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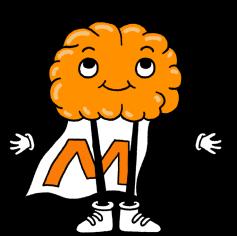
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## Participatory action research: Implementing positive psychology in north-east primary schools

Dr Elizabeth Hidson & Dr Kate Duffy

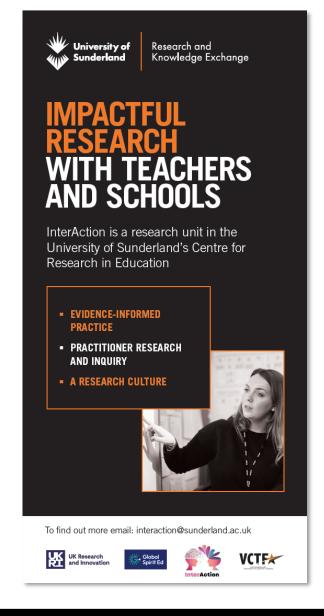
**CRE InterAction Unit, Faculty of Education & Society** 







Dr Kate Duffy is research lead for Initial Teacher Education (ITT). This involves supporting colleagues in the School of Education (SoE) with their research activity and convening the Centre for Research in education (CRE) Public Seminar series. The series showcases the wide range of research that is undertaken by the SoE at its different stages of development. Within this role I also work with external partners such as Global SpiritEd and support the Global Research Network which is committed to exploring ways to personalise education and increase student agency.



**Dr Elizabeth Hidson** is research lead for the International Initial Teacher Training (IITT) team in the School of Education. She is also a Vice-Chancellor's Research and Knowledge Exchange fellow. Her research focus is research collaboration with schools and teachers, with the goal of co-constructing evidence-informed solutions to teaching and learning priorities that schools and teachers want to focus on, and to facilitate reciprocal knowledge exchange between teachers, schools and the University.







### Schools engaging with research

- Research in schools is arguably mostly top-down, but...
- The sector is geared towards developing a research-rich and selfimproving 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

FIGURE 1: EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRACTICE





Figure adapted from Scutt (2018)



## Background to this PAR project







- Research England allocations to develop or increase the scale of research conducted in partnership with diverse communities.
- Participatory research involves the communities and users of research, better recognising their experience, needs and preferences, and supporting communities to implement findings.
- UoS existing partnerships with local schools for teacher training → general invitation to participate.
- Four\* local schools / 9 teachers trialling
   Mini Mind from EYFS to mixed Y3/4

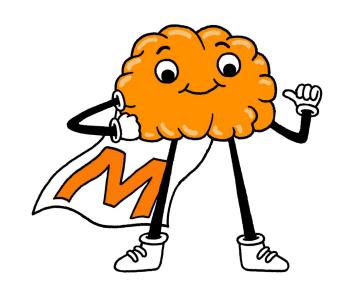
#### What is Mini Mind?

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.



#### 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 identify initial trial group
- WHEN must be completed by June 2024
- WHERE –training at university; trial in schools



#### **Progress so far**

- Full day of training on campus at UoS booklets, materials, planning
- Documents to structure thinking, planning and research questions for each school
- Individual school meetings to capture first cycle reflections, tweaks, insights
- Capturing and sharing progress so far with a view to reporting back to the university and to UKRI in July

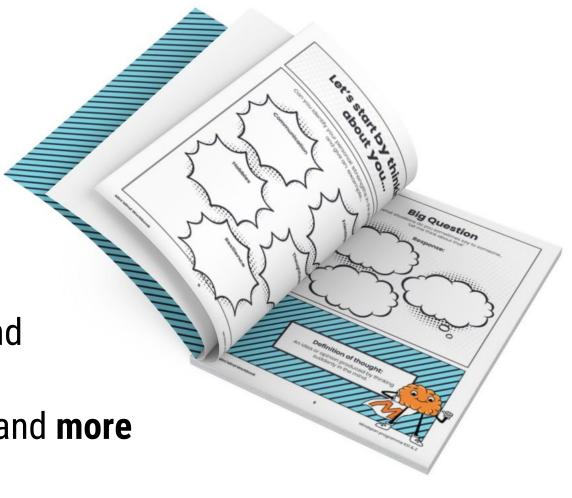
#### School example

- Three mixed Y3/4 classes on a carousel for 30 minutes per week
- Delivered by the same (trained) teacher
- Each class progressing at their own pace
- Want to complete the programme considering drop-down days
- Considering progression, curriculum design and integration with other provision e.g. NHS Y5 programme (mental health-related); PSHE

- Challenges with children thinking of examples to share; teacher scaffolding, teacher developing bespoke resources
- Keeping track of teacher insights and evaluation, annotating the booklet, research journal, developing a report for governors etc, prompts to guide the teachers
- Future review e.g. in a year's time;
- Becoming Mini Mind schools;
   champions; training other schools;

#### Impact on children

- Children taking pride in their booklets
- Now have tools to articulate
- Less dysregulation
- Better behaviour around school
- Notable in comments at break times and relationships between each other
- Much more reflective on their actions, and more quickly



#### **Teacher insights**

"I feel like we've got more questions than answers"

"There's **not enough research-driven changes in school**. It's difficult when you're in school to access that."

"But we have these conversations, yeah, like all the time in the corridor."

"I've actually really enjoyed teaching it. It's been lovely to teach. I think I learn more about myself every week that I teach it as well. It's been really good."

"Might not be something you can see on paper"

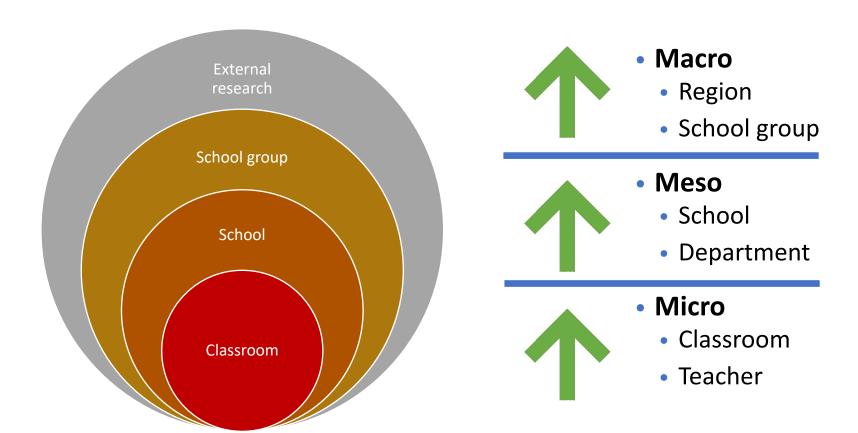
"How they'll retain it when it's not being delivered weekly will be a test of it"



#### **Next steps and outputs**

- School visits data collection\* (RAs, ethics etc)
- End of term review meeting all schools on campus
- Sharing progress: BERA practitioner research SIG newsletter, Chartered College Impact abstract, BERA practitioner research showcase, NTU Close to Practice conference
- Formal write ups for stakeholder, practitioner and academic audiences
- Seek further funding to continue/scale up project

#### Can school research influence the sector?

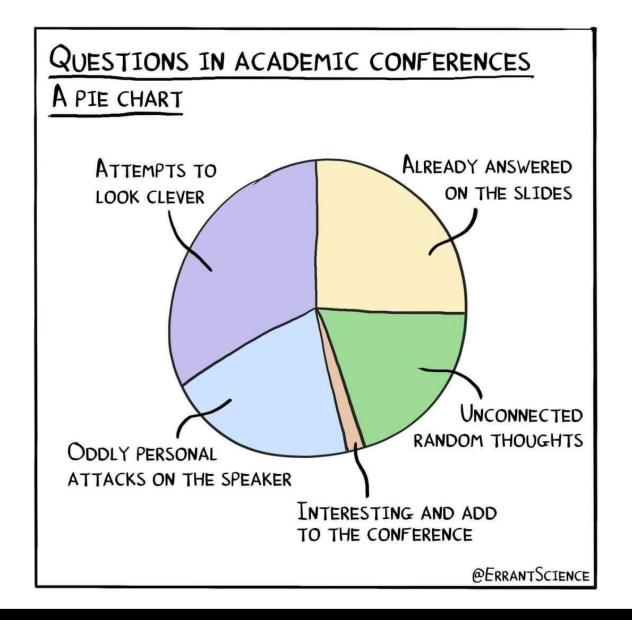


QUESTION: What is our (HE) role?

#### **Interdisciplinarity and Collaboration**

- Collaboration between university, external partners and local schools
- We (InterAction@UoS) acting as a catalyst for this project (and others)
- Bringing people, ideas and funding together
- Interdisciplinary the right people on the team to move projects forward

# Questions, comments, insights, suggestions?



#### References and further information

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#### https://wp.sunderland.ac.uk/interaction/ interaction@sunderland.ac.uk

