



# The Effectiveness of Student-Delivered Speech Pathology Intervention in Schools: An initial Investigation



Leonie Hamilton, Northern NSW Local Health District  
[leonie.hamilton@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:leonie.hamilton@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

This study investigated the research question: can student-delivered speech pathology intervention improve school-age children's skills in the language areas targeted more than would be expected with normal maturity and education?

A non-equivalent pretest-posttest control group design was used to investigate the language outcomes of 28 school children aged 5-6 years who received student-delivered intervention through the newly established *Community Health in Schools – Student Speech Pathology Clinic*. In particular changes in phonological awareness and oral narrative skills are reported.

Results demonstrated that student-delivered phonological awareness and oral narrative intervention, can improve school-age children's skills in these important areas. Phonological awareness measures significantly improved, with children who received targeted therapy making significant gains (mean score change 8.4, sd 5.1,  $t=3.7$   $p=0.02$ ) whilst only minimal gains were made by children waiting for therapy (mean change 3.1, sd 4.6,  $t=1.9$ ,  $p=0.1$ ). Similarly measures of oral narrative production significantly improved following intervention (mean change 9.6, sd 7.0,  $t=4.7$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and showed only minimal change for children waiting for therapy (mean change 0.3, sd 0.6,  $t=1.0$ ,  $p=0.4$ ).

These positive results add powerful evidence that student-delivered speech pathology clinics are a feasible and effective model for working with school-age children with language impairment. This model also has the potential to be replicated by other allied health disciplines working with this population.

**For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on 'view completed projects'**

Leonie is a Paediatric Speech Pathologist working at Murwillumbah Community Health and a Speech Pathology Clinical Educator for Griffith and Southern Cross Universities. She initiated the Community Health in Schools Student Clinics through the Leading for Better Patient Outcomes program.

