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

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Presentation structure

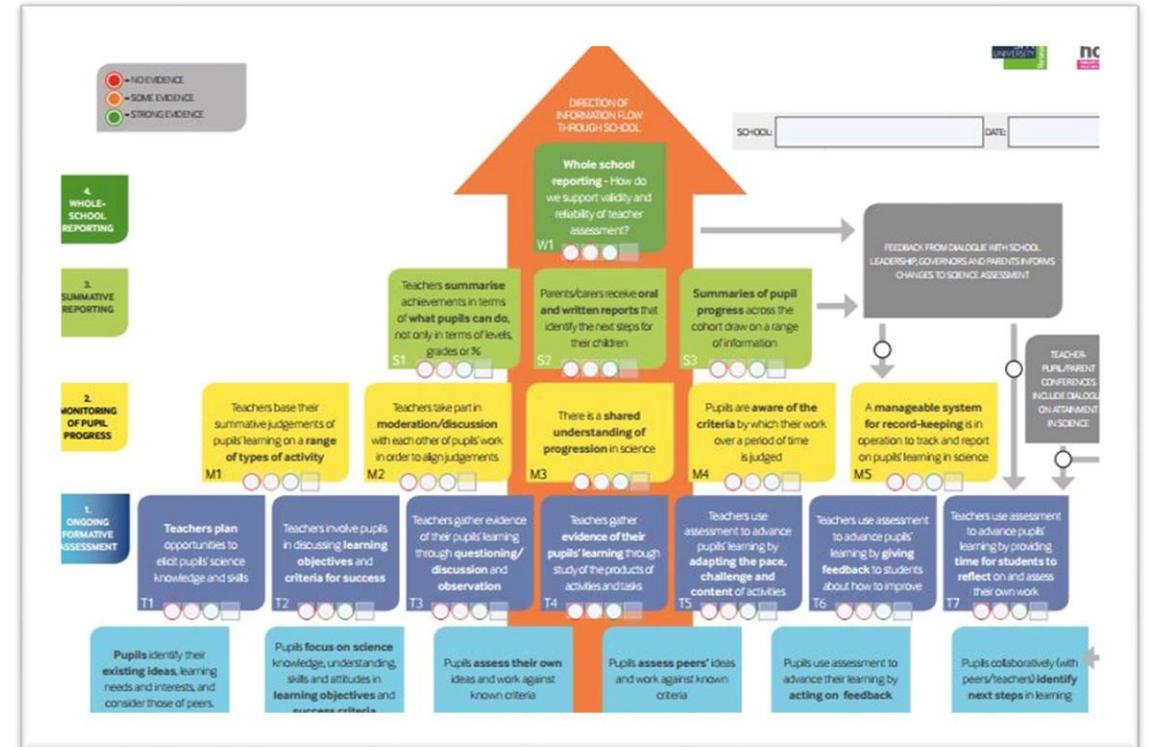
- Research context
- Theoretical framework
- Aims of the study
- Methods
- Findings
- Recommendations to research teams and school leaders
- References

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)

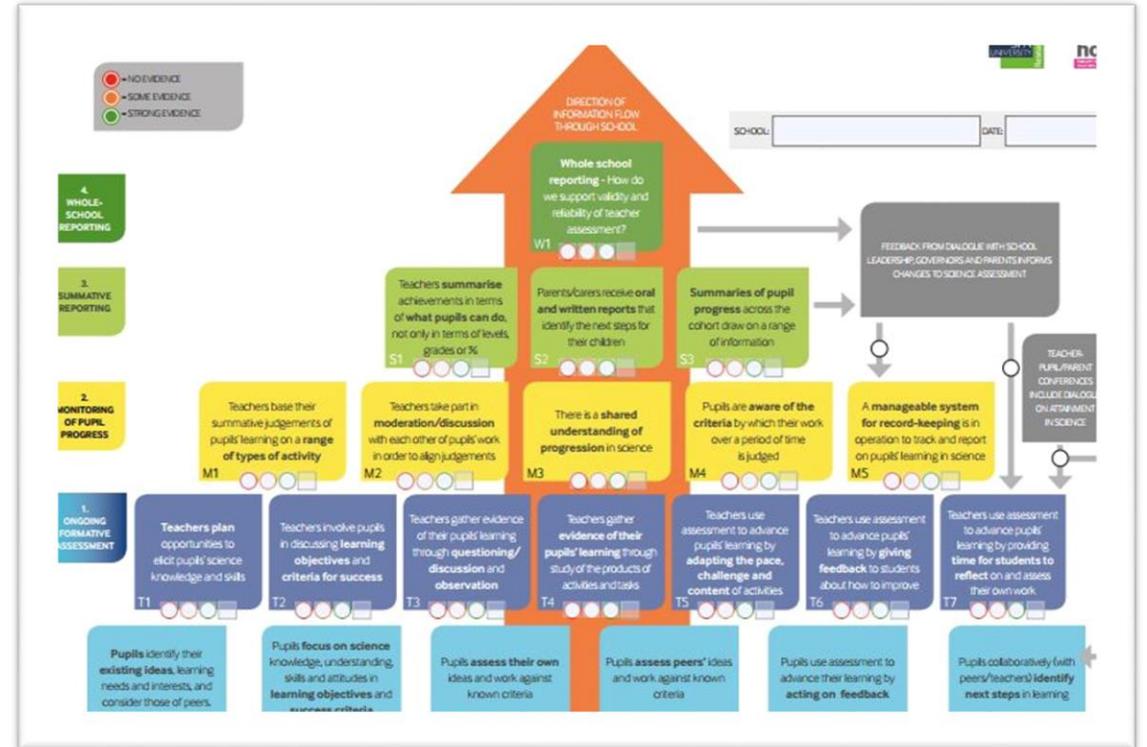
How is dissemination for action achieved?: the TAPS pyramid (Earle et al., 2016)

- 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: able to raise concerns and suggest ideas	.01
Meetings: opportunity to work collaboratively	.02
Workplace: collaborative working	.009
Workplace: ongoing professional development encouraged	.012
Workplace: attend training courses	.38
Workplace: work with colleagues across year-groups	.017
Workplace: innovation is encouraged	.021
Other: Discussion with a colleague	.001
Other: Discussion with a group of colleagues	<.001

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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