

CATCH UP LITERACY TASMANIA PILOT 2009 - 2010

Final Report

BACKGROUND

In mid-May 2009, senior managers from 4 schools (Learning Services North) attended an 'Introducing Catch Up Literacy' (L1) information session and signed protocols agreeing to the requirements of the pilot 'project brief'. In particular, it was agreed that the Salford Sentence Reading Test would be used as a standardised measure of progress for the pilot (the test was administered at the beginning of the pilot, June 2009, and at the end, December 2009, allowing gains/losses to be calculated).

24 staff (16 teacher aides and 8 teachers) from 4 Tasmania (Learning Services North) schools then attended 'Delivering Catch Up Literacy' training (L2) to enable them to deliver the Catch Up Literacy intervention to struggling readers in their schools.

The participating schools were a mix of Primary and 'All through' (5 -19 years) from a range of socio-economic contexts:

- Brooks High School
- Campbell Town District High School
- Mowbray Heights Primary School
- Rocherlea Primary School

Each school identified a member of staff to manage/coordinate Catch Up Literacy in the school (Sarah Shimmin, Brooks H/S; Samantha Woodham, Campbell Town District H/S; Marie Gavlik, Mowbray Heights P/S; Leanne Forbes, Rocherlea P/S). These staff attended an additional session, 'Managing Catch Up Literacy' (L3), to support their coordinating role in schools. Sarah Shimmin was the key named link for the pilot.

A Catch Up Literacy 'Review and next steps' session (L4) was held, with staff who had attended the L2 training, in February 2010 (approximately 8 months after L2, which is the usual model).

All the Catch Up Literacy training was delivered by Dee Reid, a UK-based Catch Up Approved Trainer.

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KEY FINDINGS

Participants

- 56 pupils
- Average Chronological Age (CA) at start of the pilot: 12 years 9 months
- Average Reading Age (RA) at start of the pilot: 7 years 2 months

Intervention

- Average 5.78 months of Catch Up Literacy intervention
- Average of 20 sessions (equating to approximately 5 hours intervention) per pupil

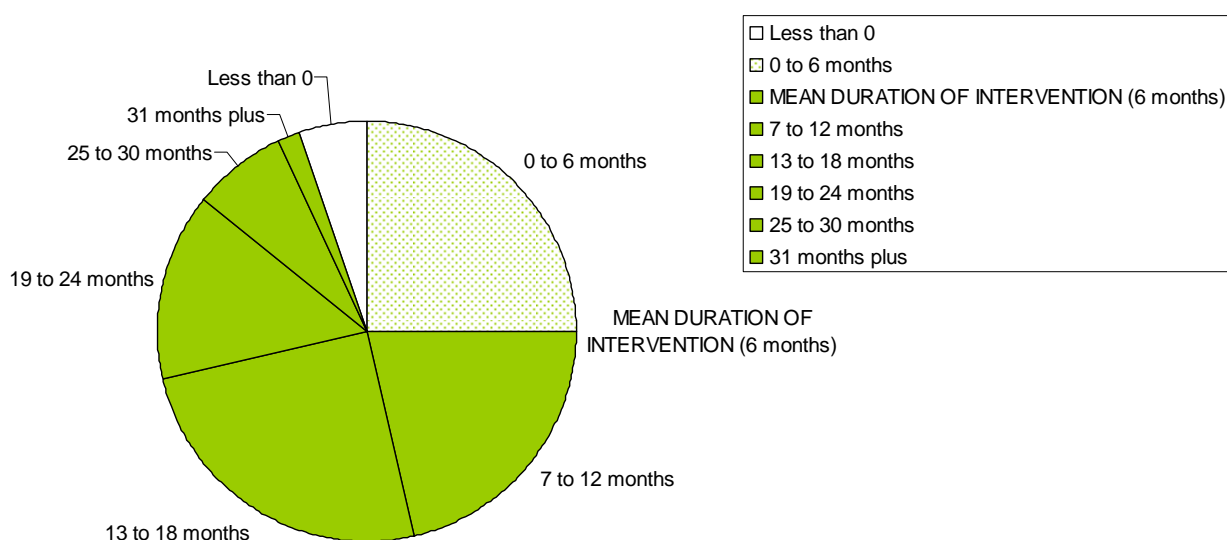
Pupil outcomes

- Average Reading Age gains of 12.05 months
- Average Ratio gain (gain divided by duration of intervention) of 2.08

Summary

Intervention	N	Start CA	Start RA	End CA	End RA	Duration	Gain	Ratio gain
Catch Up Literacy	56	153m 12y 9m	86m 7y 2m	159m 13y 3m	98m 8y 2m	5.78m	12.05m	2.08

Percentage of learners making gains or losses



NOTES:

- 1 N = Number of participants for whom there are standardised test results for both the start and end of the intervention (all other figures are calculated only on these participants)
- 2 Start CA/End CA = Mean Chronological Age (in months and in years and months)
- 3 Start RA/End RA = Mean Reading Age (in months and in years and months)
- 4 Duration = Mean difference in months between Start Chronological Age and End Chronological Age
- 5 Gain = Mean difference in months between Start Reading Age and End Reading Age
- 6 Ratio gain = Gain divided by Duration

CASE STUDIES

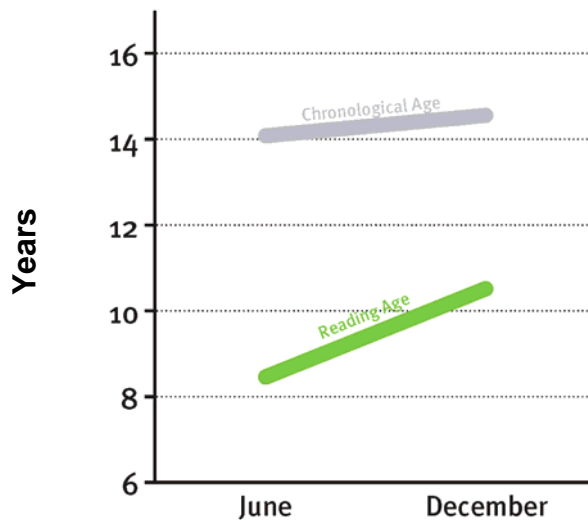
Codie

Codie is in Grade 8. He lacked confidence and avoided reading whenever he could.

Codie loved taking part in the regular learning sessions and, after 6 months of Catch Up Literacy, he made almost 2 year's 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.

Codie's progress



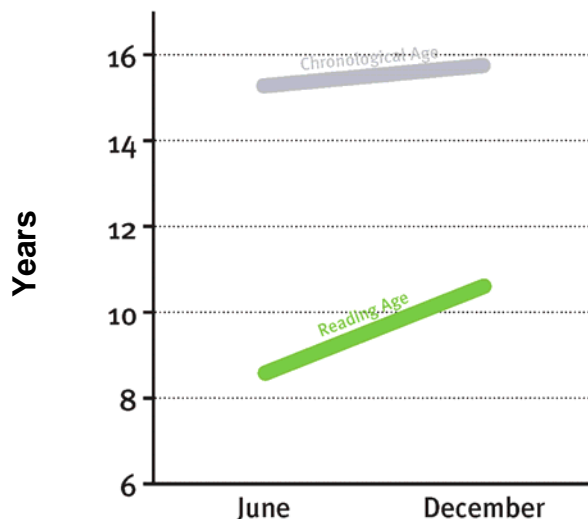
Daine

Daine is in Grade 9. He moved to the school in Grade 7 and was very unhappy, which had 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.

Daine's progress



FEEDBACK

Training

Feedback from the trainees was very positive. The average score given for the question 'How would you rate the training overall?' was 4.6 (with 1 being 'poor' and 5 'excellent'). Comments included 'best training ever' and 'thank you for coming half way around the world'. The video clips were thought to be appropriate and very helpful in giving a clear overview of the Catch Up Literacy procedures.

There were some minor issues over the differences in pronunciation of vowel sounds between English and Australian speech but these were easily resolved. Differences in the handwriting style for the letter 'f' were noted but there was no more agreement between the trainees on a specific style than there would have been for the equivalent group in the UK.

Two of the trainees have submitted for the OCN (UK Open College Network) accredited qualification. Several other trainees are interested in doing so.

Literacy file

Trainees believed that the vast majority of the Catch Up Literacy file (which is provided to each trainee and which contains everything needed to deliver the intervention) was appropriate to the Tasmanian Curriculum and wider context. It was felt the planned Australian National Curriculum, replacing individual 'State Curricula', would cover very similar ground to the English National Curriculum Levels 1 - 3.

Catch Up Literacy online booklist

Trainees reported that many of the books that they regularly use are already included in the Catch Up Literacy online booklist (a tool which enables staff to identify books graded to Catch Up Literacy Levels and age appropriateness). However, more Australian publishers and their books do need to be included. A local bookshop has been very helpful in supplying books to support the pilot.

Potentially 'unique features' identified by trainees of Catch Up Literacy in the Tasmanian/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 pupils to gain support in later years
- Will fit into school Literacy Plans very comfortably
- Matches National Strategic Initiatives, encouraging schools to follow 'First Steps' (for Primary schools) and 'Stepping Out' (for High schools)
- Spans Primary and Secondary schools – can provide continuity from Grades 2 - 8
- 2 x 15 minute sessions - very time-effective and realistic

Next steps

- Two of the trained staff will train as Catch Up Approved Trainers during May and June 2010.
- These trainers will deliver training to other staff in Tasmania (Learning Services North) during 2010
- A further pilot involving approximately 100 struggling readers is taking place in NSW (Parramatta). This follows the training of 35 staff from 10 schools in February 2010 and will run to September 2010.

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