

Journal Club



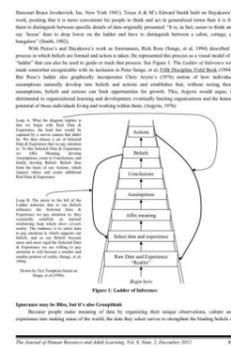
'Groupthink and the Ladder of Inference: Increasing Effective Decision Making' Tompkins and Rhodes (2012)

This paper by Tompkins and Rhodes (2012) describes how individuals form opinions or inferences, and focusses on the ladder of inference as a theoretical framework, and as a tool for communication and effective decision making.

The paper discusses the development of the Ladder of Inference, and describes the concept of “traveling on the ladder,” - linking the bottom of the ladder (data) with the upper portions of the ladder (inference), and concludes that the ladder of inference can be used as a tool to increase communication, credibility, influence, and decision making.

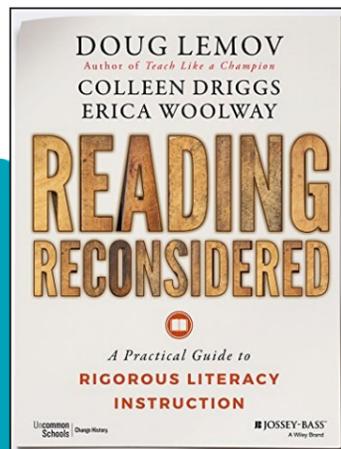
The 'Ladder of Inference' explains how people form opinions and beliefs over a series of steps starting with data and experience and how the information we pay attention to influences the meaning we place on information, the assumptions we make and conclusions we reach, leading to the development of beliefs and our actions. Our individual journey up the ladder will be different to others presented with the same data.

Where 'groups of similarly thinking individuals are formed around their perceived similarities at the top of their individual ladders (where the actions informed by deeply held beliefs exist), groupthink can develop', which can lead to segregation. The paper states that if 'differences are not openly discussed, each functional group tends to assume that their world view is the “truth.” and by seeking to explore others' ladder of inference, and clearly 'walking people down' your own, communication can improve.



Tried and Tested

'Reading Reconsidered: A practical guide to rigorous reading instruction' by Teach Like A Champion's Doug Lemov and Colleen Driggs and Erica Woolway, offers practical information and advice for anyone teaching reading and literacy.



The book centres around four, core ideas:

1. Read harder texts
2. “Close read” texts rigorously and intentionally
3. Read more nonfiction more effectively
4. Write more effectively in response to texts.

Each chapter is broken down into modules and alongside the strategies includes links to video clips available both online and on the DVD included with the book.

The appendix to the book offers useful tools and templates for implementing the ideas in practice which can be used by new teachers and experienced teachers alike—across all phases of education.

Edited by Beth Greville-Giddings



INSIDE



Governance:
Become and evidence-informed governor and trustee



Tried and tested:
Doug Lemov's 'Reading Reconsidered'



Journal Club:
The ladder of inference and groupthink



Raleigh Learning Trust Learning and Development Bulletin

The BIG Conversation 2021

Issue 39,
July 2021

June 2021 saw the first Raleigh Learning Trust 'BIG Conversation' INSET day with expert speakers from across the Trust and beyond. Whilst it was necessary to hold the day remotely, we were able to come together as a community to explore some important topics and start talking.

Conversations can achieve real changes in teaching practice, improve student outcomes, create better solutions to problems and develop new practice. The day sought to encourage connection, participation and have a greater impact on learning across our schools.

Keynote speaker David Weston kicked off the day looking at 'The Power of Conversation'; covering, culture, bias and strategies for open-to-learning conversations. The day then broke out into a range of evidence-informed conversations covering academic and pastoral issues.

The final session of the day was an opportunity to come back together and start the important conversation of staff wellbeing. A panel representing a range of roles across the Trust discussed what 'wellbeing' means and how we can achieve this across RLT. This is part of an ongoing piece of work for the Trust.

Thank you to everyone who took part and made the day a success; there is plenty more to come next year!



Themes identified to revisit:

ACEs

Mental Health

Behaviour

Marking and Feedback

Pre-teaching

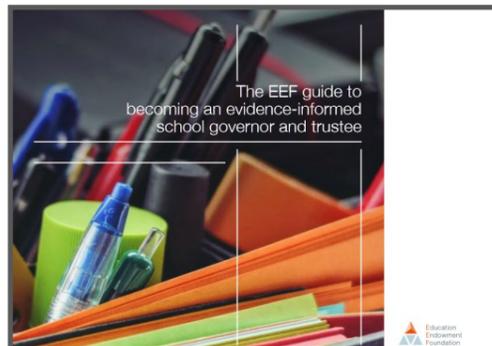
Oracy

School governors and trustees provide support and challenge to headteachers and leadership teams and it is essential that they have access to and use the best available evidence-based resources in order to undertake this crucial role.

eef.li/GovernorGuide

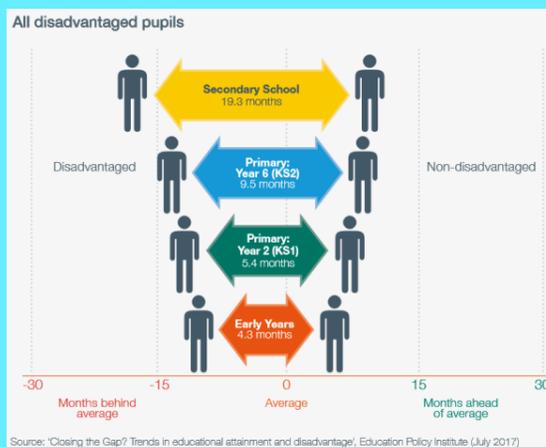
Becoming an evidence-informed school governor and trustee

The Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) guide to becoming an evidence-informed school governor and trustee is designed to offer a quick way into the evidence they make freely available to all schools. Many governors and trustees are short on time and do not have a background in teaching, and it can be hard to know where to find usable and reliable information. Using this guide can help promote better-informed discussions in governing boards about how schools and trusts can improve.



The guide gives a brief overview of the EEF and explains how research evidence can be used to help schools improve and address challenges such as finances, capacity and workload. The guide presents research as offering 'best bets', advising that what works somewhere doesn't necessarily work everywhere, and by understanding how approaches have been implemented in other settings, governors and trustees are in a better place to make their own decisions.

The guide takes governors and trustees through evaluation of how pupils are achieving in schools, how effectively schools are spending their money, and how schools support effective teaching and learning. There is an overview of understanding the national attainment gap and how schools can use the work of the EEF to support the challenge of closing the gap.



Source: 'Closing the Gap? Trends in educational attainment and disadvantage', Education Policy Institute (July 2017)

There is information on Pupil Premium and tips for maximising spending. Throughout the guide there are recommendations for further reading and 'next steps', directing governors and trustees to a wealth of resources to support their decisions.

To help equip those in governance roles, who often may not have professional experience in education, to ask questions about the quality of teaching and learning, the guide presents a run-through of the EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit, and for more depth, their guidance reports. The guide offers support for implementation and evaluation of strategies.

Edu-Blog Spotlight

Peter Foster is an Assistant Headteacher for Teaching, Learning and Curriculum at an all-through school in Somerset. He blogs at <https://curriculumteamleader.wordpress.com> and tweets as [@pnifoster](https://twitter.com/pnifoster)

In the first of two post on Expectations, Peter Foster asks 'How do our expectations of students vary?'



He discusses the idea of 'self-fulfilling prophecies' and references Rosenthal and Jacobson's (1965) Pygmalion experiment, whereby they told teachers that certain students would be 'growth spurters' (children who would soon develop rapidly in terms of intelligence) and found 'that "When teachers expected that certain children would show greater intellectual development, those children did show greater intellectual development."

Foster suggests that whilst teachers are aware of expectations, 'there aren't definitive concrete practical applications' about what this means in practice. He cites commentary by Jussim and Harber (2005) who describe teacher's understanding of Pygmalion as 'oversimplified and that the reality is 'messier' and 'more complicated', concluding that 'self-fulfilling prophecies in the classroom do exist, but they are generally small, fragile, and fleeting.', and with 'less certainty in the research about how this affects things like students' behaviour and achievement.'. He goes on to discuss expectations in relation to biases associated with socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, SEND and physical appearance.

The research suggests that 'unlike other areas of teaching, this isn't something that experience seems to improve' and Foster says considering this caused him to start to feel 'a bit trapped in biases and expectations I might have' and he looks at how the research points to 'ways teachers' expectations can be changed and with them, at least at times, the achievement of these students.'

He outlines three things the research suggests is important for teachers and schools to consider:

- Self-fulfilling prophecies do exist in schools.
- Expectations can be changed.
- To change expectations, we will need to focus on the classroom.

Full post with comments available here: <https://bit.ly/3hNmAeh>

Cognitive biases are shortcuts in our thinking but they can make us lose objectivity. Each issue we'll introduce a new bias to help you avoid its pitfalls

Cognitive Bias of the Half-term

The Barnum Effect

Barnum Effect, also known as the Forer Effect, is the psychological phenomenon that explains how people give high accuracy ratings of generalised personality descriptions as if they are accurate descriptions specific to their personality.

This effect explains the underlying mechanisms of our susceptibility to accept practices like horoscopes, fortune-telling, and online personality tests as bespoke, which are in fact vague and general enough to apply to a wide range of people.