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**The effectiveness of a small group intervention for struggling readers
in Year 4**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
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Abstract

The purpose of the current study was to examine the effectiveness of a small group literacy intervention for low-achieving readers in Year 4. The present study set out to determine if an explicit and systematic reading programme will show accelerated gains in word reading skills that is superior to the conventional school approach to reading instruction based on the multiple-cues method. The teacher delivered this intervention as part of the group's weekly reading instruction over a ten-week school term. The study employed a modified version of a five-step instructional programme originally designed by Blachman et al. (2004) during their intensive reading remediation study with second and third graders with a one year follow up. The intervention programme focused on the phonological and orthographic connections in words and text-based reading.

The design of the study involved a whole class screening process using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 6th Edition (Good & Kaminski, 2007). The intention of the screening process was to select the ten participants with the highest requirements for strategic teacher support. A pre-test-intervention-post-test design was used to compare the effects of the intervention programme using a set of word reading skills. Due to the small sample size of the present study a non-parametric test (The Mann-Whitney –U Test) and sets of pre-test and post-test difference scores were used to report statistically significant gains made by the intervention group.

The key findings from the present study suggest that the intervention group gained significantly better results in terms of word reading measures in addition to some generalised word reading skills not included in the programme. The findings highlight the importance of differentiating reading instruction and using explicit teaching in word reading skills for older struggling readers.

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