

Why an early literacy intervention?

Evidence indicates that a significant number of children on entry to school cannot quickly or efficiently process all the linguistic information needed to interact appropriately with teachers, peers and others. (Barrett & Hammond, 2008; Catts & Kamhi, 2005).

Best Start Kindergarten Assessment data also reflects research findings that suggest some students in low socio-economic communities may not have developed expected conventional literacy levels on entry to school. (Snow, P.C., & Powell, M.B. 2008).

However, there is also a growing evidence that appropriate early language and learning experiences can act as a protective factor that promotes the cognitive and social development of young children. (Cashmore, 2001; Elias, Hay, Homel & Frieberg, 2006; Hawkins & Catalono, 1992; Paul, 2007).

L3 acknowledges research that has identified that the quality of children's transition into literacy is a major predictor of their later academic achievement, by quickly and efficiently addressing initial disparities in language, reading and writing. (Phillips et al, 2001).



L3 is cohesive. It is based on sound instructional practices that are foundational to effective literacy instruction. The theory based principles of L3 are:

1. Reading and writing are learned behaviours.
2. Systematic observation informs teaching.
3. New learning is built on individual students' strengths.
4. Accelerated progress is critical to closing the gap.

Which schools should implement L3?

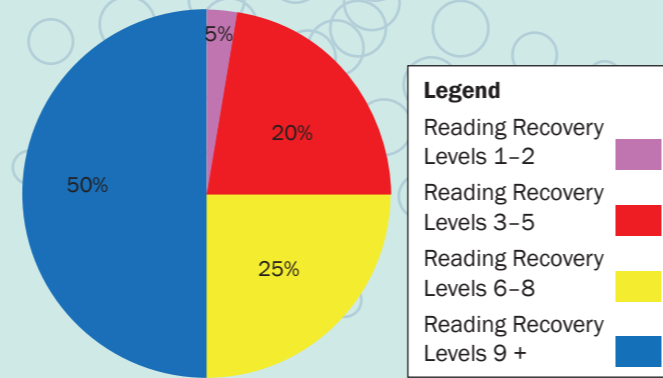
Schools may consider participating in L3 professional learning and implementation if a significant percentage of the Kindergarten cohort are at low levels across multiple aspects of early literacy, at entry and/or at the end of the school year.

The decision to participate should be supported by student data and discussion with the regional early literacy team and reflected in school planning.

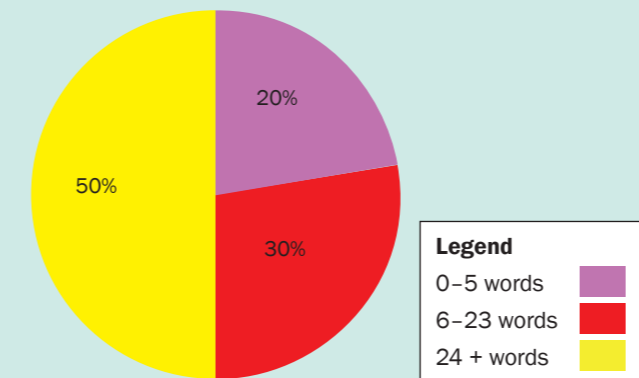


Project goals

Project goal for end of year text reading as a result of instruction



Project goal for end of year writing vocabulary as a result of instruction



Outcomes

In 2010, **260** L3 teachers in **106** schools successfully implemented literacy programs using L3 strategies for **4,288** Kindergarten students.

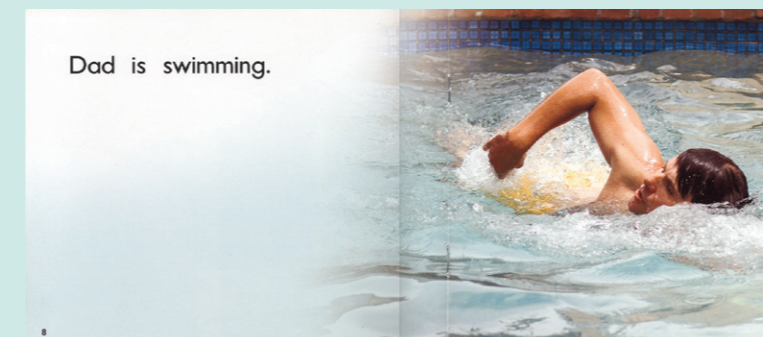
- **68%** of the participating students were reading at or beyond Level 9. The project goal was **50%**.
- Only **13%** of students will require reading instruction at text levels 1 to 5 in Year 1.
- **76%** percent of students had an independent writing vocabulary of more than 24 words.

These outcomes have been compiled from the five-weekly data collection that occurs in all L3 classrooms. These results build on similar findings from the 2007 and 2009 implementation of L3.

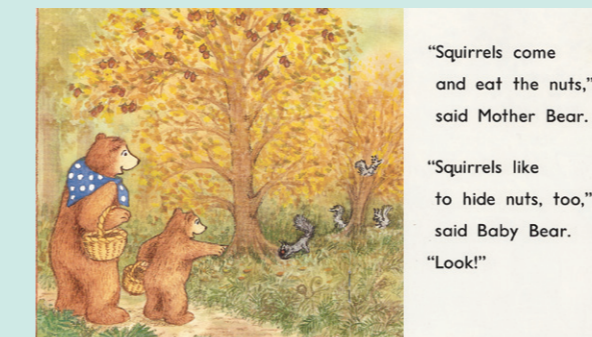
What do these gains look like?

Reading

Beginning of Kindergarten

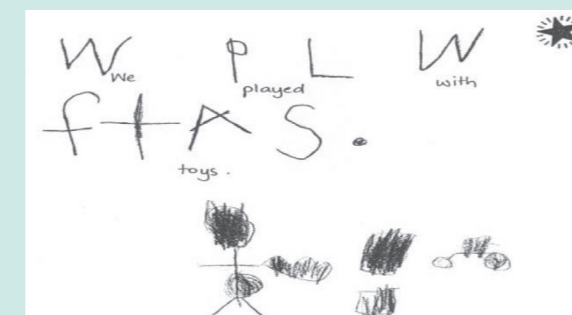


End of Kindergarten

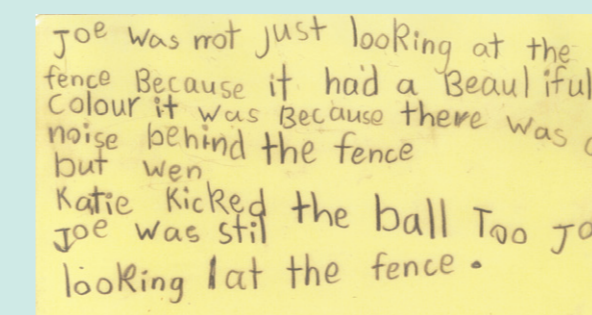


Writing

Beginning of Kindergarten



End of Kindergarten



L3 addresses the following aspects of reading and writing processes that support the comprehension of texts:

- Phonological awareness
- Visual perception of letters
- Word recognition
- Word analysis
- Structural analysis
- Phrasing in fluent reading.



Professional support

Teachers – The Kindergarten team engage in 12 half days of professional learning and coaching to:

- Extend their knowledge and expertise. This is achieved through theoretical discussions grounded in research.
- Explore literacy acquisition processes. This is achieved through observation and other related tasks.
- Analyse and discuss student interactions, teaching decisions and data collected during literacy lessons.
- Plan for the transition from Kindergarten to Year 1 for students requiring ongoing support.

Each professional learning session is led by a regional trainer and discussion is supported by evidence of students' text reading, writing and responses to text.

Schools – The regional trainers provide support for the school Literacy team and executive to:

- Commit to continuous improvement of literacy outcomes. This is achieved through the analysis and use of all Kindergarten students' data to inform teaching and learning.
- Share responsibility for student literacy learning by engaging in professional inquiry and learning.
- Continue with explicit literacy teaching practices for those Year 1 students who require additional assistance.

Regions – Are invited to:

- Nominate outstanding early years teachers to participate in 12 full days of professional learning to become regional trainers.
- Provide localised support and assistance to L3 regional trainers.
- Coordinate the regional implementation of the L3 program.



Why should schools implement L3?

Evidence based results - Text reading and writing data collected over four years from diverse educational settings indicates that L3 meets and in many cases exceeds all criteria identified for Early Stage 1 learners.

Building knowledge and skills for sustained outcomes – L3 equips students with the knowledge and skills to problem solve whilst they are reading and writing. Knowing how letters and words work supports students to check on themselves and search further so that they can maintain meaning on increasingly complex texts.

Caters for the needs of students from a diverse range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds – Explicit teaching in small groups enables the literacy program to identify and address the learning needs of students as they occur. Data indicates that Aboriginal and English as an Additional Language students are able to close the gap in Kindergarten.

Capacity building for schools and regions – L3 trainers and teachers can confidently analyse students early literacy learning needs; effectively implement a program to meet those needs; provide evidence to support their decision making and report effectively to region, school executive and families. Training and implementing L3 as a Kindergarten team provides a solid base for school Literacy programs.

2010 classrooms case study

Data was collected every five weeks from 15 diverse classrooms as part of a year-long case study.

The following information, provided by one of the participating schools, demonstrates the changes that occurred in students' learning at three key points in the Kindergarten year.

School G joined L3 in 2010. The school is located in a rural, low-SES community and has a large Aboriginal enrolment. The Kindergarten teacher was in the second year of her teaching career.

End of Term 1

School: G	Class: KH															Week: 10
Writing Vocabulary	3	3	2	2	2	0	1	3	2	2	A	2	1	A	0	4
Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words	9	5	6	6	4	1	1	6	8	2	A	0	A	A	0	12
Text Levels Read After Instruction																
18 or above																
17																
16																
15																
14																
13																
12																
11																
10																
9																
8																
7																
6																
5																
4																
3		X		X												X
2			X			X	X	X	X	X	X					
1						X					X	X		X		
0													X			
Students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16

End of Term 2

School: G	Class: KH																	Week: 20
Writing Vocabulary	24	22	19	19	21	23	13	24	10	12	8	7	10	4	4	3	1	
Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words	29	28	26	33	23	25	10	29	21	18	13	10	15	3	3	2	3	
Text Levels Read After Instruction																		
18 or above																		
17																		
16																		
15																		
14																		
13																		
12																		
11																		
10		X		X	X													
9																		
8		X				X	X											
7																		
6					X			X	X	X								
5																		
4										X	X	X						
3													X	X	X	X		
2																	X	
1																		
0																		
Students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	

End of Term 4

School: G	Class: KH																Week: 40
Writing Vocabulary	65	56	60	44	55	69	76	14	34	34	15	33	8	46	16	50	
Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words	37	36	37	36	37	36	37	20	37	36	13	37	8	35	28	37	
Text Levels Read After Instruction																	
18 or above		X	X	X		X	X									X	
17					X	X	X										
16	X											X					
15															X		
14																	
13																	
12																	
11																	
10																	
9									X	X							
8																	
7							X									X	
6																	
5																	
4											X			X			
3																	
2																	
1																	
0																	
Students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	

Critical elements for success in L3 schools

Team approach

I am so proud of my literacy learning team. We have attained results we have never attained before. The ongoing professional dialogue, planning and assessment by the staff has kept me informed of the students' progress.
(Principal, Western Sydney Region)

Quality teaching

I believe the strength of L3 lies in the fact that it is not a reading scheme or a collection of expensive resources. It is about good teaching. The good teaching lies side by side with the explicit nature of the teaching strategies and our knowledge of quality teaching and learning.
(Principal, North Coast Region)

Parent and community understanding and support

When I sent him to school at the start I was very worried initially as my little boy showed no interest at all in literacy. Even reading story books to him was a chore and he seemed so bored by anything to do with writing. That has completely changed now. He writes all the time and it is amazing to watch him spell words he doesn't know by breaking them into parts. Usually he is spot on as well. I love L3 and what it has given him.

Sustained, ongoing professional learning

I have been teaching Infants classes for almost 30 years and I have never used anything even close to being as successful as L3 ... I thought I would be too old and set in my ways so I was really apprehensive about how I would go but the approach is brilliant and the training support has helped me so much. I love the way it is very specific and you get time to give it a go between sessions. The ongoing support into the second year is really valuable as well.
(Teacher, Illawarra South East Region)

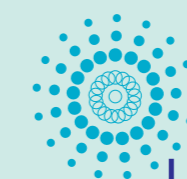
High expectations

I have such a richer understanding of how children learn to read and write. I feel so empowered to provide explicit instruction for all the students in my class. I am equipped to cater for all student needs including those who require additional support and students needing extension.
(Teacher, South Western Sydney Region)

Further information

<www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/beststart/III/index.htm>

NSW L3 team
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Language, Learning & Literacy



The less prepared groups need as much challenge, more thought, more time, more attention, and twice as many learning opportunities as the well prepared. What they do not need is to be set aside from literacy activity for another year.
(Boomer, Organising the Nation for Literacy 1988)

What is Language, Learning and Literacy?
Language, Learning and Literacy (L3) is one component of the Best Start Initiative that aims to ensure all students are on track in their literacy and numeracy learning by Year 3.
L3 is a research-based, cost-effective Kindergarten classroom intervention, targeting text reading and writing. It provides rich literacy experiences through systematic and explicit teaching. It complements the daily Literacy program.
Students participate in reading and writing lessons in small groups, designed to meet their specific learning needs. They also engage in short periods of independent, individual or group tasks to practise and consolidate their current literacy learning. This occurs in the classroom within the daily Literacy session.
The program goal is to reduce the need for more intensive and resource demanding programs in future years of schooling.