

# **The international need for robust and relevant knowledge and how to benefit from systematic use of research**

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**The third international Evidence Informed  
Policy and Practice in Education in Europe  
(EIPPEE) Conference, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014, Oslo**

The EPPI-Centre is part of the Social Science Research Unit at the  
Institute of Education, University of London



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Oslo 14-15 May 2014



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FOR EDUCATION

**2014 EIPPEE Conference**

EIPPEE Conference, 14-15 May, Oslo.  
Conference Programme **now available**.  
For all other Conference details **click here**.

## Training

The EIPPEE Network can provide training and support for you and your organisation in research synthesis and evidence informed policy and practice. To find out more click the link below.

[Learn More >](#)

## Search portal

Access our search portal to identify quality assured research in education from around Europe. Users are able to search multiple websites and add their own resources.

[Learn More >](#)

## Getting involved

Do you want to get involved with the EIPPEE Network?

[Learn More >](#)

## Welcome to the EIPPEE Network

The EIPPEE Network is made up of organisations and individuals working together in [groups on specific aspects](#) of the use of evidence. They work in dozens of different countries and communicate mainly electronically and occasionally by meeting.

## News

- ▶ Slides available from [@wtgrantfdn](#) seminar 07/05 Current research priorities in the study of evidence

# Four gaps we need to attend to -

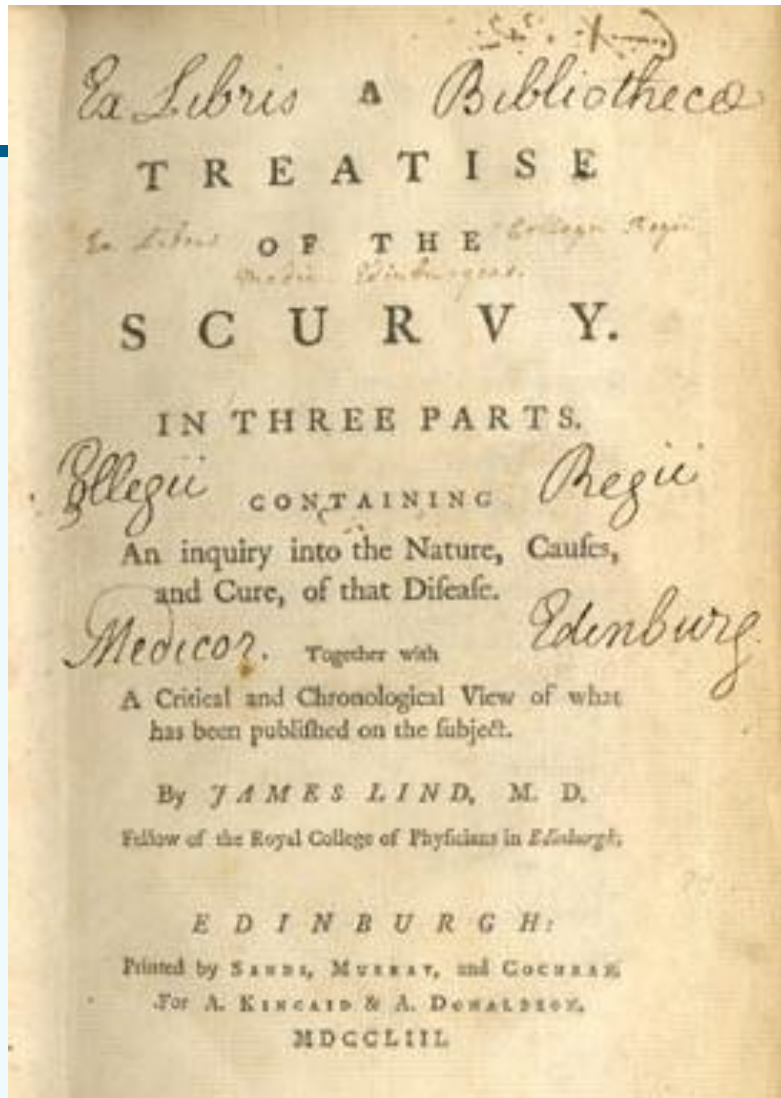
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To provide and use research knowledge more effectively:

1. Awareness and use of research findings
2. Synthesis of good relevant research
3. Relevance and applicability of research
4. Policy and practice on research use (and research on research use)



# 1. Awareness and use gap



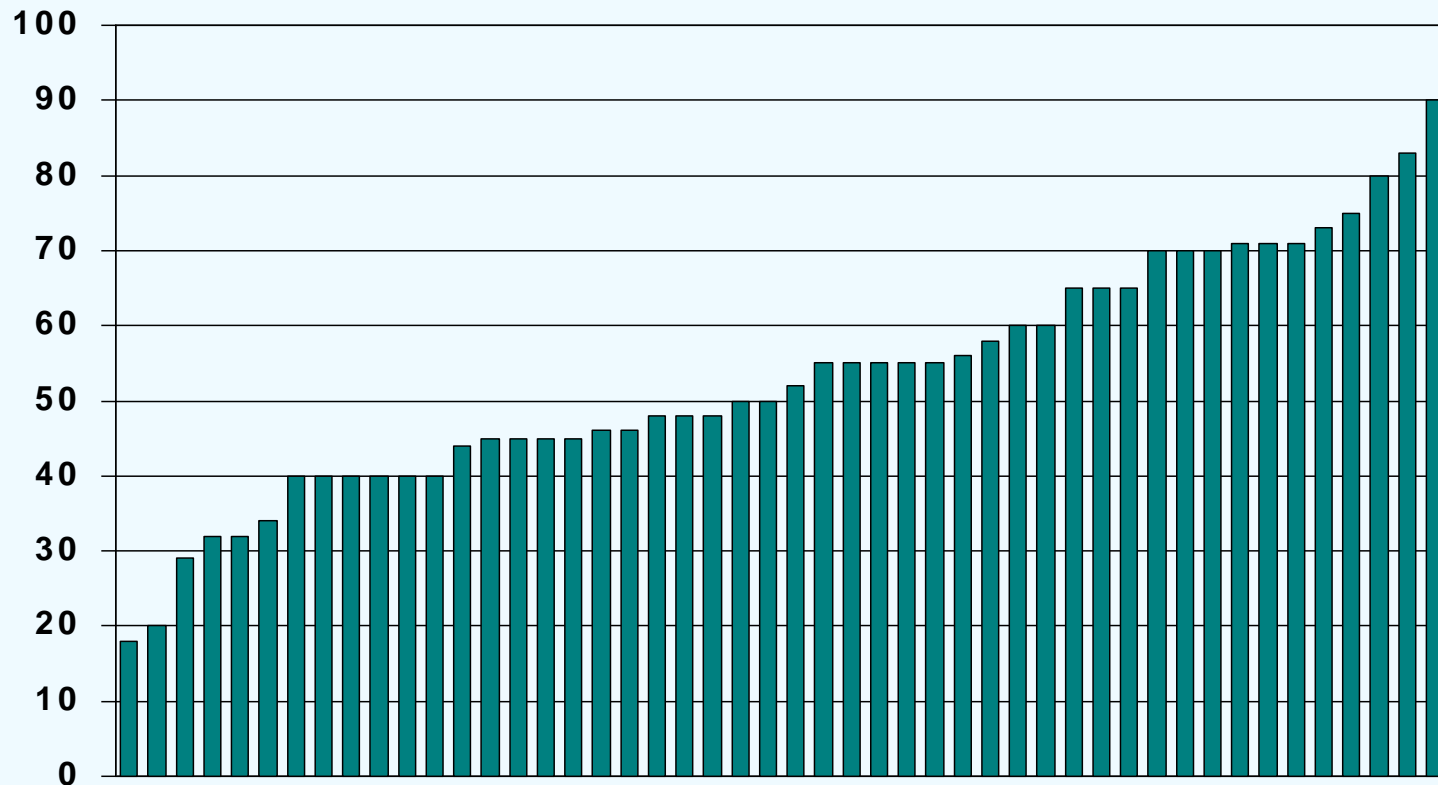
visibly produced. But as it is no easy matter to root out old prejudices, or to overturn opinions which have acquired an establishment by time, custom, and great authorities; it became therefore requisite for this purpose, to exhibit a full and impartial view of what has hitherto been published on the scurvy; and that in a chronological order, by which the sources of those mistakes may be detected. Indeed, before this subject could be set in a clear and proper light, it was necessary to remove a great deal of rubbish. Thus, what

[www.jameslindlibrary.org](http://www.jameslindlibrary.org)

With thanks for slide to Prof Amanda Burls

# Treatment for heart attack: “Door to needle time” (1997) in 48 UK hospitals in West Midlands

## Awareness to action gap



*With thanks for slide to Prof Amanda Burls*

## 2. Synthesis of good relevant research gap

Rigour, representativeness and relevance of the research that we use to inform decision making.

- EIPPEE aim to make use of research in education. Lots of research but:
  - **Quality / rigour of its execution**
  - **Fitness for purpose**
  - **Relevance to use**
  - **Difficult to access and to synthesize the findings**

# Systematic reviews – explicit methods of review

- Secondary research – bringing together what we know from good relevant research should be the 1<sup>st</sup> thing we do:
  - What do we want to know?
  - What do we know already (mapping and synthesis)?
  - What more do we want to know?

*(research gaps & appropriate methods to fill these)*

Systematic reviews more transparent about relevance, representativeness and quality than many traditional reviews and expert views

# 3. Relevance and applicability gap

- Effectiveness (what works) is a key question, but include important issues of generalizability?
  - Effect so powerful and universal that do not need a RCT (e.g. parachutes)
  - Near universal effect but need a RCT to identify this effect
  - Is this effect context dependent? If so, then when and where does it have effect?



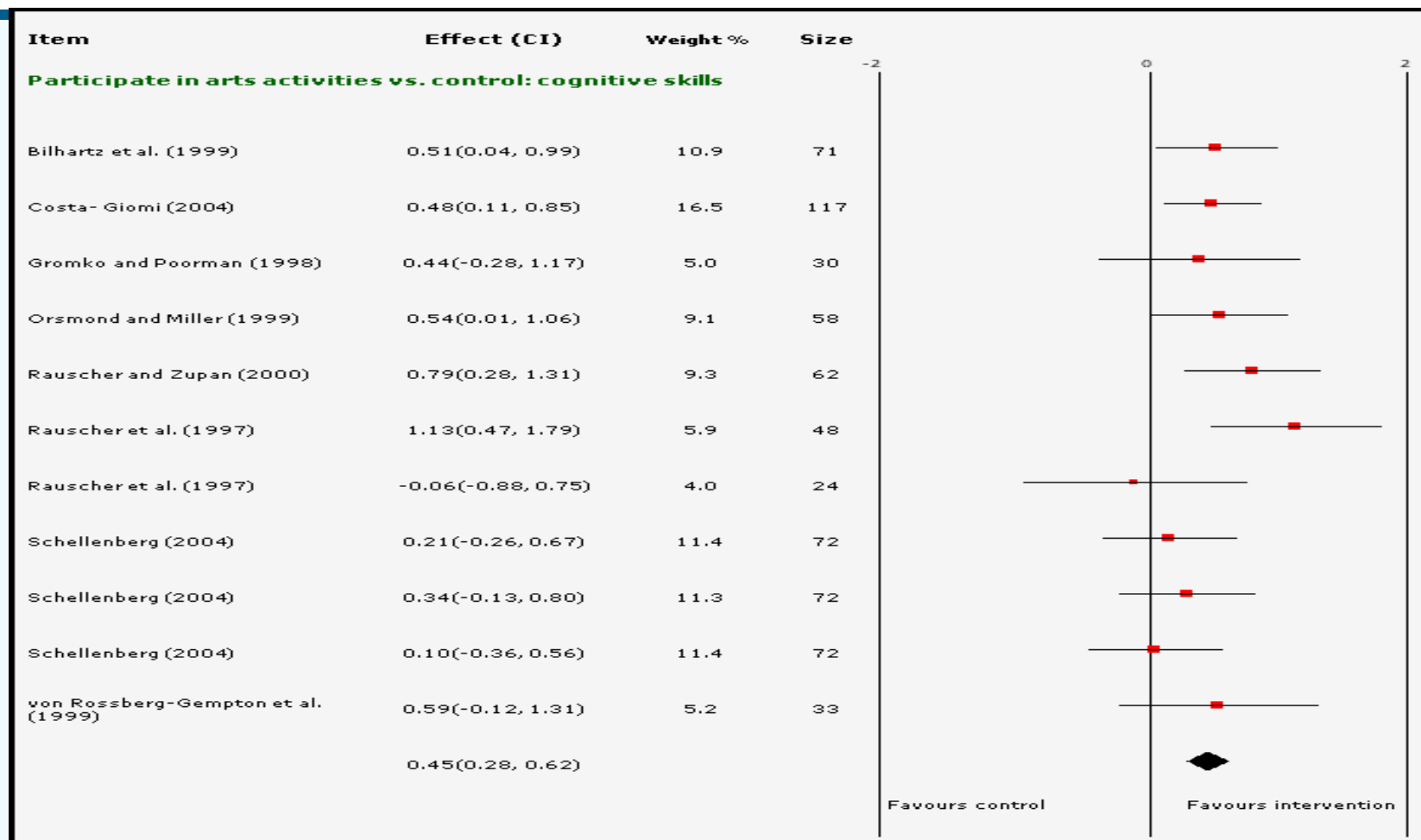
# Aggregative approaches in research

Aggregative reviews  
predominately add up  
(aggregate) findings of  
primary studies to  
answer a review  
question...

... to indicate the  
direction or size of effect



# RCT forest plot: Does children's participation in structured arts activities improve their cognitive learning outcomes?



Newman M, Bird K, Tripney J, Kalra N, Kwan I, Bangpan M, Vigurs C (2010) Understanding the impact of engagement in culture and sport: A systematic review of the learning impacts for young people. London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport. <http://culture.gov.uk/images/research/CASE-systematic-review-July10.pdf>

# Context dependent

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- Many other variables
- Complexity
- Mechanisms
- Fit for purpose – user driven questions  
(not just supply side (push) research)

# Why might people want to use research?

To know what works but also:

- When and where and why
- To provide insights and understanding of people's experiences, of causal factors, etc
- To provide data on prevalence and evidence of causal effect, etc.

So similar to the questions asked by researchers. BUT policy makers and practitioners have to make decisions so: contextually bound + many other factors to consider

# So need many types of research question

Question	Type
What do people want?	Needs
What's the balance of benefit and harm of a given approach?	Impact/ effectiveness
Why/how does it work? How does it vary in effect?	Process/explanation
What is happening?	Implementation
What relationships are seen between phenomena?	Correlation
What are people's experiences?	Views/perspectives
What resources are <b>needed</b> ?	Costs

So need theory as well as data!

Configure ideas,  
concepts, hypotheses

**The concepts**  
defining the facts

**The Facts**  
Just Ahead

Aggregate data  
Test hypotheses



# Configurative approaches in research

- Configurative reviews predominately arrange (configure) the findings of primary studies to answer the review question....
- ... to offer a meaningful picture of what research is telling us



**Philosophy:**

**Idealist**

**Realist**

**Relation to theory:**

**Generate**

**Explore**

**Test**

**Approach to synthesis:**

**Configuring**

**Aggregating**

**Methods:**

**Iterative**

**A priori**

**Search:**

Theoretical search

‘Exhaustive’ search

**Quality**

**assessment:**

Value uniqueness  
of contribution

Avoid bias

**Product:**

Emergent concepts

Empirical findings

**Review use:**

**Enlightenment**

**Instrumental**

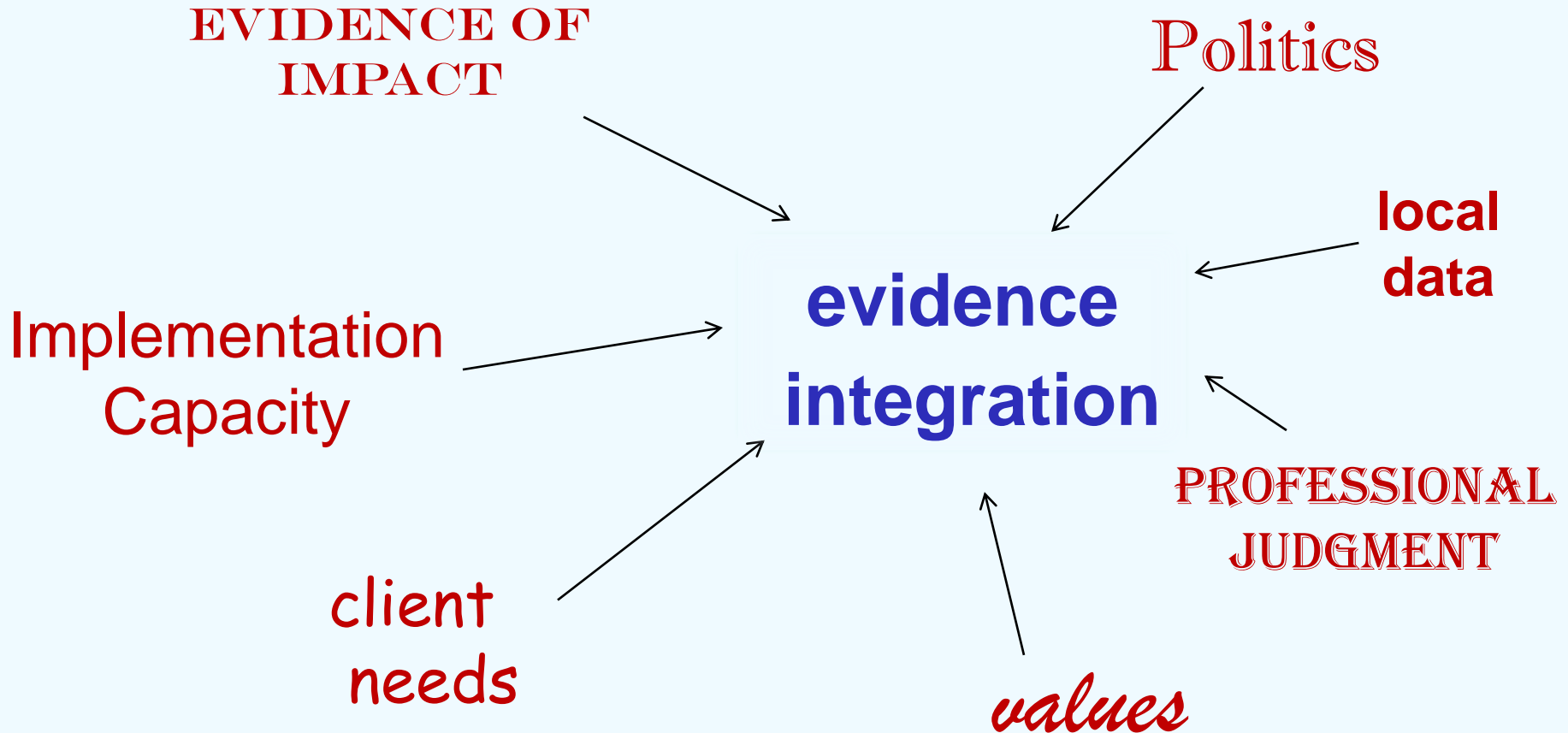
Even if no stats!

# 4. Policy, practice and research on 'research use' gap

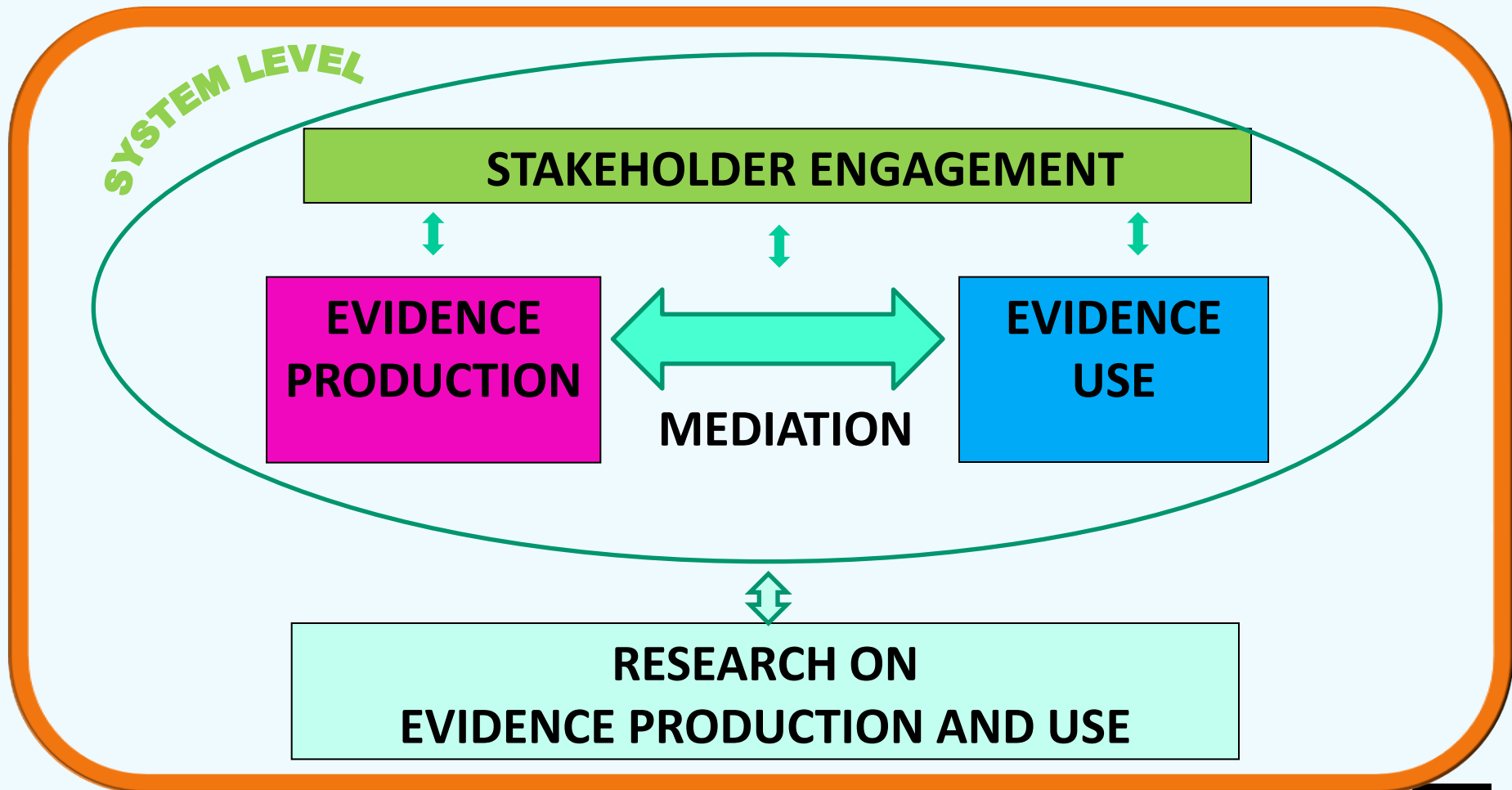
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- Policy makers and teachers work in the real world
- Use (demand/pull) from research may be more important to use than supply/push of research findings
- Consider many other factors other than research
- We need to study these processes

# Local Decisions



# Evidence-to-Use System



# **Demand side requirements for research to be used by people and organisations**

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- Motivation: culture; training; accreditation and review; roles and responsibilities
- Resources: skills; resources; products; facilitation; power
- System: structures; procedures; supports for motivation and resources at multiple levels (and evidence advisory bodies)

***Need for a policy for research use and studies of such policies and resultant practices (research on research use)***



# Thank you for your attention

## Websites

EIPPEE Website: <http://www.eippee.eu>

Evidence and Policy: [http://www.policypress.co.uk/journals\\_eap.asp](http://www.policypress.co.uk/journals_eap.asp)

EPPI-Centre Website <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk>

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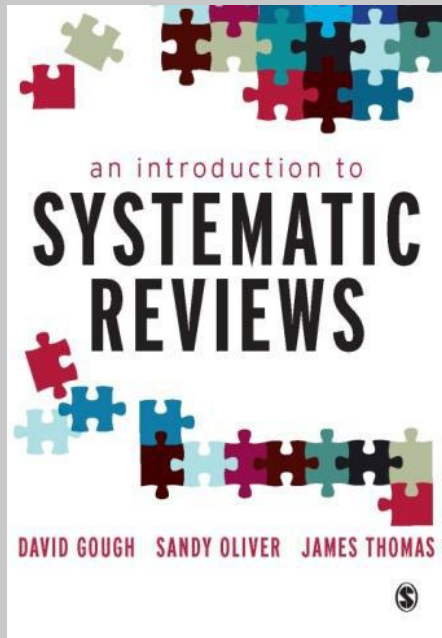
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# An introduction to systematic reviews: Sage Publications Ltd



Gough D, Oliver S, Thomas J  
(2013) *Learning from Research:  
Systematic Reviews for Informing  
Policy Decisions: A Quick Guide*.  
London: Alliance for Useful  
Evidence., Nesta.  
<http://www.alliance4usefulevidence.org/assets/Alliance-FUE-reviews-booklet-3.pdf>



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<http://www.systematicreviewsjournal.com>

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<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1741-7015/11/22>