

Ensuring Impact in research: The case of reading intervention

Professor Robert Savage
University College London
Institute of Education

A Better Start is funded by the Ministry
of Business, Innovation and Employment



Impact – my early career

- Within organizations build relationships, seek and build opportunities to answer both **big and local questions**, use and stay abreast of the science, be highly aware of ethics

Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry 46:12 (2005), pp 1297–1308

doi: 10.1111/j.1469-7610.2005.01436.x

Phoneme manipulation not onset-rime manipulation ability is a unique predictor of early reading

Robert Savage¹ and Sue Carless²

¹McGill University, Montreal, Canada; ²London Borough of Sutton, UK

Educational Research, Vol. 47, No. 1, Spring 2005



Learning support assistants can deliver effective reading interventions for ‘at-risk’ children

Robert Savage^{1*} and Sue Carless²

¹Institute of Education, University of London, UK, and McGill University, Montreal, Canada; ²Learning Support Service, London Borough of Sutton, UK

Journal of Research in Reading, ISSN 0141-0423
Volume 27, Issue 3, 2004, pp 195–211

Predicting growth of nonword reading and letter-sound knowledge following rime- and phoneme-based teaching

Robert Savage
University of London, Institute of Education
Faculty of Education, McGill University

Sue Carless
Learning Support Team, London Borough of Sutton

Independent
review of the
teaching of
early reading

Final Report, Jim Rose, March 2006

National
SCIENCE
Challenges

A BETTER
START

E Tipu e Rea

Impact - my experience

- Later as professional scholar – relationship building: trust, communication flexibility
- gradually scholarly staff members (project managers, masters and doctoral students) became school board staff members. **A network of practice linking academia and school boards.**

SCIENTIFIC STUDIES OF READING
2018, VOL. 22, NO. 3, 225–247
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2018.1427753>



Preventative Reading Interventions Teaching Direct Mapping of Graphemes in Texts and Set-for-Variability Aid At-Risk Learners

Robert Savage ^a, George Georgiou^b, Rauno Parrila^b, and Kristina Maiorino^a

^aMcGill University; ^bUniversity of Alberta

Article

Linguistic and reading comprehension in simultaneous dual language instruction: Evidence against unitary constructs

Robert Savage
Faculty of Education, McGill University, Canada

Adriana Pace
St. Wilfrid Laurier School Board, Canada

International
Journal of
Bilingualism

International Journal of Bilingualism
2018, Vol. 22(3) 118–137
© The Author(s) 2017
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions
DOI: 10.1177/1540796117711592
journals.sagepub.com/home/ibj
SAGE

National
SCIENCE
Challenges

A BETTER
START

E Tipu e Rea

Impact

- Work with practitioner students (e.g. special activities, evening classes)
- Push broader agenda e.g. inclusive education
- Seek out opportunities for **cultural learning** – I taught on site in Kanasetake reserve
- Talk share be open and learn
- Endlessly network!
- Launch a thousand ships
- **Trust the science – ABRACADABRA**
- **in Australia**





Basics

**A Balanced Reading Approach for all Canadians
Designed to Achieve Best Results for All**

- Online and highly interactive
- Evidence-based literacy tool
- Designed for kindergarten and Grade 1

Available in English and French – free, free, free!!

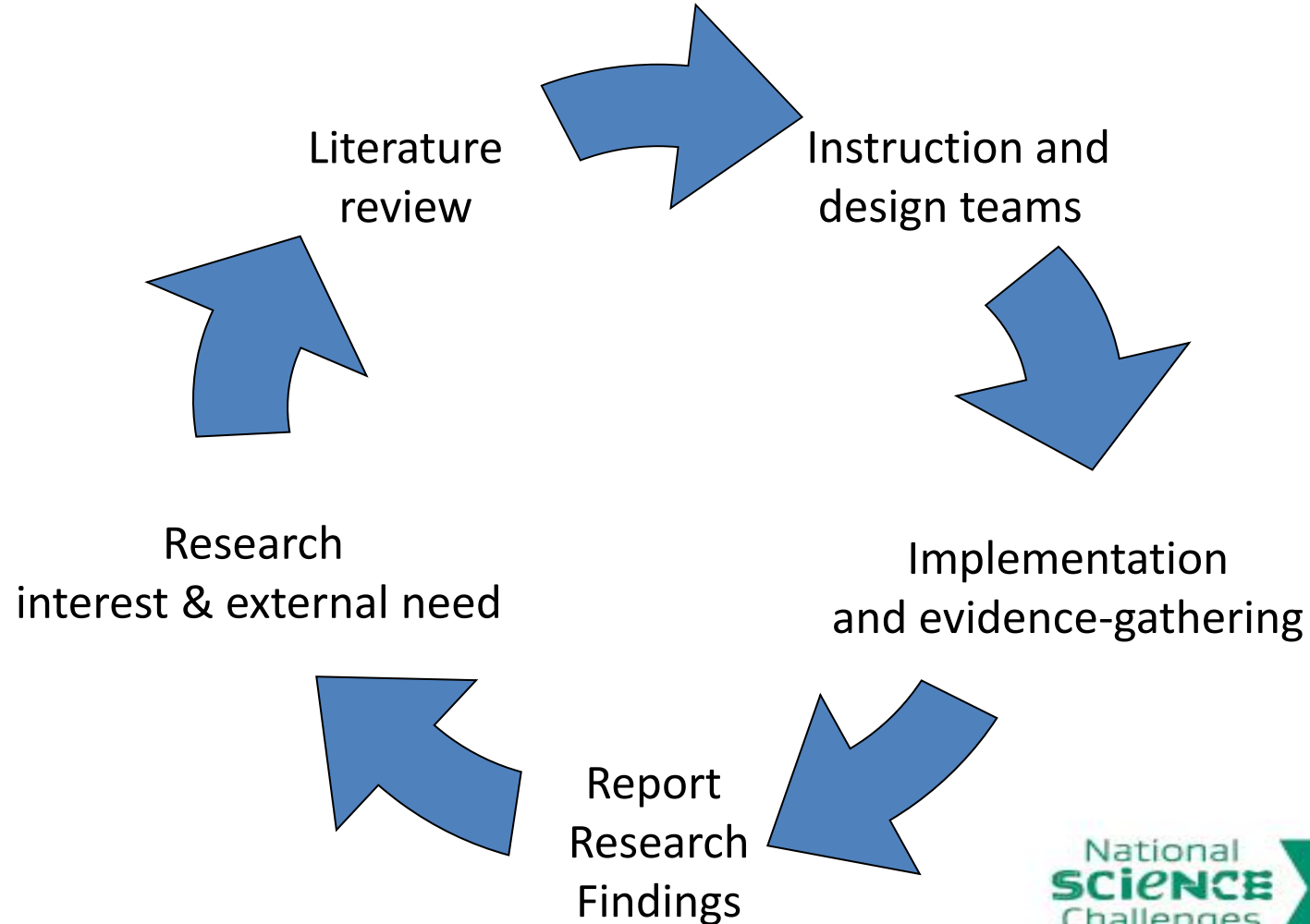
WEBSITE: <http://abralite.concordia.ca>

As part of a 'learning toolkit' ABRA can also be placed on local servers and thus includes an assessment module with student data

Impact: ABRACADABRA

- A 15+ year commitment from focus group to international implementation and national policy impact.
- Heavy piloting (**really listen to teachers**). For example on phonics linked to real books
- Cycles of research and development
- Make it a great tool
- Sustained quality PD and support (long term effects on teachers practice)
- Walk before running

Iterative cycles of R&D from focus group to National and international trial



ABRACADABRA: Trust the science

- Canadian content
- Science behind activities drawn from meta –analysis e.g. National Reading Panel (2000)
- (Then) Run in UK, Canada, Hong Kong,
- Opportunity arose to run in Northern Territories of Australia
- Issues of cultural appropriateness?

ABRACADABRA

- Prof Tess Lea (Now Sydney U) an experienced anthropologist there argued:
‘We’ don’t decide in advance what will work for others: This itself is a form of colonialism.
- If it is good run it well, try it out, then decide.
- Echoes of inclusion debates

Computers & Education 67 (2013) 250–264



ABRACADABRA aids Indigenous and non-Indigenous early literacy in Australia: Evidence from a multisite randomized controlled trial

Jennifer R. Wolgemuth^{a,*}, Robert Savage^b, Janet Helmer^{a,1}, Helen Harper^{a,1}, Tess Lea^{a,2}, Phillip C. Abrami^c, Adrienne Kirby^d, Kalotina Chalkiti^{a,3}, Peter Morris^e, Jonathan Carapetis^{e,4}, William Loudon^f

^a School for Social and Policy Research, Charles Darwin University, Casuarina, NT 0810, Australia

^b Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec H3A 2T5, Canada

^c Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec H3G 2V8, Canada

^d NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre, Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia

^e Menzies School of Health Research, Charles Darwin University, Casuarina, NT 0810, Australia

^f University of Western Australia, Crawley, WA 6009, Australia

Impact: Some other aspects

- Study the implementation process and the relatively novel discipline of 'Implementation Science'
- Have and use a theory of systems change
- Participation research as a stream alongside the basic science
- Relationship maintenance – no fly by nights
- Costs and benefits

Impact

- State of the practice versus state of the art (e.g. ABRA technology and / or tight now, the complexity of my ‘set-for-variability’ interventions).
- Distribute expertise for permanence, culture shift
- Avoid fashion / quick fix rhetoric
- Identify ‘replacement threats’
- Don’t fight unwinnable battles (‘heart-sets’ of **some** K teachers)
- Use media and multimedia

Impact - a summary

- Build 'Pathways to impact' over time
- Make plans to develop and share your study from the start not the end and with all partner communities (e.g. strong development input)
- Trust in well-executed applied science to deliver reliable, valid, important results on big questions relevant to policy
- Relationships: Trust, Communication, Respect, Equity: Genuine partnership and ownership