

Learning Impact Fund Evaluation – In Brief

MiniLit is a small group reading program for Year 1 children who are struggling to learn to read. It is an explicit and systematic early intervention developed by MultiLit.

MiniLit is designed to be delivered for one hour every day, for two to three terms, depending on student need. This allows for the full program to be delivered. A reasonable level of attendance, ideally at least four out of five days per week, is necessary for the program to be beneficial to students.

About the evaluation project

In 2017, MultiLit collaborated with Evidence for Learning and the New South Wales Department of Education to undertake a trial of the MiniLit intervention program. MultiLit provided training, resources and limited coaching to schools implementing the program.

The trial was evaluated by an independent team of researchers from the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and the University of Melbourne.

The report of the evaluation was released in August 2019.

About the trial

In the trial, MiniLit was delivered for only two terms, and only 55% of children attended lessons for the recommended number of lessons (at least four out of five days on average).

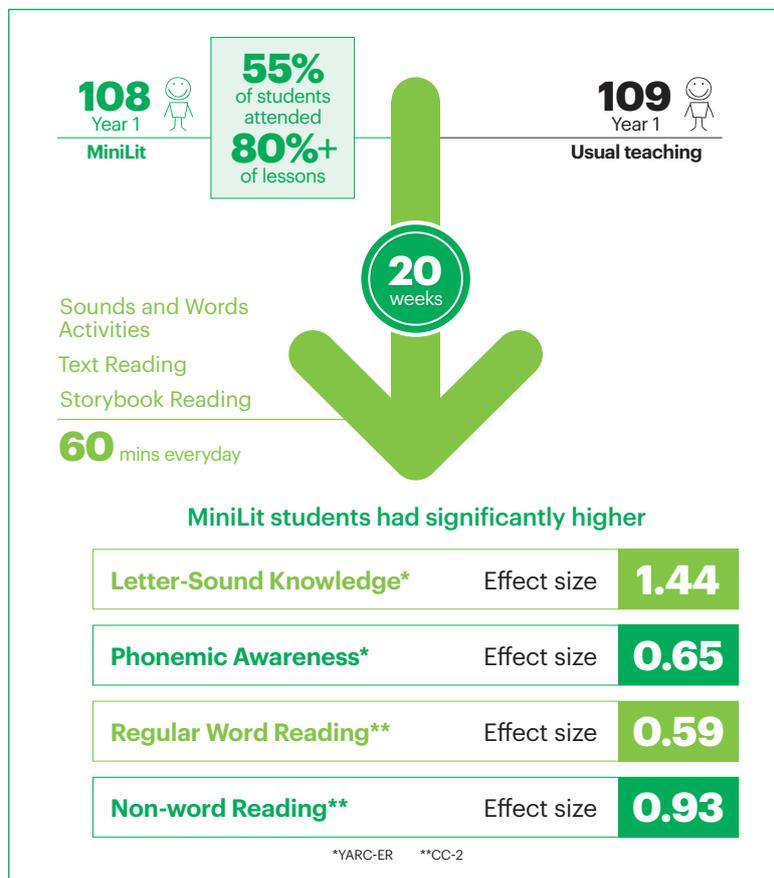
Reading outcomes for children who attended MiniLit were compared to children who had not attended MiniLit at two time points: at the end of the intervention period (six months after the trial started) and six months after the intervention ended (12 months after the trial started).

About the findings

The trial found that children who had participated in MiniLit for at least four out of five daily lessons on average had higher scores in four sub-tests of two assessments – the York Assessment of Reading Comprehension Early Years (YARC-ER) and the Castles and Coltheart 2 (CC-2).

Reading outcomes were significantly higher for the MiniLit students on measures of letter sound knowledge, phoneme awareness, regular word reading and non-word reading. These are essential sub-skills for word reading development and subsequent reading comprehension that are targeted in the MiniLit program.

These results were strong even though the MiniLit tutors in the trial had never delivered the program before.



Results were not as strong for children with lower attendance, confirming its importance.

Another measure was also used in the trial – the YARC Passage Reading test. This was determined to be an inappropriate measure for the young struggling readers in the trial because only a very small proportion were able to complete required tasks at the baseline assessment. The results were therefore considered unreliable by the independent evaluators and assigned low security ratings by Evidence for Learning. The YARC-ER is the companion test created for children with this reading profile.

An extended discussion of the trial’s findings can be found [here](#).