

What were the conditions and steps taken that have contributed most to the success of the measure?

The role of the stakeholders was crucial. In those schools where there was a whole-school approach from the start and where head teachers took ownership of the program, ToTT had the most success and some of those schools found means to continue the program.

Which stakeholders were involved in identifying needs and in the planning and design of the measure?

The project involved various agencies and organisations including staff and leadership team of the Manchester Federation of Schools, The Communication Trust and the Communication Trust Consortium, a group of voluntary and community service organisations who have expertise and knowledge of children's speech, language and communication, the local speech and language therapy department, specialist consultants, independent speech and language therapists, the police, charities, early years' services and most importantly children, young people and their families.

Who was involved in implementing the measure?

I CAN and ToTT, designated school staff, and local stakeholders.

Who has key responsibility for implementation?

I CAN and ToTT were strongly involved at the start of the program, but in collaboration with school leadership from the start, in order to ensure an independence and sustainability. During the intervention, a professional speech and language therapist is seconded from the local health service to work with the group of schools for one or two years. At the end of this time, the schools are expected to be able to sustain the ToTT approach themselves.

How are the different people involved in implementation being supported (e.g. do they receive specific training?)

The speech and language therapist spends one day per week in each school supporting teachers in their classrooms, and provides training for teachers and classroom assistants about how to identify and address SLC delays, how to promote good SLC skills universally in school, with parents, and in the community, and how to build SLC into curricula and school strategy documents. NGOs provide additional support and training to help build professional bridges between the schools as education specialists and the speech and language therapists as healthcare professionals.

What have been the obstacles to introducing the measure? How have they been addressed?

Ensuring that senior school leadership was fully behind the program. Conflicting school priorities and competing issues would sometimes decrease the focus or attention on the measure. Working to strengthen and ensure a whole-school approach and designating a staff communication-lead from or with the support of senior leadership.

Is there a monitoring/evaluation system in place?

Yes

What is monitored?

Signs of progress among students.

Who monitors and how?

Some schools have developed their own monitoring system.

Are further evaluation planned and when will the results be available?

The EEF grant funded a randomised controlled trial of ToTT between 2013 and 2015, to provide evidence supporting the link between speech, language and communication and educational attainment in primary school children in 64 primary schools across three local authorities. The link between ToTT and changes in literacy levels, and was independently evaluated by Queens University Belfast (QUB). A primary evaluation focusing on the impact on reading was released by the EEF in May 2016. Although there was no overall impact on reading comprehension during the four terms of the project, teachers were clear that they hoped to see improvements in reading and writing in the longer term. Teachers and senior leaders also reported positively on the wider benefits of the programme, with 88% of staff confirming that ToTT was an important addition to the provision in their school. The independent secondary evaluation exploring the wider benefits and impact of the ToTT approach brings together findings from the EEF evaluation, information from an in-depth process evaluation undertaken by the University of Manchester, and data collected by schools involved in the RCT.

What has been the impact of the measure?

An initial needs analysis was undertaken to provide baseline measurements against each of the four aims and to offer insights into the breadth of SLC needs across the locality, shaping the programme:

- More than a quarter of 3-4 year-olds in the schools' nursery classes had standardised scores below 70 – a level which would meet the criteria for a Statement of SEN in many local authorities
- 27% of children sampled in Key Stage 1 tested at this 'severely delayed' level.
- There was a similar picture in Key Stage 2, with poor vocabulary emerging as a particular issue and half the children tested having significant difficulties.
- At secondary level the incidence of difficulties was at 50% of thirteen year olds assessed with significant language difficulties.
- Staff from across the Federation were under-identifying children's SLCN at up to 50%.

TOTT ensures changes in policy and practice, implementing and embedding a community-wide approach to supporting all children's communication. TOTT has immediate impact, improving children's speech, language and communication as well as staff confidence, skills and knowledge in identifying SLCN and supporting children's communication development through sustainable interventions.

What resources are involved (material, space, amount of funding)?

EEF Funding ended in 2015 resulting in some schools not being able to continue. Other schools continued to fund their own program in 2016. It is possible that some of these schools have continued into 2017.

Is the measure still running? If not, why not?

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Further info (website, contact person e-mail, organisation details)

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Relevant documents, photos or videos

<http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/projects/talk-of-the-town/>

http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/32946/tott_report_manchester_university.doc

<http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/projects/talk-of-the-town/randomised-controlled-trial/#sthash.VMiyNxZP.dpuf>