

National  
**SCIENCE**  
Challenges



# Successful Learning Theme

## A Better Start, E Tipu e Rea Symposium 2022

Project Leads: Brigid McNeill and Gail Gillon



## ***Research Team***

***Lead Researchers:*** Gail Gillon, Brigid McNeill, Amy Scott, Jen Smith, Rachel Maitland, Megan Gath, Sally Clendon, Angus Macfarlane, Rachel Martin, Stephen May, Peter Keegan.

***Research Assistants:*** Elizabeth Gibson, Paddy McNicholl, Nadine Prescott, Nikki Turpie

***Kaiārahi UC:*** Tufulasi Taleni, Mel Tainui, Mary Boyce



Early learning success is a powerful protective factor for children's well-being

## Phase 1: Strategic Funding

- Better Start Literacy Approach (BSLA)

## Pathway to Impact: Implementation Trial

Pilot Trials  
(5-6 years)

National  
implementation  
(with MoE)

Early  
Childhood  
Pilot trials

## Phase 2: Strategic Funding

- Words Can POP

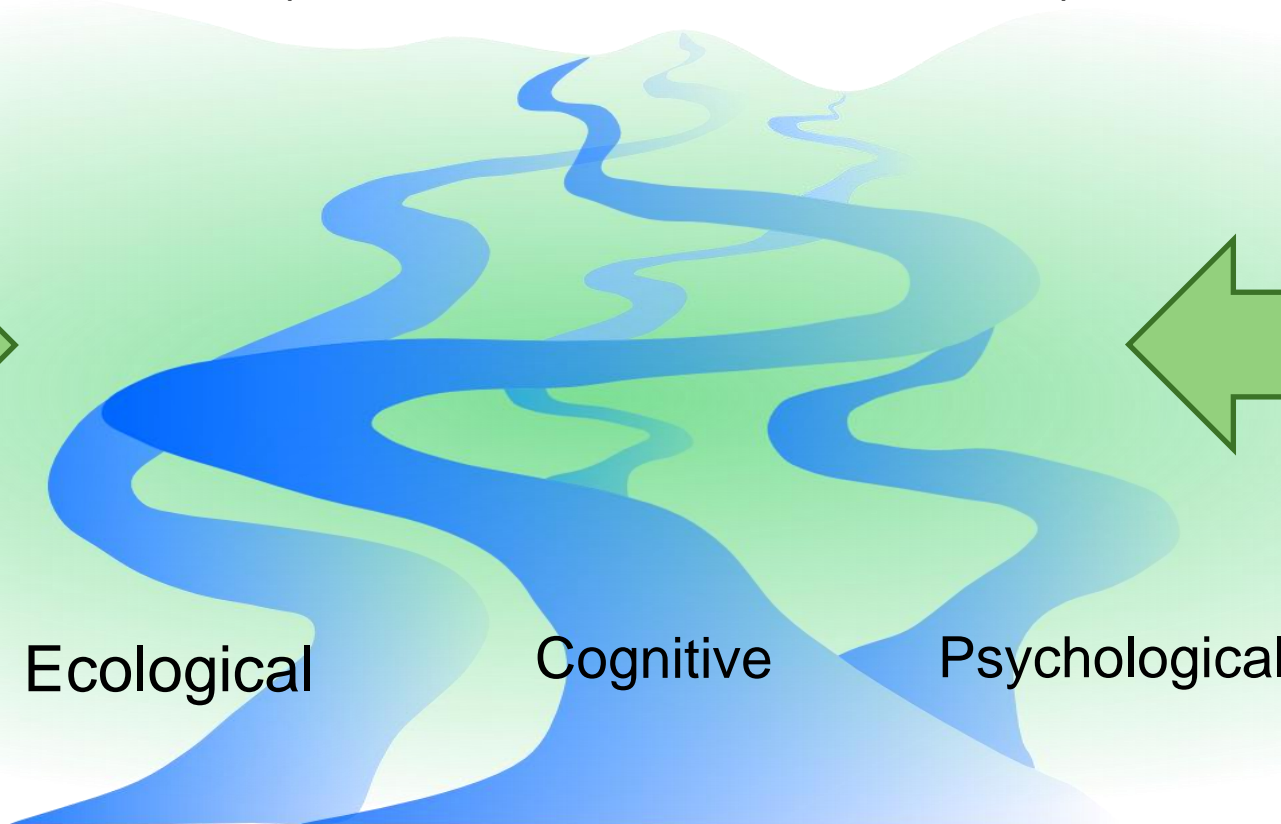
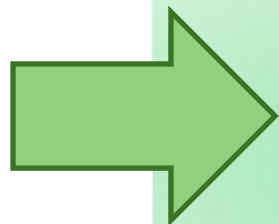
# BSLA Development: He Awa Whiria or Braided Rivers

## Approach to integrating knowledge streams

(Macfarlane et al. 2011; Gillon and Macfarlane, 2017)

Indigenous  
Science

Kaupapa  
Māori  
Science



Western  
and  
Non-  
Western  
Science

### Whānau engagement:

Culturally relevant  
literacy activities  
Valuing home languages

### Quality Literacy Instruction

Multidimensional / structured  
approach to literacy teaching

### Expect Success

Create successful learning  
experiences- strengths based  
ways of working that are  
culturally inclusive

# BETTER START LITERACY APPROACH

*Building  
foundational skills  
to foster early  
literacy success*



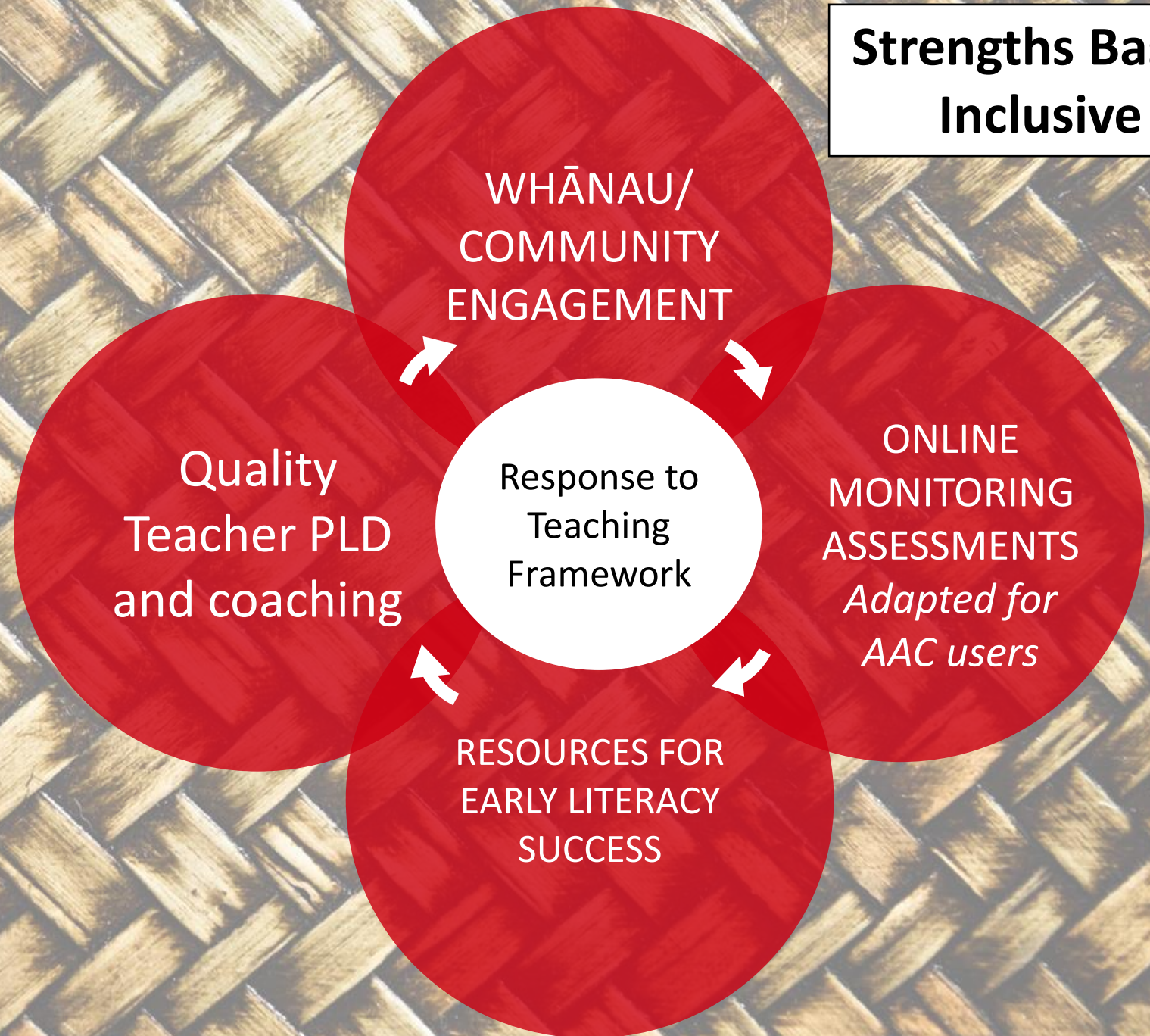
BETTER START  
LITERACY APPROACH  
*Te Ara Reo Matutini*

A BETTER  
START

E Tipu e Rea

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## Strengths Based Inclusive





## A better start to literacy learning: findings from a teacher-implemented intervention in children's first year at school

Gail Gillon<sup>1</sup> · Brigid McNeill<sup>1</sup> · Amy Scott<sup>1</sup> · Amanda Denston<sup>1</sup> · Leanne Wilson<sup>1</sup> · Karyn Carson<sup>2</sup> · Angus Hikairo Macfarlane<sup>1</sup>

Published online: 8 January 2019  
© The Author(s) 2019

> Read Writ. 2022 Jun 12;1-34. doi: 10.1007/s11145-022-10303-4. Online ahead of print.

## A better start literacy approach: effectiveness of Tier 1 and Tier 2 support within a response to teaching framework

Gail Gillon<sup>1 2</sup>, Brigid McNeill<sup>1 3 2</sup>, Amy Scott<sup>1 2</sup>, Alison Arrow<sup>1 3</sup>, Megan Gath<sup>1 2</sup>, Angus Macfarlane<sup>1 3 2</sup>

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 35729991 PMCID: PMC9188636 DOI: 10.1007/s11145-022-10303-4

[Free PMC article](#)

### Abstract

New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies (2022) 57:191–211  
https://doi.org/10.1007/s40841-022-00251-6

### ARTICLE



## Impacting Change in Classroom Literacy Instruction: A Further Investigation of the Better Start Literacy Approach

Amy Scott<sup>1,3</sup> · Gail Gillon<sup>1,3</sup> · Brigid McNeill<sup>1,2,3</sup> · Megan Gath<sup>1</sup>

Received: 18 January 2022 / Accepted: 7 April 2022 / Published online: 3 May 2022  
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### Abstract

A controlled intervention study supported the effectiveness of teachers implement-

OPEN

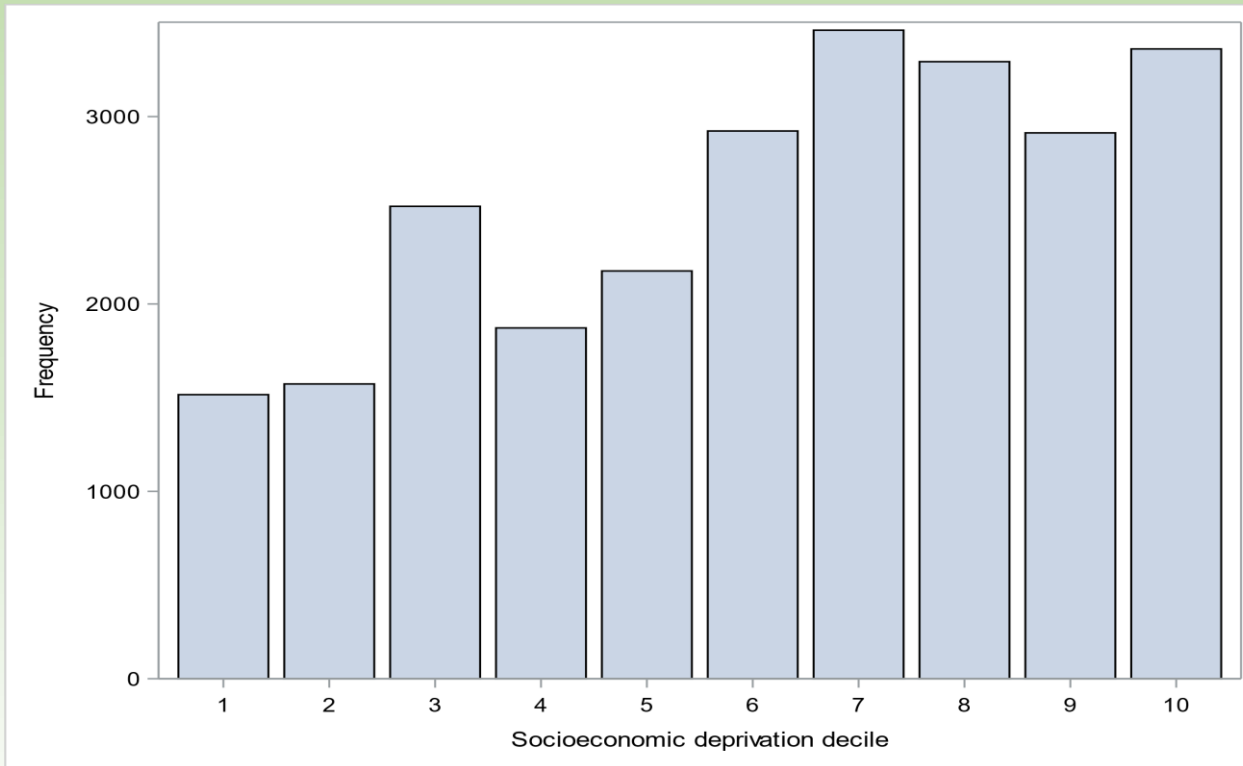
*Top Lang Disorders*  
Vol. 40, No. 4, pp. 357–374  
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## Evidence-Based Class Literacy Instruction for Children With Speech and Language Difficulties

*Gail Gillon, Brigid McNeill, Amanda Denston, Amy Scott, and Angus Macfarlane*

This study investigated the response to class-wide phonological awareness and oral language teaching for 40 children who entered school with speech and language difficulties. A stepped wedge research design was adopted to compare the immediate impact of the 10-week teacher-led instruction. The progress of the children with speech and language difficulties was monitored over the first school year and compared with 110 children with language difficulties alone and

- Total of 25,747 children assessed at baseline
  - Mean age = 67.4 months (SD = 6.1)

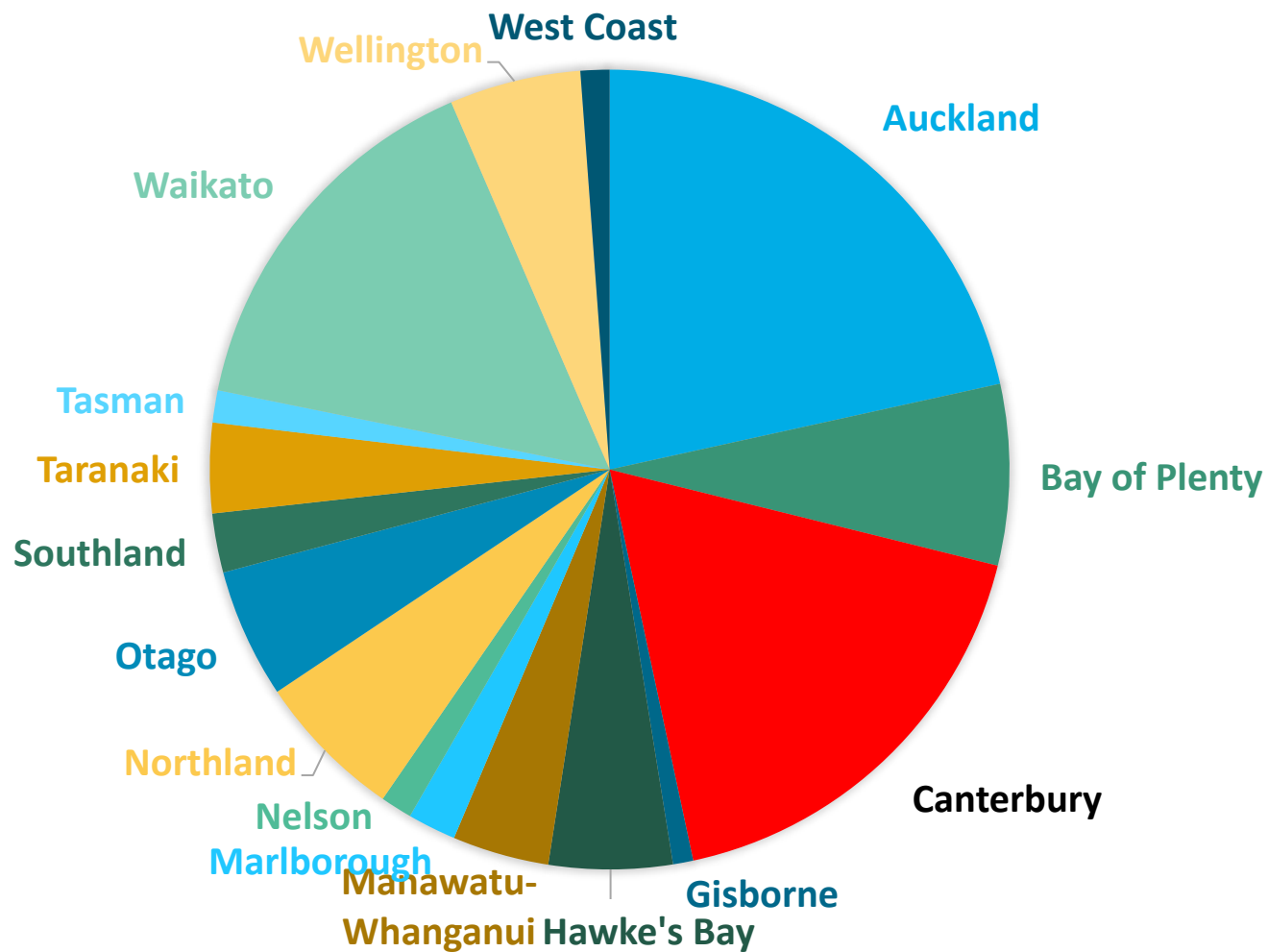


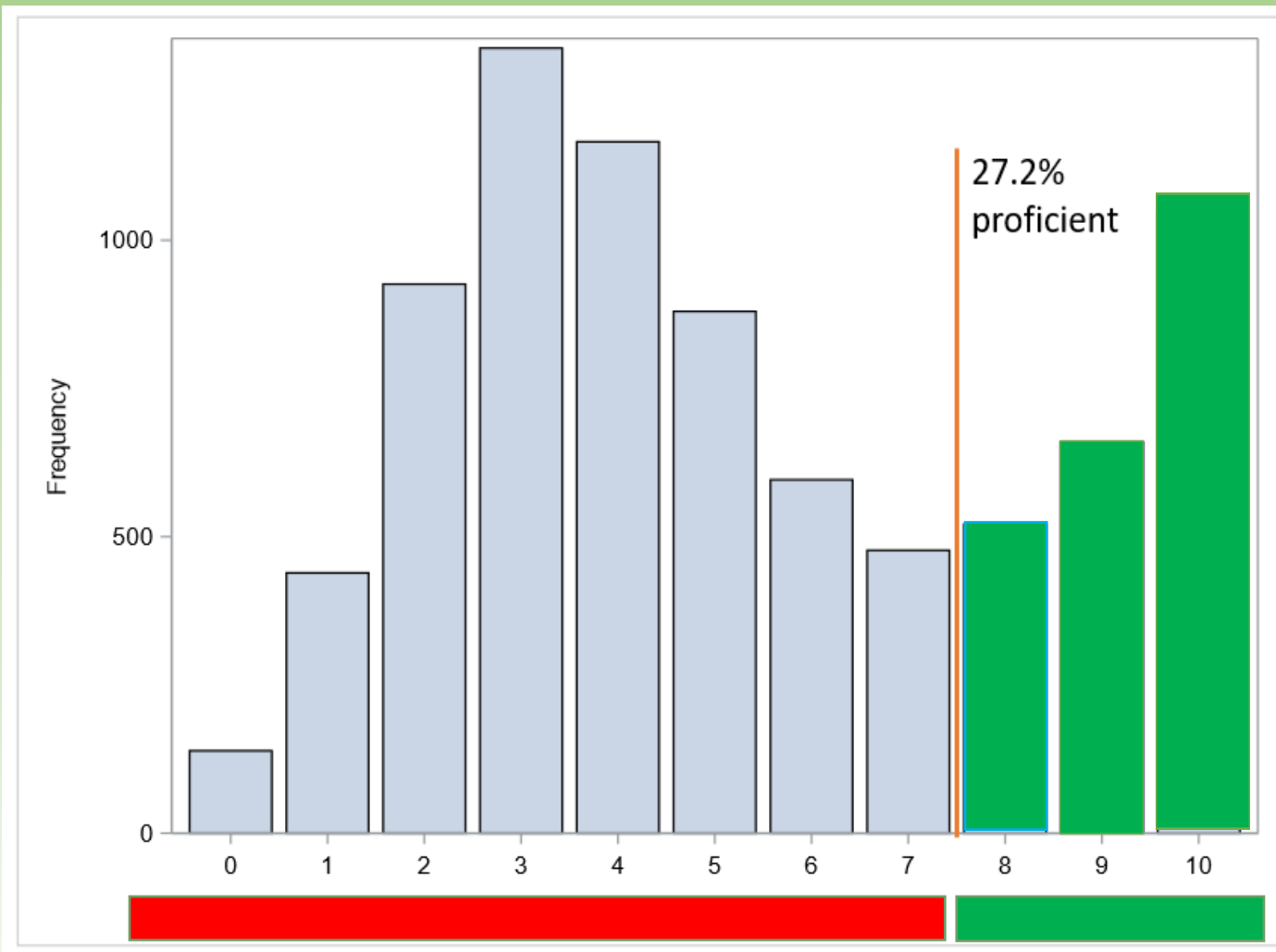
- 49.1% NZ European
  - 26.1% Māori
  - 8.6% Pasifika
  - 9.3% Asian
- 
- Baseline data comes from 620 different schools across 16 regions

Distribution of deprivation (*1 = low deprivation; 10 = high deprivation*)



# Regional distribution of baseline BSLA data (n = 25,747)



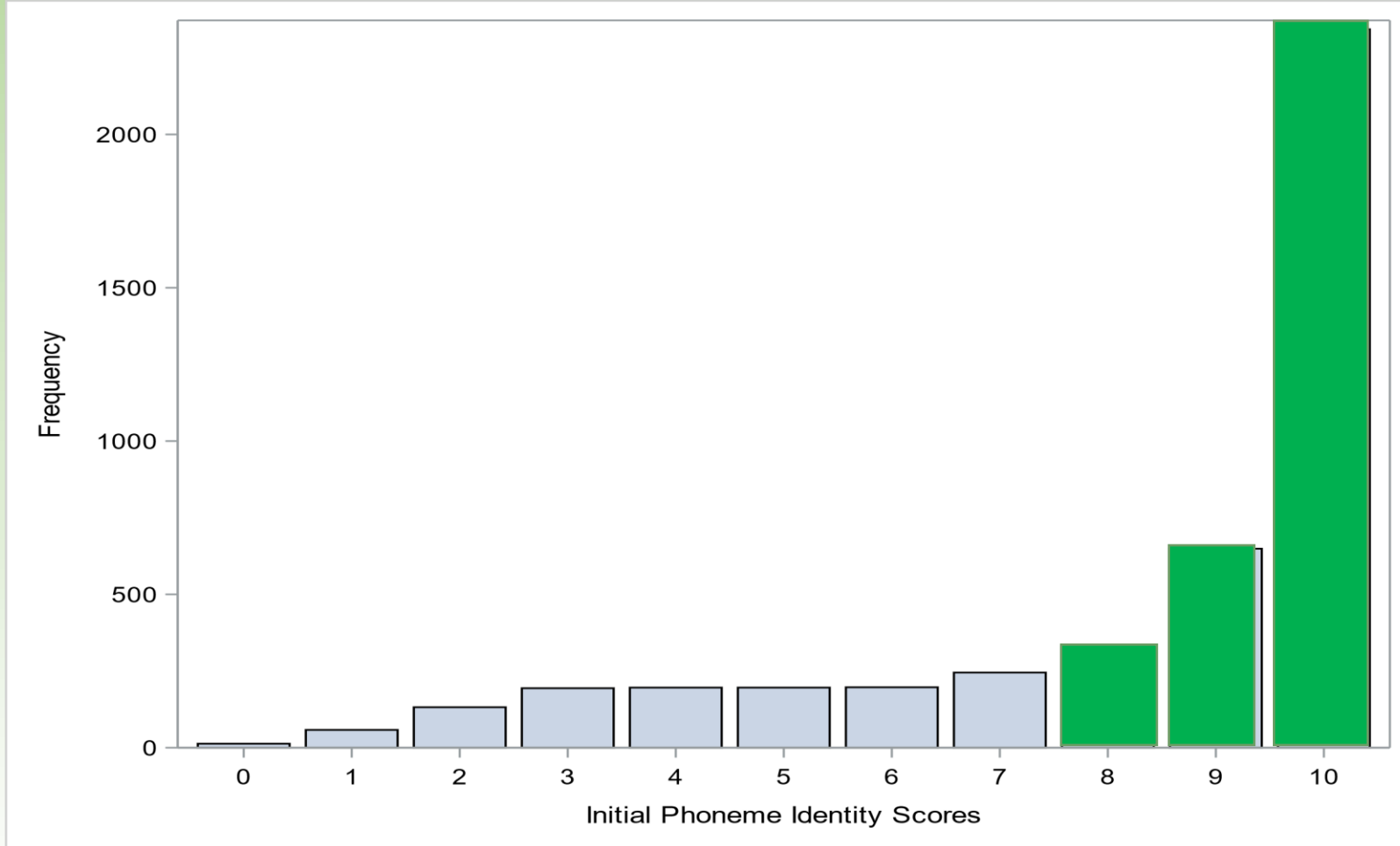


Learning goal 73%

Proficient 27%

Phoneme identity scores at school entry (n= 8185 children aged 5;0 – 5;3)

# Phoneme identity after ten weeks of BSLA teaching (n= 4,949 children; aged 5;0 – 5;3)



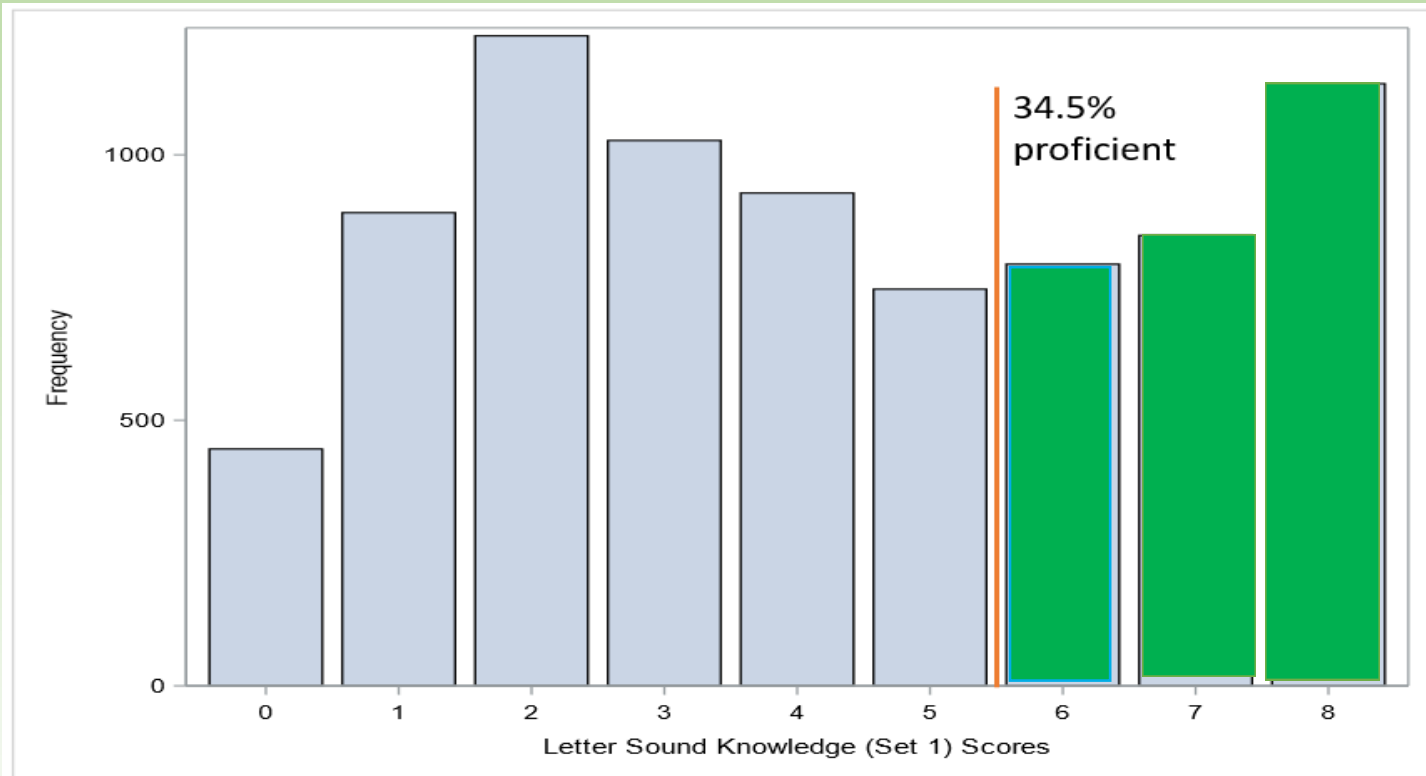
74% of children show proficiency post 10 weeks of BSLA Tier 1 teaching (scores of 8, 9 or 10 correct)

Proficient 74%



# Children Aged 5y0 to 5y3 – Baseline

Letter Sound Knowledge (Set 1: m, p, t, n, d, c, l, s)



(n= 8185 children  
aged 5;0 – 5;3)



Learning Goal 65%



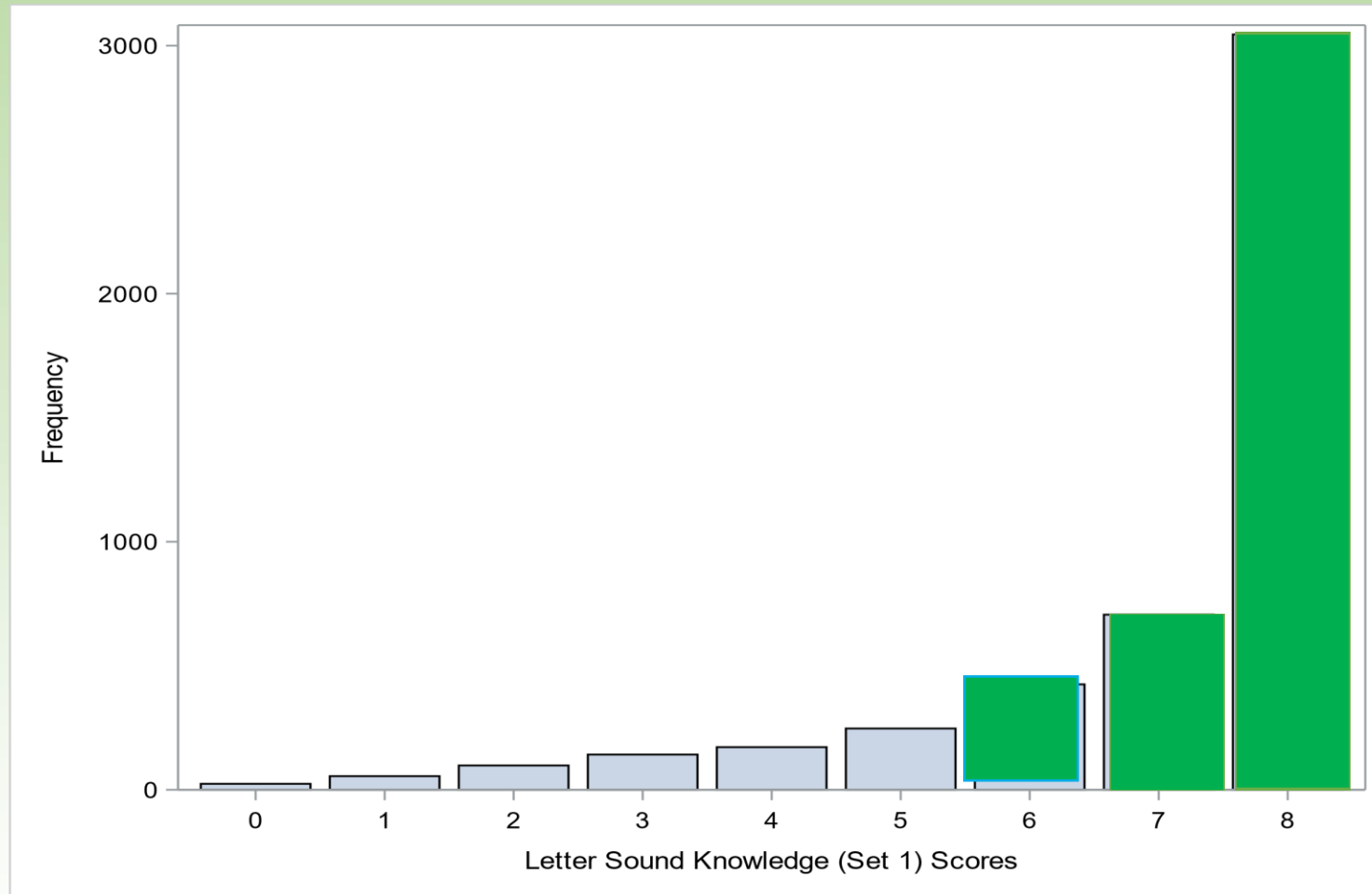
Proficient 35%

# Letter Sound Knowledge (Set 1) 10 week assessment

n = 4,949  
aged 5- 503

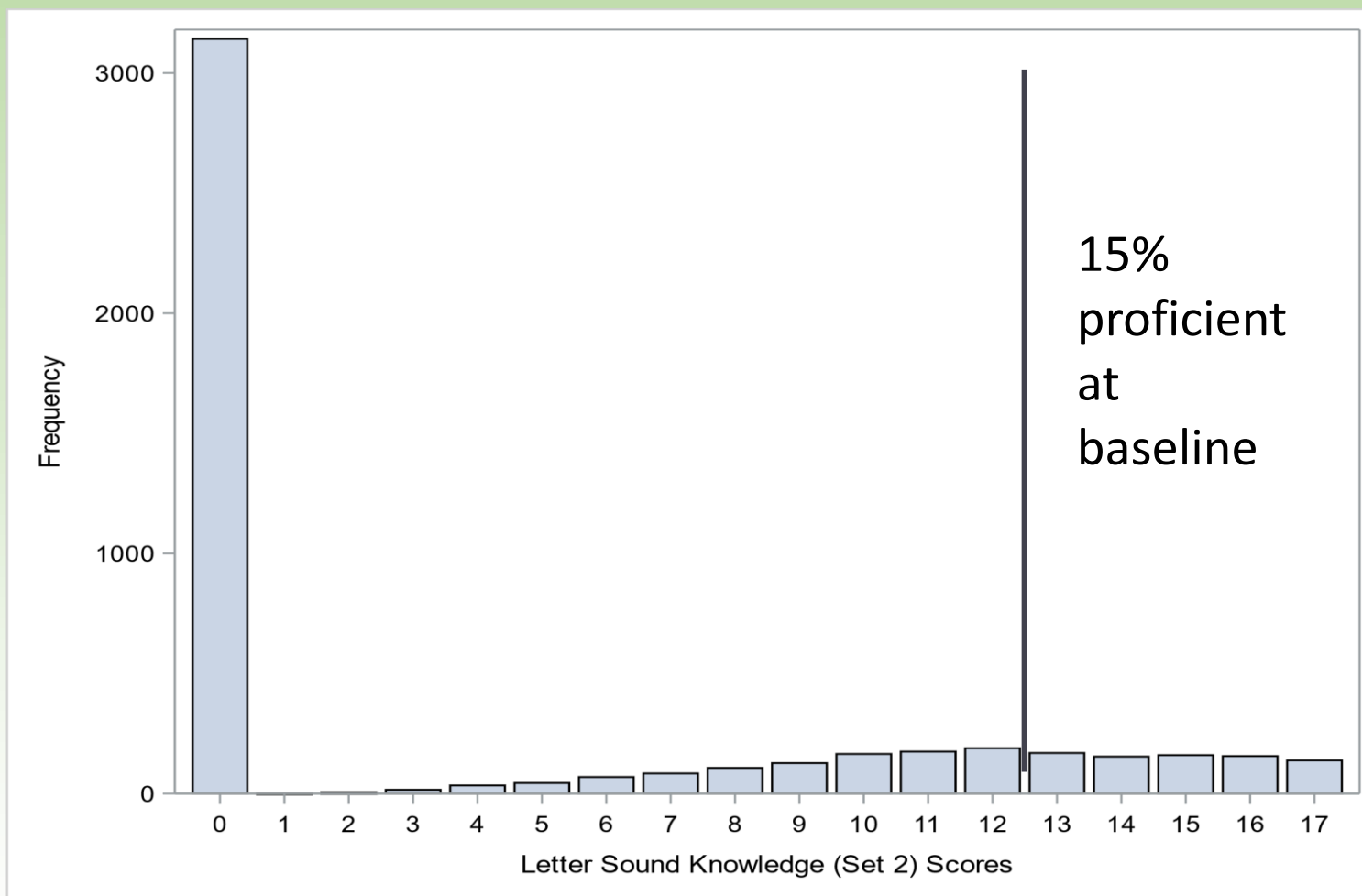
re-assessed at Ten  
Weeks

84% of children  
were proficient  
after 10 weeks



Proficient 84%

# Baseline Letter Sound Knowledge Set 2 (ch sh th g, b, f v w j h a e l o u)

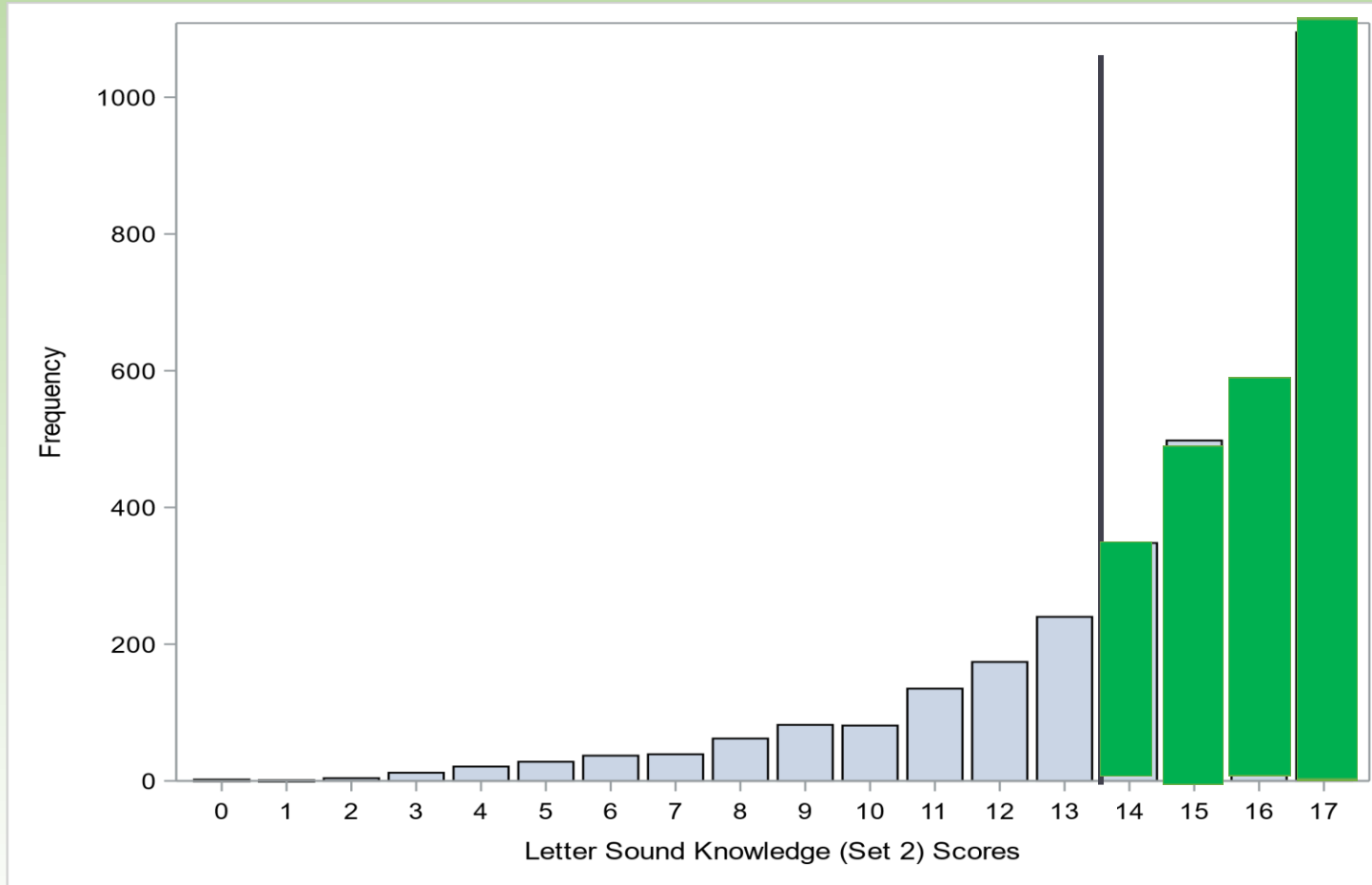


Children aged 5,0-5.03

n = 4,949 re-assessed at Baseline

# Children Aged 5y0 to 5y3 – After 10 weeks

## Letter Sound Knowledge Set 2

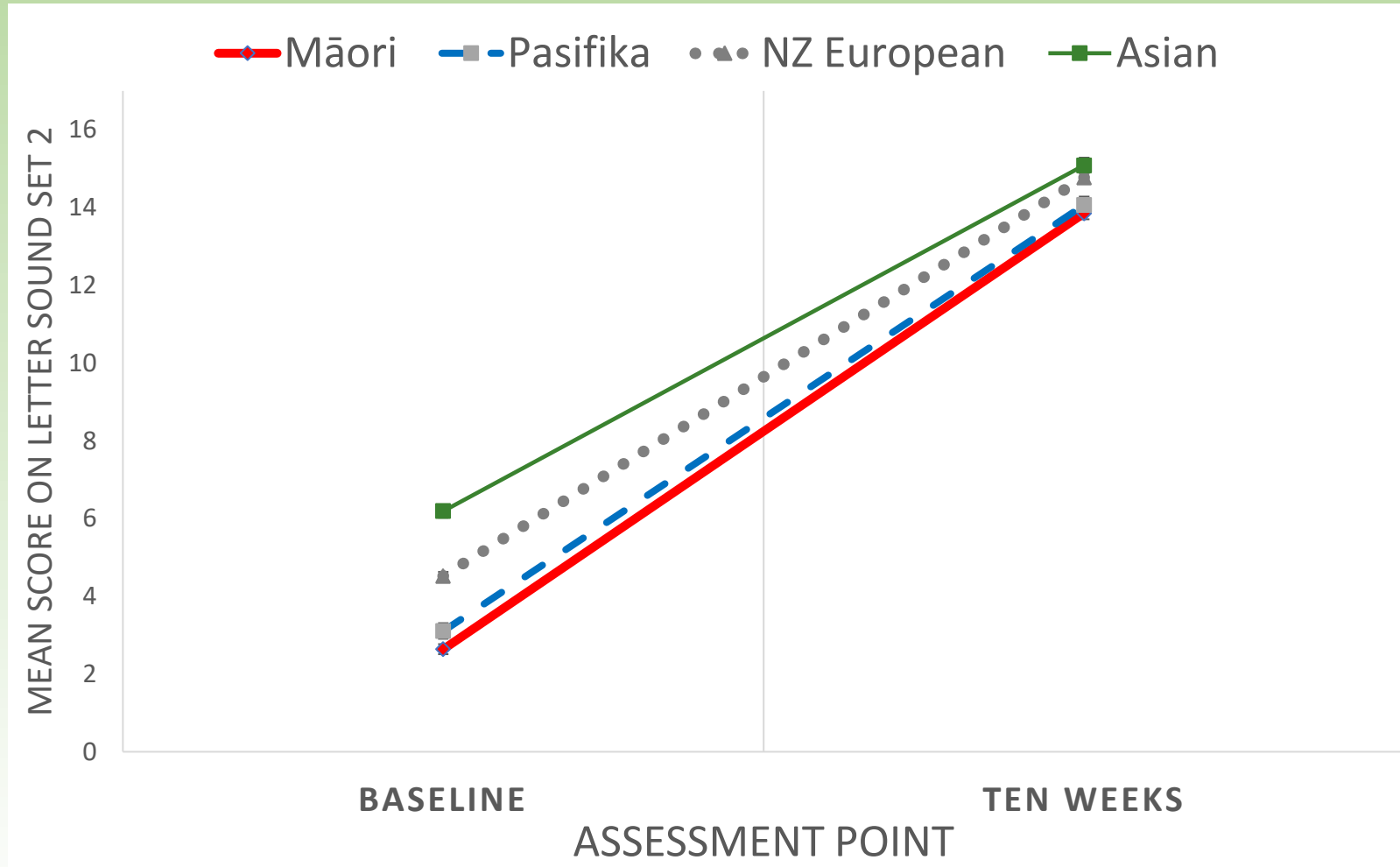


n = 4,949 re-assessed at Ten Weeks

70% proficient

# Letter Sound knowledge growth (Set 2)

Baseline to post 10 weeks of BSLA teaching (n= 3440 children)



Growth significantly greater for Māori and Pasifika Learners ( $p < .01$ )



# Early Childhood Project

Investigating children's foundational oral language and self regulation skills that support early learning success within the context of their whānau and early childhood learning centres.

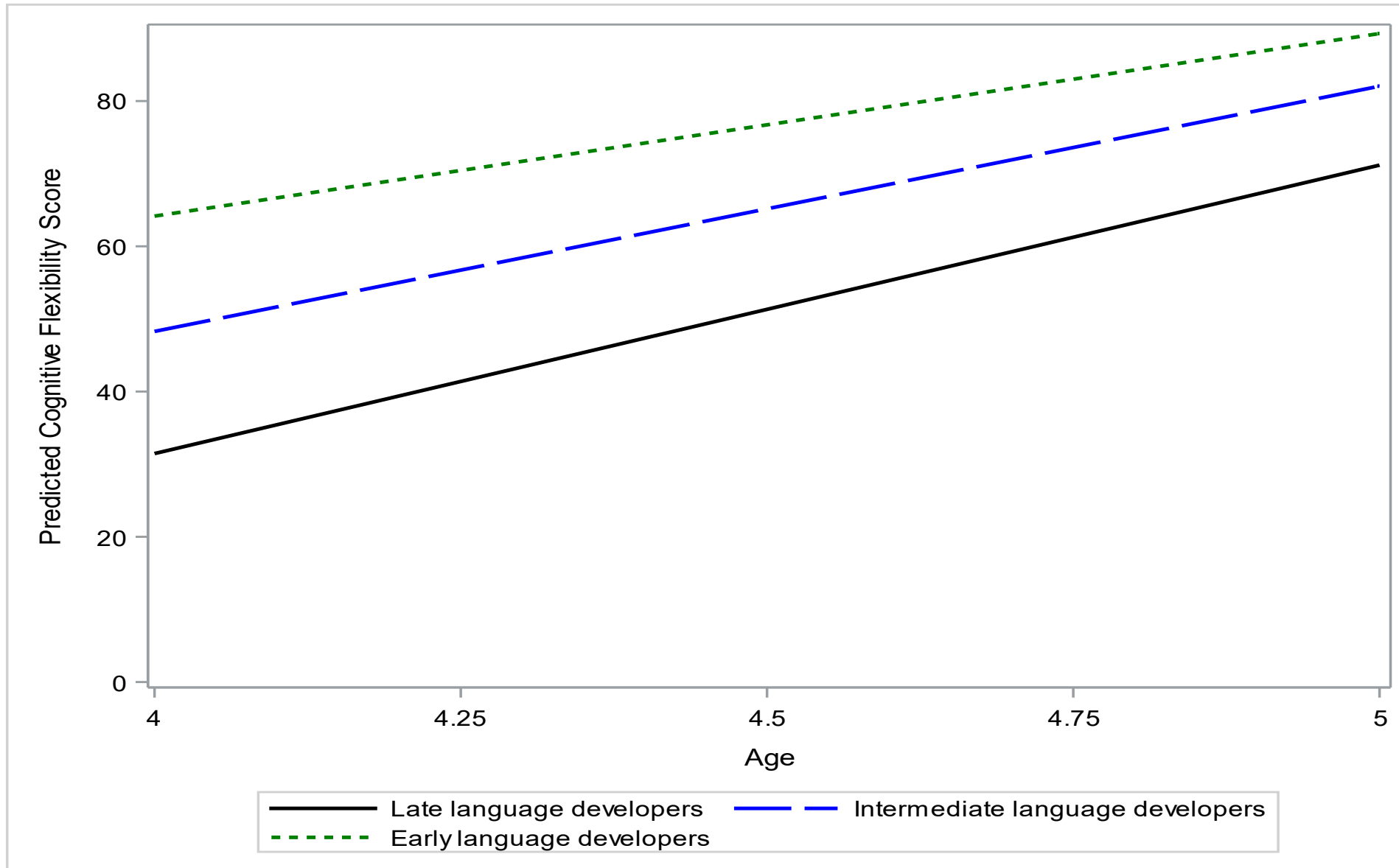
- Whānau and teacher workshops, online whānau support
- Coaching and mentoring in-centre support
- Controlled study supporting children with increased needs
- Speech, oral language, self regulation assessment measures over time



## Participants

486 tamariki aged 3-4 years, their whānau and kaiako  
Followed until school entry

# Predicted Cognitive Flexibility Scores over time by Language Group (n = 408)



# Words Can POP



Words

Word Learning: vocabulary elaboration techniques.

Can

Can you keep the conversation going? Back and forth high quality conversations.

P

Phonological Awareness: Awareness of sounds in words of their language.


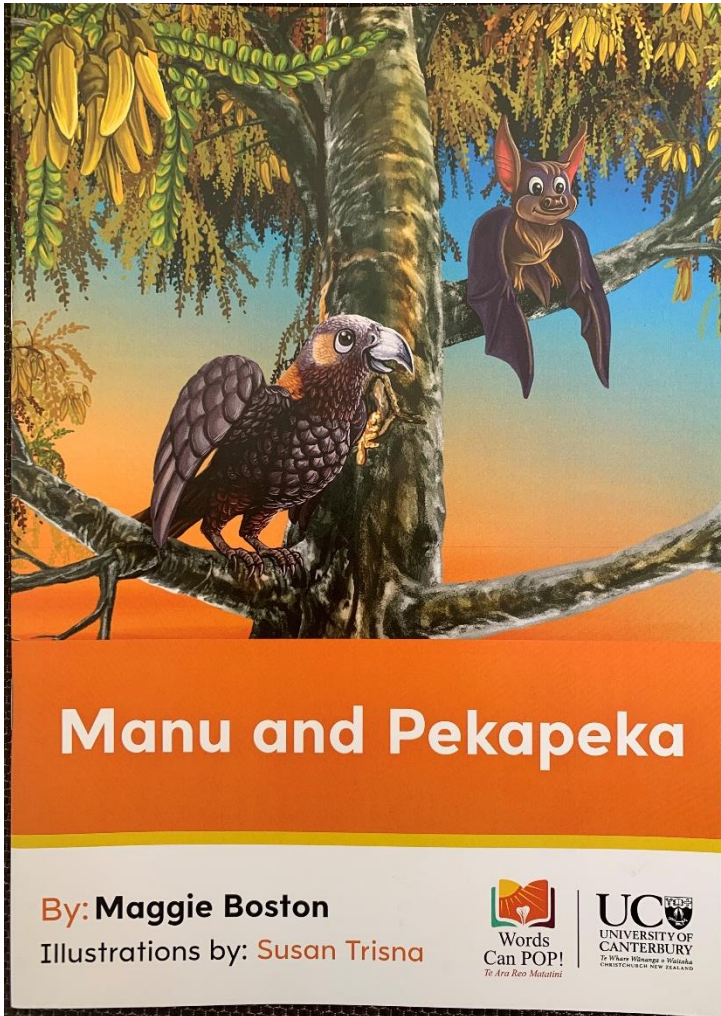
O

Oral Narrative: personal narratives and story retell.

P

Print Awareness: relating print to speech.

# Resource Development



### Reading Notes:

## Manu and Pekapeka

These reading notes are designed for preschool children to build their oral language skills within the “Words Can POP” framework focusing on word learning, conversations, phonological awareness, oral narrative and print awareness.

### WORDS Word Learning

Highlight the target words using the word elaboration techniques in each prompt box: perched, delicious, canopy. After you have read the story revise the meaning of the target words as you summarise the story.  
Extension: Select other words related to the story to discuss with the children. For example:  
Manu is eating the sticky sap from the tree.  
Pekapeka are nocturnal animals, so they are usually active at night.

### CAN you keep the Conversation going?

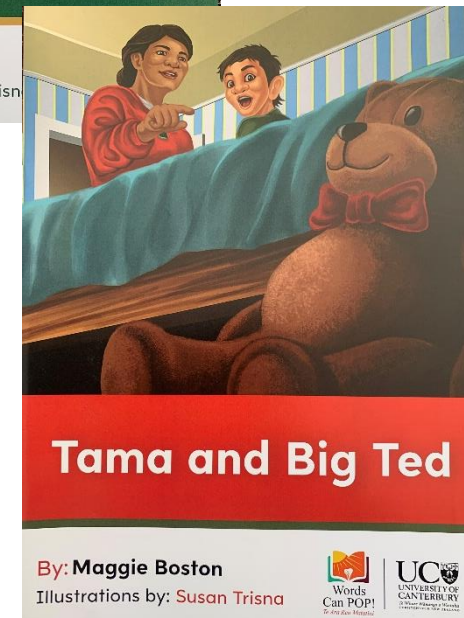
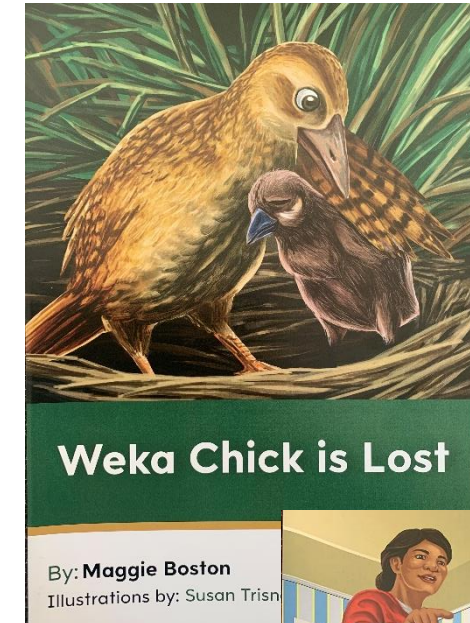
Engage children in a conversation about the story. Aim to keep the conversation going for five turns each. Follow the children’s lead and give children plenty of time to answer.

You may also want to ask questions to prompt the conversation and to check the children’s comprehension of the story.

Prompt Questions:

- When is a bat/pekapeka active?
- What other kinds of food would Manu like to eat?
- Why do you think they like sitting in the tree canopy?

14



# Place-based Stories (in partnership with Te Taumutu Rūnanga)



## Ruru and the Giant Pouākai

*An adaptation of a  
traditional pūrākau from  
Te Taumutu Rūnanga o  
Ngāi Tahu*



## The Creation of Tuna

*An adaptation of a  
traditional pūrākau from  
Te Taumutu Rūnanga o  
Ngāi Tahu*



*Ruru and the Giant Pouākai  
The Creation of Tuna  
Taniwha and the Rakaia Gorge*

# Whānau video series – 15 videos



1. Introduction to Words Can POP! Video Series

Unlisted

230 views • Jun 17, 2021

1 DISLIKE SHARE SAVE ...

Words Can POP! Video Series

Unlisted UC Education, Health and Human De... - 1 / 15

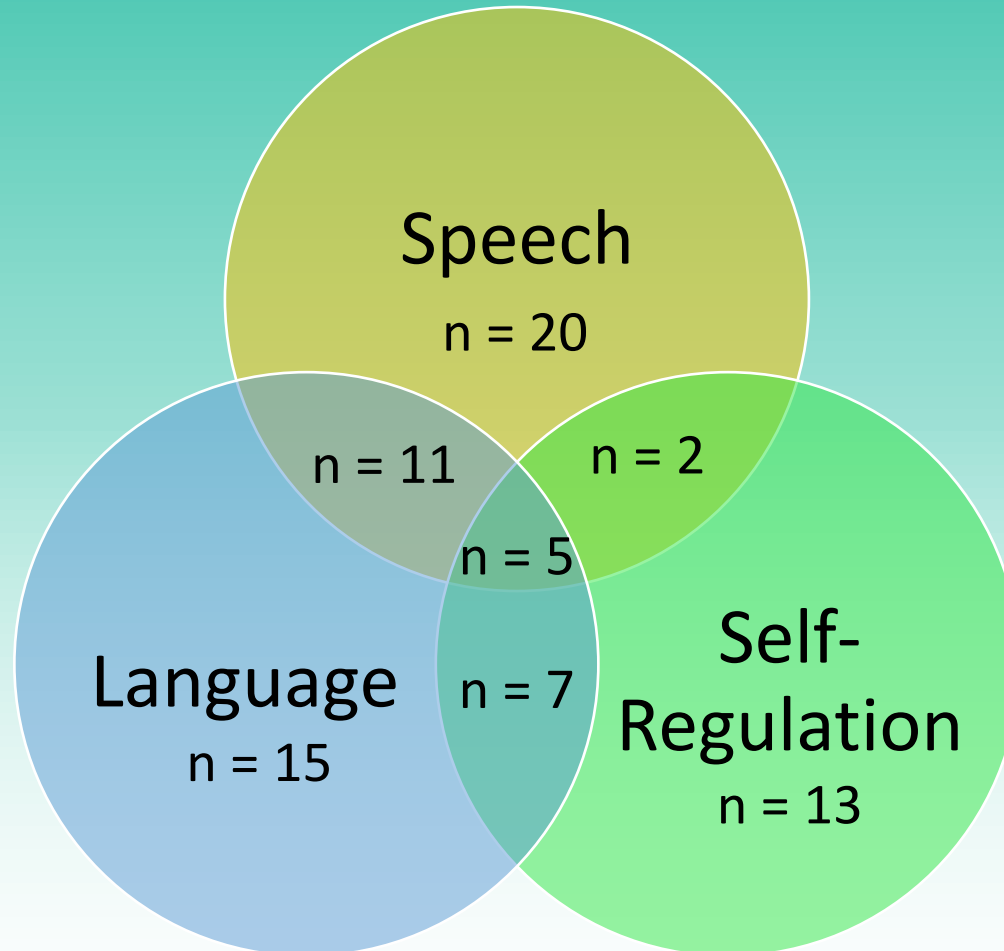


- 1. Introduction to Words Can POP! Video Series UC Education, Health and Human D... 1:54
- 2. Building Children's Word Knowledge UC Education, Health and Human D... 2:11
- 3. Making Words Memorable UC Education, Health and Human D... 2:11
- 4. What Makes a Quality Conversation - Part 1 UC Education, Health and Human D... 2:02
- 5. What Makes a Quality Conversation - Part 2 UC Education, Health and Human D... 2:07
- 6. What is Phonological Awareness? UC Education, Health and Human D... 2:11
- 7. Pointing out Print UC Education, Health and Human D... 1:54
- 8. What is an Ora UC Education, Health and Human D... 2:01
- 9. Supporting Chi Stories UC Education, Health and Human D... 2:03
- 10. Words Can POP! Strategies in Action UC Education, Health and Human D... 6:06
- 11. What is self-regulation? UC Education, Health and Human D... 2:10
- 12. What is co-regulation? UC Education, Health and Human D... 2:21
- 13. How to support children to learn about emotions UC Education, Health and Human D... 4:44
- 14. Books to support emotions UC Education, Health and Human D... 2:20
- 15. Self-regulation games and the importance of play UC Education, Health and Human D... 2:47



# Tier 2 Response to Teaching Pilot

- Supporting 86 children in foundational skills in addition to centre-wide approach

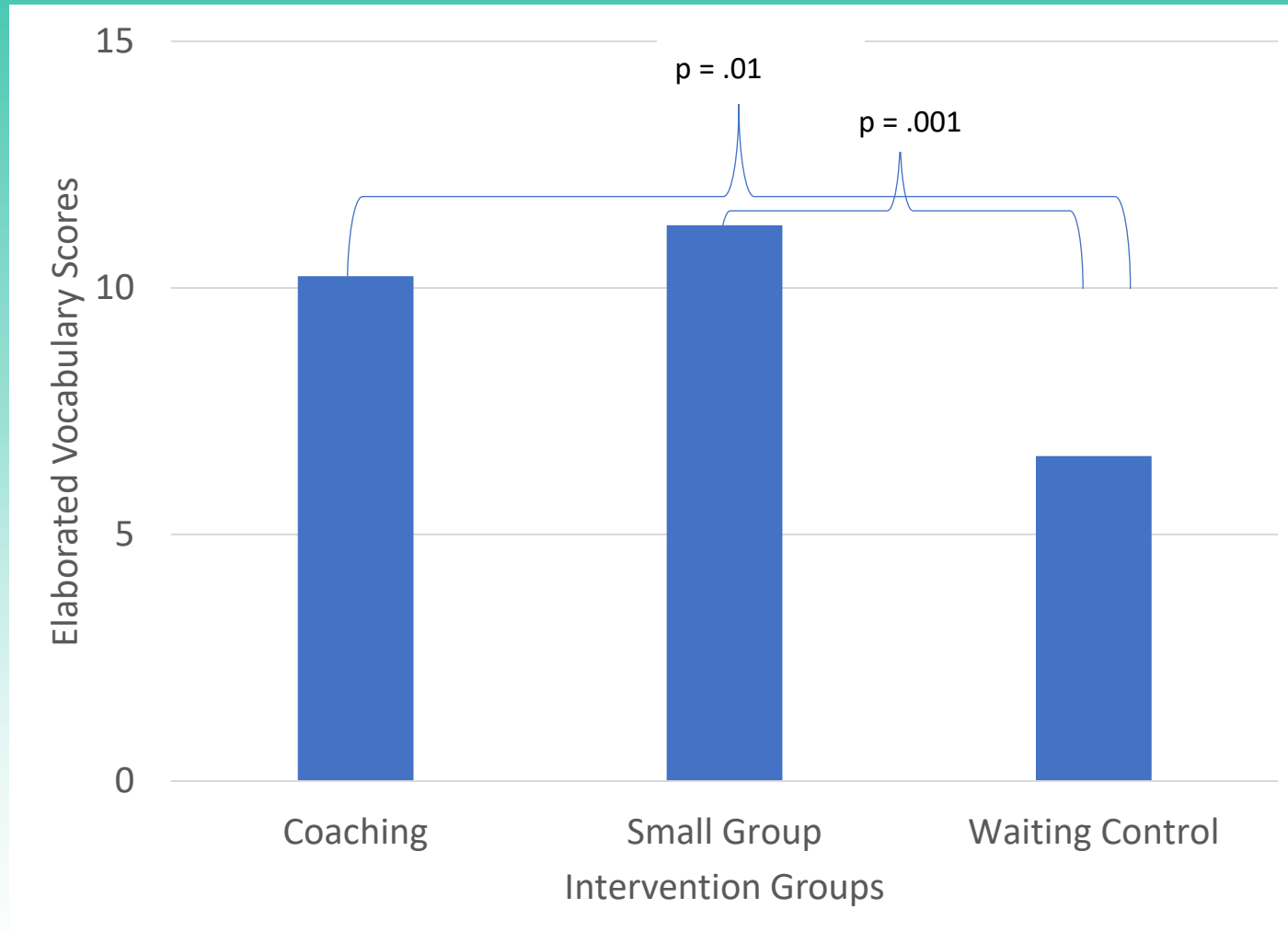


Tier 2 Coaching  
n = 30

Tier 2 Small Group  
n = 36

Waiting  
n = 20

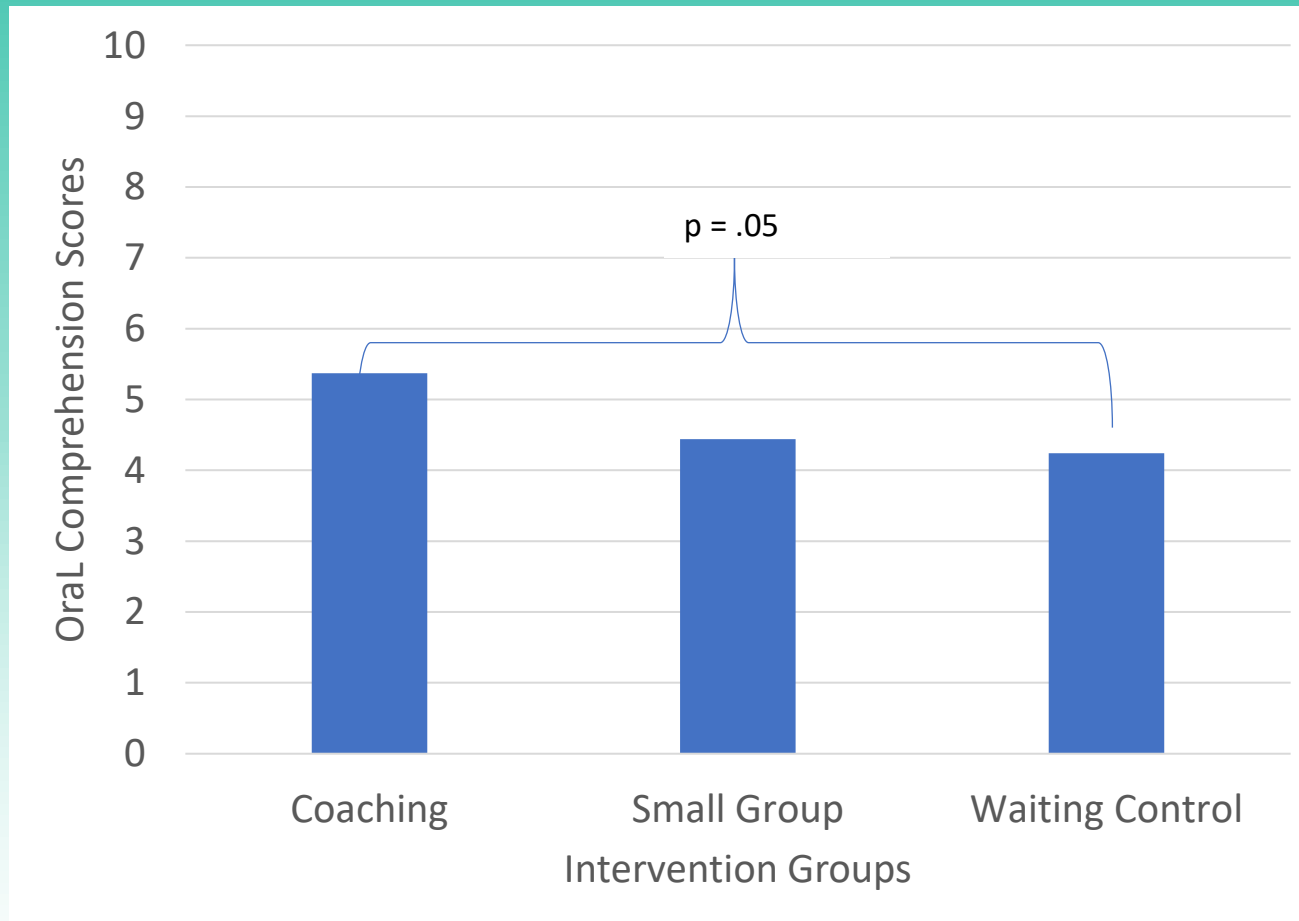
# Post-Tier 2 Results: Elaborated Vocabulary



- Post-test means controlling for pre-test scores and between-centre variance
- Significant effect of small group [ $t(58) = 3.47, p = .001$ ] and coaching [ $t(58) = 2.55, p = .01$ ] over waiting group.



# Post-Tier 2 Results: Oral Comprehension

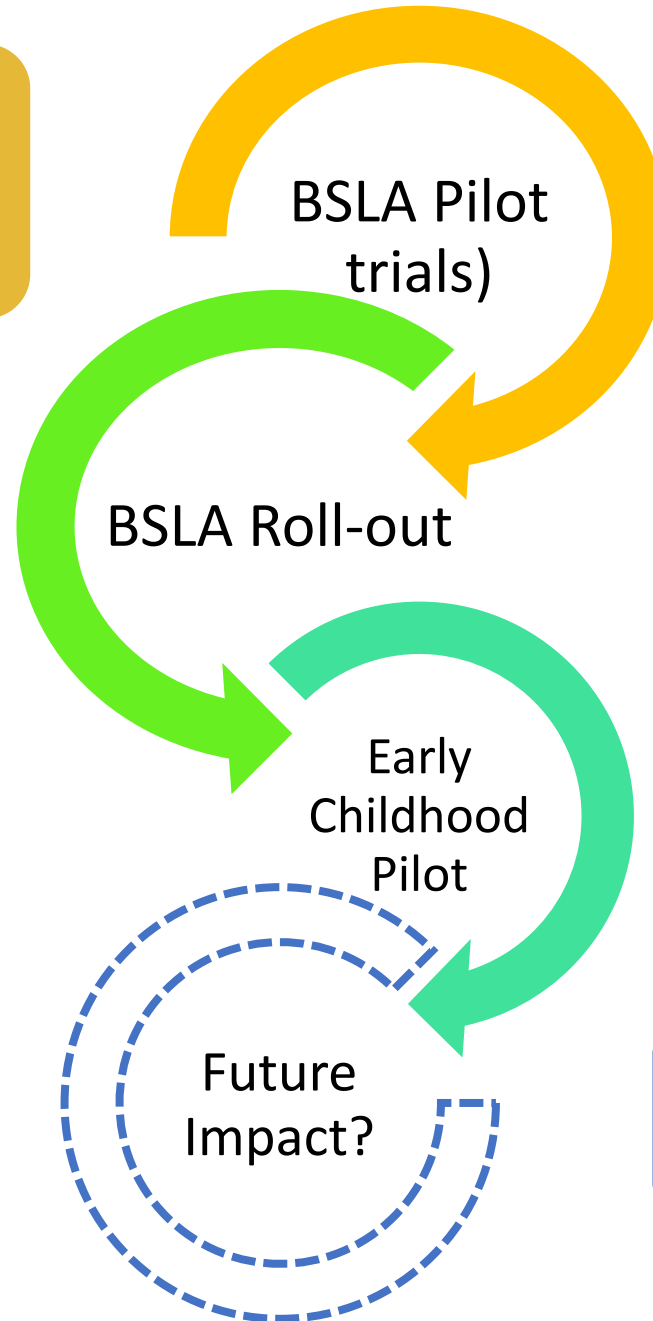


- Post-test means controlling for pre-test scores and between-centre variance
- Significant effect of coaching over waiting group,  $t(58) = 1.95, p = .05$

## Phase 1: Strategic Funding

- Better Start Literacy Approach (BSLA)

Pathway to Impact:  
Implementation Trial



## Phase 2: Strategic Funding

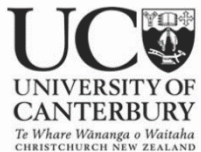
- Words Can POP

Pathway to Impact:

- Words Can POP

**Brigid McNeill**

[brigid.mcneil@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:brigid.mcneil@canterbury.ac.nz)



Te Kāhui Pā Harakeke  
Child Well-being Research Institute

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