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# How educational publishers are engaging with contemporary educational research and one example: The *Oxford Impact* initiative from Oxford University Press

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# Overview

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- Educational publishers' engagement with educational research
- One example: Oxford University Press and the *Oxford Impact* initiative
- Collaborative projects from *Oxford Impact*:
  - Research study: *isiXhosa and English – school dictionary*
  - Research study: informing the *Oxford Reading Buddy* digital reading service
- Reflections on collaborations with OUP
- How might we collaborate further?
- Comments and questions

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# **Educational publishers' engagement with educational research**

## Educational publishers and educational research

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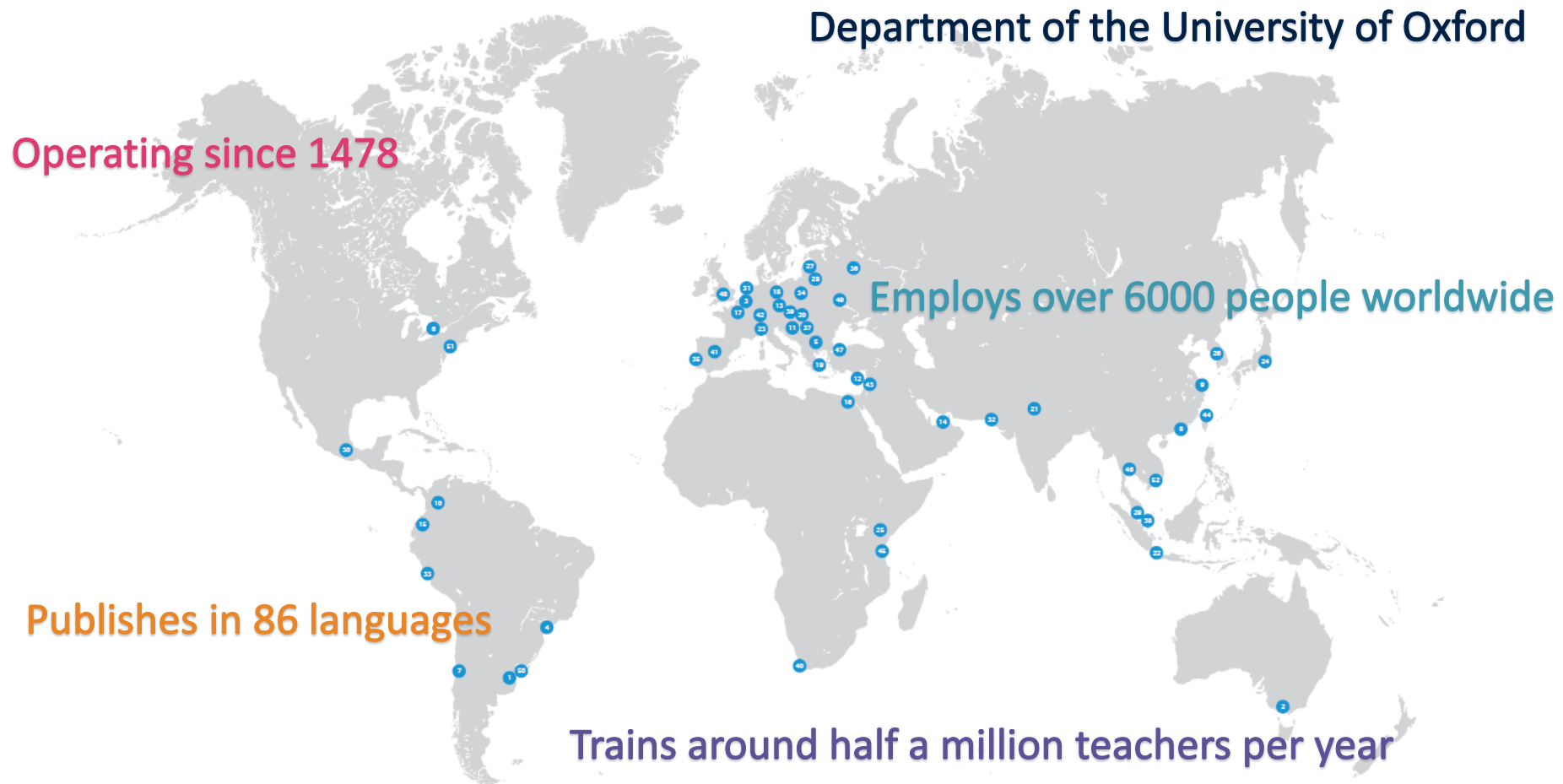
- Everyday, all around the world, educational publishers promote policy change through their partnerships with policymakers, schools, teachers and parents
- Some of these partnerships and the materials of educational publishers are well known, others less so
- Partnerships that publishers form with educational researchers (and the research that results) are of increasing importance in an era that includes *What Works Centres* (UK) and *What Works Clearinghouse* (USA)

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# Oxford University Press and the *Oxford Impact* initiative

# Oxford University Press (OUP) around the world

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# Example OUP collaboration to achieve school improvement – Oxford OWL



## Leading organizations



## Experts



## Schools, practitioners and parents



# The *Oxford Impact* initiative

Engaging OUP colleagues, researchers, practitioners and professional bodies worldwide

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- **Workshops** – 85 staff – Australia, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Africa (SA), Spain, UK
- **Interviews with staff** – Australia, SA, UK
- **Interviews with experts** – associations, foundations, institutes, trusts, academics and teachers in 18 schools (SA, UK)
- **Language/user experience testing** with staff – Australia, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, Pakistan, SA, Spain, UK
- **Exemplar evaluations** – 8 products – UK, Australia, Malaysia, SA, Taiwan
- **Creation of guides and templates** peer-reviewed by academics/key stakeholders



The Oxford Impact Framework is a systematic approach to evaluating the impact of Oxford University Press products and services. It was developed through a unique collaboration with the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and is supported by the Oxford University Department of Education.



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Evidence for  
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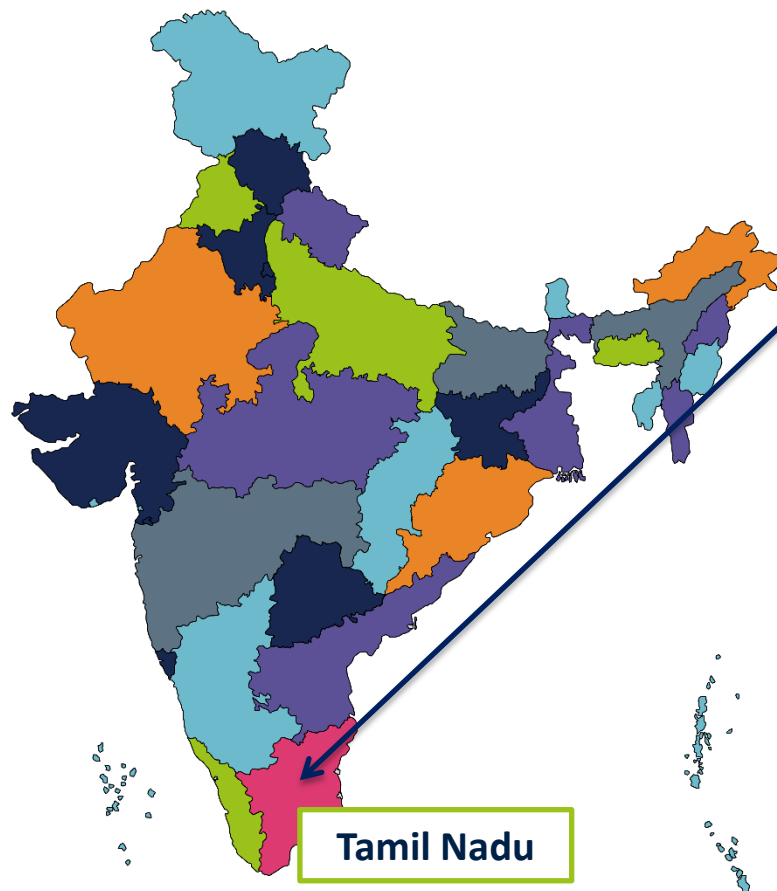
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# OUP recognizes that the demand for evidence of impact is global



## One example:

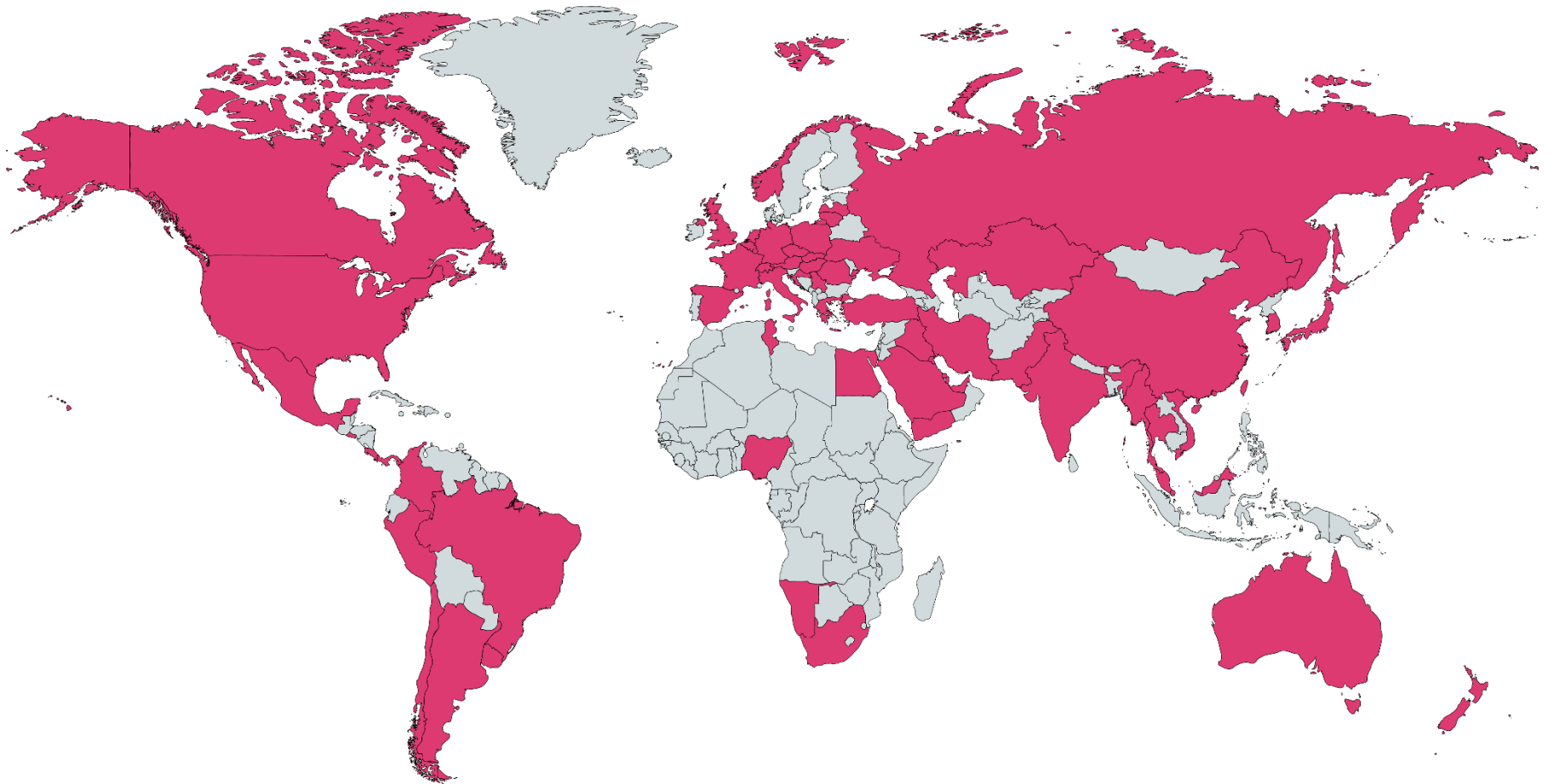
demand for evidence of the effects of learning materials in Tamil Nadu, India

*'There is increasing global demand from governments, ministries of education, and educational institutions for **impact evidence for educational solutions**. Proving efficacy serves multiple purposes, both internal and external, and is an increasingly important element of the business of producing educational tools and services. In education, **efficacy studies are the critical fuel that powers trust.**' Outsell Inc.*

# Global reach

Participant countries

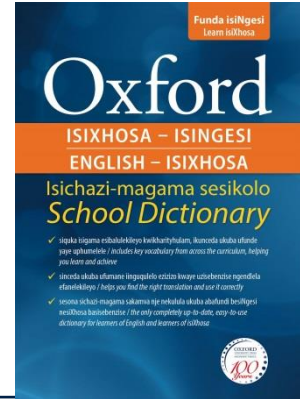
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# Collaborative projects from *Oxford Impact*

# isiXhosa and English – school dictionary



- **Background:** to support the learning of English as an additional language
- **Research question:** ‘What are teachers’ perceptions of the difference that the Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: isiXhosa and English makes to teaching and learning in the classroom?’
- **Methodology:** qualitative research carried out in two stages
  - **1st stage (2016):** OUP staff guided by NFER
  - **2nd stage (2018):** same staff member – now independent researcher
- **Research method:** Teacher interviews
- **Duration:** March 2016; June 2018–March 2019

## 2016 and 2018:

- Primary/intermediate schools (grade 7, ages 12–13)
- Same selection criteria
- Interviews in isiXhosa conducted by same interviewer

## 2016: Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape

- 6 interviews with grade 7 language teachers in 5 schools
- OUP staff guided by NFER

## 2018: all other districts in the Eastern Cape

- 29 interviews with grade 7 language teachers in 23 schools
- Independent researcher

# isiXhosa and English – school dictionary

## Evaluation findings

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- Saved time for teachers – they no longer have to be ‘walking dictionaries’
- Majority of teachers felt that bilingual dictionaries are easier to use than monolingual dictionaries for learners at grade 7
- The dictionary empowered learners to understand what they were reading
- In the first stage of the research, positive impacts were not limited to English, but extended to isiXhosa as a home language
  - This was a surprising finding as monolingual dictionaries are usually used to support the mother tongue

# Oxford Reading Buddy

## Background

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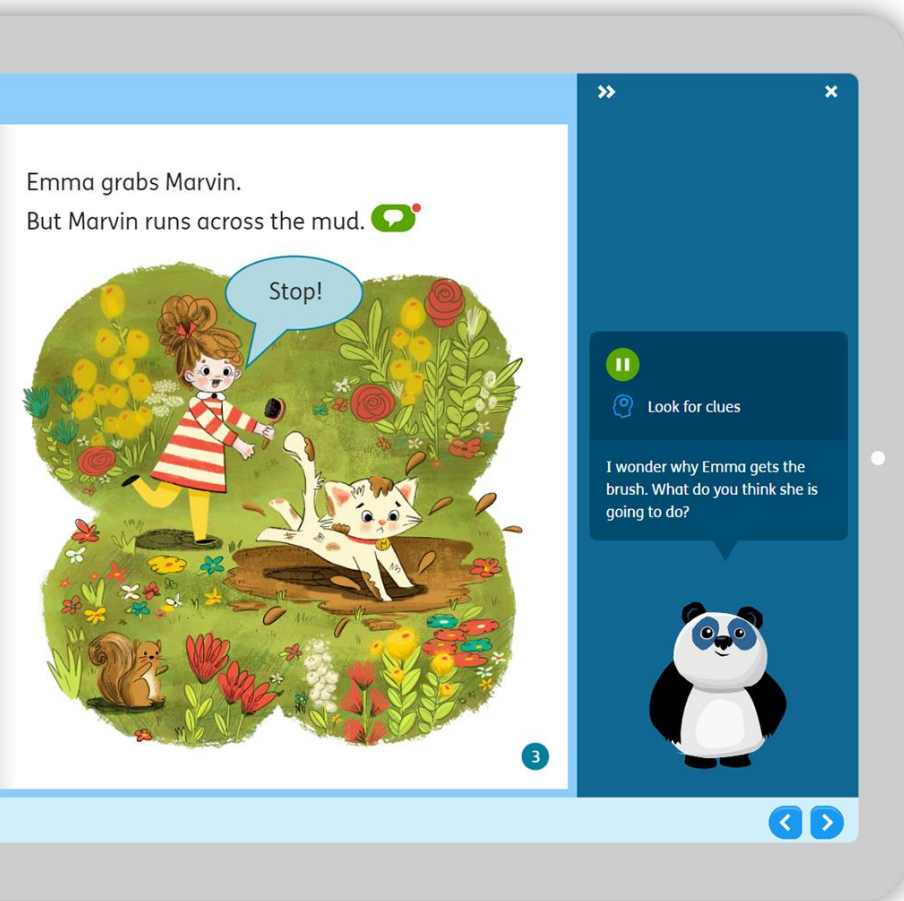


- A major cross-divisional project to deliver a shared digital reading service to customers across our Education Division – UK, Australia, South Africa, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, China
- One shared online digital reading service, blended with print
- Underpinned by shared technology, shared reading levels (Oxford Levels), shared (as well as local) content
- Informed by its own impact study



# Oxford Reading Buddy

## Coaching eBooks



- Learners are asked to think and reflect rather than input responses
- Focuses on 7 Key Comprehension Strategies informed by the work of Professors Jane Oakhill and Kate Cain, Lancaster University, UK
- Models the thoughts of a reader and encourages them to be active
- Complements, but does not replace, the teacher or parent, and supports independent reading

# Oxford Reading Buddy

Informed through a range of research activities

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- Research on parental engagement, and review of research into eBook features: Professor Kathy Sylva, Oxford University
- Referenced Professor Kou Murayama's research, University of Reading, UK, and consulted with him on motivation and reward strategies
- Difficulties included:
  - Lack of existing academic research
  - Reconciling research with testing undertaken with teachers; children's views of early versions of the Reading Buddy



# Oxford Reading Buddy

Impact study

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## Research question

What impact can the use of the prototype Coaching eBooks have upon the reading attitudes and reading activities of pupils in Years 1 and 5?

## Areas for investigation

To what extent can Year 1 and Year 5 teachers differ in their implementation and use of the prototype Coaching eBooks?

What benefits do teachers associate with using the prototype Coaching eBooks?

What possible impacts on teachers, lessons and pupil outcomes do Year 1 and Year 5 teachers perceive from using the prototype Coaching eBooks?

# Oxford Reading Buddy

## Impact study

- **Evaluation option:** RCT
  - **Research method:** Pupil questionnaires and teacher interviews at the beginning and end of the RCT; classroom observations during the RCT; system data
  - **Teams:** OUP publishing, OUP marketing, OUP digital, Oxford Impact team, external researchers
  - **Time:** 6 months
- 3 primary schools in England
  - 322 children: Year 1 (ages 5–6) and Year 5 (ages 9–10)
  - 12 classrooms:
    - 6 Coaching eBook classes and 6 ‘control’ classes (*‘dual form entry’*)
  - 7 prototype Coaching eBooks used over 3 months

# How the findings from the impact study transformed Oxford Reading Buddy

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Impact study finding	Impact on the service, support/messaging
Children weren't motivated to take the quizzes and the user journey from Coaching eBook to quiz was not smooth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduced a number of new features aimed at encouraging children to take the quizzes e.g. 'I've done my First Quiz' badge</li><li>• Screen at the end of each eBook in which the Buddy encourages the child to take the quizzes</li></ul>
Children weren't motivated to open the hotspots (activation of the Reading Buddy) in the Coaching eBooks as frequently as hoped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduced an overview from the child's Reading Buddy as part of a child's 'first time here' experience, highlighting the purpose of hotspots in coaching texts</li><li>• Highlighted importance to teachers in the User Support site of opening hotspots</li><li>• Prioritised further research on engagement with the hotspots with our partnership schools</li></ul>

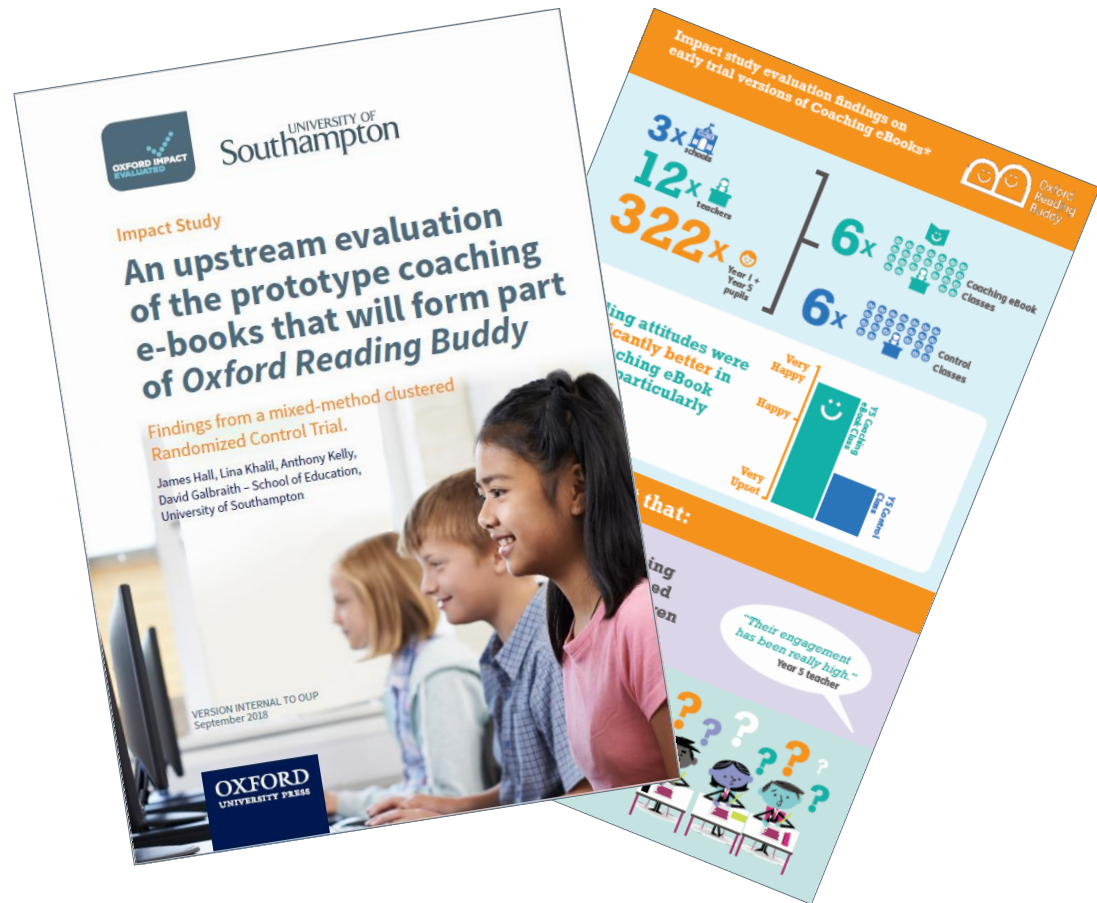
# Find out all about it

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**Report and infographic**  
[Oxford Impact website](#)

**About the product  
and underpinning  
research**

[Pedagogy and impact](#)



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# **Reflections on collaborations with OUP**

## Criteria for successful inter-professional collaboration following ORB impact study

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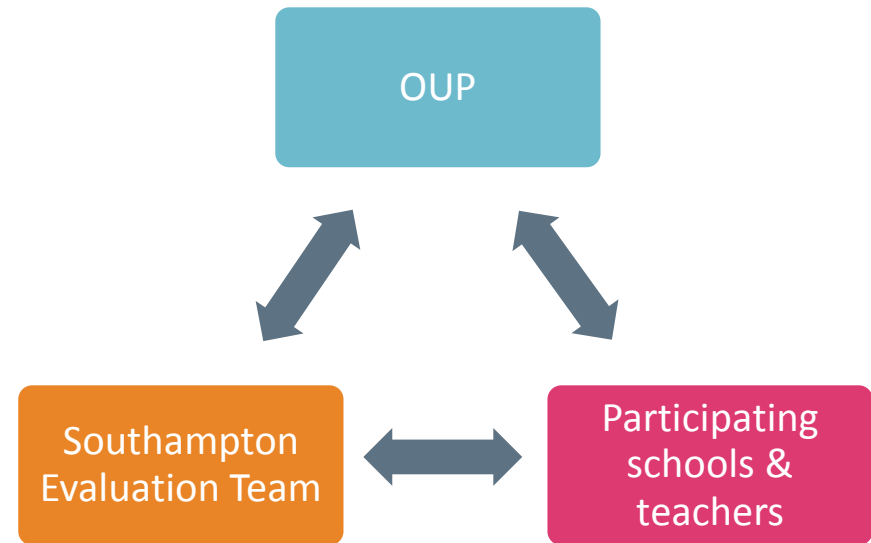
- Pluralistic approach from all parties
  - Diversity of perspectives and beliefs is useful
  - Reinforcement of shared goals and values of the group
    - ‘buy-in’
- Monitor language in speaking and writing
  - Terminology cannot be assumed to be shared across, and within, professions
- Plan ahead
  - Leave time for sharing of draft documents with wording and messages that all stakeholders can agree to
- Patience at all times

# Developing, maintaining and reinforcing unique relationships between schools, researchers and publishers

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- External evaluations require professional distance to be maintained from the developer of that being evaluated
- OUP recruited schools to trial the prototype Coaching eBooks
  - ...and trained teachers to use them
- Southampton's involvement was solely as an external evaluator
- Teacher interviews were strictly confidential to maximize quality and quantity of teachers comments and observations
  - E.g.: *'Children weren't motivated to take the quizzes'*

Inter-professional relationships in the ORB impact study:



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**How might we collaborate further?**



# Opportunities for further collaborations between educational publishers and educational researchers

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- Currently, educational policymakers, schools and teachers are familiar with maintaining separate relationships with educational publishers and educational researchers
- However, there is a growing global demand for services and materials from educational publishers to be based on research evidence
- We can do more by ‘closing the circle’ and working together – but there are risks to be negotiated. These include:
  - Inconsistent language within and across professional fields
  - Inconsistent and/or conflicting goals for different stakeholder groups
- What role might these collaborations play for the development of educational theory?
- What potential is there for variation in who forms these collaborations?
  - Do they have to be initiated by educational publishers?

# In summary

## Contributions to professional capital and community

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- Increasing demand for materials and services built on research evidence
- The *Oxford Impact* initiative is a way of responding to this demand
- Through the *Oxford Impact* initiative OUP works with policymakers, researchers and practitioners to promote educational change
- *Oxford Owl* makes an innovative contribution to professional capital by making hundreds of eBooks free to access, providing pathways to school improvement, and engaging with the community of experts and practitioners
- *Oxford Reading Buddy* makes an innovative contribution to the professional capital of teachers and school communities by bringing parents closer to the more usual teacher/child relationship
- This presentation is another example of a collaboration between an educational publisher and researcher to raise professional capital as regards teaching and learning
  - Raising professional capital means bidirectional knowledge exchange

# Comments and questions



Please email us with additional comments, questions and follow-ups:  
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