Research reflection guide

The *Research reflection guide* (the Guide) helps education practitioners and policymakers reflect on what they have learned from reading a piece of research evidence on a particular policy, program or practice (i.e. an *approach*), which they may be considering implementing.

How do I use the Guide?

To use the Guide, first identify a piece of research evidence on a particular approach that you are considering implementing. Then, answer the series of guiding questions below that will prompt you to consider: what the research says; how relevant the research is to your context; whether you should implement the approach; and what you can do to ensure successful implementation.

The Guide can be used individually or in a group as part of a community of practice.

Guiding questions

Objective questions

What does the research say? What policy, program or practice (i.e. *approach*) is being evaluated? Where and when was this evaluation conducted? How many participants were involved?

How was the approach evaluated? What outcomes were looked at, and how were these outcomes measured? Was there a comparison between a group of individuals who experienced the approach and a group of individuals who did not experience the approach?

What standard of evidence does this research meet? Does the research generate causal evidence (i.e. does it show that 'b' is *caused* by 'a')? Or does the research only provide an association, correlation or link between the approach and the outcomes (i.e. that 'b' is *associated* with 'a', but is not necessarily caused by 'a')?

Reflective questions

What connects with my experience? What about the research is similar to my context and our current priorities? What aspects of the research are different to my context?

What excites me about the research? What might be possible in my context?

Interpretive questions

What makes the approach work? According to the research, what are the key features of the approach that led to improved outcomes? What resources and organisational conditions (financial, human, logistical, curricular etc.) enabled success?

Would there be a benefit if I changed to this approach? What am I currently doing? What would I have to change in order to adopt this approach? Given what the research says, would any of the changes I make lead to improved outcomes? By how much do I think outcomes would improve? Alternatively, am I already doing something very similar to the approach, such that any changes might not improve outcomes further?

What adaptations would I need to make? How aligned is this approach with existing system approaches? What about the approach will I need to change? Will any changes affect the key features? Will any adaptations make the approach less effective? Will any adaptations make the approach more effective?

What is the cost of changing? What will it cost me and/ or my students to change what I'm doing? Where will this time, effort and/or other resources come from? If I implement this approach, what would it replace? What would be the consequences on my students of replacing my existing approach?

Decisive questions

Should I implement the approach? Are the potential benefits worth the costs of implementation? If yes:

How can I rally resources to support implementation? How do I make implementation as smooth as possible? What resources and/or organisational supports do I need? How do I access these resources and/or supports?

How will I be sure that implementation is effective? What data do I need to collect to track the effects of implementation? How will I know that any changes will be due to implementation of this new approach and not anything else?