

MacqLit in schools

Results from program trials



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September 2019

MacqLit, or the 'Macquarie Literacy Program', was originally designed to target literacy skills in readers who have not shown adequate progress during the first few years of school. The program is typically delivered to small groups of 4 or 5 students in Year 3 and above. As such, it's seen as the first line of support for those in middle primary school, who are struggling to learn to read despite exposure to good whole-class instruction.

Since the release of MacqLit in 2016, we have loved hearing from teachers who have implemented the program and found it successful. However, as a company founded on delivering evidence-based programs, MultiLit has also been very keen to back up this positive anecdotal feedback with hard data. With that in mind, we've recently taken a close look at the data we've collected while running MacqLit programs in schools across Sydney.

The analysis included 292 students, from Years 3 through 6, who attended MacqLit at school for two terms. Trained MultiLit tutors delivered the program for roughly four hours per week during the semester, and trained MultiLit testers collected the assessment results at the beginning and end of the program.

According to the raw score results, the students made substantial and statistically significant gains across the semester in word reading accuracy, nonword reading accuracy, spelling accuracy, passage reading fluency, passage reading accuracy, and reading comprehension. These improvements were all associated with large effect sizes.

Where standardised scores were available (i.e., for measures of nonword reading accuracy, passage reading accuracy and reading comprehension), the results again indicated that improvements were statistically significant. Moreover, the results suggest that students improved *relative* to what would be expected just based on age-related change.

One of the biggest improvements was in students' nonword reading ability. At the start of the program, the average reading age of the group was 7 years, 3 months. By the end, they had made a huge leap to 9 years, 1 month. Although reading ages give only a crude indication of the developmental stage at which a child is performing, an improvement roughly equivalent to 22 months is still very positive to see. Nonword reading performance indexes skills in how well a reader can decode unfamiliar words, using knowledge of letter-sound correspondences. Given how important these skills are to overall reading comprehension, it's pleasing that such improvements may be associated with exposure to a semester's worth of MacqLit instruction.

It's important to note that, for these newest analyses, only students receiving MacqLit instruction were included, meaning there was no control group with which to compare our results. However, the findings are supported by two small randomised control trial (RCT) studies, which were conducted in 2010 and 2011 with an earlier iteration of the MacqLit program. Hence, based on all the available research there is strong evidence that MacqLit is an effective program to target the reading skills of older low-progress readers.

Note: Most students (n = 239) from the analyses reported on here were included in a study of MacqLit efficacy, published in *The Educational and Developmental Psychologist* (available to read [here](#)).