

Schools are the solution – not the problem: **Building a culture of action research for sustainable, meaningful and impactful improvement in education**


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Research and
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IMPACTFUL RESEARCH WITH TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

InterAction is a research unit in the
University of Sunderland's Centre for
Research in Education

- **ENGAGING IN EVIDENCE-INFORMED
PRACTICE**
- **ENCOURAGING PRACTITIONER
RESEARCH AND INQUIRY**



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ACTION RESEARCH

 Global
Spirit Ed



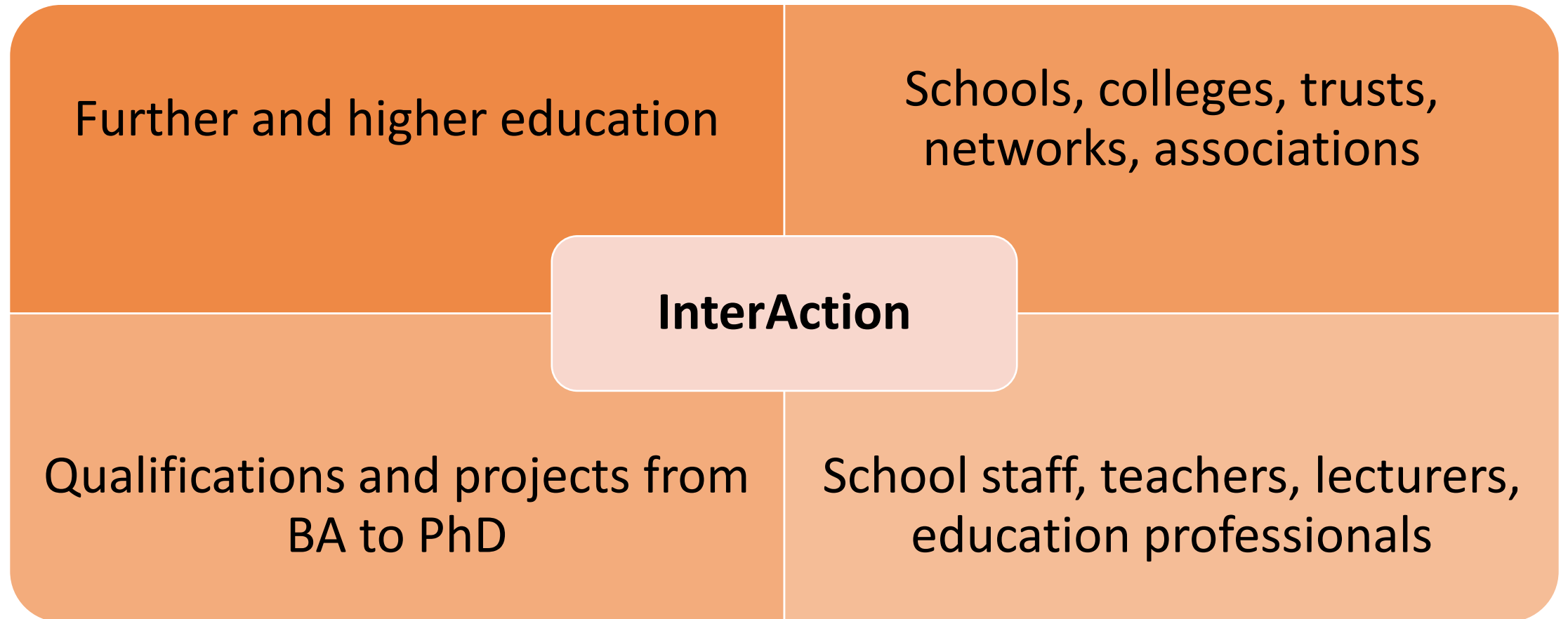
Who we are



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What we do



Engaging with research

- The school sector is geared towards developing a **research-rich** and **self-improving** educational system predicated on the capacity for teachers to engage with research
- Schools are part of the **solution**, not the **problem**
- **Local** insights and context are vital: situational verification

FIGURE 1:
EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRACTICE

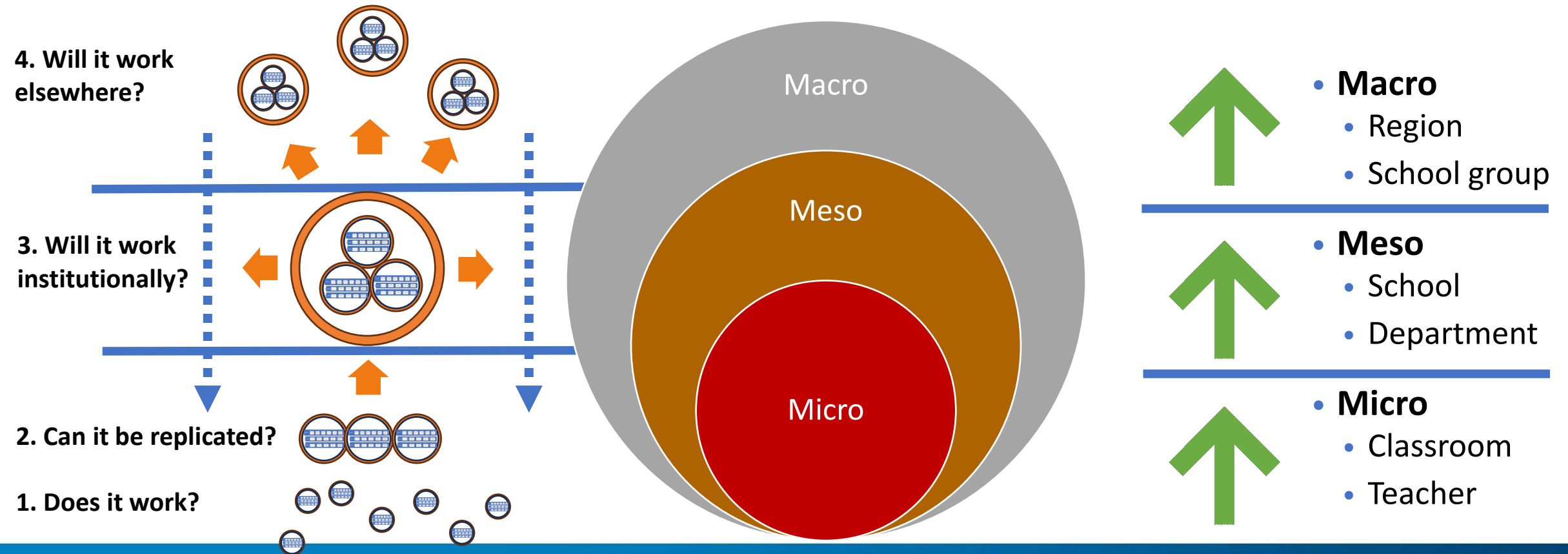


Figure adapted from Scutt (2018)



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How can practice-led research influence the sector?



No matter how great an idea is in principle,

“what really matters is how it manifests itself in the day-to-day work of people in schools”

(Sharples et al., 2019, p. 3)

What is Mini Mind?

The Mini Mind Programme is designed for children to understand how they think about themselves, life, and the world around them. The aim of the 12 hour programme is to empower children to take responsibility for their actions and choices, provide greater understanding of how their mind works and consider the relationships around them.

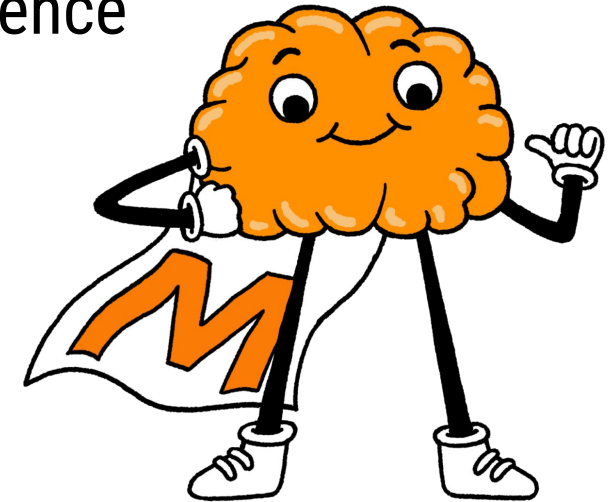


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The 'WHAT' – the Mini Mind Programme

- WHAT – Mini Mind **positive psychology** – helping pupils to understand how they think about themselves, life, and the world around them
- WHY – school has identified psychological wellbeing and resilience as a **school priority**, especially post-pandemic
- HOW – delivery and evaluation of **12 hours of learning**
- WHO – schools identified initial RQ, **trial group** and outcomes
- WHEN – over a term
- WHERE – training at **university**; then trial in schools



Research with you, not on you: “Nothing about us, without us”

- Action research approach – **research and action** at the same time – plan, act, observe, reflect
- We agreed what **success** would look like, who/what needed to be involved, how this would be captured and shared
- School ‘owned’ their own research, but supported shared research about participatory action research as a school-led **collaborative** approach and how the project worked in their context





Issue 22: Embedding a culture of
research in schools

September 2024



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OECD Schools+ Project

Inspiring Practices

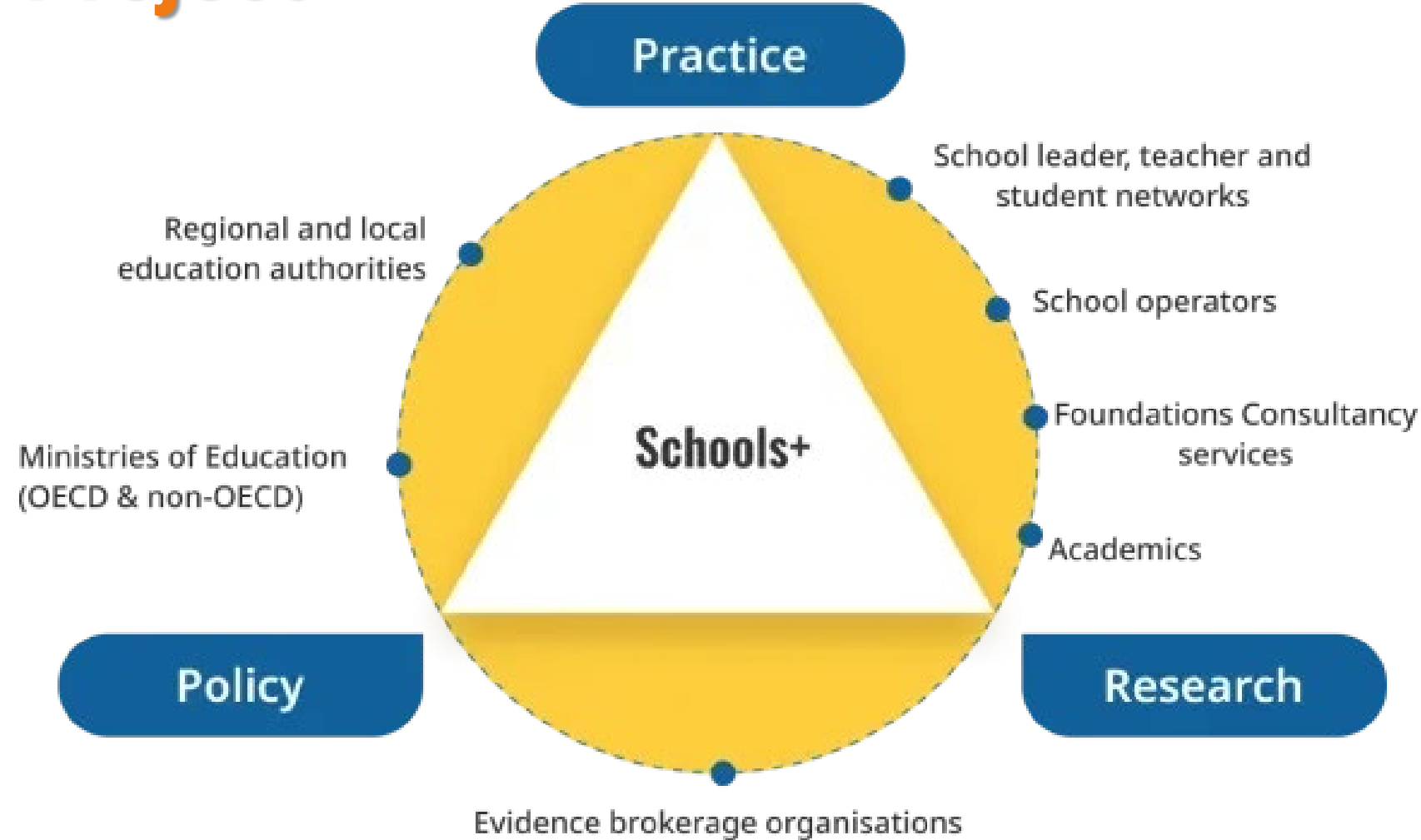
Reflecting on cognitive engagement pedagogical dimension in our school

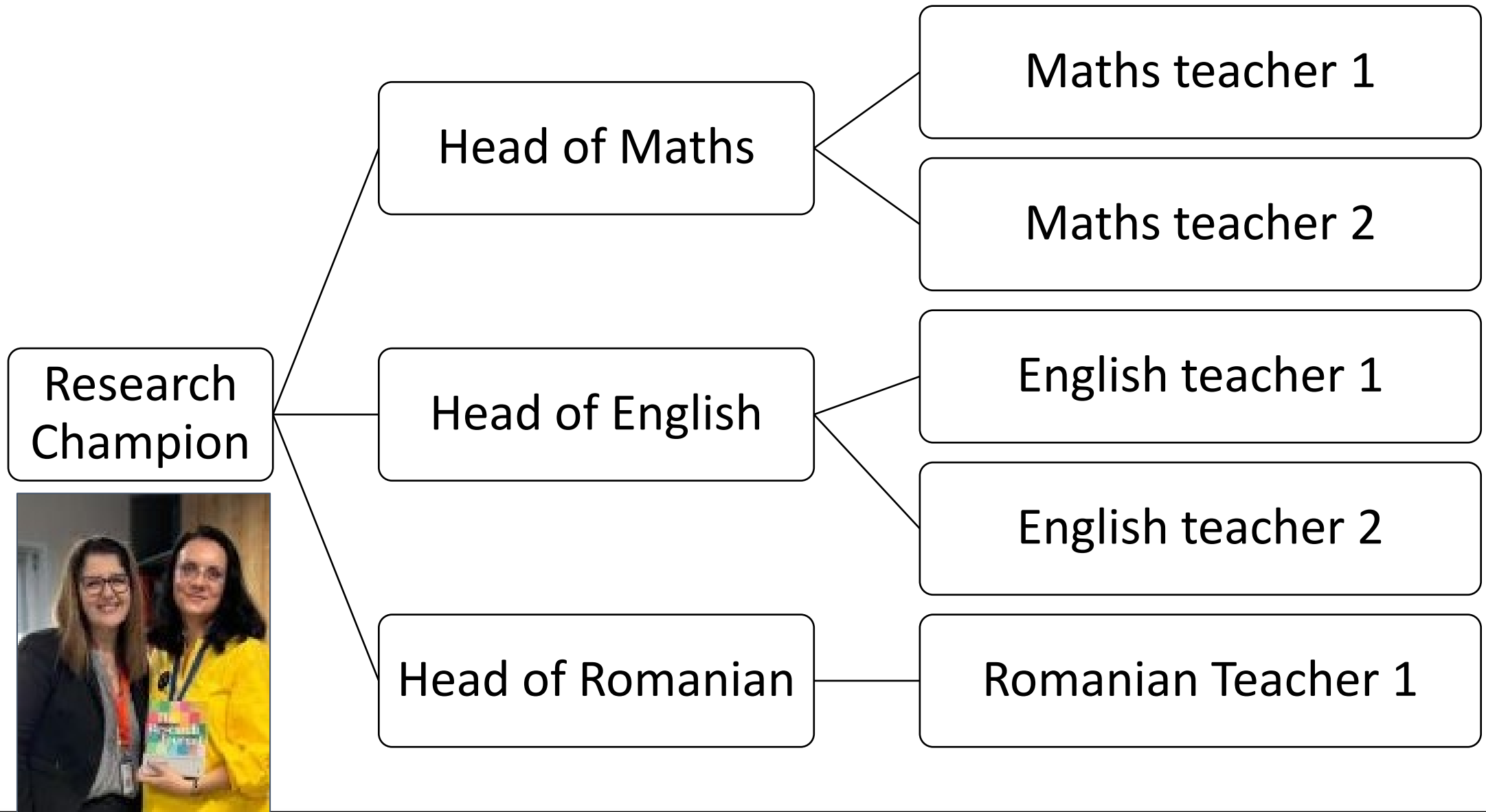
A case study on metacognition

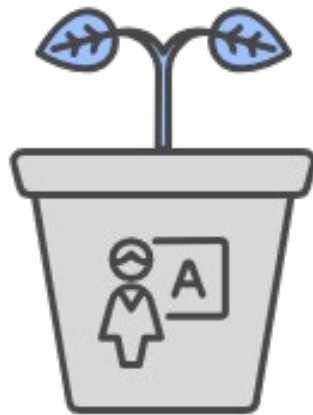
Dr. Mihaela Stancu



avenor college







Explicit Teaching



Guided Practice



Independent
Application



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Improvement priorities?

- Where do improvement priorities come from?
- Operational, cohort-specific, strategic, inspection
- DfE research areas of interest?
- Problems that bug or perplex you
- Existing project or process
- Speculative / pre-emptive / reacting to evaluation / inspection / strategic direction





Department
for Education

Areas of Research Interest

April 2025

Detailed Areas of DfE Research Interest

Mission Pillar Areas of Research Interest

Best start in life

Every child achieving and thriving

Attainment

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Attendance

Mental and physical health and wellbeing

School belonging, motivation, and engagement

Enrichment activities and childcare for school- aged children

Skills for opportunity and growth

Family security

Keeping children safe

Family support

Cross-cutting Areas of Research Interest

Workforce

Technology

Buildings and Environment



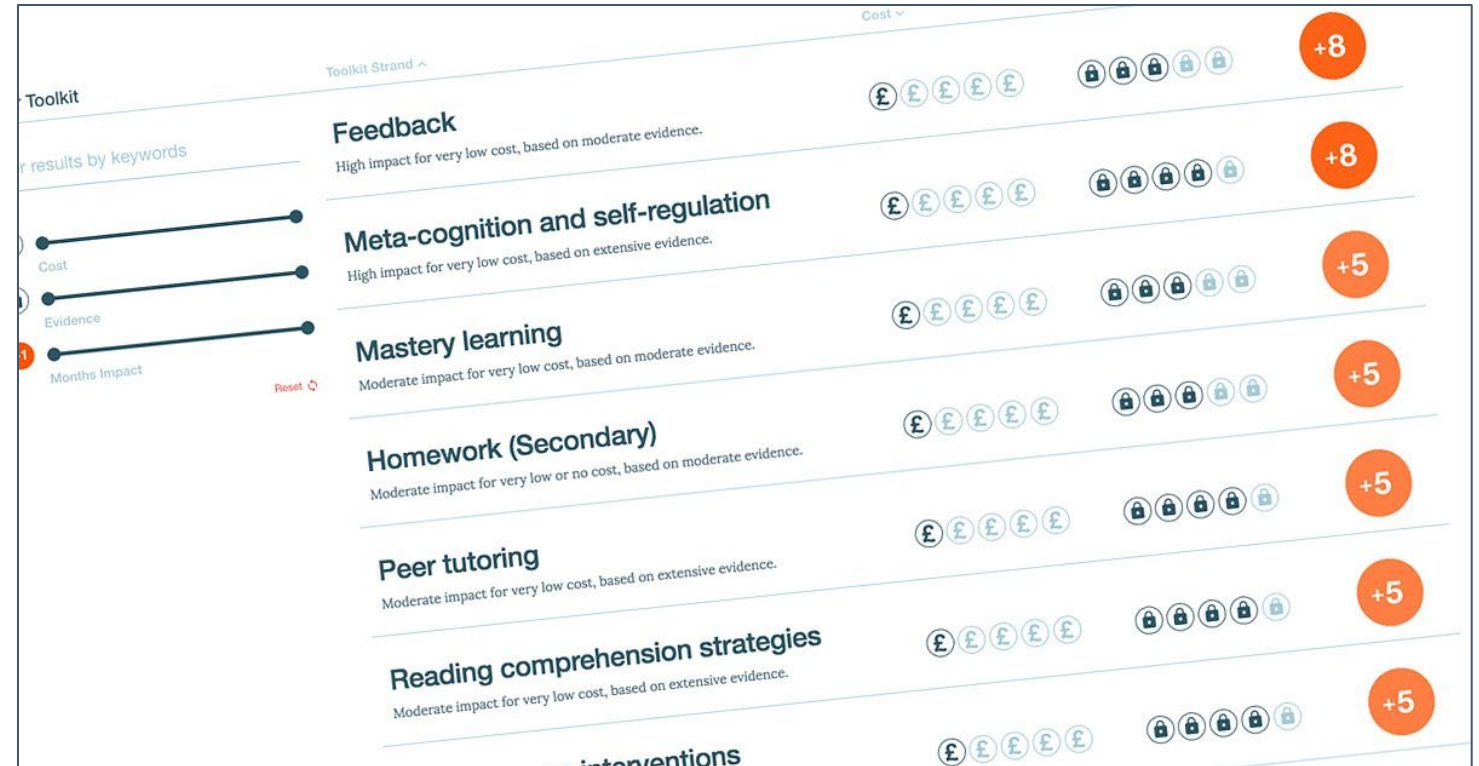
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Education
Endowment
Foundation

The EEF Toolkit: bridging gap between educational research and classroom practice



Implementation cost ?



Evidence strength ?



Impact (months) ?



YOUR research question challenge

What impact does

[what practice?]

delivered **[over how long?]**

have on **[what outcome?]**

for **[whom?]**

...and how will you know?

Speculative / pre-emptive / reacting to
evaluation / inspection / strategic direction?



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Agile Research Teams (ARTs)

- Create a manageable and sustainable continuum of credible **research activity** among practitioners.
- Establish, support and build researcher **relationships** across teams and disciplines, bringing together **diverse expertise**
- Valuing the **process** of relational opportunities within 'Research & Knowledge Exchange' (RKE) as much as the **product** of the process.



Duffy, K., Hidson, E., & Deacon, L. (2025, in press) Facilitating practice-led research culture in initial teacher training: the case of Agile Research Teams (ARTs)) . Exchanges: the Interdisciplinary Research Journal **EMAIL FOR PREPRINT**

Next steps: maintaining momentum

- Contact us and keep in touch!
- We're happy to share materials and handbooks (and pre-prints) when they are released
- We may be able to provide some free support with ARTs and research activity
- We are applying for funding to set up short course, facilitated versions of our ARTs
- <https://forms.office.com/e/0iAtrueRgn>
- interaction@sunderland.ac.uk



Research (Lab) Schools



John Baumber: Visiting Professor @UoS



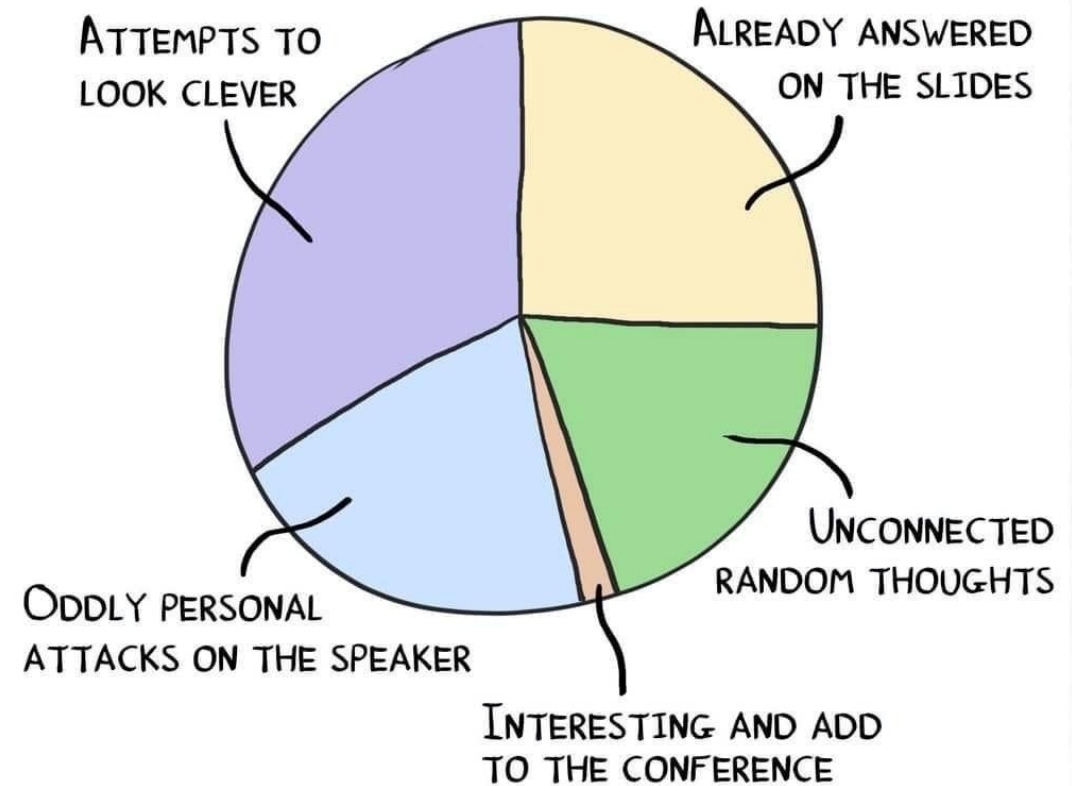
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Questions, comments, insights, suggestions?

(Thanks to Simon for sharing!)

QUESTIONS IN ACADEMIC CONFERENCES

A PIE CHART



@ERRANTSCIENCE



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