

<b>Institution: Robert Gordon University</b>		
<b>Unit of Assessment: UoA34 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management</b>		
<b>Title of case study: Shaping government library policy in Scotland</b>		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2001-2018</b>		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Williams, DA.	Professor	1983-2014
Wavell, C.	Research Assistant	1997-2007 and 2013
Coles, L.	Research Assistant	1998-2006
Morrison, K.	Research Assistant	2007-2016
Reid PH.	Professor	1998 to date
Hood, C.	Research Assistant	2016-2016
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013-2019</b>		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? YES</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>Research conducted between 2001 and 2018 has developed an evidence base on the role of libraries (both school and public) in supporting and enhancing literacy, numeracy, information literacy and learning. The research has had an impact on public policy (social, cultural and education) and decision-making at governmental level with Scottish Government policies associated with libraries have been demonstrably influenced by work undertaken. The research has, in particular, helped state the case for the contribution of school libraries to learning and the role of professional school libraries and librarians and the importance of early-years engagement with libraries.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>The underpinning research was a foundation study of the impact of school libraries on learning, funded by Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, 1999-2001 and further work undertaken for Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) in 2013 when curriculum authorities and Scottish Government were developing guidelines for self-evaluation by Scottish school libraries of their impact on learning. The research involved working with teachers and librarians and identified school library impacts on achievement and attainment in secondary school contexts. Case-studies showcased approaches librarians could adopt, and indicators that could be developed and tailored to specific learning contexts.</p> <p>Dissemination of findings from this study (<b>UR1</b>, <b>UR2</b>) resulted in further work around the international evidence on the impact of school libraries on learning and achievement (<b>UR3</b>) to provide an evidence-base to support ongoing DfES consultations about support for, and staffing of, school libraries in England. The work continued to inform policy discussions with further commissions from DfEs and Resource (2002), to provide a review of evidence of the impact of primary school libraries (<b>UR4</b>). These remain underpinning research for this case-study.</p> <p>These studies highlighted the importance of teacher-librarian collaboration in developing the information literate (IL) learner and led to the team's research into teachers' perceptions and experiences of IL. This was widely published in the professional and academic press including JoLIS. Since 2014, Williams has been invited to speak on school library policy to practitioner organisations and conferences in the UK and overseas, notably Slovenia in 2018, which was</p>		

followed by a one-to-one meeting with the Slovenian Minister of Education. Although now retired, Williams remains active in the information literacy field and, was (2020) invited, based on this career-long body of work, to serve as President of the School Library Association.

The reports generated from the work in 2001-02 (**UR1, UR2**) continued to have significance and, in 2013, Williams, Wavell and Morrison were commissioned by Scottish Library and Information Council (on behalf of Scottish Government) to revisit their work and to update it in the intervening years (2002 until 2013). This was published as 'Impact of School Libraries on Learning: Critical review of published evidence to inform the work of the Scottish education community' (**UR5**) developing impacts in both the library practitioner and teaching communities in Scotland and beyond. This research moved beyond IL and considered links between the provision of school libraries, reading, literacy, numeracy and impacts on attainment and performance in schools.

The connections between engagement with libraries and educational development and attainment led the Scottish Government to implement a pilot project in 2015 to ascertain methods by which all children could *also* be enrolled in the public library network. This was done through the *Every child a library member* scheme. RGU (Reid and Hood) was commissioned, in 2016, by Scottish Library and Information Council to conduct the evaluation (**UR6**) of the pilot, leading to the permanent implementation of the scheme and the concept of *active* library membership being including the Scottish Government's *Programme for Government* in 2017.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

**UR1** – Williams, D.A. and Wavell, C. (2001) *Impact of the School Library Resource Centre on Learning*. Library and Information Commission Research Report 112. [Available at: <http://www4.rgu.ac.uk/files/SLRCreport.pdf>]

**UR2** – Williams, D. A. and Wavell, C. (2001) Evaluating the impact of the school library resource centre on learning. *School Libraries Worldwide*, 7(1), 58–71. [Available at: <http://www.iaslonline.org/files/jan01-williams-wavell.pdf>]

**UR3** – Williams, D, Wavell, C and Coles, L. (2001) *Impact of School Library Services on Achievement and Learning*. Report for Department for Education and Skills and Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries. Information Management Research Report No. 10. [Available at: <http://www4.rgu.ac.uk/abs/research/page.cfm?pge=5248>]

**UR4** – Williams, D, Coles, L and Wavell, C. (2002) *Impact of School Library Services on Achievement and Learning in Primary Schools*. Report for the Department for Education and Skills and Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries. Information Management Research Report No. 11. [Available at: <http://www4.rgu.ac.uk/abs/research/page.cfm?pge=5931>]

**UR5** – Williams, D., Wavell, C. & Morrison, K. (2013) *Impact of School Libraries on Learning: Critical review of published evidence to inform the work of the Scottish education community*. For Scottish Library and Information Council [Available at <https://scottishlibraries.org/media/1211/impact-of-school-libraries-on-learning-2013.pdf>]

**UR6** – Reid, P and Hood C. (2016). *Every child a library member: an evaluative review*. Report for the Scottish Library and Information Council [on behalf of the Scottish Government]. [Available at <https://scottishlibraries.org/media/1204/ecalm-review-2016.pdf>]

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research has provided clear evidence of: the positive role and impact of libraries on society including, in the school library sphere, on learning, including reading and information literacy as well as, academic attainment, and attitudes to reading; and, in the public library sphere, allied to the points above, associated value of children's early engagement with the library and positive benefits for their reading, attainment and learning.

The reports of 2001-2002 (**UR1**, **UR2**, **UR3** & **UR4**) up to 2013 (covered in REF2014 Impact Case Study) have demonstrated a sustained impact with these messages used by professional groups to advocate for better school library provision. More significantly, this work has also influenced policy debate in Scotland around the role of libraries (both school and public) in developing literacy and numeracy skills. The updating of the 2001-02 research in 2013 (**UR5**), together with 2016 review (**UR6**) of the Scottish Government's 'Every Child a Library Member' initiative in the public libraries have particularly influenced and shaped high-level Scottish government policy developments and strategic decision making.

Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) used **UR3** and **UR4** "to inform its strategic approach to school library services and to share good practice with practitioners" and that the research has "given practitioners a credible source of information to demonstrate the value of library services" (**CE01**). This has continued to be their prevailing approach and the period, 2014-20 has witnessed new policy approaches towards school libraries influenced by this earlier work. The value attached to this work by SLIC was reinforced by the commissioning of an updated critical review of evidence to cover 2002-13 (**UR5**) with results presented to teachers and policy-makers various public forums in 2013 (referred to in the 2014 Impact Case Study), September 2013 and the report published the following month.

One of the most significant outcomes of this research has been the impact of the 2013 report on a public policy campaign (PE1581) led by Duncan Wright. The report provided key evidence base underpinning the petition "Save Scotland's School Libraries" presented to the Scottish Parliament in 2015 (**CE02**). The report was also cited in the Government's response to parliamentary questions, stating, "Ministers welcomed the research undertaken by Robert Gordon University in 2013 on behalf of the SLIC which showed the value of school libraries in terms of supporting learning across the curriculum and raising attainment." (**CE03**). The petition led to a parliamentary committee hearing at Holyrood (November 2015) with the RGU report being cited by Wright in his evidence to the Committee (**CE04**). Further written evidence, based on the research, was provided by Williams to the chair of the committee on 3 December 2015 (**CE05**), in the SLIC's written submission to the Public Petitions Committee 28 October 2016 (**CE06**) and was referred to by the Deputy First Minister in his written submission to the Committee 13 April 2017 (**CE07**). The Deputy First Minister also acknowledged the wider links to children's engagement with the public library sector and its decision to implement the 'Every Child a Library Member' scheme (**CE07**).

The campaign and parliamentary committee resulted in the Scottish Government deciding to develop a five-year National Strategy for School Libraries in Scotland, 2018-2023 and the establishment of the School Library Improvement Fund (SLIF) to support quality enhancement in school libraries in Scotland. The 2013 RGU report (**UR5**) is cited in the introduction to the national strategy *Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools* (**CE08**) as well as being quoted in *How good is our school library*. (**CE09**).

The links between libraries, reading and attainment outlined in Williams' work in school libraries also informed the Scottish Government's subsequent decision to implement *Every child a library member* in 2015 (**CE03**).—The pilot of *Every Child a Library Member* was evaluated and reviewed in a research project (**UR6**) by RGU (Reid and Hood) during 2016. The evaluation and review led to the permanent adoption of the scheme as government policy implemented across all thirty-two local authorities in Scotland. Additionally, the recommendation of the research, namely that the scheme recognise the importance of *active* library memberships was incorporated into the Scottish Government's *Programme for Government* in 2017 (**CE10**) alongside the commitment to roll the scheme out fully and permanently across the country.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

**CE01** - Statement from SLIC on file, 2013

**CE02** - Petition history and background are available at:

<http://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/SaveScotlandsSchoolLibraries>

**CE03** - Scottish Parliament Library and Information Centre briefing on School Libraries

<https://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/Petitions%20briefings%20S4/PB15-1581.pdf>

**CE04** – Oral evidence by Duncan Wright to the Parliamentary Committee

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10237&i=94243#ScotParlOR>

**CE05** - Written evidence by Professor Dorothy Williams

[http://www.parliament.scot/S4\\_PublicPetitionsCommittee/General%20Documents/20151203\\_PE1581\\_A\\_Prof\\_Dorothy\\_Williams.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S4_PublicPetitionsCommittee/General%20Documents/20151203_PE1581_A_Prof_Dorothy_Williams.pdf)

**CE06** - Written evidence by Scottish Library and Information Council

[https://www.parliament.scot/S5\\_PublicPetitionsCommittee/Submissions%202016/PE158120161028ScottishLibraryandInformationCouncilletterof28October2016.pdf](https://www.parliament.scot/S5_PublicPetitionsCommittee/Submissions%202016/PE158120161028ScottishLibraryandInformationCouncilletterof28October2016.pdf)

**CE07** - Response by John Swinney, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education

[http://www.parliament.scot/S5\\_PublicPetitionsCommittee/Submissions%202017/PE1581X\\_Deputy\\_First\\_Minister.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S5_PublicPetitionsCommittee/Submissions%202017/PE1581X_Deputy_First_Minister.pdf)

**CE08** - *Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools*. <https://scottishlibraries.org/media/2108/vibrant-libraries-thriving-schools.pdf>

**CE09** - *How good is our school library?* <https://scottishlibraries.org/media/2808/hgiosls-pdf.pdf>

**CE10** - Scottish Government *Programme for Government*. Adopting term “active library member” in connection with Every Child a Library Member

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/protecting-scotlands-future-governments-programme-scotland-2019-20/pages/7/>