



Equipping Literacy Assistants

**Overview of the Literacy Program
for Literacy Assistants**

What is a Literacy Assistant?

A person who

- helps children to read
- works with students who are behind the expected standard in reading
- usually works one-on-one with students, but in some cases may work with a small group

Note that we do not call our students “slow learners”

Why do we need Literacy Assistants?

- Large class sizes in schools
- Teachers lack time for individual assistance because in one class, children are at different ability levels.
- Working with students one-on-one or in small groups gives students the opportunity to learn to read at their own level.
- There are many reasons why students may not be reading at the expected level.

Solving the problem

- Some schools have libraries with many books.
- Is a well-stocked library the answer to illiteracy?
- What if the children cannot read the books?
- What must be done first?

This course is based on a tried and proven method

- Developed in the 1970s by Marie Clay, N.Z. known as “Reading Recovery”.
- One-on-one assistance for children who are failing to read by the end of their first year in school.
- In countries where English is a second language, we recommend starting the program in Year 3 (around age 8).
- However this program could suit any Primary or Lower Secondary student who is failing in reading.

The goal

- To bring children up to the national standard for their year level
- With consistent one-on-one work this should take 6 to 12 months.
- Then the student will exit the program.

How do we know which children should be on the program?

- Students will be tested using the ***Running Records*** test, and a basic phonics test. (*You will hear more about these tests later.*)
- Some children may need assistance in oral language, (conversation only), before starting the program.
- This particularly applies to students who are not fluent in spoken English.

What will you learn during this training?

- To find out the problems children are having in the speaking, reading and writing of English.
- How to work with students on their weaknesses
- To test regularly
- To report on student progress

What will you do?

- Work with children individually (one-on-one)
- Spend about 20 minutes to half an hour with each student in your care, 3 to 5 times per week.

You will teach your students:

- the sounds of the alphabet
- how to read words and simple stories
- how to write short sentences

When to take the children out of class

- During any classroom literacy activity: oral or written.
- It is better that the student is working with you, than being present in a class where they are not understanding
- The classroom teacher will tell you when to take the students out.
- The classroom teacher will make a timetable for you.

- There are some subjects that children should not miss! They should not be taken out of class.
- During these subjects the Literacy Assistant can work with another class, or quietly work alongside students in the class.

When not to take the students out

- Maths
- Bible period
- Phys ed
- Art
- Vernacular language

The Literacy Assistance program outside of the school setting

This program may also be used for students in the following settings:

- Before or after school tutoring
- Home schooling
- Community groups – especially speakers of languages other than English

Revision

- What will you learn in the course?
- What will you be doing as a Literacy Assistant?