Implementing the AVAILLL Literacy Programme
at Wesley College, Auckland New Zealand in 2012

Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti
Arahia o tatou mahi
Let the uniqueness of the child
Guide our work

AVAILLL (Audio Visual Achievement in Literacy, Language and Learning) is programme that assists students to improve their vocabulary, reading comprehension and reading fluency as they participate in literacy activities while watching sub-titled films. A recommendation was made by the RTLB (Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour) service to Wesley school to implement the AVAILLL reading programme that is currently being used in a large number of Aotearoa New Zealand classrooms. This paper reports on the results of the AVAILLL programme as it was used with Year Nine students at Wesley College with predominately Maori and Pasifica students.

 The AVAILLL Reading programme is a six-week intensive reading programme that can be used up to five times (one hour sessions) per week. The programme is based upon popular, subtitled movies with targeted literacy-based activities and the accompanying novels. The content is appropriate for a variable ability range and fits well within requirements of the NZ Curriculum. The programme was trialled in the USA with a sample of 600 Year 7 to 9 students, 48% of which were minority students. The gains made by these and special needs students were so impressive that it gave impetus for a replication study in NZ. Since then, seven research projects have been undertaken by Canterbury University to investigate the efficacy of AVAILLL with students from a range of ages and cultures. Parkhill, Johnson and Bates (2011, p.141) described AVAILLL as being at the forefront of the current use of multiliteracies to enhance reading skills practice and to extend learning within the classroom. The AVAILLL programme makes use of images, text and aural language to support students' understanding while capturing their interest.

The AVAILLL Reading programme assists the use of inclusive teaching approaches through practices such assuch as cooperative learning where students work in pairs, groups and teams and have the opportunity to learn with and from their peers; often changing roles from leader to learner. The teachers use differentiated learning where learning tasks are scaffolded to meet individual needs of students. Students master the skill to read text from the subtitles and watch the movie at the same time.
A feature of this set of activities has been to use the concept of "ako where the educator is also learning from the student and forming new teaching and learning relationships" (Ka Hikitia, 2008, p.20). The learning activities draw on a student's prior knowledge while engaging in the reading of subtitles and listening to the movies. Students construct new meanings, knowledge and understanding through the group activities. By using familiar movies, stories and formats, students are encouraged to use the known and add new vocabulary, ideas and strategies.
Critical thinking skills, analysing, evaluating and creating (Bloom's Taxonomy) are all addressed in novel ways throughout the AVAILLL program. By using enjoyable activities and experiencing success, the students are more likely to be more positive and receptive to new learning.

AVAILLL is able to work in an inclusive way in classrooms. As a RTLB, the author has observed enhanced enjoyment and increased engagement in reading. Parkhill (2008) states there are a strong link between high engagement and success in reading.
As noted by Parkhill, Johnson and Bates (2011), "when assessing the efficacy of this programme, take into consideration that the pedagogical principles underlying it, such as collaboration and contributing (group activities) along with critical thinking using language, symbols and texts

facilitated through engagement in popular media and new technologies are capabilities people need in order to learn, work and contribute as active members of the community."

Student Cohort AVAILLL

This literacy initiative was set up by the hostel/boarding side of the school as a RTLB Referral project. In this project it was acknowledged that attention to evidence-based practice is a pre-requiste to inclusive teaching practice, one of the principles that guide RTLB practice. This focus of RTLB work is on increasing teacher and school capability and capacity (RTLB Toolkit, 2011). In this context we were involved with the AVAILLL reading programme as a literacy intervention that allowed equality of opportunity through a school-based approach.

The aim was to provide a programme that would lift the literacy levels of the students in the hostel, beginning with the Year 9 students. Initial AsTTLe data (collected in February) showed that there was a need for literacy support for junior school and that it would be helpful if the AVAILLL programme could be delivered in prep time to support their literacy learning at school. This provided a second group of students who, unlike the other group, were not boarders. This report details the comparative differences in reading comprehension that the AVAILLL programme has made.

Twenty-six students undertook 30 x 65 minute sessions of the AVAILLL programme. The programme started with 32 students, but decreased to a total of 26 students as some left school, others left boarding and one left because of sporting commitments.

Group #1	# of students (Year 9)		
Level	Pre-Test AsTTLe February	Post AVAILLL AsTTLe June	Sustainability AsTTLe November
2B	1		
2P	4	1	
2A	1	2	3
3B	2	1	2
3P	8	1	3
3A	5	4	1
4B	2	4	2
4P	2	3	6
4A		6	6
5B	1		
5P		2	2
Total	26	24	25

Table 1: Achievement data of students over the three tests.

Table 2: Movement of students after AVAILLL

Sublevels	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
# of students	3	9	1	4	5	0	1

11/23 47 % of students made unexpected gains of accelerated improvement of 2 or more sublevels in their reading comprehension.

Group # 2	# of students (Year 9)		
Level	Pre-Test AsTTLe February	Post AVAILLL AsTTLe June	Post Testing AsTTLe November
2B	1		
2P	3	1	
2A		1	2
3B	2	1	
3P	6	1	1
3A	3	2	4
4B	2	3	4
4P	1	8	1
4A	1	3	8
5B			
5P			
Total	19	20	20

Table 1: Achievement data of students over the three tests.

Table 2: Movement of students after AVAILLL

Sublevels	- 1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
# of students	1	3	4	4	5	1	1	

11/19 = 57% of students made unexpected gains of accelerated improvement of 2 or more sublevels in their reading comprehension.

Comparison of Data

1 AVAILLL post testing
Following the first AVAILLL programme, asTTle reading comprehension testing was administered to Year 9 students in June 2012. The following data gathered on the students involved in the AVAILLL programme showed students made unexpected gains of accelerated improvement of 2 or more sublevels in their reading comprehension:
*Group 1 11/23 = 47 % of students
*Group 2 11/19 = 57% of students

2 Pre – Post AVAILLL
This final asTTle reading comprehension testing in November 2012 showed a consistent comparison to the second test administered after the delivery of AVAILLL.

*Group #1 10/26 accelerated movement of more than 2 asTTle sub levels
     10/26 1-2 increase in sub levels
      3/26 remained on the same level

*Group # 2 7/19 accelerated movement of more than 2 asTTle sub levels
     8/19 1-2 increase in sub levels
     3/19 remained on the same sub level
     1/19 decrease of I sub level

3 **Non AVAILLL**

Group # 1. Seven of the 20 students did not take part in the AVAILLL programme and 2 did not sit one of the tests.

Of the 5 non- AVAILLL students, 1 made no movement and 3 students moved up 1 sublevel. The average gain for students who did not take AVAILLL was .5 of a sublevel.

Of the remaining 14 AVAILLL students, 12 made gains; 2 made movement. The average gain for students who took AVAILLL was 2.6 sublevels.

Group # 1 Pupil #	Ethnic group	AsTTLe #1	AsTTLe #2	AsTTLe #3	T1 & 3 sublevels	
1	S	4P	4B	4A	+1	
2	S	3B	3P	3A	+2	A
3	M	3A	4B	4P	+2	A
4	M	2P	3P	3P	+3	A
5	F	5B	5P	5P	+1	
6	T	3P	4P	4P	+3	A
7	M	2P	4P	4A	+7	A
8	M	4P	4B	4A	+1	
9	M	2P	2A	2A	+1	A
10	M	2B	2A	2A	+2	A
11	T	4P	4P	4P	0	A
12	T	3A	4A	4A	+3	A
13	S	4A	4P			
14	T		2P	3P	+3	
15	T	2A	4P	4A	+6	A
16	S	3P	4P	3A	+1	A
17	S	3P	4B	4A	+4	A
18	T	3A	3P	3B	-2	A
19	S	4B	3B	4B	0	A
20	NZE		4A	4A	0	

14 AVAILLL students

Gains	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	Average
#	1	0	2	2	3	3	1		1	1	+2.6

5 'Non -AVAILLL' students

Gains	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	Average Gain
#	1	3		1		+ .5

Ethnic makeup:
Maori 6 / AVAILLL – 5

Gains	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	Average
#		2	2	1				1	+3.0

Samoan 6 /AVAILLL – 4

Gains	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	Average

#	1	1	1		1				+2.5

Tongan 6 /AVAILLL - 5

Gains	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	Average
#	1	1		2			1		+2.2

Class #2 Eight of these 19 students did not take part in the AVAILLL programme. One student decreased 3 sub levels; 1 student made no movement; 4 students increased 1-2 sub levels and 2 students increased more than 2 sublevels. The average gain for students who did not take AVAILLL was 1.5 of a sublevel.

The remaining 14 AVAILLL students saw 12 make gains and 2 made no movement. The average gain for students who took AVAILLL was 2.6 sublevels.

Group # 2 Pupil #	Ethnic group	AsTTLe #1	AsTTLe #2	AsTTLe #3	T1 & 3 sublevels	
21	T	3B	4P	4A	+5	
22	T	3B	4A	4B	+3	A
23	T	3A	4B	4B	+1	
24	T	3P	4P	4B	+2	
25	T	2P	3P	3P	+3	
Roi	S	4B	4B	3A	-1	A
26	S	4P	4P	4A	+1	A
27	M / S	4A	4P	4A	0	
28	T	2B	2P	4B	+6	A
29	M	3P	4B	3A	+1	
30	N / F	4B	4A	4A	+2	
31	T	3P	4P	4A	+4	A
32	M	3P	3A	4P	+3	A
33	M	3A	3A	2A	-3	
34	S	3P	4P	4A	+4	A
35	T	3P	4P	3A	+1	A
36	S	2P	3B	3A	+4	A
37	T	3A	4P	4A	+3	A
38	S			2B		A
39	T	2P	2A	2A	+2	A
40	M / IF		4A	4A		A

11 AVAILLL students (2 students were not enrolled for the year)

Gains	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	Average
#	1	0	2	1	3	2	0	1	+2.3

8 'Non- AVAILLL' students

Gains	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	Average Gain
#	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	1	+ 1.5

Ethnic makeup:

Maori 4 /AVAILLL – 1

Gains	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	Average
#				1					+3.0

Samoan 5 /AVAILLL – 4

Gains	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	Average
#	1		1			2				+2.0

Tongan 11 /AVAILLL- 7

Gains	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	Average
#		1	1	2	2		1		+3.5

Implications

The implications of the data gathered show that AVAILLL has a high success rate, moving students on average – 9B increased 2.6 sublevels; 9S increased 2.3 sub levels. Maori students who undertook AVAILLL made the greatest gains with Class #1 gaining 3.0 and Class #2 3.0 sublevels followed by Tongan students moving up Group #1 2.2 and Group #2 2.0 sublevels and the Samoan students who moved Group #1, 2.5 and Group #2 3.5 sublevels.

Overall compared to the class of Group #1 and Group #2, the 'non- AVAILLL' students on average only increased .5 of a sublevel.

From a personal experience in working alongside teachers using the AVAILLL programme, most learning activities need to be differentiated according to the range of student abilities within the groups. Teachers implementing the programme require professional development to ensure the activities are scaffolded with the read/watch/listen method of viewing the movies. For teachers to run the programme there is a minimal amount of technological knowledge needed, however some teachers may find aspects of some activities very structured. In addition schools have to make a financial contribution for materials, equipment and initial training.

This programme has assisted readers at this College to be engaged with reading and to improve their reading comprehension and/or vocabulary. The AVAILLL Reading programme has been a motivational tool for connecting readers who are underachieving academically. Post assessment data taken from the Year 9 class would indicate that most students have made significant gains in their asTTle data results. Parkhill and Johnson (2009) found that a group of students from a Maori bi-lingual class made significant progress with average gains of 1.5 years in 6 weeks. The AVAILLL students in Group #1 and Grouop #2 have made significant gains of 2.6 and 2.3 levels respectively. In response to future developments with the AVAILLL programme, educators may use novels and movies that have more of a Maori or Pasifika content. Individual teachers who are familiar with the programmme may even be able to prepare these themselves. (delete this)

Conclusion:
Research has found that an inclusive approach has a positive impact on all students' learning experience, whether or not they have specific learning needs.
Evidence based practice is the most powerful means of improving the learning of all students. The MOE (2004) encourages professionals to engage in evidence-based research and use this knowledge

to inform teaching practice and develop school policies. Research suggests that all students do better in inclusive classrooms. The AVAILLL reading programme follows an inclusive teaching practice of having student specific goals. Students are engaged in a wide range of meaningful learning opportunities. From a personal viewpoint, I see the programme as having the potential for all readers to read more confidently and to assist them read for pleasure and for longer periods of time.

Everyone benefited from the changes in teaching and learning and has assisted teachers to work successfully with a diverse range of students. Inclusive teaching is about minimising the barriers to learning experienced by students with different needs and expectations.

Recommendations:
*AVAILLL to be continued in the Boarding Hostel at prep time for Year 9 & 10 boarders
*AVAILLL programme discussions to take place with HOD English and individual English teachers as a 6 week intervention as part of English curriculum programme

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