

Elsbeth McCartney

Biography

Elsbeth holds qualifications as both a speech and language therapist (SLT) and primary teacher, with professional experience in both and long experience as an academic teaching and managing qualifying and post-graduate courses for teachers and SLTs.

She has acted as principal investigator for funded research projects into aspects of childhood speech and language disorders; language and literacy development, and co-professional working; co/edited three books, co/authored thirteen book chapters and published fifty peer-reviewed journal papers on these topics.

She is a Professional Partner (Visitor) for the UK Health and Care Professions Council, and is a Fellow of the UK Higher Education Academy and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT), where she is a member of two working groups.

Abstract

Ireland is embarking on a new and large-scale demonstration project where in-school SLT and OT services will be delivered in 75 schools and 75 pre-schools. A research project will also be undertaken. The project will use a Tiered approach, where Tier 1 services support all children to access the curriculum; Tier 2 services implement strategies for children at risk, and Tier 3 services co-produce individualised support for children with significant and persistent difficulties.

This presentation will very briefly outline some international service-delivery models for SLTs' work in schools, and discuss definitions of Tiered approaches used in education and SLT settings, and how these map on to each other. It will outline the findings of a recent review of high-quality research on the effectiveness of SLT service-delivery pathways. Extensive evidence was found for effective SLT work at Tier 3, but limited evidence on Tier 1 and Tier 2 SLT services in schools, although effective educational projects are available. Lack of evidence does not suggest inadequate services, but a need for principled studies. Qualitative research has reported enhanced practice in collaborative SLT school services, but mixed-methods implementation studies combining evidence of outcomes with participants' views and evaluation of real-life service delivery contexts are needed. The conclusion therefore stresses the importance of the research commencing in Ireland, which will advance understandings in this under-researched area, and so influence service developments internationally.