

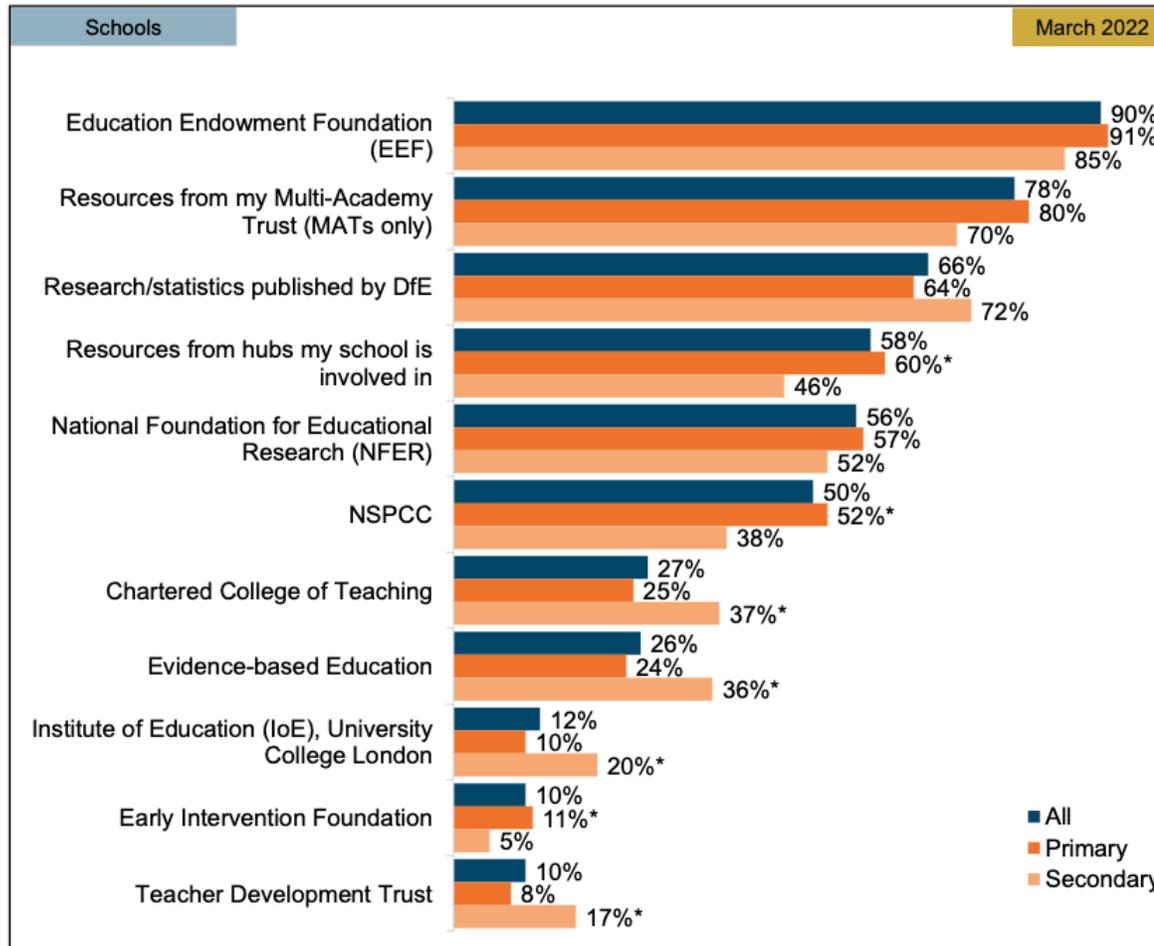


Implementation in Schools: Uncommon Common Sense

Prof. Jonathan Sharples, Education Endowment Foundation

Culture change in terms of evidence engagement

Figure 18. External evidence sources used by schools in the current academic year to support decision making and delivery (Prompted)



DfE School & College Panel survey, 2022

“Our leaders are more evidence-rich than a decade ago. But leaders face a clear choice about the ways in which they use it.

Ironically, as the language of evidence proliferates, there is a risk that it loses its impact. Surface-level compliance is the biggest threat to any change in education.”

Prof. Becky Francis

Chief Executive

Education Endowment Foundation



Making, and acting on, evidence-informed decisions



- Identifying priorities;
- Selecting the right approaches to implement;
- Judging fit and feasibility;
- Writing implementation plans;
- Designing professional development;
- Monitoring implementation;
- Developing an improvement culture etc.



What have I learnt?

Implementation...

- is lots of small things done well – ‘uncommon common sense’
- is rare – vision > shared vision > shared practice
- is often about making implicit actions and processes explicit
- “isn’t sexy!” (Sir Kevan Collins)

“It doesn’t matter how great an educational idea or intervention is in principle; what really matters is how it manifests itself in the day-to-day work of people in schools – the practitioner IS the intervention!”

FOUNDATIONS FOR GOOD IMPLEMENTATION



1 Treat implementation as a process, not an event; plan and execute it in stages.

- Allow enough time for effective implementation, particularly in the preparation stage; prioritise appropriately.



2 Create a leadership environment and school climate that is conducive to good implementation.

- Set the stage for implementation through school policies, routines, and practices.
- Identify and cultivate leaders of implementation throughout the school.
- Build leadership capacity through implementation teams.



EXPLORE

3 Define the problem you want to solve and identify appropriate programmes or practices to implement.

- Specify a tight area of focus for improvement that is amenable to change.
- Determine a programme of activity based on existing evidence of what has – and hasn't – worked before.
- Examine the fit and feasibility of possible interventions to the school context.
- Make an adoption decision.



PREPARE

4 Create a clear implementation plan, judge the readiness of the school to deliver that plan, then prepare staff and resources.

- Develop a clear, logical, and well-specified implementation plan:
 - Specify the active ingredients of the intervention clearly: know where to be 'tight' and where to be 'loose'.
 - Develop a targeted, yet multi-stranded, package of implementation strategies.
 - Define clear implementation outcomes and monitor them using robust and pragmatic measures.
- Thoroughly assess the degree to which the school is ready to implement the innovation.
- Once ready to implement an intervention, practically prepare for its use:
 - Create a shared understanding of the implementation process and provide appropriate support and incentives.
 - Introduce new skills, knowledge, and strategies with explicit up-front training.
 - Prepare the implementation infrastructure.



DELIVER

5 Support staff, monitor progress, solve problems, and adapt strategies as the approach is used for the first time.

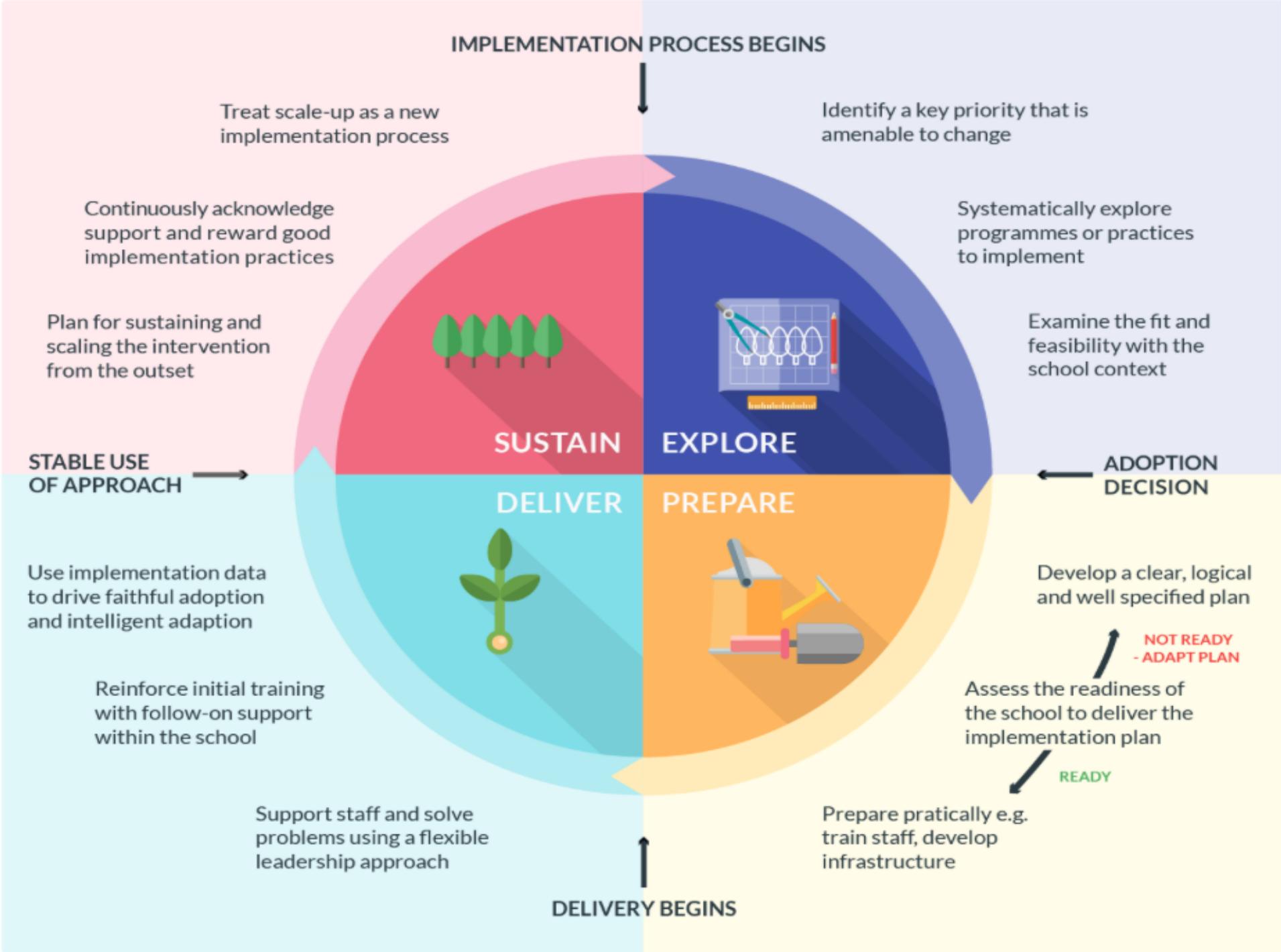
- Adopt a flexible and motivating leadership approach during the initial attempts at implementation.
- Reinforce initial training with follow-on coaching within the school.
- Use highly skilled coaches.
- Complement expert coaching and mentoring with structured peer-to-peer collaboration.
- Use implementation data to actively tailor and improve the approach.
- Make thoughtful adaptations only when the active ingredients are securely understood and implemented.



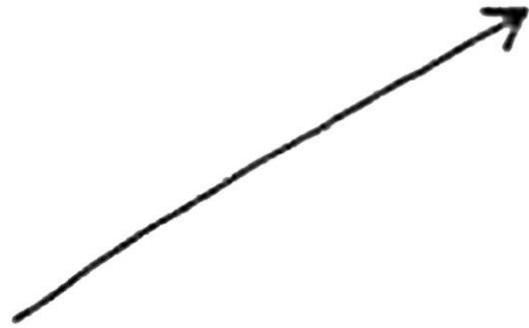
SUSTAIN

6 Plan for sustaining and scaling an intervention from the outset and continuously acknowledge and nurture its use.

- Plan for sustaining and scaling an innovation from the outset.
- Treat scale-up as a new implementation process.
- Ensure the implementation data remains fit for purpose.
- Continuously acknowledge, support, and reward good implementation practices.

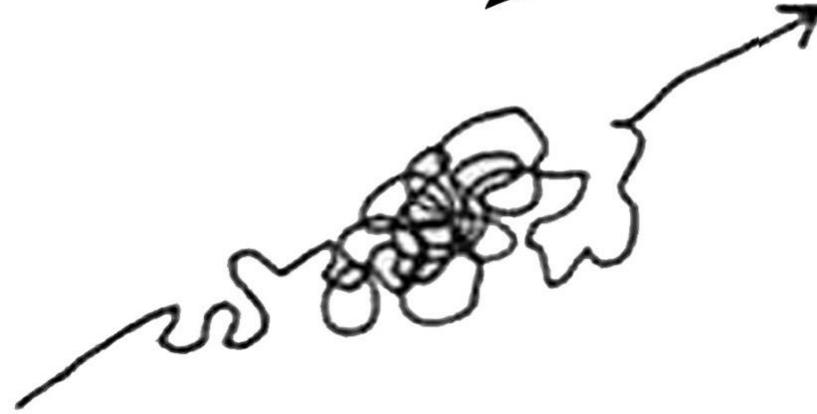
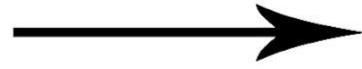


Success



what people think
it looks like

Success



what it really
looks like

Foundations for good implementation

1 Treat implementation as a process, not an event; plan and execute it in stages.



- Treat implementation as a **process not an event**.
- **Allow enough time, particularly to Explore and Prepare**; prioritise appropriately
- **Do fewer things better** – we tend to take on too many projects (and underestimate requirements of implementation)
- Decide what you can **stop** doing to make room – de-implementation

Foundations for good implementation

2 Create a leadership environment and school climate that is conducive to good implementation.

“If not present already, an ‘implementation friendly’ climate cannot be created overnight.”

a) *Dedicated* leadership

- Establish a **clear vision for implementation** and standards of excellence
- Model best practice – **‘walk the walk’**
- Create an environment of **openness, trust, safe experimentation, collective efficacy**

b) *Distributed* leadership

- Identify and cultivate **leaders of implementation across the school**
- Build capacity through **implementation teams**

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast”

Building trust

“Developing positive school culture is a practical endeavour. Trust isn’t magically created in a vacuum then applied — trusted relationships are developed as a result of quality daily interactions (communicating clearly, delivering on plans, making good decisions that staff can see, and so on). It is about “walking the walk not just talking the talk”.

Prof. Viviane Robinson



IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS BEGINS

Treat scale-up as a new implementation process

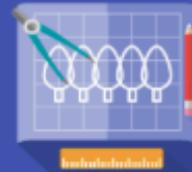
Identify a key priority that is amenable to change

Continuously acknowledge support and reward good implementation practices

Systematically explore programmes or practices to implement

Plan for sustaining and scaling the intervention from the outset

Examine the fit and feasibility with the school context



SUSTAIN

EXPLORE

STABLE USE OF APPROACH

ADOPTION DECISION

Use implementation data to drive faithful adoption and intelligent adaption



DELIVER

PREPARE

Develop a clear, logical and well specified plan

Reinforce initial training with follow-on support within the school

Assess the readiness of the school to deliver the implementation plan

NOT READY - ADAPT PLAN

READY

Support staff and solve problems using a flexible leadership approach

Prepare practically e.g. train staff, develop infrastructure

DELIVERY BEGINS

EXPLORE

Define the problem you want to solve and identify appropriate programmes or practices to implement



- 'Devil is in the detail' – consider the variation in effects and what drives that variation
- Identify the *active ingredients* for successful implementation



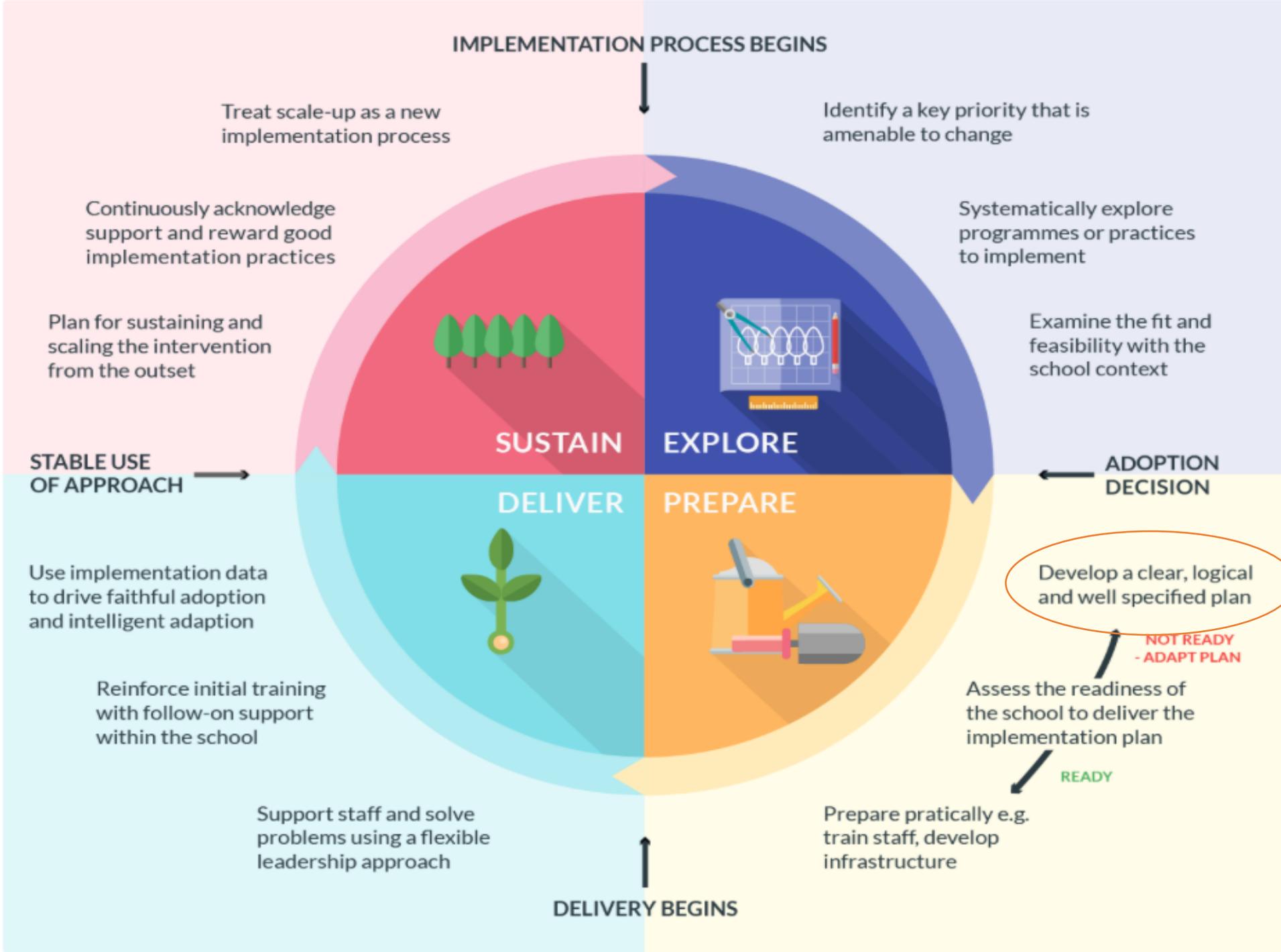
Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning

Seven recommendations for teaching self-regulated learning & metacognition



What is metacognition?

- 'Learning to learn'?
- 'Thinking about thinking'?
- 'Knowing about knowing'?
- 'Being aware of one's awareness'?



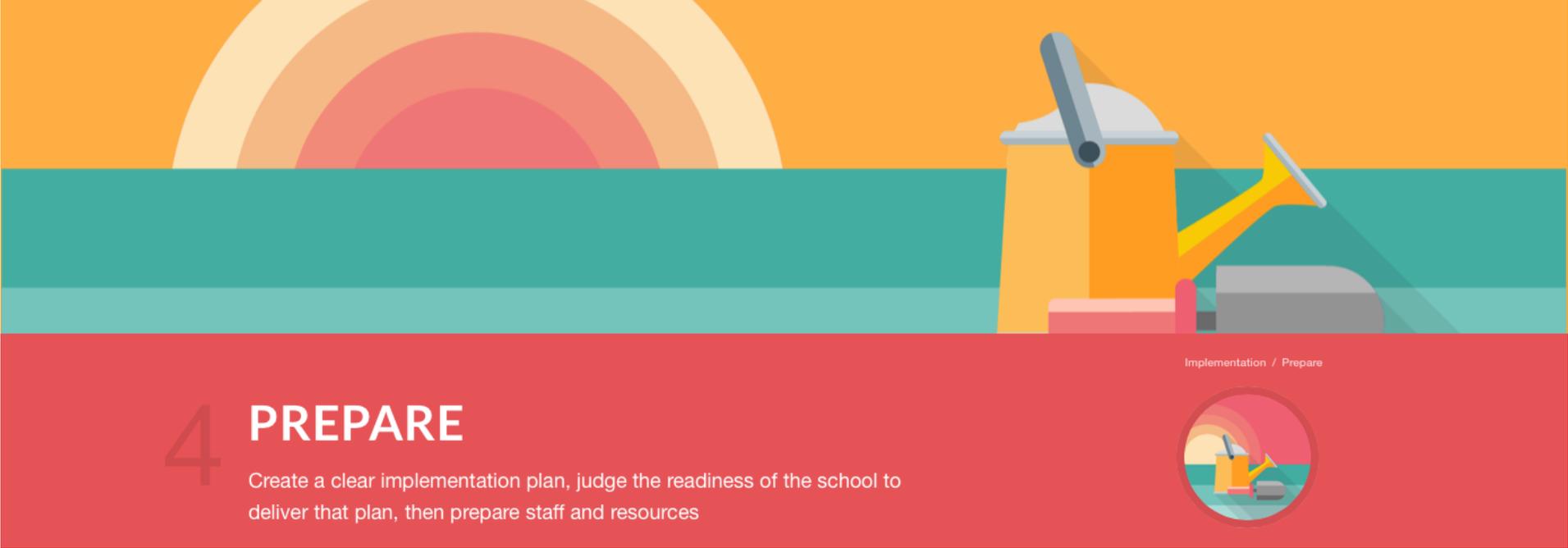
Preparation, preparation, preparation...

*“The **amount of preparation** required for introducing the interventions is a common **issue that occurs across all programmes.**”*

*Where there are problems of implementation these often appear to be linked to **a lack of shared understanding among senior leaders and teachers of what is involved.**”*

Dr Jake Anders, EEF Projects Review





Describe:

- **why** we are doing this – a definition of the problem
- **what** the intervention entails – the active ingredients/core components
- **how** it will be implemented – the implementation activities
- a means of knowing **how well** implementation is going – the implementation outcomes
- and the final intended outcomes (**and so?**) – the overall objectives

The process is more important than the output

Problem (why?)

What needs to change e.g. teacher behaviour, student behaviour, attainment?

Why?
Problem/priority

Intervention Description (what?)

What are the essential 'active ingredients' of the intervention?

What activities will you see when it is implemented?

What?
Active Ingredients

Implementation Activities (how?)

How will it be done?
What blend of activities are required?

How?
Implementation activities

Implementation Outcomes (how well?)

How will you know that it is working?

Do you use...
Should you...

Measure...

Look for...

How well?
Implementation outcomes

Final Outcomes (and so?)

How will pupils, teachers and the school benefit?

And so?
Final outcomes

5 INTRODUCING KNOWLEDGE ORGANISERS

Durrington High School - Worthing

Problem (why?)	Intervention Description (what?)	Implementation Activities (how?)	Implementation Outcomes (how well?)	Final Outcomes (and so?)
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Active Ingredients – defining the ‘what’



<p>Problem (why?)</p> <p>What needs to change e.g. teacher behaviour, student behaviour, attainment?</p>	<p>Intervention Description (what?)</p> <p>What are the essential 'active ingredients' of the intervention?</p> <p>What activities and behaviours will you see when it is working?</p>
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‘ACTIVE INGREDIENTS’ –
the essential principles and practices for an approach, which need to be adopted closely to get the intended outcomes

i.e. What activities & behaviours will you see when it is working?



**PUTTING EVIDENCE TO WORK:
A SCHOOL'S GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTATION**
Implementation theme - Active ingredients

 Education
Endowment
Foundation

In 2018, the EEF published *Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation*—a guide for schools on how to implement their plans and interventions with the best chance of success. The guide is designed around a stage-by-stage approach to implementation.

This supplementary set of summaries draws together recommendations relating to specific themes across those stages—this one focuses on active ingredients and fidelity. It provides further information on what we mean by 'active ingredients', how to define them, and ways in which they can be used to support implementation. We discuss the importance of fidelity and how to balance fidelity with thoughtful adaptation.

Key points

- What do we mean by 'active ingredients'?
- Real-world examples of active ingredients—outside education
- Real-world examples of active ingredients—in education
- How do we define the active ingredients for our approach?
- Use your active ingredients to anchor the implementation process
- Ensure programmes and practices are delivered as intended, i.e. with fidelity
- Make thoughtful adaptations only when the active ingredients are securely understood and implemented.



Without these, how can we communicate or monitor the changes?

5 INTRODUCING KNOWLEDGE ORGA

Durrington High School - Worthing



Problem (why?)

Teachers

- New specifications require decisions about what knowledge to teach in restricted lesson time.
- There is a lack of cohesion and accumulation between knowledge taught at KS3 and KS4.
- There can be a lack of consistency between lessons in the same subjects regarding what knowledge is being taught.
- There can be a lack of challenge in lessons for all or some students.
- Curriculum Teaching Assessment policy has an expectation of explicit vocabulary instruction (of tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary) in all subjects.

Students

- Students experience different lesson content dependent on teacher.
- Many students are using ineffective revision strategies.
- Students do not have a framework or schema for organising new information.
- There is a lack of automaticity of knowledge making higher-order learning less likely.
- There is a gap in tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary knowledge between different groups of students (disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged).

Attainment

Intervention Description (what?)

Active Ingredient 1

Curriculum Planning:

- A knowledge organiser, based on knowledge that will build cultural capital as well as meet specification demands, to be in place for every unit of work in Year 9 and Year 10 for all subjects by September 2018.

Active Ingredient 2

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction:

- All knowledge organisers to include tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary. This vocabulary is taught explicitly using strategies such as 'STI'.

Active Ingredient 3

Lesson Planning:

- All teachers of the same subject explicitly teach the knowledge on the knowledge organiser and go beyond this as appropriate.

Active Ingredient 4

Assessment & Metacognition:

- Teachers to use knowledge organisers for formative assessment strategies such as quizzing, and students to use knowledge organisers for monitoring of learning, for example through self-quizzing and self-checking of work.

Active ingredients are....

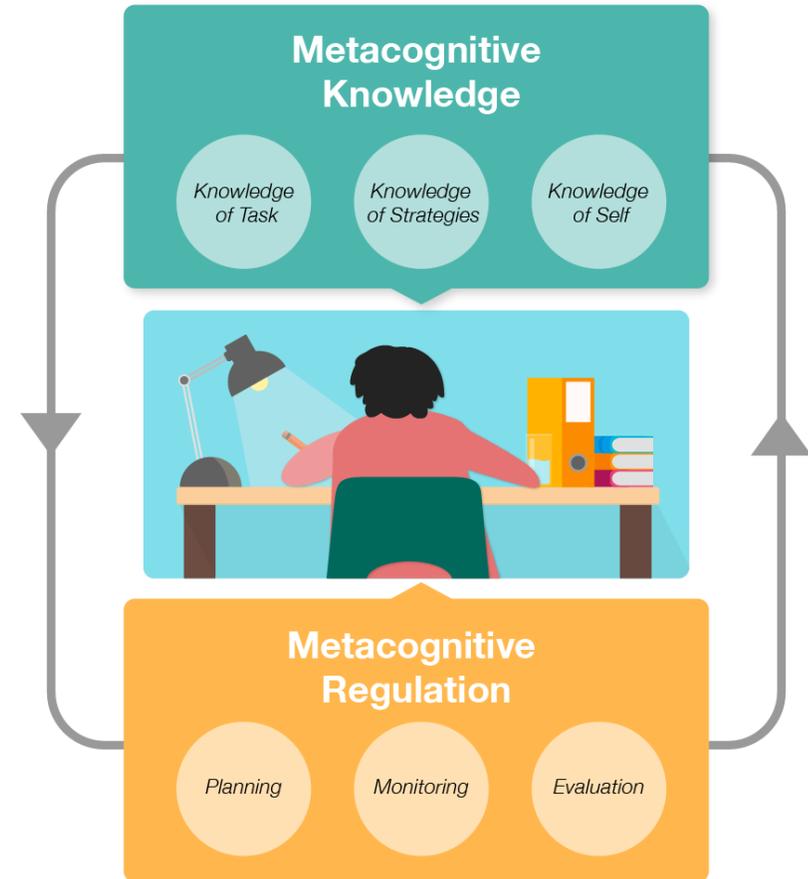
- A summary of ONLY the essential principles, practices and behaviours
- The key defining features of the approach (the 'what')
- Where we want consistency (adoption vs adaptation)
- Focused and actionable

Active ingredients - metacognition

ACTIVE INGREDIENT 1

– Shared mental model

- Staff have a shared understanding of metacognition
- Staff are able to apply that model dynamically in the classroom



When is a bike not a bike?!



DISCUSSION:

What are the active ingredients of a bicycle?

“The observable, replicable and irreducible components of an intervention (Michie et al., 2013).”

Faithful adoption vs intelligent adaptation



Is it a bicycle?! Critical adaptation?

Active Ingredients

The essential principles and practices for an approach, which need to be adopted closely to get the intended outcomes



What activities & behaviours will you see when it is working?

'TAs supplement not replace teaching in the classroom'

VS

Implementation Activities

The actions, strategies and resources you will use to introduce the approach, as defined by the Active Ingredients



How will it be done?

What blend of activities are required?

'Teachers receive training and coaching on how to deploy TAs'

Implementation activities - The 'How'?

“Typically, the application of a single strategy alone will be insufficient to successfully support the implementation of a new approach.”

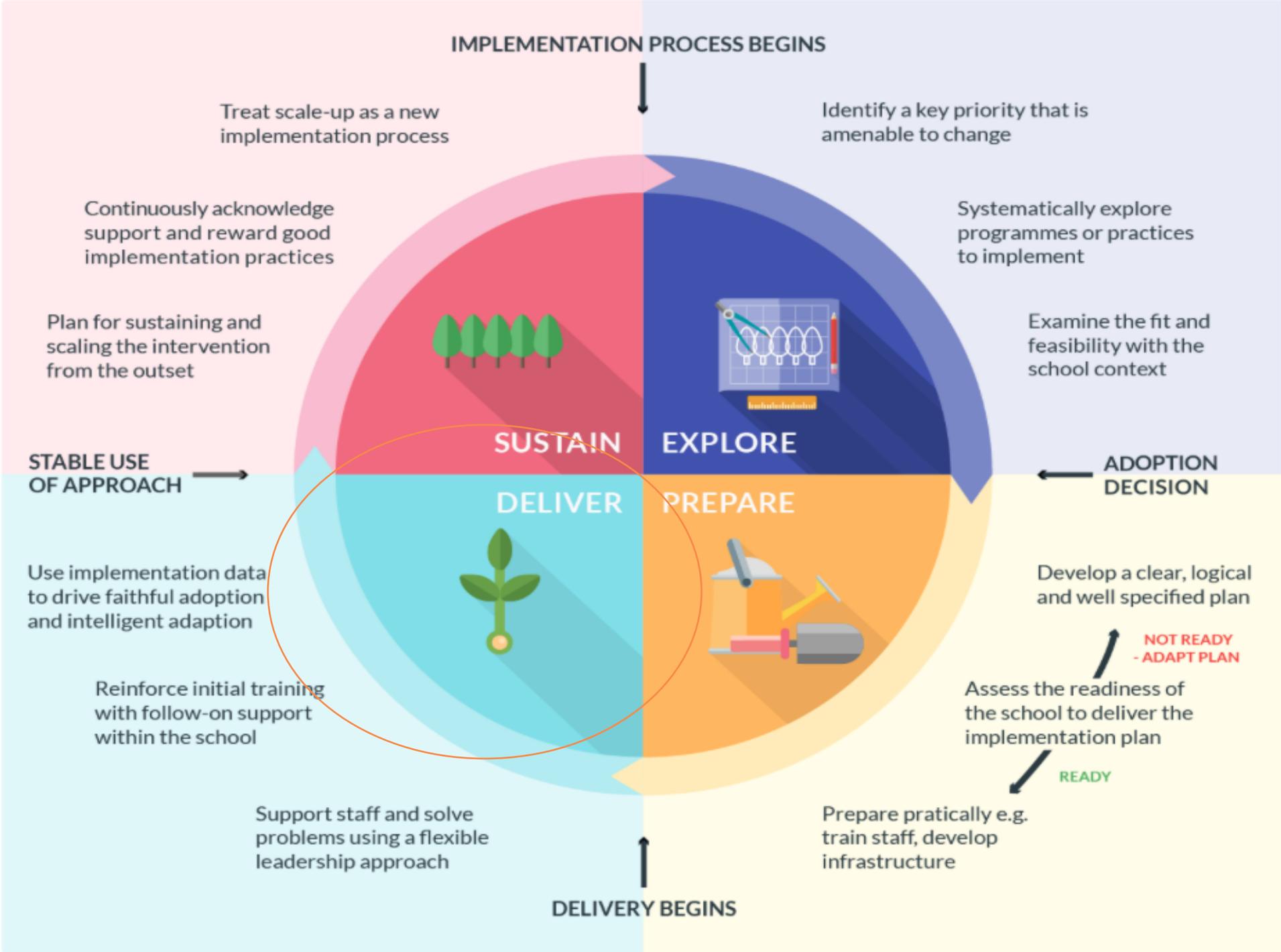


Don't just train and pray!

5 INTRODUCING KNOWLEDGE ORGANISERS

Durrington High School - Worthing

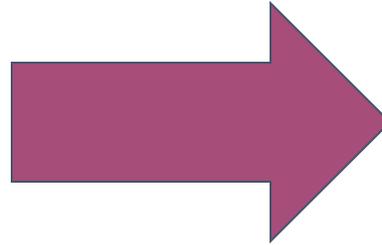
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 **DELIVER**

5 Support staff, monitor progress, solve problems, and adapt strategies as the approach is used for the first time.

- Adopt a flexible and motivating leadership approach during the initial attempts at implementation.
- Reinforce initial training with follow-on coaching within the school.
- Use highly skilled coaches.
- Complement expert coaching and mentoring with structured peer-to-peer collaboration.
- Use implementation data to actively tailor and improve the approach.
- Make thoughtful adaptations only when the active ingredients are securely understood and implemented.



- You don't expect perfection on the first attempt
- You know you're going to get better over time
- You adapt and learn as you go, and as situations arise
- You value inputs from skilled instructors during deliberate practice.

“Anything worth doing well is worth doing poorly!”

This stage is about...

continuous dynamic improvement

- Motivating and modelling
- Identifying and solving problems
- Identifying and using successes
- Helping staff apply their knowledge



DELIVER

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- ➔ Reinforce initial training with follow-on coaching within the school.
- ➔ Use highly skilled coaches.
 - Complement expert coaching and mentoring with structured peer-to-peer collaboration.
- ➔ Use implementation data to actively tailor and improve the approach.
 - Make thoughtful adaptations only when the active ingredients are securely understood and implemented.

Key points



- Implementation matters – the practitioner *is* the intervention!
- View implementation as a process not an event
- Implementation needs time, especially for preparation
- Benefits from dedicated but distributed leadership
- Have a clear, logical and well-specified plan
- Specify the elements of the approach that you believe are critical to its success – i.e. the ‘active ingredients’
- Treat ‘Delivery’ as a learning process

School's Guide to Implementation online course

An attractive online course, which guides you through some key activities in the guidance report. The course contains two video case studies of schools that have used the guide to support changes in practice.

School's Guide to Implementation online course
Introduction

Contents

- Introduction
- Foundations for implementation - structured process
- Foundations for implementation - implementation climate
- Explore
- Prepare (1)
- Prepare (2)
- Deliver
- Sustain

Practical Tools

Introduction - Jonathan Staples

Activities

Exercise one: Project post-mortem

- Think of a project you were involved with, that, despite the best intentions, lost momentum and faded away.
 - Why and when did that happen?
 - Was it something that happened before delivery?
 - Did it get moving but initial problems weren't spotted or dealt with quickly?
 - Was the project initially successful but it lost momentum?
- Use this example to reflect on your school's wider approaches to implementation.
 - Do we give enough attention to how new approaches are implemented?
 - Do we fall into similar patterns of behaviour between projects?
 - When has something been implemented well? What lessons can we learn from this?

Schools are in a better than ever position to judge what will work in their classrooms. We have access to more robust evidence about 'what works' in teaching and learning and, as the evidence base has grown, so too has teachers' appetites for it. Nevertheless, one of the characteristics that distinguishes effective and less-effective schools, in addition to what they implement, is how they put those new approaches into practice.

PUTTING EVIDENCE TO WORK: A SCHOOL'S GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTATION
Master checklist

Education Endowment Foundation

PUTTING EVIDENCE TO WORK: A SCHOOL'S GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTATION
Master checklist

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'Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation' contains checklists at the end of each section to help you reflect on implementation in your school. All six checklists are outlined below.

1 Treat implementation as a process, not an event; plan and execute it in stages.

- Do we implement changes across the school in a structured and staged manner?
- Is adequate time and care taken when preparing for implementation?
- Are there opportunities to make fewer, but more strategic, implementation decisions and pursue these with greater effort?
- Are there less effective practices that can be stopped to free up time and resources?

2 Create a leadership environment and school climate that is conducive to good implementation.

- Does our school have a climate that is conducive to good implementation?
- Does the school leadership team create a clear vision and understanding of expectations when changing practices across the school?
- Do staff feel empowered to step forward and take on implementation responsibilities?
- How do day-to-day practices affect the motivation and readiness of staff to change?

3 EXPLORE: Define the problem you want to solve and identify appropriate programmes or practices to implement.

- Are we confident we have identified a strong school improvement priority that is amenable to change?
- What are we looking to achieve by adopting a new programme or practice?
- Have we systematically identified the right approach to achieve these goals?
- Is there reliable evidence it can have the desired impact, if implemented well?
- Is it feasible within our context?

PUTTING EVIDENCE TO WORK: A SCHOOL'S GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTATION

Gathering and interpreting data to identify priorities

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- Confidently identify a priority**

Often, the decision to act begins with an instinct, a hunch, or a hunch. Existing beliefs about problems in school can be powerful and useful, but they can also blind leaders to other solutions. The main aim is to check and challenge our initial thinking so that we are confident that the identified problem is both important and not too big a priority. Each confidence issue has two boxes:

 - 1. Gathering relevant and rigorous data**
 - 2. Generating credible and plausible interpretations of that data**

Remember that any data you use are simply representations of the effects of a problem—none of the "multiple inadequate glasses" that you can have of the same problem. Be careful not to mistake the quantity of evidence for the accuracy of a problem. For example, the statement of Key Stage 2 will be an accurate of underlying issues (see the figure in section 4).

To generate evidence and insights on the problem we have to interpret data and use judgement, and that begins by questioning the quality of your data.
- Gather data that is fit-for-purpose**

We sometimes use data that we have to hand rather than what we need. Example information from a range of sources to build a picture of the issue. Recognising the strengths and weaknesses of different sources. Find the gaps between the data. Do you need the headlines and explore the details. Ask yourself: 'What cause of problem does the data represent?', 'What are the trends in the data over time?', 'What are the underlying issues?'

	External test data	Internal test data	Lesson observations	OFSTED data	Surveys/questionnaires
External data	External test data	Internal test data	Lesson observations	OFSTED data	Surveys/questionnaires
Internal data	Internal test data	Internal test data	Lesson observations	OFSTED data	Surveys/questionnaires
Lesson observations					
OFSTED data					
Surveys/questionnaires	Surveys/questionnaires	Surveys/questionnaires	Surveys/questionnaires	Surveys/questionnaires	Surveys/questionnaires
- Recognise weaknesses in the data**

There are always weaknesses in the data that we use—everything from the wording of questions, to how fast the person answering the questions, to the reliability of the data. This is something we need to accept and respond to constructively by interpreting data for its quality. Ask yourself:

 - Are your biases, and those of colleagues, skewing your interpretations of the data?
 - Are there significant gaps in your data? Can you fill these gaps with your own assumptions and generalisations?
 - Is the most relevant and rigorous data—that which is most fit-for-purpose—being prioritised, while data of less relevance and rigor is treated with greater respect?

Source of weaknesses

How to identify the issue
- Provide credible and plausible interpretations**

To generate evidence of a problem we have to provide credible and plausible interpretations of the data—this requires interpreting data from different sources and using judgement to draw accurate conclusions. Here are some things to bear in mind:

 - Describe how each source of data provides evidence for the problem or implementation issue, beyond through narrow observations, suggest the causes, and if you are engaging in action for improvement, identify the current needs, what is required to meet the needs.
 - Ask: 'What does the data tell us about the problem and solutions, and the data needed to support the plan?'
 - Check a strong argument that is credible and plausible, if it will meet the challenge of your colleagues. Rather than trying to convince yourself and your colleagues that you are right, focus on demonstrating an issue well understood.
 - When you interpret data with people who hold different views, it is important to explore the reasons for their views and not just to say they are wrong or the evidence of the problem.

The resource supports the *Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation* guidance report.

PUTTING EVIDENCE TO WORK: A SCHOOL'S GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation plan template

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Problem (why?)	Intervention Description (what?)	Implementation Activities (how?)	Implementation Outcomes (how well?)	Final Outcomes (and so?)
What needs to change e.g. teacher behaviour, student behaviour, attainment?	What are the essential 'active ingredients' of the intervention? What activities and behaviours will you see when it is working?	How will it be done? What blend of activities are required?	How will you know that it is working? Do staff feel the approach is feasible and useful? Short term Medium term Long term	How will pupils, teachers and the school benefit?

This resource supports the *Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation* guidance report.



Thank you!

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