



**Hopwood-Stephens, I. (2019) How is dissemination for action achieved amongst in-service primary school teachers?, *BERA Annual Conference*, University of Manchester, UK, 9 - 11 September 2019.**

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# How is dissemination for action achieved among in-service primary teachers?

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# Presentation structure

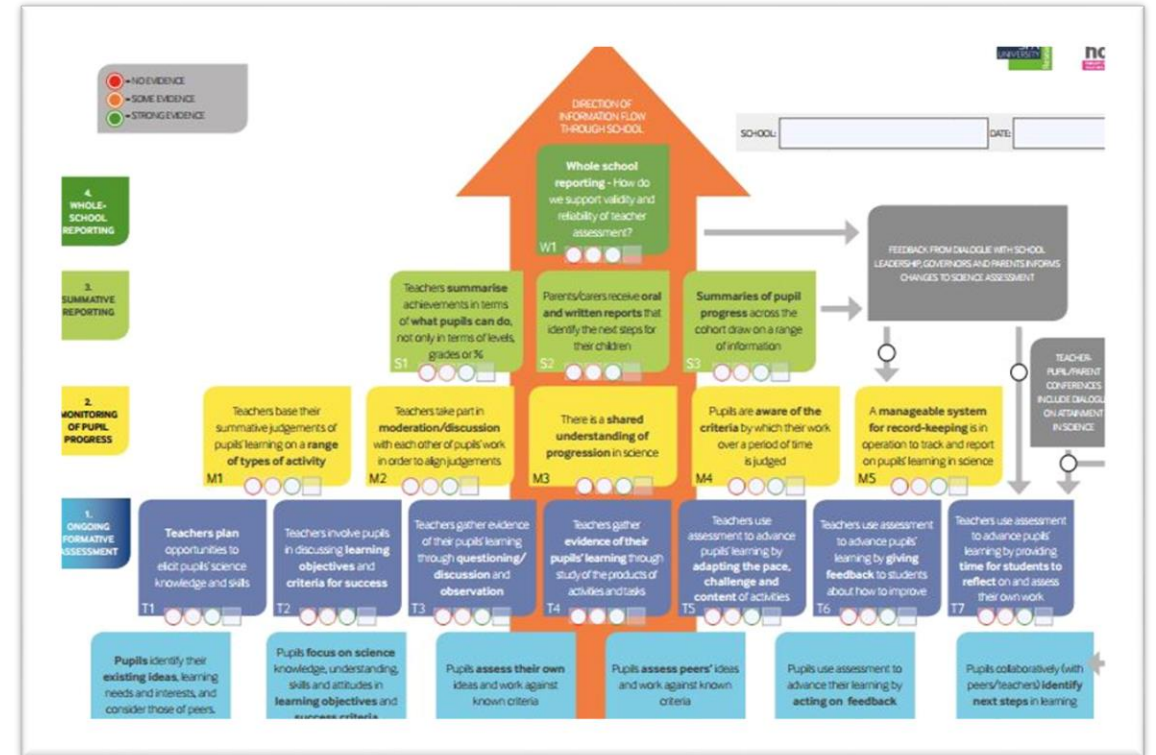
- Research context
- Theoretical framework
- Aims of the study
- Methods
- Findings
- Recommendations to research teams and school leaders
- References

# How is dissemination for action achieved?: the context

- In-service teachers are a hard audience to reach; high workloads and anxiety about curriculum coverage (Sellen, 2016); reduced budgets for professional development (Teacher Development Trust, 2017)
- Changes to assessment policy (DfE, 2014) from levelling to teacher judgment have left schools looking for new assessment frameworks (none were issued by the DfE)

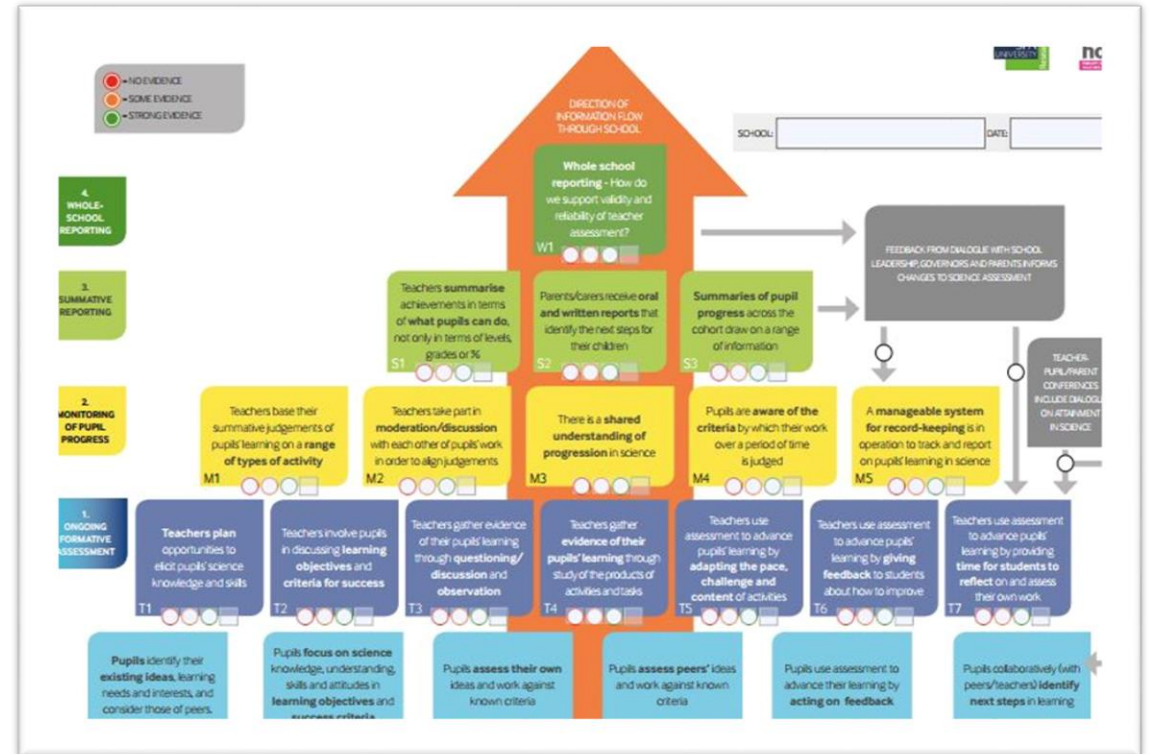
# How is dissemination for action achieved?: the TAPS pyramid (Earle et al., 2016)

- Lets teachers evaluate and improve their use of formative assessment strategies
- Also provided a 'post-levels' framework for using formative data towards a summative teacher judgment of progress
- Can be used at an individual and schoolwide level; research team intended it for schoolwide use



# How is dissemination for action achieved?: dissemination strategy

- Disseminated through the subject interest network (events such as conferences, seminars and workshops) and online as a download
- Attempts to use the TAPS pyramid to evaluate and improve assessment practice at a schoolwide level relied upon the target audience disseminating the resource within their own schools



# How is dissemination for action achieved?: theoretical framework(King, 2003)

Three levels of dissemination for educational research outputs:

- **Awareness:** fliers, posters, passive online availability. Achieved when target audience made aware of the resource.
- **Information:** conference speech, presentation, workshop. Achieved when more information has been provided.
- **Action:** Under-specified; but achievement results in changes to practice.
- Only **action** implies use, and therefore changes to practice, but it is beyond the control of the project team (Southwell et al., 2010).
- So: how is dissemination for action achieved?

# How is dissemination for action achieved?: research aims

- How is dissemination for action achieved?
- What might its mechanisms be?
- What workplace factors might enable or inhibit it?
- What recommendations to enable its success can be made to school leaders?



# Methods and conceptual frameworks: quantitative

- Mixed methods study, within an [Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods \(ESMM\)](#) design (Creswell, 2013)
- Online survey of 100 TAPS pyramid users; quantitative analyses using SPSS version 22
- Participants rated workplace characteristics (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2005)
- Participants rated any staff meetings held to support their use of the resource against criteria for effective meetings (Vescio, Ross and Adams, 2008)
- They also indicated whether they had had the opportunity to discuss the TAPS pyramid with a colleague or group of colleagues

Variable	<i>p</i> value
Meetings: had a clear purpose	.67
Meetings: link between assessment practice and learning clear	.06
Meetings: can reflect upon and discuss practice	.20
Meetings: <b>able to raise concerns and suggest ideas</b>	<b>.01</b>
Meetings: <b>opportunity to work collaboratively</b>	<b>.02</b>
Workplace: <b>collaborative working</b>	<b>.009</b>
Workplace: <b>ongoing professional development encouraged</b>	<b>.012</b>
Workplace: attend training courses	.38
Workplace: <b>work with colleagues across year-groups</b>	<b>.017</b>
Workplace: <b>innovation is encouraged</b>	<b>.021</b>
Other: <b>Discussion with a colleague</b>	<b>.001</b>
Other: <b>Discussion with a group of colleagues</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>

# How is dissemination for action achieved?: quantitative findings

- Discussion is key to reports of whole school changes to assessment practice, and therefore achieving dissemination for action
- Teachers are learning from each other; but not necessarily within the mandated, formal contact of the staff meeting
- Informal contacts (peer-to-peer discussion) could be an important part of this learning process (Aalbers et al., 2014)
- An expansive workplace (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2005) which enables frequent informal contacts through collaboration, innovation and ongoing professional development could be more important
- So: what is the **format and nature of the discussion** between teachers changing their practice?

# Methods and conceptual frameworks: qualitative

- Qualitative interviewing within case study design
- Thematic analysis using a dual approach of the two-step method of coding (Watts, 2014) within Braun and Clarke's (2006) criteria for a robust thematic analysis
- Levels of communication: linear, interactive and transactional (Harris and Nelson, 2008). Used by participants to characterise their social learning opportunities.
- Multiplex contacts – both formal and informal – found in organisations with effective transfer of innovative knowledge (Aalbers, Dolfsma and Koppius, 2014)

# How is dissemination for action achieved?: qualitative findings

- All participants valued **informal contacts** and felt that they assisted their professional learning
- Communication style during contacts deemed valuable to the teachers' learning was rated as **interactive or transactional**
- Transactional communication **underpinned the following activities** entailed in all teachers learning to change their assessment practice: negotiation of shared aims; questioning to clarify goals; reflection upon progress; sharing of good practice; using each other for support
- **Subject leads were highly competent advocates for their subject and teacher educators**, evaluating their colleagues' abilities before planning an intervention and persuading the SLT of its value
- Subject leads had access to a far **wider range of external and expert sources** of knowledge about pedagogy and assessment

# How is dissemination for action achieved in a primary school setting? Overall findings

- Accurate evaluation of diverse professional development needs among teaching staff
- Highly competent subject specialist who can advocate for their subject and develop / deliver an intervention to improve practice
- Opportunities for teachers to discuss practice, within a range of group sizes
- Multiplex contacts (informal and formal; multi-network) between colleagues
- Expansive workplaces, where collaboration, professional development and innovation are encouraged

# Recommendations for achieving dissemination for action: research teams

- Define your target audience carefully
- Create a resource which meets a specified or recognised need
- Your target audience might end up disseminating your resource internally; you may need to develop their ability to:
  - Articulate its potential value
  - Formatively assess the existing knowledge for your innovative ideas amongst their colleagues
  - Devise and manage an appropriate intervention

# Recommendations for achieving dissemination for action: school leaders

- Teachers learn to change their practice through ongoing and reflective discussion of practice; schedule opportunities for this
- Ongoing, reflective dialogue between teachers is more effective when the communication style is transactional: model this and find ways to enable this, e.g.: Littleton and Mercer's (2013) rules for Exploratory Talk
- Teachers' learning preferences vary: provide a range of learning formats, such as staff meetings, learning pairs, observing, mentoring
- Teachers' professional learning is shaped by the characteristics of the workplace; to what extent is collaborative working and innovative practice enabled or encouraged? Could this be improved?



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