

## Note 8.1 – On the use of experiments in EEI

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In Chapters 3 and 8 we claim that there are very few examples of experimentation in EEI. This is periodically raised as a future direction for the field, something we discuss further in Chapter 10 when considering the unification of the evidence-informed education field. In this note we want to make a point about the EEI and WW boundary which felt a little too esoteric for the main body of the chapter.

In the *Exploring the Field* online document we describe the *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness (JREE)* as being an example of a WW-focused journal. We did this in the knowledge that the EEI handbook (Chapman et al., 2016) refers to JREE as one of the 'new structures' of EEI. Our central theme is that WW and EEI divisions are detrimental, so links/integration between JREE and the EEI field are very welcome. At present, we believe that this is just an aspiration rather than a reality. Our inspection of JREE and the researchers associated with suggest that it represents a distinct (WW) faction, in terms of methodology, personnel and funding.

In terms of methods, we note that experimental research (and the related methodological discussion and reviews of experimental research) is the hallmark of JREE, whereas experimental research is almost completely absent from the *School Effectiveness and School Improvement (SESI)* journal – where statistical models of effective schools and their analysis is the predominant focus (see for a rare example: Antoniou & Kyriakides, 2011). Back in 2015, one of us (Perry) carried out a mapping exercise of methods used in JREE and SESI, finding that between January 2013 and mid-April 2015, 20 out of 45 articles in JREE reported experimental or quasi-experimental research<sup>1</sup> compared to *only 1* out of 62 articles in SESI (Perry, 2016, p. 34). We see similar levels of methodological imbalance in more recent years and issues. Moreover, in terms of personnel, we note that the editorial board for JREE is exclusively (or very close to exclusively) based in the US, with very little overlap of personnel compared to, for example, the various EEI handbooks listed in our *Exploring the Field* guides. With regards to funding – if the acknowledgements sections of studies in recent journal editions are anything to go by – JREE research is far more likely to be US government (IES) funded and SESI research is far more likely to be academic research council funded.

So, with marked differences in methodology, personnel, and funding sources, it is hard to argue that SESI and JREE (and therefore EEI and WW) are part of a single, cohesive research community at present. That JREE was being considered to be one of the 'new organisational structures' of EEI is a positive step (Chapman et al., 2016, p. 3). Whether genuine integration between these groups can be achieved remains to be seen.

## References

- Antoniou, P., & Kyriakides, L. (2011). The impact of a dynamic approach to professional development on teacher instruction and student learning: results from an experimental study. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 22(3), 291-311. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2011.577078>
- Chapman, C., Muijs, D., Reynolds, D., Sammons, P., & Teddlie, C. (2016). *The Routledge international handbook of educational effectiveness and improvement: Research, policy, and practice*. Routledge.
- Perry, T. (2016). *The validity, interpretation and use of school value-added measures* [University of Birmingham].

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<sup>1</sup> I am defining quasi-experimental here as anything that includes a design- rather than statistical model-based control, such as forms of difference-in-difference, instrumental variables, regression discontinuity, interrupted time series and similar (and not including standard multi-level regression modelling).