

Bridge Toolkit • Webinar Series

Module 2: Defining the Policy Problem & Using Evidence

Introduction to RCTs in Education

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What is an RCT?

Moving from Intuition to Empirical Rigour: Establishing Causality in the Classroom

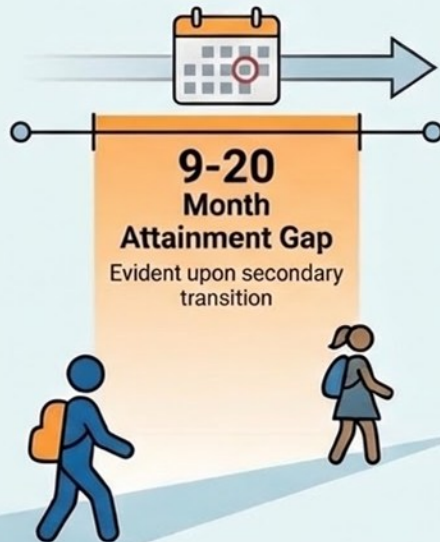
LEARN: Longitudinal Educational
Achievements: Reducing Inequalities

Dr. Lee Bentley
Manchester Metropolitan University



The Attainment Crisis

The Persistent Gap



Limitation of Current Practice



Intuitive Models

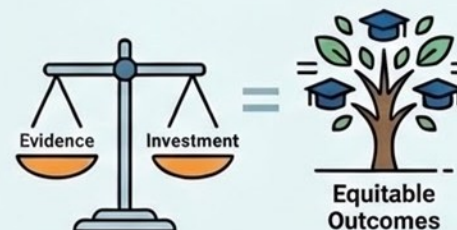
Relying on intuitive models is proving **insufficient** to accelerate progress



A Critical Shift Required



Toward **measured, evidence-based investment** to drive equitable and impactful student outcomes



The Role of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)



Education
Endowment
Foundation

Independent Charity



Dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement.

'What Works Centre'



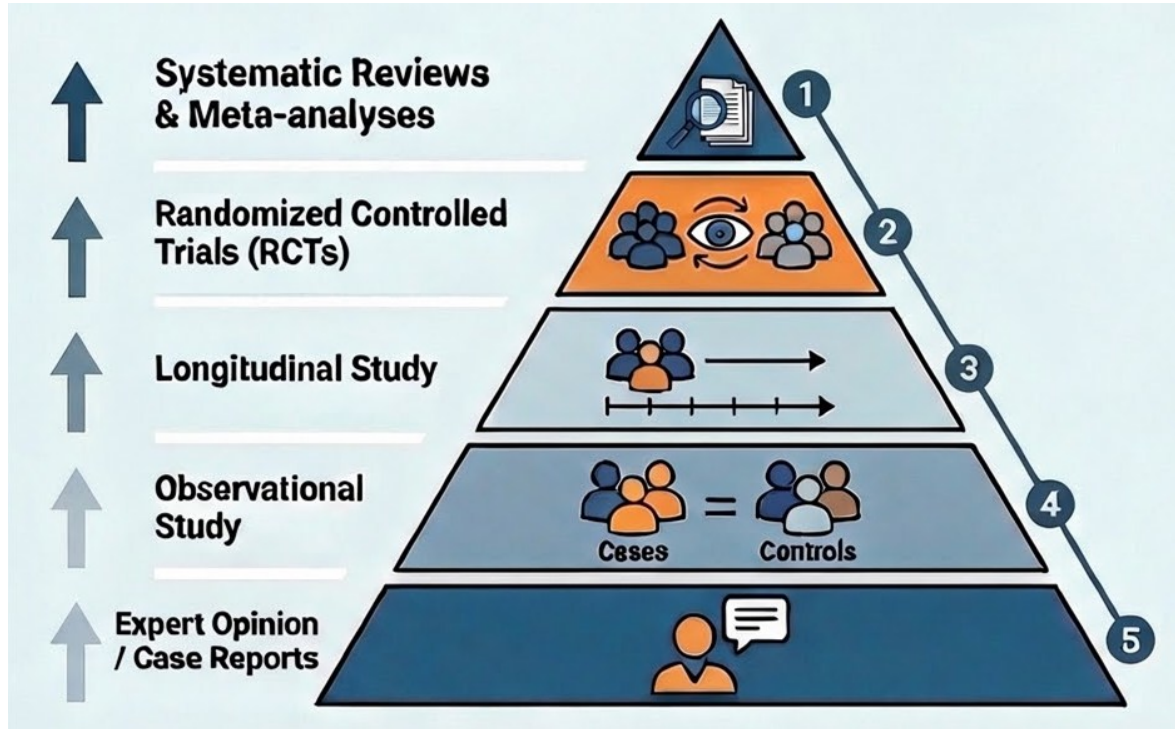
Serves as the designated **'What Works Centre'** for education.

Find, Fund, Scale



Finds, funds, and scales robust evidence to tackle the attainment crisis head-on.

Hierarchy of Evidence



Systematic Reviews

Multiple High-Quality Studies

Combines multiple high-quality studies on a specific intervention.



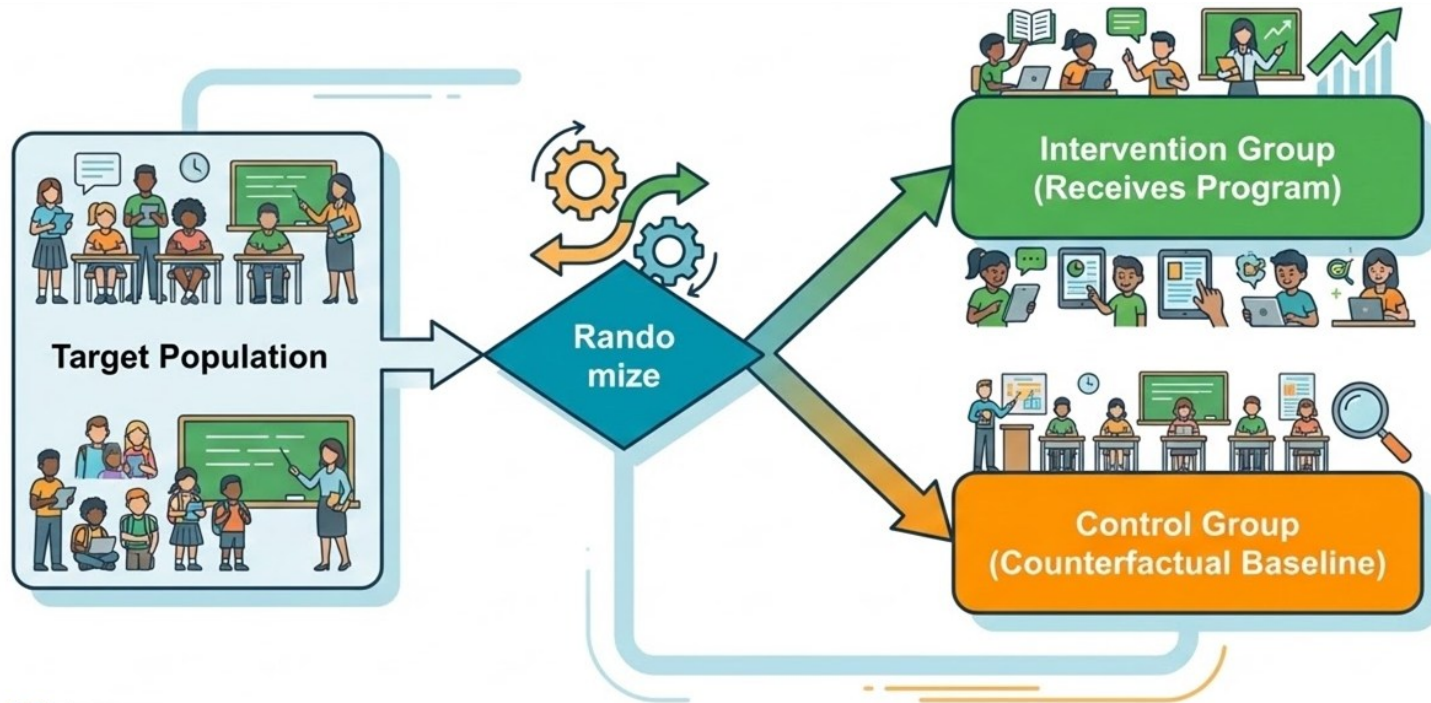
RELIABLE, CONTEXTUAL CONCLUSIONS

Provides reliable, contextual conclusions.

POLICY PROTECTION

Protects policy from the risks of 'cherry-picking' single-study results.

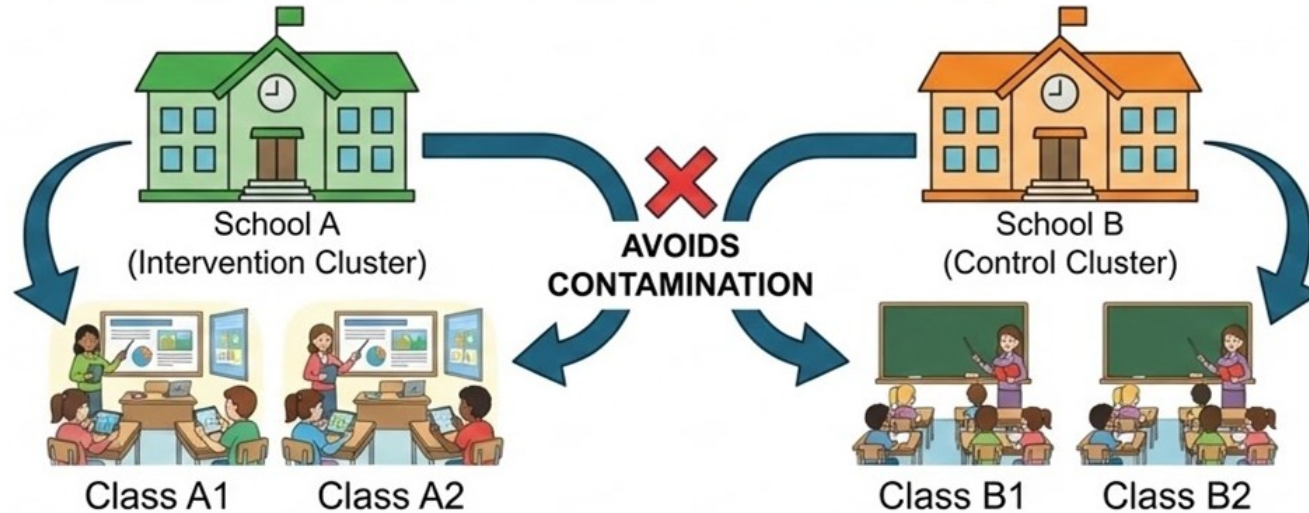
Mechanics of an RCT



School-Based Randomization

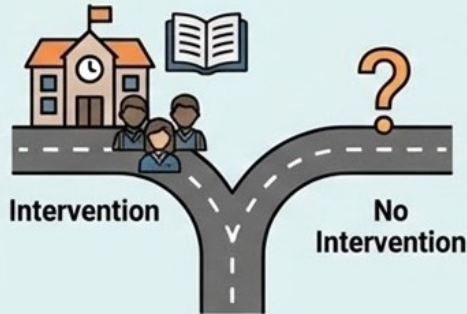
Why Cluster Randomization?

Randomizing at the whole-school level avoids 'Contamination' (teachers naturally sharing new methods with control students).



Defining the Counterfactual

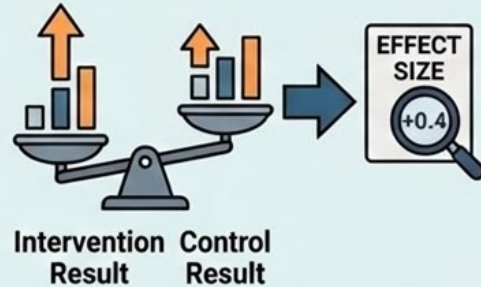
Answers: **'What would have happened in the absence of the intervention?'**



Measured strictly via the **uncontaminated control group**.



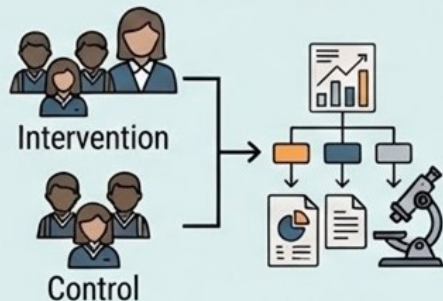
Allows for a precise calculation of the **'Effect Size'**



The EEF Ecosystem

Building new evidence
(Rigorous RCTs)

RIGOROUS RCTs



Conducting high-quality
Randomized Controlled Trials.

Summarizing research
(The Toolkits)

THE TOOLKITS



Synthesizing existing knowledge
into actionable resources.

Mobilizing data directly
to policymakers and
practitioners, and
school leaders

DATA MOBILIZATION



Disseminating findings for
informed decision-making.

The EEF Dashboard Framework

IMPACT



(Months of Progress)

Measures the additional learning time gained.

COST



(£ to £££££)

Estimates financial investment required.

SECURITY



(1 to 5 Padlocks)

Assesses the strength and reliability of the evidence.

Oral language interventions

High impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence

Implementation cost ?



Evidence strength ?



Impact (months) ?



[What is it?](#)

[Key findings](#)

[How effective is the approach?](#)

[Behind the average](#)

[Closing the disadvantage gap](#)

[How could you implement](#) >

[Technical Appendix](#)

What is it?

Oral language interventions are about making the most of spoken language and verbal interaction for learning.

'Oral language' refers to speaking and listening. 'Intervention' means doing something new or making a change or refinement to usual practice. Oral language interventions can therefore include approaches that emphasise speaking and/or listening in a whole class setting. They can also include targeted and small-group approaches.

Conclusion & Next Steps



Empowering Professional Judgement

- Evidence is a tool, not a rigid set of rules.



Next Steps

- Access the EEF Toolkits to review interventions in your policy area.

Teaching & Learning Toolkit:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>