

Lexia Trial Report

Westbridge Residential School

Lexia Trial 10th November – 15th December 2009

Westbridge Residential School
488 e Don Buck Road
Royal Heights
Auckland 614

Background

- Westbridge Residential School is described on the Min.Ed. website as, “a School for Students in year levels 3 – 8. Students at this School will have severe behavioural difficulties and their needs are unable to be adequately met in their local School.”
- Westbridge provides a nominal 40 week programme.
 - * Students are able to be Mainstreamed prior to this if their behaviour level is deemed high enough to place them within levels acceptable in their home classes and Schools.
 - *For Behavioural and Social reasons some students remain in the programme for more than 40 weeks.
- Those who are most likely to succeed in their transition are not only those whose behaviours have been modified but whose academic abilities have improved to a level where the child is no longer anxious about the exposure of those levels to peer groups. Confidence in Literacy and Numeracy usually means that a child who has reacted negatively to those times within the school day in the past, no longer has to protect themselves from exposure to children far in advance of them.
- To this end one of our stated aims is to have our children functioning in the area of literacy with an expressed target of reading at least AT, WITHIN or even hopefully ABOVE the Chronological / Class bandwidth they will return to.
- In saying this it is extremely rare for children to enter the Westbridge Programme even AT the age or class appropriate bandwidth. Of the 21 children involved in our Lexia trial none were reading at their chronological age.
- The correlation between negative behaviours and under achievement in academic performance prior to Westbridge can be broken via increasing that academic performance. This has seen to be true especially in reading as children are able to witness, feel and appreciate their progress. This starts forming the positive cycle of buying into learning, which by its own definition means being part of that “positive” group whose behaviour includes rather than precludes.

Measurement of reading ability at Westbridge

- Assessment of reading is done by the triangulation of asTTle Reading, Star and either Probe or P.M. Benchmark. All 3 are used as Formative Assessment Tools with asTTle also being used summatively.
- To measure the Lexia affect of our trial we have placed it alongside our asTTle results.
- The asTTle results are then placed into chronological age / class bands.

The Trial

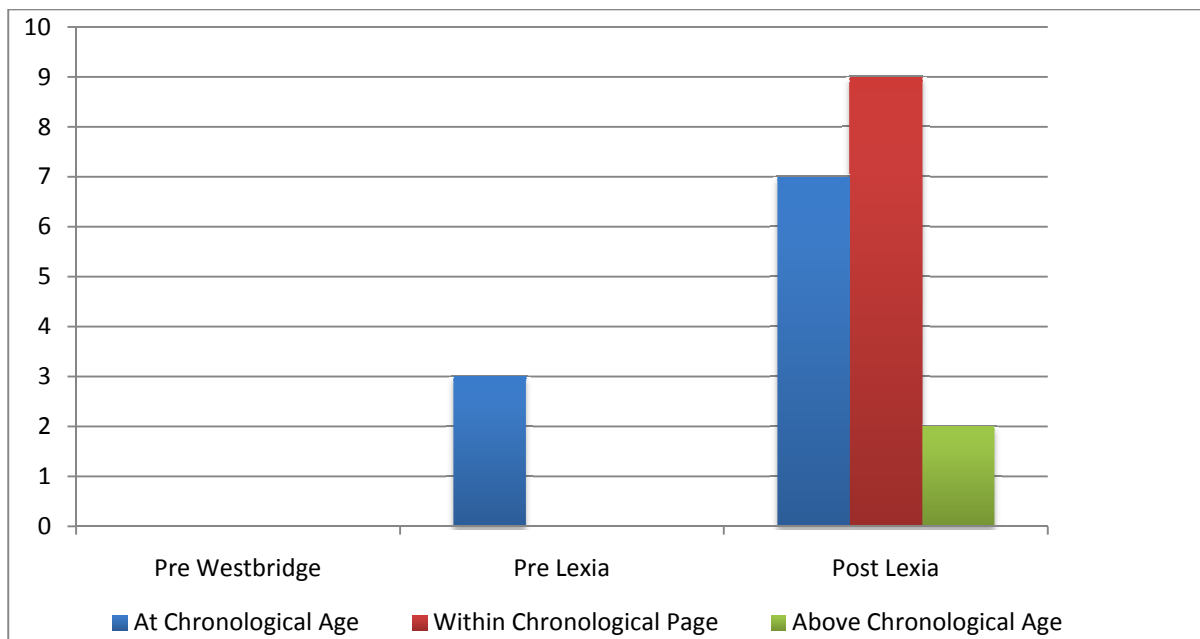
- Our trial included 21 children.
- Ages ranged from 8 to 13 and classes from Years 4 to 8.
- The last asTTle testing used as point of comparison was done on the 18th day of the trial.

AsTTle results pre and post Lexia exposure

- Graph 1 - Reading Improvements with Lexia (see next page) shows the number of students reading AT, WITHIN and ABOVE their chronological reading age.
- Column 1 of the graph shows on entry to Westbridge none of these students were reading at their chronological age. In fact 3 students were at a pre-reading stage. After being on the Westbridge program 3 students were reading AT their chronological age (Column 2 - Pre Lexia), but none were reading WITHIN, or ABOVE.
- Prior to the Lexia intervention the students reading ages were on average 2.7 years behind their chronological age.
- After Lexia intervention 7 students were reading AT chronological age (Column 3 – Post Lexia), 9 WITHIN chronological age and 2 ABOVE chronological age. The other 3 students made gains but did not reach their chronological age.
- The Curriculum Rating growth from Term 3 to Term 4 = on average 1.85 units.
- Prior to Lexia the average growth per term was 0.3 of a unit.

Graph 1

Reading Improvements with Lexia



- 6 children produced 1 unit of growth. 8 children produced 2 units of growth, 3 children produced 3 units of growth. 1 child produced 4 units of growth and 1 child produced 5 units of growth the first growth he had shown in 5 Terms. Note: The norm in mainstream is to expect 1 unit of growth every 8 months.
- The fact that the trial had only been in operation for 18 days at that the time of Term 4 asTTle testing might indicate that this unprecedented growth could have had as much to do with the positive side effects of Lexia involvement for our children than the actual learning involved.
- However, when compared with the average Curriculum Rating growth exposed pre Lexia involvement of .3 per term something truly amazing has happened. Remarkably there were no troughs in performance.

2 Case Studies

- 1) E_____ had been in the programme for 76 weeks at the commencement of the trial. He is a boy with Major Attachment Issues, a diagnosis of Oppositional Defiance and a history of intense behavioural outbursts who lives in a large CYFs foster home. He entered the programme as a 9 yr old, year 5 (who was so out of control at school he was considered a danger to not only himself but others including staff), he is now 11 and in Year 7.

His term by term asTTle reading results on conversion to his age /class banding reads as follows. 4 - 5 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 6.5 - 5 - 9 The last one being from the asTTle testing done 18 days into the Lexia trial. His term 3 aRs score was 429 placing him at level 2P. His Term 4 aRs score was 554 placing him at level 3A. A full 2 level jump in 10 weeks or 8 months growth in ten weeks.

His teacher commented that after an intensive phonics programme and incentive based reading programme delivered over the previous 7 terms his actual “buy in” to the reading process only kicked into overdrive with exposure to Lexia. The daily success independent of adult input (independent and impartial) triggered his willingness to own his own learning. Every successful unit completed was met with whoops of joy. Also he engaged enthusiastically in the asTTle testing round, used all of the time allocated, instead of refusing to continue 20 minutes in as had been the previous experience.

This boy who returned this year has asked when he can “do the Lexia.” And has started to read by choice.

- 2) G_____ had been in the programme for 10 weeks at the commencement of the trial. He had been out of school for over a year because of suspension and stand downs. He entered as a 10 year old but has now turned 11.

He has been involved in 2 asTTle testing rounds. The first one soon after arrival in which even with a Teacher Reader his aRs score was 246 which placed him at less than level 2B. His 2nd 18 days into the trial resulted in an aRs score of 382 placing him at level 2P. A jump of 2 complete levels or 8 months growth.

His Teacher commented that he entered the programme wanting to “learn to read” and took a full part in all reading activities offered. This included 3hrs and 20mins per week broken into 10 x 20 minutes of 1:1 with the teacher working on the “Fun Fonics” programme. On exposure to Lexia the boy announced to the class that he was sacking the teacher in favour of the programme. He averaged 24 minutes a day on the programme and stayed after school on half a dozen occasions when we had

only 1 station operating. The daily quantifiable success became a motivation independent of but added to that offered by the teacher. From willingly reading as a wise choice option, willingly reading to and or with the teacher or Teacher Aid this has grown to include sharing his reading with peers and on 2 occasions with complete strangers. This increased confidence largely due I believe his positive reaction to the Lexia programme.

Further Teacher Comment

- “With 2 children working on Lexia at a time it fits perfectly into my reading rotation although I had to change the rotation so that the time they spent with me followed independent tasking and not the programme. I was starting to detect some buyer resistance to my input.”
- “The hardest part of our job for me is to sell learning to these children. To get them to actually own their own learning, to become involved in the whole process. Then along comes Lexia and it’s done for you. The spin offs for the rest of my reading programme are only positive.”
- “It used to be a case of chasing them into classrooms after break-times now it’s a case of chasing them out at break-times.”

From Student Appraisal of Lexia

- “I used be dumb at reading.”
- “I know it’s not supposed to be a competition but every-time that R_____ tells every one how many levels he’s gone up I go harder. That’s why do extras after school.”
- “If my old school had this stuff I wouldn’t be here. When I go back I’m going to tell them to get it and I’ll show them how to do it. I know I won’t have to go to the sick bay at reading time any more.”
- “B_____ is a Lexia Junkie and he’s started to hog all the Captain Underpants books.”
- “I like how every day when I finish you show me my chart thing and I can see how much I’ve learned. I especially like it when our charts get published on Friday because then I can look at last Friday’s”

- “Since I started Lexia I have put 3 chapter books on my reading log. The only other ones there are the ones I HAD to read.”

Additional anecdotal evidence of positive Lexia outcomes for Westbridge Children

- Because of child demand we had to institute a booking sheet system for usage at break times and after school.
- Levels of compliance remained remarkably high in what is usually an extremely anxious time (Pre Christmas holidays) for our residential children.
- The children who experienced the programme last year are asking when it will start again to such an extent that children who have entered the programme this year are asking, “What is Lexia?”
- The Teaching Staff are unanimous in their desire to have the use of this most direct of instructional tool to add to not only their reading programmes but as a proven support to our children’s buy into their own learning.

In Summation

- Learning is like riding a bike. The more you do the better you get at it. When you've got the basics someone takes the training wheels off you. Then you are really riding. You are in charge. You learn to go fast. You learn to do tricks. Then you graduate to bigger bikes and start racing or find different types of bikes built to do different things. But no matter what you are riding or how you are riding it, you only really started to improve when you were able to be in charge. This was when someone took the training wheels away. For our children Lexia is not only a tool to help them learn to read but a tool that enables them to take control of one of the most important aspects of their learning.
- Lexia takes the training wheels off the whole learning process faster than we can as Teachers.
- For us dealing with the negative behaviours which have compounded the child's ability to learn prior to Westbridge. In conjunction with increasing literacy, numeracy skills and the tools to delivery the same but also switch our children on to learning so that they can see that not only are they progressing but will gain new confidence in their ability. This means that when they return to mainstream they are at the correct reading levels and have broken the cycle.
- Lexia will be a vital spoke in our wheel.

Mark Schofield
(Teacher in Charge of Trial)

"The reading growth we've witnessed over the last term has been astronomical and the only difference I see in our delivery is the inclusion of Lexia. I've never seen anything like it in 20yrs"

Programme Director
Westbridge Residential School