

Just Sentences

Prison Literacy Pilot Project February 2015

By Rosalie Martin, Speech Pathologist, Chatter Matters Tasmania.



Motivating Purpose for this Pilot Project:

Just Sentences is a pilot project which has taken place in the Prisoner Education and Training (PEaT) unit at Risdon Prison over the past 16 months. It has brought phonemic (speech sound) processing and oral language perspectives to the literacy intervention programs of two inmates. The project was motivated by the knowledge that a large proportion of prisoners are functionally illiterate, and the roots of literacy challenges most often lie in language-based difficulties such as difficulties with sound processing (Snowling & Hulme, 2011). This is especially so for those who have not responded to regular educational inputs and whose presentations are highly complex (Snow & Powell, 2011). Current research on language and literacy impairment points toward the need for specialist interventions to assist such adults in custodial settings to make real and sustained progress in the acquisition of literacy skills. *Just Sentences* was begun at Risdon Prison to explore the application of this perspective within the prison-based literacy programs in Tasmania's Risdon Prison, where it is not currently in use and where speech pathologists who have skills to bring it into use are not currently employed. The two participants, both severely functionally illiterate and previously making little or no gain in literacy programs, each made significant gains.

Disclosure:

Rosalie Martin is the founding speech pathologist of Chatter Matters Tasmania – a charitable organisation building awareness and skill in human communication: language, literacy and positive relatedness. Rosalie is also the proprietor of Speech Pathology Tasmania – a private speech pathology practice. Rosalie’s time and expenses in conducting the *Just Sentences* project on behalf of Chatter Matters Tasmania have been provided pro bono; Speech Pathology Tasmania has sponsored the cost of clerical support and therapy materials.

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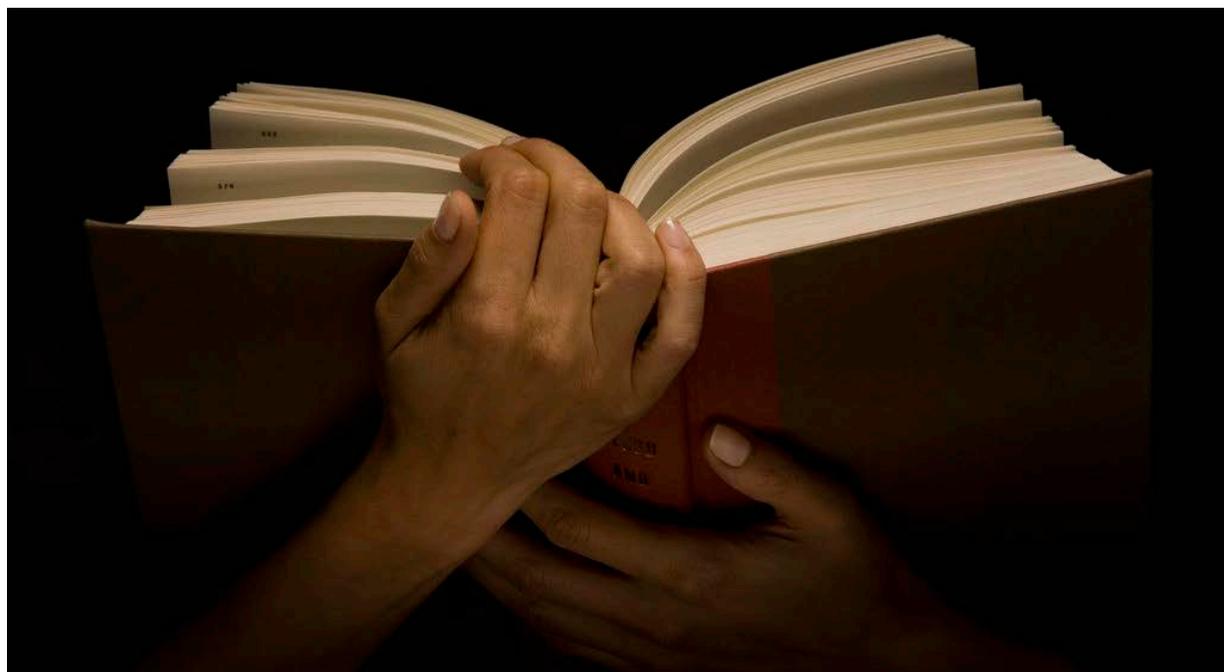
Who was Involved:

Key personnel from PEaT, Mike McLaughlin, Manager, and Melissa Iocco, Literacy Coordinator in the Learning and Information Network Centre (LINC) based within the PEaT, were approached in August 2013 by Rosalie Martin of Chatter Matters Tasmania (CMT). CMT is a young benevolent organisation based in Tasmania with interest in bringing evidence-based language and literacy development programs to disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. Rosalie is a speech pathologist specialising in assessment and intervention for persons with literacy and social communication challenges.

This initial contact led to an invitation being made to Hugh Fielding, State-wide Senior Literacy Coordinator with LINC, to also participate in the early discussions. A further information-sharing meeting was held in mid-September 2013 with Brian Edwards, Director of Prisons, and Ginna Webster, Director of Community Corrections.

Initially, one inmate in minimum security – Inmate-A – was invited to participate in the project. Inmate-A was invited because those who knew him felt that in addition to his complex literacy problems, he had personal qualities of persistence which would mean that he would voluntarily and willingly stay with the program and not drop out part-way through. Later it was requested by the LINC staff that a second inmate in maximum security – Inmate-B – also be invited to participate. Inmate-B was chosen because of his very complex history and presentation, inability to read any words except his name, and because after having observed the *Just Sentences* program in action with Inmate-A, Melissa had identified that the methodology being used was likely to make a difference for the more vulnerable Inmate-B.

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What Happened:

Inmate-A

The work with Inmate-A began in late September 2013. An individualised skills-assessment was undertaken, followed by weekly, hour-long, individualised literacy intervention. This input, all embedded in a relationship of flexibility, humour and respect, involved: phonological awareness instruction, synthetic phonics instruction, correction of pronunciation of some phonemes, decoding of non-words, reading-fluency interventions, daily writing (including reflective writing), systematic intervention for spelling, punctuation and morphology based upon the daily writing samples, and stimulation of metacognition (thinking about thinking) as well as vocabulary knowledge within each of the above domains. For examples of – and explanations about – what actually took place across the therapy tabletop in each of these interventions, see [Appendix A](#).

Intervention did not follow a specific, rigid program, but was tailored to the individualised skills-profile and progress-trajectory of Inmate-A, in accordance with the principles and sequences of a systematic, phonemically-informed approach to reading and spelling.

Progress and the mastery of new skills began immediately for Inmate-A. His motivation and engagement were further fuelled by this early success.

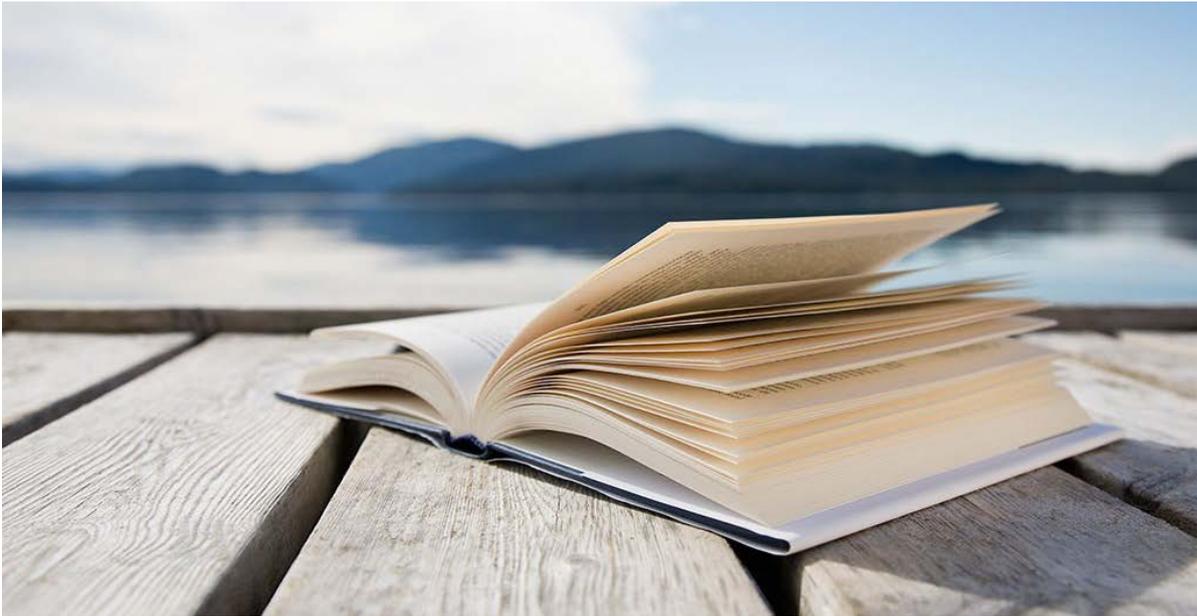
Mentoring Melissa

In October 2013, just a few weeks into the program, it became evident that the methodology of *Just Sentences* also held value for the knowledge bases of the teaching staff situated within the PEaT, and Mike McLaughlin asked if the program could be expanded to include mentoring of Melissa Iocco. Melissa and Mike had both seen that a different and highly effective skill-set was being brought to Inmate-A's literacy intervention and that it was working. Mike's request set up a 'win-win-win' outcome – new skills were taught to Melissa, she practised them with Inmate-A on a daily basis and thus his program was improved through receiving greater intensity of input; and by this intensity, the methodology of the pilot was brought much closer to the ideal conditions indicated by research in this field (Dehaene, 2009). Inmate-A's *Just Sentences* program is ongoing.

Inmate-B

In December 2013, arising from her increased involvement in *Just Sentences*, Melissa identified that the program might benefit other inmates, and Inmate-B was referred to the program. Assessment and commencement of his individualised literacy intervention began in January 2014, initially for hour-long sessions on a weekly basis, but increasing to three times per week as he drew closer to his release. Inmate-B's intervention was also individualised according to his skills-profile. This inmate was released in April 2014. Unfortunately, however, he returned to prison in late 2014, and in November 2014 he again took up the *Just Sentences* program.

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Results:

Inmate-A:

The Story:

Aged 53 years at the start of the program in October 2013, of low average language ability (as indicated by receptive vocabulary measurement) with some speech pronunciation errors, from a nurturing family background and three years into his first custodial sentence, Inmate-A had attended a special school but had not achieved literacy and had avoided reading and writing all of his life. He had attended adult literacy-development programs on and off over many years before his time in prison, as well as having been involved with the PEaT program during his three years in prison. Inmate-A had a small sight vocabulary consisting of some common grammatical words and could identify by sight a small number of words of high personal interest – that is, recognising them because he could remember what they look like. He said of himself:

“I can’t read and write. Never learned to do it at school.”

Now, however, in direct response to his new learning arising from *Just Sentences*, he views himself as a reader and a writer. He has learned how to systematically and confidently approach print with patience and how to apply his new skills with an expectation that he will succeed in both reading and writing. Inmate-A wrote the first voluntary letter of his life – to his father – in December 2013. In May 2014, Melissa said this to him of his progress:

“It’s like you now have a tool box for reading that you didn’t have before. When you come up to a word, you know how to steady yourself and then take out the tool you need and use it.”

Inmate-A has progressed from writing a few lines per week in a journal, to writing up to four A4 pages each week. The personal reflection that has been enabled by this journaling is also felt to have contributed to his success in this program. Personal reflection permits of deep processing of complex emotions, self-realisation and planning.

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Inmate-A has said this of his experience in the *Just Sentences* program:

“You are the one who worked it out. The others [volunteer tutors] didn’t know what to do. Like, they were nice and everything. They tried different things, but they didn’t know what to do. It was confusing. But this way, I get it. It’s not confusing anymore.”

[Appendix B](#) contains further examples of Inmate-A’s experience of the program in his words – lifted, with permission, directly from his reflective journal.

The Test Results:

By January 2014 – four months into the program – Inmate-A was experiencing joy in the process of reading and decoding, and pleasure in discovering meaning in texts of grade 3-5 reading level as well as daily writing. The details of his pre- and post-program assessments appear below.

Receptive Vocabulary:

Inmate-A’s receptive vocabulary was assessed using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT4). The PPVT4 is a standardised test of receptive vocabulary. This means that it assesses the words that individuals *know*. Receptive vocabulary is strongly correlated with academic outcomes. In this test Inmate-A did not have to retrieve or say the words, but had only to point to one picture from an array of four pictures to identify the given stimulus word. The PPVT4 scores are reported such that scores of 85 - 115 define the ‘normal range’, with 100 being average. Inmate-A’s results were:

Task	Standard Score	Percentile Rank	Performance
Receptive Vocabulary	87	19	Low average

These results indicate that Inmate-A’s ability to understand and derive meaning from the spoken vocabulary of the English language is in the low average range. His reading skills, however, were noted to be well below this potential.

Receptive vocabulary was not reassessed at the end of the program because it was not reasonably expected that significant changes in this skill would be measurable in such a short time-frame of intervention. Over a longer time-frame, with the inclusion of new skills and increased regular reading, it could indeed be anticipated that a change in Inmate-A’s receptive vocabulary would be measurable.

Description of Reading Skills:

Standardised assessment of Inmate-A’s reading skills was not made at the beginning of the *Just Sentences* program. It was understood from his prior engagement within the prison literacy program that he was unable to read any material except common grammatical words and some words of high personal interest which he recognised by sight as a result of high exposure to them. He had no knowledge of how to analyse a word for its phonemic components. For example, when asked to identify the word ‘scarf’ he responded “It’s got ‘car’ in there”: he could see the word ‘car’ within ‘scarf’ but could not add /s/ to the beginning and /f/ to the end of the word to work-out ‘scarf’. He said of himself “I can’t read and I can’t spell”.

Inmate-A never read for pleasure and had actively avoided reading all of his adult life. When I met him he had been encouraged by his previous volunteer tutor to write a daily journal and was producing a few lines on most days. Prior to this, he had avoided all writing.

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Four months later, in January of 2014, Inmate-A was eagerly choosing to read aloud from books of reading levels in the grade 3 – 5 range. He knew how to make a decoding attack on every word he encountered. He was not always successful, but could always be supported to succeed if given extra direction. He was able to comprehend that which he read and would review and correct his efforts as soon as he realised that a word or part of the story had not made sense to him. He was able to bring the wealth of his language knowledge and his knowledge about the world to his reading experience as he gained mastery of, and new insights into, the process of decoding. He was able to verbalise that it was the process of decoding which was the key he had been missing in all previous attempts to teach him to read.

Over the course of the program Inmate-A's writing became abundant. He realised that he *could* write, and found motivation to do so through his responding to reflective questions which he knew would then be read by the speech pathologist, enjoyed by her, discussed, and not judged. He realised that he could make an attempt at writing any word and that if the spelling was not correct that he would be celebrated for the elements in his attempt which showed application of encoding knowledge; and that he would be supported to learn how to tackle that word ready for future use, and to learn why it should be spelled in its particular way. Writing suddenly became very attractive to him and he practised often and with pleasure. Writing practice is powerful for building new skills in reading, spelling and organisation of ideas.

Auditory Processing Assessment:

Inmate-A's auditory processing skills were assessed using the Test of Auditory Processing Skills (TAPS3). The TAPS3 is an individually administered assessment of auditory skills necessary for the development, use and understanding of language commonly utilised in academic and everyday activities.

- The first 2 subtests (Phonological Segmentation and Phonological Blending) provide assessment of very basic *phonological abilities* which are important for learning to read and understanding the sound system of English.
- The next 4 subtests (Number Memory Forward, Number Memory Reversed, Word Memory and Sentence Memory) are measures of basic *auditory memory processes*, including sequencing. Auditory memory is a process which underlies other auditory processing abilities. If a learner cannot retain what has been heard and keep it in correct sequence, he cannot process that information accurately.
- The last 2 subtests (Auditory Comprehension and Auditory Reasoning) are the most complex and assess *auditory cohesion*. This is a higher order linguistic skill that requires the student to not only understand exactly what is being said but also to be able to use inferences, deductions and abstractions to obtain meaning from the passage.

Performance on each of the subtests of the TAPS-3 cannot be reported as scaled scores because this test is not normed for Inmate-A's age. It was administered for the purpose of gaining qualitative information about Inmate-A's ability to perform tasks which are known foundation-skills for efficient literacy learning. Though not as statistically rigorous or meaningful, age-equivalent information can be reported for Inmate-A's performance, and appears below. Details about the specific skills which the subtests measure, are available in [Appendix C](#). Inmate-A's subtest results were:

Subtest	Age Equivalent (years: months) Pre-Program Oct '13	Age Equivalent (years: months) Post-Program Nov '14
Phonological Segmentation	6:1	7:3
Phonological Blending	9:6	10:1
Number Memory - Forward	13:0	16:5
Number Memory - Backward	6:0	6:0
Word Memory	13:0	11:6
Sentence Memory	7:6	9:6
Auditory Comprehension	>18:11	-
Auditory Reasoning	13:0	-

These results demonstrate quantitative gains in Inmate-A's skills of phonological segmentation and blending. These are essential sub-skills for decoding written English, and were directly taught to Inmate-A. There is more gain to be made in these skills, but it was the awareness and advancement made in these two areas in particular, which most particularly enabled the demonstrated functional gain in Inmate-A's reading and writing.

Inmate-A demonstrated evidence of working memory impairment, but it was not possible in the scope of this project to directly address this. One of the memory measures – Word Memory – appears to have quantitatively 'worsened' between pre- and post-testing. This is felt to have been caused by reduced attention to task at this point in the post-testing.

Inmate-B:

The Story:

In January 2014 Inmate-B, aged 21 years, with a background of trauma, multiple foster homes and group homes and a long history of incarceration and recidivism, could identify only his name in print and knew only five letters of the alphabet – j, f, o, s, z. Games and 'play', pitched with awareness of his (low) cognitive level, age and self-image, were used to engage him in learning from which he had previously remained disengaged. By the time of his release in April, he knew 17 letter-sounds and could accurately decode more than 60 Consonant-Vowel-Consonant words (for example: jug, pat). This is *enormous* progress in just 3 months. Inmate-B caught sight of the possibility that he could become a reader.

In the third session of the program Inmate-B's understated sense of hope in the program was revealed when at the end of the session he pointed at a pile of teaching cards with letters of the alphabet printed on them, and stated:

"Next time, I wanna learn more of those."

At this point in the program, he had made the link that if one knows the sounds represented by a letter, then one could use this knowledge to decode words. He had been delighted to find that he could use the letter-sound combinations that he knew, to decode words which were constructed of those letters. He had identified that the power behind the process was to know the sounds represented by the letters; and with this awareness he spontaneously identified and stated the personal short-term goal of learning more letters and their corresponding sounds, with an eye to the longer-term goal of learning to read.

Melissa said this of him:

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“He had said to [one of the other workers] – ‘*It’s all good – I’m learning to read now*’. He framed what he was doing with you [Rosalie], as the real thing. Harrumph [playfully] – what have I been trying to do in these last two years! I think that the way you introduced the process to him, helped him to understand that this was going to work for him. As well as what you actually do – which works too.”

Inmate-B said this of his experience:

“I always knew I could learn to read – I just needed someone to show me.”

The Test Results:

Inmate-B began the program able to read two words – his first name and surname. He exited it three months later able to read more than 60 words and with the early establishment of the first of the sub-skills with which to give further wings to this experience.

Receptive Vocabulary:

Inmate-B’s receptive vocabulary was also assessed using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT4). Inmate-B’s results were:

Task	Standard Score	Percentile Rank	Performance	Age Equivalent years: months
Receptive Vocabulary	73	4	Moderate to severely impaired	11:2

These results indicate that Inmate-B’s ability to understand and derive meaning from the spoken vocabulary of the English language is moderate to severely impaired. Ideally, complete educational assessment would have been conducted within which this result could be further interpreted, but this was not possible in this program.

Auditory Processing:

Inmate-B’s auditory processing skills were also assessed using the Test of Auditory Processing Skills (TAPS3). Performance on each of the subtests of the TAPS-3 cannot be reported as scaled scores because this test is not normed for Inmate-B’s age. It was administered for the purpose of gaining qualitative information about Inmate-B’s ability to perform tasks which are known foundation-skills for efficient literacy learning. Though not as statistically rigorous or meaningful, age-equivalent information can be reported for Inmate-B’s performance, and appears below. Details about the specific skills which the subtests measure, are available in. Inmate-B’s pre-program subtest results were:

Subtest	Age Equivalent (years: months) Pre-Program
Phonological Segmentation	5:3
Phonological Blending	6:6
Number Memory - Forward	8:2
Number Memory - Backward	6:7
Word Memory	9:7
Sentence Memory	9:6
Auditory Comprehension	10:6
Auditory Reasoning	5:5

Due to the shortness of Inmate-B's program and the focus on maximising intervention input within this brief time, post-program assessment of these skills in Inmate-B was not undertaken.

Description of Reading Skills:

Standardised measured assessment of Inmate-B's reading skills was not made at the beginning of the *Just Sentences* program. It was known from his prior engagement within the prison literacy program that he was unable to read any material except his own name.

Inmate-B could also write his name. In just the few weeks before I met him he had indicated willingness to engage with the LINC literacy program at the prison in order to learn to write his surname. This skill had just been accomplished when I met him.

By the end of his initial 3-month long engagement with the *Just Sentences* program, Inmate-B could read Consonant-Vowel-Consonant words provided they were constructed of the 17 letter-sounds which he knew by then – a, e, i, o, u, f, h, j, m, p, s, t, z, b, c, g, r. This amounted to more than 60 words which were therefore then accessible to Inmate-B. Inmate-B could also, with approximately 80% accuracy, write each of the words he could decode.



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Reflections of Prison-based Literacy Coordinator:

Melissa Iocco has provided a great deal of information about her key learnings arising from this pilot project. She said:

“Many clients respond well to our handling and techniques with the attention and the care and the respect and the acceptance. But we've got a certain portion of clients with low literacy, that no matter how much we give, until we are addressing the underlying problems – the areas that the speech pathologist knows about – we will make little progress and they will continue to feel frustrated and so may we.

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Because of the range of severity of literacy impairments which we see in the prison, the approaches which the speech pathologist and I use are complementary. The methods that we currently use achieve great results for many clients, but for some, it doesn't matter how much attention is given, words will just be squiggles on the page unless we are addressing those deeper issues. The speech pathologist's engagement with them is always at that deeper level, which is what is needed for some of our clients."

Melissa also saw that the phonemically and linguistically-based methods used in *Just Sentences* were appropriate for clients whose overt presentations might be very different to each other. She said:

"With Inmate-A – he's always been willing. He's changed a lot since I first met him. His first tutor said that after a few months of tutoring his reading 'hadn't really changed that much'. His second tutor had made good progress in terms of his journal writing. Inmate-A would do his homework and was a very willing student. He had fewer barriers than Inmate-B to engaging with workers. Some of Inmate-B's behaviours that got in the way of his engaging, weren't problematic for Inmate-A. They are very different people – and the fact that the speech pathologist was able to make progress with both was really good."

Melissa's full reflections, drawn from interview with Rosalie Martin, can be found in [Appendix D](#).

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What Next – Recommendations:

These pleasing results do no more than demonstrate that which is already thoroughly understood in the scientific literature regarding the teaching of reading – whether that teaching is to children in the early years, or to persons who have been unable, for whatever reason, to acquire it in the regular educational system – which is that consistent, systematic, evidence-based methodologies using phonics instruction synthesised with stimulation and instruction in oral language and metacognitive awareness is necessary (Dehaene, 2009). To change the problem of low literacy rates in prisons – indeed in Tasmania’s entire population – it is in these approaches that the evidence lies. Practitioners trained in these interventions know what to do. What is required are systems within which to do it sustainably and effectively. That is, to deliver evidence-based intervention. At the grass-roots.

It is recommended that:

1. LINC and TAFE services include evidence-based, systematic, direct-teaching of all of the linguistic properties of the written word, into the regular delivery of the literacy support program at Risdon Prison. These properties are phonological (sounds), orthographic (letters), semantic (word meaning) and morphological (grammatical meaning), as well as mental imagery of words (Apel et al 2012). Speech pathologists have this training and these skill sets but are generally not present in prison settings. It is recommended that speech pathologists become part of the professional team within the education systems at Risdon.
2. It is further recommended that the full suite of speech pathology professional skills be included in future iterations of the literacy intervention and rehabilitation programs developed for inmates at Risdon (Caire, 2013). Speech pathologists have skills in assessing and treating literacy impairment as well as oral and written language, social communication and pronunciation – all of which are fundamental for the growth of the protective, pro-social skills needed for flourishing involvement in community (Snow & Powell, 2011).
3. The intensity of engaged and enjoyed literacy intervention be increased within inmates’ literacy programs. Evidence arising from the neurophysiological bases of language and literacy skills demonstrates that these skills are most efficaciously and sustainably developed with intensive input in trusted, positive, safe, enjoyed relationships (Hardin & Conley, 2001). Ideally, ‘intensity’ means daily intervention (Dehaene, 2009).
4. Discussions ensue with prison management regarding trials to identify systems by which to practically and sustainably deliver intensive intervention. ‘Rehabilitation’ is simply a word and not an effective action if it does not take place with intensity.
5. Chatter Matters Tasmania continues to make partnership with the LINC, PEaT, TAFE and other prison-based services to jointly develop programs for the support of language and literacy skills amongst the inmates. CMT is a young and innovative organisation and is developing strategy for benefactor-based funding of its programs. CMT seeks ongoing partnership with Risdon Prison and the development of policy for effective interventions for communication skills and education in prisoners with needs in these areas. It is understood that these skills are foundational to flourishing and successful community living.
6. Having current Australian relevance and context, the recommendations of the Speech Pathology in Youth Justice Custodial Education Report (Caire 2013) be referenced as a

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framework for engagement of speech pathologists within the prison system – acknowledging that Caire’s report was developed within the youth justice system and that modifications, in consideration of adults, would be needed.

7. Trials be planned to derive further information about the impact of intensive literacy, language and social communication intervention upon recidivism rates and the real costs of intervention versus non-intervention.

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Thanks:

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Appendix A:

Descriptions of therapy activities

Phonological awareness instruction: This refers to instruction which develops an individual's ability to identify the sound components of speech as distinct from the meaning contained within that speech. An example of an activity which was used to do this with both participants in *Just Sentences* is as follows:

Therapist: Say 'farm'

Participant: 'farm'

Therapist: Now say 'farm', but don't say '/f/'.

To successfully do this one must be able to feel and hear that the /f/ is a distinct and individual sound within the word 'farm' and that it can be manipulated independently of the rest of the word. Neither participant was able to do this at the beginning of the program. Experiential instructional activities and practice enabled the development of this skill – and then its use as a foundation upon which to build further skills to manipulate sounds within words. Now Inmate-A is able, in similar manner, to separate out all of the sounds within words – an essential skill for being able to spell words and to 'have a go' at spelling them. The interruption to Inmate-B's program meant that he has not yet received enough practice in these tasks to become fluent at this skill.

Synthetic phonics instruction: This refers to instruction in which the learner is specifically taught to synthesise, or link, the individual sounds (phonemes) of English with letters and/or letter combinations. This synthesised knowledge, as it becomes established, is then the basis to further synthesise (or blend) phonemes together to identify a word – along with the reverse process which is to segment the phonemes away from each other in order to learn to spell a word.

Drills to practice these links were delivered in engaging ways using letter cards and written letters and words. Inmate-B was not able to tolerate drills without becoming frustrated, and so games and high-energy interaction were used to supply enjoyment simultaneously with the practice drills.

Correction of pronunciation of some phonemes: Speech pathologists have skills to correct the pronunciation of sounds and words. Such correction is often the starting platform from which to teach the awareness of sounds which is needed for literacy. This was relevant for Inmate-A who was unable to pronounce the sound /e/ at the beginning of the program.

Decoding of non-words: Decoding non-words which were constructed to follow the rules of English spelling, provided Inmate-A with the opportunity to practise using his new skills in synthesising sounds. For example, if presented with a word like 'mot', he could not possibly know it by remembering what it looks like, because he would never have seen it before – but such a word permits opportunity to identify and synthesise the sounds associated with each letter. And these are skills which need to be automatised in order to approach real words that he may encounter in print.

Reading fluency intervention: Timed repeated reading of passages of text were included in Inmate-A's program. These gave him experience at feeling the flow of fluent reading as well as identifying

troublesome words with characteristics which required further exploration and direct teaching. Inmate-B did not reach the stage at which this intervention could be helpful.

Daily writing (including reflective writing): Any skill, if it is to improve, must be practised. The more intensively and intentionally it is practised, with guidance and feedback, the more rapid the progress. Inmate-A's progress was greatly enhanced through encouragement and support to write on a daily basis. Topics which engaged reflection were motivating to him and were suggested to him each week. The quality of the respectful working relationship, and his knowing that his writing would be read and its content kindly responded to in interaction, provided further motivation to write.

Systematic intervention for spelling: Spelling intervention was undertaken using a systematic hierarchy of English spelling difficulty, examples drawn from daily writing, and enquiries arising directly from Inmate-A's self-directed interest.

Punctuation and morphology: Spellings, word derivations and word knowledge based in the language morphology (grammar) were drawn from daily writing samples and taught directly. Similarly, punctuation and the meaning it specifies was directly taught.

Stimulation of metacognition (thinking about thinking): Metacognition refers to awareness and understanding of and insight into one's own thought processes. Enhancing knowledge about thinking can engage further motivation as well as provide tools to self-regulate that engagement. Inmate-A was supported to notice when he made an error, when he self-corrected, when he solved a problem he would previously have found difficult, and to notice his level of calm, or otherwise, as he engaged with the tasks and so on. This was initially given as externally applied feedback which gradually shifted to self-awareness for comment and discussion.

Vocabulary knowledge: The importance of growing new vocabulary and becoming curious about words was emphasised with both participants from the start of the program and in every task and every interaction. This was done through discussion, play and direct teaching.

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Appendix B:

Reflective Writings – Inmate A

These reflective comments have been reproduced, with permission, from the journal writings of Inmate-A during his participation in the *Just Sentences* program.

7.1.14: ... I've had my second birthday in here! I hope to be out before my 55th birthday? But I may not be – that life! I just have to hope.

12.1.14: Summer seen to find it's self! It's good to see. I love the summer. ... I know that I am going well & ok. This is good that I am doing this! [referencing the literacy work and daily writing].

16.1.14: If you let it get to you in here you go crazy. So I just let the guy's go on and read beteen the line's – a lot of the guy's bullshit to make there self's look better?... It been wake up in here for me!

21.1.14: Thank you for finding time to come in to help me out. I still finding it hard but I am sticking with it. It's new to me. I didn't think i would able to do it. I been put down all my life. That didn't help

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me out saying you can't do it. So I just gave up. I am one of the one's that get put down. I may be different but it still hurts.

23.1.14: I know I am a nice guy. ... New life when I get out ok. New start new life!

19.1.14: I had a good childhood happy life. ... Was closed family to I came out. ... I did my best putting this in to words so you would not think I'm silly. I know good at saying things like this? I am happy in side my self.

29.1.14: Mum like drinking camberry. That a hard word but I gave it a go.

1.2.14: [Asked to reflect on school and what things were hard, what things were fun]: I find reading and writing hard but I find my own way of doing things! I find fun on balesing [balancing] on a big ball plus tanalen [trampoline]. I did my best a tring to wright the words. I find out at school my mates was finding it hard to. ... I hope that you can work out what I am saying. It hard ti put in to word's. I doing my best to say what I wont to. This is what I find. It's hard don't know what to say or how to say it.

2.2..14: I think I did a good job at this? I am getting this slowly! It not so hard now to do. I seen to be happier and not as confused. Blood hell I am useing words I would never say! It shows i can do it i would of never did it like this! Just flows now pen to paper is not as hard as it was. I'm been put down all my life that why I just stopped! (thank you for helping me out). ... Mum had a little set back. I hope that the right thing to say? I am not good at exsping! Why do I come up with the hard words that I can't wright but I'm happy that I'm doing this for my self.

8.2.14: [Asked to reflect on what has happened inside that has made him want to do this work and not be concerned about what others think]: Well where do I start? Blood hell you are making this hard (this time). Well I had to be a hard nut to get on with my life. I'm not like most being the odd one out. Life is hard. Nobody can work out why you want to be gay? But you not the one that pick your desened! I don't know why it's so hard for people to work out! They say you can change. That a load of bullshit (Bad of me to say) Get back on the right track. Why I don't care what others think? It's my life and i wont to get better at this. That why and show others! that I am as good as them. I'm not someone that back down from things I'm doing my best and if it that upset others? That thin I'm nut cases! They need the help? I am doing this to make me better and i am happy that some body has worked out how to. It is so hard with people that put other's down. I know this was hard to do. But I'm not back down. (You had me on my back legs) But I didn't back down. Now you know I can. Grr grr grr you are hard case's to bet (my joke for today) Thank you for making me think. ... Sorry for being so cheekly. Just had to let you know that I am so lucky that some one has worked me out. A lot have tried and you the first that have. I am not as hard as you think I am. Just alot think I am. I have to or I wouldn't last in here. If you let them know you a push over. Guy's would stand over you in here. That why I stand up for my self and and it was the same on the outside to. That why I don't care what other's think I am. What I am a happy go lucky and why should I change. That what I think iof people who think that they are better than me. I say who you to say that you are better! Mosts come back with the gay line! You not a real man you don't like woman! I fill more sorry for them. People who think like that i got no time for. They the one that need the help? (not me) But that life. I am over all the bullshit! I am the one that more of a man than they are! I am getting help with my reading and writeing. That what I think of other's that put me down. I am the one that is the bigger

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one. Not like half on the guy's in here. Think they are men but only boyies. I'm getting help and I don't care what other think. you brought the wild one out of me. That been hiding a way for so long. I'm just let off some steam. Thank you. The nice's Inmate-A back now.

11.2.14: So I am getting this now. More work i do the better i get. Now i alot happier that i am doing this. I don't know what to say! That a first lost for words. My i just shut up and say thank you for coming in and putting up with me.

14.2.14: [Asked to write on something you witness between people communicating together. Write about how you know what kind of messge they are communicating to each other]: I don't know where to go with this one so I will do my nest? You just have to work out what is real and what is a load of bull. You just have to read beteen the lines half the time. Just so not right. But you can't say that! Ut you would know it a load of bull. I can't work out why you wont to do that. Just make you look like you somebody you not! That why I think i get wild with bullshitter. Not wild in wild more mad whic some body have to make up lie's about stuff to fit in with overs in here grr grr that just silly in my book. But o well if it make them feel better who I am to say that bullshit. I hope this is what you wont or i did all this for enuthing.

17.2.14: Dad was waiting for a call from the movelyscampne [moving company]. Blood hell i stop now to hard to got the right words i wont to say. I did my best at this it is not esly to do for me. I am ok at little words but the big one i get stuck on.

20.2.14: I will sleep well tonight. I always do when it's raining. I love hereing the rain pip a patter on the roof! I know that a old fatshen word. But I am old bugger from way back.

23.2.14: [Asked to write about his mother before her dementia – what did she love to do, what is most wonderful memory of her]: Mum is just mum to me. Mum was a good cook and made her own close. I used to love hte banna cakes! Mum uses to make me one to take home with me. Mum is a lovely woman! But mum is mum and always will be to me! So hard on us all with the way mum lost her mind. I know that not nice's to say that about somebody and being my mother that wast. I know it's not mum fort. It can happen to embody. I stuff this up but i did my nest and that what it all about just doing my best and not to give up when it gets to hard. I shut up now before I brake down it was hard on me doing this one. But thank you for helping me to know i can do something only so hard to expes my self? Don't know how to never had to. That why I can't? Don't know what to say? You only got one mum? Mum is the one that pick you up when you hurt yourself and make you better! Mum the first to see you take your first walk alway's help you out with what you wont. Come to you help with what you cant do yourself. That what mum's do just be there for you. Never let you down! Not like I did. I let mum & dad plus all the family down. But I doing my time now. I know mum still love me deep down some wear know body know's wear mum is. But we all still love her deep down never stop loving mum. I stop now. Thank you for all the help you been giving me.

7.3.14: I am happier will the work i am doing it a lot better i don't get piss off so much like did before. Bad word there but that ok.

30.3.14: It so hard on Dad seeing his wife slipping away. (that's one way of putting it.) I didn't know how to put that one but that the only way I can put it.

4.4.14: [Asked to think about and write about the change in himself during his time in prison]: I woken up that there alot of truble guy's in prison! That need help but wont ask for help. They get out and wont be out very long! You can work out who will be back fast in here. I know that don't sound nice's saying that but that life alot in here been in here bact out and in. That life for them. Don't know how to live out side of prison. This has shownen me the over dise that I didn't know what living in here was like.(Now I do) It now a places that i would wont to make home but alot in here this is home for them.

6.4.14: I am going to set my mind to finding away to keep this work i am doing! going on the outside to. I wouldn't have did this before i didn't know how to. I know that don't make a lot of scents to you but I didn't know wyat or how to start off! You helped me outand show me how to do the work were others didn't just told me you can do this! But I didn't know how to. To you showed me. In away i coming in here helped me out alot. But it not a nice places. It's not a place's you take your mother to! That my joke for this week.

11.4.14: Look like it going to be a wet weekend. I am going a lot better with all this! It shows that doing it the right way not the womd way helps! Still can't spell a lot of words but who can? So I am not going to let that get to me. I am doing a lot better that i used to. It show's that you got me worked out were over's didn't know how to. Thank you.

29.4.14: I am going well with all this. I have not been doing much lately! Just have not been in the mood. But I am making up for it now! It been good that i have a brake from this. I know that I cand to this work now so it don't worry me like it used to. Thank you for showing me away that it is eszy way of doing this work I am doing. I would not of did this before you helped me! You are good at you job Rose's. I better not keep saying this you may stop coming in if i keep saying this! Rose's are red villet are blue you are the one that got me out of my shell. See i can be nices some time. Boldly hell i am a mad bugger.

18.5.14: [Asked to write about what it was like to have to ask others to provide help with reading and writing in daily life – did it worry them? How?]: I used to and still get confused with reading and paper work is still hard for me to do that why i am not worry about getting help! It a lot better doing it that way! Than me doing it and stuffing it up and that made some more upset that I didn't ask for help in the first places. That why i just do it that way than they don't getting upset and say why didn't you just didn't say you didn't know or understaned the paper work. That why i just get them to do it. Bad luck to them if they get up that why they work there to help out. I use to get pissed off when they would say do your best with it. How can you when you didn't know half the words was you can't don't fill paperwork out! If you didn't know what it mean's. You still get lot of people now that give you look's but i don't worry about it! If they wont to be like that I don't worry about what they thinking about me! They the one's that need to grow up not me we all not the same! Some are good at what they do and some find it hard to do the same thing as you can. I know i not the best at doing somethings but i do my best and if that not food why should i let them get to me! I know i am still as good as them but just can't do the same word as some. I have been put down all my life. It hard being diffent byt there a lot about like me! I am what I am. You cannot changes who you are. I know it will chanchg one day! It is getting better now. Than when I first came out. It was hard people would say why are you gay. Alot say that bullshit you can chngnes your life you just don't wont to

change's. Bloody hell that make me wild how some just think you wont to be diffent. I'm not? I am happy but some can't see that. Just wont to changes you. Sorry I am going off.

8.6.14: I didn't know how to do the paperwork it was better say i can't fill it in? Some would say cant you fill it in your self! I would say i not that good at filling in paper work. Some would be ok about it. But some would give you the look! But i didn't let that get to me. It alot better to get them to fill it in than me to stuff it up. I know it must be hard on them but that what they are there for to help you out.

3.7.14: Bob [an old friend] did turn up today. I had 3 hour vistor. Bob was looking well. He was saying that it been cold in his town. I said it havn't been much better here. Bob was saying you been in here for 3 years now. I was saying i may be out by my next birthday. If i am lucky. You never know Bob said i know i can only wish. Bob and i was saying that the time went quitly it don't seen to be that long. I know i did a silly thing but i doig time now. Bob said you did but you know you did.

12.7.14: [Asked to write about how being calm might make a difference to skills and attitude]: What I have seen is when i am CALM is a lot better to do this! I am CALM most of the time. Just when i start thinking about the family the way i let them down. That when i am not CALM i start stuffing up my writing goes downhill and i cant think of what to say it all goes haywhys. I cant do this and i get wild but not wild as in wild more upset in side me? I am happy go lucky and not a lot worry me. It take's alot to upset me. But i am one that say what i think and CALM down fast. What is good you are a CALM one and that good t help's a lot. You never get upset with what i say or do that good thing! It help me to keep CALM. You never put me down that what help alot to know that you know how i am thinking. ... You worked me out where alot didn't know how to. Just say you can do the work but I didn't know how to do the work. Thank you Rose's for having time to help me. (you never have put me down)

24.7.14: Dad want to know if I know what going on with my secens [sentence]. Bloody hell I don't like hard words i never can work out how to spell them. O well i do not worry like i used to. I would of been wild a year ago but not now. I am a lot calmer now i give it a go and if i stuff up I don't worry about it like i used to.

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Appendix C:

Skills assessed by the TAPS-3 subtests:

PHONOLOGICAL PROCESSING

WORD DISCRIMINATION

This subtest assesses the student's ability to discern phonological differences and similarities within word parts. They are asked to identify whether 2 spoken words are the same word or a different word eg bike-bite.

PHONOLOGICAL SEGMENTATION

This subtest is designed to determine how well a student can manipulate compound words, syllables and phonemes within words eg say "cowboy". Now say it without "boy".

PHONOLOGICAL BLENDING

This subtest is designed to determine how well the student can synthesise a word given the individual phonemes eg I'm going to say some sounds. When I'm finished you say the word that the sounds make - s/a/t.

AUDITORY MEMORY

NUMBER MEMORY FORWARD

This subtest is designed to show how well the student can retain simple sequences of auditory information. It is an indication of a student's immediate short term auditory memory capacity. Number sequences of increasing length are read to the student who is asked to repeat them.

NUMBER MEMORY REVERSED

This subtest is designed to show how well the student can retain and manipulate simple sequences of auditory information. It is an indication of a student's auditory working memory capacity. As in

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the previous subtest number sequences of increasing length are read to the student who is asked to repeat them in *reversed* order.

WORD MEMORY

This subtest is designed to show how well the student can retain simple sequences of auditory information. It is an indication of a student's short term auditory memory capacity. Word sequences of increasing length are read to the student who repeats them.

SENTENCE MEMORY

This subtest is designed to show how well the student can retain details in sentences of increasing length and grammatical complexity. Sentence memory allows the student to utilise the words within the sentence as cues to recall.

AUDITORY COHESION

AUDITORY COMPREHENSION

This subtest is designed to show how well the student remembers, understands and can retrieve spoken information. Passages of increasing complexity are read to the student and then a series of literal questions asked. The student uses key words from the passage to answer the questions. The correct answer is contained within the passage.

AUDITORY REASONING

The auditory cohesion skill for this subtest reflects higher-order linguistic processing and is related to understanding jokes, riddles, inferences and abstractions. These items are intended to determine if the student can understand implied meanings, make inferences or come to logical conclusions given the information in the sentences presented. The answers cannot merely be just a repetition of key words for the sentence, rather the student must also be able to understand and use more complex language constructions to answer the questions.

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Appendix D:

Learnings and Reflections – Melissa

Melissa Iocco, LINC Literacy Coordinator, Justice (Risdon Prison), in discussion with Rosalie Martin, Speech Pathologist, Chatter Matters Tasmania, April 2014 and December 2014.

What was your initial reaction to a speech pathology informed approach to literacy support at the prison?

- Great opportunity
- Saw it as an opportunity to work closer with prison Therapeutic Services

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- Interested to learn more and could see the potential of the speech pathologist's input

What were your expectations at the outset?

- Relief at the thought of additional help and interested in the potential of working from a Speech Pathology perspective on literacy. I was pleased that someone with this level of expertise was taking an interest in the men and women that we're trying to help.
- So it was very welcome. Because of the level of need, complexity of problems and the lack of resources, often it feels like we've just got our heads above water and we're trying to respond to need – so the clients are being seen to in a sense, but how much (sighs) we can actually give with the little we have is something that I'm consciously aware of.
- Human resources would be a challenge – and the speech pathologist has now seen how the system works – that is, the restrictions on hours available to work with inmates between lockdown times and the oft slowness of moving around the physical environs of the prison. You get the feeling that education is not the primary objective of the prison, it's about security. I understand completely why that is necessary but it can make improving literacy in this environment a challenge.
- I also saw it as a great opportunity to develop my skills and deepen my knowledge and to help clients; and I thought at that point that there was a lot to gain from the speech pathologist's involvement.
- Lately, I've been working more collaboratively with the prison psychologists with high-needs and complex inmates with literacy problems. I've enjoyed this as it's been about building relationships within the prison – because there are a lot of us seeing the same person and we're not always talking about what we are doing.

How has the whole process felt for you?

- Inmate-A was selected to work with the speech pathologist because I felt we were more likely to have success with him. Not all clients who are referred would be suitable for a pilot programme. He would have a positive approach to this because he's quite generous – but also deeply needs the assistance and I knew that I didn't really have the skills to get to the bottom of what he needed - so there was a conscious matching. And with him being in minimum security it was an easy thing to do.
- I did find it difficult to provide the daily level of support and practice for Inmate-A that I know was required for the program which the speech pathologist developed for him. Initially, I tried to match him with a peer tutor (an inmate) and a LINC volunteer to assist, but neither of these options worked out, for different reasons. I probably took on too much in agreeing to assist him with his program myself, because of my own busyness as a coordinator – I wanted the process to work because I believed in it and so I felt that I was letting the process down. That was the reality. I did really benefit from the work I did with he and the speech pathologist, though – and learned a lot.

Tell about the mentoring experience which grew out of the programme:

- Most of us – the Prisoner Education and Training coordinator, myself, and the rest of the LINC see the speech pathologist as a golden gift! A gift to the literacy service. It was the coordinator's idea for the speech pathologist to mentor me and I thought it was a great idea.

- He asked “how’s it all going” and I said “Great, I’ve been sitting in on sessions and learning so much” and he said “What about if she were to mentor you more closely?” And I could see his wisdom in that.
- As a specialist and someone who’s been doing this work exclusively for such a long time, the speech pathologist just had a particular knowledge and set of skills. As coordinators we have a range of different skills that we bring to the job but we don’t all necessarily have that practice or knowledge or professional experience that the speech pathologist does.
- When I agreed to the mentoring I saw it as a win-win-win – for the speech pathologist, Inmate-A, and for the project. How did it feel putting this into practice? It was fantastic – really good. I liked how when we had Inmate-A there in a session and we were all focussed on the activity, that the speech pathologist would say ‘just a moment’ and explain the science behind what we were doing, or the reasoning behind it.
- I found the sessions with Inmate-B *the* most beneficial. This was a client who I knew needed the help, but wasn’t necessarily going to participate – just seeing how the speech pathologist engaged him and explained things to him and seeing him respond to her, that was very enlightening – and just seeing the level of commitment and knowledge and focus that the speech pathologist had to keep him on track.

What did the speech pathologist do that was enlightening to you?

- The speech pathologist had an objective – she knows that there is a sequence and she kept the men with her until she reached that point that she was aiming for; and if they weren’t there yet, she would just go back and then bring them along, and go back again – it was almost like she was resetting the directional device, in a sense. She didn’t give up. And she stayed pleasant about it as well! She stayed really pleasant, and she didn’t give up, and she didn’t falter. I didn’t sense any exhaustion or irritation. I guess that’s part of being professional but it’s just that it’s an unwavering commitment to the process that I can see in the speech pathologist’s approach. It’s like a personal trainer who might say ‘no you’ve got to keep doing it, you’ve got to keep doing it’. But she was working with someone who is very likely to have a short fuse, who may have had very bad previous experiences with learning and who may not be invested in the process, so it’s incredibly skilled, I think. Yeah.

What did the speech pathologist do which made this quality of engagement stand out to you in some way?

- I took notes in sessions for my own reference, and I drew the pictures that the speech pathologist had drawn for the inmate which she then used to explain the process.
- The speech pathologist explained to him what this was all about. It was different to my approach because she talked to him about why he may not have got these skills as a child and how it wasn’t his fault.
- She drew a picture of the eye and the ear and did lots of explaining about the relationship between the two and that he hasn’t quite got it yet and that it wasn’t his fault. And what we need to do is reconstruct that relationship so that we can recreate the process of being able to read. At one point the speech pathologist drew a brick wall with an arrow with a little crack in it. And that made a lot of sense to me because it was about the tiny little steps we need in order to have that breakthrough. So it was great metaphor.

- That was the main thing – she explained it from that bigger perspective. As a coordinator, that bigger perspective might come up, but my approach is that I will get a referral for assistance with reading and writing and I might say things like ‘if you missed out on this or that at school it’s understandable that you didn’t pick this up’ and ‘it’s never too late’ and ‘lots of people have trouble with their spelling’ and I’ll try to normalise their literacy issue and make them feel comfortable – but I won’t go deeply into what is happening at a neurological level for them to have this difficulty, which isn’t really my role. More what I would do is I would normalise it saying ‘it’s never too late’, ‘you’re showing courage’ and ‘it’s very common and will take practice’. I’ll also say ‘usually if you’re interested in something that’s a good place to start’ – for example, reading to your children, football, cooking. That’s what I’ll say, but I won’t get to the root of it, because I don’t know what the root is really. It was more about where are you in your skill level and what can I give you to assist you to meet your goals and get to the next stage. And in many cases that is enough. We’ve had clients who have progressed - they’ve worked with tutors and there’s been a connection there and something’s working well and we see progress. I think it is often the quality of the relationship that makes the difference.

Tell more about your observations on the quality of relationship:

- There has to be respect.
- The student has to have a level of drive, of needing to want to improve.
- Where I’ve seen improvements is with inmates who have self-referred.
- I’ve seen some improvements in those who are generally quite confident – but they feel embarrassed about their literacy problem. They do well with practice and the regular engagement and they come looking for it.
- But I wouldn’t say that that is a common quality in people with low literacy.
- I’ve seen ESL clients in here make some excellent progress and I think this is related to their levels of motivation. They often already have knowledge structure in their own language. Often I’ve found they are committed and independent students.
- Generally, part of the motivation is having someone visit them each week. You need to be careful here as the motivation is about maintaining contact with the helper – which can bring all sorts of problems with it – rather than the content of the lesson.

Inmate-B:

- The referral of Inmate-B was one based on need, I wasn’t sure of his willingness to participate.
- Staff had been very concerned about this young man who was going in, out and coming back in – and of the difficulty in keeping him engaged. There was some engagement with the volunteer literacy tutor, and then we lined him up with a volunteer to work on his numeracy – and there was a peer tutor willing to work with him. Resources were going his way. But it wasn’t what he needed to make progress.
- He was released, came back in, and there was concern that this person was back in and he was even more antisocial than he was before.
- I reconnected with him and asked if he wanted to do some literacy and he said “am I gonna get paid for it? No? Don’t wanna do it”. This is leading up to when I referred him to the speech pathologist. He was encouraged by one of the inmates who was working with me on

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his literacy. The other inmate said “C’mon mate, you don’t wanna be like me in your late thirties and still can’t read”. Encouragement from an older inmate who they have respect for helps a lot.

- Then Inmate-B came in and identified a goal – I’ve got to learn to write my surname. He worked with me over a few sessions and he achieved this goal. It was great!
- When I suggested to a support staff member who had been working with him closely that I refer him to the *Just Sentences* program, she said “he doesn’t really need a speech pathologist” and that was my first opportunity to explain about what the speech pathologist and speech pathology intervention can do. We don’t normally have non-prison staff going down into maximum regularly. You have to be a specialist or an interpreter. So that’s where I could use the speech pathologist’s status as a specialist to help this young man who a number of us were struggling to help.
- Having the speech pathologist suggest that she could visit Inmate-B every day and me getting the manager’s support for this was also... that was new ground. And when I mentioned it to the support staff member I’d been working with, she said with surprise “oh, every day!” Not because it was inappropriate, but because none of us have the ability to see anyone every day because of our case loads. That also pointed out to me the level of intensity required and I wondered whether or not we could pull this off. If this level of intensity is what’s needed, do we have the staff to help in the way that the inmates need? But all along the speech pathologist was saying it’s not so much about being dependent on one support person to support the inmate to practice every day, it’s about having a number of support people who are skilled to assist. It’s about who’s around them. Normally out in the community it would be family and friends. At that point I was wondering ‘how realistic is this?’, because we can’t get people coming in to work with inmates every day. But I could see the speech pathologist’s commitment to see this through and one of the things I said to the manager, in asking permission for the speech pathologist to increase her visits, was that we need to increase the visits so that Inmate-B would be more likely to have what he needs when he gets out, than not. Because otherwise it is just going to be token and he’s just going to forget what he’s learned.
- I could see the reasoning behind the speech pathologist coming in everyday and it made me realise how serious she was about this pilot. She could easily have said “I’m busy, it’s difficult, we’ll just continue once per week and see where he’s at when he’s out.”
- Approaching the manager of the facility Inmate-B was housed in and explaining the reasoning behind it, and him not having a problem with it – it just shows the level of good will and support.

The Prison System:

- It is important to be courteous. Must have courtesy for people running the show, the custodial staff. A courtesy email goes a long way.
- Takes time to build credibility and build trust.
- The manager’s response to the request for increased intensity showed this – I sent a courteous, explanatory email, and all boxes were ticked, and he didn’t have a problem with it. A courteous rationale had been given.

What have you learned?

- A lot – where do I start?
- Starting with my own journey and how this builds depth in what I already do, how this builds my confidence in what I already do. I have more skills for understanding how and why people have reading problems.
- The ‘just-right challenge’ was a key learning. I now practice this with clients and see their enjoyment in it.
- Increasing intensity. I’m finding that I’m more comfortable to be more hands on with particular activities and moving things along at the right pace for the client, ‘what about this?’ and ‘what about this combination?’. I’ve picked this up from the speech pathologist. And even with activities that are not about doing things in a structured way – it’s almost like a style.
- It’s engaged, intensive, and very, very invested in the activity you’re doing right now. I’m finding now that I can do things more purposefully – so that I’ve got a better understanding.
- The style... the speech pathologist sits there listening and understanding and she’s just engaged. There’s a quality to the interaction which the person at the other end can feel and in the case of literacy, if that is helping them with their literacy, then that’s beneficial.
- The speech pathologist’s stamina, her belief in her approach and knowing what the goal is. That’s been good.
- My general busyness and other commitments have gotten in the way of attending more of the sessions but I have absorbed a lot out of the sessions that I have attended.

What responses did you observe from the inmates in relation to the teaching style demonstrated?

- With Inmate-B – timing was important. When talking to the speech pathologist his body language showed that he was taking it very seriously. He took her seriously. He was respectful, he was honest. With his previous tutor he was always respectful of her and he was courteous. But I’ll say that his engagement wasn’t as good and his progress in literacy wasn’t as good either.
- ‘Oh look the only reason why I couldn’t was...’ – Inmate-B was regretful that he couldn’t see the speech pathologist on one occasion when he got sent to another unit – he apologised to me in the next week – I wouldn’t have expected that previously. At this point I felt that it could have gone either way, but the fact that he wanted to continue meant to me that there had been some deepening of his insight.
- He had said to a colleague, “It’s all good – I’m learning to read now”. He framed what he was doing with the speech pathologist, as the real thing. (Harrumph – what have I been trying to do in these last two years!)
- I think that the way the speech pathologist introduced the process to him, helped him to understand that this was going to work for him. As well as what she actually does, which works too.
- With Inmate-A – he’s always been willing. He’s changed a lot since I first met him. His first tutor said that after a few months of tutoring his reading ‘hadn’t really changed that much’. His second tutor had made good progress in terms of his journal writing. Inmate-A would do his homework and was a very willing student. He had fewer barriers than Inmate-B to engaging with workers. Some of Inmate-B’s behaviours that got in the way of his engaging,

weren't problematic for Inmate-A. They are very different people and the fact that the speech pathologist was able to make progress with both was really good.

- They are different in many ways and yet the approach has worked with both of them.

What differences of practice did you observe?

- The LINC approach is often about focussing on the client's short term and long term literacy goals and maintaining the client's interest. It's not necessarily about diagnosing the origin or nature of the reading problem; it's about capturing their interest and increasing their exposure and confidence as the main thing.
- Our professional development focuses on a range of areas related to literacy, learning and the contexts and networks we operate in. We also focus a lot on the pathway of the client in terms of improvements in the five core skills from the Australian Core Skills Framework, and opportunities for further training. Our reporting looks at pathways to employment, community engagement and volunteering and so on. We think about their engagement in literacy as a journey.
- It would be great to have more of the professional development that I've experienced through the speech pathologist's approach – learning about neurophysiology, learning disorders and auditory-processing. Why is it that after 20 years of being involved with literacy support, some people have still made no progress? They've had tutors and special education and yet no progress! This is where what the speech pathologist does, helps us.
- Many clients respond well to our handling and techniques with the attention and the care and the respect and the acceptance. But we've got a certain portion of clients with low literacy, that no matter how much we give, until we are addressing the underlying problems – the areas that the speech pathologist knows about – we will make little progress and they will continue to feel frustrated and so may we.

Because of the range of severity of literacy impairments which we see in the prison, the approaches which the speech pathologist and I use are complementary. The methods that we currently use achieve great results for many clients, but for some, it doesn't matter how much attention is given, words will just be squiggles on the page unless we are addressing those deeper issues. The speech pathologist's engagement with them is always at that deeper level, which is what is needed for some of our clients.

Tell about the demands this project made upon your time:

- It's been fine. It's been important so I've prioritised it. I don't mind that the speech pathologist has occasionally needed to reschedule bookings as I value what she has been doing here. When I've had a larger number of volunteers coming in and out there's always been a fair bit of cancelling, rescheduling and rearranging that goes on, and it's just a part of coordinating. I have really valued the speech pathologist's contribution to the program and to the lives of the inmates she's worked with. And she's been flexible with our systems so I've been happy to make sure her access keeps flowing.

Has there been anything which has felt uncomfortable?

- I have been conscious of my level of busyness and have wanted to have more time to engage and to immerse myself a little more in it – but I have needed to manage those competing demands.

- My role involves focus on a lot of different things, and so I have not always been switched on to what is going on with the speech pathologist's sessions. I get back to the unit and I think "oh that's right, the speech pathologist's here!"

How have you felt honoured?

- The speech pathologist's way of being with people is very respectful. She has been very flexible and understanding about prison processes.
- I feel that the speech pathologist understood the processes I need to go through or the limitations of this environment. She has always been very respectful in requesting things. Lovely to work with!

Would you do it again/like to see it expand?

- Yes, but I wonder how it could expand?
- The idea of using peers or officers is good in principle – in practice is difficult. Because it all depends on the 'who'. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. When it works it's great, but sometimes implementing a system is difficult.
- Is it possible to identify those qualities in the individual for 'when it works' and screen for them? Yes. But there is a lot of movement of inmates within the prison which makes implementation a challenge. Not impossible but a challenge.
- This is the challenge for anyone trying to run a program across different sites. You also need a good mix of inmates in a particular unit and hope you've got one or two with the qualities required for this kind of sensitive work. Sometimes, just when you think you've found one, they move on.

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