

<b>Institution: Institute of Education</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 25</b>
<b>Title of case study: Literacy and language development: working together to close the attainment gap</b>
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)

Literacy and language work reciprocally to support children's learning and attainment. Professors Morag Stuart and Julie Dockrell, in complementary and sometimes co-authored work, have had a substantial influence on the way children of all abilities and with a range of needs are taught to read and develop their broader oral language and literacy skills. Their work influenced national programmes in England on early reading, dyslexia and spoken language (National Literacy Strategy and National Curriculum) and speech, language and communication needs (the Better Communication Research Programme). Their findings provided educational professionals and speech and language therapists with the conceptual understanding that underpins good practice, and helped equip teachers to identify difficulties and intervene.

<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)
----------------------------------------------------------------

**IOE context:** Stuart and Dockrell's work sits within a rich field of IOE research and teaching. This enables a strong synergy between high quality research and practice. Research areas include children and young people with dyslexia, deafness, speech and language impairment (SLI), classroom talk and handwriting. The European Centre for Reading Recovery trains teachers in this successful method of bringing the lowest achievers at age six up to the standard of their peers. The Special Educational Needs Joint Initiative for Training (Senjit), a not-for-profit organisation at the IOE, offers specialist training for teachers of children with specific oral language and literacy difficulties.

**Early Literacy:** Stuart's influential work highlighted the importance of phonic knowledge to successful early reading.

Lessons from the Inner-city: An intervention study carried out in Tower Hamlets during the 1990s showed that after 12 weeks of systematic phonics teaching, Reception children made significant and long-lasting gains in word reading and spelling (see research reference **R1**). 112 five-year-olds, mainly English Language Learners (ELL), were tested before and after intervention, with 101 re-tested at age seven. Although word-reading gains persisted at that stage, a 2004 follow-up showed that the children's reading comprehension was only equivalent to that of the control group. Building on their earlier work demonstrating that good spoken language is important for reading comprehension, Stuart and Dockrell developed an evidence-informed programme, 'Talking Time' (**R2**). A quasi-experimental study showed this improved children's vocabulary, ability to understand and draw inferences from speech and to recount an incident.

Printed Word Database: Stuart's experimental study (**G2**), showing that beginner readers need many more exposures to printed words than they typically received before they can reliably read them in and out of context, challenged 'real books' methods of teaching reading current since the 1970s. This led to development of the Children's Printed Word Database (**R4**), now an interactive web-based word frequency count based on books young children read in school. It enables teachers to discover which words children need to know in order to read at a given level, and is used by researchers in designing studies. Research teams from 1993-2010 were led by Stuart (who moved to the IOE from Birkbeck in 1995) and Professor Jackie Masterson (who joined the IOE from Essex University in 2007).

Simple View: With colleagues, Stuart scrutinised the research on how children learn to read, and argued that an evidence-informed framework, the Simple View of Reading (SV) (**R3**), should replace the National Literacy Strategy's 'Searchlights' approach. SV highlights two interacting dimensions of skilled reading: word recognition and language comprehension.

**Speech and language difficulties:** Dockrell's research over several decades documented the nature and effects of Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). It highlighted the specific ways in which language-learning difficulties damage children's literacy development and scholastic attainment, and also affect their behaviour and well-being. The work demonstrated the challenges teachers and other professionals face in mapping these children's needs and providing effective interventions. It also pinpointed 'what works'.

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

Language and communication needs: For study **R6** (2001), researchers interviewed teachers of 69 children with specific language difficulties (SLD) and combined teachers' perspectives with objective assessments of individual children's needs. They found the teachers had inadequate training and support and were unaware of developmental links between poor language and problems with literacy or behaviour. Similarly, Dockrell's studies for the 2008 *Bercow Review of Services for Children and Young People (0-19) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)* (2008, see impact source **S3**) showed that provision was patchy and inadequate and that teachers were typically unaware of SLCN and its repercussions.

Better communication: Dockrell was a lead researcher on the Government's 2012 £1.5m Better Communication Research Programme (BCRP), which published 19 reports. She led one of its four strands, analysing children's needs in relation to available provision (**R5**). A particularly significant finding was that resources were allocated according to children's SEN categories – but these did not identify their language learning needs. By contrast, each child's needs depended on their individual characteristics, but differentiation to meet them was not evident in the classrooms. Researchers called for individual learning programmes set within a three-tiered system of service provision: universal, targeted (about 20% of children) and specialist (some 2-3%). *Programme: BCRP* (2009-12). Director: Professor Geoff Lindsay (Warwick); Co-directors: Dockrell, Professors James Law (Newcastle) and Sue Roulstone (West of England). Further IOE expertise came from Professor Tony Charman, director, Centre for Research in Autism Education 2009-12 and economist Professor Anna Vignoles (IOE 2003-12, now a visiting professor).

<b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

R1: Stuart, M. (1999) Getting Ready for Reading: Early phoneme awareness and phonics teaching improves reading and spelling in inner-city second language learners, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, **69**(4), 587–605.

R2: Dockrell, J.E., Stuart, M. and King, D. (2010), Supporting Early Oral Language Skills for English Language Learners in Inner City Preschool Provision, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, **80**(4), 497-516.

R3: Stuart, M., Stainthorpe, R. & Snowling, M. (2008), Literacy as a complex activity: deconstructing the Simple view of Reading, *Literacy*, **42**(2), 59-66.

R4: Masterson, J., Stuart, M., Dixon, M. & Lovejoy, S. (2010). Children's Printed Word Database: Continuities and changes over time in children's early reading vocabulary, *British Journal of Psychology*, **101**(2) 221-242.

R5: Dockrell, J.E., Ricketts, J. and Lindsay, G. (2012). *Understanding speech language and communication needs: Profiles of needs and provision*. London: DfE.

R6: Dockrell, J.E. and Lindsay, G. (2001), Children with Specific Speech and Language Difficulties – the teachers' perspective, *Oxford Review of Education*, **27**(3), 369-394.

**Indicative grants:** G1: Getting Ready for Reading and follow up studies: (1996) London Docklands Development Corporation and funding partners, £27,000; (1999) ESRC, £7,556; (1999) London Borough of Tower Hamlets, £40,000. Grantholder: Stuart.

G2: Development of Printed Word Recognition and Production in Early Primary Education (1993-6), £52,286, ESRC. Grant holder: Stuart.

G3: Better Communication Research Programme: Speech, Language and Communication Needs (2009-12), £196,253, DCSF. Grantholder: Dockrell

**Indicators of quality:**

IQ1: R1 was cited in US National Reading Panel Report (2000) and was part of the impetus to re-introduce phonics in both countries. It is cited in academic papers from four continents.

IQ2: ESRC grants were rated as outstanding by end-of-grant reviewers.

IQ3: An international academic consultants' report on the BCRP (**S2**) praises its four thematic reports, including **R5**, stating: "In conclusion we applaud the government for its vision in commissioning this project and the investigators who carried it out in such a thorough and thoughtful manner". It highlights the international implications for Dockrell and colleagues' findings.

IQ4: **R3** was one of *Literacy's* 10 most downloaded papers in 2009, 2011 and 2012, receiving 3558 downloads from the start of 2009 to the end of 2012. It was also reprinted as a chapter in an Open University textbook.

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

**Principal beneficiaries:** Stuart's work benefits all children learning to read in English schools. Dockrell's work benefits the 7-10% of children in England who have speech and language difficulties, their teachers and parents, policy-makers and commissioners of services for such children. Together, their work benefits children whose language development lags behind their peers at the start of school.

**Dates of impact:** Impact was at its height in 2008-9, influencing changes to the National Literacy Strategy (NLS), and 2013, with the BCRP roll-out and the 2014 National Curriculum's publication.

**Reach and significance:** IOE research on language and literacy has improved educational policy and practice, enhancing all three waves of provision: universal, targeted and specialist, as demonstrated below. This body of work has had instrumental impact<sup>1</sup> – underpinning national guidelines and advice, and commercial tests and schemes; conceptual impact – changing accepted ideas about the nature of language learning needs; and capacity-building impact – informing ITE requirements and CPD core content. It is helping to close the learning gap in areas of high social deprivation, where more than half of children start nursery with delayed language.

**Literacy – impact on policy and practice:** Since the 1970s, the place of phonics in the teaching of early reading has been hotly contested. Stuart has played a significant role in establishing a research-informed approach to phonics teaching for all children in England. The 'simple view of reading', which she espoused (**R3**), is embedded in the curriculum, teacher education and Ofsted guidance. She has written and influenced many official, commercial and third-sector teaching and teacher training materials, as exemplified below. Sir Jim Rose calls Stuart an 'unsung heroine of literacy' (**S1**).

**Rose report:** Following her Tower Hamlets intervention studies (**R1**), Stuart was asked to give oral evidence to the Select Committee inquiry on early reading (2005), and to advise on Jim Rose's early reading review (2006). She led in drafting an appendix that proposed replacing the Searchlights model with the 'Simple View' (discussed in **R3**; also see **S1**). The Government accepted all the Review's recommendations. The National Literacy Strategy (NLS) introduced the 'Simple View' to schools in 2007-8; it was also incorporated into ITE and CPD courses. Stuart helped develop resources and training, including:

- *Letters and Sounds* (DCSF 2007), a phonics teaching programme distributed free to all primary schools in England and still widely used;
- Training for Primary National Strategy (PNS) literacy consultants on language and reading development. These sessions, filmed and distributed throughout England as a set of training DVDs (2007), are also still used (e.g. **S8**).

**2014 Curriculum:** Stuart helped ensure that the 'Simple View' formed the framework for the teaching of reading in the final draft on 31 July 2013 (p4). The DfE's policy lead for English confirms Stuart's essential role as expert consultant (**S7**): "The papers she submitted to officials to support her commentary were invaluable in creating a robust rationale for the reading curriculum, and in developing officials' knowledge of the reading process, which in turn informed advice to Ministers. Her work is highly respected and admired". She played a key role in:

- Influencing the precise approach to systematic phonics;
- Extending the 'Simple View' to writing;
- Influencing content on spoken language, vocabulary and spelling.

**The Children's Printed Word Database (R4)** was used in developing national curricula and assessments in England including: a) the 2007 NLS framework, b) the spelling appendix for the 2014 English Curriculum and c) the DfE's Year 1 Phonics Screening Check introduced in 2012. Stuart helped design the check and, with Professor Rhona Stainthorp of Reading University, developed a training DVD for teachers. In the commercial world, she helped design a reading test making use of the database, published by GL Assessment in 2012. The first normative test diagnosing different types of word reading problem, it garnered more than £40,000 in sales by July 31, 2013. Stuart ran training sessions on its use with Ark and University of Chester Academies.

**Dyslexia:** Stuart was an expert adviser on Rose's 2008 Dyslexia investigation. Her annex on the roles, responsibilities and training of specialist dyslexia teachers helped Rose persuade the Government to commission new dyslexia training materials for the National Strategies (**S1**). Stuart

<sup>1</sup> Using Evidence: How Research can Inform Public Services (Nutley, S., Walter, I., Davis, H. 2007)

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

and Rea Reason of the University of Manchester provided the content of the resulting DfE training resource (2011, **S4**), which situated dyslexia along the continuum of normal development and embedded the 'Simple View' in a whole-school approach.

**Better communication – impact on policy and practice:** Dockrell's work has had a well-recognised and "highly significant" impact on policy and practice (**S9**), influencing views and attitudes across the speech, language and communication needs landscape and promoting the role of research in best practice (**S5**). Her findings on the damaging effect of speech and language difficulties on children's achievement and the lack of support they and their teachers received (e.g. **R6**) helped to persuade the Government to commission the influential *Bercow Review* and informed its findings and recommendations (2008, **S3**, e.g. p32), as National Communication Champion Jean Gross – appointed in the wake of Bercow – attests. She also played a personal role in triggering the review, which was commissioned in the wake of a meeting between Dockrell, Afasic's CEO, a parent and Ed Balls, then Economic Secretary to the Treasury (**S5**).

The Government's response to Bercow was an action plan in 2008, which launched the *Better Communication Research Programme (BCRP)* (**G4**). Dockrell's research helped underpin all its recommendations – published in 2012 and accepted by the Government – but most explicitly those calling for changes to the way children are categorised and for individualised provision for each child built around family needs (**R5**). Education Minister Edward Timpson, highlighting the BCRP, told the Commons (*Hansard* 19/06/13) that the 2013 Children and Families Bill would replace the current system of School Action and School Action Plus with new guidance for schools to "ensure that they identify children with SEN more accurately". Another important output of BCRP was the *Communication Supporting Classrooms Observation Tool*. Dockrell led in developing this research-informed web resource to help schools ensure they have classrooms which support the development of language and communication skills (**S6**). In Lewisham, where the tool was piloted, the Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) team used it to train teachers. They found it offered a useful conceptual framework for considering the classroom environment. It is hosted on the Communication Trust website, along with the BCRP *What Works* database, on which Dockrell advises. The database was developed as a direct result of Dockrell's BCRP study examining commonly used interventions to support children's language (**R5**), and had 22,700 visitors between April and 31 July 2013 (**S10**). The 19 BCRP research papers, published on a bespoke DfE website in December 2012, clocked up 17,125 downloads in four months, including 3,492 for Dockrell's thematic report.

*Talking Time*: Dockrell and Stuart helped shape, design and disseminate the high-impact Every Child a Talker (ECAT) programme (2008) and teaching materials for early years, adopted in all 152 LAs in England (**S9**). Informed by their 'Talking Time' resource and research, (**R2**), it "led to very large reductions in the number of children with language delay in the settings which took part", Gross confirms. She adds: "The ECAT programme provided a model of how to make change happen on a large scale". Talking Time itself is one of only five universal interventions included on the BCRP *What Works* database. The Database, Talking Time and the Tool all had a direct influence on the Communication Trust's Talk of the Town programme to help children and young people with SLCN in disadvantaged areas (**S10**).

<b>5. Sources to corroborate the impact<sup>2</sup></b> (indicative maximum of 10 references)
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

S1: Testimonial from Sir Jim Rose (available)

S2: Weismer, S.E. and Tomblin, J.B. (2013) *An International Perspective on the BCRP: Final Report of International Consultants* (available)

S3: DCSF (2008) *The Bercow Report* <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/8405/1/7771-dcsf-bercow.pdf>

S4: <http://www.idponline.org.uk>

S5: Testimonial from Linda Lascelles, CEO, Afasic (available)

S6: <http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-practitioners/communication-supporting-classroom-observation-tool.aspx>

S7: Testimonial from Jane Hough, former DfE policy lead for English (available)

S8: [http://www.childrenscentres.org.uk/eyfs\\_resources.asp](http://www.childrenscentres.org.uk/eyfs_resources.asp)

S9: Testimonial from Jean Gross, National Communication Champion (available)

S10: Testimonial from Anne Fox, Director, Communication Trust (available)

<sup>2</sup> All web links accessed 04/11/13