

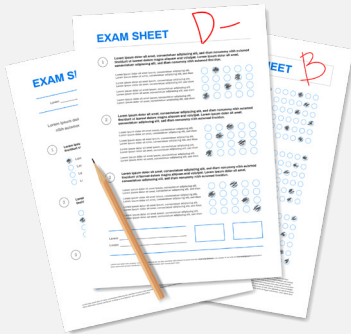


Raising educational outcomes for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

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Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) often have lower educational outcomes compared to their peers, necessitating additional support.



The current project examined the impact of targeted interventions to raise educational outcomes for students with SEND, the current practices used by educational practitioners, and existing barriers to implementing evidence-informed interventions.



The study comprised **three phases**:

Phase 1 examined the existing research evidence base. It included a systematic review and meta-analysis of studies that used Randomised Controlled Trials and Quasi-Experimental Designs to evaluate the impact of targeted interventions for students with SEND aged four to 25.



The systematic review identified

467

global studies reporting on

1,758

outcomes, predominantly related to



reading
(*n* = 1139)

with fewer studies focusing on:

writing outcomes
(*n* = 279)



mathematical outcomes
(*n* = 284)



science outcomes
(*n* = 3)



and general attainment
(*n* = 53)



The majority of studies were from the US and only

21

studies were from the UK.



50%

of the studies focused on students with Dyslexia/Reading Difficulties and Dyscalculia/Mathematical Difficulties.



Phase 2 involved talking to teachers. It identified current targeted intervention practices and how evidence is used in schools, and explored barriers to implementing effective practices through in-depth interviews with 33 educational professionals.

Phase 3 included the co-production of a toolkit, an online tool that allows educators to visualise the best-evidenced approaches for particular educational outcomes and SEN groups. The toolkit can inform educational decision making to select the best approaches.



The toolkit and MetaSENse searchable database can be accessed through this [link](#) and QR code.

Key Research Findings:

Targeted interventions can raise educational outcomes among students with SEND by an average of five months of progress compared to those receiving teaching-as-usual or active control interventions. There is evidence that some interventions can be effective.



The type of setting in which an intervention was delivered – mainstream or special – had no effect on reading or writing outcomes, but students in mainstream schools showed larger positive mathematical outcomes following an intervention than those in special schools.

Intervention effects did not vary according to delivery: small group versus 1-1, who delivered the intervention or the type of control group used (business-as-usual vs active control group).



Interviews revealed that educational practitioners varied in their understanding of evidence-informed practice and how to go about it. Interviews also revealed practitioners experienced barriers in trying to implement interventions and that they had limited awareness of rigorous scientific methodologies such as the use of control groups and randomised controlled trials (that is, the methods that produce more robust evidence).

Most research is on students with specific learning difficulties. In comparison, there is a relative lack of research on what works for students with intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, and sensory disabilities such as vision and hearing impairments.



Recommendations

1

Funders and academics should invest in a more balanced evidence base

2

There should be increased opportunities for collaboration between researchers and educational practitioners

3

Policy makers and Higher Education providers should ensure that practitioners have more training in evaluating evidence related to interventions and what works in their classrooms

4

Policy makers should establish a new national database on the outcomes of SEND interventions

Further information about the study and findings can be found:

<http://www.educationalscience.org.uk/metasense/>

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