

BACKGROUND

This paper provides guidance for evaluation and delivery teams on the aims, expectations, and roles for an effective Intervention Delivery and Evaluation Analysis (IDEA) workshop. This paper should be reviewed in conjunction with the EEF theory of change and logic model guidance and [IPE guidance](#), as well as [project set-up documents](#).

Upon appointment of an evaluator, delivery and evaluation teams will attend an IDEA workshop, followed by two set-up meetings. The IDEA workshop will introduce the two teams, affording opportunity to establish a shared understanding of the intervention theory and programme elements, as well as to develop the implementation and process evaluation (IPE).

IPE is a key feature of EEF evaluations, as emphasised in EEF's IPE [literature synthesis](#) and [introductory handbook](#). Whether there is evidence of impact or not, IPE can help to explain why an intervention or a project has or has not been successful, what factors have contributed to this result, what improvements or refinements could be made, and what lessons could be learned about wider educational practice and research. The IDEA workshop is a key recommendation from the IPE handbook.

In our experience, the most effective IDEA workshops focus on:

- Confirming the theory of change and logic model diagram¹, including finalising definitions of: inputs, outputs, short-term (proximal) outcomes, long-term outcomes, moderators and other contextual factors, causal and contextual assumptions, and unintended consequences.
- Agreeing and defining the relevant implementation dimensions, with focus on core components and fidelity.
- Setting out how the programme is expected or designed to be different from usual practice/business as usual.

FORMAT OF IDEA WORKSHOP

Aims

The IDEA workshop is a two-hour collaborative workshop between evaluation and delivery teams, held prior to two set-up meetings. The overall aims of the IDEA workshop are:

1. For the delivery team to share information and materials on the programme and its theory of change, leading to in-depth discussion and opportunity for evaluators to seek clarity.

¹ See the EEF theory of change and logic model guidance for further clarification on EEF understanding of this terminology.

2. For the evaluators to gain a thorough understanding of the programme and its theory of change, with sufficient information to consider whether any updates to the evaluation proposal and IPE research questions are needed ahead of set-up meetings².
3. To support the production of a “final” and mutually agreed logic model (by the end of the set-up phase) that both delivery and evaluation teams respectively can refer to:
 - a. Keep track/progress and update their own programme’s theory of change
 - b. Inform final evaluation design and to report on and update in the final evaluation report.

Roles and Responsibilities

The IDEA workshop will be attended by the delivery team and the evaluation team, as well as representatives from the EEF. It is expected that these parties will attend in the following capacities.

- EEF – Administrative/logistical capacity. Expected responsibilities include:
 - a. To prepare agenda and chair IDEA workshop.
 - b. To facilitate introductions between the delivery and the evaluation teams.
 - c. To keep a record of agreed decisions and actions.
- Delivery team – Content capacity. Expected responsibilities include:
 - a. To lead a session on discussing the intervention and theory of change.
- Evaluation team – Content capacity. Expected responsibilities include:
 - a. To lead a session on information gathering to clarify implementation dimensions and defining usual practice.

A suggested agenda can be found in Appendix 1.

Standard Actions

In addition to a record of actions specific to the project, it is expected that the following standard actions will be completed following the IDEA workshop.

1. Delivery team
 - a. Share any additional material helpful to evaluations (e.g., platform logs, sight of materials, useful literature or programme monitoring data).
2. Evaluation team
 - a. Make required edits to the logic model, to be included in the protocol post set-up meetings.

² It is not expected that updates to the evaluation proposal and planning of IPE measures is complete ahead of the set-up meetings, only that sufficient information has been shared to allow for consideration.

- b. Start updating the PLANIT framework for the evaluation protocol and follow up with the delivery team on any information that requires further clarification.
- c. Complete the intervention implementation dimensions table to capture the IPE dimensions measured in the evaluation (see section below) and be prepared to discuss the research questions and data collection methods associated with each dimension at the set-up meetings.
- d. Based on the discussion on fidelity, consider options for measuring compliance for the purpose of compliance analysis in the impact evaluation, and be prepared to discuss during set-up meetings.

IDEA WORKSHOP CONTENT

Confirming the Theory of Change (ToC)

The IDEA workshop should include an in-depth discussion of the intervention and its theory of change. Prior to the IDEA workshop, shortlisted delivery teams have participated in a General (introductory) ToC workshop and a programme-specific ToC workshop over a period of approximately 4-5 weeks. These workshops support the delivery teams to complete a logic model using a standard EEF template, along with developing an intervention description using the PLANIT framework and capturing the causal and contextual assumptions underlying their programme in an assumptions log. These documents are shared with evaluators when invited to prepare proposals.

The ToC workshops cover inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes as well as the causal links between them, but usually do not cover moderators and unintended consequences. We therefore recommend that the IDEA workshop focuses on identifying moderators that are expected to have the strongest influence on the outcome, providing enough information for evaluators to reflect in the set-up meetings on how these may be explored within the evaluation. We also encourage speculation of potential unintended consequences and consideration for mitigation and management of these.

Please refer to the EEF theory of change and logic model guidance for further information.

Defining IPE Dimensions

In addition to finalising the logic model, the IDEA workshop should be used to discuss and agree on relevant implementation dimensions. Please refer to the [EEF IPE guidance](#) for further information on defining and measuring implementation dimensions.

We particularly encourage discussion of what it means for the intervention to be delivered with **fidelity**. By fidelity we mean the degree to which the intervention is implemented as intended or prescribed. Fidelity sits on a spectrum across different dimensions (e.g., quality, dosage, responsiveness). The evaluation and delivery teams should aim to agree a definition of fidelity for the evaluation and should discuss and agree the extent to which the intervention should be faithfully adhered to and/or adapted.

After the IDEA workshop, we recommend evaluators complete the following intervention implementation dimensions table using the IPE research questions as specified in their proposal and updating them as necessary based on the information from the IDEA workshop.

The table captures the IPE dimensions that will be measured in the evaluation, and the table will be included in the evaluation protocol or study plan. We also encourage evaluators to reflect on the discussion from the IDEA workshop and be prepared to discuss options for measurement of implementation dimensions in the second set-up meeting.

Intervention implementation dimensions

IPE dimensions*	Research questions	Data collection methods	Participants/ data sources (number)	Data analysis methods

(*) Not all dimensions will necessarily be measured in all evaluations. We recommend agreement at set-up on IPE dimensions most relevant for the study, and use of these to structure a succinct set of research questions that closely align with the intervention ToC. All IPE designs should specify questions related to fidelity and usual practice. Please see the [IPE handbook](#) (pp. 14-15) for suggestions on how these dimensions could be measured.

How the programme differs from usual practice

The IDEA workshop should also include a discussion on what usual practice looks like and how the programme is expected to differ from usual practice. Points of discussion might include:

- whether the programme delivery is in addition to, or instead of, usual practice.
- what is our understanding of the nature of existing practice and existence of similar programmes, both in relation to programme content and pedagogical practices.
- which are the key elements that are expected to set the programme apart from business-as-usual.
- any relevant details about the context in which usual practice occurs (e.g., changes to the curriculum or school funding).

The following table can be used as a guide for the types of questions that may need to be asked in the evaluation to understand usual practice. Please refer to the [IPE guidance](#) for further detail.

Pre-intervention survey		Post-intervention survey
Control schools	Programme differentiation - what common programmes and practices already take place in schools in this subject area, what does 'business-as-usual' look like?	Contamination – comparing results from the pre-intervention survey, is there evidence that control schools changed their practice (e.g. increased provision or adoption of new practices?)
Intervention schools	Usual practice – how different is 'business-as-usual' provision from the programme?	Unintended consequences – is there evidence of displacement of provision?
All schools	Context – are there any local/national contextual issues that could affect delivery or lead to adaptation of usual practice/programme delivery? (e.g. inspections, change in regulations, covid disruption)	

APPENDIX 1: IDEA WORKSHOP AGENDA

1. Introductions (EEF – 10 minutes)
2. Roles, responsibilities and goals of the meeting (EEF – 5 minutes)
 - a. [For studies progressing through the pipeline: Differences between pilot, efficacy and effectiveness].
3. Intervention (Delivery team lead – 45 minutes)
 - a. Programme overview
 - b. Review existing theory of change/logic model (inc causal assumptions log where available)
 - c. Any aspects requiring further formative work or codification
 - d. Review contextual assumptions (using contextual assumptions log where available)
 - e. Identifying potential moderators and unintended consequences

BREAK (5 minutes)

4. Evaluation (Evaluation team lead – 45 minutes) – use IDEA Workshop Checklist
 - a. Defining fidelity and core components
 - b. Defining other implementation dimensions
 - c. Defining usual practice
5. Summary and closing (EEF – 10 minutes)
 - a. Review list of actions
 - b. AOB

APPENDIX 2: IDEA WORKSHOP CHECKLIST

We recommend evaluators and developers use this checklist to guide their IDEA workshop discussion, in addition to the PLANIT framework. The agreed content will then be included in the evaluation protocol (and final report).

- 1) Logic model:** Have all core components been clearly defined and represented in the model? Please summarise:
 - a. inputs:
 - b. activities:
 - c. outputs:
 - d. short-term outcomes:
 - e. long-term outcomes:
 - f. causal assumptions:
 - g. contextual assumptions:
 - h. moderators and other contextual factors:
 - i. unintended consequences:

- 2) IPE dimensions:** Does the evaluator have sufficient understanding of what it means for the intervention to be delivered with fidelity? Have other IPE dimensions relevant for the evaluation been discussed and agreed? Does the evaluator have sufficient information to reflect during set-up meetings on how these can be used to structure IPE research questions?

- 3) Usual practice:** Does the evaluator have sufficient information on the key elements that are expected to set the intervention apart from usual practice, to allow reflection during set-up meetings on key questions to include to understand usual practice?