

Collaboration and co-design: Learning from literacy interventions co-created by researchers and teachers

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Background & Aims

There is growing interest in using collaborative practices in educational research. However, not all university-based research translates into teaching practice. Here we reflect upon two projects where teachers, researchers and other professionals have worked together to create literacy interventions; *Paws and Learn* and *The Love to Read Project*.

Aims: To discuss the merits and challenges associated with collaborative research practices and draw upon our experience of co-designing two educational (specifically literacy) interventions.

Collaboration and co-design

Benefits

- Common shared goal of improving educational outcomes for children
- Interventions are research informed
- Teachers provide insights into barriers to implementation and fidelity (i.e. will the intervention work in a classroom setting?)
- Opportunity for professional learning and development for teachers and researchers.

Challenges

- Teaching is demanding and teachers' time scarce
- Priorities for research may differ - researchers want a contribution to knowledge and teachers want solutions to practical problems
- Communication difficulties such as specific job-related terminology.

Paws and Learn

A collaborative reading to dogs project between one researcher and three teachers with three phases:

- 1) Researcher-led work: Research/policy brief and intervention parameters
- 2) Teacher recruitment: Recruitment of three primary school teachers
- 3) Intervention co-design: 4 hours of online meetings and 6 hours of offline communication

Love to Read

A collaborative project between 4 researchers, 8 educators, and 3 professionals from national education and literacy organisations with four phases:

- 1) Researcher-led work: Literature review to define research principles
- 2) Interviews with children
- 3) Teacher Recruitment
- 4) Intervention co-design: 12 hours of online meetings and 24 hours of offline communication

Discussion & Implications for Education

Reflecting on our experiences of co-design, we recommend sharing summaries of the research literature with teachers prior to co-design and aligning this with relevant curriculum and policy. We also advise creating a structure for collaborative working, which draws optimally upon the knowledge and experience of all members, seeking feedback on this structure during the co-design process. Allowing different forms of input (online and offline), clear communication channels and inclusive contexts for contribution is essential.

To access our website: go to <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/literacylab/> or scan the QR code



Academic paper

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