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Reading Fluency into Comprehension intervention to improve Reading for 7-9 year olds

Summary Feedback Report for Schools

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Headline Findings

The technique was found to improve pupil reading outcomes by three additional months’ progress.
All schools engaged fully in staff training and delivery of the intervention according to its design.

The study

The aim of the Reading Fluency & Comprehension intervention was to improve reading outcomes for Primary age children by up-skilling staff with evidenced-based CPD and resources to deliver the targeted intervention to pupils in Years 3 and 4.

Reading is a key skill for success, yet in 2019, 27% of English children did not reach expected standards in Reading tests at age 11. For some years, reading fluency approaches developed in the U.S. have been used with success to improve reading outcomes (Rasinski, 2011¹). Reciprocal reading, a reading comprehension learning strategy, has been implemented successfully with 9-11 year-olds in the UK in 100 Primary schools, where pupils who participated made an additional two months progress in their reading ([O’Hare et al, 2019](#); [Thurston et al, 2020](#)). Creating a reading intervention which combined reading fluency and comprehension using these targeted approaches was predicted to extend capacity for schools who implemented it to improve reading outcomes for children.

Owing to the urgency to ensure children catch up when they do not reach the expected standard in reading fluency and comprehension, including owing to COVID-19 lockdown episodes during 2020, The Reading Fluency into Comprehension intervention (including staff-training and resources) was developed. Using a Phase 2 randomised controlled trial between 2020-2021, the effectiveness of the intervention was tested in 12 Primary schools from areas of high socio-economic disadvantage. ([Cockerill et al, 2021](#)).

Implementation in schools and impact evaluation

School staff worked in teams with one teacher lead and two support staff trained to deliver the intervention. Schools also receive training manual with teaching and pupil resources, pupil books, and an online session to support implementation.

¹ Timothy V. Rasinski (1990) Effects of Repeated Reading and Listening-While-Reading on Reading Fluency, The Journal of Educational Research, 83:3, 147-151, DOI: [10.1080/00220671.1990.10885946](https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.1990.10885946)

Eight pupils were selected from Years 3 and Years 4 in each school using guidance provided to schools by the programme trainer FFT Literacy. Up-to 16 pupils who participated from each school completed a pre- and post- intervention independently designed online reading test.

The targeted intervention was delivered to the eight pupils per school who were randomly selected to the treatment group. The four pupils in Years 3 and 4 respectively in each school worked in small groups of four pupils per group led by teaching assistants. The intervention was delivered three times per week for 20 minutes over a minimum of 12 weeks. Owing to Covid19 disruptions, the intervention was delivered across the academic year 2020-2021. The eight pupils randomly selected to act as the control group per school continued with usual teaching during this time and were eligible to receive the intervention once the trial was completed in July 2021.

Staff completed an online feedback survey in respect of implementation, and pupil reading tests were analysed to assess the impact of the intervention on pupil reading outcomes compared to the pupils who continued with usual practice during the same period.

Results

All 12 schools engaged fully in staff training and delivery of the intervention during academic year 2020-2021, despite Covid19 disruptions.

Using an independent standardised measure with high reliability (New Group Reading Test, GL Assessment), the progress made between the pupils who received the intervention was compared to a control group who continued with business as usual during the implementation period.

Positive effect sizes of +0.26 on overall reading scores were observed across the board for Year 3 and Year 4 pupils in the intervention group, on the independently designed reading test. This is equivalent to an estimated three additional months' progress ([EEF, 2021](#)).

The conclusion from this is that the reading intervention shows excellent promise as a technique to improve overall reading (mainly through a process of enhancing reading comprehension at the sentence level).

Given the positive results from the Phase 2 exploratory trial using the reading intervention technique and materials, we would recommend this intervention be explored in a larger trial to see if gains scale to different school contexts and will be looking for further funding from other sources to test this in different contexts (Secondary stage) and at greater scale.

Acknowledgement

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