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**Teaching high frequency words to poor readers using
flashcards: Its effects on novel word acquisition, skill
transfer to in-text word reading, and passage reading
competencies**

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Abstract

Several literacy reports published in the last decade have emphasised the large gap in the reading attainment of children in New Zealand. A common barrier that prevents poor readers to catch up to their peers is difficulty in reading fluency, which is theorised to represent underlying difficulty in rapid and automatic word recognition. The ability to rapidly recognise a few common words, also known as *high frequency words* (HFWs), may increase the fluency of reading the majority of novel text. As such, the National Standards for literacy achievement outline the development of basic HFW vocabulary by the end of the first few years at school. However, past research that has investigated single word training has rarely used HFWs and those that have used HFWs have scarcely investigated its transfer to in-text reading. Therefore, the aims of the current research were to provide an investigation of HFW training and its influence on word reading accuracy, in-text word reading, and passage reading accuracy, speed, and comprehension. Experiment 1 was a single case design carried out with one 8 year old participant and was largely used to inform the second experiment. Experiment 2 was a multiple baseline design carried out with five 8-9 year old participants using a modified training procedure. Experiment 1 utilised visual analysis and Cohen's *d* effect size analysis whereas Experiment 2 also used statistical analysis, made possible through the Wampold-Worsham method of randomisation incorporated into the experimental design. The results of both experiments indicated that training facilitated word reading accuracy but the successful transfer of target words to in-text reading was only observed in Experiment 2. Post-training increases to passage reading accuracy, speed, and comprehension scores were not apparent in either experiment. The main contribution of the current research is its applicability to classroom practice. Another important contribution of the study to research practice is the rare application of the Wampold-Worsham method of randomisation

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