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Educational Management Administration Leadership 2001; 29; 63

DOI: 10.1177/0263211X010291005

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Multi-Level Management and Literacy

Issues Arising from the Catch Up Project

Suzi Clipson-Boyles

Introduction

The Catch Up Project provides a literacy intervention programme that is supported by a range of classroom management and communication strategies. The introduction of the programme into schools (over 2000 since its launch in January 1998) has taken place through a variety of routes, some of which have involved local education authorities (LEAs), and some which have not. Despite the clearly defined and focused nature of the teaching, resources and management of the programme, many patterns of use have emerged, reflecting the complex nature of the organizational structures of schools. This has highlighted an intricate maze of management and communication practices between outside agencies, headteachers, coordinators, teachers, other adults who may assist with the programme and ultimately the children themselves.

This article attempts to look more systematically at this maze by developing what has been called here a Multi-Level Management (MLM) model, developed through observations from the following Catch Up Project data:

- ex post facto descriptions of relevant project administration information
- the initial pilot trials of the children's reading progress
- a survey of project implementation variables
- a qualitative study into the roles and levels of involvement of learning support assistants (LSAs)

The aim of the article is to offer an analytical discussion about the multi-level management of literacy intervention, and is intended to serve two purposes: first, to identify new areas of focus that could be usefully developed into a larger and more systematic investigation of the management variables that may have a causal effect upon the impact of the Catch Up Project, at both school and LEA level; second, to contribute to the newly emerging debate on the links between school management and raising standards of literacy.

Management and Literacy

Since the introduction of schooling, literacy has always been high on the educational agendas of politicians and parents, and never more so than in Britain today. However,

concerns have tended to centre almost exclusively around standards (DES, 1978, 1990; OFSTED, 1996), with a predominance of attempts to make causal links with different teaching approaches (e.g. see Adams, 1990; Bryant and Bradley, 1985; Chall, 1993; Chew, 1997; Goswami, 1995; Huey, 1913; Scholes, 1998; Smith, 1992; Turner, 1990). While, at times, such debates can be useful (for example, the 'real books' campaign in the 1980s acted as a catalyst for significant changes to reading schemes by persuading publishers to produce higher quality stories by well-known authors and illustrators), on other occasions they can be less than helpful. The so-called 'great debate' about phonics, for instance, has been raging for almost 40 years and continues to do so with supporting evidence accumulating in virtually equal proportions on each side! An indicator, perhaps, that we need to turn our energies laterally if we are ever to find an alternative solution for the many children and adults who struggle with reading and writing. One direction for this new thinking could be to draw on what we know about effective management and relate this to the field of literacy intervention.

Like literacy, the subject of school management has also been closely linked to concerns about standards, and in particular, the relationship between strategic planning and resource allocation and educational aims and objectives (Bullock and Thomas, 1996; DES, 1988; Fidler, 1996; Hargreaves, 1995; Levačić and Glover, 1998; OFSTED, 1993, 1995). The improvement of literacy and school management have both enjoyed high profiles in research and policy development during the last decade. It is surprising, therefore, that two such vital areas of educational significance have failed to connect with each other until very recently, and, in particular, that attempts to improve standards of literacy have revolved exclusively around pedagogical issues without any recognition of the contribution management practices, at various levels, might also make.

There are, of course, some notable exceptions—programmes such as Reading Recovery from New Zealand (Clay, 1993) and Success for All in the USA (Slavin et al., 1992) are characterized by their inclusion of organizational factors at classroom and whole-school level, and the Labour government has introduced the most radical reform to the teaching of literacy ever seen in Britain, *The National Literacy Strategy Framework* (DfEE, 1998). Not only does *The Framework* prescribe the literacy and language curriculum content for every term of primary schooling, it also presents a teaching and management model, in which each class is taught for one hour every day, with the time divided into proportional slots for whole-class, group and individual work. Early indications have shown that the first cohort of 250 schools who implemented the pilot National Literacy Project (NLP) showed significant improvements, as observed through higher quality teaching and improved scores in reading ages (OFSTED, 1998). However, a 'stubborn minority' of schools were also identified 'where deep-seated weaknesses in leadership, management, and the quality of teaching combine to inhibit progress' (OFSTED, 1998: 4, paras 1 and 3). In other words, when implementing change, the curriculum content is only one ingredient if the recipe is to be a success—management at a whole series of levels, from the headteacher's leadership through to the teacher's own organization in the classroom, also needs to be considered.

If internal mechanisms reflect so powerfully on teaching and learning, then the management and organization of the school should not be underestimated when introducing change such as a new literacy intervention programme. Organizational structure is essential for the efficient and effective management of a school, and poor or inappropriate structures (for example, where roles are unclear or ill-defined) will generate poor practice

(Blandford, 1997). School effectiveness studies, in their attempts to measure (among other factors) the differentials between schools, have increasingly included organizational variables into their brief, and school improvement research, in more recent years, has focused on the processes by which learning conditions can be changed in order to produce successful outcomes. The increasing convergence of these three traditionally separate paradigms—school management, school effectiveness and school improvement—is welcomed by many (Davies, 1997; Reynolds et al., 1996; Stoll and Mortimore, 1997). Indeed, there is much to be gained by the principle of developing interdependent disciplines where the sharing of knowledge makes appropriate and useful connections. Thus, it may be argued that, in the same way, there could be distinct advantages to relating what is known in these fields to the teaching of literacy, and in particular to the introduction of intervention programmes, which in essence represent a specific implementation of change.

Characteristics associated with each of these three areas have become increasingly relevant to the work of the Catch Up Project team, and the term 'multi-level management' (MLM) has been adopted here to encompass certain features from each. Our definition of MLM is: 'The complex organizational and communication processes by which effective change is introduced, implemented and embedded into school policies and practices.'

In this particular context, 'change' is the introduction of the Catch Up Programme, and 'effective' is an increase in the children's reading ages up to the expected norm or beyond, in order that the children can enjoy reading and feel confident using literacy skills across the curriculum. Effectiveness is also implicit in the extent to which the programme becomes established and embedded within school policies and practices. However, before engaging in this discussion, it is important first to set the context by describing the project and briefly summarizing the research studies that are relevant to the discussion.

Project Background

The Catch Up Project team, based at the School of Education, Oxford Brookes University, developed a new literacy intervention that was launched in January 1998, after 18 months' development and trials. The project was designed for the 18.4 percent of 7–8-year-old children who are behind with reading but who do not qualify for additional learning support at the start of Year 3 (Thomas and Davies, 1997). In other words, children who are not classified as having special needs, but who are below average. Research has shown that reading attainment levels for this age group were relatively consistent between 1948 and 1995 (Brooks, 1998), with approximately 20 percent failing to reach the expected Level 2 standard. DfE and DfEE statistics for children in this age group achieving less than Level 2 for reading appear to confirm this, and OFSTED inspection data have produced similar figures, with much concern being expressed about the so-called 'Year 3 Dip' (OFSTED, 1995, 1996).

The project provides a structured teaching approach that is presented to teachers in a training pack. A lecture programme is also available, though not compulsory. Two years after the initial launch, over 2000 schools across Britain are using the programme, with around 10 new schools adopting the programme each week, and lectures have been delivered in 62 LEAs, by invitation from advisers. In February 1999, a CD-ROM of literacy games, designed to suit the interest level of this older age range, was launched and an updated edition of the training pack became available in January 2000.

The programme is a broad-based approach linking reading and writing, and using a variety of evidence-based strategies. It consists of two weekly slots for each child: a 10-minute individual teaching session and a 15-minute group reading session. Assessments are provided for use at the start of the programme, and continuous monitoring systems are designed to integrate into the ongoing programme. An important communication system is designed into the programme to maximize the effectiveness of other adults who may also work with the child. The 10-minute session has a structured teaching framework, but uses resources, and targets skills and strategies, which are specific to the individual child. It employs a range of effective and proven methods grounded in research from different sources (e.g. Clay, 1980; Gardiner, 1965; Goswami, 1994; Huxford et al., 1997; Stanovich, 1980). In particular, it centres around the Prepared Reading Approach, which the Catch Up team developed from an earlier study (Bentley and Reid, 1995). The 10 minutes are divided into three sections: prepared reading, child reading under observation and linked writing. The 15-minute group session aims to teach the skills of reading with fluency and expression. It adopts different styles of group reading according to the type of text, and again, the time is divided into three approaches: preparing and modelling the text, group reading and evaluating the performance.

The Place of Research in the Catch Up Project

Research was the starting-point for the project, and research continues to play a variety of different roles as the project develops and grows, as illustrated in Figure 1.

The project began in response to 'research that identified a problem'—almost one-fifth of children who had reached the end of their second (and in some cases third) year in school without reaching the expected levels for reading and yet whose levels of literacy were not low enough to entitle them to additional support. The aim was to use existing 'research that offered a solution'. Any intervention provided for these children needed to be firmly grounded in evidence-based teaching strategies. Concerns in the team that useful findings from many research studies fail to reach the classrooms where they are needed were addressed by bringing together a range of evidence-based strategies into a management structure that had been explored in an earlier study (Bentley and Reid, 1995).

Having created an intervention package containing these strategies, it was then necessary to conduct 'monitoring and evaluation' research to measure its impact upon the children's reading progress. The pilot pack was used in 15 schools across three counties during the autumn term, 1997, and the reading ages of pupils were measured at the start and end of a 10-week period. A subsample of five Oxfordshire schools was also drawn, and parallel-matched with two further groups of similar schools to constitute a matched-time group (where teachers were asked to give the Catch Up time equivalent each week, but no advice or resources offered to assist with this intervention) and a control group.

Pupils in the main sample showed an average reading age increase of 6.5 months across the 10-week period—an average gain of four months when the chronological increase is deducted. In the experimental subgroups, the average reading age gain for the Catch Up pupils was considerably greater than those of both the matched-time group and the control group. The average gain in months was 8.6 for the Catch Up pupils, compared with 3.5 for the matched-time group and 1.1 for the control group. (For further statistical details of these results see Brooks et al., 1998; Clipson-Boyles, 2000.) In other words, the children who received no dedicated intervention time showed a regression of reading ages, those to whom special time was allocated made accelerated gains in their reading ages, and those

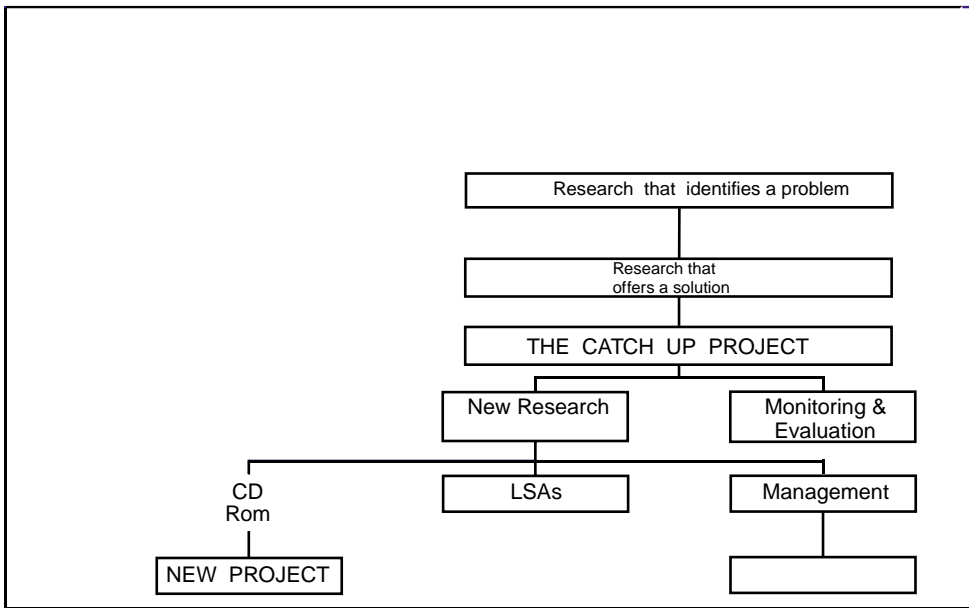


Figure 1. Positioning of research in the Catch Up Project

whose time was used in a systematic and focused way, with guidance on resources and teaching strategies, made considerably greater gains. These early results, therefore, not only provided sufficient evidence to warrant further programme implementation in more schools, they also introduced the hypothesis that management decisions (i.e. whether or not to allocate special intervention time, and if so how to use that time) were also playing a part in helping children catch up with reading and writing.

Alongside the monitoring and evaluation, 'new research' questions were also emerging. One such question focused on the use of supporting adults in literacy intervention. A small-scale study was designed to assess the role and level of involvement of LSAs in the Catch Up Programme. Data was collected in eight schools through structured interviews with headteachers, teachers and LSAs, and from observations of group teaching by LSAs. It was clear from the findings that the role of the LSA in Catch Up varied enormously from school to school. This ranged from hearing the group read without a clear idea of methods and expected learning outcomes through to taking full charge of the programme, including the completion of records. Only a minority had been systematically trained, but all expressed the wish to receive training. Necessary improvements were also suggested in defining and supporting the role of the LSA in the programme. It was apparent that working partnerships between teacher and LSA could benefit from more communication regarding diagnostic assessments and progress, clearer explanations of the purpose of follow-up work, joint training and regular review meetings.

Another 'new research' area involved investigations into the use of the Catch Up CD-ROM games that were designed to provide the children with independent supplementary skills practice in exciting game environments. Again, this raised significant management issues, with many teachers expressing reluctance to rely on computers because of their own lack of skills and knowledge or organizational and time-management factors.

It became increasingly apparent that management issues not only permeated every area under investigation, they also played a significant part in most interactions as observed informally by the project team during their close work with schools and LEAs throughout Britain. Thus, as management became recognized as a key variable in the implementation and impact of the Catch Up Programme, it seemed appropriate to look at specific aspects of how the programme was being managed in more detail. This study is described briefly below.

Management and Implementation of Catch Up

Despite the prescriptive nature of the actual programme and the fact that the *Catch Up Pack* provides core training (which, theoretically, should be the same for all purchasers), schools hear about the project in a variety of ways. Likewise, the complexity of management decision makers within schools means that the arrival of the pack on site marks the start of an equally complex set of variables. A small-scale survey was planned to try and identify the varied approaches to the programme implementation six months into the project. This section briefly reports on the following:

- access routes to the project
- sources of funding
- patterns of training
- staff involvement
- monitoring and evaluation
- programme management

Design

A systematic sample of 300 schools was taken from the Catch Up database (the record of pack purchasers, six months into the project). Of these schools, only 45 responded. At this point it is perhaps worth mentioning that the month during which these were sent out was a time of significant pressure to teachers, who were being trained for the introduction of the Literacy Hour, ready for the start of the following term. Indeed, it has been discovered since that many schools, having bought the pack, decided to delay the start of Catch Up until the Literacy Hour was in place. Similarly, those who were on target with the programme did not intend to launch and monitor it fully until the start of the academic year. This may account for the low return rate, which is in itself interesting. In other words, the timing of the study was inappropriate, and therefore the findings can only provide a useful starting-point for subsequent investigations. However, despite all this, the final sample was checked and found to constitute a representative sample of school size, location and type.

A simple survey questionnaire, comprising 12 questions, was posted to the selected schools. The questions were designed to collect only categorical data at this early stage of the project.

Findings

Access Routes to the Project

As predicted, schools found out about Catch Up from a variety of sources and these were evenly spread, suggesting no dominant dissemination success story (see Table 1). The

Table 1. Original source of information about the project

<i>Source</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
LEA	27
TES	27
Circular/advert	23
Meeting/course	23
Other	0

LEA was responsible for just over a quarter of the introductions, as was a large article in *The Times Educational Supplement (TES)* which appeared just after the launch of the project. Slightly below a quarter each were advertisements and meetings.

This indicates that all four sources of communication were important in helping schools to hear about the project, and that a range of dissemination practices should be continued rather than focusing too narrowly on any one approach.

Selecting and Paying for the Programme

The decision to implement the Catch Up Programme was made by the headteacher in 65 percent of cases, the SENCO in 54 percent of cases and the English coordinator in 28 percent of cases. (The totals exceed 100 when discussing role categories due to the overlapping of roles by some headteachers and/or coordinators.) No schools in the sample involved both the SENCO and the English coordinator, the roles being clearly delineated rather than evidence of a team approach. The source of funding reflected a slight tendency towards special needs, as 40 percent of schools bought the pack from the SEN budget, 30 percent from the English budget and 30 percent from the general school budget.

Training

Of the teachers 54 percent had not attended any courses involving the Catch Up Team, but had used the training pack in school. The remaining 46 percent had attended additional courses, although only one person had attended a Saturday seminar.

Staff Involvement

A total of 53 teachers and 27 LSAs were said to be involved in delivering the programme. This is perhaps an indication that schools had taken on board the principle of a teacher-led programme, although patterns of implementation were not explored within this study. Also, 19 percent of headteachers were involved in the teaching of the programme, but these were exclusively first-school heads, with no teaching by junior/primary heads. Likewise, in first schools, the English coordinator was often directly involved, whereas in junior and primary schools most coordinators had no involvement at all.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Most schools (91 percent) said that they planned to use the Catch Up assessments in order to measure the effectiveness of the programme; 53 percent said they also planned to use standardized reading tests; 73 percent would use the national assessments (three years on) as an indicator of the success of the programme; and 14 percent said they had other plans.

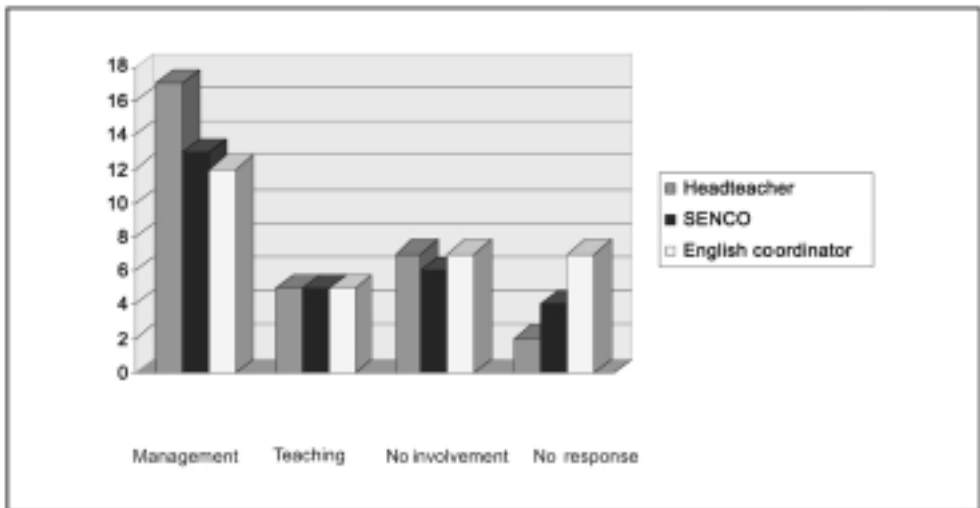


Figure 2. Levels of involvement by those other than the teacher

Management of the Project

Project management was carried out by headteachers in 57 percent of schools, the SENCO in 54 percent of the schools and the English coordinator in 38 percent. When asked who should offer further support for the project, 68 percent of the respondents said it should be the SENCO. The extent to which headteachers, SENCOs and English coordinators were involved in teaching and management of the programme are illustrated in Figure 2.

Apart from the slight lead in management by the headteachers, the roles are fairly evenly distributed, but it is interesting to note that this includes no involvement at all by six or seven members from each category. In other words, there were schools in which key personnel were not involved in this significant intervention.

Implications

The findings from this reconnaissance study have confirmed that complex management factors exist before the programme even starts to operate in the classroom. Likewise, other elements of the programme under investigation have revealed the fact that management issues have a strong and pervasive influence on its effectiveness. For example, the decision to allocate dedicated time and the decision about how to use that time are both essentially management issues. The question remains, do these impact upon the effectiveness of the programme once it starts to be implemented, and if so, which variables have a causal effect on the learning outcomes?

Multi-Level Management and the Catch Up Project

The definition of MLM provided earlier referred to 'organizational and communication processes'. Eight levels of operation have been identified within which variations in these processes have been observed in the Catch Up Project.

- the hierarchical location level from where the change is introduced, for example, it may come from the teacher who has read or heard about the approach, or it may have come from government;
- the levels of ownership—for example, the change might be voluntary or imposed;
- the levels of involvement and decision-making—for example, training and planning;
- the levels of resourcing as a result of the planning, or not, as the case may be;
- the levels of support and guidance—for example, training;
- the levels of monitoring and evaluation—for example, policy, who conducts this and when;
- the levels of organization in the classroom—for example, class management, record-keeping, teaching approach, deployment of classroom assistants;
- the levels of accountability—to parents, to the head, to the children.

At this point, no attempt has been made to arrange the levels into a hierarchy. Indeed, observations would suggest that the ways in which these levels operate are more intricately multidimensional rather than hierarchical, and differ from school to school and LEA to LEA, according to the balance of one level influencing another (for example, high levels of support and guidance might have a positive influence on levels of teacher involvement, high levels of accountability might influence the level of monitoring and evaluation and so on). It is also apparent that the influences of change are not unidirectional, but operate simultaneously from top-down and bottom-up (see Fullen, 1999). However, the ratio or balance between the two can vary enormously, and arguably this could be an influential factor in the successful implementation of change. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the human impact of personalities and values also make a considerable contribution to the successful implementation of Catch Up, and this is certainly a growing area of interest more generally (see Ouston, 1998).

The eight levels have been seen to operate at different points of communication between the project base at the School of Education, Oxford Brookes University, and the final destinations, Year 3 classrooms. To describe this in more detail the points of communication are illustrated here through a series of five diagrams.

First, the route by which the programme arrives in school can fall into one of two broad categories. Schools either hear about the project and order the programme training pack direct from the university, or they are informed about it by their LEA. This could arguably be a point at which impressions are influenced, for instance, if the LEA is directing the school to adopt the programme against the headteacher's wishes. The Catch Up Project targets both potential participants in a wide range of ways. Seminars and in-service training (INSET) sessions offer an interesting insight into the different approaches of schools. For example, some headteachers welcome the idea of training on a Saturday that does not involve the need for supply cover, whereas others have said they would not dare to ask their staff to give up time at the weekend! Likewise, on Saturdays there are always teachers in attendance who are doing so under their own volition as well as those that have been 'sent'. Saturday seminars are organized by the university, whereas weekday INSETs are booked by the LEA (the sessions are the same), and it is assumed that this is also likely to affect motivation and decision making at this level.

The pattern within LEAs is also interesting. Initially, the project team thought that English advisers would be the main contacts to secure bookings. However, it very quickly became apparent that special needs advisers were even more enthusiastic, and their

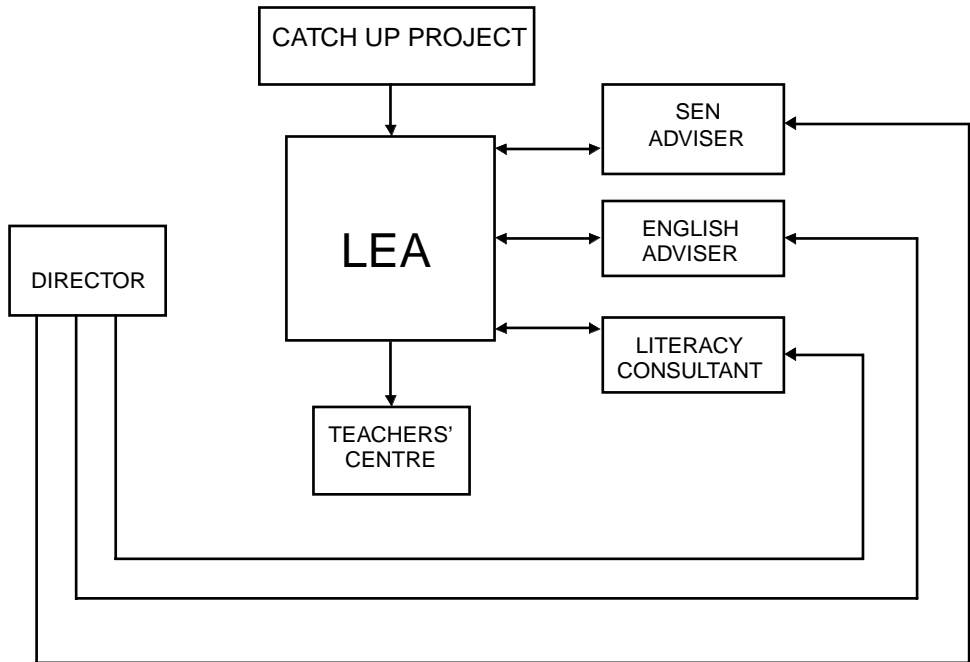


Figure 3. Communication routes between the project and LEAs

responses constitute approximately two-thirds of all bookings to date. English advisers were initially targeted through mailshots, but the special needs advisers soon heard about the project through exhibitions at which members of the team were invited to speak. It is impossible to tell at this stage whether this pattern is due to the credibility of exhibitions over mailshots, or whether it relates to the roles and responsibilities of different teams.

In some LEAs, there are strong partnerships between the teams, whereas in others they are actually in competition with each other (particularly where market forces for services are in operation). This has not been found to be particularly helpful for teachers. Figure 3 illustrates the different points of contact within LEAs to date.

In some cases, the director or chief education officer heard about the project and channelled this through to one of the advisory teams. In some LEAs, the project training pack has been bought for a teachers' centre, to enable schools to view the materials before making a decision. In some cases this is instigated by one or other of the advisers, and sometimes the centres approach us direct. Another interesting feature has been the changing role of the literacy consultants in Catch Up. In 1998, their priority was the delivery of the NLS training. Now, as they work to support schools in achieving their target reading scores, some are starting to approach the university for Catch Up information. Again, some tensions have been observed between English advisers and literacy consultants in some, though by no means all, LEAs. It is quite clear that, where advisory teams and schools work together in integrated partnerships, the project is running particularly well.

Figure 4 illustrates the different channels through which the programme has entered schools (whether via the LEA or not). In some cases, the project is channelled through

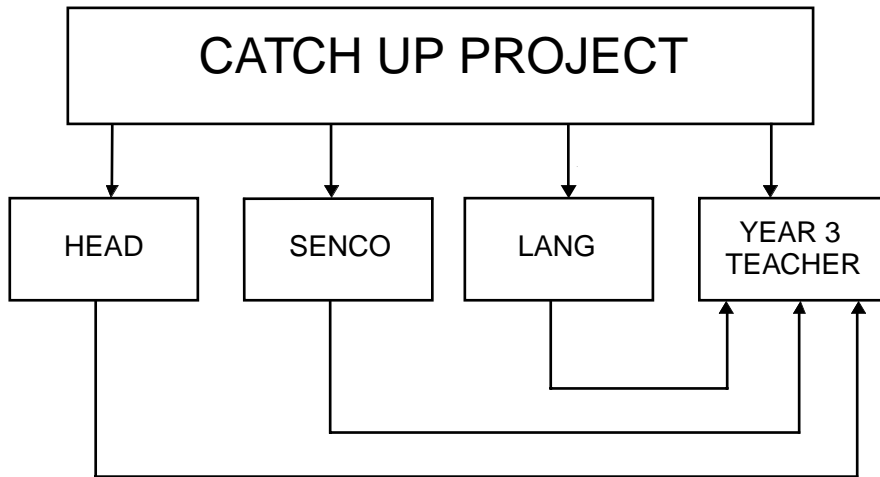


Figure 4. Range of initial contacts in school

the headteacher, special needs coordinator (SENCO) or the language coordinator. In other cases the Year 3 teacher might be the first to hear about the project. The channel of entry will undoubtedly affect the enthusiasm or ownership of the programme by the Year 3 teacher and be influenced by the personal relationships, as well as any strategic planning policies, within the school. Also, this stage is likely to influence planning for resources and monitoring.

Finally, once the programme is implemented, the whole range of teacher management variables comes into focus. Figure 5 illustrates some of those that have been reported to the team by Catch Up schools. It should also be mentioned that, although this particular diagram automatically attaches the teacher to Year 3, there is much evidence to indicate that schools are also using Catch Up with other age groups, which adds yet another variable.

The Year 3 teacher, having agreed or decided to implement the programme, has a number of important decisions to make. Which children? In some schools, over half the class may need additional support, in some mixed-age classes the teacher may consider prioritizing Year 4 and so on. The 10-minute slot needs to be fitted into everyday classroom activities, and teachers have found many ways of doing this, from using assembly time to employing parents for story-time in order to free themselves to work one-to-one with a pupil each day. Although Catch Up mostly takes place in the classroom, as recommended by the team, some schools are extracting pupils (for example, the headteacher takes them out one afternoon a week). How do the rest of the class cope when the teacher is focusing on one child? This varies enormously according to the existing ethos and working routines of individual classrooms. Are books needed from other classrooms, or are new resources required? And most importantly, how will the children be monitored and for how long? Some teachers place equal emphasis on data such as the reading attitude questionnaire as on more quantitative data such as reading ages, whereas in other schools no formal evaluation is made.

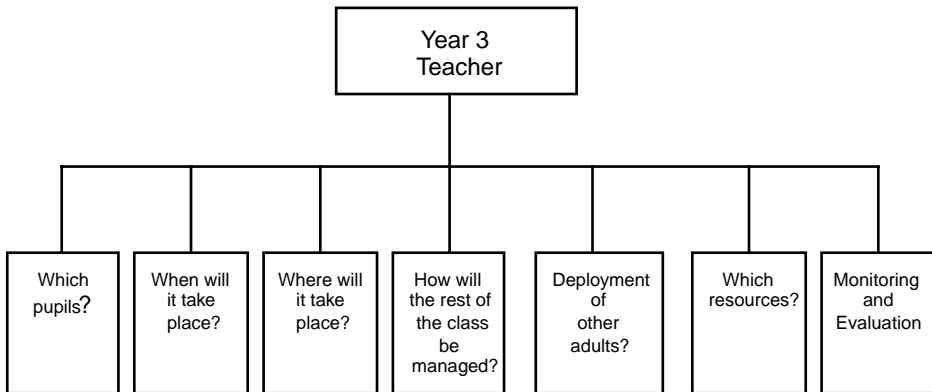


Figure 5. Teacher management variables

Summary

This basic breakdown of the channels of communication for the Catch Up Programme, from Oxford Brookes University through to the Year 3 classroom, illustrates how increasingly complex the variables become in a top-down approach. Indeed, they would suggest that a purely top-down approach is inseparable from the influences of bottom-up variables. The variety in methods of introduction and implementation of this programme is welcomed by the team, as the need for adaptation and flexibility is recognized to be a contributing factor to effectiveness through ownership, appropriateness to the individual contexts of schools and the ultimate embeddedness of the programme into ongoing policy. However, this diversity is also likely to represent variation in outcomes, and these must be investigated if the programme is to continue developing in ways which will be helpful to children's learning.

The implementation of a literacy intervention programme is about the implementation of change. While it is quite possible for a teacher to make the decision (and even purchase the pack) independently, the true long-term success of the Catch Up Project will be reflected by the extent to which the programme becomes embedded in school policies and cultures due to effective results and desirable outcomes. Clearly, such a goal involves issues which are multi-level, for while the teacher has the maximum impact on learning, that impact disappears if the teacher disappears (taking the pack with her, as we have heard in one interesting case)! Clearly, a programme in itself is not enough, no matter how good it might be. Nor is one rigid interpretation of that programme. To be truly effective it needs planning, training, resourcing, evaluating and reviewing in ways which involve good communication between all concerned. In this way, the principles of good education management become as essential as the pedagogy of literacy in helping children to become successful and enthusiastic readers.

Directions for the Next Catch Up Phase

During the first 12 months of the Catch Up Project intricate lines of communication have been involved in the introduction and implementation of the programme into schools. In

some regions, the programme is seen as a special needs resource, in others it is considered to be a part of the literacy curriculum. Arguably, these variations assist the project in become embedded in ways which are appropriate to local (LEA) initiatives, and perhaps there is little to be gained from attempting a tighter prescriptive dissemination approach. However, from the moment at which the pack arrives in school, an even more influential set of variables comes into play. Within the education establishment, from government downwards, it is arguably the school itself which is the most complex social organization, and indeed recent studies have shown that variations between classrooms are most responsible for variation in pupil performance. The way in which the programme is managed from that point onwards offers rich scope for further investigation. We therefore need to focus on the following practical and research areas in the next phases of the project.

Further Practical Developments

As the team prepares to write a second edition pack, the following additions will be considered: guidelines for the management of successful implementation; guidelines for monitoring and evaluation; training materials to define a clearer role for LSAs; suggested review format.

New Research Questions

In order to explore further some of the issues which have been raised in this article, future studies might be of use which ask the following questions:

- What are the common patterns of programme delivery at classroom level, and are there identifiable causal links to their outcomes?
- How effective is the programme with other age groups?
- Do the levels of support by the headteacher, SENCO and English coordinator affect the teacher's commitment to implementing the programme?
- How does the programme become embedded into school policy and practice?
- What are the reasons for schools discontinuing the programme, and how was the programme implemented in those schools?

General Implications for Schools

Although the studies described in this article are too small for specific generalization, we have been able to identify useful principles which we believe might be of help to schools when implementing literacy support for struggling readers in Year 3. The following recommendations are based on our research and ongoing working observations.

Investment and Commitment

Schools must recognize that Year 3 Level 1 children need a special allocation of time which is used for systematic and focused teaching. Appropriate resources should be planned and provided for that teaching.

Communication and Consultation

If a programme is to become embedded into ongoing school practice and policy, its implementation needs to be clear to the headteacher, SENCO and English coordinator. LSA input might be improved if teachers could work in closer partnership with them.

Training

The training helps teachers to understand the 'why' as well as the 'how'. LSAs should be trained in partnership with teachers.

Adequate and Appropriate Resources

Additional human resources, where possible, can help the teacher work more closely with children in need. Books need to be available at an appropriate reading level and interest level.

Monitoring and Assessment

Outcomes (particularly reading age and attitude) should be measured across an agreed period. The success of the programme should be subject to internal review.

Acknowledgements

Suzi Clipson-Boyles is the former director of the Catch Up Project. She is now a headteacher in Oxfordshire. The Catch Up Project is funded totally through grants and sponsorship, thus facilitating provision to schools at subsidized cost. The team is grateful to the following organizations and companies for their generous support to date: BP, Caxton Trust, HSBC (formerly The Midland Bank), Jarvis Hotels, Mosse Charitable Settlement Trust, Network for Social Change, Oxford Brookes University, Research Machines, Save and Prosper, Scottish Amicable, Unipart, Wates Foundation, World in Need. Further information about the project or project resources can be obtained from: Mary Wakefield, project administrator, the Catch Up Project, Sandringham House, Heritage Gate, Sandy Lane West, Oxford OX4 6LB, UK (tel. 01865 488129). Website: <http://www.thecatchupproject.org>

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