friend access via [a] university [that supports us] develop[ing] an evidence-based approach to change [including finding and] implementing the research with enough fidelity so that the same results can be expected, but with enough flexibility so that it meets the needs of [our] context.” – Middle Leader, Catholic Secondary School, Victoria

Social media networks can play an important role in enabling educators to find and share evidence (see Professional Learning Networks below). They can facilitate equitable access to evidence for an increasing number of educators who, for example, live in regional and remote areas and cannot easily access professional learning experiences or incidental networking opportunities, which often act as sources of new and different evidence. Educators around the world are able to connect with each other through these platforms to exchange insights and information.

However, these platforms can present challenges for educators when sourcing evidence. Whilst Q Project educators acknowledged their value, they indicated preferences for accessing more immediate, personal and known networks when sourcing evidence. Their responses highlighted the risks of engaging with content shared online without consideration of its relevance and reliability.

Poor research use means using “research that ‘fits’ a particular trend or fad that doesn’t have any evidence of improving student learning. Something [found] on Twitter that has not been looked at critically. There is a lot of self-promotion on social networking platforms like this [although] some good things as well.” – Senior Leader, Government Primary School, New South Wales

Professional Learning Networks (Trust, 2012)

A professional learning network (PLN) is a system of personal connections and resources that supports an educator's informal learning. They are teacher-driven, global support networks that aim to decrease isolation among educators and increase independence. PLNs can be supported by technology related platforms.

Social media connections

Educators can use social media networking platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, to connect with peers around the world and gain access to evidence they might not otherwise encounter. Educators can pose questions, share ideas and ask for guidance

whenever it suits them. These platforms provide the opportunity for collective knowledge building and sharing as educators can pool their responses to identify the most relevant evidence for their context.

Information aggregation

This type of PLN enables educators keep up to date with new and emerging evidence by following multiple websites and new sources through RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds. RSS feeds collect news posts, articles and updates from websites educators have identified as useful and push this information through to them via an RSS reader. Educators can efficiently skim a tailored list of articles rather than trawling through masses of information. Email subscriptions to tried and trusted sources of information can also serve a similar purpose.

Analysing, interpreting, deciding

Just as finding and identifying relevant evidence involves social processes, interpreting and making sense of it can also involve collaboration. Working with colleagues can help educators decide whether the evidence they have found is robust and reliable and whether it is relevant to their school's context.

We assess research for use by “making evidence-informed decisions based on quality data sources and engaging in dialogue with colleagues to make informed choices.” – Senior Leader, Government Primary School, New South Wales

As part of the Q Project's survey, educators were asked how they assessed the quality of evidence when deciding on approaches to improve student outcomes. Overall, educators cited 'information sources being backed by academic research' (64%, $n=267$) as one of their top three ways of assessing quality. Highlighting the importance of social relationships, almost two in five educators (38%, $n=141$) indicated that they relied on 'critique of the information with school colleagues', with a similar proportion selecting 'word of mouth or recommendations from others' (35%, $n=123$) as one of their top three assessment methods.

With regards to research specifically, teachers reported lower levels of confidence in their research-related skills and capacities when compared with school leaders. Approximately two in five teachers indicated they did not feel 'confident in analysing and interpreting research for my own teaching context' (36%, $n=102$), with approximately half expressing a lack of 'confidence in how to judge the quality of research' (51%, $n=143$). These findings suggest a role for leaders to facilitate more consultative processes so as to help teachers unpack the meaning and usefulness of evidence in their own context, alongside their colleagues and peers. These collaborative processes can also encourage information sharing and help to address emerging questions.

When deciding on research for use, “a range of teachers [are] involved, if not the whole school, and teachers and students [are] empowered to give feedback on the [research decision-making] process.” – Middle Leader, Catholic Secondary School, Victoria

On the whole, educators involved in the Q Project’s survey expressed positive perceptions of the opportunities to engage with evidence within their schools. More than two thirds (69%, $n=341$) indicated that their school has ‘*informal* processes’ to help staff engage critically with information sources, while a slightly smaller proportion indicated their school has ‘*formal* processes’ to support this (64%, $n=315$). When describing their school environments, Q Project respondents emphasised the importance of social processes when assessing and interpreting evidence for contextual relevance. They used language such as “being consulted”, “teachers having an equal say”, “everyone being involved”, “sharing” and “having a whole-of-school approach and understanding”.

“Whole-of-school improvements are introduced [at our school] using research as a basis of evidence as to ‘why’ things are changing. This [consultation process] is very collaborative with many people involved.” – Senior Leader, Catholic Secondary School, Victoria

“Research evidence from [both] internal and external sources should be studied and examined carefully in a collaborative way so that it is not one person’s interpretation. Colleagues work together to critically review research...seeking external validation [about the research] to avoid ‘tunnel vision’.” – Senior Leader, Independent Primary School, Queensland }

They also appeared to value professional learning communities (PLC) and collaborative learning as ways in which to come together to critically engage with evidence, with the majority of Q Project participating teachers (84%, $n=236$) and an even greater proportion of school leaders (93%, $n=148$) believing their school facilitated these structured opportunities.

PLCs call for collaboration, sharing and ongoing critical interrogation of teaching practices in line with professional standards. They are often learning-oriented and can help to facilitate teacher growth. PLCs also provide educators with the opportunity to regroup following the implementation of evidence-informed initiatives to discuss any benefits that have occurred as well as any issues. PLCs are a significant resource as teachers are more likely to collect and use evidence systematically when working as a group (e.g., Dimmock, 2019; Supovitz, 2015). Professional collaborative activities between educators, including PLCs, have also been found to contribute to improved student outcomes (Schleifer, Rinehart, & Yanisch, 2017).

Professional Learning Communities

For more information on PLCs, including guidance on how to establish one in your own school, visit:

🔗 <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/feedback/aitsl-professional-learning-communities-strategy.pdf>

Educators involved in the Q Project's survey also highlighted the pitfalls of assessing, interpreting and making decisions about evidence within their schools without proper collaboration and collective buy-in from staff – effectively illustrating what *not* to do. Their experiences highlight the risks associated with centralised, non-consultative decision-making and the use of evidence without a proper shared understanding of the 'why' motivating these decisions. These comments also underscore the importance of properly exploring the relevance of evidence-informed practices to the school's specific context and only adapting and implementing relevant practices.

Poor research decision-making means “one person/group implementing research that they thought was correct without consultation, collaboration or without dissecting its reliability and suitability to our college.” – Teacher, Independent P-12 School, New South Wales

Poor research use involves “the introduction of a [research-based] initiative where staff are told to do it. [There is] no room for adaption...no reflection or collation of [different views] to ascertain the impact. [There is] lots of jargon and no collaboration.” – Middle Leader, Government Secondary School, Victoria

Q Project respondents described their social processes of assessing, interpreting and deciding on specific evidence for use in ways that would seem to locate them further along the collaboration continuum described earlier. Their descriptions suggested a need for collaboration (see Figure 2) including shared and common understandings of the evidence, inclusivity and joint decision-making. These meaningful interactions can foster greater trust among educators and openness to change (Moolenaar, Slegers, & Daly, 2012).

AITSL's Essential Guide to Professional Learning: Collaboration

The Essential Guide to Professional Learning series unpacks the research behind key themes outlined in The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders and The Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework. The Essential Guide series provides practical strategies to help teachers and school leaders engage in effective professional growth. The Essential Guide on collaboration explores the importance of collaborative professional learning as well as the significant

role school leaders play in supporting a collaborative learning culture. It outlines common approaches to building a collaborative environment and provides a case study to enhance your understanding.

Experimenting, applying, reflecting

Once educators have together made sense of the evidence and decided what it means for their learning environment, they can then begin using it in practice. Collaborative processes again can play a role, with teachers and leaders working together to experiment with different evidence, implement and monitor its effect on their practice and student learning, and then discuss and reflect on its impact.

Quality research use involves “using the research carefully to make your own practices better, [but] only after discussion with colleagues and school leaders.” – Teacher Aide, Catholic Primary School, Victoria

The majority of educators involved in the Q Project’s survey (70%, $n=342$) indicated they had ‘used research to inform their practice in the last 12 months’. These educators indicated they had used research directly and indirectly in their practice, both by themselves and in groups. ‘Discussions of best practice with colleagues’ was the strongest reason for using research (76%, $n=260$), highlighting the importance of collaboration and information sharing between colleagues in the integration of research into practice.

Once educators have developed a shared understanding of what the evidence means and how it could be applied in their context, the processes of experimenting, trialling and implementation begin. Again, collaboration is key to the effectiveness of these processes in practice. A good starting point is to establish shared and well-defined objectives that articulate what school teams are aiming to gain from the implementation of evidence. Co-constructing problem resolution approaches are also important for group buy-in and uniform troubleshooting of issues as they arise. Structured, ongoing opportunities to collaboratively reflect on impacts post-implementation also help educators to decide together how best to proceed and sustain improved practice (Sharples, Albers, & Fraser, 2019).

*In a research-supported culture “there would be ongoing opportunities for professional discussions, collaborative practice, [collective] feedback and reflection...[a] common language across the school [regarding research use].”
– Teacher, Government Primary School, Queensland*

Using research well means “staff would be unpacking the research together to gain a common understanding. [They] would be working together to plan and implement the research evidence effectively in the classrooms.” – Senior Leader, Government Primary School, Victoria

Evidence-informed teaching: an evaluation of progress in England (Coldwell, et al., 2017)

Senior leaders have been found to be largely responsible for building awareness of evidence within their school, and for filtering and presenting evidence – usually via continuing professional development. Engaging with evidence was found to be a collaborative process, integrated into continuing professional development activities and planning meetings over an extended period of time. The use of evidence was only found to lead to sustained change when time was made for informed debate and teachers were given the opportunity to see the impact of the evidence in practice. The use of evidence was found to be an ongoing iterative process that involved implementing new practices, or changing existing practices, and then assessing impact. Most schools involved in the study highlighted the importance of discussing the impact of findings with others. Overall, embedding evidence took time and required consistent, strategic direction from school leaders.

When describing the ways in which they used or implemented evidence, Q Project respondents used language such as “collegial discussion”, “group debate”, “team implementation”, “going on one improvement journey together”, “colleagues working together”, “openly sharing thoughts and ideas for improvement with others”, and “collaborative practice, feedback and reflection”. Their responses suggested a need for collaborating-type processes when implementing and using evidence in practice, locating them at the far right of the continuum described earlier (see Figure 2).

Effective research implementation involves “subsequent debriefing along with colleagues after a suitable trial period and trial of other methods to gather evidence of what works or not.” – Teacher, Catholic Secondary School, New South Wales

“Teachers were choosing research [applicable to] their own classrooms, [then] framing their own theories of action and investigating their own problems [before] then collaborating with others to explore those problems through practice.” – Senior Leader, Government Secondary School, Victoria

Collaborative teacher inquiry is a helpful example of a collaborating-type process whereby educators work together, sometimes as members of a PLC, to identify common challenges, interrogate evidence and test practice applications. This approach is based on the understanding that inquiry is a cyclical process that can help to foster ongoing collaboration between educators. In a collaborative inquiry cycle, educators:

- commit to a common goal or focus,
- develop a plan for action,
- carry out the plan while collecting and analysing research, evidence and data, and
- determine the implications of their findings as they relate to their individual practice and learning environment (Butler & Schnellert, 2012).

This process allows educators to incorporate different evidence types into their own practice and context, creating opportunities for collective dialogue, observation and reflection. This type of collaboration empowers educators to jointly trial evidence in their practice and builds shared commitment to and responsibility for improved evidence use (Timperley, Kaser, & Halbert, 2014). This meaningful and sustained collaboration is crucial to affecting sustainable change within learning environments (Levine & Marcus, 2010). Q Project findings suggest that organisational supports including trustworthy leadership, time and resource investment, and defined group roles and aims are crucial to facilitating this level of collaboration in a sustained way (Rickinson et al., 2020).

Poor research use means “only limited [or] one-sided research [was sourced], no consultation [and] no debate, [resulting in] no positive impact on student outcomes.” – Senior Leader, Catholic Secondary School, Victoria}

Research use is poor when “only a few staff, or pockets of staff, [are] talking and using [the] research-informed practices in their classroom, but [even they are] not really able to articulate what they [are] doing or why they [are] doing it.” – Senior Leader, Government Secondary School, South Australia

Overall, collaborative social processes can help educators determine how evidence can best be implemented within their own contexts. Ongoing monitoring and joint reflection can help teachers and school leaders understand what has and has not worked in their school, and together they can work towards improving student outcomes.

Jurisdiction guidance on collaboration in schools

The **ACT** Education Directorate’s resource for teachers *Great Teachers By Design* includes guidance on how teachers can collaborate and the positive impact this has on student outcomes, including information on Professional Learning Communities and questions for reflection and discussion.

The **New South Wales** Department of Education provides [guidance on collaboration for educators](#) and offers an online, self-paced course [Collaborative Teaching Practice](#) to support educators engaged in establishing collaborative teaching practice and building and maintaining collaborative relationships.

The Collaborative Impact Program was implemented in the **Northern Territory's** Schools South Directorate in 2012. The Program provided a formalised method of establishing collaborative, communicative approaches in schools. You can read more about the program and its impact [here](#).

The **Queensland** Education Leadership Institute (QELi) has released a [Research Spotlight on collaboration](#), which outlines advice for lead teachers and other school leaders on how to foster collaborative practices as well as videos and podcasts on the topic.

South Australia's Department of Education has established local partnerships between geographically defined groups of schools. These partnerships aim to foster the sharing of expertise and resources with and across schools and promote the dissemination of good practice. You can [search for your school](#) to find its associated local partnership.

[This paper](#) reflects on the value and application of strategies that aim to foster collaboration in **Tasmania's** education system.

The **Victorian** Government's guidance [Using evidence for impact](#) highlights the importance of collaboration between educators, including the establishment of a collaborative learning culture within schools, and the usefulness of collaborative inquiry approaches (outlined above).

[This paper](#) explores the impact of projects that have used technology to build connections and foster collaboration between teachers working in regional, rural and remote schools in **Western Australia**.

What do these findings mean?

Evidence-informed teaching practice represents a “collaborative process in which teachers and school leaders work together to access, evaluate and apply the findings of research [and evidence] in order to improve teaching and learning in their schools”.

— Brown et al., 2018, p. 38

How can teachers and school leaders work better together, as well as with others, to improve evidence use?

Social processes can help educators to locate evidence, understand what it means for their early learning centre or school, and make decisions regarding implementation. At the heart of these processes are strong and meaningful relationships between educators, leaders and the broader learning environment community.

Interactions between educators often go beyond just sharing of resources, anecdotes and experiences. The Q Project's findings demonstrate that educators are engaging with evidence in different ways, depending on the task at hand, and have different needs and expectations regarding the depth of collaboration required. Effective collaboration requires strong leadership support and facilitation, especially when it comes to analysing, experimenting with and implementing evidence in practice. Schools and system leaders can support effective collaboration by providing opportunities for educators to come together and share and interrogate evidence. By focusing on understanding evidence and the impact it can have on learners, educators can develop a shared understanding of their context-specific nuances and how the evidence can be tailored for implementation in their own context.

Thinking about evidence use as a stepped, social process can help educators engage with appropriate evidence that can strengthen their practice. Collaborating with colleagues to locate, interrogate and implement evidence represents a great opportunity for educators to learn from and with each other.

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32% senior and middle leaders, 57% teachers and 11% other staff.

Spanning primary, secondary, combined and special schools from government, Catholic and independent sectors.

Survey comprised 5 parts: 8 open-text questions; 8 quantitative questions.

For ranking-style questions, percentages are calculated by dividing the number of participants who ranked the item the 1st, 2nd or 3rd positions, divided by the total number of participants who ranked the item in any position.

Includes those teachers who were 'unsure' of their research-related capacities

Percentage calculated by dividing the number of participants who ranked the item in the 1st, 2nd or 3rd position, divided by the number of participants who indicated they had used research evidence in the past 12 months.