





# Embedding research evidence use

Involves deliberate activities to find, understand and apply research evidence to the classroom. Having clear and embedded processes is likely to improve how evidence is understood and used within a school.

## Reflection Question 1: How to embed research evidence use across all stages of school improvement or implementation processes?

School leadership teams, and those that work with them, are encouraged to use these reflection questions and examples and tips from GEMS to consider how to embed research evidence use into their school improvement processes.

### An example of how research evidence is used in a school implementation cycle

	Examples of using research during E4L implementation stages
 <b>Explore</b>  Define the problem you want to solve and identify appropriate programs or practices to implement	You could use research evidence to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help specify a tight area of focus for improvement that is amenable to change (i.e. select a focus area).</li> <li>• Determine a program of activity based on existing evidence of what has and hasn't worked before (i.e. identify general research to support the focus area).</li> <li>• Examine the fit and feasibility of possible interventions to the school context (i.e., identify specific research from similar schools to explore the focus area).</li> </ul>
 <b>Prepare</b>  Create a clear implementation plan, judge the readiness of the school to deliver that plan, then prepare staff and resources	You could develop a clear, logical and well-specified implementation plan by using specific research evidence to help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify critical components of the intervention.</li> <li>• Understand the nuance and conditions required for that intervention to have the best chance of success.</li> <li>• Define realistic and relevant implementation and student outcomes.</li> <li>• Inform which new skills, knowledge and strategies that school staff may need to implement the intervention.</li> </ul>
 <b>Deliver</b>  Support staff, monitor progress, solve problems, and adapt strategies as the approach is used for the first time	You could use specific research evidence to support staff, solve problems and adapt strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate research-informed strategies into follow-on coaching.</li> <li>• Revisit and reflect on the research identified in earlier stages as part of structured peer-to-peer collaboration.</li> <li>• Use a combination of school implementation data and information from the research to tailor, improve and adapt the approach as required.</li> </ul>
 <b>Sustain</b>  Plan for sustaining and scaling an intervention from the outset and continuously acknowledge and nurture its use	You could use specific research evidence to inform how to sustain and scale the intervention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore how similar interventions have been sustained or scaled in schools.</li> <li>• Return to evidence sources identified in earlier stages following full implementation or when sustaining changes to refine or seek further clarification.</li> </ul>

See Challenge 2 in the [GEMS Insights paper for school leaders](#) and E4L's [Putting evidence to work: a school's guide to implementation](#) for more information.

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## Reflection Question 2: How to make evidence-informed decisions on what to implement?

This work involves selecting a focus area or a specific problem to address, and identifying and assessing research to support that focus area or problem of practice as part of the 'Explore' phase of a school improvement cycle.



### Tips on making evidence-informed decisions on what to implement

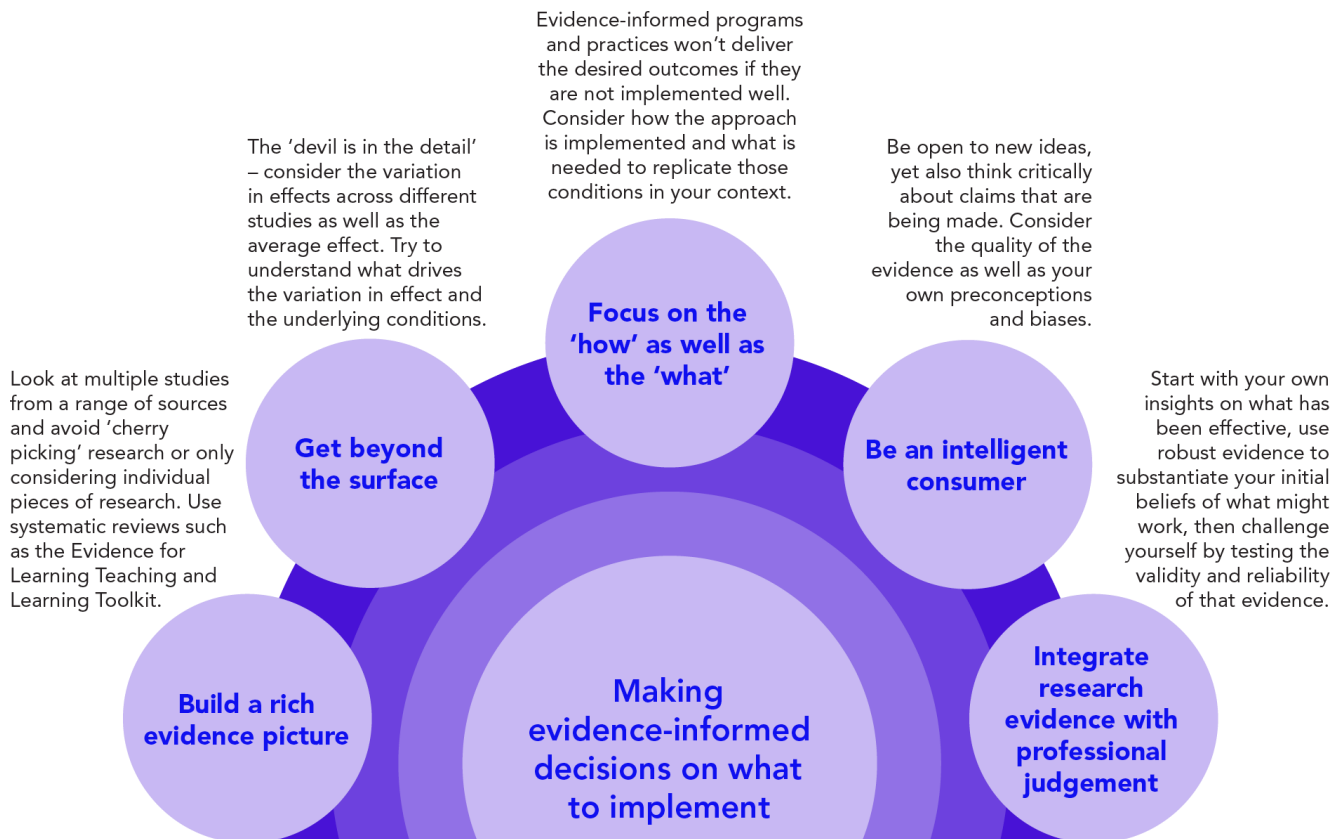


Diagram adapted from the EEF's 2019 version of [Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation](#).

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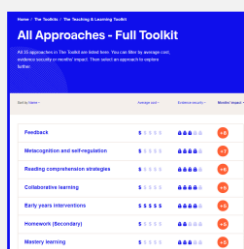
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## Reflection Question 3: How to understand and use the research to inform classroom practice?

Consider how to introduce school staff to the research, use strategies to unpack and understand the research, apply the research in lesson planning, and encourage teachers to carry out new or adjusted practices in the classroom. Evidence summaries and evidence-based guidance can assist with this process.

### Overview of Evidence for Learning resources and suggestions for using them

#### The Teaching and Learning Toolkit (the Toolkit)



#### Evidence for Learning resource

Provides an accessible overview of the international evidence on teaching for 5–16-year-olds. The Toolkit guides schools towards the ‘best bets’ for improving students’ attainment on the basis of research on what has (and also what hasn’t) worked in the past.

Each of the 30+ topics covered in the Toolkit briefly answer four key questions: How effective is it? How secure is the evidence? What are the costs? What should your school consider?

#### Suggestions for use

The Toolkit is a good place to start when considering different evidence-based practices. Use it to inform your decision-making by considering the relative strengths and weaknesses of different strategies. Think carefully about how a generic approach—for example, feedback—should be applied in specific subjects and contexts.

Suggestions for use:

- Consider a snapshot of various approaches to help select a focus area.
- Review a summary of the research related to a selected focus area.
- Explore nuance and variability in the approach and reflect on questions for consideration when deciding on what to implement.

#### Guidance Reports



Provides evidence on key school improvement priorities—such as improving social and emotional learning—and goes into greater detail than the Toolkit. They are based on rigorous reviews of the best available research evidence.

This evidence is translated into clear and actionable recommendations for schools. Guidance Reports are accompanied by resources to support implementation, such as self-assessment tools and illustrations of practice.

Guidance Reports are designed to support teachers and school leaders in developing their practice. The guidance is presented at different levels of detail. The summary of recommendations is a good place to start, but the more actionable insights often sit in the full text of the report. Try and see the recommendations as a coherent whole rather than cherry pick those that you like.

Suggestions for use:

- Pinpoint and articulate what should be occurring in order for the approach to have the best chance of success (once a focus area has been identified).
- Review progress on the approach in a discussion with staff using the supporting tools (e.g. audit and discussion tools).

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