



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.

Some causes of failure to read

- English is not the student's first language.
- Students are often absent from school
- Class sizes are too large and the student cannot get individual attention
- Classroom teaching is not catering for students' needs

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

How can this program be used?

- As a supplementary school program, where students are taken out of class for one-on-one assistance
- As an after-school program

As an after-school program

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

- Before or after school tutoring
- Saturday sessions
- Home schooling
- Community groups and church groups

Questions

1. What is a Literacy Assistant?
2. Why are so many children below the expected standard in reading?
3. Why should we not call these students “slow learners”?
4. Why do you think Marie Clay, the inventor of “Reading Recovery” targeted children in Yr 2 / 3?
5. Some students first need help in oral language. Why?