

Catch Up™ Literacy in Australia

In 2009, Catch Up™ was approached to find out whether Catch Up™ Literacy might be of benefit to struggling readers in Australia.

The schools

The participating schools in the pilot project were a mix of Primary and 'All through' (ages 5-19 years) schools, from a range of socio-economic contexts in New South Wales and Tasmania.

The learners

Across the 14 schools, 148 learners who were struggling readers were identified. They included both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children.

The average Chronological Age of the participating children was 10 years 9 months, their average Reading Age was 6 years 10 months – a gap of almost 4 years (the children were assessed at the beginning and end of the project with the Salford Sentence Reading Test, to give a standardised measure of progress).

The intervention

Catch Up™ Literacy individual sessions were delivered to each child by trained teachers or teacher aides. Each session included a prepared reading, an opportunity for the child to read while the supporting adult noted miscues, and a linked writing activity. Two sessions per week were recommended with each session lasting 15 minutes.

The outcomes

After only 6 months of intervention, the participating learners achieved average Reading Age gains of 15 months!

15 months of Reading Age gain after 6 months of intervention is a mean ratio gain (gain in RA divided by duration of intervention) of more than 2.5. Research shows that a ratio gain of at least 2 may be considered 'good impact' (Brooks, 2007).

The outcomes were based on an average of less than one session per week, with some learners receiving the recommended two sessions while others missed some sessions.

“This has been an incredibly exciting journey for me so far and I can honestly say that in 17 years of teaching, this is by far the most effective literacy intervention that I have seen, not only in terms of data around reading, but in terms of student self-esteem, motivation and attitude towards schooling. On a recent visit to another District High School, I was told about a Grade 10 student who is disengaged from school, but will come on the mornings of his Catch Up Literacy sessions!”

Samantha Woodham, Principal, St Marys District High School, Tasmania

Training

Feedback from the trainees was very positive and several submitted for the OCN (UK Open College Network) accredited qualification.

There were some minor issues over the differences in pronunciation of vowel sounds between English and Australian speech but these were easily resolved.

Online booklist

Trainees reported that many of the books they regularly use are already included in the Catch Up™ Literacy online booklist. However, more Australian publishers and their books do need to be included.

Literacy file

Trainees believed that the vast majority of the Catch Up™ Literacy file (which is provided to each trainee and contains all the guidance needed to deliver the intervention) was appropriate to the Australian National Curriculum and wider context.

Appropriateness for the Australian context

- Targets the struggling reader
- Supports the effective use of teacher aides
- Makes use of all the 'recommended' teaching approaches
- Whole language approach covering reading, writing, spelling and handwriting
- Complements 'Reading Recovery' (enabling students to gain support in later years)
- Fits school literacy plans
- Spans Primary and Secondary schools (can provide continuity from Grades 2-8)
- Very time-effective and realistic

Please visit www.catchup.org to read the full report.

"We currently have 22 students on the Catch Up Literacy program ranging from Grade 1 to Grade 8. After testing in May and again in August we were amazed to discover an average gain of 11.1 months over the three month period!

Three students have now finished on the intervention and we are currently going through the process of adding five more students. Very exciting!"

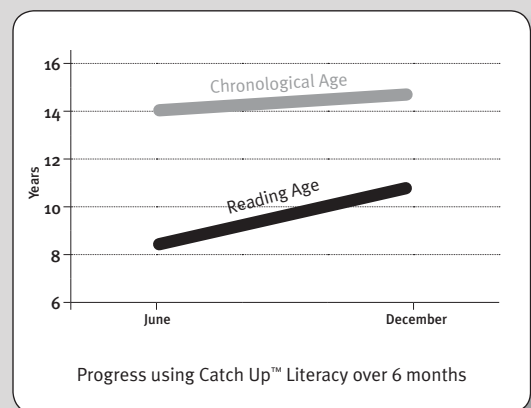
Wendy Phillips, Catch Up™ Literacy Coordinator, Geeveston District High School.

Due to the success of the pilot, Catch Up™ established an Australian office in 2011, enabling additional staff from the pilot schools, along with staff from almost 30 more schools, to be trained to deliver Catch Up™ Literacy sessions to struggling learners.

Codie (Grade 8)

Codie lacked confidence and avoided reading whenever he could. Codie loved taking part in the regular Catch Up™ Literacy sessions and after 6 months he made almost 2 years progress in his Reading Age. His confidence has grown amazingly.

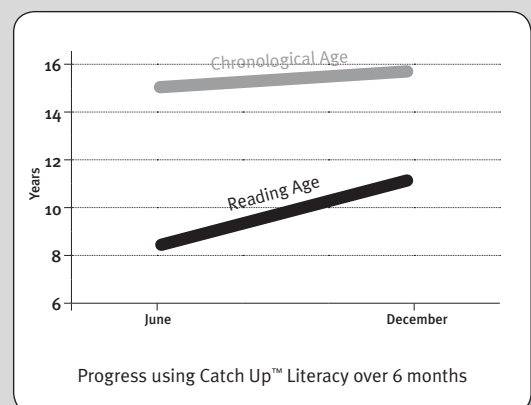
He is now always willing to have a go at new words and often asks if he can read out loud in class. Codie brings his own books into school and he loves talking about them with his friends and teachers.



Daine (Grade 9)

Daine moved to the school in Grade 7 and was very unhappy, which led to some behaviour issues. He refused to write, saying that everything was "too hard".

Daine looked forward to his Catch Up™ Literacy sessions, asking every day: 'Have we got that thing today?' After 6 months of Catch Up™ Literacy, he made two years progress in Reading Age. He became so confident that he was willing to take part in a demonstration session for other teachers to observe, and he was happy to answer questions! His teacher commented that his participation in Catch Up™ Literacy was 'life-changing' for him.

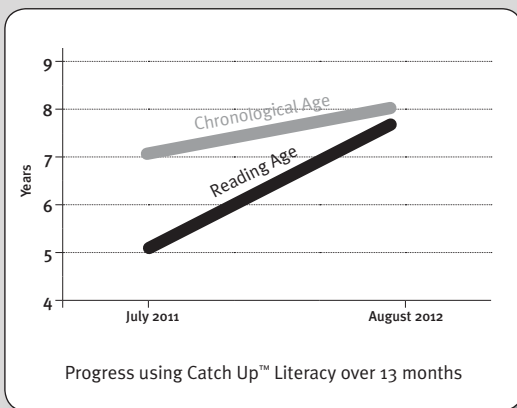


Una (Grade 2)



“Catch Up is the best thing in the world because it’s awesome and you get to talk to someone and you’re not just on a computer.”

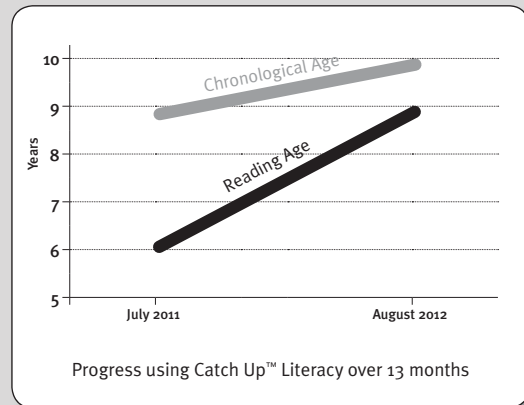
Una began Catch Up™ Literacy in Grade 1, she was nervous and apprehensive at first but now she comes dancing down to do her sessions! Una has more confidence with her reading and in class.



Peggie (Grade 4)



“I love everything about Catch Up, everything, the reading, writing, spelling and the stickers. I like learning to read and write with just one person because it makes it easy.”

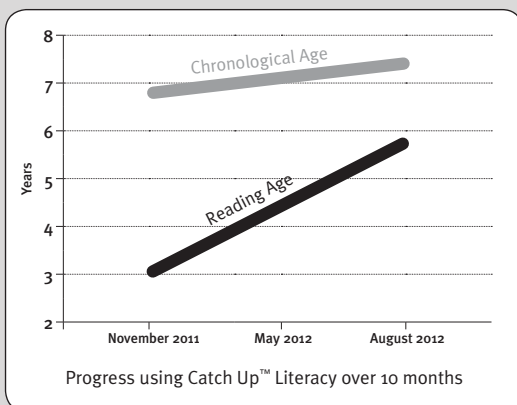


Seth (Grade 1)



“Since my son has been attending the Catch Up Literacy program on a regular basis, his reading ability has increased as well as his confidence. He is now able to read a book fluently, recognising many words.”

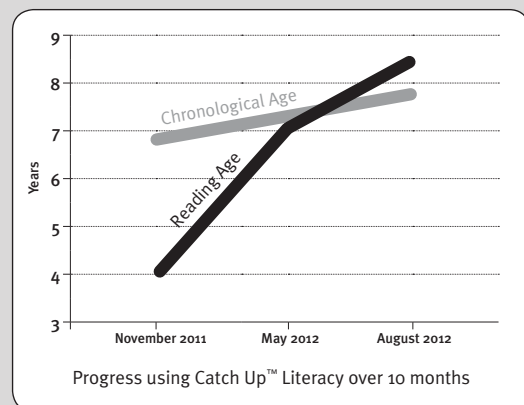
Nikki, Seth’s mum.



Connor (Grade 1)



Connor has just finished on Catch Up™ Literacy because he is now reading beyond his age. His confidence has grown immensely. He started reading books at the Catch Up™ level 2 and quickly progressed to Catch Up™ level 10 books. It was very hard for me to tell him he has now finished because I know just how much he enjoys coming to his regular sessions. When Connor was asked how he felt about not doing Catch Up Literacy anymore he replied, “SAD! Because I like doing Catch Up and I wanted to read all the books”.



“One of the hardest things about working with students on Catch Up Literacy is telling them they no longer need to be on the program. I really don’t like seeing the look of disappointment on their faces when they are so eager and want to continue with the program. Some students that were on Catch Up Literacy and have been off for a while continue to ask, “When can I come and do Catch Up again?”

Wendy Phillips, Catch Up™ Literacy coordinator,
Geeveston District High School.



“Catch Up Literacy is time and money well spent!”

Mr Pattison, Grade 4/5 teacher,
Geeveston District High School



“Just \$700 will pay for Catch Up training and resources for a teacher aide who will be able to work with at least 10 learners a year – year after year. That’s a lot of learners and they will all make real progress.

This isn’t spending – it’s investing.”

Samantha Woodham, Principal, St Marys District High School, Tasmania

Book your **FREE** introductory session by calling **0488010880**
or emailing **training.au@catchup.org**

You can also find more information on the Catch Up™ website **www.catchup.org**