



Bristol Speech and
Language Therapy
Research Unit

What can interventions do?

A summary of the ways in which speech and language therapy, and support at school, can improve outcomes for children with DLD

Dr Yvonne Wren

Director, Bristol Speech and Language Therapy Research Unit



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‘Improve outcomes’

- What outcomes are important?
 - To teachers and schools
 - To speech and language therapists
 - To children with DLD
 - To you as parents





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‘Support at school’

- **Programmes for schools**
 - Targeted population – those at risk of DLD

What is the evidence that these work?



Supporting Spoken
Language in the
Classroom (SSLiC)
Programme



The Communication Trust
Every child understood

What Works Training database

ELKLAN
COMMUNICATION
FRIENDLY SETTINGS

HANEN
ABC

HANEN
LEARNING LANGUAGE
AND LOVING IT

I CAN
EARLY TALK

I CAN
PRIMARY TALK

I CAN
SECONDARY TALK

I CAN
WORKING WITH
UNDER THREES

NCFP SLT SERVICE
LET'S INTERACT

THE COMMUNICATION
TRUST
PLATFORM 3

TALKING MATS
FOUNDATION TRAINING

<http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/projects/what-works-training/training-database/>



Strategies to help at school

- Slow your rate of talking
- Repeat verbatim -2nd chance at processing
- Visual methods to support
- Non-verbal methods support verbal message
- Pause – 10 second rule
- Chunking
- Word order = order of action
- Avoid ambiguities or non-literal meanings



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Communication Supporting Classrooms Observation tool

- **Language learning environment ...**

- » Elements identified as necessary prerequisites to allow teaching and learning
e.g. Labelling in classrooms, quiet corners

- **Language learning opportunities ...**

- The *what* of learning *e.g. Small group work*

- **Language learning interactions ...**

- The *how* of learning *e.g. the ways in which staff talk with children*

Dockrell, J., Bakopoulou, I., Law, J., Spencer, S., & Lindsay, G. (2015). Capturing communication supporting classrooms: The development of a tool and feasibility study. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 31(3)



LL Environment





LL Opportunities

- Interactive book reading
- Structured conversations
- Asking predictive questions



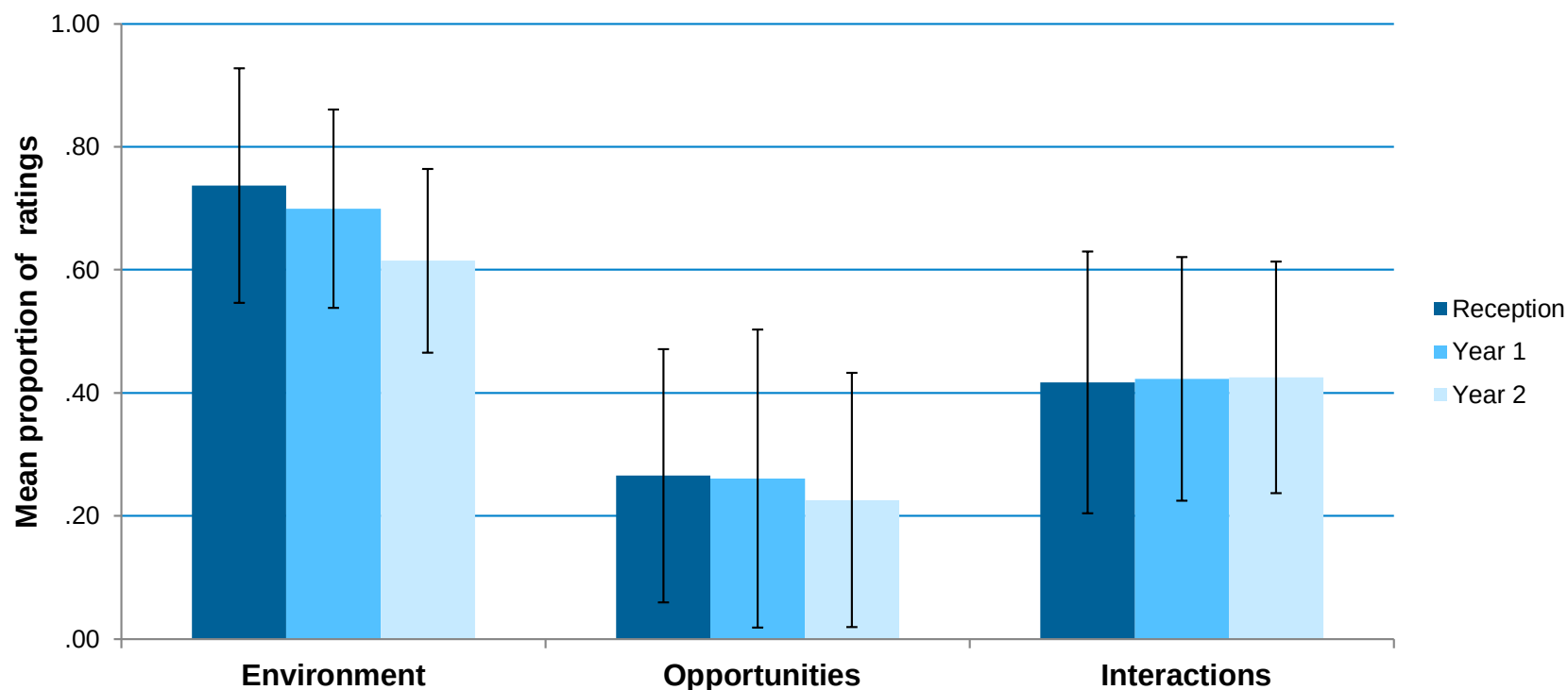
LL Interactions

- Use of child's name
- At child's level
- Natural gestures
- Signing and symbols
- Pictures and props
- Pacing and pausing
- Confirm meaning
- Open questions
- Commenting
- Choices
- Modelling, extending and recasting



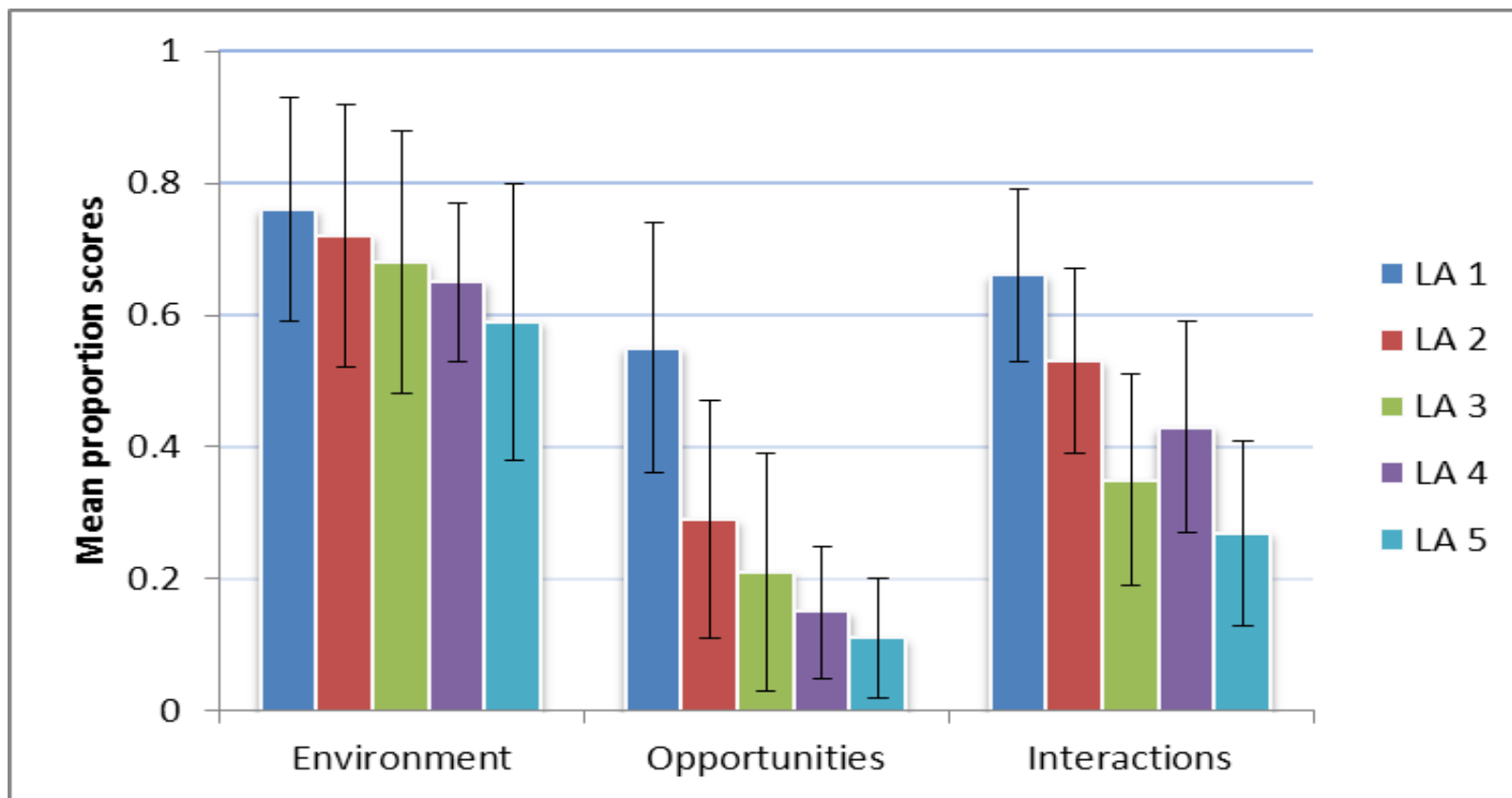
Findings

- Across all years:
 - LL Environment > LL Interactions > LL Opportunities
- LL Interactions & LL Opportunities the same across all years
- LL Environment in Reception > LL Environment in Y2





Local authority variation





Implications

- **Good classroom organisation** is needed to maximise language development needs
- Needs to be complemented by fine tuning **oral language interactions by adults**
- Activities to scaffold language development need to be provided in a **regular and deliberate manner**
- **All school staff** should fully understand, appreciate and develop quality use of these language learning interaction techniques



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Speech and Language Therapy

- Direct
- Indirect
- Consultative





Targets for intervention





Types of intervention

- Variation in dosage
- Variation in location
- Variation in target
- Variation in type
 - Manual (e.g. Strathclyde Language Intervention Programme; Hanen Programme; Shape Coding System)
 - Approach (e.g. Visualising and Verbalising)
 - Technique (e.g. Broad Target Recast; Focused Stimulation)

<http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/projects/what-works/whatworkssearch.aspx>



Types of intervention

- Multiple interventions
- Each has a different focus
- Customised to child's needs
- Evidence base is variable



Evidence based approaches to support (Ebbels et al., 2019)

Specialist interventions

Direct SLT

Non-direct SLT

Targeted interventions

Educational
professionals

Universal interventions

Educational professionals

High Quality Teaching ♦ Professional Development



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