

Inspiring leaders to
improve children's lives



National College
for School Leadership

Schools and academies

Research and development kitbag

Guidance documents

Resource

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Guidance and pro-forma documents

The following section contains some useful documents that can be used to help set up and run research and development projects in your school. The hints and tips document provides prompt questions to consider when initially designing a project in your school and academy.

The final two documents can be used to track the progress of projects that are on going and may be useful for line management meetings and end of project evaluations.

Hints, Tips And Guidance: Developing Effective Approaches To R And D In Teaching School Alliances

Suggestions For Setting Up, Running And Evaluating Practitioner Enquiry Research

Alliance Context:

By way of an introduction to initial thinking it's useful to capture brief relevant background information about the alliance; where it's located, student numbers, profile of demographic, OFSTED status, challenges, stage of development.

Choosing An R and D Programme Of Enquiry:

Consider the appropriate range of choices available to you

- Where will the idea for this research come from?
- Will it be needs led by staff, or in response to Performance Review, or the Alliance Development Plan, or department development plans, suggested by external feedback, an idea from SLT, or from work undertaken in other alliances?
- How will this programme of practitioner research support the direction of the alliance? How will it impact on student progress?
- Will it be a development from other existing alliance projects?

Programme Context:

Think about the rationale for the chosen programme

- Why now?
- Why this idea?
- Where does it nest within other research based activities?
- What are its projected outcomes?
- Which other alliances might be involved in similar practice?

Consultation Process:

Consider how the programme's viability will be tested.

- How will you gauge the level of staff support for the idea?
- How will you get buy-in and ownership?
- Which will staff be consulted?
- What timelines would be appropriate?
- How will you manage the reluctant participant?
- How will you refresh the Learning Organisation culture?
- Is there pre-programme inception introductory work to be done?

Programme Title:

Consider the way in which the programme will be “badged”

- How will colleagues perceive the suggested programme?
- Will it be accessible to all staff and will the umbrella title and range of research topics under consideration, stimulate discussion and desire to participate?

Range Of Research Opportunities:

Consider the expansion of possible directions for research under the umbrella title.

- Is the meaning, scope and range clear?
- Does it allow for individual choice and adaptation of the original idea?

Staff Selection:

Think about participant selection process

Is there a rationale for whole staff involvement in directed time?

- Will staff volunteer?
- Will some staff be approached?
- Should SLT suggest who might benefit from participating?
- Will it be a closed group after a period?
- How might those not included feel about not being involved in the process?

Incentives For Engagement:

Consider ways in which staff might be encouraged to participate or maintain their engagement over time

- If not directed time then time in lieu?
- Further academic accreditation?
- Opportunities to meet previously set PM targets.
- Unspoken but mutually acknowledged rewards?
- Regular provision of arrival refreshments?

WAYS OF WORKING:

Consider how often will groups meet and how the groups will be structured.

- Decide how much leadership, monitoring, supervision and scrutiny will be offered and who will lead?
- Will Action Planning be central to the research process?
- How will SLT be involved?
- Will the project's working framework be devised or will it be organic?
- How will individual's research projects be monitored?
- Will you set up co-coaching within the groups?
- What model of coaching will you use?
- How often will the projects' progress be reviewed?

- To whom will colleagues be accountable?
- Would it be helpful to be mentored through the process by an experienced researcher?

Resources And Support:

Consider how resources will be deployed and shared and how support will be offered to colleagues.

- How often will colleagues meet?
- Will on line support be available?
- Will the Resources Centre provide support materials?
- Will there be opportunities to further explore and develop ideas?
- Will academy/federation wide support be available?
- What about HEI support?

Underpinning Values And Principles:

Think about what might underpin the processes as well as the content of the programme.

- Will the projects be open ended, free-ranging notions, predicated on the teacher's interests, concerns and experiences?
- Will there be interventions around choice of focus to bring the projects into alignment?
- What do you want colleagues to consider when devising their projects?
- How much will you encourage the use of theoretical underpinnings of experiential learning?
- If students are involved in colleague research, how will you seek permission and from whom?

Sharing Practice:

Consider ways of assisting colleagues to share good practice

- Who will colleagues report their findings to?
- How will colleagues access each others' projects?
- How much cross research opportunities will be available?
- Will there be mechanisms for embedding good post-research practice?
- Will students know about staff involvement in this research?
- What about parents and the wider community?
- Will you involve regional HEIs?

Review And Evaluation:

Consider which systems can be put in place to effectively measure the impact of this research.

- Would it be useful to embed mid-point reviews and shared findings?
- How will you know if the alliance's outcomes been met?
- What has been the impact on participants and students?

- How can this be measured?

Future Growth And Development Plans:

Think about how the alliance will take the research projects' findings forward

- What about meta-learning and opportunities for growth and change?
- Analysis of the strengths of the programme?
- What could be improved next time?
- How might a wider audience for the research be encouraged?
- How can the research processes be captured and embedded in the alliance's capacity as a learning organisation?
- Where might you publish the research findings?
- Who owns the research?

Next Steps:

Consider how colleagues may want to continue working within this framework during the next phase

- Does the original project lend itself to a second phase/stage of research?
- Do colleagues want to remain with the same partner to further develop their thinking?
- Can you afford to be more flexible in the choice of direction colleagues may want to take?
- How will you challenge staff perception that this might become a carousel that enables the alliance to tick a box?

Developing Effective Approaches To R And D In Teaching School Alliances

Setting Up, Running And Evaluating Practitioner Enquiry Research

Initial details	
Name of Alliance:	
Alliance Context:	
R&D programme:	
Period of R&D programme:	
Current stage of programme:	
Name of programme leader:	
Colleagues interviewed:	
Programme Description	

Overview	
Title and explanation	
Range of research opportunities	
Staff involved	
Ways of working	
Resources and support	
Intended Outcomes	
Review and Evaluation	
Future Developments	

Next Steps	
Programme context	
Initial programme stimulus	
Consultation process	
Selection of groups	
Underpinning values and principles	
Incentives for engagement	
Coaching and mentoring	
Monitoring and supervision	

Sharing practice	
Systems for measuring student impact	
Programme context continued	
Particular strengths of the programme	
Practical tools and tips	

Knowledge capture interview questions checklist

Background to the role
How would you describe the main purpose of your Practitioner Enquiry?
What were the key tasks of your research? (How do you carry them out and what were the priorities?)
What would you say were the main 'deliverables' of your research?
What would you say were the main termly activities of your research?
What were your key outputs / deadlines?
How was this research different from other practitioner enquiry you've been engaged in?
What do you think is the most important skill or ability required for you to carry out this research?
What were the main approaches and processes associated with your research?
What special training or development have you undertaken to help you carry out the research?
Who was your role model or mentor?
Successes
Can you give examples of your main successes during the enquiry process?
What have been your key contributions to the alliance's research programme?
What do you feel worked well whilst you were engaged with the enquiry?
What improvements have you initiated that you are proud of during and since the research?
Why do you think you were successful?
What makes for successful communication with the range of enquiry participants with whom you worked?
What can be learned about working in collaboration with research colleagues?
What have been the key levers to ensure on-going engagement and collaboration?
Challenges (specific examples)
Can you give examples of the key issues you have faced while engaged in Practitioner Enquiry?
What were the most difficult aspects or challenges of this work and how do you manage them?

Can you give examples of the main challenges and pitfalls you faced while engaged in the enquiry?
Can you give examples of what worked less well?
What was missing that contributed to that outcome?
Any particular challenges associated with bringing the research to a close?
Have you made any mistakes that you have particularly learnt from?
What would you do differently if you had the opportunity to do this kind of research again?
What were the factors which contributed to something not turning out as expected?
How could you have been helped to better know/understand/work with other colleagues that might have assisted you to research more effectively?
Working in partnership and collaboration is fundamental part of this work – what have been the challenges and what has it taken to be successful in this?
What would you do differently if you had the opportunity to do this again?
Impact (specific examples)
Think of a couple of examples where there has been a real impact on your learning and in the classroom.
What did you need in order to measure or to know this?
Did your work impact on any other areas in the Academy of Federation or more widely? If so, what are these areas?
What impact did communications within the Academy have on your ability to do this research? Can they be improved?
What did you put in place to ensure you met your outcomes?
How did you measure and report this success?
Contacts
Which colleagues have been most useful during the research programme?
Who is/are the most important contacts / relationships for you while you've been researching?
Who were the main external contacts for your research? What aspect of your enquiry required you to use these contacts?
Which alliance online communities do you contribute to?
Any networks you belong to that supported your research?

How and where do you record the information about your contacts?
Knowledge Management
Where is information stored which is related to the key areas of your research?
Who can access it when the programme has ended?
Are security details needed?
Where is it stored?
Are there any explanatory notes?
Where do you keep your contact information which was in relation to your research? (Does this information identify why you approached them?)
Where do you go to for information and theoretical understanding [people, books, other resources]?
Any 'bibles' that you use?
How can the alliance gather and make better use of the knowledge gained and held by Enquiring Practitioners?
What knowledge and information did you have to find out for yourself?
People and teams
Who knows what you discovered from your research?
Who needs to know your research findings?
What other teams or individuals helped you carry out your research?
What is the main thing your colleagues / team appreciated about the way you collaborated?
What can the alliance learn about engaging and motivating staff in the final months of the programme?
What was successful about engaging learning leaders as managers of group projects?
Your Knowledge & Contribution
What are the most important insights, or 'golden nuggets', that this research has provided for you?
What do you hope/envisage others will see as the significance of this research?
What do you wish you had known when you started the enquiry?
What have you learnt in the role of researcher that you wish you'd known before?

What have you learnt about bringing coherence to the wide range of research activities driven by a variety of needs?
What have you learnt about keeping a focus on the outcomes?
What can other teams learn from your experience of how the programme leader achieved buy in from participants?
What examples do you have of effective processes and templates relating to your activity that could be shared across the alliance?
What can we learn from best practice in peer to peer and alliance to alliance collaborations?
What does the alliance need to learn about school leaders' role as directors of research programmes? And how might we learn these lessons?
What can other teams learn from this programme about how effective communications were developed?
How successful were leaders in gaining buy in?
How could this be shared with other teams in the alliance?
What have you learned about researching in this way?
What can other teams learn from this programme about how effective communications were established and maintained?
What does the alliance need to learn about peer to peer, cross-Federation and wider collaborations with a wide range of stakeholders? And how might we learn these lessons.
Looking Forward
What essential knowledge might someone embarking on Practitioner Enquiry need to acquire to be successful?
What advice / useful tips would you give an Enquirer?
If you could design an ideal induction session for this way of researching, what would you include?

Research And Evaluation Websites For Teachers

Action Research

<http://www.jeanmcniff.com/>

Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE)

<http://www.curee-paccts.com/>

EPPI-Centre systematic reviews

<http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/>

Inside Information: Research for teachers, by teachers.

<http://www.curee-paccts.com/resources/publications/inside-information-research-teachers-teachers>

HEFCE Research

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/>

Mentoring and Coaching Framework and Resources

<http://www.curee-paccts.com/mentoring-and-coaching/national-framework-and-resources>

NERF Evidence Bulletin

<http://www.eep.ac.uk/nerf/bulletin/index.html>

NFER - Practical Research for Education (PRE)

<http://www.pre-online.co.uk/index.asp>

Practitioner Applications

http://www.tlrp.org/pa/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=53&Itemid=43

Research Evidence in Education Library

<http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=56>

Research Informed Practice Site

http://213.251.150.222/ga_tna_november/20101119131802/http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/research/

Research of the Month (RoM)

http://www.gtce.org.uk/197683/147962/150521/afl_diamond9_fac_notes

Teaching and Learning Research

<http://www.tlrp.org/>

Teacher Training Research Bank (TTRB)

<http://www.ttrb.ac.uk/>

UK Educational Evidence Portal (EEP)

<http://www.eep.ac.uk/DNN2/>

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- Helping to identify and develop the next generation of leaders
- Improving the quality of leadership so that every child has the best opportunity to succeed

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