

Evaluation of the Research Learning Communities Intervention, that aims to improve teachers' understanding, engagement and use of research evidence in their practice

Submission date 10/11/2017	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date 15/11/2017	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 08/04/2020	Condition category Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

The aim of this study is to find out whether the Research Learning Communities (RLC) intervention improves teaching quality and learning outcomes by raising teachers' awareness, understanding, and use of educational research in their teaching practice.

Who can participate?

Primary schools with pupils at Key Stage 2 (age 11)

What does the study involve?

Participating schools are randomly allocated to the control group or the intervention group. The control group schools receive no intervention. At the intervention group schools, two Evidence Champion teachers from each school attend four RLC workshops each year with peers from up to four other schools. Workshops are delivered by academics from the Institute of Education at University College London and examine research relating to an area of interest agreed with the schools (for example improving literacy or numeracy via growth mindsets). The Evidence Champions are then required to develop, apply and evaluate school or key-stage wide improvement strategies using the learning from the workshops; and to support other teachers in the school, aiming to raise their awareness, understanding and use of research. The intervention runs for two academic years (from October 2014 to June 2016). Teacher awareness, understanding and use of research is measured with a survey and Key Stage 2 reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling outcomes for Year 6 pupils are assessed using national Key Stage 2 tests.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Possible benefits include teachers developing a greater understanding of research to inform practice, and subsequent improvement in practice and pupil attainment. Possible risks include time spent away from the classroom learning about research, and increased workload for teachers if schools do not arrange adequate cover.

Where is the study run from?
University College London (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
May 2014 to October 2016

Who is funding the study?
Education Endowment Foundation (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Dr Jo Rose
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Contact information

Type(s)
Public

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
EEF RLC Evaluation

Study information

Scientific Title
A school randomised control trial to evaluate the impact of the developer-led research learning communities intervention

Acronym
RLC Evaluation

Study objectives

Teachers in schools that participate in Research Learning Communities will have better engagement with research (as measured by teacher survey) than teachers in control schools. Pupils in schools that participate in Research Learning Communities will have higher attainment at Key Stage 2 (age 11) than pupils in control schools. There will be a positive relationship between teachers' engagement in research (as measured by teacher survey) and pupil attainment at Key Stage 2 (age 11).

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

University of Bristol, Faculty of Social Sciences and Law Committee for Research Ethics, 14/07/2014, ref: 9142 – EEF Research Learning Communities Evaluation

Study design

Whole-school randomised efficacy trial

Primary study design

Interventional

Study type(s)

Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Teachers' engagement with research and how that relates to pupil attainment at Key Stage 2 (age 11)

Interventions

Schools were allocated to treatment and control groups using the minimisation method in MinimPy, to ensure balance of school-level variables of size of school, %FSM, and attainment at KS2. The sample size was not large enough to warrant balancing on further variables as well. It was important to be aware of school alliances in this process. In total, 119 schools were recruited, though some signed up to the intervention in federations or alliances, and some as individual schools. Where groups of schools signed up, the size of the group determined how they were treated in the randomisation:

1. Large alliances of 6 schools or more (n= 5) were split into two groups using the minimisation method, based on size of school, percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM), and KS2 attainment. Of these split alliances, one group was randomly allocated to the treatment condition, and one to the control condition
2. The remaining schools recruited were in units of either single schools (n=54), or federations or alliances comprising pairs (n=6), or groups of three (n=3), or four (n=3) schools. This gave 71 units in total. These units were allocated to the treatment or control group using the minimisation method, based on size of unit (single school, two or three schools, and four or five schools), average size of school in each unit, average percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) in each unit, and average KS2 attainment in each unit. The majority of units comprised single schools, but this method allowed for federations of schools or alliances who signed up because they wanted to work together. Using this method, 60 primary schools were allocated to the treatment group and 59 schools were allocated to the control group.

The treatment condition involves two or three designated "Evidence Champions" (one senior leader, and one other teacher) from 3-5 primary schools working together in a "Research Learning Community" (RLC). Each RLC meets 4 times per year to engage with research evidence around a specific topic of their choice, then plan, conduct and evaluate their own action research projects in their schools. In Year 1 the workshops are led by facilitators from the intervention team, in Year 2 the facilitators are present but sessions are led by Evidence Champions. The role of Evidence Champions also involves engaging and enthusing teachers in their own schools about research evidence.

The control condition involves no intervention.

Total duration of the intervention: October 2014 - June 2016.

Intervention Type

Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)

Pupil attainment at Key Stage 2 (age 11) in Reading, assessed using national Key Stage 2 tests: baseline Key Stage 1 data collected in May 2012 and Key Stage 2 data collected in May 2016

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. Pupil attainment at Key Stage 2 (age 11) in Numeracy, and Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling, assessed using national Key Stage 2 tests: baseline Key Stage 1 data collected in May 2012 and Key Stage 2 data collected in May 2016
2. Teacher engagement, understanding and use of research, measured using teacher survey in two rounds: July - October 2015 and July - October 2016

Completion date

31/10/2016

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria were at school level:

1. Primary school with pupils at KS2 (age 11)
2. Head teacher and chairman of governors having signed Memorandum of Understanding.
3. 100% of Y5 and Y6 teachers in the school completing baseline teacher survey
4. 75% of KS2 teachers overall in the school completing baseline teacher survey

Participant type(s)

Other

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Child

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

119

Key exclusion criteria

1. Not having signed memorandum of understanding
2. Not having pupils at Key Stage 2
3. Not having enough teachers complete baseline survey

Date of first enrolment

01/06/2014

Date of final enrolment

15/09/2014

Locations**Countries of recruitment**

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre

Institute of Education, University College London

Gower Street

London

United Kingdom

WC1E 6BT

Study participating centre

School of Education, University of Bristol

35 Berkeley Square

Bristol

United Kingdom

BS8 1JA

Sponsor information**Organisation**

Education Endowment Foundation

ROR

<https://ror.org/03bhd6288>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Charity

Funder Name

Education Endowment Foundation

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

Pupil Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 educational attainment data from the National Pupil Database (NPD) is stored in the EEF Data Archive. Opt-out parental consent was given for this data storage. Data is anonymised using Unique Pupil Identifiers (which are standard for use in the NPD). Access to this data will be via EEF's Small Grants Programme (contact the EEF for more information on info@eefoundation.org.uk).

IPD sharing plan summary

Stored in repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Funder report results	results		08/04/2020	No	No