REPORT TO ACCOMPANY BEEBY FELLOWSHIP.

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The AVAILLL programme: Using popular film subtitles to enhance literacy outcomes for youth offenders

Background Literature

Literacy and Youth Offending

The literacy demands of the workplace and society in general are growing in complexity, and recurring linked cycles of poverty and low literacy levels put some people at increasing disadvantage. The prison population includes disproportionate numbers of the poor; those released from prisons are often unable to find employment, partly due to a lack of job and/or literacy skills, and are often re-incarcerated (Paul, 1991). In the New Zealand context, for example, the 2001 census highlighted the fact that three-quarters of sentenced inmates left school with no educational qualifications and about an eighth of imates had one or more school certificate subjects as their highest school qualification.

A complex variety of explanations and theories have been proposed in the attempt to explain the relations between academic performance and delinquent behaviour (Katsiyannis, Ryan, Zhang and Spann (2008). A number of other studies have found that delinquent youth are reading below their peers or grade level (Zamora, 2005). Conversely, there have been limited numbers of studies investigating the efficacy of of specific interventions for incarcerated youth. While Katsiyannis, Ryan, Zhang and Spann's review (2008) of the literature pertaining to academic achievement and its effect on delinquency were unable to establish direct causal relations between the two variables, the literature did show that rates of recidivism were highly correlated with low levels of academic performance and that the implementation of sound academic interventions, particularly in reading, can effectively reduce rates of both delinquency and recidivism. Krezmien and Mulcahy (2008) suggest that while there is unfortunately a paucity of methodologically rigorous reading research investigations in juvenile corrections settings, it is an important area for further investigation in order to advance our understanding of the links between the many variables. Despite the many different explantions for the development of reading deficits and behavioural disorders, the two conditions are "consistently recognised as conditions that contributed to long term nagative outcomes for youth" (Krezmien & Mulcahy, 2008, p. 221). Taking into account the high cost of imprisonment and the huge increase in the prison population in New Zealand, improving literacy skills in vulnerable populations may be one preventative, proactive way of addressing the problem.

Other examples in the literature demonstrate that programmes based on current thinking about literacy and sound adult education practices can be effective. Successful prison literacy programmes are learner-centred, recognising different learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and multiple literacies (Newman, Lewis, & Beverstock, 1993). Such programmes are participatory. Instead of taking a "deficit" perspective, educators recognize and use learner strengths to help them shape their own learning.

Impact of New Technologies on Literacy

Everyday literacy practices in schools (and in adult literacy programmes) are changing rapidly due to multimedia and interactive communication technologies. To date however, research to support the integration of new technologies in literacy instruction in schools and elsewhere is still emerging (O'Brien & Dubbels, 2009). Ever-evolving information and communication technologies and Web 2.0 reading and writing tools are influencing the rapidly changing nature of literacy and according to many commentators, new literacies are moving too fast for solid research to determine what best practices in literacy education are (O'Brien & Dubbels, 2009).

It could be argued that one consequence of these new technologies and Web 2.0 tools, is to render traditional classroom print materials on their own insufficient and less interesting to young people. During adolescence in particular, where there is an increase interest in peers and social activities and often a decreased interest in school-related reading, students can begin to lose self confidence, develop anxieties about school and even engage in activities that inhibit rather than facilitate learning (Dunston & Gambrell, 2009). Even those students, who consider themselves as non-readers at school, actively engage in out-of-school reading (Smith & Wilhelm, 2004) including popular culture texts. Dunston & Gambrell (2009) argue too that if we ignore young people's motivation to engage in out-of-school literacy practices we "run the risk of placing a great divide between traditional, school-related literacy and relevance to adolescents" (p. 275).

The continual challenge to motivate all students to achieve in reading was the impetus behind recent research to investigate the premise that using popular movies with subtitles not only enhances students' reading skills but also provides the engagement that is required for success as a reader (Parkhill & Davey, 2012 in press; Parkhill, Johnson & Bates, 2011; Parkhill & Johnson, 2009). The common feature of reading both subtitled movies and books is the emphasis on the use of imagery; through read-watching, the students *read it, see it*, and so *get it*. According to Hibbing and Rankin-Erickson (2003), many reluctant and low-progress readers "see nothing" when they read, because they are unable to create pictures in their mind. Unlike traditional reading comprehension tasks, continuous exposure to images on television, film, and other digital technologies helps create visual representations for the viewer, whereas readers of written texts have to draw on their own experiences to create the internal visual images from the text.

Same Language subtitling

Same language subtitling (SLS) involves the subtitling of moving image into the same language as the audio (Kothari, Pandey & Chudgar, 2004). What you hear from the audio is what you read on the screen. Known variously as *Teletext subtitles* in the UK, *Same Language Subtitles* (SLS) in India, and *close captioning* (CC) in the US, it was first introduced to the latter with the intention of improving access to television for the hard of hearing. However, as Kothari and his colleagues (2004) demonstrated, subtitling can also be used equally effectively with hearing students. In an earlier study, Kothari & Takeda (2000) demonstrated that same-language subtitled song programmes on television were effective in raising children's reading. Exposure to SLS educational songs improved decoding ability in formal school settings in India. However, it was outside of the school context, where the watching of television with song subtitles more than doubled the percentage of viewers who became good readers, at the same time as halving the percentage of those who remained illiterate. Following on from this study, and capitalizing on Indians' life-long passion with Bollywood film songs, Kothari and his colleagues have continued to suggest that the merger of karaoke and Bollywood have doubled the number of readers in Indian primary schools (Banks, 2012). SLS "switches on life-long and inescapable reading practices for millions of television viewers" (p. 9). The repetitious nature of songs ensures that the reading of subtitles is an automatic action; prior knowledge and habit formation are not prerequisites. If subtitles are present they will "be read and simultaneously processed with the audio in a complementary manner" (Kothari et al, 2004, p. 29). For many, the shift from engaging in predominantly picture viewing on television, to a focus on reading the subtitles evolves over time.

Overview of the AVAILLL Programme

An example of a literacy programme used in formal school settings, The Audio-visual Achievement in Literacy, Language and Learning (the AVAILLL programme) uses a combination of image and word (subtitles) to foster comprehension and fluency in reading. The programme includes explicit literacy activities that interweave acquisition of literacy skills with watching movies (on DVDs), reading the subtitles on these movies, and (later) reading extracts from the original novel on which the movie was based. Students "read-watch" movies and complete a range of games and activities designed to keep them on track when reading the subtitles. The activities themselves therefore provide an ongoing opportunity for purposeful and focused reading.

Delivered as a six-week unit, AVAILLL includes one hour of focused reading per day along with a variety of other activities, which students carry out either as individuals or in pairs, groups, and teams. All activities are designed to target the key skills of reading comprehension, reading fluency, vocabulary exploration and visualisation. These activities require students to collaborate, emphasizing and fostering the participatory approaches necessary to support and consolidate learning.

The following is a list of accompanying activities, interwoven into the viewing process at appropriate moments

Surprise subtitles: Encouraging rapid reading through chunking of text.
When a DVD is stopped the image and subtitles are not visible. For this activity, the movie is stopped eight times and the students write down the last subtitle that they have read. As the spoken text can be slightly different from the subtitles, it is not sufficient just to listen to the movie. This activity helps to train the students to read subtitles while watching the movie and also encourages rapid reading and fluency since students must keep up with the pace of the movie. The movie is stopped at eight points during viewing and the students must write the last subtitles they have read.

Next word hunt: Focused vocabulary teaching and concentration while searching for certain words. This activity requires students to write down all of the words that follow a common word (e.g. 'we') for 25 minutes of the movie.

Take a dictionary to the movies: Extending word meanings. The movie is paused on a pre-planned subtitle containing a challenging word and students must work in teams with a dictionary, and record the meaning- in context - within a competitive time frame.

Fostering fluency: Providing an oral/written link and reading with phrasing and fluency. The teacher reads an extract near the end of the novel in robotic fashion. The students then read the same passage with a buddy using appropriate phrasing and fluency. This also provides the link between the film and the novel. One effect is to stimulate many students to want to read the novel.

Read it - see it: Teaching visualization to extend comprehension and recall. Similar to Picture Dictation, students are asked to recreate/retell a scene in visual images using, in this case, *audio-only* input.

A movie's worth a hundred words: Building personal vocabulary knowledge by using contextual support in the movie. In a team activity, students discuss with group members the meanings of challenging words. These are then shared with the class. A vocabulary chart is developed which is then used to study for a quiz at the end of the activity.

In all, the six-week programme focuses on three to four novels and their accompanying films, using these activities in varying ways as is appropriate to context.

Summary of the research projects using subtitles of popular films (AVAILLL)

So far, we have carried out six different research investigations into the use of AVAILLL with a number of different age and institutional groups. This included the study conducted with youth offenders in Christchurch Prison. In all of these studies, the Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) standardised test of reading comprehension and vocabulary was used to measure progress (Darr, McDowall, Ferral, Twist, & Watson, 2008). Tests One to Seven were administered in accordance with the different age groups. A different form of the test for each level was used for the pre-test, post-test and sustainability (Studies 2 and 5) assessment. PAT tests are developed and standardised for New Zealand schools, and so allow teachers to determine the level of achievement of their students relative to the achievement of students in the same level in Years 4 to 10. Qualitative data was also analysed from various sources: questionnaires (Studies 1, 2 3 and 4); from focus group (Study 5) and from interviews with individual participants (Study 6). The quantitative data explored numerical trends in

achievement in vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension, while the qualitative data gathered participating students' personal responses to the programme.

Previous AVAILLL studies
At this stage, six studies have been published or are in press:

1) Pilot Study
A pilot study was completed in 2007 in Christchurch by the developer from the US, (Alice Killackey) and reported on by Faye Parkhill and Jilaine Johnson. Four schools in the Christchurch area were invited to participate in this project. Teachers in the experimental group were chosen by standard random method, with the developer, researchers and school administrators there as observers. A total of 240 children from decile 2 – 5 schools took part in the study. 40% of the children in the study were from non-European ethnic backgrounds.

The results of thisstudy indicated that the AVAILLL programme had a significant impact, particularly for Maori and Pasifika and low progress students. There was also a lesser, but still significant, impact for average or higher-level readers. In this sample of schools, the non-New Zealand European group's mean reading gain increased by 0.66 years and the below age readers' mean gain was 0.77 years. This compares with the control classes non-New Zealand European groups, whose mean gain over the same period was 0.17 years. Control below age readers' gain was 0.22 years. These results were statistically significant.

The qualitative data from questionnaire revealed some interesting trends. There was a 98.8% positive reaction from the students in the programme. Emerging themes from student evaluations included the following: high enjoyment, ways in which it helped their reading, its role in supporting other academic areas, the development of (renewed interest) in reading and reading subtitles in their leisure time. Comments below from the student evaluations are typical:

I didn't even realise I was reading.
It was awesome and I'm sad that we have to do lame worksheets that don't teach you anything [now].
I used to read one page in 2 minutes and now I am reading 10 pages in 2 minutes.
I can understand more difficult words.
AVAILLL – it was absolutely excellent. I am speechless!
Made me spell faster, read faster and image about what you're listening to.
I think this programme should go worldwide.
AVAILLL can help millions.

This research is published in:
Parkhill, F., & Johnson, J, (2009). An unexpected breakthrough for Rapid Reading Improvement: AVAILLL uses movies to Read it-See-it-Get-it. *set: Research Information for Teachers. 28-34.*

2)   Experimental research with Year 7 and 8
Another experimental study occurred in six Christchurch schools (323 Year 7 and 8 students) in 2009. This time sustainability data over six months for Year 8 students were included. A three-member New Zealand-based research team (Parkhill, Johnson, and Bates) investigated whether a larger experimental study could provide enough evidence to position AVAILLL as a short-term enrichment programme that would assist in raising reading levels and reading engagement in the upper primary (elementary) school. The students in Experimental Group A who received the full AVAILLL programme made gains in comprehension but so did the students in the control group (C) and those who watched subtitles without the associated teaching activities (Group B). Overall, there were no statistically significant differences between the groups after six weeks of the AVAILLL programme. However, the Year 8 students (n = 73) in Experimental Group A continued to sustain progress over the six-month period following completion of the programme (see Table 3). By the end of the academic year, these students' mean comprehension scale score had increased from 54.89 in

the pre-test to 62.95, and the mean stanine score had increased from 4.12 to 5.45. The gain in the vocabulary scale score was from 55.91 to 60.54. The mean stanine score increased from 4.34 to 5.08. Once again self-reported comments of the questionnaire indicate gains in achievement and engagement. When the 164 students were asked how they "found" the AVAILL programme, 90% of them gave a positive response, 8% a negative response, and 2% a neutral response. The comments mirrored those of the pilot study described above:

I now get pictures whilst reading and writing.
[It] was fun because you got to watch and read at the same time.
[It's good] because I look at the words and use my peripheral vision to see both at once and understand at the same time.
[H]eaps better than reading in a group and it's fun reading.
You have to keep your eyes glued to the screen, and I reckon I have got better at reading.
[It's good] because I tend to read books more often and I understand better.
[I know I have got better] because I can read fluently and not sound like a robot.

For a full report refer to:

Parkhill. F., Johnson, J. & Bates, J. (2011).Capturing Literacy Learners: A reading programme using popular novels and films with subtitles. *Digital Culture and Education.* 3(2)140-156.

3)   Year 9 and 10 study (189 students) of low literacy achievers
    Four out of five of the participating schools in this research were co-educational, while the fifth was a boys-only school. In total, 12 classes participated, all classified by their schools as students with the lowest achievement in literacy for both Year 9 (10 classes) and Year 10 (two classes). Once again we used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. According to statistical analysis, significant gains were once again recorded for both comprehension and vocabulary. The results for these secondary students showed improved stanine and scale score averages well beyond those expected over seven weeks of schooling with an overall effect size of .91 for comprehension and .37 for vocabulary. The qualitative data gathered through the open-ended questionnaire completed by all students revealed overwhelmingly positive comments, despite the fact that many face difficulty when expressing themselves when writing. Comments from these older students were similar to the previous studies. For example:
I know more words and I am more fluent
I have because now I write down words and understand what they mean
I've learnt that I have to read a lot more and to go over words carefully cos most words have more than one meaning.
It helped me understand much more words and *because I'm improving in reading fluency* and *Yes because I learned to read faster instead of stopping all the time when there were no full stops.*

This report is entitled:
Parkhill, F and Davey, R. *Can we watch that movie today, Miss?: subtitled movies and reading achievement in adolescents.* It is currently under peer review with *English In Aotearoa*, the national journal published by The New Zealand Association for the Teaching of English (NZATE)

4)   Queensland study (98 students) Year 6 and 7
In order to achieve a comparison of findings across two education systems, the same standardised measures of comprehension and vocabulary used in the Canterbury studies were administered to all of the Year 6 and 7 students who participated in the programme. Clearly it is inappropriate to apply New Zealand norms or comparisons of stanine growth to an Australian context. As a consequence, we used scale scores since this allowed a finer grain of analysis, since it applies to any time of the school year and because it "provides an excellent tool for measuring progress over time" (Darr et al, 2008, p. 20).

The gain of 3.89 (n=96) in scale score was almost identical to the score in the New Zealand study of 3.49 (n=111). Although the effect size can only be classified as an average gain (Coe, 2002), the PAT manual (Darr et al 2008) indicates that taking in the margin of error, the normal growth for year 7

students over 12 months is seven scale points. If one considers that a school year comprises 40 weeks, then over a six week period, this could equate to an expected increase of 1.05. A mean of 3.89 scale score gain for this period of schooling can therefore be considered to be significant. (personal communication, NZCER, 2010).

In addition to the formalised testing, students completed surveys to access student voice. A series of simple open-ended questions sought feedback on the students' overall response to the programme and their perceptions of whether they felt their reading had improved, and if so, in what ways. As has been the case in our earlier studies, responses were overwhelming positive, with over 80% expressing favourable comments. The word "fun" occurred 58 times, with most student comments emphasising enjoyment. The next most frequent descriptors were 'interesting', 'successful', and 'challenging' and 'exciting'.

While several found the programme challenging: "*I found the programme really successful but it was very hard in some places*".. and "*overall it was fun and it was trikey*", this did not seem to detract from its enjoyment. *It has improved my reading because when I read it feels a lot easier to read*" and "*It has helped me read more fluently*" and *"I can read aloud faster* .

5)   Hawkes Bay (275 students) Year 5 and 6 from 5 Decile One schools in 2011.
Data for this study is currently being analysed. Sustainability of results included retesting at the end of the year (similar to the second study above).

The ethnic makeup of these students comprised 65% Maori, 15% of Pasifika and 15% of New Zealand European ethnicity. The latest international reports from PISA (Telford and May, 2010) indicated that New Zealand's 15-year-old students continued to perform very strongly in reading literacy, with a mean score of 521 points. This was statistically better than the average score for the 34 OECD countries (493). However, those students identifying as Māori (19%) and Pasifika (10%) scored 478 score points and 448 score points, respectively and this was below the OECD mean. As a vulnerable group in terms of reading achievement, we were keen to investigate the impact of the variable of ethnicity.

In terms of the quantitative data, the gains in scale scores for both comprehension and vocabulary were significant. The new AVAILLL programme developed for this level of the school spans eight weeks rather than six weeks that is recommended for the programmes developed for the other year levels. Once again, an analysis of variance ($P<0.001$) indicated a significant difference in scale score means between time 1 and time 2, with an effect size of 0.31. Sustainability data revealed even more progress with an overall effect size of .72 for comprehension and .34 for vocabulary. No other interventions occurred during the year, with normal literacy classroom programmes resuming after Test 2. The stanine growth for the year for 223 students in comprehension was 1.79.

6) Beeby Fellowship Prison research with young offenders

    Some Background literature
The research literature highlights a number of barriers and difficulties in conducting reading investigations in juvenile corrections settings. These include issues around collaboration with staffing, role definitions, sampling and attrition, securing appropriate instructional settings, as well as instrumentation and materials (Mulcahy, Krezmien, Leone, Houchins & Baltodino, 2008). It also emphasises the dearth of research on what makes for effective instructional interventions for this particular population group. While several of these factors were found to apply to this vulnerable group of young men, we were very fortunate to find great support and an enthusiastic reception from the prison tutor herself and the administration within the youth offenders unit, which made the introduction and initial reception within the prison service of the intervention a relatively stressfree process. Her relationship with the young men in the unit was a very positive one which smoothed the way for this intervention to find acceptance with the participants themselves.

Methods

Initial anaysis of the data indicates findings similar to our previous studies of AVAILLL interventions and our data collection methods were similar: the use of pre and post testing, followed by interviews with the participants themselves and with key staff, as well as ongoing audio-recorded reflective conversations between the Education Tutor and AVAILLL Facilitator.

However, even taking into account the complex socio-cultural context of the prison service with its stringent security measures, the transient nature of the population within the youth offenders unit at Christchurch Prison meant that there were only a small number of participants in this study. We conducted pre and post tests using PAT comprehension tests based on the age and capability of individuals. In our decision making we were guided by the prior knowledge and experience of the Education Tutor.

The small sample size (22) made it difficult to determine any valid statistical significance in the quantitative data. Even given this, the effect size was similar to our other studies (.48) with the mean scale score increasing from 67 to 71.45 (4.45), which can be seen as a very positive gain in such a short time span, though because of the small numbers, it cannot be called statistically significant. We chose to use a comparison of the scale scores achieved on both tests as this allows a finer grain of analysis and applies to any time of the school year Darr et al, (2008, p.20) state that scale scores "provide an excellent tool for measuring progress over time Scale scores can be plotted and used as trajectories monitored to provide profiles of growth for both groups and individuals". Darr et al suggest that when a time span is less than a year, an average gain in scale score is appropriate to statistically analyse achievement for a group. Over a six week period this would equate to an expected increase of approximately 1.05.

Because of the transience of the prison population, it will not be possible either to follow up to determine sustainability of progress. Due to the more advanced ages of the prisoners (17-20 years as opposed to school age up to year 10), it was not appropriate to report stanine growth, as has been the case with our previous studies.

The following graph shows the scale score
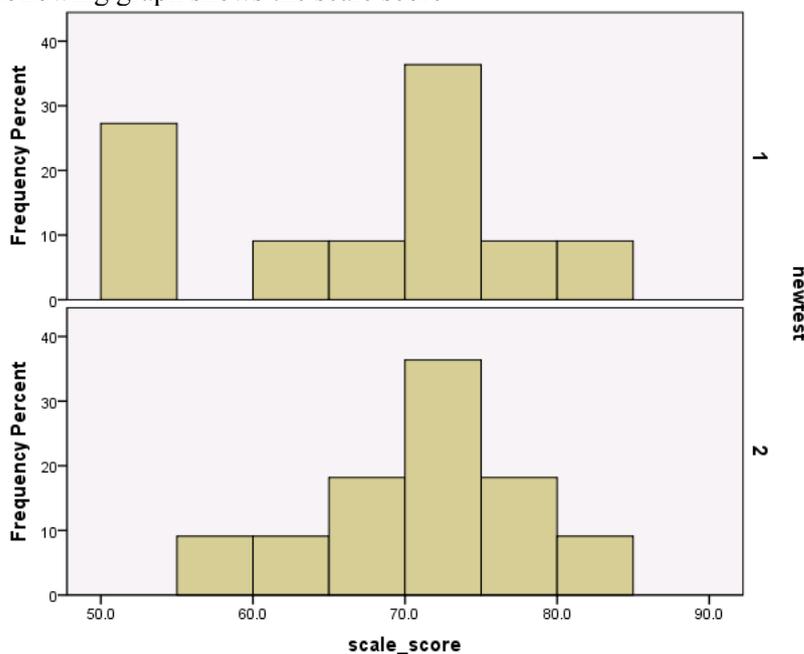
SAMPLE TEST SCORES AND INTERVIEW COMMENTS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

NAME	TEST 1	TEST 2	GAIN IN SCALE SCORE	COMMENTS
A (M)	51	59	8	It would have been excellent to do this at school I loved doing this compared with school work – I probably would have stayed at school…School was shit – only just stayed to do athletics and stuff I liked – science and PE, I didn't like English.. Mx was not too bad.. not reading and writing
B (R)	84.3	89.4	5.1	The reading was all right – others reading out loud when you were reading in your head. Yeah as now I know what certain words mean…Maybe a little bit faster – never good at reading and never read a subtitles – it made us read.. I reckon the way Chuck handled things was pretty good as well. I put in my comments Chuck's oisome. Sounds like awesome – thought id put a smile on Chucks face when he saw that…. Not really like Chuck. Most of my teachers some of them were bullies and some were all right – That;s how I got that scar.. teacher slammed the desk down on my handat Ascot community – most of my scars from schooldays. Cracked in two places.. didn't stay at that school long…
C (M)	69	68	-1	I thought it would suck but to be honest as I thought just another test, just another fail, but it helped as good to do something you enjoy and you can learn off something you enjoy. The movie made it more enjoyable and easy to work with. Not much bad things you can say about it. ..All pretty well planned down and well done. I thought it would be boring as and it would be pausing every minute and it was good how it was broken down into certain sections and it wasn't play stop play stop and skipping sections but you watched the whole thing
D (J)	72.4	78	5.6	I found reading difficult at school – didn't get much help – I wasn't really at school much kept taking days off school too hard for me…My readings improved…I can read faster and I read some long words too. More meanings.. I like working in groups – makes it more fun… I enjoyed Freedom Writers cos probablys based on some of us in here…*the subtitles* told to watch it and hard at first… At first it didn't then a couple of movies through and then my eyes were staying down at the titles and I found it easier cos looking at the whole thing at the same time
E (T)	61	73	12	Availll was 'all good'. Reading was hard. I couldn't really read just came here ajil and started reading again. When I turned 14, I went to work and didn't go back to school since coming here I've learned how to read properly again..when I used to read I used to skip lines and now I have learned to read again.. understanding the words and stuff. I think my reading has improved a lot. I can read faster now I used to take ages word for word and but now I can read a few words and then say it out. I have learned how to read and say some big words. I could read them but now I can say them.
F (R-T)	54.7	74.6	19.9	Felt determined to do something new and to be able to learn something. I didn't have much school or potential to learn…I found it easier when I was looking at pictures and by watching movies, easier to understand the questions that were asked. I had to concentrate to keep my eyes on the subtitles and most of the work was based on the subtitles…My writing is not that much improved but its improved. Didn't like Some of the movies and some of the topics were fairly simple… I found that my reading has improved as I'm reading books in my spare time and the words that I can pronounce I found easy.. I can read faster…I haven't done something like that in a very long time (the tests)… I get books out of here…crime, action, assassin.. can't remember reading books when little.Watch TV- I mostly watch TV more but still read three times a day…I think the course is running fine.. I found it worthwhile.. is that only one

				module.. to improve my reading?
G (N)	73	79	6	No Interview available. Court appointment
H (M)	50.6	55.1	4.5	I found reading hard at school.. spoke English at home.. no extra help at school – left at 15-14.. South Auckland at Sir Edmund Hillary.. just gym teacher helped me.. can only remember a teacher at primary… Classes all right but some of them a bit too out of my range – I felt like I had to try harder but didn't know how to do it.. when I left school I was on my own.. I was not living at home.. living on the streets with a couple of my mates.. I always regretted leaving school…tried to get back in but didn't accept me.. cos of my attendance…More interesting watching the movie and reading at the same time..I can read faster and yeah have learned more words…–always wanted to read books in my cell but not motivated.. cant really see the picture of the story in my head.. I had this whole folder of work.. I can just go through it I can read real fast now…slowly getting into reading – reading a stack of books.. slowly getting into it now… *Can you do some more study..* just once I get up the nerve if they'll let me do it…like going to courses…did a couple but didn't really pay attention.. enjoying mechanics and good opportunities to do some
I (A)	71.2	73.5	2.3	Pretty cool –got to watch the movies but no it wasn't that good as ended up having to watch the subtitles most of the time and I hate that as it interfered with watching the movie. I didnt think it helped my reading at all. I got to get out of my cell a bit. That's pretty cool …I didn't like the subtitles as it had to keep stoopping it and I then Id forget what it was all about. I don't think I can read faster…. Liked *October Sky*…I prefer seeing kids coming from pretty much nothing and they change their lives cos they pretty much want to.. that gives me a good feeling The films enjoyed Blindside… it seemed a bit funnier.. he came from nothing and ended up getting quit a lot out of life and that was pretty cool

The qualitative aspect for this study offers more rich data as is clear from the brief comments included in the table above. Once the programme was complete, we conducted individual interviews with most participants, including the head prison tutor and outside facilitator for the intervention. Several youths who were present at both tests were unfortunately not available on the two interview occasions. A sustained interview with both these people is recorded on the accompanying informational DVD that goes with the Instruction Manual.

In terms of participant feedback, the following comments show a range of responses to the intervention.

Several took the pragmatic view that it got them "out of their cell". *I found it good, eh- made me get out of the cell and learn something. Reading at school – I was pretty good at reading.* Or they were litotic : *"Pretty good"* or indifferent: *All right – didn't really care.*

Other comments were more positive: *It would have been excellent to do this at school. I loved doing this compared with school work – I probably would have stayed at school..*

Another highlighted how he moved from initial reluctance because of past failures, to growing enthusiasm and increasing confidence.*"I thought it would suck but to be honest as I thought just another test, just another fail, but it helped as good to do something you enjoy and you can learn off something you enjoy. The movie made it more enjoyable and easy to work with….. here it's pretty cool cos the people you are doing it with are like family. And I read a few times and I wasn't comfortable with it but the boys encouraged me. It would have helped me a lot at school cos… It would have helped me a lot at school cos when you are watching a movie that you enjoy you then you get a lot more out of it and you're learning more than what you think you do, cos at school you just*

get told – here's a text book- do this and its all written and no pictures of anything and here in AVAILLL, you can see what's happening and you get a better idea of what you are supposed to be doing...my eyes go own to the subtitles – write every letter after you and the second time I done it, I got all of them and I got all of them and I thought how did I do that and I realized that I'm was actually learning something and that was quite cool. I can definitely read faster... I never read till I came to prison...

In response to whether their attitude towards reading had changed as a result of the intervention, responses were also mixed, with some believing that it had not changed, while others made comments, such as: *Yeah...read a few Lee Child novels but then I couldn't understand the big words and after doing this programme I went back to look over the book and that made it more interesting ... gets boring watching TV all the time...*
and
When I turned 14, I went to work and didn't go back to school since coming here I've learned how to read properly again..when I used to read I used to skip lines and now I have learned to read again.. understanding the words and stuff... I think my reading has improved a lot. I can read faster now I used to take ages word for word and but now I can read a few words and then say it out. I have learned how to read and say some big words. I could read them but now I can say them.

Asked about the effectiveness of AVAILLL, one response was: *Felt determined to do something new and to be able to learn something. I didn't have much school or potential to learn.* When asked he had felt it was easier to learn this way, the same youth responded: *I found it easier when I was looking at pictures and by watching movies, easier to understand the questions that were asked. I had to concentrate to keep my eyes on the subtitles and most of the work was based on the subtitles...My writing is not that much improved but its improved.*

One insight that emerged was that those who had lacked confidence in reading articulated more enthusiastic responses to the intervention. Only one out of 22 was negative about the programme.

Adaptations to the programme in response to context.
For the prison population, adaptations and modifications to the programme were necessary in order to pitch the intervention appropriately for these youth offenders. Individual interviews with the prisoners after the conclusion of the programme indicated that for most, formal schooling was not successful with poor attendance, truancy and school exclusions being a common response. As a result, developing an environment conducive to learning presented a challenge for the Education tutor and the AVAILLL facilitator who delivered the programme. On the DVD, these challenges and issues are discussed.

What follows is a summary of some of the implementation details for AVAILLL with prisoners.

Summary Of AVAILLL interventions

In five studies the progress was significant according to statistical analysis.
As noted earlier, in previous studies, we obtained data though a variety of means including: questionnaires, focus group interviews for younger participants and individual interviews with teachers and RTLBs. All studies indicated a high level of enjoyment and engagement.

For the prison population, adaptations and modifications to the programme were necessary in order to pitch the intervention appropriately for these youth offenders. Individual interviews with the prisoners after the conclusion of the programme indicated that for most, formal schooling was not successful with poor attendance, truancy and school exclusions being a common response. As a result, developing an environment conducive to learning presented a challenge for the Education tutor and the AVAILLL facilitator who delivered the programme. On the DVD, these challenges and issues are discussed.

What follows is a summary of some of the implementation details for AVAILLL with prisoners.

Implementation

In preparation for the writing of the manual for the prison study, the content was discussed and reviewed by the Education officer at the Youth Unit and also a New Zealand police officer who works with young men at risk. From those discussions, a number of changes were made to the manual that was initially designed for use in the New Zealand primary, intermediate and high school system.

During the six week implementation at the Youth Unit, many more changes had to be made to take into account the academic level, complex environment and unpredictable behaviour of the prisoners. This is hardly surprising as the author of the manual had no previous experiences with teaching prisoners and the Education Officer had not used the AVAILLL programme before. Some changes were implemented immediately while others were noted for future use in this setting. The major changes involved rewriting parts of the activities and the ways in which those activities were delivered to the class.

Participation was voluntary. All prisoners in the Youth Offenders unit were invited to take part in the classes and all agreed. Participants had explained to them the purpose of the AVAILLL programme, what it entailed and what they would potentially gain from it.

A number of factors needed to be taken into account:

- That there was a wide variation in reading ability

- That some participants had been in conflict with each other previously

- That more than one tried for dominance over the others

- That there were some who were very diligent and others who were much less so

In addition, the youths were taught in two groups of 14, one class directly following the previous one. This was done because of time limitations around the availability of both he tutor and visiting teacher, The youths' other educational or court commitments also needed to be taken into account. These factors meant that some participants needed to be removed, since they were only present part of the time, or on only one of the testing occasions.

Changes made to the original AVAILLL programme

The original classroom manual contains some activities that require group cooperation as well as others that are competitive. We quickly learned that cooperative activities were very challenging for the young men. We anticipated that there would be conflict if the groups were too big and as a result started off working them in groups of three. The number of negative verbal interactions and the resulting disturbance to the lessons led us, after the first week, to restrict the number sitting at each table to two. For the most part, this proved to be a more successful option and the amount of conflict was reduced dramatically. In general, the young men were allowed to sit with someone of their own choice. However, there were times when pairs were deliberately split up because they were not working well together. Often it appeared to be a case of them 'feeding' each other's misbehaviour, until they were either not doing the work or they were interfering with others who were. On two occasions, young men were removed from the lessons for the day and on two other occasions, young men were withdrawn permanently. The Education tutor kept a close watch upon the pairs and attended to any issues that arose. In spite of all that was done to anticipate problems, we found that the only cooperative activity that was successful was when the youth read aloud to each other in pairs.

The activities that were competitive between pairs were also challenging for the youth. They would attempt to cheat or sabotage the lesson, often in very creative ways, to the point where the activities had to be altered so that any reliance on trust was removed.

We soon realised that the size of the groups was resulting in the potential for excessive conflict, displays of bravado and behaviour to gain the attention of the teachers or other boys. There was also a degree of subtle and not so subtle intimidation that resulted in some of the less able readers not wanting to participate. For instance, some of the more dominant youths who were already good readers, captured the reading aloud exercise. It was decided in future that the classes should be no larger than six, especially when there was only one teacher present. Subsequent to this study, the education tutor taught AVAILLL by herself to a class of six youths with similar abilities in literacy and found that that number worked well. The young men did all the activities individually and the only time they worked together was when they read the extracts from the books.
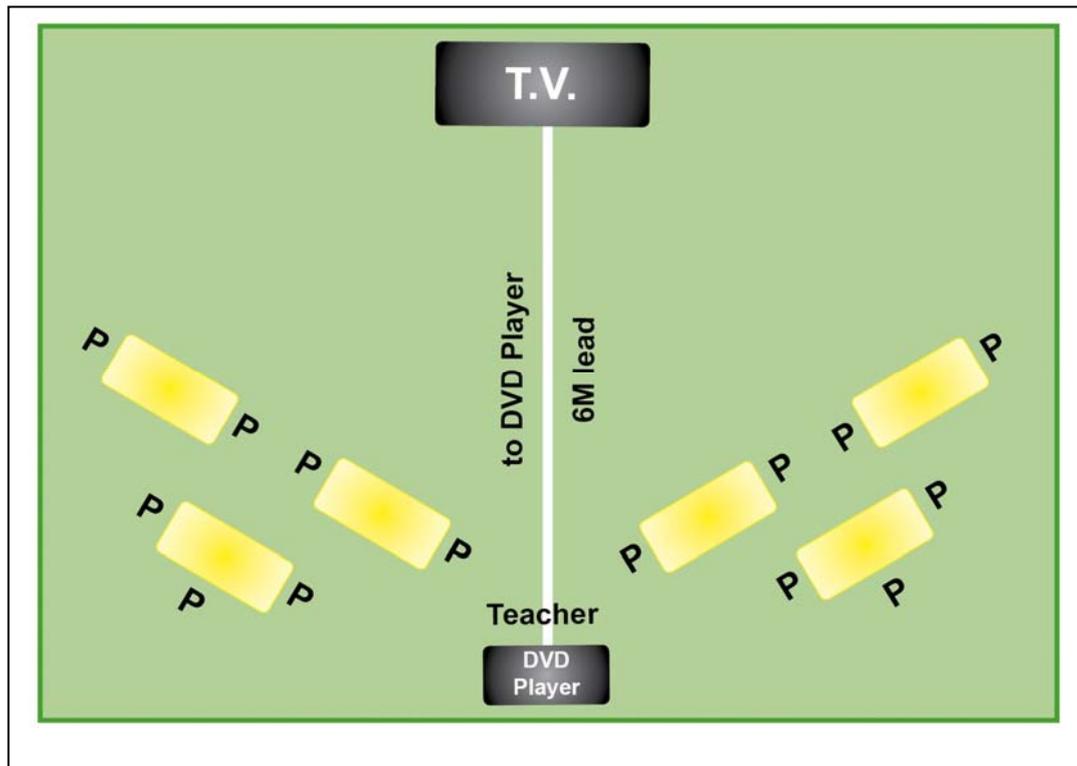
The physical set-up of the room was another factor that changed over time. We started out with the following arrangement.
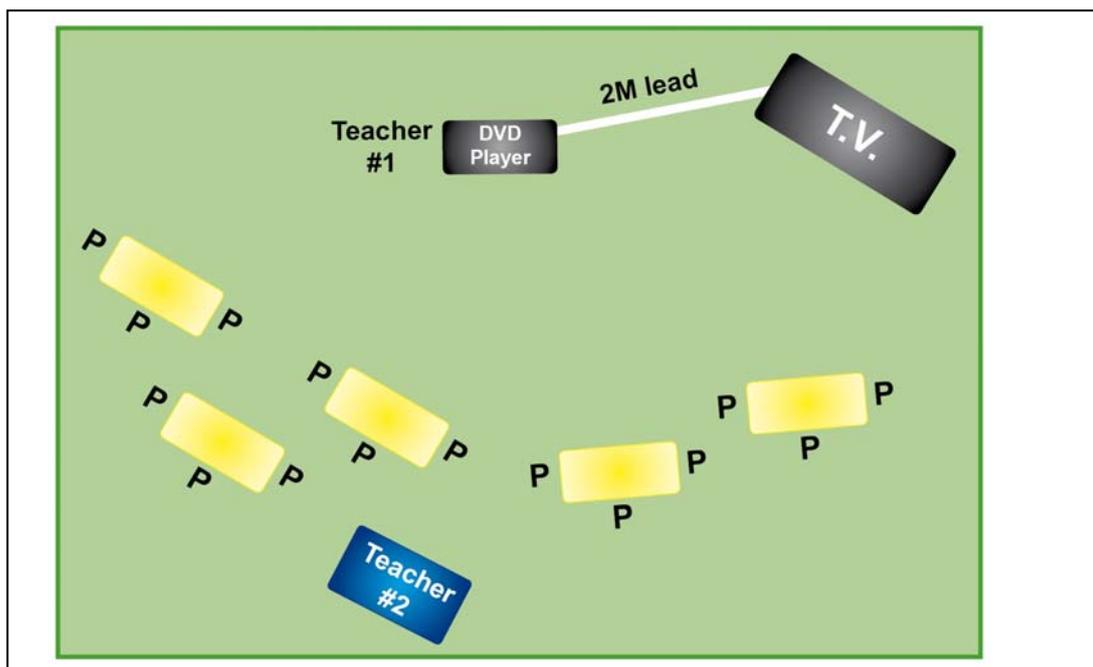
This changed after the first week to:
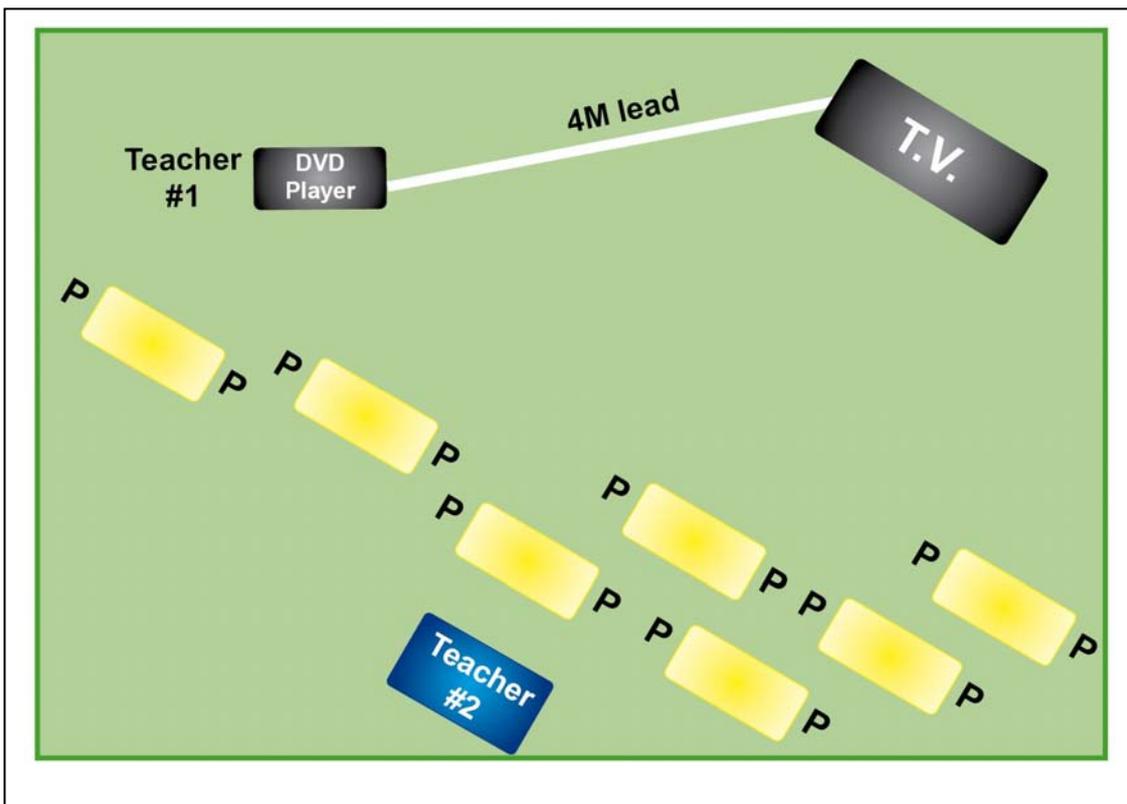
The recommended set up is:

In the first set-up, the Facilitator was in front of the boys while the tutor stood at the back to observe and monitor them. By shifting to the back, the facilitator was also able to see them as he played the DVD. The third set-up is recommended in the future as it keeps the young men in the line of vision all the time.

We suggest that it is important that a single tutor be behind the boys so that she/he can see them as she/he controls the DVD player remote. A six metre RCA lead from the television to the DVD player was used and if needed, longer leads can be purchased. If a projector/laptop is being used then the same arrangement is still advisable.

The Movies and the Books

Considerable thought was given to which movies to be used. The starting point, as with all AVAILLL manuals was that the movies be based on a book. A number of potential movies were rejected immediately because of excessive obscenities, gratuitous violence or sexual content. We decided that if the movie could not be shown in a state high school then we would not use it. While we attempted to use movies that would appeal to the boys, it is important to remember that the movie is only a vehicle for learning and for drawing the boys into the text. Watching any DVD for the prisoners was seen as a privilege and as a result, most were grateful just to be involved regardless of what was chosen. In fact, we found that those movies that connected to the young men's worlds were most popular, as were those movies based on a true story. Of the movies used: *The Blind Side, The Freedom Writers, I Robot, October Sky, True Grit, The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Rabbit Proof Fence*, the first two were the ones the group as a whole enjoyed the most. A film such as *The Last of the Mohicans* that would appear on the surface to include all the elements which we assumed would appeal to them, was actually the least popular. Possibly a story that is set hundreds of years ago in a different historical and cultural context is simply not relevant to them. The books that went with the movies were used in a number of the activities to give the young men practice reading extended pieces of text. Where possible, the selections that were used were chosen for having the most relevance to the movie, since the movie often varies greatly from the book. A book such as *The Last of the Mohicans* we found to be far too difficult, so an abridged version was used.

Anecdotally, the reading was something the young men appeared to enjoy a great deal and this focus will be added as an option to all activities.

The Activities

We decided to trial eight different activities with the group. These activities become more challenging during the second round of movies. During the first three movies we used:

1. *Last Word Hunt*- The movie is stopped and the particpants have to record the last word in the last subtitled they viewed

2. *Synonym Search*- The movie is paused and the particpants match a word in the subtitled with a word in a list they have been given.

3. *Match the Meaning*- The subtitle is paused and the particpants find a word in the subtitle that matches a list if definitions they have been given.

4. *What's the Word*- This activity is made up of two activities that require the particpants to a) find as many little words in a big word that is in the paused subtitle and b) Mystery Word where the particpants match a word in the paused subtitle with a letter string.

The next four movies used:

1. *Next Word Hunt*- As the group watches about thirty minutes of the movie they record the words in the subtitles that appear after a designated word such as 'when'.

2. *Surprise Subtitles*- The movie is suddenly stopped and the particpants record the last subtitle they saw.

3. *Take a Dictionary to the Movies*- The movie is paused and the particpants use a dictionary to find a designated word in the subtitle

4. *Film's End But Books Beginning*- Three more surprise subtitles are used and then paired reading. The particpants draw pictures of three images that came to their minds as they were reading that were not in the movie.

Additionally this manual contains an activity that is done six times called *Read-It-See-It* that does not have a movie shown that day. This activity proved extremely useful and well within the abilities of the boys. It is designed to develop reading comprehension skills through the use of visualisation, note taking and summarising.

Other Considerations

Some very small extrinsic rewards for achievement were used during the implementation for offering to read aloud, and for the highest score on some activities. This is an option for others to do, but there are some pitfalls. Some young men received more than others and this created some conflict. Extrinsic rewards can be a 'slippery slope' as their value quickly diminishes.

On the other hand, the young men were very interested in some final end-of-programme recognition and were very grateful for a certificate that stated they participated in the programme as this could be used in their CVs.

Those activities that required drawing were very popular. These have been extended within the newly edited manual, with the addition of *Read-It See-It* activities that use drawing as part of the exercise.

Finally , we would like to express our gratitude to NZCER for the opportunity to conduct this study and for the financial assistance support that has enabled this implementation and accompanying

research to take place. There is little research in the area of literacy education done in New Zealand prisons with youth offenders or adult prisoners and this study shows that such literacy interventions may have future potential.

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