

Institution: Bath Spa University
Unit of assessment: UoA25: Education
Title of case study: Dyslexia and Learning Style
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The Centre for Research into Inclusion and Vulnerable Learners' research on dyslexia and multilingualism in schools (Tilly Mortimore, Mim Hutchings and Anny Northcote) has influenced the public policy of several Local Authorities in England and of the South African Association of Learning Differences (SAALED), through which it has also impacted upon the practice of teachers, psychologists and facilitators in both countries. Mortimore's research on dyslexia and learning style in higher education is part of her wider body of research in this field which has influenced the curriculum and policies of several UK universities, and has also made an impact upon the policy and training offered by professional associations such as the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) and Professional Association of Teachers with SpLD (PATOSS).</p> <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Dr Tilly Mortimore joined Bath Spa University as a Senior Lecturer in Special Educational Needs in 2007 and continued to develop her research in dyslexia through the Centre for Research into Inclusion and Vulnerable Learners (CRIVL), which she founded alongside Dr Mim Hutchings and Anny Northcote. In 2009, in collaboration with the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) they successfully bid for funding from the Big Lottery fund for the <i>Dyslexia and Multilingualism</i> project (2010-12), which has already generated significant initial impact. . The project report (published on the BDA website) is included as an output from this project. Tilly Mortimore's other work on dyslexia since she joined Bath Spa University is represented by her research into the support offered by higher education to dyslexic students, described below. Both projects are part of a wider body of work which has made Dr Mortimore a recognised international expert in this field, demonstrated by her invitations to give keynote presentations and books widely recommended on reading lists.</p> <p>The <i>Dyslexia and Multilingualism</i> project investigated assessment and support processes for multilingual children who might be at risk of dyslexia. It involved training 55 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) in the use of literacy assessment methods and SpLD/dyslexia screening protocols, alongside 76 teaching assistants who received specialist training in SpLD and bilingualism. During the project, 462 children in 55 schools across the UK were screened with 240 identified as at risk of SpLD, who then took part in a 15-30 week intervention programme. The Lucid Assessment System for Schools (LASS) 8-11, Lucid Ability (verbal reasoning test only), Dyslexia Checklist and Working Memory Rating Scale were used to screen pupils initially. A full specialist dyslexia assessment was eventually completed with 44 pupils, each being assigned a Lucid Dyslexia Index (LDI) – a measure developed specifically for the project. The intervention took place in two phases, using two e-learning tools (Nessy spelling support and Rapid Reading) mediated by practitioners working intensively in half-hour periods with pairs of children. Participants were divided into three groups: pairs who undertook the intervention, pairs who undertook a paired reading activity with a trained teaching assistant, and a third waiting control group with no individual support (given intervention in phase 2). Pre, mid and post-intervention instruments – Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT 4), British Picture Vocabulary Scales (BPVS), Non-word test and York Assessment of Reading Comprehension (YARC) – were used to assess pupils' literacy skills.</p> <p>Findings indicated that both intervention groups outperformed the controls across all areas. In</p>

areas such as spelling, phonological decoding and reading accuracy, children who had worked with Nussy and Rapid Reading performed better than paired reading children. However, the latter group made higher gains in skills associated with reading fluency, silent reading sentence comprehension alongside comparative gains in single word reading. Overall, gains from phase 1 were sustained across the reading skills but were more fragile in spelling and writing.

The *Inclusive Practice in Higher Education* project (2010) built on Mortimore's earlier research which explored the experiences and needs of 60 male students with dyslexia. It mapped the relationship between cognitive style, dyslexia and the experience of dyslexic students in Higher Education, and has provided empirical evidence for claims that dyslexia is associated with a specific style profile. This has since been developed conceptually to encompass the role of metacognition in developing independent learners, and to critique policy, practice and constructs in HE learner support, as in the case study which applied a framework for evaluating the inclusivity of a university. A mixed-methods design interrogated policy documents and explored staff and student experiences through focus groups, interviews and a questionnaire. Findings suggested the existence of examples of inclusive culture at all levels of the case-study university, alongside a need for strengthened and clarified systems cementing links between policy and the work of facilitators and lecturers.

3. References to the research

1. Mortimore, T., Hansen, L., Hutchings, M., Northcote, A., Fernando, J., Horobin, L., Saunders, K. and Everatt, J. (2012) *Dyslexia and Multilingualism: Identifying and supporting bilingual learners who might be at risk of developing SpLD/dyslexia*. Research report for Big Lottery Fund. www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/files/Big-Lottery-Research-Report.pdf

2. Mortimore, T. (2013) Dyslexia in higher education: creating a fully inclusive institution. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 13(1): 38–47. DOI: 10.1111/j.1471-3802.2012.01231.x

The Dyslexia and Multilingualism project in partnership with the British Dyslexia Association (2010-12) was funded by the Big Lottery Fund (£456,000), RGT/1/010334521

The Inclusive Practice project was supported by an internal Pedagogical Research Grant from Bath Spa University (£5,000), won through competitive bidding within the University.

4. Details of the impact

Mortimore's work on dyslexia, learning style and multilingualism, undertaken through the Centre for Research into Inclusion and Vulnerable Learners (CRIVL) at Bath Spa University, has made impacts upon a number of user groups, both in the UK and internationally:

Impact upon Public Policy

Mortimore's textbook *Dyslexia and Learning Style. A practitioner's handbook* (2nd edition 2008) based on her research was recommended by the Department for Children, Schools and Families as a core text for training teachers on the SpLD/Inclusion Development Programme, and was included as a set text on the DCSF dyslexia-friendly school website before its archiving by the Coalition Government. Mortimore was invited to lead workshops for practitioners within Local Government (Wiltshire 2008; Bath & North East Somerset 2010), and with parents and teachers via local dyslexia organisations (e.g. Leicester 2011, Bridgnorth 2009, Richmond 2012).

Impacts upon Practitioners and Professional Services

The greatest reach of impact from the dyslexia research has been achieved through its influence on the South African Association of Learning Differences (SAALED). Mortimor gave keynote presentations to SALEED conferences in Cape Town (2008) and Johannesburg (2011) and delivered workshops in Paarl (for 120 teachers); in Soweto (for 150 teachers); and in Limpopo (for 200 teachers). The conferences attracted attendees from a wide range of independent schools and public schools, and private practitioners in the fields of speech and language therapy; occupational therapy; psychology; and social work, in addition to support groups such as Autism SA, Downs Syndrome, and Blind Association, who have adopted Tilly Mortimore's approaches and strategies in the development of their own work. In 2011, she delivered training for over 1,000 people in areas from Cape Town to the North East Vende rural region in collaboration with the Oprah Foundation. Impact statements from participants in these programmes indicate significant changes in practice. For example, one participant reported: "I have been fortunate to have heard almost all of the talks Dr Tilly Mortimore has presented for SAALED in South Africa. Her work has had a significant impact on my practise as a learning support specialist". Another said: "These strategies have been used in the classroom and during Remedial and Speech and Language therapy sessions." She also published in practice journals for teachers in South Africa such as the SAALED bulletin (2011), a journal with over 2000 readers. She established a partnership with the Bellavista School in Johannesburg to develop specialist dyslexia training for teachers, as a consequence of which a CPD course to train teachers to work with learners with SpLD across South Africa is in development, the only existing course of its kind in the region. Dr. Melodie Hougaard President of SALEED said: 'Tilly has become a household name for all in South Africa who are in any way involved with children with different needs in education... work that will impact on the lives of many young people, through changing perceptions and giving skills and understanding to their teachers and therapists. She has taken an understanding of Dyslexia and Learning Style to new heights in South Africa.'

In the UK, Mortimore's research has had a significant impact upon professional organisations such as the British Dyslexia Association (BDA). The BDA has used the *Dyslexia and Multilingualism* project to guide its policy and practice through the following channels:

- Research report published on the BDA website: (<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/files/Big-Lottery-Research-Report.pdf>);
- BDA Multilingualism conference 26/09/12, including presentations on the project
- Publication of *Dyslexia, Languages, and Multilingualism* as part of the BDA 40th anniversary series of mini-books, with chapters by Dr Tilly Mortimore et al.
- A chapter on Dyslexia and EAL/Multilingualism included in the BDA *Dyslexia Friendly Schools Good Practice Guide* (2012);
- Chapters on Dyslexia and Multilingualism by Dr Tilly Mortimore and others in *The Dyslexia Handbook* (2012).

The project report has already changed practice and training materials for the BDA dyslexia-friendly school and for BDA training courses, such as bespoke courses for international schools and colleges and open courses for teachers and TAs. The project itself made significant impacts on specific groups of professionals. For example 60% of the 131 participant TAs and SENCOs reported increased knowledge of dyslexia with 50% reporting an increase in understanding of bilingual issues. Over 50% of both reported higher levels of confidence in their roles as SENCO or TA. 89% of SENCOs reported higher knowledge of screening/testing tools with 75% suggesting that their TAs' skills and confidence had increased during the project. As a result of Mortimore's training of staff on paired reading (another finding from the project), the approach she devised is being utilised by Norton Hill School in Somerset in their library lessons and by sixth formers who are piloting paired reading during tutor times. In addition, the school is launching a training session for parents of year 6 and 7 students to enable the support of students with developing literacy skills.

Mortimore's other dyslexia research has also impacted upon policy and practice in the BDA. *Dyslexia and Learning Style. A practitioner's handbook* is a core text on the BDA website and forms the basis of BDA-accredited teacher training courses such as Southampton and Birmingham Universities. Bath Spa University, which has been recognised by the BDA as a Centre of Excellence for Research and Practice in SpLD/dyslexia. This has resulted in reciprocal partnerships with Bath and North East Somerset, Wiltshire and South Gloucestershire Local Authorities to train their teachers for Associate Membership of the British Dyslexia Association (AMBDA) accreditation, and a collaboration with the Professional Association of Teachers of SpLD (PATOSS) to train teachers to assess for SpLD. Approximately 150 teachers have either qualified to AMBDA level or are undergoing training which involves changes to classroom practice. It has also resulted in Bath Spa University being commissioned to deliver UK Government-funded Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) standards training to support teachers' work within inclusive and specialist settings. Graduates of this programme report that it has been 'life changing' both for them, their learners and their colleagues and it has given rise to applications for Dyslexia-friendly status from schools.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Individuals

- 1) Chairman, Leicestershire Dyslexia Association: Impact on Public Policy at regional level.
- 2) Interview with the President of South African Association of Learning Differences SAALED. Impact on practitioners, internationally.
- 3) Chief Executive, British Dyslexia Association. To corroborate impact on professional organisations
- 4) Interview with Bath & North East Somerset Local Authority representative. Impact on public policy at local authority level.
- 5) Chief Executive, Professional Association of Teachers of SpLD (PATOSS). Impact on practitioners nationally.

Others

- 6) National Web Archive <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00659-2009>. To corroborate impact on public policy.
- 7) Statements from participants in SAALED programmes led by Mortimore including the collaboration with the Oprah Foundation from Cape Town to the North East Vende rural region. Available from the University. Demonstrating impact on practitioners internationally.
- 8) CPD Impact statements from Bath Spa University SENCo course. Available from the University. Demonstrating impact on practitioners.