

## How can we use collaboration with colleagues to make the best use of research evidence?

### Evidence about independent learning

Student focused learning environments have been found to help students create new ideas and materials, talk about their methods for solving problems and take the initiative to interact with teachers and peers.

These learning environments include collaborative learning activities, peer teaching, and the use of classroom talk that requires multiple levels of thinking. Such approaches (see <http://www.tla.ac.uk/site/SiteAssets/Anthologies/06RE079%20Pupil%20participation%20anthology.pdf>) have promoted students' motivation and engagement with their work and teachers have spent less time than usual managing their students' behaviour.

### Evidence about teacher collaboration

Classroom enquiry is a key feature of effective professional development. When you use and respond to different sources of evidence (from formal research as well as your own enquiries), this helps to model teaching and learning practices that support active and independent learning among students. One approach is to create a partnership with a colleague through which you can collect and interpret evidence about how new approaches work out for both you and for your students.

### Your evidence and reflections

Try working through the following activity with a colleague.

A key and manageable first step in increasing independence is increasing student choice. What opportunities for classroom decision-making and choice of resources do you share with your students?

You might like to think back to one or two recent lessons and use the table below to reflect on decision-making in your classroom. Tick the boxes on the scale for each pair of statements which best describes the lessons:

Lesson date:

Lesson objectives:

Students were responsible for choosing/deciding:					The teacher was responsible for choosing/deciding:
the learning activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	the learning activities
the materials used	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	the materials used
the seating arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	the seating arrangements
their pairs/groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	the pairs/groups
checking the work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	checking the work

the success criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	the success criteria
the issues they wanted to explain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	the issues they wanted to explain
what questions and problems were explored	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	what questions and problems were explored
what had been learned and how well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	what had been learned and how well
the follow-up work/homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	the follow-up work/homework

You could also ask the students to fill in the table and see how closely your perceptions match their perceptions of the lessons.

Are there any patterns in your data? How often did you offer your students responsibility for the task? How did your students respond? Can you identify opportunities where you could have given your students more responsibility? Which areas described in the table would you like to focus on in increasing their independence?

After you have worked through this initial exploration, take time to reflect with your colleague on what difference it made working with someone else. For example, did having two people widen the pool of examples you could learn from? Did working with someone help you clarify your ideas because you had to explain your thinking and assumptions? What else made a difference?

### Putting the evidence to work

Once you have some evidence and reflections on how using research collaboratively has helped you move forwards you might want to:

- tackle new research tasters with other colleagues;
- design your own mini enquiry to test out strategies to enable your students to make more decisions about their learning; and
- share your findings with colleagues, inviting them to try the same thing to build a bigger pool of evidence about the extent to which students take an active role in making decisions about their learning.

### Find out more

You may want to read *Practitioner engagement in and/or with research and its impact on learners* (available at <http://www.curee.co.uk/resources/publications/purr-summaries>). This highlights the importance of working with colleagues when using research and evidence.

For further tasters visit <http://www.curee.co.uk/our-products-and-services/research-tasters> or contact Rebecca Raybould ([rebecca.raybould@curee.co.uk](mailto:rebecca.raybould@curee.co.uk)) for tasters focused around your class or school's/college's needs.

To find out more about increasing student's active participation and independence in learning, you may wish to read: CUREE (2009) Pupil Participation Anthology: *GTC research for teachers summary*.

Available at:

<http://www.tla.ac.uk/site/SiteAssets/Anthologies/06RE079%20Pupil%20participation%20anthology.pdf>