

Developing an evidence-search



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What's the idea?

It is important to have a simple search strategy to help you sift through all the research evidence and keep you focused on what matters

What does it mean?

We have already shared some simple tips for searching for research evidence. These include:

- » Making the question you are trying to answer precise so that it is easier to find relevant research evidence
- » Ensuring that you prioritise which problem to investigate so that you spend time on research that matters.

You might also want to consider what your 'best-guess' answer to the question is. You probably already have an inkling about how to proceed; it's worth trying to articulate this so that you can search for research evidence that challenges your preconceptions.

You can use multiple sources of

evidence, including: academic research, school data, practitioner expertise and stakeholder views.

Here's how to get started with each:

Educational research

- » First, identify high-quality educational research that gives a general overview of your topic or question, such as the EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit
- » Use a 'snowball strategy'. Note down any references, texts or authors that seem particularly pertinent to the topic so you can follow up. Check reference lists to alert you to seminal texts and authors that are repeatedly cited
- » In the first instance, limit your reading to several key articles/books.

School data

- » What types of school data are available that could help answer your question?
- » Who do you need to ask to access this data?

- » What external sources of data might be useful?

Practitioner expertise

- » Has anyone in the school experienced this problem before?
- » Are there practitioners outside the school who might have an interesting perspective?
- » Don't forget to ask these people to recommend experts.

Stakeholders

- » Who are the most influential stakeholders in addressing this problem?
- » Which stakeholders have most interest in the problem?
- » What do you want to ask each stakeholder?
- » How could you get their response?
- » How many stakeholders could you ask?

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

- » Barends E and Rosseau D (2018) *Evidence-Based Management: How to Use Evidence to Make Better Organizational Decisions*. London: Kogan-Page.
- » Jones G (2018) *Evidence-Based School Leadership: A Practical Guide*. London: SAGE.
- » Park S and Takhashii S (2013) *90-Day Cycle Handbook*. San Francisco, CA: Carnegie Foundation For The Advancement Of Teaching.