

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Psychology ▪ South Bank University, London, England ▪ 2003

M.S. in Research Methods in Psychology ▪ University of Strathclyde, Scotland ▪ 1995

B.S. in Social Psychology and Sociology ▪ University of Ulster, Northern Ireland ▪ 1994

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYST

Center for Community Research and Evaluation, University of Memphis ▪ Memphis, TN **2020-**

Conduct program evaluations related to education and health. Clean and prepare quantitative data sets, perform statistical analysis, and develop coding schemes for qualitative data. Write evaluation reports for stakeholders and journal papers for wider program dissemination. Conduct education-based literature reviews and prepare guidelines related to best practice approaches.

PRE-AWARD COORDINATOR

School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy, University of Memphis ▪ Memphis, TN **2018-19**

Collaborated closely with faculty in four academic departments to seek and apply for grant funding. Identified funding sources, worked with faculty to build interdisciplinary teams, project managed federal and foundation funding applications, prepared proposal documents, edited grant narratives and facilitated grant-related professional development workshops.

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE II

Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis ▪ Memphis, TN **2016-18**

Evaluated Pre-K through postsecondary educational programs in a range of subject domains (e.g., science, reading, math and art). Managed evaluation projects, designed research instruments, collected data and performed quantitative and qualitative analyses. Prepared literature reviews, technical reports and sections of grant proposals.

RESEARCH CONSULTANT

Center for Research and Reform in Education, Johns Hopkins University ▪ Baltimore, MD **2014-16**

Evaluated Pre-K through postsecondary educational programs in various US locations. Served in both project leadership and specialist roles. Designed evaluation instruments, gathered data in various US cities and performed quantitative and qualitative analyses. Prepared and edited technical reports and grant proposals.

PROJECT AND DATA MANAGER

Department of Civil Engineering, University of Memphis ▪ Memphis, TN **2010-15**

Managed a \$2M project entitled “MemphiSTEM” funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) (DUE-0756738) designed to increase the number of STEM graduates at the University of Memphis. Also collected and analyzed program evaluation data, prepared project reports and coauthored peer reviewed manuscripts, conference papers and grant proposals.

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE II

Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis ▪ Memphis, TN **2007-10**

Evaluated pre-K through postsecondary educational programs in Tennessee and nationwide. Managed daily running

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of multiple ongoing projects, developed evaluation plans/budgets, liaised with clients and supervised duties of Research and Graduate Assistants. Designed research instruments, conducted classroom observations, and performed quantitative and qualitative analyses. Produced technical reports, assisted with the writing of grant proposals and made multiple in-house and external presentations.

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

Department of Psychology, Lancaster University ▪ Lancaster, UK

2006-07

Performed role of lead researcher on a social psychology project associated with bystander intervention and the control of violence in the nighttime economy. Managed project operations, developed methods to evaluate complex, real-world data and applied a range of techniques to analyze behavioral and interview data. Coauthored peer reviewed papers and conference documents.

POST-DOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW

Department of Psychology, University of Memphis ▪ Memphis, TN

2003-05

As part of an interdisciplinary team, researched reading comprehension strategies/processes used by elementary, high school and college students. Designed experiments and assisted in the development of educational software to enhance students' comprehension of science texts. Collected quantitative data in school and laboratory settings and applied a range of statistical methods to analyze data. Produced and coauthored a multitude of research papers and conference presentations and assisted with the preparation of grant proposals.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Department of Psychology, London Guildhall University ▪ London, UK

1997-99

Managed a research program investigating elementary school children's acquisition of scientific vocabulary. Liaised with teachers and school authorities, planned experiments, and visited schools to collect data. Assisted with statistical data analysis and writing research papers.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Department of Education, Roehampton Institute ▪ London, UK

1996-97

Managed a program evaluation associated with health education in elementary and high schools. Liaised with teachers and school authorities, visited schools to collect data, interviewed students and parents, and helped to analyze qualitative and quantitative data.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND AWARDS

Best Applied Paper Award (*Taylor, P. J., Levine, M., & Best, R. M.*) ▪ International Association of Conflict Management ▪ 2008

Full Ph.D. Scholarship ▪ Awarded by South Bank University, London, UK ▪ 1999

PUBLICATIONS

EDUCATION-BASED ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

- King, C. N., Arthur, R. M., Bennett, J. R., James, W. L., & Matthews, K. C. (2021). Evaluation of a Peer-Led Comprehensive Sexual Health Program for College Teens, *American Journal of Sexuality Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15546128.2021.1959472>.

- Windsor, A., Bargagliotti, A., **Best, R. M.**, Franceschetti, D., Haddock, J., Ivey, S., & Russomanno, D. (2015). Increasing retention in STEM: Results from a STEM talent expansion program at the University of Memphis, *Journal of STEM Education*, 16(2), 11-19.
- Ozuru, Y., Briner, S., **Best, R. M.**, & McNamara, D. S. (2010). Contributions of self-explanation to comprehension of high and low cohesion texts. *Discourse Processes*, 47, 641-667.
- Russomanno, D., **Best, R. M.**, Ivey, S., Franceschetti, D., Haddock, J., & Hairston, R. (2010). MemphiSTEP: A STEM talent expansion program at the University of Memphis, *Journal of STEM Education*, 11, 25-37.
- **Best, R. M.**, Dockrell, J. E., & Braisby, N. R. (2009). Children's semantic representations of a science term. In C. Andersen, N. Scheuer, M. Puy Pérez Echeverría, & E. Teubal, *Representational Systems and Practices as Learning Tools in Different Fields of Knowledge*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- **Best, R. M.**, Floyd, R. F., & McNamara, D. S. (2008). Differential competencies contributing to children's comprehension of narrative and expository texts, *Reading Psychology*, 29, 137-164.
- Dockrell, J. E., Braisby, N. R., & **Best, R. M.** (2007). Children's acquisition of science terms: Simple exposure is insufficient. *Learning and Instruction*, 17, 577-594.
- Ozuru, Y., **Best, R. M.**, Bell, C., Witherspoon, A., & McNamara, D. S. (2007). Influence of question format and text availability on assessment of expository texts, *Cognition and Instruction*, 25, 399-438.
- McNamara, D. S., Ozuru, Y., **Best, R. M.**, & O'Reilly, T. (2007). The 4-Pronged Comprehension Strategy Framework. In D.S. McNamara (Ed.), *Reading comprehension strategies: Theories, interventions, and technologies*. New York: Erlbaum.
- **Best, R. M.**, Dockrell, J. E., & Braisby, N. R. (2006). Lexical acquisition in elementary science classes, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98, 824-838.
- **Best, R. M.**, Dockrell, J. E., & Braisby, N. R. (2006). Real world word learning: Children's developing semantic representations of a science term. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 24, 265-282.
- McNamara, D. S., O'Reilly, T., **Best, R. M.**, & Ozuru, Y. (2006). Improving adolescent students' reading comprehension with iSTART, *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 34, 121-152.
- **Best, R. M.**, Rowe, M., Ozuru, Y., & McNamara, D. S. (2005). Deep-level comprehension of science texts: The role of the reader and the text. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 25, 62-80.
- McNamara, D. S., **Best, R. M.**, & Castellano, C. (2003). *Learning from text: Facilitating and enhancing comprehension*. http://www.speechpathology.com/articles/article_detail.asp?article_id=45.
- O'Connor, L., Best, D. W., **Best, R. M.**, & Rowley, J. (1998). Missed opportunities: Drugs and drugs education, *Early Child Development and Care*, 141, 73-109.
- O'Connor L., O'Connor D., & **Best R. M.** (Eds.) (1998). *Drugs: Partnership for Policy, Prevention and Education - A Practical Guide for Working Together*. London: Cassell.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY-BASED ARTICLES

- Lowe, R. D., Levine, M., **Best, R. M.**, & Heim, D. (2012). We police it ourselves: Group processes in the escalation and regulation of violence in the night-time economy, *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 42, 924-932.
- Lowe, R. D., Levine, M., **Best, R. M.**, & Heim, D. (2012). Bystander reaction to women fighting: A theory of intervention. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 27, 1802-26.
- Levine, M., Taylor, P., & **Best, R. M.** (2011). Third parties, violence and conflict resolution: The role of group size and collective action in the micro-regulation of violence. *Psychological Science*, 22, 406-412.
- Taylor, P. J., Jacques, K., Giebels, E., Levine, M., **Best, R. M.**, Winter, J., & Rossi, G. (2008). Analyzing forensic processes: Taking time into account. *Issues in Forensic Psychology*, 8, 45-57.

BOOK REVIEWS

- **Best, R. M.** (2001). [*Teaching science in the primary Classroom: A practical guide*]. *International Journal of Science Education*, 28, 1623-1636.

- **Best, R. M.** (2000). [*Learning relationships in the classroom*]. *First language*, 20, 122-124.
- **Best, R. M.** (2000). [*Teaching for understanding: What it is and how to do it*]. *Psychology of Education Review*, 25, 39-40.

REFEREED CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

- Ivey, S., **Best, R. M.**, Camp, C., & Palazolo, P. (2012). Transforming a Civil Engineering Curriculum through GIS Integration. *Paper presented at 2012 ASEE Annual Conference & Exposition, San Antonio, Texas.* <https://peer.asee.org/22130>
- **Best, R. M.**, Russomanno, D., Ivey, S., Haddock, J., Franceschetti, D., Bargagliotti, A., & Hairston, R. (2010). Math bridge bootcamp: A strategy for facilitating undergraduate success in STEM courses, *Proceedings for the International Conference on Frontiers in Education: Computer Science and Computer Engineering* (pp. 261-266), CSREA Press.
- **Best, R. M.**, Ozuru, Y., Floyd, R.G., & McNamara, D. S. (2006). Children's text comprehension: Effects of genre, knowledge, and text. In S. A. Barab, K. E. Hay, & D. T. Hickey (Eds), *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference of the Learning Sciences* (pp. 37-42), Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- **Best, R. M.**, Ozuru, Y., & McNamara, D. S. (2004). Self-explaining science texts: Strategies, knowledge, and reading skill. In Y. B. Kafai, W. A., Sandoval, N. Enyedy, A. S. Nixon, & F. Herrera (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference of the Learning Sciences: Embracing diversity in the learning sciences* (pp. 89-96). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- McNamara, D. S., Floyd, R. G., **Best, R. M.**, & Louwarse, M. (2004). World knowledge driving young readers' comprehension difficulties. In Y. B. Kafai, W. A., Sandoval, N. Enyedy, A. S. Nixon, & F. Herrera (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference of the Learning Sciences: Embracing Diversity in the Learning Sciences* (pp. 326-333). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- O'Reilly, T., **Best, R. M.**, & McNamara, D.S. (2004). Self-explanation reading training: Effects for low-knowledge readers. In K. Forbus, D., Gentner, & T. Regier (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 26th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society* (pp. 1053-1058). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Ozuru, Y., **Best, R. M.**, & McNamara, D. S. (2004). Contribution of reading skill to learning from expository texts. In K. Forbus, D. Gentner, & T. Regier (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 26th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society* (pp. 1071-1076). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Braisby, N. R., Dockrell, J. E., & **Best, R. M.** (2001). Children's acquisition of science terms: Does fast mapping work? In M. Almgren, A. Barrena, M. J. Ezeizabarrena, I. Idiazabal, & B. MacWhinney (Eds.), *Research on Child Language Acquisition: Proceedings for the 8th Conference of the International Association for the Study of Child Language* (pp. 1066-1087). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.

FIRST AUTHOR POSTER & PAPER PRESENTATIONS

- **Best, R. M.**, Dockrell, J. E., & Braisby, N. R. (2005, August). *Children's semantic representations of a science term*. Symposium paper presented at the 11th Biennial European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction Conference, Nicosia, Cyprus.
- **Best, R. M.**, O'Reilly, T. P., & McNamara, D. S. (2005, August). *Comprehending science texts: Effects of computerized reading strategy training*. Paper presented at the 11th Biennial European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction Conference, Nicosia, Cyprus.
- **Best, R. M.**, McNamara, D. S., & Floyd, R. G. (2004, April). *Understanding the 4th grade slump: Comprehension difficulties as a function of reader aptitudes and text genre*. Paper presented at the 85th AERA Conference, San Diego, CA.
- **Best, R. M.**, O'Reilly, T. P., & McNamara, D. S. (2004, August). *Self-explanation reading training: effects for low knowledge readers*. Paper presented at the 14th Annual Meeting for the Society of Text & Discourse, Chicago, IL.
- **Best, R. M.**, Dockrell, J. E., & Braisby, N. R. (2002, July). *Exposure to novel and familiar words in primary science lessons*. Poster presented at the 9th International Congress Association for the Study of Child Language, Madison, WI.