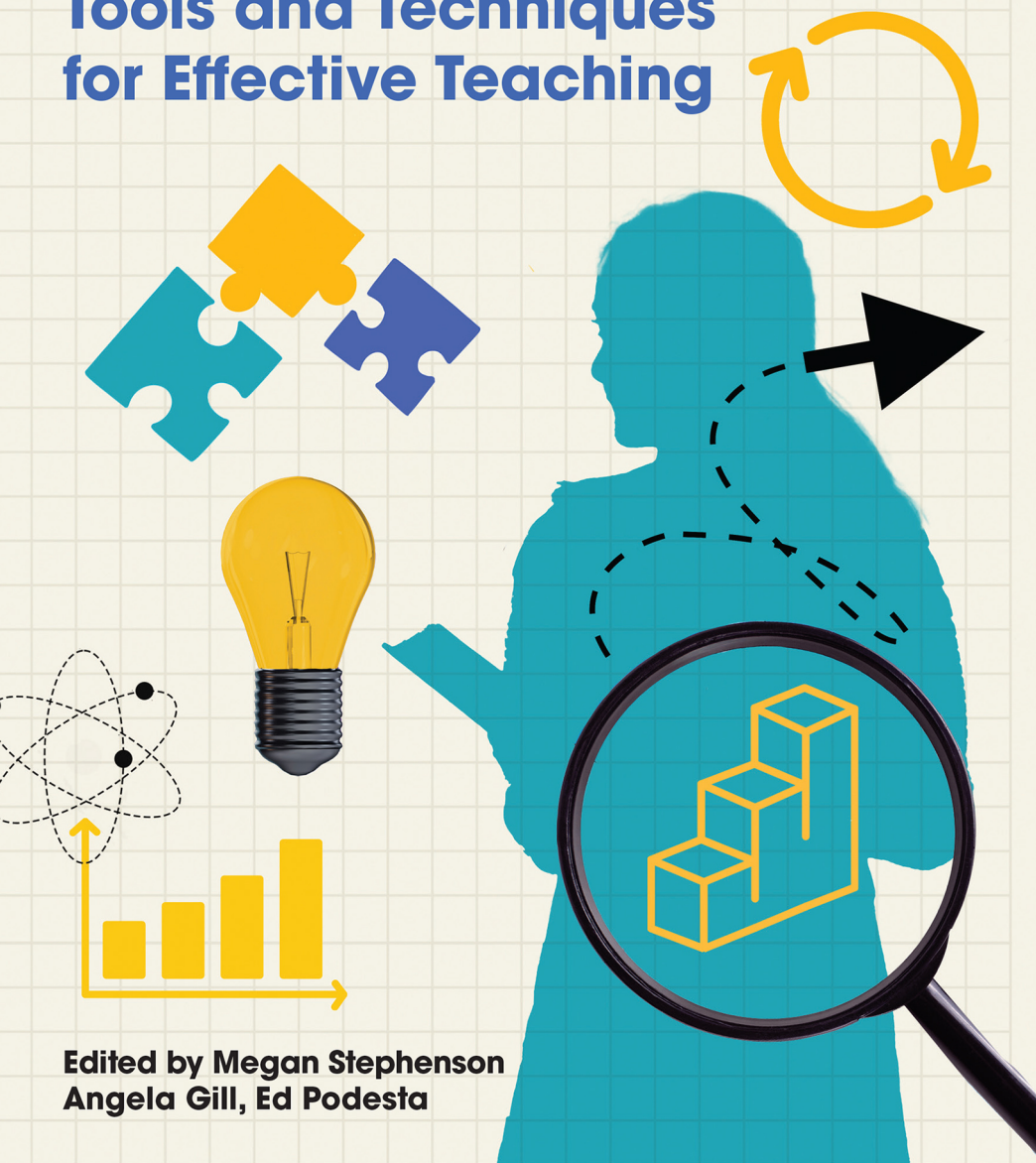


The Research-Informed Educator

Tools and Techniques
for Effective Teaching



Edited by Megan Stephenson
Angela Gill, Ed Podesta

THE RESEARCH-INFORMED EDUCATOR

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Tools and Techniques for
Effective Teaching

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BERA	The British Educational Research Association
BPS	British Psychological Society
BSA	British Sociological Association
CCE	Climate change education
CCF	Core Content Framework
CPD	Continual Professional Development
CoP	Communities of Practice
DfE	Department for Education
DoH	Department of Health
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ECF	Early Career Framework
ECT	Early Career Teacher
EBE	Evidence Based Education
EBM	Evidence Based Medicine
EEF	The Education Endowment Foundation
INSET	In-service Education and Training
IPCC	International Panel on Climate change
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
ITTECF	Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework
NFER	The National Foundation for Educational Research
NPQ	National Professional Qualification
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PLC	Professional Learning Communities

QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENDCo	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator
TA	Teacher Assistant
UNSGDs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

FOREWORD

In 2010, the incoming Conservative/Liberal Democrat Government made reform in education a major element of its political legacy. As part of this refocusing, it was tempting to see a move towards a greater use of research in education, and in particular classrooms, as a positive opportunity. However, the model offered by politicians and their supporters at that time veered towards a quasi-medical model, with the creation of the Education Endowment Foundation and a research landscape dominated by randomised controlled trials and teachers as consumers of research rather than creators. This systematic revolution of ‘medicalised’ research in education ignored the complexity of schools and classrooms and attempted to disenfranchise teachers from becoming more deeply involved in researching their own practice, exploring and understanding the complex, local contexts in which they worked.

This volume is a positive contribution in presenting how teachers and teacher educators use the research evidence base provided by the DfE as a benchmark but also goes beyond, challenging a simplistic view of classrooms and wider educational issues and how we can understand and explore them as part of the work of professionals in education. Schon (1983) distinguished between the ‘high ground’ of theory and the ‘swampy lowlands’ of practice and questioned the degree to which the uplands were of practical utility in the messy world of the practitioner. This volume provides an excellent roadmap for exploring how these two different worlds can be brought together to offer positive opportunities for practitioners to develop an understanding of and practice within research to support the critical development of their own professional work.

Professor Phil Wood
Nottingham Trent University

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INTRODUCTION

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We hope this book will enable teachers and teacher educators to re-address the pressing issue of the relationship between practice and research in teaching. The background to the book is the English government's decision to undertake a 'market review' of initial teacher education, and our increasing professional and therefore personal frustration with the narrow conceptions that the policy makers then brought to bear on the way that research, research evidence and practice might (and should) relate to each other. We have spent the last three years working in reaction to those policy decisions, and wanted instead to speak back – certainly to those policy makers, but also to colleagues and peers in teaching and teacher-education.

The biographies of our authors show they are grounded in many years of experience in the practice of classroom teaching, but also that they are at different points in their continuing professional journey and transition into higher education and teacher education (or training). Some were teaching in classrooms when the book was first discussed between us, some of us have been learning how to become teacher-educators for much longer! The book is therefore also a collection of different perspectives and approaches towards the contemporary issue of the relationship between practice and research in the field of education. This means that some of

the chapters discuss issues in much more concrete terms, focused on particular classroom problems and dilemmas experienced in schools. Others ground their writing in the professional education problems that their current work exposes them to. For some, this means the issues of the contemporary teacher-education or master's of education seminar room – how to help trainees and teachers understand the relationship between initial and ongoing professional development and research evidence. We hope that you agree with us that this diversity of approach is a strength of our collective work, because each chapter brings a new opportunity to engage with the interests of potential readers, whether you are just starting out in pre-service teacher training, taking steps to develop your practice or career, or whether you are looking for ways to move out from under some of the dominant approaches and mentalities that are critiqued in the book.

In Chapter 1, Angela Gill and Megan Stephenson start the book by outlining different relationships between research and the curriculum and practice of teacher education. After describing an idealised 'cause' and 'effect' relationship that policy assumes, they explain how that has impacted on regulatory requirements for teacher education in England, and outline how providers of teacher education have tried to go beyond official requirements to provide curricula, experiences and practices that better reflect the way a broader research perspective has characterised teachers' professional development.

Chapter 2 brings a sharp focus on the experiences of new teachers. Samantha Wilkes and Suzanne Tomlinson use research evidence to explore the ways in which preservice and novice teachers form teacher identities in the pressured environment of initial education, training placements, and first professional positions. The fact that teachers wear 'all the hats' is a springboard to considering how this research helps us understand these different responsibilities and stakeholders, as a context for identity formation. The chapter builds up to a helpful toolkit for new teachers navigating these multiple pressures and demands.

In Chapter 3, Charlotte Wright brings together the themes of the first chapters to help trainees and early career teachers recognise the ways that different types of research can help them address

concrete dilemmas they are experiencing in practice, including the way that research is used as a cover for imposing changes to practice. Charlotte's approach respects and seeks to develop teachers' autonomy by encouraging them to make evaluations of their practice and of research. This chapter also outlines concrete steps that practitioners can use and develop in their use of research, but always with an eye on the development of judgement and practitioner wisdom.

Experienced and novice teachers have consistently prioritised adaptive teaching and responding to learners' needs as an area where they feel research could contribute more to their practice. Chapter 4 takes the themes and issues of the book and brings them to bear on this concrete issue. Evan McCormick models the way that practitioners can use research literature to develop an overview of practices, and then focuses on how it can also help them develop specific aspects of their own work. This chapter places that development in the ongoing debates and dilemmas about purposes, impact and professional compromises that characterise educational practice, but also brings to the surface the different ways in which we can notice these dilemmas, and the impact of our practice. In this way, Evan's work encapsulates the call for 'systematic' evaluation of practice and the development of more 'intelligent action' that can result.

In Chapter 5, Aimee Quickfall argues for the importance of research ethics for teacher-researchers. Aimee explains the responsibilities for ethical practice of research in ways that align with the big themes of this book – teachers have to think about competing ends and means – the benefits and harms that their work might bring, and have to learn to notice these emerging as they undertake their work. Aimee's argument is that this focus brings development opportunities for researchers – that ethical research is always better research. The book as a whole also argues that this enhanced awareness brings benefits for practice. The relationship between ethics and practice is reinforced by Aimee's explanation of the key ethical issues through clear real-world examples and case studies.

Leigh Hoath and Heena Dave, in Chapter 6, use research to argue that the issue of sustainability is at the heart of pupils' experiences of and anxieties about the world. Their reading

suggests that, rather than treating sustainability as knowledge to be taught or CPD to be delivered, the issue of climate change requires teachers to engage with research. The chapter outlines how this can help teachers to understand the history of climate education, the barriers that inhibit its impact and ways to address the contextual issues of their practice. Crucially, they argue that teachers' responses should not be limited to developing more 'effective' pedagogy, but should include curricular agency that allows them to change, develop and innovate their curricula too.

In Chapter 7, Jo Hopton and Alison Griffiths ask us to think again about who researchers are, in an exciting argument for pupils' active participation as researchers. This argument, for bringing pupils into the circle of their own learning, for showing them powerful tools for making sense of their world, and for advocating change, is something we think will resonate with practitioners. The chapter is another example of the ways that a broader conception of research and evidence can make powerful contributions to practice and the lives of pupils (and teachers). It is also grounded in real-world examples and case studies in ways that should help teachers consider ways of integrating these ideas into their professional practice and development.

Ed Podesta develops many of the earlier themes of the book in Chapter 8 by exploring the meaning of 'research' in educational practice. This chapter tries to avoid dismissing any form of educational research, but suggests that recent policy focus on providing access to 'high quality' evidence that claims to tell teachers 'what works', has been a missed opportunity. Ed's argument goes beyond pointing out that policy makers have assumed that medicine and teaching are broadly comparable. He suggests that they have also made important mistakes in ignoring the lessons from 40 years of implementing a strategy of evidence-based practice in medicine. Ed alerts us to the urgent need to create an educational discipline which looks at classroom educational problems, with the aim of helping teachers undertake increasingly 'intelligent action', rather than expect them to copy techniques with fidelity.

Amanda Nuttall's Chapter 9 underlines the concerns about the way that the relationship between research and practice has been prescribed and the negative impact that may have on research

and practice. Her insight focuses on the role of ‘critical’ and ‘intellectual’ engagement with research, as opposed to the kind of ‘technical’ relationship envisaged by policy makers. Whilst this might seem like something that busy, or less experienced teachers might not have space and time to explore, Amanda’s argument is that this approach contributes to professional identity formation, satisfaction and engagement in ways that make teaching a more sustainable career.

This book is determinedly practical – it is designed to help new and more experienced teachers understand how they can interact with research in ways that address issues that are important to them. It uses case studies of real teachers’ development and reflection to bring these challenges, opportunities and developments into sharp relief, and once again underlines our collective commitment to avoid dictating practice, but instead to enable and empower professional development focused on teachers’ needs, dilemmas and experience. It is not a book that will dictate techniques. It does not tell teachers ‘what works’ – for reasons that we hope become clear (and compelling), but it is a call for action in a number of specific ways.

This book started as a way for us to confront our dissatisfaction and discomfort at the way that the relationship between research and practice has been prescribed (and in some ways proscribed) by policy-makers and dominant voices in related disciplines or interested sectors. But overall, we hope that we have collectively made a contribution which helps a more purposeful and thoughtful relationship between research evidence and practice emerge.

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HOW RESEARCH INFORMS THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CURRICULA FOR TRAINEES AND TEACHERS

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CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

In this chapter, you will:

- Consider how evidence informs and supports the content of the initial teacher training (ITT) and early career teacher (ECT) curricula.
- Explore what high-quality curricula that encourage research-informed approaches to teaching and learning look like.
- Learn about how research literature has been interpreted in policy and practice.
- Explore the benefits of developing research-led teaching and learning through communities of practice (CoPs) during continued professional development.

Keywords: Research informed practice; department for education (DfE); initial teacher education (ITE); initial teacher training (ITT); early career teacher (ECT); qualified teacher status (QTS); core content framework (CCF); early career framework (ECF); initial teacher training and early career framework (ITT/ECF); continual professional development (CPD)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the core statutory framework that provides the foundational evidence base for ITT and ECT Training programmes in England, the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF) (DfE, 2024). It considers the research and evidence base that informs the content of the ITT and ECT curricula. It explores what high-quality ITT and ECT curricula that encourage a wide, research-informed approach to teaching and learning look like.

The statements within the ITTECF (DfE, 2024) setting out the foundational concepts of how trainees and teachers learn and the pedagogical delivery will be explored. The chapter then takes a more in-depth review of additional research, through the work of Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002). Analysis and exemplification materials demonstrate how using wider research can promote deeper learning.

Finally, the chapter introduces a discussion on the benefits of developing research-led teaching and learning through communities of practice (CoPs) (Lave & Wenger, 1991). An example case study illuminates how impactful and effective continual professional development (CPD) can be for practising teachers when delivered by research-informed academic experts.

THE ITT AND ECT CURRICULA

Since 2016, there have been a number of documents published by the Department for Education (DfE) that identify what must be included by providers when delivering training in initial teacher