

February 2024

Hello Future Reading Intervention – a small n impact evaluation

Report for Hello Future

hello
future.



In this report



Chapter 1. Research context

- The intervention: background, desired outcomes
- The evaluation: the need and the small n sample
- The evaluation study: methodology, student selection sample
- The students: experiences and aspirations

Slide numbers:

4-29

Chapter 2. Executive summary

- Key Findings

30-36

Chapter 3. Intervention evaluation

- See next page for breakdown

37-65

Chapter 4. Impact of the evaluation

- See next page for breakdown

66-89

Chapter 5. Summary

- Overall
- Design; Set-up; Delivery

90-95

Chapter 6. Appendices

96-101

Chapters 3 and 4: Detail



3. Intervention Evaluation

Slide numbers:

- 3a Intervention design and set up, including:
 - Design and format of the intervention
 - Communications and planning, including timeline
 - Student selection: how it worked, what worked well, considerations
 - YARC reading assessments
 - Summary

37-53

- 3b The Intervention sessions:
 - Design & planning
 - Content, materials, toolkit
 - Receptivity
 - Challenges
 - Student perspective
 - Summary

54-65

4. Impact of the intervention

66-89

- a. YARC reading assessment
- b. TASO Access and Success Questionnaire (ASQ)
- c. Broader impact: Student and teacher sentiment
- d. Multi causation: External factors

1. Research Context

1a Background

Background (1)

The Hello Future Reading intervention: aims and rationale

Hello Future (Uni Connect Partnership for Cumbria) and University of Cumbria in partnership, planned to pilot a new attainment raising project in 2023.

Primary aim

The primary aim of the project was to see a positive increase in the reading age of Year 7 learners. There were also other secondary or potential outcomes such as increasing Higher Education (HE) knowledge and spending time with a positive role model. There is significant evidence from multiple studies that elevating reading age at this age can contribute to greater future educational success (see appendix) and a narrowing of the attainment gap.

Project rationale

Many learners enter secondary school with a primary school reading age. This is true of many Cumbrian learners who enter secondary school with a primary school reading age that could impact on KS4 attainment. The rationale for the project can be broken down as follows:

- To engage and motivate learners to move forward and build skills that will support them in their studies
- To support learners with reading to help 'unlock' the wider curriculum



Background (2)

Project rationale cont.

- To focus on raising attainment by helping students to develop skills (in this case reading and comprehension) needed to succeed in education
- To improve how learners' approach and / or think about learning and equip and / or motivate them to achieve higher levels of attainment.

Intervention overview

- Work with two schools in the region who require support with literacy / reading attainment
 - Schools to be representative of the needs of the region
- Work with 2 groups of 6 learners in each school, over 6 weeks
- Hello Future staff – Outreach Officers and/ or Graduate Interns – will visit the school and lead a guided reading style small group session with each group using Scholastic ‘Connectors’ series literacy intervention packs:
 - 2 x 40 mins sessions per week = 12 sessions in total (per school)



Desired intervention outcomes



The specific desired outcomes of the intervention were as follows:

- Learners make positive progress in reading comprehension by the time they complete the reading intervention
 - Measured via improved scores in reading comprehension via YARC (see next chart for details)
- Learners self-report progress in reading skills after taking part in the reading intervention
 - Measured via TASO* study strategies scale
- Learners report progress with confidence and motivation in ability to reach grades required to progress / for university after taking part in the reading intervention
 - Measured via TASO* scale
- Learners are more likely to indicate that they intend to apply to HE, post-reading intervention
 - Measured via TASO* scale
- In addition to TASO* scores and reading scores, self-reported qualitative feedback from the students will be taken into consideration
- Feedback from Hello Future personnel who deliver the sessions and the teachers in each school, will also be used to provide a perspective on progress/intervention success.



*TASO Access and Success Questionnaire (ASQ)

YARC: What is it?



YARC assessment: York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension

YARC is an individually administered reading assessment which allows for close observation of a pupil's reading behaviours, strengths and areas for development. It breaks down the components of reading so that specific skills can be targeted. There is a YARC assessment appropriate to all school age ranges.

More information regarding YARC can be found here: <https://www.gla-assessment.co.uk/assessments/products/yarc/>

The YARC standard score for reading comprehension was used to decide whether a student qualified for the intervention, regardless of whether other tests showed a different result.

The evaluation

The evaluation brief

Hello Future commissioned Cosmos to design and execute an evaluation that measures the impact of the reading intervention. The evaluation was requested to be based on:

- Comparison of participant reading levels between baseline and completion of the intervention
- The impact of the intervention itself.

The initial phase of the project involved a pilot phase, with no evaluation. There was subsequently a further pilot with an evaluation: it is this(2nd) pilot + evaluation which is discussed in this report.

Why conduct the evaluation?

Evidence from other studies suggests that more evaluation needs to be done as differing delivery models and intervention approaches can have varying impact. The evaluation was also required in order to aid future delivery of the programme should it be rolled out more extensively.

This reporting document

This report is focussed on:

1. Providing an overview of the intervention: what took place and how it was set up.
2. Providing feedback on the evaluation of the intervention in terms of impact on participants and the intervention itself.



A small n impact and evaluation study (1)

Why use a small n impact evaluation

A small n impact evaluation was requested by Hello Future. This was in order to take into account the small sample size that draws on alternative understandings of causation to the traditional.

In line with guidance from TASO on approaches to small n impact methodologies, a multiple causation approach was required to ensure causation is measured in the appropriate way and which takes into account the sample and the environment.

“..in small n methodologies, when multiple causes are recognised, the focus tends to switch to understanding the contribution of an intervention to an observed outcome. Thus, the notion of a ‘contributory’ cause recognises that effects are produced by several causes at the same time, none of which may be necessary nor sufficient for impact. This, in turn, leads to several impact questions that go beyond attribution to develop an understanding of how an intervention contributes to an observed effect”

(Stern et al., 2012)

“This leads to ‘causal imagery’ which evokes the notion of interventions as part of complex systems”

(Pawson, 2008)



A small n impact and evaluation study (2)

Advantages of a small n impact evaluation

Overall advantages of using small n impact evaluations vs. larger evaluations studies, as per advice from TASO in conducting a rigorous evaluation, include:

- They only need a small number of cases or even a single case. The case is understood to be a complex entity in which multiple causes interact. Cases could be individual students or groups of people, such as a class or a school. This can be helpful when a programme or intervention is designed for a small cohort or is being piloted with a small cohort.
- They can ‘unpick’ relationships between causal factors that act together to produce outcomes. In small n methodologies, multiple causes are recognised, and the focus of the impact evaluation switches from simple attribution to understanding the contribution of an intervention to a particular outcome. This can be helpful when services are implemented within complex systems.
- They can work with emergent interventions where experimentation and adaptation are ongoing. Generally, experiments and quasi-experiments require a programme or intervention to be fixed before an impact evaluation can be performed. Small n methodologies can, in some instances, be deployed in interventions that are still changing and developing.
- They can sometimes be applied retrospectively. Most experiments and some quasi-experiments need to be implemented at the start of the programme or intervention. Some small n methodologies can be used retrospectively on programmes or interventions that have finished.



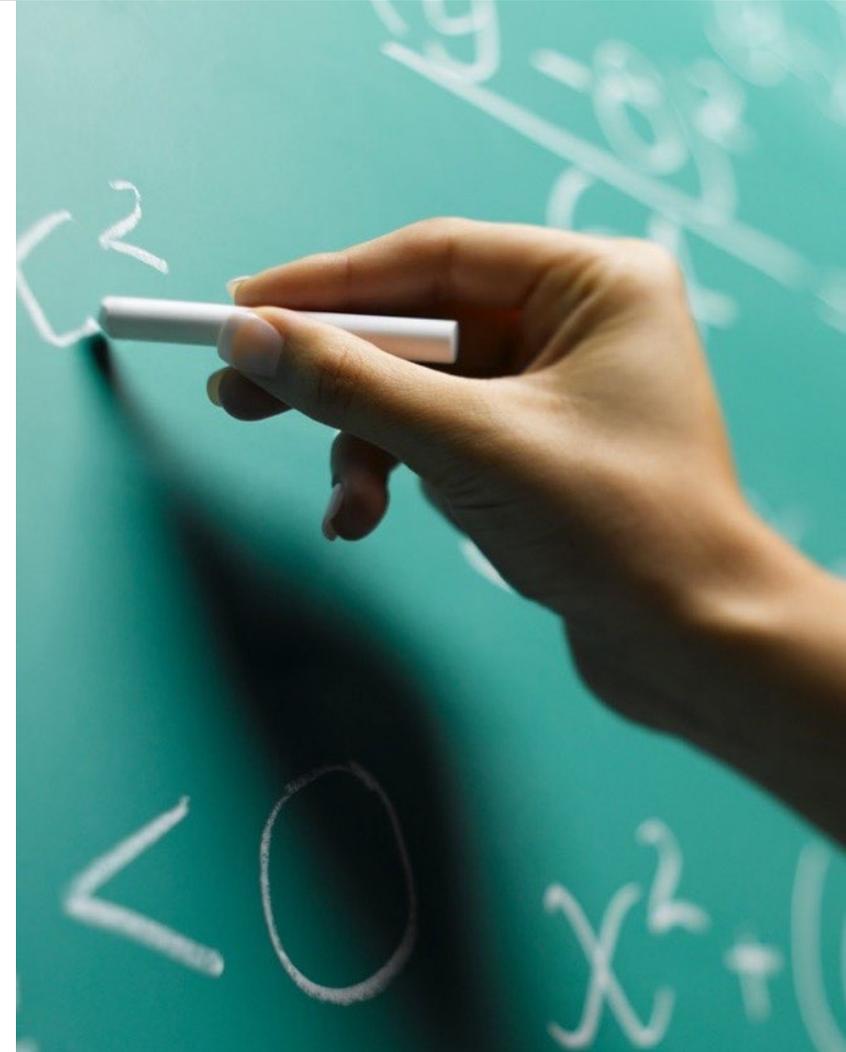
A small n impact and evaluation study (3)



Further reading

Further information on small n studies can be found here:

<https://taso.org.uk/evidence/evaluation-guidance-resources/impact-evaluation-with-small-cohorts/what-is-small-n-evaluation/how-do-small-n-impact-evaluations-work/>



1b The evaluation study

Method: Overview (1)



The approach took the following form

Two schools were selected. In each school students were chosen to form two groups: the intervention group (group A) and the control group (group B). 6 students were selected for each group, per school.

- **Prior to the intervention**
 - Interviews took place with all students: 30 minutes each, on Zoom with a qualitative researcher from Cosmos
 - Topics covered included social and academic capital, understanding student habits and skills capital; and their current perspective on education / motivation levels
 - YARC reading assessments were completed for all students by the school staff
 - TASO Access and Success questionnaire (ASQ) was completed by each student
 - Interviews with teacher/teacher assistant leads from each school were undertaken by a qualitative researcher from Cosmos in order to understand past/current/planned reading focussed interventions.
- **Intervention** – for ‘intervention group’ (group A) only: 6 weeks, 12 sessions (detail provided in this document)
 - After each intervention session, students provided feedback on their experience
 - Hello Future personnel recorded their experience of the session
 - NB. ‘Control’ group (group B) will receive the intervention in the Spring term, thus are not missing out on the opportunity to benefit from the intervention programme itself.

Method: Overview (2)



Cont.

- **Post-intervention**

- Interviews with students in intervention group: 30 minutes each, on Zoom with a qualitative researcher from Cosmos
 - Feedback on their overall experience of the intervention and perceived impacts
 - Influence of intervention on their perspectives and motivation towards education
- YARC reading assessments for all students – intervention group and control – were completed by school staff
- TASO Access and Success questionnaire (ASQ) were completed by all students (group A and group B)
- Interviews with teacher/teacher assistant leads from each school were undertaken with a qualitative researcher from Cosmos
- Interviews with the Hello Future personnel who delivered the intervention were undertaken with a qualitative researcher from Cosmos.

- **Notes:**

- Feedback from students regarding the sessions was planned to be collected through the Cosmos Express Online research platform. Due to difficulties with access, collection ultimately was via a mix of the platform and paper-based collection.
- Pupils were given an incentive (a £10 Amazon voucher, each time) for taking part in the pre/ post interviews with a researcher. Students from group A were also taken to Waterstones, post-intervention, and given a £25 voucher to spend.
- The intervention itself and all research interviews took place during the school day.
- There was one researcher per school: Kate Wood undertook all the interviews with School Y and Fiona Smalley undertook all the interviews with School X.

Method: Timeline



The research ran to the following timescales

- **June - September 2023:**
 - Planning and set up
 - YARC reading assessment selected / administered to aid student selection and benchmarking
- **October 2023**
 - Interviews with students and staff personnel
 - TASO Access and Success (ASQ) questionnaires completed
- **October/November 2023**
 - Intervention runs for 6 weeks
 - Students record feedback after each session
 - Check-ins by researchers
- **December 2023**
 - Initial analysis of feedback; preparation for January research (e.g. discussion guides prepared)
- **January 2024**
 - YARC reading assessments completed again
 - Student interviews; Student TASO Access and Success questionnaire (ASQ)
 - Teacher interviews
 - Hello Future intern/staff interviews
- **February 2024:**
 - Analysis and report preparation

Method: Student selection



The students were selected on the following basis:

- They all had a lower reading age than chronological age: this was the lead recruitment criteria.
- All students were eligible for PP (pupil premium)
- All had a measure of disadvantage e.g. Free School Meals (FSM), UniConnect postcode, SEND (but not related to literacy)
- No acute learning disabilities
- Mix of males and females
- It was requested that students (control group and intervention group) were not taking part in other literacy interventions whilst this one was running.

Identifying students to take part

- Schools administered YARC reading assessments in order to aid identification: the benefits and challenges of this are outlined in the document.

Sample: Schools



Two schools took part in the intervention and evaluation

- Two schools in Cumbria were selected and are referred to as School Y and School X in this report
- The two schools represented were:
 - Both secondary, co-ed schools. Both rated as 'requires improvement' by Ofsted
 - Different sizes/needs/demographics
 - School Y: 27% pupil premium
 - School X: 35% pupil premium
- Schools and students were informed about the need for intervention evaluation at the outset.
- Parental consent for participation in the intervention and the evaluation was sought and was gained initially verbally, with follow up written consent where possible.

Sample: Students



24 students were recruited to participate

- Of the 24 students recruited to take part, 1 student did not participate in the intervention or the evaluation. This was a student from the intervention group in School X. They did not participate due to attendance issues (in general). In addition, 1 student from the intervention group in School Y did not take part in a follow-up interview or TASO questionnaire with a researcher, post-intervention.
- School Y:
 - Intervention (group A): 4 females; 2 males; 3 x Uni Connect postcode; 1 x FSM; 1 x SEND
 - Control (group B): 1 female; 5 males; 2 x SEND; 4 x Uni Connect postcode; 1 x FSM
- School X:
 - Intervention (group A): 1 drop out; 2 females; 3 males; 5 x FSM
 - Control (group B): 4 females; 2 males; 6 x FSM

1c. The schools and the students

Schools: Challenges



In line with the demographic of the schools and the high level of pupil premium, the schools noted the following challenges:

- A diverse range of abilities within the Year 7 cohort
- Students arriving with Key Stage 2 results which may suggest students are more able than they appear to be
- Some students with incomplete foundations for reading/phonics, providing challenges in a secondary school setting
- Some instances of disengaged parents who do not always value education, and this view being passed on to students
- Home environments which may not lead to vocabulary development
- Legacy of students missing education due to COVID
- Students with low aspirations or those who felt they had employment certainty via following parents into a local employer
- High number of different first languages within the school (e.g. 13 languages within one school)

Not all students love reading and we've tried so many things to develop a love of reading and one of the big barriers is the students who can't read. So they've reached us, they've come in at Year 7 and their phonics are still not grounded, they don't have the phonics knowledge, they can't decode words. And we are a secondary school we don't get trained to teach phonics.

Teaching Staff

...because of the catchment area - you know, some parents didn't want to come to school and sort of put that onto their own children, they're not bothered, and they didn't go. I've got a job, and I didn't go to school, that's what you hear them still saying.

Teaching Staff

a lot of our like lower ability students they will follow in the footsteps of parents or relatives. So, like 'my dad's a plumber, I'm going to be working for him', and then so on and so forth. There's not really a lot of students have the aspiration to leave [the area] and explore the world, especially the kids from low income families.

Teaching Staff

Schools: Existing approaches and interventions



Both schools had several policies, approaches and interventions to support reading. These included:

- 'Drop everything and read': in form 3 x a week from year 7 to year 10. All abilities read the same book. Led by the teacher
- Sparks reader: a weekly reading homework task, bespoke to their level
- Lexonik Leap/Advance (external provider): Not yet underway at time of research, but expected to be small reading sessions, with materials provided
- Lexia (computer aided): Reading sessions with a comprehension and grammar focus, held in dinnertimes
- 'Student passports': created for students with literacy difficulties. The passport has strategies for staff to use in the classroom to support them
- Training for teachers: how to support reading in the classroom
- Policy of not allowing students to read alone: They might read alone in the lesson but then the teacher has to also read it with them
- Specific 'speaking computer-based phonics system' for students with standard scores below 75
- Holiday programmes e.g. open 3 x a week, with a timetable and food (pizza) provided for attendees.

Note: All of the students who took part in this intervention pilot were not taking part in any other reading interventions.

We've got Sparks Reader, which is set on a weekly basis, all the students have done a reading test for that and then it's bespoke to them for their homework, it gives them the appropriate level book for them to read. It's really good, it's got like all the overlays and the font change and things like that for them to access it, so that's quite positive. That's monitored by the tutors.

Teaching Staff

We have Lexonik, it's a small group-based intervention, groups of 4 or 5. The onboarding is this week, I think we get given materials to use in the small groups. It's multi-sensory, and then Lexia as well in dinner times.

Teaching Staff

The students: Domestic lives



Domestic lives

The students were 'Pupil Premium' and all had a measure of disadvantage. This was sometimes, but not always, reflected in their domestic situations and created challenges for learning. Some specific examples include:

- Large families, often within small households/shared bedrooms, which led to challenges for quiet homework/reading space. e.g. At School X, 4 of the 11 students had 4+ siblings
- Issues with addiction within the family, which led to changes in home/care situations
- Arguments/difficulties within families following a bereavement.

Teachers also provided feedback that some students had external issues which impact their ability to learn, but they did not reference details of the situations.

Whilst students did not directly reference money/financial concerns at home, it was clear that some households placed a greater importance on moving quickly towards paid work vs incurring the costs associated with continued education, post-16.

Despite the points highlighted above, it should also be noted that the majority of students reported having relatively settled domestic lives with at least one adult figure in their family who provided some support with school.

I like walking to school because I get some time to myself. I have to share my room with my sister and she's everywhere...I normally do homework in my mum's room

School X Intervention group, female

I would talk to my mum and dad [for advice]... they push me to have good attendance so I can get good grades and they will talk to school if I'm struggling.

School Y Intervention group, female

The students: Support and role models



My Nana gives me books, and my dad helps me in maths – he knows a lot about maths

School X Control group, female

I think they just want what's best for me, because that's what their parents didn't, their parents didn't do for them so they wanted to do it with me.

School Y Control group, male

My dad says have I got any homework and if I do, I can't go out with my friends or on my phone until I've done it. and he says it's important if I want a good career

School X Intervention group, male

Parental / carer support

A slightly mixed picture emerged in terms of level of parental support. In general, most students reported that their parent(s) encouraged them to complete homework /enforced homework completion and that their parents' said school was important for future success and employment. Students also reported talking to their parent(s) regarding their successes and challenges at school. Some students reported that parents actively supported them when they were struggling with schoolwork.

However, there were also indications that parental involvement and engagement in the student's education could be relatively low. These indications included: parents not attending parents' evenings; telling the student it was ok to not engage in all subjects so long as they engage in some; having limited conversations at home regarding education; placing more importance on moving immediately to work at age 16 vs. further study.

Role models

Upon prompting, most students could cite some role models in their lives. Typically, this was a parent, an Aunt/ Uncle, or older sibling. The role models were people who had a job which interested the student or were kind and supportive to them. Some students also cited sportspeople or pop stars as role models due to their level of success.

The role models who were in the students' lives typically had jobs which felt achievable to the students – for example, working at BAE, being a mechanic, a plasterer/decorator or a beautician.

The students: Experiences of education



Primary education

The majority of students reported positive experiences at primary school. They enjoyed the small size of school and being more familiar with their environment. Some had taken part in reading acceleration programmes which they appreciated and enjoyed.

Secondary education

Secondary education was reported to be significantly more challenging than primary education. Students at School X reported finding the size of the school a challenge in terms of navigation. Some students at School Y also reported feeling initially 'overwhelmed' by it. It should be noted that the interviews with a Cosmos researcher took place in the first term, so students were in the process of adjusting to the change.

Putting aside adjusting to the scale of the environment, many of the students were positive regarding their initial experience of secondary school. Many could cite lessons which they enjoyed and often enjoyed socialising with friends and playing sports during break periods. Only a minority across the sample were significantly negative and disinterested towards school. In addition to having areas of positivity, most students cited some areas of frustration and difficulty (see next slide.)

It was better [at primary] – you were always in the same classroom and had the same teacher. Now you have to get to lessons on time and like getting from the top floor or the bottom floor takes quite a long time.

School X Intervention group,
male

It's a bit overwhelming but I think I'm getting the hang of it.

School Y Control group, male

The students: Educational needs



I sometimes just get really distracted in class, so I don't really focus, I fidget a lot, it's hard to focus.

School X Control group, female

It's English that's making everything trickier – I get frustrated and told off for not doing enough writing.

School X Intervention group, male

There's a lot of people in my class who just don't listen to the teacher and just be rude. So that kind of holds me back because they kind of distract me and make me laugh.

School Y Control group, male

Needs, challenges, support

The majority of students felt that they received the support they needed and couldn't cite any specific support needs that were not being met. Some of the students referenced specific teachers who were particularly helpful, typically their form tutors or teaching assistants. Students also referenced some useful systems such as being able to add a colour code to their workbooks to identify the subjects they needed help in. This system enabled them to register a need for help without having to speak up in person.

Students generally had a number of subjects which they felt were difficult and which they describe feeling 'frustrated' by. Maths was regularly mentioned, alongside English, Geography, History and Science.

When English was mentioned as a challenging area, students cited several areas of specific difficulty. These included:

- Reading out loud and pronunciation of longer/more complex words.
- Understanding verbs and adjectives.
- Understanding how to use and interpret punctuation.
- Following the narrative of stories.
- Being able to recall what they had read without referring back to the text.

Concentration and focus was also referenced as a challenge by many students. Many reported becoming distracted in lessons, either due to their own inability to concentrate/ stay on task, or due to the behaviour of others.

Accessing homework online was also referenced as a challenge by a minority, due to either issues with log ins or the devices required.

The students: Educational aspirations



Aspirations: Education

A mixed picture emerged across the schools and the students. Most students claimed that getting good grades was important to them because it was important for their future success and ability to get a job. However, it was sometimes difficult to ascertain the level of sincerity within these statements vs. students repeating what they had clearly been frequently told by teachers.

That said, only a minority were dismissive and negative towards education. In these cases, they criticised it as being 'boring' and expressed an intent to leave education as soon as possible.

The majority generally expressed interest in continuing to sixth form or college but were relatively disengaged with what that would entail. Most expected they would find out more as they progressed through their school years and felt it the pathway would be more evident by the time they reached year 9/GCSEs.

Awareness of Higher Education was very low. The term 'Higher Education' generally held no meaning for the students and there was no awareness of the application process. 'University' was a familiar term, but there were very mixed perspectives on it – many were not interested due to cost and the perceived need to live away from home.

Higher education, I think it means like harder education, when you're getting like, harder work...

School X Intervention group, male

I know absolutely nothing [about Higher Education].....Personal application? Does that mean I send it to them and no one else

School Y Intervention group, female

I don't think I want to go to university because you have to stay there overnight. But maybe college. My brother says he likes it except it's tiring.

School X Intervention group, female

The students: Employment aspirations



Aspirations: Employment

- When asked, most students could provide some ideas of future jobs that interested them, but these were largely based on the jobs of parents or other people in their family
- Jobs cited included: nurse, doctor, footballer, boxer, bus driver, car mechanic, electrician, beautician, hairdresser, chef/cook, cheerleader.
- The pathways to achieving employment in these roles was generally unclear to the students. There were very mixed levels of confidence in terms of achieving the roles they were interested. Some were highly confident, and others were very uncertain.
- The overall picture which emerged was that the students had engaged very minimally with their future pathways into employment. This was reflected by their envisaged jobs sometimes fluctuating between the pre- and the post-intervention interview.

My dad says he wants me to go straight to work so I can make money, but my mum says if I've got more education, I can be smarter and I can make higher achievements. I think what my dad says is more important, I want to work so I can get loads of money.

School Y Intervention group, male

I'm probably not smart enough to do the job I want [electrician] because I don't want to go to like university or owt, I just want to like pass all my GCSEs and then just get straight to work, but I reckon I'll just have to go to like college and that.

School Y Intervention group, male

The ones that are going to work for the father's business and they feel, right I'm sorted, I've got a job either way, I don't need to get my grades. We're motivating them as best as we can, but those ones are reluctant to work hard.

Staff

2. Executive Summary

Executive Summary (1)

Background

The intervention programme ran in two schools in Cumbria and had the following structure:

- 12 x 40-minute 'Reading Intervention' sessions during a 6-week period.
- Two sessions per week.
- Held during the school day.

Six students were selected for each group. They all had a lower than chronological age reading level. They were also students in receipt of Pupil Premium and/ or had another a measure of disadvantage. YARC was used to assess reading age.

The sessions were run by Hello Future personnel and the sessions were based on the *Connector* series of books by Scholastic. Hello Future liaised with the schools in order to organise the sessions and advise on the selection of the students.

Previous to this pilot phase, an initial pilot phase (without evaluation) had been conducted. This second pilot phase was evaluated in order to refine the intervention and understand whether a wider roll out would be beneficial.

The evaluation was designed to be a small *n* study. It consisted of pre/post interviews with students and staff; pre/post YARC assessments and TASO questionnaires, and post-intervention interviews with the Hello Future team. A control group of students in each school was used in order to gain a clearer read on progress made by the intervention group.



Executive Summary (2)

Headline feedback from the evaluation

The intervention emerged as being positive for participating students. This evaluation points towards the intervention having the potential to improve 'below average' reading ages in Year 7 students. The broad structure and design of the intervention is strong and works well.

The intervention structure and timing

The evaluation identifies the following specific strengths:

- The structure and frequency of the sessions (twice a week for 6 weeks) allowed for a rhythm to develop, and the number of sessions was sufficient to build rapport and cover a number of books.
- Using the reciprocal reading structure dictated by the *Connector* book series provided a structure and encouraged all students to participate and read out loud.
- Using a different book each week, with a mixture of fiction and non-fiction helped to maintain interest and cater for different preferences.
- The size of group (5-6) worked well. It was a manageable size and ensured that all students participated.



Executive Summary (3)



- Running the sessions within the school day resulted in better attendance (when compared to a previous intervention, that was run before/ after school at School Y).
- Running the sessions within a half term (i.e. with no break during the 6 weeks) allowed a rhythm to develop and rapport to be built between the students and the person leading the sessions.

Timing of the intervention

The intervention ran during the second half of the Autumn term, 2023. The timing is positive for the students i.e. they are able to fully benefit from progress made. However, it meant the schools had to select the students when staff were less familiar with them. Moving forward, consideration could be given to running the intervention in the first half of the Spring term, once staff had had the chance to get to know students' needs better.



Executive Summary (4)

The impact of the evaluation

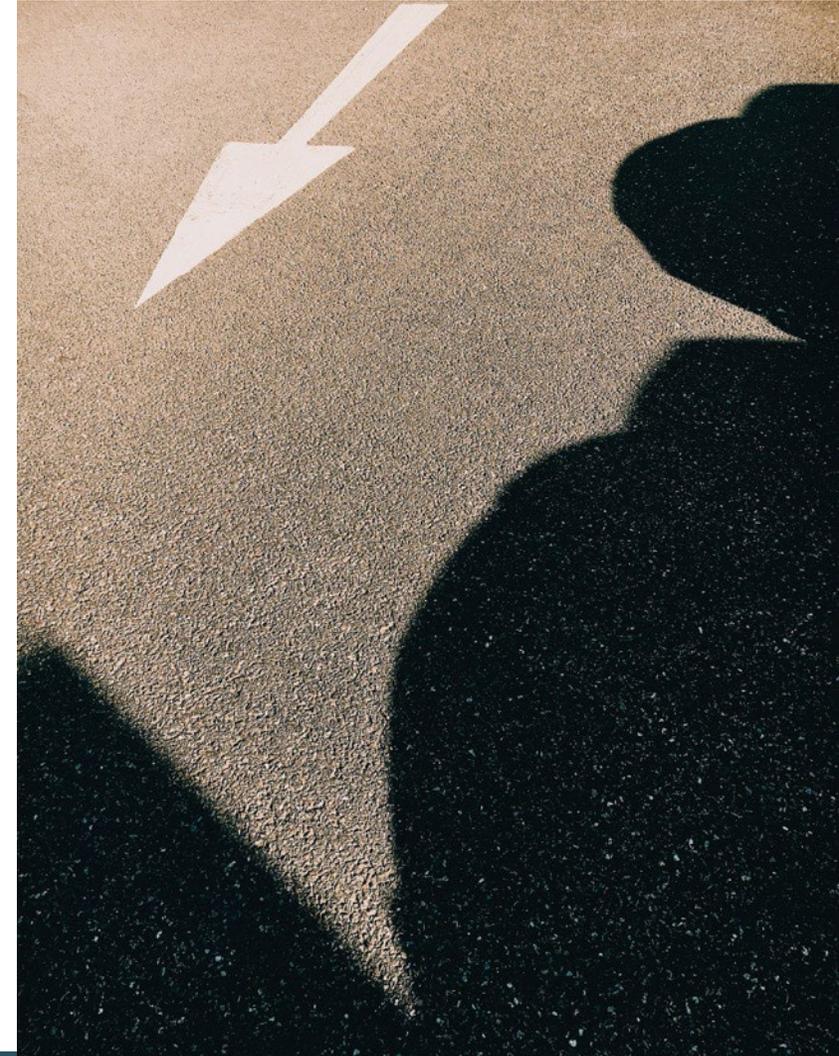
The evaluation showed that the intervention has the potential to positively impact reading level. This was evidenced by:

- YARC reading scores improving more in the Intervention group vs the Control group.
- Students self-reporting being more confident in their reading ability and ability to participate in lessons.
- Teachers reporting positive progress with vocabulary.
- Hello Future intervention personnel reporting positive progress from the start to the end of the intervention.

These positives were noted despite there being a number of factors which may have impacted the effectiveness of the intervention. These factors included:

- Mixed attendance across the six weeks.
- Not all of the 12 sessions being able to be used for the Reading Intervention.
- Disruption and behaviour issues.
- Domestic issues being experienced by the students outside of the school environment.

The intervention did not appear to have an impact on responses to TASO (ASQ) or directly impact future aspirations. However, it is acknowledged that the time between administering pre- and post-intervention ASQs was approximately 12 weeks. This may be too close together to see meaningful improvement. Should there be a desire to directly impact TASO more targeted content may need to be introduced to the sessions, or more time should elapse between ASQ 1 and ASQ 2.



Executive Summary (5)

Considerations for future optimisation

There are several considerations for a wider roll-out. Tackling these considerations will help to maximise impact for students and improve the experience for schools.

Key consideration areas:

1. The set-up process and the communication between the school and Hello Future

- **Key take out:** It is appropriate to begin conversations with school at least a half term in advance e.g. for an intervention during second half of Autumn term, communication could start before school breaks for summer. Email communication cannot be relied upon without verifying reception. When email is used, teachers would like an extended timeframe to respond. Ideally aim to establish one point of contact between Hello Future and the school. If there are personnel changes, a new relationship needs to be established. A written summary document could be produced, but conciseness is key.

2. The student selection process via YARC

- **Key take out:** YARC is a precise tool, but the schools need to be aware and onboard with the time it takes to administer and mark the tests. Ideally, sufficient students need to be selected who are then very likely to be confirmed by YARC.



Executive Summary (6)

3. The student criteria

- **Key take out:** It is important that the schools fully understand the student selection criteria and that they feel their school demographics have been reflected within them. Should students with behaviour problems or other SEND needs be included in future reading interventions, consideration must be given to how best support these students and mitigate any potential disruptions to the sessions.

4. Planning the sessions

- **Key take out:** Protecting the first two sessions for rapport building and planning to commence the actual reading intervention from week two, might be required for some student groups.

5. Managing behaviour and disruption within the sessions

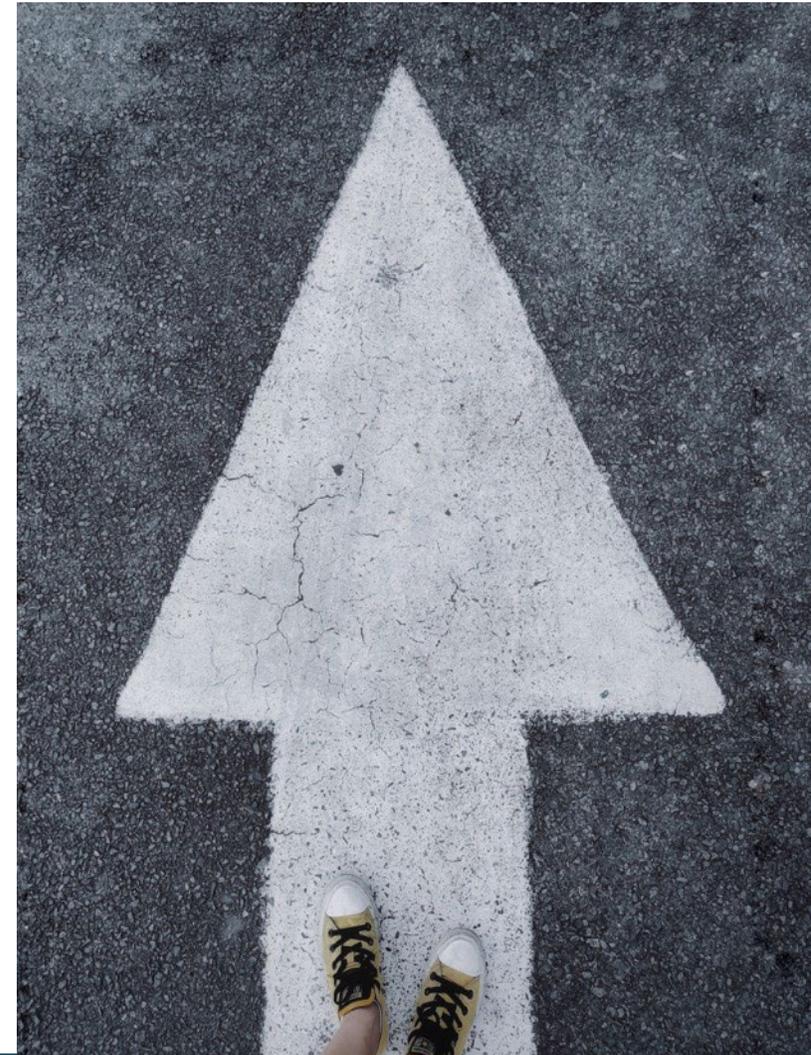
- **Key take out:** Behaviour needs to be strictly managed by setting boundaries and adhering to the school's behavioural policy, even if this means excluding students from the sessions.

6. Maximising engagement within the sessions

- **Key take out:** It is necessary to have a flexible 'toolkit' of exercises and approaches to maintain engagement. Students may remain more focussed via group exercises/interaction vs individual task sheets.

7. Monitoring progress longer-term

- **Key take out:** A further YARC assessment with these students, at the end of the academic year, would provide an opportunity to explore whether improvements attributed to participation in the Hello Future Reading Intervention have been sustained or if the student has continued to make progress.



3. Intervention Evaluation

Chapters 3 : Detail



3. Intervention Evaluation

- 3a Intervention design and set up, including
 - Design and format of the intervention
 - Communications and planning, including timeline
 - Student selection: how it worked, what worked well, considerations
 - YARC reading assessments
 - Summary

- 3b The Intervention sessions
 - Design & planning
 - Content, materials, toolkit
 - Receptivity
 - Challenges
 - Student perspective
 - Summary

Slide numbers:

37-53

54-65

3a Intervention Set Up

The design and format of the intervention



The design and format was as follows:

6-week duration: taking place in second half of first term for Year 7 pupils

Time of day

During school day.
Students received a 'pass out' from lessons to attend.

Delivery

Either Hello Future Outreach personnel or a Hello Future graduate intern.
Delivered by an individual.

Length and frequency

40 mins each.
2 x week.

Size of group

Intended group size with full attendance: 6 students.

Session content: A guided reading style session using literacy intervention packs and books from the Scholastic 'Connectors' series (see next chart)

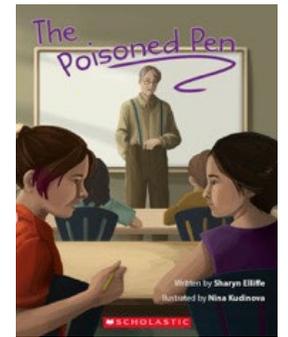
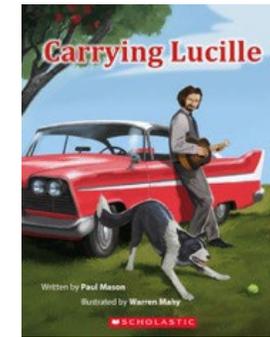
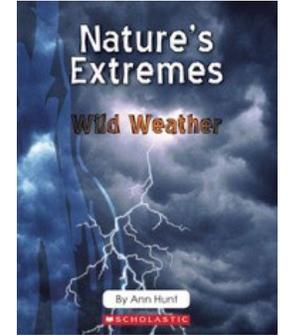
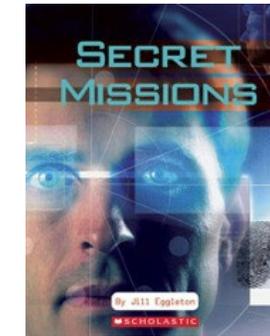
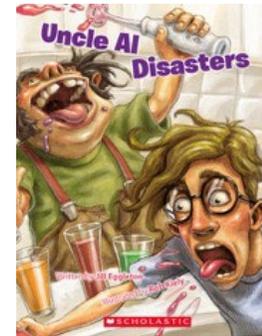
This chapter of the report provides further detail on this design and format plus commentary on considerations for future roll out.

The session content: Books

The Scholastic 'Connector' series of books for 11yrs+ were used as the basis for the sessions

They are known to offer a number of benefits. Scholastic states that:

- The series uses peer to peer learning strategies that include every child with proven results
- They are aimed at narrowing the attainment gap with reciprocal reading
- The use high-impact methods, based on collaboration. These methods are proven in case studies and recommended by the Education Endowment Foundation
- Formal classroom trials of *Connectors* showed children's reading age improve within 12 weeks (by an average of 9.1 months)
- They are ideal for small group teaching at different ability levels
- Their method develops teamwork as well as speaking, listening, comprehension and evaluation skills
- Case studies show particular benefits for disadvantaged learners.



Information and images from <https://www.scholastic.co.uk/>

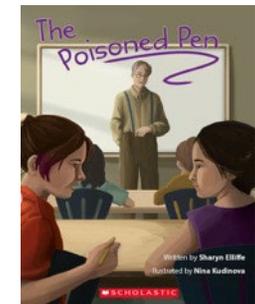
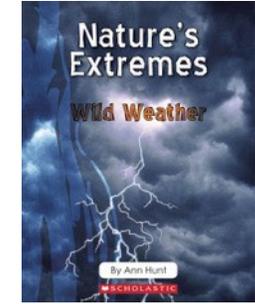
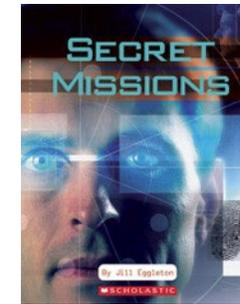
The session content: Structure and style



The Connector series books are aimed at collaborative learning in small groups and provide session leaders with a structure to adopt

The Connector books are designed to be used as follows:

- Children work in small independent groups of up to six, each taking turns to be the leader as they read and debate a book together.
- The books have clear prompts which the session leader uses to focus the discussion and work with the students to predict outcomes, clarify issues, ask questions and evaluate content.
- Note: Feedback from students regarding these books is provided in section 3b 'The intervention sessions.'



Information and images from <https://www.scholastic.co.uk/>

Intervention design and format (1)

Timing of the intervention

The intervention took place in the second half of the first Year 7 term (Autumn 2023). This was appropriate timing in some respects, but early in the second (Spring) term could also be considered.

Positives

The positives of the timing were as follows:

- It was positive that the intervention took place during one continuous half term (i.e. with no holidays to interrupt the flow.)
- It was also positive that the very first term of Year 7 was avoided, as this would have been difficult for planning/pupil selection.
- Running the intervention within the first term means there is maximum time for students to benefit from the reading improvement during the academic year.

Considerations

There could be an argument for running the intervention at the start of the Spring term. This might be better timing for schools in terms of student selection. It would allow schools more time to become familiar with students during the first half of the Autumn term, and then select participants within the second half of the Autumn term. On the downside, this would mean there is less time for students to benefit from the reading intervention during the rest of their Year 7 studies.

Ultimately, the exact timings of the intervention could be discussed with individual schools and run either in the second half of the Autumn term or the first half of the Spring term in accordance with the school's preference/time availability for set up.

Intervention design and format (2)

Frequency / number of sessions

There were 12 sessions in total, run over a 6-week period. Running two sessions per week was found to be positive as it allowed a routine to develop, and students became familiar with the concept of the sessions. 12 sessions was generally felt to be sufficient to make some progress with reading aims. Any less than 12 sessions would be problematic for progression.

It is worth remembering that students may attend less than 12 sessions due to external issues, such as attendance or bad weather. In the pilot, School Y missed a session due to a 'snow day.' Within the 12 sessions, the specific reading intervention might only be covered in 10 of them as two sessions might be needed for set up and rapport building, as was the case during the pilot.

Length of sessions

The sessions were 40 minutes each. In general, this length was felt to be appropriate, but could feel 'tight' according to the Hello Future personnel leading the session. Therefore, consideration could be given to extending them to 45 minutes. This would allow for more content to be covered in the sessions. The Hello Future personnel running the sessions noted that it was possible to 'lose' some of the session time to warming up /controlling behaviour – thus a slightly longer session could be beneficial.

Time of day

The intervention took place within the school day. Students missed their regular lesson to participate. A 'pass out' system was developed, with times recorded, for leaving and returning to lessons. Running the intervention during the school day was found to be a success as it had a positive impact on attendance. In the initial pilot, the sessions were held before school and attendance was poorer than in the evaluated pilot. The pass out system from lessons was important and worked well.

Intervention design and format (3)

Number of students per session

The intention was to have six students per session, although in School X, the intervention group ran as a group of five students. Some sessions ran with fewer students due to school attendance issues. Six students is the maximum recommended number per intervention, assuming the sessions will be led by one person. If students are expected to have behavioural problems, there would be an argument for decreasing the size, or having more personnel available to support with session delivery.

Sessions led by Hello Future personnel

The sessions were led by one person: either a graduate intern or a member of Outreach staff. Within School X, there was a personnel switch halfway through the intervention. In both schools, the final session was run by two people (1x lead, 1 x support.) A personnel switch during the intervention is not recommended if it can be avoided. This is for better continuity and relationship building with the students. If it is unavoidable, it is important that the new lead is introduced by a teacher/a figure of authority in the same way that the initial led was introduced.

One person leading the sessions was generally found to be possible and appropriate, however if the students are known to have behavioural issues, then it may be helpful to have a supporting individual, should someone be available.

Content and delivery of sessions

Feedback on content and delivery of sessions is provided in section 3b 'The intervention sessions.'

Summary: Intervention design and format



| Set up element | Suitability | What worked well | Considerations | Ideals for future roll out |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Timing of intervention: second half of Autumn term | Appropriate. | Good timing for ensuring the benefits are maximised during Year 7. | Schools had to choose pupils before feeling very familiar with them. | Discuss with school. Potential to run intervention either 2 nd half term of Autumn term or 1 st half of Spring term. |
| Intervention frequency and length: 12 sessions over a 6-week period | Appropriate. | One continuous 6-week block. Potential to see progression with 12 sessions. | All 12 sessions are unlikely to be dedicated to the reading intervention (due to attendance/the need for some sessions for rapport building). | Design the intervention to be rolled out over 10-11 sessions and aim to only use one session for rapport building. |
| Length of sessions: 40 mins | Appropriate but could be extended. | Schools endorsed the length of the individual sessions. | The time felt tight for the desired content coverage, particularly if there was disruption. | Ensure 40 minutes is maintained as a minimum. Consider extending to 45 minutes. |
| Number of students per sessions: 6 (intended) | Appropriate, providing behaviour issues are minimal. | A relatively small group, particularly as sometimes attendance further reduced numbers. | With disruptive students, 6 students could be problematic/hard to control. | Six should be the maximum, unless increased support with session delivery is available. |
| Intervention lead (x1 person; Hello Future intern or Outreach personnel) | Appropriate, but additional support might be beneficial if students are disruptive. | 1:6 lead/student ratio generally worked well. | Change in personnel during the programme should be avoided. Ideally students would build a rapport with one individual. | If a change in personnel is required, the new lead should be introduced by the team. |

Set up, planning & communication (1)



Timeline

Communications with the schools began before the end of the Summer 2023 term and continued over the Summer break. It was positive that schools had this level of advance warning and could take account of the intervention when planning for the Autumn 2023 term. Schools highlighted the importance of long lead times for an activity which would impact on their workload (e.g. YARC reading assessments and student selection.)

Communication model: Methods

Communication with the schools was in the form of email, phone calls and in-person/ remote meetings. Email is useful but can be problematic due to delivery issues and the infrequency of schools/teachers checking emails, particularly during the summer break. In terms of email the following is important to note:

- Teachers/school personnel may have limited time to digest detailed information/attachments.
- Delivery issues might be more common with school email systems, thus delivery should be checked and not assumed.
- Teaching staff may require longer than expected in commercial environments to reply to emails e.g. at least 48hrs.
- Email/written communications are useful to provide summaries/reference points but often it is important to also delivery key information verbally (either phone or in person).

Set up, planning & communication (2)



Communication model: Personnel

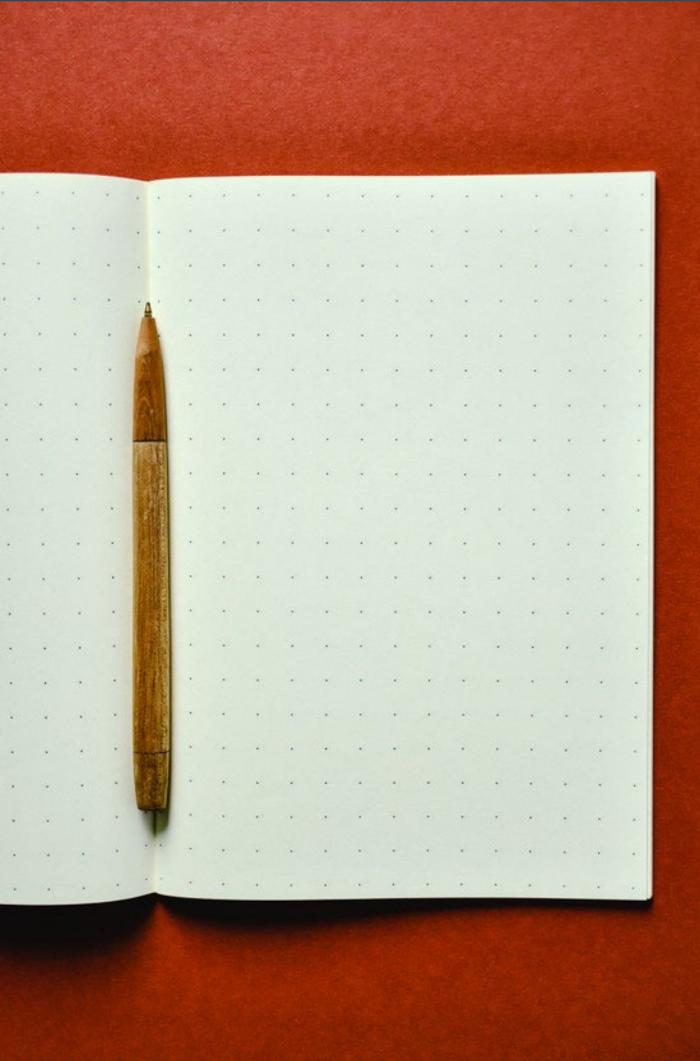
Schools were directly in contact with a number of individuals at Hello Future for the planning and set up process, with the aim of having a lead point of contact. Having a lead/ direct point of contact was important and resulted in a smoother and more informed set up process. Rapport building between the Hello Future lead for each school and the lead member(s) of the school staff is a central element to set up success.

Focus of communication

The communication between Hello Future and the schools focussed on outlining the intervention and informing the school regarding their role. Three key areas emerge as being priorities for communication. They are:

- The timeline
- What the expectations of the school will be: time, venue, student selection, other support required
- The time that will be required from the school (e.g. for the student selection process)

These emerged as important as they are the aspects which are crucial to the smooth running of the intervention. It is imperative that the school is aware of what they need to deliver to support an effective intervention so that they can plan accordingly and allocate teacher/assistant hours as needed.



Set up, planning & communication (3)



Supporting documentation for the intervention

The schools received various pieces of detailed documentation outlining the intervention. Written documentation is important but should be as streamlined as possible so that it is easily digestible for busy teaching staff. Providing an 'at a glance' guide to student selection is particularly important, as this is the most time-consuming element for the schools, particularly if they do not 'get it right' first time.

Understanding the school

During the set up, it is also important to dedicate time to understanding the school. Specifically, it is important to understand:

- The demographics of the school and if there are considerations to take into account for student selection.
- The behavioural policy of the school, so that the session leaders are familiar with it and ready to implement it ahead of running the sessions.

Consent from parents

The schools were required to gain consent from parents. This was initially gained verbally by phone and secondarily in writing. Typically, it was possible to make telephone contact but ensuring completion of the written permission was more difficult in some cases and led to schools being required to invest additional effort and time to follow up. Consideration could be given to how this process could be streamlined or whether verbal consent could be sufficient if required in future.

Student selection process



Criteria for selecting students

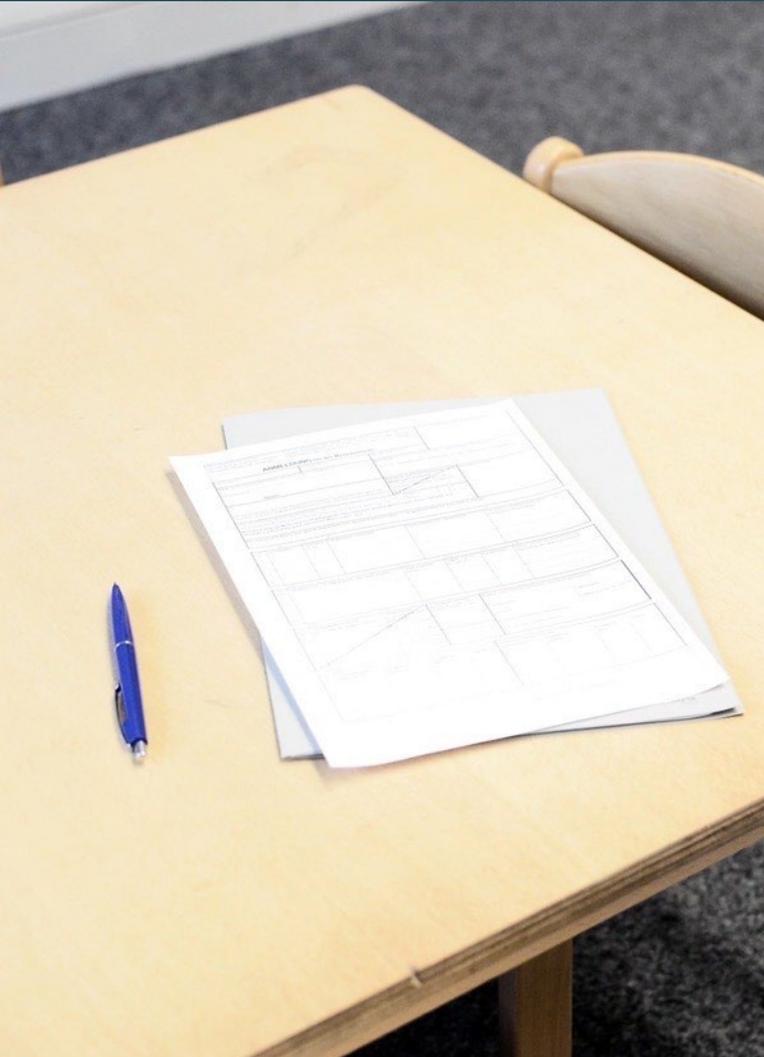
All of the students were required to be below their chronological reading age as established by the YARC assessment. They were also required to have some level of disadvantage/ be classed as Pupil Premium. Those with educational needs specifically related to reading were not eligible for selection.

The schools felt the criteria for choosing students was logical. Schools highlighted that it is important for the demographics of the school to be taken into account when setting the specific selection criteria. For example, a school may appear to have a sufficient 'pool' of Pupil Premium students to choose from, but upon more detailed analysis, many may not be eligible due to also meeting other criteria.

Selecting the students

The schools were tasked with completing YARC reading assessments in order to select students. Schools conducted YARC assessments with those students who they suspected may qualify based on other reading assessments. Both reported needing to test a high number of students (e.g. up to 30) in order to find enough suitable students with similar needs.

YARC: Administering the tests



Conducting the YARC assessments

Schools report that YARC assessments are time consuming to administer, taking around 1 hour to administer and at least 30 minutes to mark. The schools feel that they are the most thorough and accurate of the reading assessments so do lead to good student selection.

Due to the time required to conduct the YARC testing, it is essential to ensure the schools are fully briefed and fully understand the student selection brief at the outset. This will help to ensure they only administer the YARC tests to students who are likely to qualify for the intervention.

The YARC test gives you this really in-depth understanding so you can pinpoint where the need is. It's a time-consuming process to administer and mark, but the information gleaned is invaluable and well worth the time it takes to do. It's not straightforward but comes with a helpful user guide to ensure you're marking properly – you need to be meticulous - and then the scores are accurate.

Teaching staff

NGRT is done on the computer and the kids can get multiple choice answers and they click on the one, so some of the students if they're not being monitored effectively can just like start clicking.

Whereas YARC is more personalised and focused and supervised. It's more time consuming but more thorough.

Teaching staff

YARC: Providing support



Supporting the schools with YARC

The YARC reading assessment process is the most time involved element for the participating schools and as much support as possible should be provided to aid this step. Schools were provided with a very detailed handbook for the YARC testing. This was a useful resource, but schools could find it difficult to have time to autonomously read and process the manual.

If possible, training should be provided to help the schools administer and mark the YARC reading assessments in an efficient manner, or alternatively Hello Future could assist with this step, should sufficient resource be available.

During the pilot, Hello Future supported one of the schools with the marking process. The school noted that Hello Future sharing tips and shortcuts was very helpful.

Summary: Intervention set up



| Set up element | What worked well | Considerations | Ideals for future roll out |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Planning timeline | Communicating the intervention plan before the Summer term ended. | How to manage communications during the Summer break. | Agree a timeline plan with the school ahead of Summer break e.g. when to recontact/when to have further meetings. |
| Communication with school | One-to-one verbal communications. Face to face/ remote meetings. Email when it was used to confirm key aspects in writing /for reference. | Email should not be relied upon as primary communication method. | Aim to have one point of contact at Hello Future/within each school. If personnel at either end changes, ensure a new relationship is created. |
| Student selection | The student selection criteria made sense/was logical i.e. students with a lower than chronological reading age, who had a measure of disadvantage. | Important to take account of the detailed/specific demographics of the school. | Ensure the school are comfortable and happy with selection criteria during a call ahead of selection commencing. Address any concerns which arise during the discussions e.g. surrounding their ability to find suitable students who fit the criteria. |
| YARC reading assessment | The choice to use YARC – accepted as the most thorough reading assessment. | Time required by the school, particularly in light of the number of tests they need to complete. Support is needed in order to help schools with efficiency or direct support with marking. | Consider how the schools could be supported: training to aid efficiency, support with marking. Avoid schools needing to work autonomously with the handbook. |

3b The intervention sessions

Design & planning

How the sessions were designed & planned

The sessions were planned by the individual from Hello Future who would be delivering the session. The Scholastic *Connector* series of books were used as the basis for the sessions. The intention was to work through half a book per session and complete exercises on the text. The sessions were based on the reciprocal reading model, which is a structured, discussion-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension.

An example session plan is shown below:

- Icebreaker (5-10 mins)
- Review of the ground rules (1 mins)
- Introduce text and predict, clarify, question, summarise process. (5 mins)
- Explain that you will read half today and the other half in the next session (pick the page number) (15 mins)
- Independent exercise (10-15 mins)- Worksheet (created using templates/ graphic organiser)

Metacognition optional activities

- Similes/ metaphors: Get learners to identify similes and metaphors and discuss what the author might mean. Students could try and come up with their own.
- Long sentences



Content: The *Connector* Series

The Scholastic *Connector* series books were used as a basis for the sessions

The following titles were used in the sessions:

- School Y: Fearless Feats, Carrying Lucille, Cotton Wool Kids, Secret Missions.
- School X: Wild Weather, Carrying Lucille, Poisoned Pens, Secret Missions, Uncle Al Disasters.

These titles were a mix of fiction and non-fiction. In one school, the session leader enlisted the help of the students to choose which book to use in the subsequent session.

Student feedback on the titles

On the whole students were positive or neutral regarding the books used in the sessions. The session leader at one school reported that fiction titles were preferred to non-fiction, but student feedback on this across both schools was mixed. Therefore, a mix of fiction and non-fiction are important to appeal to different tastes. The books were reported to be at the appropriate reading level according the students.

One of the books was interesting - like they smashed a window and then they like got chased by this old guy and they feel down like a cave and then they cut all their knee and then they wrapped it up with like a t-shirt and then they ran home.

Student at School Y re: Cotton Wool Kids

I liked them all, but Carrying Lucille was my favourite, it was easiest to read and probably like the funnest [sic] – it was about like travelling with your dog and then they lived on a farm somewhere.

Student at School Y re: Carrying Lucille

Content: materials, techniques and exercises



Ice breaker

An icebreaker or a game for the first session and to start each subsequent session was typically used and well received. In one school, students consistently recalled 'hangman' as a highlight of the intervention. Playing memory games were also noted positively by students (e.g. think of an item you'd take on holiday and being required to remember the full list of everyone in the room).

Reading out loud in turn according to colour

Students were given a colour and read the associated colour out loud from the text. This style of structured reading was liked by students. It was noted by Hello Future personnel that it is important to not necessarily expect students to read out loud in the initial session(s), before gaining their trust/building their confidence.

Toolkit /Techniques

- **Whiteboard:** The following exercises using the whiteboard worked well: writing down questions on whiteboard for students to answer; writing words the students did not understand in order to look them up in a dictionary.
- **Individual exercises/worksheets:** these had mixed success as often students became confused or distracted when asked to work independently. Group interaction and discussion was generally more successful.
- **Predicting:** Prediction exercises worked well (guessing what might happen in the book)
- **Quiz:** A group-based quiz to check on comprehension.
- **Post-it note exercises:** Post-it notes around the room with different questions. This was found to break concentration/encourage disruption.
- **Conversation/ 'chat' about the content:** Asking questions but in a more naturalistic manner than a structured quiz.

The one I feel like worked the best for me was actually sticking all the questions on a flipchart. I tried putting the questions on post it notes around the room but with that for example, was like, oh we're going to get up and mess about.

Session leader

I came to rely on that I was not necessarily having a quiz, but more like a conversation where I asked them questions – they seemed to respond to that a bit better. It was the chattiness and ensuring everyone was on the same page before moving on.

Session leader

Receptivity and engagement

Receptivity and engagement levels varied

The two schools varied in terms of receptivity and engagement levels, with one school generally having more engaged students than the other. However, in both schools, there were fluctuating levels across the twelve sessions and engagement challenges.

Factors impacting engagement

Some barriers to engagement were noted. These included:

- being asked to read out loud too soon during the intervention programme.
- being tasked with individual exercises/worksheets to complete.
- wider events within school - for example if something had happened in the break just before the intervention session. This is discussed in more detail during 'external factors' in section 3c.

I jumped in at the deep end at the start and asked them to read and in hindsight that was the wrong thing to do. I wanted to get an idea of where they were at, but they are embarrassed by their ability to read, so doing silent and then paired and then group is the advice I'd give.

Session leader

Location & venue



The location/ venue for the intervention has an impact on engagement and focus

The ideal appears to be:

- A separate room, within the school, where quiet/ focus can be guaranteed.
- The room being close to teachers is likely to have a positive impact on behaviour.

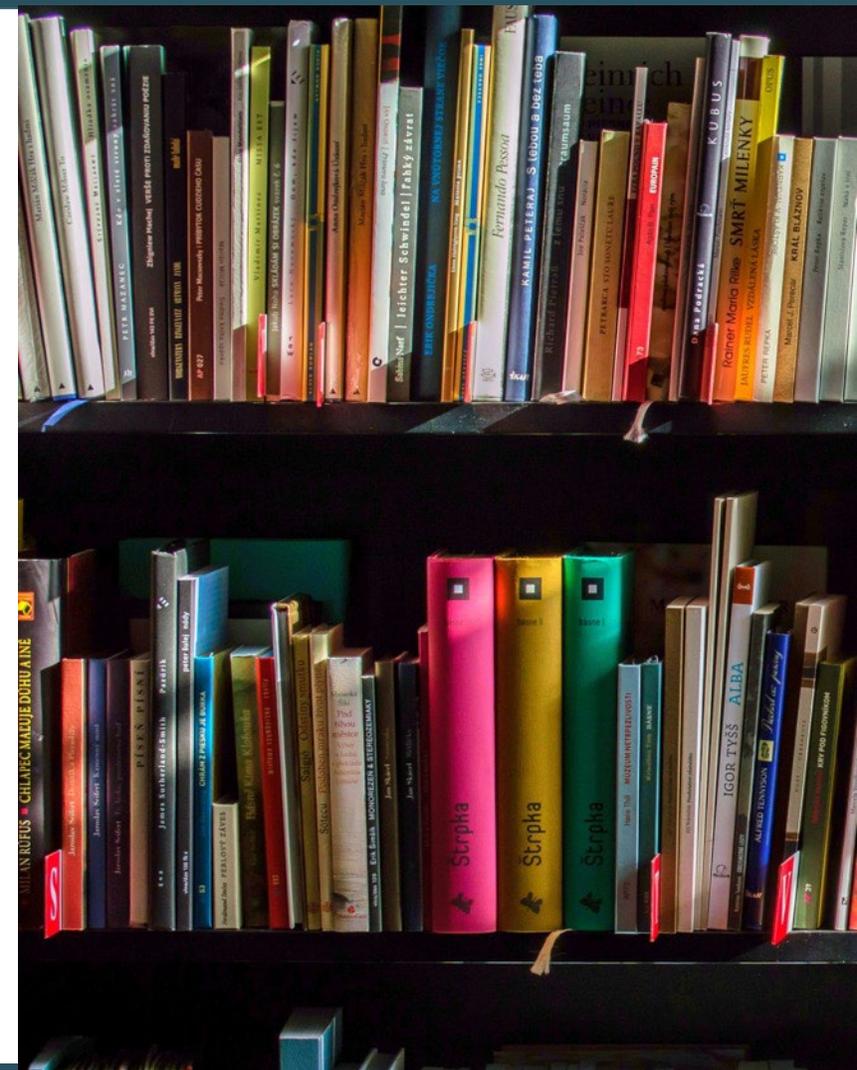
It is more difficult to run the sessions in a focussed manner within an open plan area due to the potential for distractions – particularly if the students are prone to a lack of focus naturally.

The room was good. Having it near teacher X's office worked pretty well. It's in the area of the school that they go if they're in isolation or doing interventions, and there are teachers and teaching assistants down there and that really helps.

Session leader, School Y

We were in our own little corner, but it was still this open room. Essentially where students were being pulled out of lessons for various reasons. So kind of in this open space, where students would recognise someone they know and they'd be shouting across the room and like that disrupts the sessions.

Session leader, School X

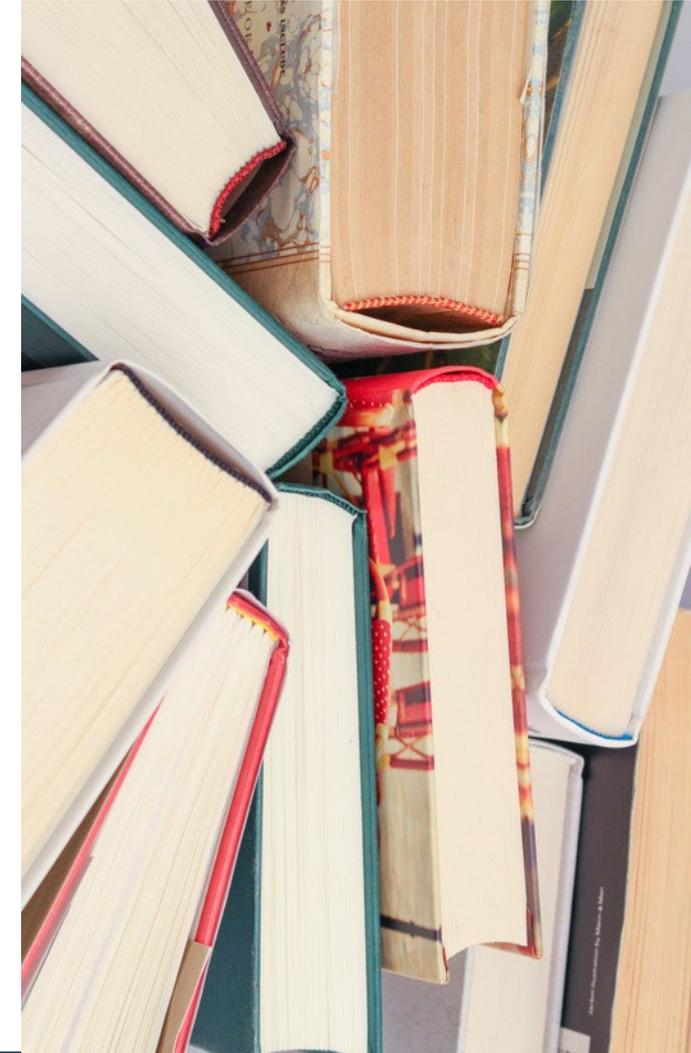


Challenges



The following were noted as being the key challenges, by the session leaders:

- **Different levels with the group**
 - The behavioural problems were sometimes assumed to be due to an individual student struggling more than the others, and thus misbehaving to distract from this.
 - Students also improved at different speeds during the intervention.
- **Understanding the reading level of the students at the outset**
 - This needed to be achieved but ideally without asking them to read out loud too early in the process.
- **Managing the impact of an event external to the intervention**
 - e.g. an incident that occurred which during the break preceding the sessions; an announcement made by the school which unsettled the students.
 - Such incidents were noted to lead to disengagement or distraction during the sessions.
- **Behaviour and disruption**
 - See next slide for details



Behaviour and disruption

Managing behaviour and disruption is a key consideration for the smooth and optimum running of the intervention sessions

Behavioural issues and disruption generally stemmed from a small number (1-2) of the students, who then distracted the other students. In one school, a disruptive student has since been diagnosed with ADHD, and perhaps would have been supported differently in the intervention, had this diagnosis have come pre-intervention.

The following strategies are likely to be helpful:

- The school introducing the session leader as a figure of authority, and this being repeated if there is a change in personnel.
- The school should share school-wide strategies used to support any student who has a SEND or other need that might impact their successful participation in the intervention.
- The session leader setting clear boundaries in earlier sessions.
- Being familiar with the school behavioural policy and fully implementing it for poor behaviour e.g. not shying away from sending the student to isolation if that is in line with the school policy, regardless of the affect it will have on the impact of the intervention for that specific student.
- Ideally having a quiet/ separate room, near to a teacher's office.

Someone in the group just started shouting and I don't know – just silly behaviour. I thought it was pretty funny but they [the leader] was getting angry

Student Intervention group, School Y

They need to request the behavioural policy of the school, read up on it and that will help them. Because the students will always push boundaries when they're not with their regular teacher – they do it with supply teachers.

Teacher

We had like that kind of relationship where it was set out from the very start, when we did our ground rules at the very start, like I'm not your teacher like don't call me sir, we're going to have fun but also there's going to be times when we're going to have to like concentrate and be serious and like when that time comes, you'll know, and they knew.

Session leader

Student perspectives: Overall

Overall, the students were positive regarding the style and content of the sessions

Students mentioned the following specific positives:

- The sessions provided them the opportunity to improve reading and build their confidence.
- The interactivity was enjoyed, particularly quizzes and discussions.
- The small group format encouraged participation.
- The variety of books and including fiction and non-fiction was enjoyed.
- Changing books each week stopped them from becoming bored.

The negatives mentioned by the students were only focussed on the disruptive behaviour from other students in the group. All reported that it was hard not to also be distracted once 'mucking around' started.

Reading different books all the time was good.

Student, School X

I liked the post it note exercises, when you got stuck on a word, you wrote it down and stuck it on a board.

Student, School Y

It was annoying because I just wanted to crack on. They'd always be laughing, it was annoying.

Student, School X

They were making silly noises when we were trying to read – running around the table, making animal noises – I got a bit distracted by it, it was hard to read.

Student, School X

Student perspectives: In the moment

Students provided feedback on the sessions immediately after taking part.

- Feedback indicated favourable ‘in the moment’ experiences:
 - To what extent did you find this session helpful? Vast majority of responses were ‘helpful’ or ‘very helpful’ (x4 across both schools/all sessions responded ‘not very helpful’)
 - To what extent did you enjoy the session: all answered ‘quite enjoyable’ or ‘very enjoyable’
 - To what extent did you find today’s session interesting: apart from one answer, all said ‘quite enjoyable’ or ‘very enjoyable’
 - What did you think of the delivery of the session: Majority ‘quite clear what I had to do’ or ‘very clear what I had to do’ (x8 responses of ‘not very clear’)

I'd say 8 [out of 10, for enjoyment] – it was quite useful because if you're like me and not very good at reading then you do this and you get better.

Student, School Y

10 out of 10, it was really helpful, I liked all of the books.

Student, School Y

I liked it when we played hangman at the start.

Student, School X

Summary: Key successes and challenges of the delivery model

The following elements of delivery worked well:

- Reciprocal reading model: clear, familiar and predictable structure works well to build confidence
- Using the *Connector* series of books as a basis for the session: give structure, appropriate for ages, mix of titles
- Small sessions on a frequent basis (2x week)
- Interactive/discursive exercises
- Building rapport with the students via games and ice breakers
- Setting clear boundaries and expectations regarding behaviour
- Having a separate room to run the sessions in.



The following aspects were noted as challenging:

- Behavioural issues and disruptions
- Managing different reading levels/progression speeds within the sessions
- Running the sessions within an open plan area.

Summary: Key elements of the delivery model



| Element | What worked well | Considerations | Ideals for future roll out |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Focus of the sessions | Working with the <i>Connector</i> series for structure. Using one book per week. | Up to 2 sessions needed to be used for rapport building: no specific Reading Intervention content. | Maintain use of the <i>Connector</i> series: aiming to cover 5 books in the 12 sessions. |
| Books | Varied titles. The mix of fiction and non-fiction to appeal to different tastes. The age-level/difficulty of the books. | | Maintain the mix of books. Students to input into book choice for subsequent week. |
| Delivery style and techniques | Reading aloud according to colour page/section. Interactivity: Q&A as a group + verbally. Allowing students to refer back to the text (reassuring). | Asking pupils to read aloud before gaining their trust / building confidence. Exercises which may distract focus (e.g. encouraging too much movement). | Be prepared to take a flexible approach according to specific sessions. Group exercises work well. |
| Managing behavioural problems | Setting and enforcing boundaries. Removing or separating students who disrupted the sessions. Having a second supporting person to work with separated students. | The behavioural policy of the school being diverged from/ not implemented. The Hello Future personnel not being clearly introduced as a person with authority. A switch in personnel delivering the session. | Ensure the session leader and the school align on the behavioural policy and implementation. Remove disruptive students. |
| Materials required | Having a flipchart/whiteboard available. | Individual response exercises needs to be used sparingly: can be harder for students /a drop off point for engagement. | Flipchart/whiteboard is key. |
| Room/ environment | A separate room, near to teachers, with no other interventions running in the space at the same time. | Open plan space. | A separate room, near to teachers. |
| School support | The school introducing the session leader. | How to manage/support a change in personnel. | School to introduce the session leader/support changes in personnel. |

Chapter 4: Detail



4. Impact of the intervention

- a. YARC reading assessment
- b. TASO Access and Success Questionnaire (ASQ)
- c. Broader impact: student and teacher sentiment
- d. Multi causation: External factors

Slide numbers:

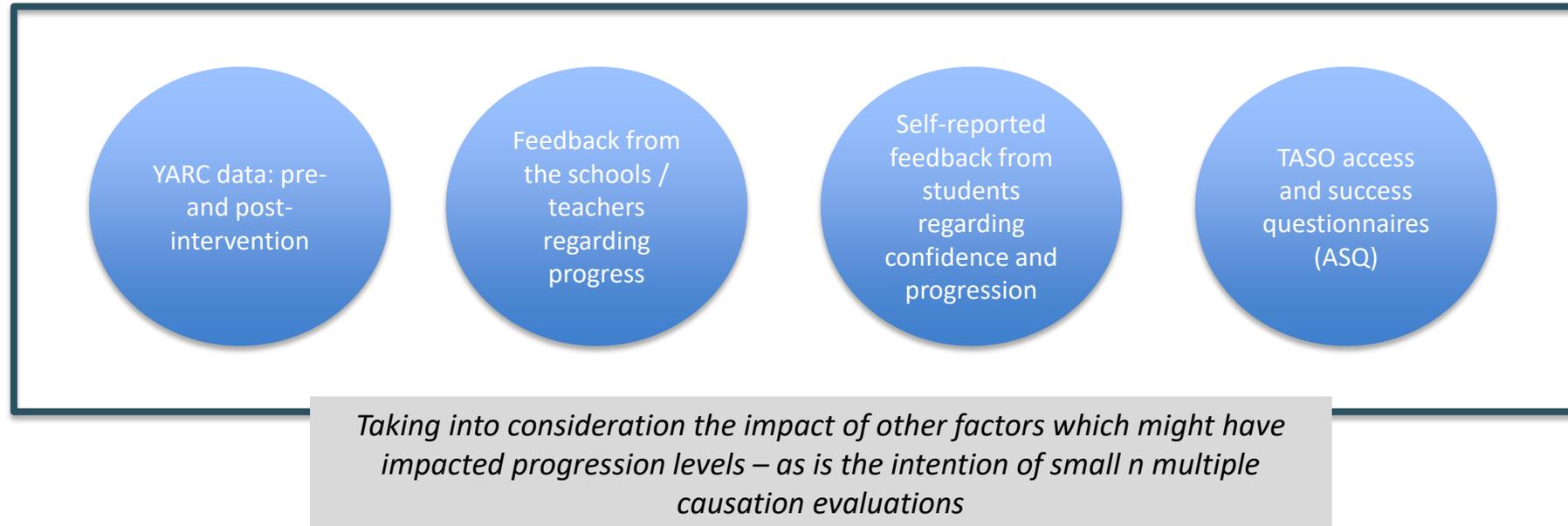
67-89

4. The impact of the intervention

Assessing the impact of the intervention



The distance travelled by the students was assessed by reference to the following four sources of information:



Summary of impact

The feedback from the four information sources can be summarised as follows:

- **YARC reading assessments:** the Intervention groups (group A), in both schools, improved more than the Control groups (group B), particularly in terms of comprehension.
- **Student perspectives:** Students in the intervention groups reported feeling more confident with reading and believe their abilities have improved.
- **Teacher perspectives:** There was limited specific feedback regarding the individual students from teachers, but the feedback provided was positive. The English teacher at School X noted a rise in vocabulary understanding amongst Intervention students and the English teacher at School Y was positive regarding two of the students in the Intervention group.
- **TASO Access and Success Questionnaire (ASQ):** Little impact was noted. However, it is acknowledged that the time between pre- and post-intervention ASQs was approximately 12 weeks. This may be too close together to see meaningful improvement.

Therefore, based primarily on YARC and student feedback, this evaluation points towards the intervention as having had a positive impact on students who participated.



4a YARC



YARC: Background

The assessment

Students took the **York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension: Passage Reading Secondary (age 12-16.)** They took this assessment in October 2023 and then repeated it in January 2024.

It is an individually administered reading test, designed to be read silently. The test assesses reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension. Rate of reading is deemed to be important as reading more slowly requires more working memory and therefore affects retention and comprehension.

The assessment is comprised of two parallel sets of graded passages (A and B) for silent reading. Students read one fiction and one non-fiction passage. A version of the YARC Single Word Reading Test is also included.

The report refers to three scores which are produced by YARC. They are standardised for the age. The scores are described below:

1. Reading Rate passage reading score

The speed at which they read the passages.

2. Comprehension score

Each passage is accompanied by a set of 13 comprehension questions to tap literal and inferential comprehension skills plus a summarisation question to assess the student's ability to summarise the main points in the passage. The comprehension score refers to these questions.

3. SWRT

The SWRT (single word reading test) provides a score for single word reading skills

Interpreting the scores

| Score | Meaning |
|-----------------------|--|
| 70-79 (or below) | a pupil with a severe reading problem |
| around 85 | a pupil with a moderate degree of reading difficulty |
| around 100 | a pupil whose reading is at an average level for their age |
| around 115 | a pupil who can be considered a good reader |
| around 125 (or above) | a pupil who can be considered an excellent reader |

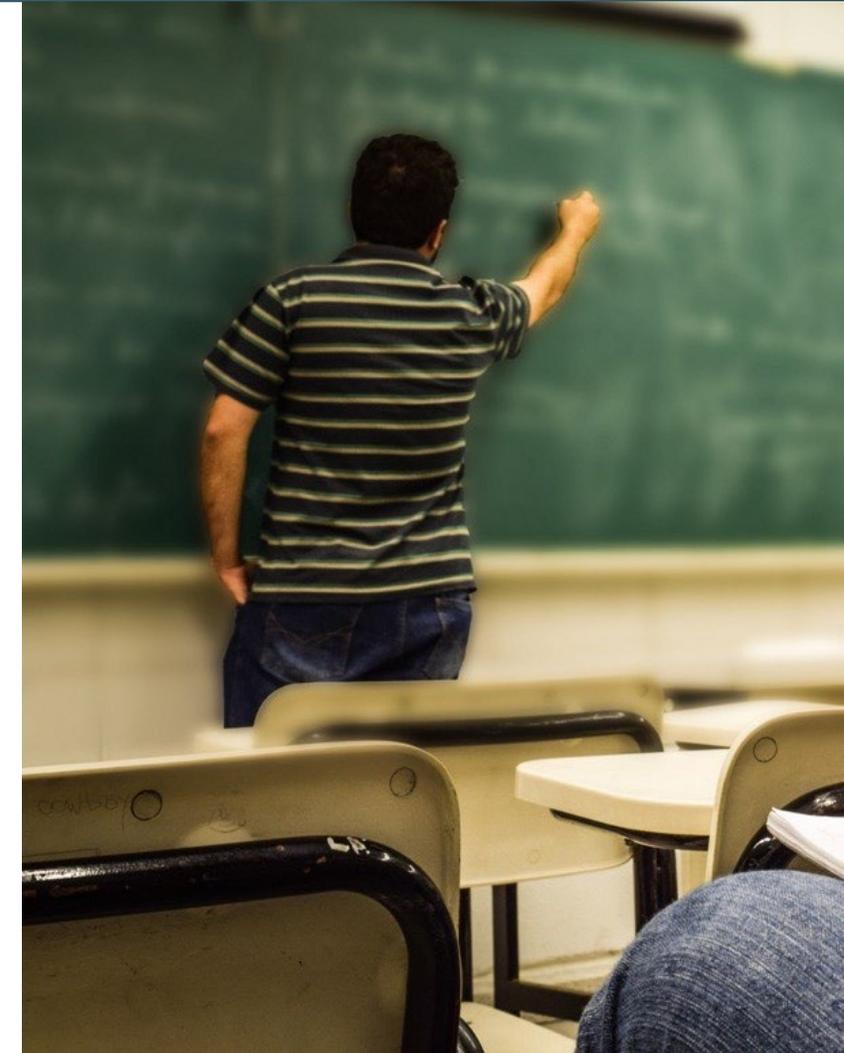
YARC: Detail on testing

Ages at time of testing (all students, groups A and B)

| | October | January |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| School Y | Mean 11.05 Range 11.01 to 12.00 | Mean 11.09 Range 11.05 to 12.03 |
| School X | Mean 11.06 Range 11.01 to 12.01 | Mean 11.09 Range 11.04 to 12.03 |
| Overall (all 23 students, both schools) | Mean 11.05 Range 11.01 to 12.01 | Mean 11.09 Range 11.04 to 12.03 |

Taking the assessment

- Some students read the supplementary passages. YARC state that supplementary passages are designed for typically developing children aged 8-9 years old and should only be administered to secondary school students who are experiencing reading difficulties.
- When known, this information is highlighted as relevant.
- The tests were administered by the schools and marked by the schools.



Summary: Impact on YARC scores

Considering all three standardised scores, the ‘Intervention’ groups (A) showed more improvement than the ‘Control’ groups (B) in both schools.

- Analysis of all YARC scores (Reading Rate, Comprehension, SWRT) show greater improvement amongst the Intervention group than the Control. The breakdown is as follows:
 - **Reading Rate score:** the results were less clear, with the control groups sometimes improving equally or more
 - **Comprehension scores:** The intervention groups in both schools showed more improvement
 - **SWRT:** The intervention groups in both schools showed more improvement.
- The improvements were more universal and consistent in School X than School Y.
- The intervention group in School Y had poorer behaviour (as reported by the school) than their control group which could account for some of the inconsistency. That said, the behaviour of the intervention group during the sessions was not reported to be significantly problematic. In contrast, School Y’s intervention group were also reported to be better behaved and more engaged than the equivalent group A in School X.
- A further YARC assessment with these students, at the end of the academic year, would provide an opportunity to explore whether improvements attributed to participation in the Hello Future Reading Intervention have been sustained or continued to improve.



YARC scores: All measures School X

- When focussing on the complete range of standardised score, the Intervention group (A) emerges as more consistently improved. Only two students improved Comprehension in the Control group (B), whereas all students in the Intervention group improved.
- Standardised scores are summarised below. As shown previously on slide 71, 100 is the standard score of an 'average' student

| Student | Group | YARC score | October 2023 | January 2024 |
|---------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 | Intervention | Reading Rate | 95 | 98 |
| | | Comprehension | 97 | 99 |
| | | SWRT | 92 | 95 |
| 2* | Intervention | Reading Rate | 94 | 104 |
| | | Comprehension | 94 | 96 |
| | | SWRT | 106 | 113 |
| 3 | Intervention | Reading Rate | 84 | 94 |
| | | Comprehension | 87 | 107 |
| | | SWRT | 105 | 109 |
| 4 | Intervention | Reading Rate | 88 | 94 |
| | | Comprehension | 90 | 105 |
| | | SWRT | 116 | 121 |
| 5 | Intervention | Reading Rate | 81 | 91 |
| | | Comprehension | 106 | 107 |
| | | SWRT | 96 | 97 |

| Student | Group | YARC score | October 2023 | January 2024 |
|---------|---------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| 6 | Control | Reading Rate | 73 | 83 |
| | | Comprehension | 118 | 96 |
| | | SWRT | 79 | 88 |
| 7 | Control | Reading Rate | 70 | 104 |
| | | Comprehension | 114 | 125 |
| | | SWRT | 104 | 114 |
| 8 | Control | Reading Rate | 110 | 77 |
| | | Comprehension | 114 | 112 |
| | | SWRT | 86 | 96 |
| 9 | Control | Reading Rate | 98 | 100 |
| | | Comprehension | 110 | 107 |
| | | SWRT | 111 | 110 |
| 10 | Control | Reading Rate | 90 | 101 |
| | | Comprehension | 119 | 107 |
| | | SWRT | 103 | 107 |
| 11 | Control | Reading Rate | 87 | 93 |
| | | Comprehension | 115 | 121 |
| | | SWRT | 103 | 104 |

*Student 2 was the lead disrupter of sessions but still improved on all measures

YARC scores: All measures School Y

- When focussing on the complete range of standardised scores, wider spread improvements can be noted in the Intervention group. 4 students in the Intervention group (A) improved Comprehension vs 1 student in the Control (B) group.
- Furthermore, the Intervention group had poorer behaviour (based on the school's points system) than the Control group i.e. their behaviour is worse, but they showed more progress with reading.
- Standardised scores are summarised below. As shown previously on slide 71, 100 is the standard score of an 'average' student

| Student | Group | YARC score | October 2023 | January 2024 |
|---------|--------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Intervention | Reading Rate Comprehension SWRT | 94 100 99 | 91 109 105 |
| 2 | Intervention | Reading Rate Comprehension SWRT | <70 93 97 | 100 109 97 |
| 3* | Intervention | Reading Rate Comprehension SWRT | 97 96 92 | 115 105 90 |
| 4 | Intervention | Reading Rate Comprehension SWRT | 88 99 90 | 104 103 96 |
| 5 | Intervention | Reading Rate Comprehension SWRT | 95 91 97 | 94 80 95 |
| 6 | Intervention | Reading Rate Comprehension SWRT | 77 102 94 | <70 100 101 |

| Student | Group | YARC score | October 2023 | January 2024 |
|---------|---------|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 7 | Control | Reading Rate Comprehension SWRT | <70 110 89 | 118 82 92 |
| 8* | Control | Reading Rate Comprehension SWRT | 87 115 87 | 109 115 86 |
| 9 | Control | Reading Rate Comprehension SWRT | 97 108 80 | 87 107 <70 |
| 10* | Control | Reading Rate Comprehension SWRT | 92 98 83 | 98 112 86 |
| 11 | Control | Reading Rate Comprehension SWRT | 117 84 95 | 115 82 91 |
| 12 | Control | Reading Rate Comprehension SWRT | 77 110 89 | 81 105 88 |

*Read the supplementary passage.

4b TASO (ASQ)



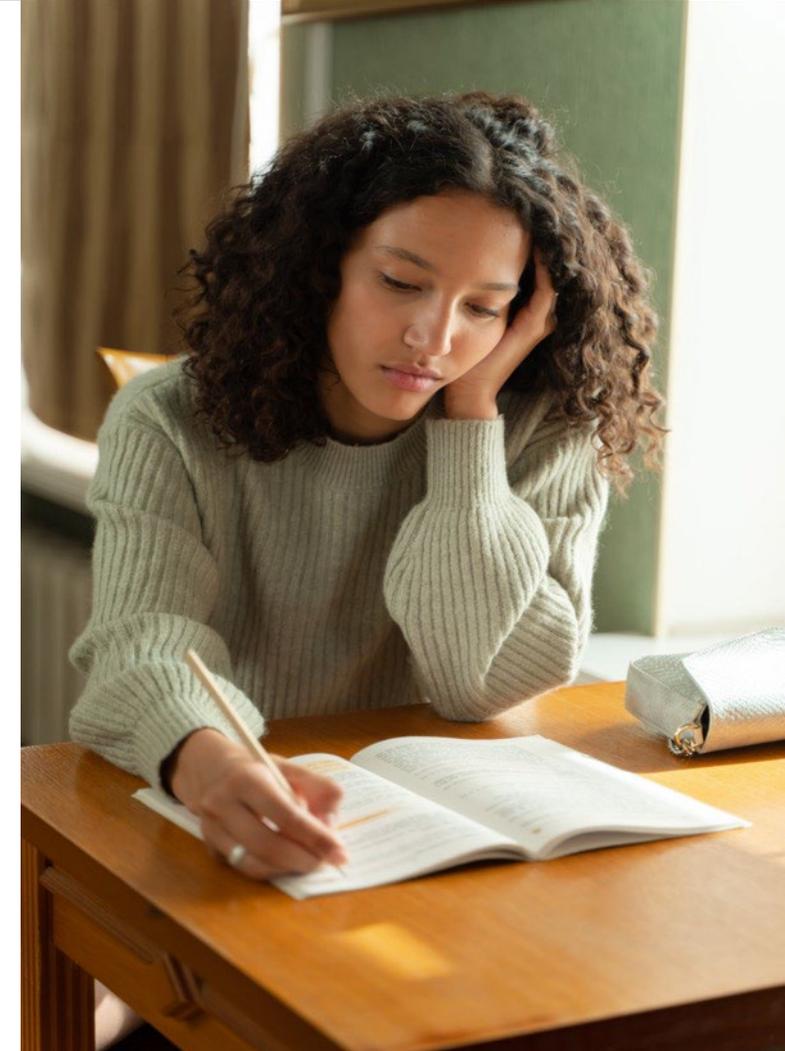
The TASO questionnaire (ASQ)

The aim of the TASO Access and Success Questionnaire (ASQ) was to monitor any changes in student sentiment towards study and towards Higher Education.

The TASO Access and Success Questionnaire (ASQ) was completed either immediately before or after the 30-minute Zoom interview with our researcher, at both the pre- and post-intervention stage. It consisted of 5 questions with between 1 and 4 statements within each question. Students were asked to complete it autonomously.

The questions were taken from the Access and Success Questionnaire (ASQ) designed by TASO. More information about this questionnaire can be found here: <https://taso.org.uk/access-and-success-questionnaire-asq/>

The full questionnaire is outlined on the subsequent slides.



TASO (ASQ): Qs 1-3

Students answered on a 5-point scale, from strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree.

Q1.
The following statements relate to how you feel about studying in higher education from an academic perspective. Higher education includes university, higher education in a further education college or other provider, or degree apprenticeships. The statements are about your results, both before and during higher education if you were to go, and what would be expected of you in terms of studying in higher education. Please think about each statement and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree.

- a. I am confident that I can get the exam results required to progress to higher education
- b. I have the academic ability to do well in higher education
- c. I could manage with the level of study required in higher education

Q2.
The following statements are about how you study. Please think about how you learn and what you do when you study. Then indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

- a. I can tell which information is most important when I study
- b. I can tell how reliable information is when I read something
- c. I can clearly explain my ideas, even when writing about complicated things
- d. I can confidently explain my ideas when talking to others

Q3. This question is about whether you're thinking about going to higher education. There is no right or wrong answer, the important thing is to respond honestly about what you think. Higher education includes university, higher education in a further education college or other provider, or degree apprenticeships.

- a. I am thinking about applying to university in the future

TASO (ASQ): Qs 4-5

Students answered on a 5-point scale, from strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree.

Q4.
The following statements are about what you know and how you feel about going to higher education.
Please think about each statement and indicate to what extent you agree or disagree. Higher education includes university, higher education in a further education college or other provider, or degree apprenticeships.

- a. I know what studying in higher education would be like
- b. I know how studying in higher education is different from studying in school or at college
- c. I believe that if I apply to higher education, I will get a place

Q5.
The following statements relate to how you might feel about becoming a student in higher education.
Please consider each statement and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree. Higher education includes university, higher education in a further education college or other provider, or degree apprenticeships.

- a. Higher education is for people like me
- b. I would fit in well academically with others in higher education
- c. I would fit in well socially with others in higher education

Impact on TASO (ASQ)



Summary of impact

There was no clear evidence of a positive impact on TASO questionnaire scores amongst the Intervention groups. There were fluctuations throughout the questionnaires in both directions which were difficult to interpret in a meaningful manner. The Control group also had fluctuations in both directions throughout their TASO responses, with no apparent pattern. Qualitative interviews with students on similar topic areas indicated a general lack of understanding regarding future goals, aspirations and HE, which may be the reason for the fluctuation in their responses. However, it is also acknowledged that the time between pre- and post-intervention ASQs was approximately 12 weeks. This may be too close together to see meaningful improvement.

In terms of Q2, which was specifically focussed on study, the picture was mixed within the Intervention group - some students indicated more confidence, others no change, and others decreased confidence. That said, scores were marginally more positive (i.e. more increases) than for the equivalent question within the control groups (see detailed analysis summary.)

The likelihood of the intervention to impact on TASO questionnaire scores regarding Higher Education (HE)

The intervention appears unlikely to impact on awareness of HE as it does not directly or indirectly communicate regarding HE. Teachers and Hello Future personnel commented that they did not expect Year 7 students to have an awareness of HE and were not surprised that TASO (ASQ) scores regarding HE did not show progression from October 2023 to January 2024 for these Year 7 students.

Student understanding and engagement with HE

It was evident during the student pre- and post-intervention interviews that there was very little engagement with Higher Education. Most students had given their future study path very little consideration at the point of the interviews. There was some intention to continue for 6th form or college, but very little consideration of university at this stage for the students in our sample.

Summary of detailed analysis

School X Intervention group

- Generally, fluctuations in both directions with no clear patterns (4 of 5 students)
- x1 indicated increases across Q1,2,4,5 but a decreased interest at Q3 (thinking about applying)
- x 3 students had a marginal increase at Q 2(study focus)
- x 1 had no change at Q2 (study focus)
- x 1 had a decrease at Q2 (study focus)

In the control group, x1 had an increase at Q2 (study focus), 2 had no change, and 2 decreased.

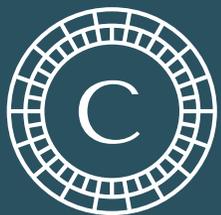
School Y Intervention group

Generally, fluctuations in both directions with no clear patterns.

x 2 students indicated marginal increase at Q2 (study focus) – one of these indicated increase at Q3 and Q4
x3 indicated decrease at Q2 (study focus)
x1 student did not complete follow up

In the control group, x2 students indicated an increase at Q2 and 4 indicated a decrease.

4c Student and teacher sentiment



Student sentiment towards participation

Students were positive towards the intervention sessions overall

- There were several indicators that students were engaged with and committed to the sessions:
 - All said they would endorse the sessions to Year 7 students who struggle with reading.
 - In one school, students turned up to participate in the intervention despite a bad weather day, where the session lead was unable to attend.
 - In one group a student independently looked up a word in a dictionary and reported back to the group.
- Students reported positive sentiment towards the sessions and rated them highly for enjoyment. The following were specific positives:
 - Lots of opportunity to participate (read out loud, answer questions, play games).
 - Being in a small group where reading was easier than in a normal class size.

The reading has helped me a lot and I think it would help me to get a job.

Female, School X

It was really helpful, doing the reading because I was never confident with reading and I'm a bit more confident

Female, School Y

They were fun, we did games and reading and I learnt to read more carefully and not skip lines.

Female, School Y

My reading improved and learning, like now I want to like put my hand up.

Male, School X

Student reported impact of the intervention



Students reported a positive impact of participating in the intervention

- They reported the following **specific positives in terms of their abilities**:
 - Being more confident with pronunciation
 - Being aware of the importance of reading every line carefully
 - Feeling more comfortable when reading out loud
 - Having a wider range of vocabulary
 - Understanding the importance of predicting when reading stories
 - Understanding how to check definitions of words that are not understood.
- All students in our intervention groups (A) reported **feeling more confident with reading** as a result of their participation. Some students reported that this meant they were now more comfortable to fully participate in other lessons (e.g. put their hand up in class).

I know more words now, and probably spelling [is better] as well.

Male, School Y

I'd probably give myself a 3 for before and like an 8 for now. Reading is quite easy now.

Female, School X

I'd say if you have problems with your reading go to Hello Future, it's a really helpful place.

Female, School X

I'd probably have given myself a 5 before [for confidence with reading] and now I'm at like a 9 or a 10.

Male, School X

Teacher/ School reported impact of the intervention



Detailed school feedback on the impact of the intervention generally and on an individual basis was relatively limited

They did however point out some positives:

- Good attendance by students was felt to be a reflection of students' enjoyment of the sessions
- Within School X, an English teacher reported an increase in vocabulary confidence amongst Intervention students
- Within School Y, teachers of 2 students in the intervention group reported that confidence had improved in lessons
- The increased YARC scores (pre- vs. post-intervention)

In general, for the ones who undertook the intervention, the English teacher said I have seen a slight improvement in the understanding of key words...vocabulary confidence has risen.

Teacher feedback, School X

The whole process worked well and it is great to see that progress has been made.... YARC scores have increased... and teachers have commented positively about the confidence of 2 students improving in the intervention group.

Teacher feedback, School Y

**4d Multi-causation:
External factors
affecting impact**

Factors affecting the impact of the reading intervention

A benefit of a small n study is that it can take account of multi-causation. There are a number of factors which affected the impact of the study, and which led to a different experience for different groups and individuals.

They are summarised below, grouped into sub-categories for clarity. They are discussed/ explained on subsequent slides.

1. Factors directly related to the intervention: Set up

- The level of the group ahead of starting
- The cohesion of the group level
- The specific needs of the group

2. Factors directly related to the intervention: Delivery/ Execution

- Attendance of the sessions
- Engagement in the sessions
- Number of sessions which were focussed on reading interventions
- Personnel changes during the intervention

3. Factors external to the intervention: home/ school/ personal

- Attendance at school more broadly
- Incidents at school
- Wider issues in home environment
- Neurodivergent conditions



Factors directly related to the intervention

Set Up

Some aspects of the set up will have affected the impact. These include:

- The level of the group ahead of starting
- The cohesion of the group level
- The specific needs of the group

These factors will impact on how successfully and efficiently the sessions can run, and therefore affect the overall impact on students. Session leaders reported that managing the different levels within the group and the speed of progression was a challenge. Different levels of ability appear to be a contributing factor to disruption/ behaviour issues.

Delivery & execution

There are aspects of the delivery and execution which will have affected the impact of the intervention. These include:

- **Attendance of the sessions:** Generally, attendance was good, but in both schools some students missed some of the sessions.
- **Engagement in the sessions:** Particularly in School X, engagement levels were mixed. Sometimes a minority of disruptive students prompted others to also be disruptive. Students and session leaders reported that the value gained from these sessions was less. That said, School X intervention was still successful based on YARC data.
- **Number of sessions which were focussed on reading interventions:** It should be remembered that 'warm up' / rapport building sessions are required – potentially up to two sessions. Therefore, potentially only 10 of the 12 sessions are directly focussed on reading.
- **Personnel changes during the intervention:** Personnel changes during the intervention have the potential to be disruptive. That said, the intervention group at School X (where a personnel change took place) still showed positive results.



Factors external to the intervention (1)

Factors external to the intervention itself, that may impact intervention outcomes, include issues related to school, home and emerging personal needs. The key factors which emerged across the two schools/Intervention groups were as follows:

Attendance at school more broadly: This has the potential to compromise the impact of the intervention/ have an impact generally on progression, however there isn't a clear-cut pattern

- e.g. One Intervention group student at School Y with poor attendance (86%) made no comprehension improvement despite the intervention. One control group student at the same school with poor attendance (84%) also made no improvement. However, at School X a student with below average attendance (91%) still made good progress, post-intervention.
- One student at School Y, missed 2 sessions due to a holiday. However, they still improved reading rate and reading comprehension from below 100 to a standardised score above 100.

Incidents at school: Incidents within the wider school day, particularly if they occur close to the time of the intervention session, have a potential to impact. Some specific issues were noted across the two schools e.g.

- An announcement by the school regarding teaching and form changes which some students reacted poorly to.
- Behavioural issues between students during breaktimes or lunchtime before the Intervention.
- Experiencing bullying which was affecting ability to concentrate in lessons.
- Informing the session leaders of such incidents / announcements may help them manage the altered mood and focus of the students.

It's difficult to say [if they were motivated to learn] – some were, but then their behaviour went a bit weird – something had happened during a lunchtime before the session, some incident with another pupil and a conflict, and they went a bit off-piste.

Session leader, School X

Factors external to the intervention (2)

Wider issues in the home environment:

During both the pre- and post-intervention interviews, students referred to some positives and negatives within their home environment which impacted on their current reading levels and overall academic performance. Such factors will have an impact on the success of a reading intervention. Negative issues which were mentioned included:

- Home setting which is crowded and noisy (e.g. high number of siblings, babies/toddlers) thus finding it difficult to have sufficient quietness to read.
- Family issues e.g. bereavement within the family; arguments or difficulties amongst family members.
- Lacking the technology to complete homework.

Positively, some students also mentioned having an individual or individual(s) at home who supported them with reading and homework, and that books were made available for them to read.

Neurodivergent conditions:

One student, from the intervention group at School X, was in the process of being assessed and was diagnosed with ADHD by the end of the intervention. This student presented with the most disruptive behaviour within the group, and this affected the value that other students appeared to gain from the intervention. Consideration should be given to dialogue with the school pre-intervention, regarding how students with additional needs may be best supported, to take part in a reading intervention going forward.

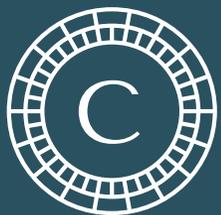
I can't do any homework since my phone is broken, that's how I'd do my homework and all the passwords are on it. There's been all these arguments and my phone got broken.

Student, School X

The behavioural issues were mainly one certain student and he is just now in the process of being assessed for ADHD, but he hadn't been assessed at the start.

Staff

5. Summary



Summary

Intervention set up, planning and design

Broadly the approach to the intervention set up was a success. The schools were onboarded with sufficient notice and appropriate students were chosen for participation, despite some initial issues. Running small sessions was positive and running the sessions within the school day worked well for attendance levels. The 12-session format were sufficient to see progress amongst the participants. Overall, no significant changes would need to be made for a wider roll out.

The areas which could be improved/ focussed on during set up are communication between Hello Future and the schools and the student selection process/ YARC testing. In terms of communication, it is important to not rely on email and to have a single point of contact between the school and Hello Future. In terms of student selection, it is key for the schools to fully understand the criteria and to be given support with administering the YARC reading assessment, as necessary.

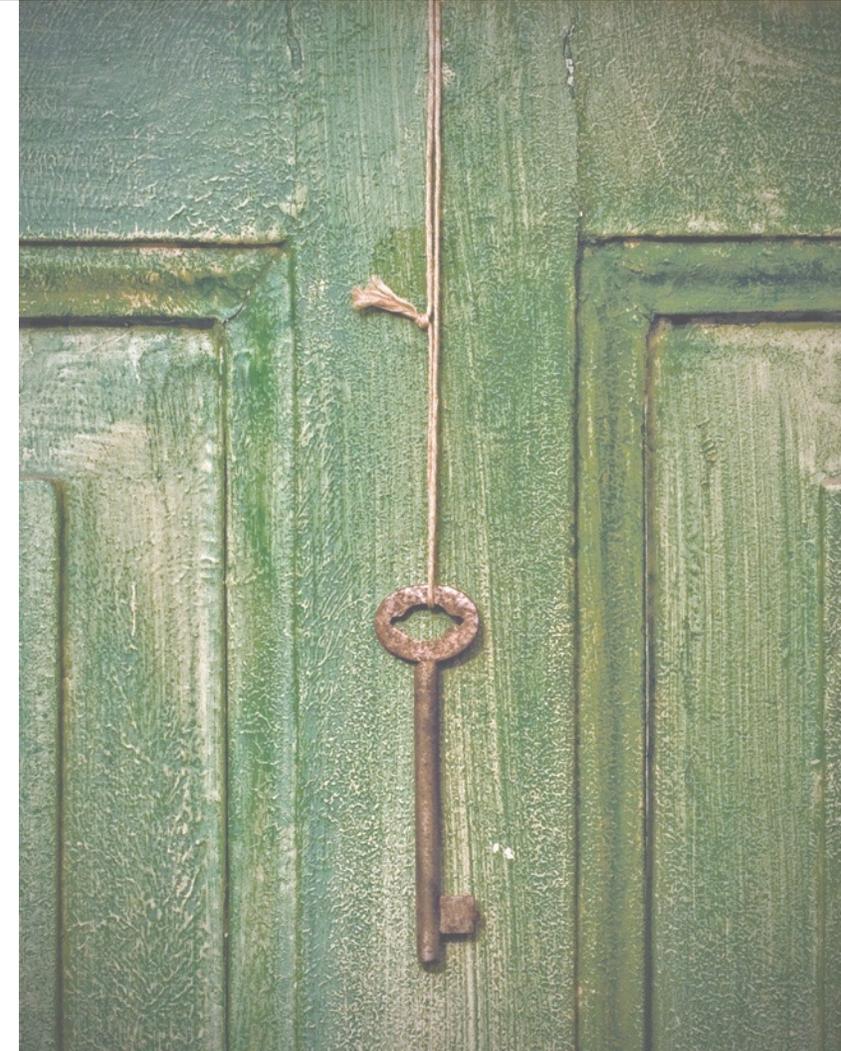
Intervention execution/ delivery

Overall, the structure of session delivery worked well. Basing the sessions on the structure provided by the Scholastic 'Connector' series of books was positive. Using a variety of fiction and non-fiction titles positively appealed to different tastes. It was important to have a mix of techniques and exercises and adapt them flexibly to the needs and mood of the group. Interactivity and verbal quizzes/discussions worked well.

Behaviour and disruption could be a challenge and impacted on the smooth running of the sessions. It is important for session leaders be made aware of students' behaviour needs and supported as appropriate. In addition, strictly enforcing the school's behavioural policy if required, would mitigate disruption. The schools should also support the session leaders by establishing them as figures of authority.

Detailed summaries

The subsequent charts show the detailed summaries, as provided at the end of the relevant sections of the report.



Summary: Intervention design and format



| Set up element | Suitability | What worked well | Considerations | Ideals for future roll out |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Timing of intervention: second half of Autumn term | Appropriate. | Good timing for ensuring the benefits are maximised during Year 7. | Schools had to choose pupils before feeling very familiar with them. | Discuss with school. Potential to run intervention either 2 nd half term of Autumn term or 1 st half of Spring term. |
| Intervention frequency and length: 12 sessions over a 6-week period | Appropriate. | One continuous 6-week block. Potential to see progression with 12 sessions. | All 12 sessions are unlikely to be dedicated to the reading intervention (due to attendance/the need for some sessions for rapport building). | Design the intervention to be rolled out over 10-11 sessions and aim to only use one session for rapport building. |
| Length of sessions: 40 mins | Appropriate but could be extended. | Schools endorsed the length of the individual sessions. | The time felt tight for the desired content coverage, particularly if there was disruption. | Ensure 40 minutes is maintained as a minimum. Consider extending to 45 minutes. |
| Number of students per sessions: 6 (intended) | Appropriate, providing behaviour issues are minimal. | A relatively small group, particularly as sometimes attendance further reduced numbers. | With disruptive students, 6 students could be problematic/hard to control. | Six should be the maximum, unless increased support with session delivery is available. |
| Intervention lead (x1 person; Hello Future intern or Outreach personnel) | Appropriate, but additional support might be beneficial if students are disruptive. | 1:6 lead/student ratio generally worked well. | Change in personnel during the programme should be avoided. Ideally students would build a rapport with one individual. | If a change in personnel is required, the new lead should be introduced by the team. |

Summary: Intervention set up



| Set up element | What worked well | Considerations | Ideals for future roll out |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Planning timeline | Communicating the intervention plan before the Summer term ended. | How to manage communications during the Summer break. | Agree a timeline plan with the school ahead of Summer break e.g. when to recontact/when to have further meetings. |
| Communication with school | One-to-one verbal communications. Face to face/ remote meetings. Email when it was used to confirm key aspects in writing /for reference. | Email should not be relied upon as primary communication method. | Aim to have one point of contact at Hello Future/within each school. If personnel at either end changes, ensure a new relationship is created. |
| Student selection | The student selection criteria made sense/was logical i.e. students with a lower than chronological reading age, who had a measure of disadvantage. | Important to take account of the detailed/specific demographics of the school. | Ensure the school are comfortable and happy with selection criteria during a call ahead of selection commencing. Address any concerns which arise during the discussions e.g. surrounding their ability to find suitable students who fit the criteria |
| YARC reading assessment | The choice to use YARC – accepted as the most thorough reading assessment. | Time required by the school, particularly in light of the number of tests they need to complete. Support is needed in order to help schools with efficiency or direct support with marking. | Consider how the schools could be supported: training to aid efficiency, support with marking. Avoid schools needing to work autonomously with the handbook. |

Summary: Key elements of the delivery model



| Element | What worked well | Considerations | Ideals for future roll out |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Focus of the sessions | Working with the <i>Connector</i> series for structure. Using one book per week. | Up to 2 sessions needed to be used for rapport building: no specific Reading Intervention content. | Maintain use of the <i>Connector</i> series: aiming to cover 5 books in the 12 sessions. |
| Books | Varied titles. The mix of fiction and non-fiction to appeal to different tastes. The age-level/difficulty of the books. | | Maintain the mix of books. Students to input into book choice for subsequent week. |
| Delivery style and techniques | Reading aloud according to colour page/section. Interactivity: Q&A as a group + verbally. Allowing students to refer back to the text (reassuring). | Asking pupils to read aloud before gaining their trust / building confidence. Exercises which may distract focus (e.g. encouraging too much movement). | Be prepared to take a flexible approach according to specific sessions. Group exercises work well. |
| Managing behavioural problems | Setting and enforcing boundaries. Removing or separating students who disrupted the sessions. Having a second supporting person to work with separated students. | The behavioural policy of the school being diverged from/ not implemented. The Hello Future personnel not being clearly introduced as a person with authority. A switch in personnel delivering the session. | Ensure the session leader and the school align on the behavioural policy and implementation. Remove disruptive students. |
| Materials required | Having a flipchart/whiteboard available. | Individual response exercises needs to be used sparingly: can be harder for students /a drop off point for engagement. | Flipchart/whiteboard is key. |
| Room/ environment | A separate room, near to teachers, with no other interventions running in the space at the same time. | Open plan space. | A separate room, near to teachers. |
| School support | The school introducing the session leader. | How to manage/support a change in personnel. | School to introduce the session leader/support changes in personnel. |

Summary of impact

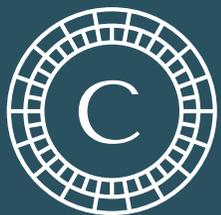
The feedback from the four information sources can be summarised as follows:

- **YARC reading assessments:** the Intervention groups (group A), in both schools, improved more than the Control groups (group B), particularly in terms of comprehension.
- **Student perspectives:** Students in the intervention groups reported feeling more confident with reading and believe their abilities have improved.
- **Teacher perspectives:** There was limited specific feedback regarding the individual students from teachers, but the feedback provided was positive. The English teacher at School X noted a rise in vocabulary understanding amongst Intervention students and the English teacher at School Y was positive regarding two of the students in the Intervention group.
- **TASO Access and Success Questionnaire (ASQ):** Little impact was noted. However, it is acknowledged that the time between pre- and post-intervention ASQs was approximately 12 weeks. This may be too close together to see meaningful improvement.

Therefore, based primarily on YARC and student feedback, this evaluation points towards the intervention as having had a positive impact on students who participated.



6. Appendices



Appendix 6a: Background



Evidence supporting reading interventions



In reviewing the Causeway Toolkit and TASO's Rapid Review of Attainment Raising Activity conducted by HEPs (2022), as well as a reviewing the direct sources that TASO have referenced, this intervention seems to fall across a number of intervention types, including the development of study/ soft skills, after school club, and teaching of the National Curriculum. We have also reviewed evidence that pertains specifically to reading interventions and those activities delivered by non-teaching professionals and have summarised some of the evidence below. According to Higgins et al (2014), who analysed data between 2008 and 2013, the educational chances of pupils starting secondary school without having achieved a Level 4 in reading are extremely poor, impacting on the likelihood of achieving the equivalent of 5A*-C, including English and Maths at KS4. (Higgins et al: 2014).

- Books and Stories (highlighted by the OfS) [Bournemouth University: Books and Stories - Office for Students](#): An analysis of 2019-20 data of 70 participating Year 6 pupils, using this approach across 10 weeks and in seven schools, revealed positive impact in terms of increased reading level (ranging from 12 to 24 months increase) and an increase in reading confidence.
- Benefits of Structured After-School Literacy Tutoring by University Students for Struggling Elementary Readers Endia J. Lindo et al (2017): A trial of an after-school programme had significant positive effects in the intervention group over the control group in reading in de-coding words and comprehension. This was also in the context of minimal training for the delivery tutors.
- Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) (2014) Reading at the Transition. Interim Evidence Brief June 2014, London: EEF: This study evaluated a range of 24 catch-up reading projects with differing delivery models and approaches. mostly one to one or small group support delivered in the final term of Year 6, during the summer holiday or in the first term of Year 7. Projects focussed on phonics, reading comprehension and/ or oral language support. Broadly this study showed that, all approaches/ delivery models demonstrated a varying positive impact. Overall, small group tuition delivery and reading comprehension approaches both revealed 4 months reading improvement.
- TASO reviewed other RCTs and meta-analyses that found structured reading tutoring delivered by university students has significant positive effects on the attainment of primary school students when compared to control groups (Lindo et al.,2017; Elbaum et al., 2000; Bloom, 1984; in TASO. (2022). Typology of attainment-raising activities conducted by HEPs: Rapid Evidence Review)

Appendix 6b: Research Team

The Cosmos Team



Sarah Dirrane
Director, Research & Strategy

Sarah Dirrane, Director of Research and project lead, has extensive experience delivering a large portfolio of research programmes within the Higher Education sector. Sarah is an accomplished researcher, with a particular specialism in understanding the intersectionality between education and socio-economic status; and assessing the impact of access initiatives on student outcomes.

- ✓ A trained researcher with a Masters in Research Methodology from the University of Leeds.
- ✓ A published author in the Race, Ethnicity and Education journal. Link to article [here](#).
- ✓ Significant experience in the project management of large qualitative projects.
- ✓ Knowledge & understanding of the HE sector – led the Research & Intelligence Team at a large HEI



Kate Wood
Senior Research Consultant,
Research & Strategy

Kate Wood is a senior qualitative research specialist with over 25 years' experience. Kate has a BSc (hons) degree in Psychology & Sociology and is a former Head of Qualitative Research at a leading global research agency. Kate has demonstrated expertise in the education sector, working with a range of audiences including teens and young adults, parents/carers, school staff, school leaders and education stakeholders (Uni Connects, FE and HE institutions). Kate's work in the education sector has included projects with hard-to-reach audiences, including teenagers, minority ethnic students and those from low SEG or those living in areas of disadvantage. To date, projects undertaken with these audiences have included learner experience, customer journey mapping, comms/narrative testing, proposition and creative testing, access and participation and impact & evaluation. Kate is also a former School Governor with a remit for working with teachers to improve teaching & learning in a school with high levels of deprivation and PP students.



Fiona Smalley
Senior Research Consultant,
Research & Strategy

Fiona Smalley is senior qualitative research specialist with over 20 years' experience. Fiona has a BA (hons) in English Literature & Sociology. She progressed from a graduate research role to a Director on a fast-track programme, before going on to be a founder/owner of two research agencies. Fiona has expertise of conducting research studies with children and teens. These projects fall across sectors, including education. She has been involved in a prior study for Hello Future, focussed on educational attainment. Outside of education, she has conducted studies for local authorities regarding multi-ethnicity integration and how it can be increased via sporting programmes. She has also conducted evaluation programmes for global sports brands, assessing how sports interventions within schools can improve physical and mental wellbeing amongst children and teens. Fiona has extensive experience of research for charities, and a number of studies have focussed specifically on the needs of ethnic groups and those with measures of disadvantage.

About Cosmos



Cosmos has extensive experience working in the education and impact evaluation sector, having worked with a large number of HE institutions. Cosmos specialises in delivering HE research programmes across a wide range of disciplines and methods - this includes quantitative, qualitative, empirical & secondary research. Cosmos has delivered innovative research programmes that have been recognised by the Office for Students as 'exemplary' and has also supported delivery of a 'sector leading' impact research programme with a partner institution. Further to this, a recent Cosmos report has been recognised by and presented to the House of Lords, in order to inform and aid development of new policies.

Contributing to Academic Literature

Cosmos has a history of contributing to academic journals and developing academic articles, contributing to topics such as educational underrepresentation, student experiences within education and barriers to accessing education.

Delivering Evaluation & Impact Programmes for Uni Connects

Cosmos has extensive experience delivering Evaluation & Impact programmes for Uni Connect consortiums, constituting a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods with learners, stakeholders & parents/carers; we are experienced in completing qualitative projects with young learners within an educational setting. Methods that we have experience in conducting include the development of in-depth case studies, 1:1 interviews (F2F or telephone), discussion groups (F2F and online), intercepts (short on-the-spot interviews) and vox pops.

Case study - Impact Qualitative Case Studies within Access and Participation

We developed several qualitative case studies to establish the extent to which a local programme had supported positive student outcomes (12 students) and partnership working (what is working well and key challenges) within seven urban and rural schools and colleges. The case studies employed a 360-degree approach, which included feedback from students, their parents and carers and school and college representatives. This included F2F and telephone interviews, online diaries and video case studies. The research explored the distance travelled by students in terms of where they were before and after they had participated in the programme. Findings provided positive insights into the impact of the programme and to what extent the programme objectives were achieved. We have also been invited to present the case studies at the client's annual conference to key internal and external stakeholders. **The full suite of case studies, including the report and video outputs can be accessed [here](#).**

COSMOS

Nexus, University of Leeds,
Discovery Way, Leeds LS2 3AA

T | 0113 887 0191

W | www.cosmosltd.uk

E | hello@cosmosltd.uk

hello 
future.

