

Institute for
Effective Education

50 Years of Education at York

Linking research to practice in education

**‘Putting practice and social justice
research in dialogue to achieve
inclusion’**

Lucy Reynolds and Peter Rudd



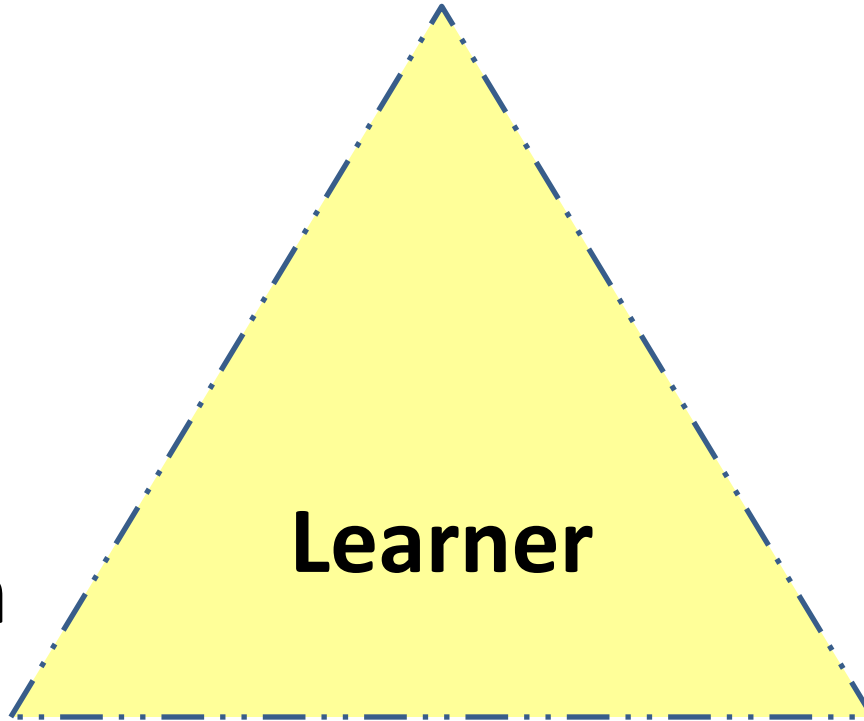
Underachievement, social justice and inclusion

social justice

Learner

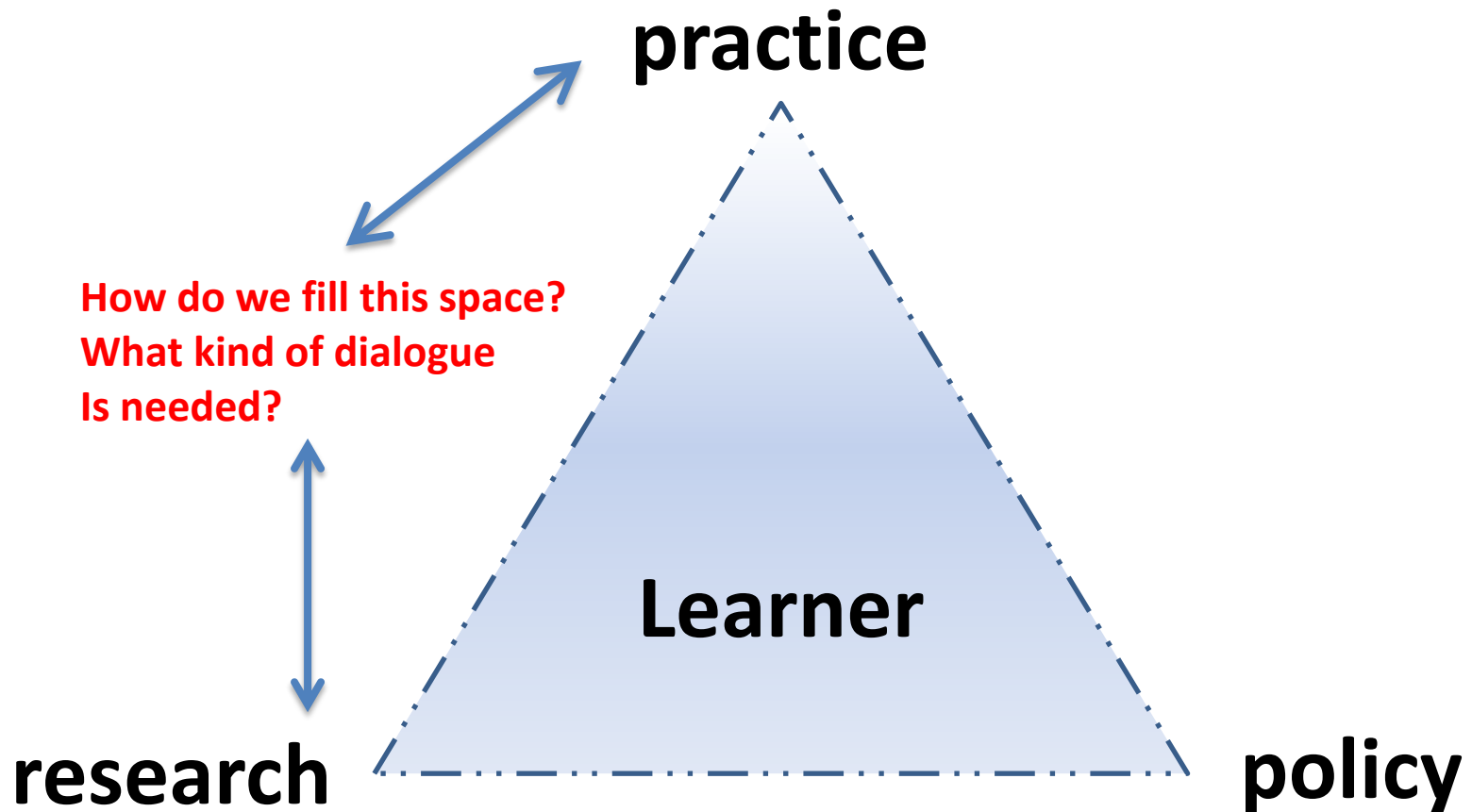
inclusion

**under-
achievement**





Triangle of 'partnerships' in education





How can we improve the dialogue between research and practice? (Four suggestions)

- 1. Practitioner ownership:** let teachers identify research issues and enable schools to 'commission' research
- 2. Practitioner involvement:** give teachers / schools the space and time to do research themselves
- 3. Researcher solutions:** provide practical research solutions, based on evidence
- 4. Researcher facilitating:** use shared, accessible language: also use networks and brokerage



Example: practitioner ownership

Lucy has given an example of how her school identified research issues

- **Challenging socio-economic context**
- **1998 – 12% 5 A*-C (7% including EM)**
- **Need to improve English results**
- **Need to improve literacy**

Issue resolved by the school through a range of strategies, e.g. ‘can do’ culture, HLTAs, data analysis, ‘Going Green’



Examples: practitioner ownership

But what if the school can identify the issues, but not the solutions? E.g.

- **Should we use other reading strategies alongside phonics – what do other primary schools do?**
- **Which off-the-shelf reading programme is best for my struggling readers?**
- **Which is the better approach for improving literacy for low achievers: pupils using ICT on their own or one-to-one tutoring by teachers?**



Practitioner involvement

In a survey of over 4000 teachers conducted for the GTC in 2010, only **33 per cent** of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that *'In the last 12 months I have undertaken my own research and enquiry to improve my practice'*.

But motivation does not appear to be a problem, since **60 per cent** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that: *'I would like more opportunities to do my own research to improve my teaching'*; and **65 per cent** agreed or strongly agreed that *'I would like more opportunities to collaborate with other colleagues on a piece of research'*.



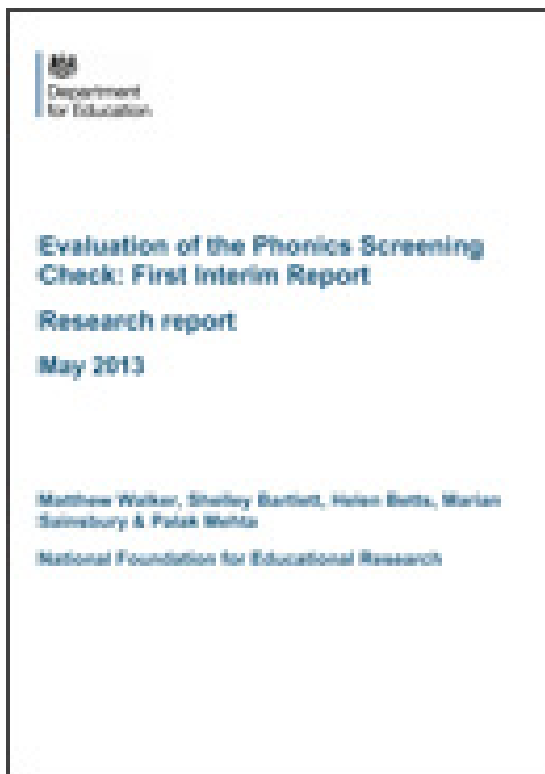
Examples of practitioner involvement?

- **support for external evaluations**
- **‘research’ during teacher training?**
- **research-engaged schools**
- **CPD & training course requirements**
- **Masters and PhD studies**
- **dedicated time for ‘research’?**
- **professional networks?**



Example: researcher solutions

E.g. Should we use other reading strategies alongside phonics – what do other primary schools do?



The NFER carried out a study of the Phonics Screening Check and this has recently been published by the DfE. The report revealed that a large majority (89 per cent) of teachers were overwhelmingly positive about phonics as an approach to teaching reading, and about its contribution towards early reading development. In the majority of schools, however, other strategies alongside phonics were also supported: 89 per cent also ‘agreed’ or ‘agreed somewhat’ that a variety of different methods should be used to teach children to decode words.



Example: researcher solutions

E.g. Which off-the-shelf reading programme is best for my struggling readers?



The Institute for Effective Education provides a (free) Best Evidence Encyclopaedia (BEE) which can help to answer this kind of question. This presents reliable reviews of research-proven educational programmes for primary and secondary education. The review of schemes for struggling readers can be found at:

http://www.bestevidence.org.uk/reviews/struggling_readers/index.html



Example: researcher solutions

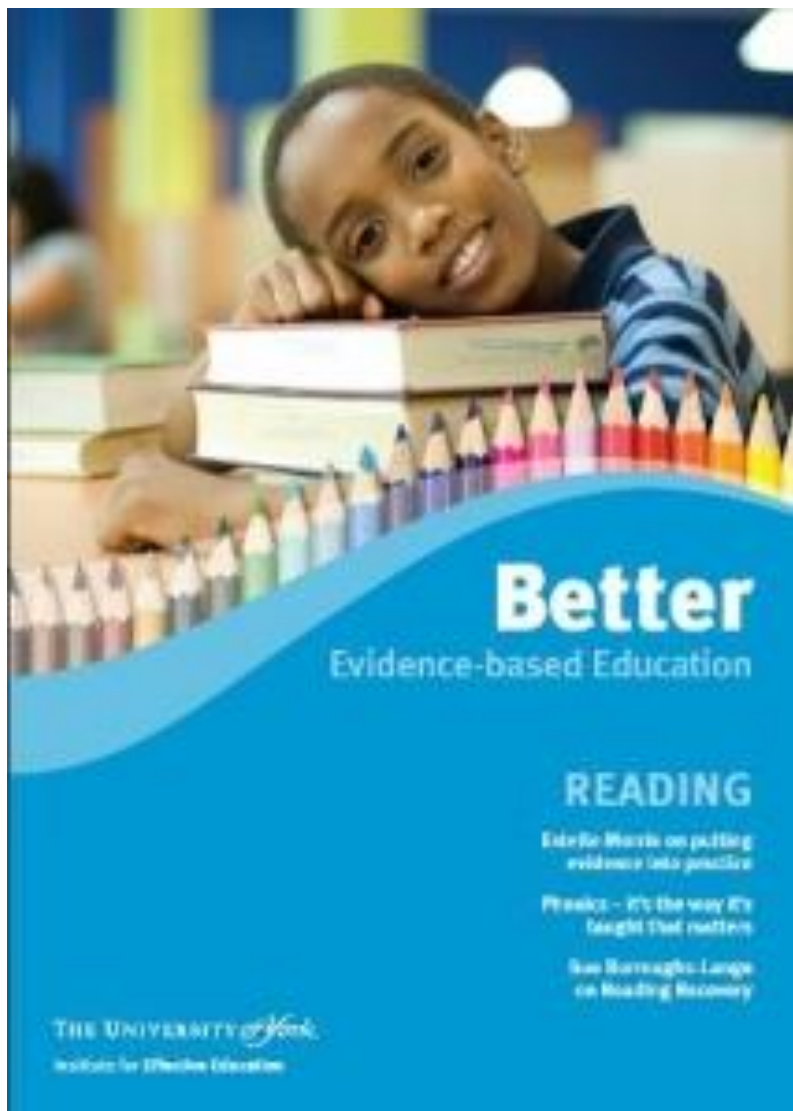
E.g. Which is the better approach for improving literacy for low achievers: pupils using ICT on their own or one-to-one tutoring by teachers?



Again, the BEE Encyclopaedia can help to answer this kind of question:

- one-to-one tutoring by teachers, effect size* = +0.38 in 19 studies
- one-to-one tutoring by 'paraprofessionals' + volunteer tutors, effect size = +0.24 in 18 studies
- small group tutorials with extensive training, effect size = +0.38 in 11 studies
- ICT had minimal impacts, effect size = +0.09 in 14 studies

* **Watch your language!**



Best Evidence in Brief is a fortnightly e-newsletter produced by the IEE at the University of York, and the Education Center at Johns Hopkins University. Every two weeks we send a round-up of items of interest from the education news. We look at the evidence behind the headlines, providing practical information on what works in schools. To sign up please send your contact details to iee@york.ac.uk

Better is a more detailed subscription magazine, published three times a year (£19.50). Accessible articles are written by respected educational researchers from around the world, and all are rooted in what works in the classroom.



Examples: researcher facilitating

YIPI – Yorkshire Informed Practice Initiative*

E4F – Evidence for the Frontline

CEBE – Coalition for Evidence-Based Research

AfUE – Alliance for Useful Evidence

EMC – The Education Media Centre

* Watch your acronyms!



Conclusion: how much progress have we made in linking research to practice in education?

Estelle Morris notes that we have a long way to go yet...

To sum up, this is a partnership that's got to work and the essence for me is that as well as being better at our own jobs it's the bits in between, it's the glue that holds us together. At the moment we're not talking about the glue that holds that central partnership of research, practice and policy making together. We are like bones that haven't got any fluid between them, we're just trying to bang ourselves together and that's why it scrapes and that's why people recoil. We need a conversation about the glue, the fluid in between that can make that relationship better.

But I hope that the examples given today show, at the very least, that we are making some progress in making this link better.