Forum Insights

PROJECT TITLE:
REX – The Research Expertise Exchange

Overview of the project

Significant policy developments in Education have mandated that school policy decisions be made on the basis of clear research-derived evidence. Thus, teachers are effectively being asked to act as research-practitioners without a strong history of research within the profession. In tandem, newly developed Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses are attempting to foster research-practitioner skills with limited access to school-based research settings. In response to these challenges the Research Expertise Exchange (REX) will help to cultivate the digital skills for research and help to match real world demand for research with dedicated relevant resources. REX will build a digital bridge between academic and professional practice and will enable educational researchers from a variety of backgrounds to meet challenges posed by a changing professional context.

Partners

Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.
University of Limerick
National University of Ireland, Galway.

Key outcomes of the project (link to materials/resources)

There are three primary outcomes from the project.

1. A social network that will enable student researchers, teacher researchers and higher education researchers to find others working in similar research fields and link research need with capacity.

2. A collaborative space to enable effective coordination of research activity across professional and geographic boundaries, allowing teacher researchers to coordinate their efforts with researching students and higher education based professionals.

3. A set of open resources that will support the development of research skills and the conduct of research projects for all those educational researchers interested in continued development of their capabilities in this domain.

These resources will be available at http://www.researchexpertiseexchange.com

Outline how the project benefits the higher education sector nationally

The REX platform provides a place where educational researchers of different professional backgrounds – pre-service teacher researchers, in-service teacher researchers, higher education researchers – to communicate, collaborate, and learn from one another. The site facilitates the identification of potential research partners and the formation of collaborative research projects

Outline how the project benefits students

REX provides benefits to learners at all stages of their professional development. During initial teacher education, pre-service teachers gain access to a number of open educational resources that support the development of research skills and research practice, in a domain where the development of research culture remains nascent. Higher education researchers are supported in their provision of supervision to researching students and the provision of research methods training, whilst also making connections with and drawing on the expertise and experience of in-service teaching professionals. Finally, in-service teachers are supported in the process of the continuing professional education and provided with potential collaborative partners through the REX network and support in the development of their own research related skills through the open educational resources hosted on and linked from the platform.

Other national/international development work that complements this project

The Teaching Council of Ireland is committed to the fostering of research activity within the teaching profession in this country and has begun the process of developing a framework for the provision of supporting resources termed, Molfeasa. The Teaching Council has also laid out frameworks for the increasing of research activity and continuing enrichment of evidence-based practice in the teaching profession within broader frameworks such as Cosáin, and Droichead. REX is being developed to complement these professional structures.

Who to contact for more information/next steps

Contact the REX Team:
email: rex@mic.ul.ie
twitter: @educationREX

Sign up to the REX platform at:
http://www.researchexpertiseexchange.com