



Ground Level Literacy Pilot Project Report

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The Project:

Ground Level Literacy (GLL) is a pilot project which brought efficacious literacy teaching to teams at Common Ground Tasmania (CGT) – a dignified apartment-style residential facility for the (formerly) homeless.

GLL involved the CGT concierge team intentionally supporting two selected tenants whose skills on the literacy continuum were at a level below that which is needed for managing the reading-writing demands of daily life. Each tenant was matched with a CGT support worker who, in the presence of the tenant with whom they were each paired, was specifically coached by a speech pathologist, to deliver incisive literacy-skills practice to develop the tenant's literacy skills in accord with that tenant's specific learning profile.

The aims of the project were to:

1. Increase literacy awareness and specific literacy skill within the tenant participants; and to increase literacy awareness and understanding of the processes of the acquisition of literacy within the support worker participants.
2. Increase self-esteem and self-understanding within the tenant participants; and increase self-understanding and compassionate understanding of 'other' within the support worker participants.
3. Gain data and increased knowledge of the challenges and efficiencies of using evidence-based direct-teaching to address reduced literacy in this cohort.

These aims were all met within both the tenant participants and the support worker participants. And there many other were significant, positive, flow-on effects in addition to the two tenants making powerful gains in their reading and writing.

In the tenants, these included positive independent initiations of life choices, a generalising confidence, and development of increased conversation, social engagement and stronger relationship bonds with CGT workers – which then led to willingness to access the workers' assistance in other areas of the tenants' lives. In the support workers, this included respectful appreciation of the complexity of teaching literacy, spreading those new skills by using them with family members, effecting greater job satisfaction through increased connected relationship with the tenants.

These rich, *generalised* benefits all arose directly from the embodied experiences gained from GLL leading with skilled, direct intervention upon the *specific* literacy challenges of the participant tenants.



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Project Schedule – as planned

Two tenants and two support workers were to receive input through GLL. The support workers were scheduled to meet with their paired tenant three times per week over the 25 week project period. This frequency of meeting was set in order to achieve the intensity of input which the evidence for direct-teaching of literacy specifies.

Within these 25 weeks, 10 sessions with the speech pathologist, spaced two to three weeks apart, were scheduled for each tenant together with the paired support workers. In the first session with each tenant – mid June 2016 – initial assessment was undertaken. The final session, intended for reassessment of each tenant's skills, was scheduled for mid-December 2016.

To expand a positive literacy culture within CGT, sharing of information and highlighting of excellent practice regarding literacy teaching and literacy support were to take place in all interactions throughout the project – including with the management teams.

Project Schedule – as executed

For personal reasons, one support worker needed to take leave from 15 weeks into the program and another support worker took-over her position for the remaining 10 weeks of the 25 week plan.

One tenant attended eight of the ten possible sessions with the speech pathologist. One tenant attended six of the ten possible sessions. Neither tenant attended the mid-December sessions and thus final, formal reassessments have not been possible.

Though three practice sessions between tenant and support worker were scheduled each week, only in the beginning of the program were this number of sessions attended – it was more common that the tenants attended two of the three planned sessions with the support workers each week.

Both of the tenants began the program with enthusiasm and experienced high levels of success from the start point. It was necessary with one tenant to occasionally rearrange the appointments with the speech pathologist onto a different day of the week, or into a different week, in order to fit with other demands in his life. This was able to be flexibly accommodated.

For both tenants the missed or cancelled sessions with the speech pathologist were the tail-end sessions. The tenants attended well; then stopped attending. The practice sessions involving the tenants and the support workers also saw tail-end drop-off. With one tenant, this drop-off was complete from 20 weeks into the program; the other tenant, maintained intermittent attendance with the support worker right through until the end of the program.

Reasons for Non-Attendance

Both tenants reported enjoying the sessions and feeling satisfied with their progress; this remained so, even during the tail-end drop-off in attendance. The non-attendance of both tenants appeared to the support workers to relate to changes in their personal circumstances; and further, were indeed reported by each tenant to be related to personal circumstance changes. Both tenants had been attending eagerly prior to these changes. Changes included matters to do with family, accommodation, legal obligations, transport, and various factors of overwhelm or expectation.

After the third session with the speech pathologist one tenant experienced some specific challenges in the program, which necessitated some repairing-support between the sessions scheduled with the speech pathologist. Once he and his support worker received this support he then continued to track well in the program until the change of personal circumstances which led to his tail-end drop-off in attendance.

Evaluation

The results of the program were evaluated using the observations collected throughout the program by the speech pathologist; together with the observations of the support workers (SW1, SW2) and CGT-based Support Services Manager (SSM) collected at interview in early January 2017*.

It was intended that the results of formal reassessments of the tenant-participants' (T1, T2) literacy skill would also be added to the data contributing to evaluation, but it has not been possible to gather this information due to the non-attendance of the final sessions.

*SW3 was unavailable to participate in final interview due to change in personal circumstances.

Outcomes

Three outcomes were being aimed for and were expected to arise from GLL. These were:

1. Increased literacy awareness and specific literacy skill within the tenant participants; and increased literacy awareness and understanding of the processes of the acquisition of literacy within the support worker participants

This goal was richly achieved in all five of the direct participants, with positive influence also extending to members of the wider team. All were effusive about how much they learned, how the experience of the program had changed their understanding of the complexity of learning literacy; and how it had given them positive hope, direction, expectation and experience that with on-target, evidence-based input, valuable and tangible changes could be accomplished.

Tenants

The tenants' awareness of what it takes to acquire the skills of reading and writing was increased. They learned experientially about the process of reading and writing, and about themselves and their own processing systems.

Both tenants made major progress in their reading skills. Unfortunately, the final reassessment appointments were not attended, so there is no formal data borne of final standardised assessment by which to determine statistical significance of the gains made. It is proffered, however, from the clinical experience and judgment of the speech pathologist that the size and speed of the gains made by each tenant is likely to have fallen within the statistically significant range of change. If this

were to have indeed been confirmed through measurement, it would mean that the gains which were made could not be expected to have occurred by chance.

Tenant 1:

- T1 avoided reading and writing and his measured skills at the beginning of GLL were more than two standard deviations below the mean.
- His stated goal for engaging with GLL was “I want to improve my literacy and help my kids with homework – especially through high school; because I didn’t have anyone to help me”. As this tenant gained skills he reported that he was teaching those skills to his son. He seized this stated goal from the start of the program and continued to use his new knowledge to assist his son throughout the program and beyond the time of his direct engagement with the program.
- He began to read the first books he had ever read for pleasure.
 - “I’ll probably finish reading this book – it’s kinda got me interested now.”
 - “I’ve noticed that reading relaxes you. It kinda gets your mind off things!”
- He showed initiation by attending the LINC on his own and applying for a library card in order to borrow books. This had been suggested to him as part of the program, but the trip had been planned to be undertaken with a support worker. It transpired that the support worker was then not available at the time that it had been planned to make the trip to the LINC together – so he went by himself. This was unprecedented. It reflects the confidence and eagerness which had grown from his successes as a new reader.
 - “Yeah, I got my library card. I just went and got it.”
- He showed tenacity by finding two of the few adult-graded readers kept by the LINC. These are not kept in a specific area of the LINC, but are filed in the shelves with other titles. The tenant (this was also unprecedented and demonstrated significantly improved confidence and self-assurance) asked a LINC staff member for assistance and insisted to this staff member that he needed to find the adult-graded titles. The staff member could not find the books that the tenant required and had to call in extra assistance to do so. The tenant reported that it took “ages” to find the books. He persisted through this, borrowed the books and read them. They were read by his next session with the speech pathologist. This all represents massive gains in a man whose initial reading assessment placed his skills at more than two standard deviations below the mean.
 - “I tell you what, those books were hard to find.”
- He began to write a reflective journal as part of the program. Before the disruption of the tail-end drop-off in attendance, he was writing two to three pages between sessions with the speech pathologist. He stated that if he woke in the middle of the night, or couldn’t sleep, that he found that that was a good time to write his thoughts.
- He demonstrated enthusiasm in the sessions; was attentive, respectful, curious, enquiring and cooperative.
- He frequently commented on how much he was enjoying the program and how pleased he was of the gains he was making.
 - “I can see I’ve learned!”
 - “Work I couldn’t do, I can do now!”

- “No one’s ever taught me English like this before!”
- He was able to independently state that he could feel that his confidence was increasing in everything – not just reading.

Tenant 2:

- T2 was an active avoider of all reading and writing situations. At the beginning of GLL his measured skills were more than three standard deviations below the mean.
- He explained that he “didn’t work in Primary School”; that he “drew at the back of the class”. He stated that at school “they thought I couldn’t do it”. His stated goal in GLL was “to be able to read”. He wanted to be able to read to a two year old family member. He stated “every time I’m out there, [the child] passes me a book” and then went on to state that he is embarrassed that he has felt he has to deflect the child’s approaches, realising that the child has an expectation that as an adult, he (the tenant) will be able to read the book to the child. He also stated that he wanted to be able to obtain his learner driver licence.
- He demonstrated enthusiasm in the sessions; was attentive, respectful, enquiring, cooperative, and he engaged with good humour.
- By midway through the GLL plan this tenant had mastered the necessary phonemic processing (processing of speech sounds) to then begin reading the first levels of adult-graded readers. At this point, he spontaneously began using his new skills to read to his young family member. Thus achieving his stated goal. His support worker also supported him to apply for his learner driver licence.
- He was very excited when the program turned from the laying of the foundational phonemic processing skills to the application of that new knowledge in the reading of actual books. This excitement and sense of achievement caused a surge in engagement with the program, and increased attendance of the sessions with the support worker to a regular rate of three per week for a short time before the disruption of other life circumstances brought about the tail-end drop-off in attendance.

Support Workers

The support workers learned experientially about the processes behind teaching reading and all three gained, and commented on making, new and potent understandings of the complexity of the theory and process.

- They previously were unaware of how much complexity is involved in learning to read and were grateful for the opportunity to have learned so much about it.
 - “It highlighted to me the importance of literacy. I think it empowers people who in the past haven’t been empowered”. SW2
- They felt dignified by the structure of the GLL program which actively taught *them* as intensely as it taught the tenants.
 - “[I learned] the skill. Of tutoring. And I’ve done a little bit of it since with a young family member. I was able to take the skills and just use them. Which was really good.” SW2
 - “I’ve learned so much. I had no idea all of this was behind reading. But when you explain it, I can see why”. SW3

- “I learned about some of the word structures, that syllables are formed by vowels – I didn’t know those things.” SW1
- “I was across the instructions. So, you would come in and do the assessments and updates and the instructions you would give were simple and really understandable. And the way that you would go over it with both of us – so you would work with T2, but then you would also work with me – that was really beneficial as well. So instead of me just being on cruise control through the whole thing... I couldn’t just be sitting there while you were teaching T2, because it was my turn next. And you would inform T2 that you were going to work with me – it was a real equaliser I think. And it was really good.” SW2
- “I think there was a lot of learning also achieved by the support workers. Whenever I would touch base with them about how things were travelling, there were comments made about the progress of the students; but there were refreshing, smiles-on-faces stories told about how they had learned as well. So what the GLL program did was not only provide improved literacy outcomes for the student, but also a better understanding of learning principles and processes as well – for the support workers.” SSM
- They felt supported and able to seek extra help when needed.
 - “The meeting we had before you came into the last session that we had together – letting you know that he was under pressure from external circumstances – the way that session went I think was great for T1 to actually see that it all impacts; that it all correlates; that there are relationships between those things that are causing stress and being able to focus and concentrate on learning and so on.” SW1
 - One support worker emailed the speech pathologist as needed between sessions in order to clarify understanding and ask trouble-shooting advice.
- Their relationships with their paired tenant became a richly central component of their enjoyment of, and satisfaction in, the program; and of their work generally.
 - “[The most enjoyable thing was] building a relationship with T2. And feeding on from that was... I’m not sure if pride is the right word... yes... feeling really proud of him. For the way that he was able to achieve.” SW2
 - “It was fun! It was actually enjoyable. That was the biggest thing. It is a difficult thing to do. There was a lot of rote and going over and over in that sort of learning. It has a tendency to be boring. So the fact that the sessions were enjoyable was great. And not just for T2, I would think ‘Oh great! There’s a session on today!’. The interaction was really positive for me as well.” SW2
 - “[It was enjoyable to] develop that relationship with T1 – and on a one-to-one basis, which for me, I generally don’t get the opportunity to do! It was good to build that relationship to help someone – especially someone who, it turned out, was going through quite a lot at that time.” SW1
- The relationship fostered by the GLL program expanded and generalised the trust between themselves and their paired tenant, resulting in them experiencing greater effectiveness in supporting the tenant in other challenges.
 - “Obviously, going through the program processes with him has contributed to relationship building as well. This has definitely led to, not just me, but other members of support, having a greater understanding of who T1 really is. So we can then help and support him in other areas of his life – as well as literacy.” SW1
 - “I guess there’s an element of embarrassment about not being able to read or write, so by building up his confidence in working with him, he’s opening up to me – so then other things that are coming up with him, in conversations with him, that have just come up because

we've been open with each other. So around his kids, for example. So then that's led to us being able to support him – going to other external resources and programs and go with him, and he's been open to that. Whereas I think maybe in the past, again, it's that embarrassment, that 'I don't have whatever the skill might be, I don't have those parenting skills, and I feel embarrassed to say "I don't know how to be a parent"; I'm not doing a good job of being a parent'. But when he's already been through the process with the reading and the literacy, that barrier has gone. It's a lot easier for him to open up. And to reach out and accept the help when it's put out there." SW1

- "[I]t has enabled us to build a bit more of a relationship – with trust. And quicker. Than might otherwise happen." SW1
- "With T2, as well as the advancements that he made in literacy, there were ancillary benefits. So issues that were popping up for him, that were coming up as barriers, they needed to be addressed in order for him to be able to proceed. I think those barriers were coming up for him any way and in a strange way, it actually provided a reason to address those barriers which actually may have gone unnoticed or without any intervention whatsoever." SSM
- "The more intensive work simply increased the frequency of contact with T2. When T2 was saying 'I'm finding it tricky to be able to achieve this', then the question was asked 'well why is that?'. And he was able to say 'well, these things are happening in my life at the moment'. So it gave a different chance to unpack those things to identify other issues that were happening for him." SSM
- They noted that the enthusiasm of both tenants to comply with the program at the beginning was extraordinary, and understood that drop-off in attendance was common within this cohort – particularly in response to changed personal circumstances, as both tenants experienced.
 - "It started off with a whole lot of enthusiasm shown by the staff and by the selected tenants. There was always contained within that the risk of the tenants finding it challenging to maintain their attendance and to maintain the level of study in between which was required of them. But I think that initial enthusiasm provided the momentum; and when the students were a bit reluctant and had some barriers, the support staff were looking to find ways to overcome those barriers or to work around them." SSM
- In spite of the tail-end drop-off in attendance, they witnessed tenacity in the tenants which was unusual, and which they felt arose from the connection, respect and success which the tenants were experiencing in the program.
 - "T1 had responsibilities and commitments from another part of his life that he *had* to attend to – he had no choice but to focus time and energy on those. I think he made an outstanding effort in trying to manage and show that he did still want to participate – it was actually that he was unable to." SSM
 - "[H]e wants to keep going with it and be supported." SW1
 - "T1... would get himself down to the library. He didn't need anyone to go with him; he didn't need a reminder to say 'have you been?' He would just go. He would just do it." SW1

Other Team Members

Other members of the wider CGT team experienced the program through the sharings of both the tenants and the paired support workers. These other team members became involved in reporting to the support workers those positive changes which they were observing in the behaviour of the tenant-participants. They became enthused by the tangible success the direct participants in the

program were having, leading to conversations and planning about how other team members could also support the participant-tenants and other tenants in literacy. That is to say, a fresh literacy-aware culture began to develop in the whole team.

- “I think as a staff we have all resourced and pulled together, so if there was anything in me working with T1 that I wasn’t sure of, then I would ask some of the others and vice versa. Sometimes we would just generally talk about it in conversations with peer support – how he was doing, where he was heading. And we’d brainstorm how we could collectively support him.” SW1
- “Obviously, going through the program processes with him has contributed to relationship building as well. This has definitely led to, not just me, but other members of support, having a greater understanding of who T1 really is. So we can then help and support him in other areas of his life – as well as literacy.” SW1

2. Increased self-esteem and self-understanding within the tenant participants; and increased self-understanding and compassionate understanding of ‘other’ within the support worker participants

This goal was also richly achieved in all five of the direct participants as well as amongst the wider members of the team. The support workers and other team members reported significant changes in the confidence, self-esteem, initiation and self-reliance of the tenant-participants as a direct result of their engagement with the program. They observed that these positive changes included, but extended well beyond, the literacy targets. The knowledge and enthusiasm which sprang from the enjoyment and positive experiences of the five direct participants also influenced other team members, stimulating growth of a literacy-aware culture and creative thinking about, and responding with, ways further literacy-support can be woven into other CGT activities, programs and interactions.

Tenants

Increases in self-esteem and self-understanding were reported for both of the tenants. This generalised beyond literacy skill.

- Gains in esteem and personal growth were reported within the literacy tasks.
 - “I notic[ed] how much pride T1 took in where he was going and where he had come from... it became a matter of pride that he was moving forward.” SW1
 - “We talked at Christmas about the fact that he wants to keep going with it and be supported.” SW1
 - “I can’t see any failing in what T1 has learned. He’s come from a very low level to now reading so well – and he still wants to do more. He’ll sit up at night and write things. How can that not be a huge success?!” SW1
- Many gains in esteem and personal growth were reported beyond the literacy tasks.
 - “The thing that I didn’t expect was his emotional growth and his ability to be able to deal with complex things that were happening within his life, through articulating them. That’s the thing I didn’t expect.” SW2
 - “I guess there’s an element of embarrassment about not being able to read or write, so by building up his confidence in working with him, he’s opening up to me – so then other things that are coming up with him, in conversations with him, that have just come up because

we've been open with each other. So around his kids, for example. So then that's led to us being able to support him – going to other external resources and programs and go with him, and he's been open to that." SW1

- "And it just let's you know where he's at as well. There was one session where he hadn't really done anything and he just came out and said 'I've been really depressed'. That's a big thing for someone to just come out and admit. He's always seemed that he's kept himself to himself – never really would chat much. Where he's opened up a lot more to me now." SW1
 - "Maybe eventually [this would have happened without the reading program]. But certainly not as quickly. And potentially not to anywhere near the same extent of shared information." SW1
 - "[It] made a big difference in him being able to work through a lot of the interpersonal relationships that he'd previously had a lot of trouble with in his life. Being able to do that led to him just being able to take that pause, that minute, and not react – especially with social media. That was really noticeable for T2. And instead of it becoming a tit and a tat, and building and building and it exploding and becoming very large, he was able to firstly think about how he was feeling and then be able to articulate it better – even when he spoke to me about it – and then just take that pause and not react straight away." SW2
 - "[I] put that down to, probably that confidence and self-belief and the fact that what he says, matters. And that it's ok to voice what's going on, and confidence in doing that, and the tools to be able to do it. T2's vocabulary was really limited when we started. So maybe that." SW2
 - "I think with T2, one of the things is that he had a bit of a reputation ... he would make up stories and do quite a few things to gain attention. And I think that really noticeably changed for him... maybe it was because he was able to communicate without having to do those other things. He used to hide behind things and jump out, to get attention. So he would do really physical things like that. So maybe, he became confident enough to be able to communicate in a more adult way. This was feedback that I received mostly from Staff1, who had a lot to do with him." SW2
 - "The reading and writing is great – but the verbal communication for me was a real benefit... I was talking and he was talking, and we were repeating things and it was consistent... At the most we had four different activities [to accomplish in the sessions], but they were all about me speaking and then him responding, so maybe that had something to do with it. In the way of the design and the delivery." SW2
 - "So I think that recognition of [being affected by other factors in his life] was another beneficial thing for him. And that fits in with him being more self-aware and emotionally regulated." SW2
 - "And even moving out of CGT, in some ways, I think has been part of the journey that he is on. I am quite confident that without the GLL program behind him, that he wouldn't have been able to get to that point." SW2
 - The speech pathologist was contacted by the magistrate who was dealing with one of the tenants through a therapeutic jurisprudence court, asking if she (the speech pathologist) might attend court to share information about the progress being made by the tenant in the GLL program. This contact arose because the magistrate had independently observed an increase in the tenant's confidence and esteem; and had become aware that the tenant was involved in the program. The magistrate could see that the program had enhanced more than just the tenant's literacy. This was all very positive experience for not only the tenant, but also for all-else involved.
- Gains in the social esteem of peers were also observed.

- “T2 was happy to talk to [the other tenants] about [the GLL program]. And he received a lot of support from them for being involved.” SW2
- “He received support from his family and also his friendship group who encouraged him to be there and to be involved. Which was really, really interesting because I don’t think he’s been supported in a lot... in the past.” SW2
- “From a tenant perspective in CGT, the people who were in his friendship group... were aware that he was doing it, and from a CGT perspective, that was seen as that we were doing something really worthwhile – we received a lot of positive comments from other tenants. So even though we don’t talk to them about it because it’s confidential – they talk to us! They would make comment on the positive nature of the course and the things they would see in T2, which were very similar to what I said earlier.” SW2
- “Can I let you know this as well; when T1 is up on the balcony having a smoke or whatever, there are other guys, and they are older guys who have been around traps, and I think they’re paying him respect. They don’t know [exactly] what he’s doing, but they understand that he’s going down to do some schooling and to do some reading and they give him respect. And that’s an energy that we want to foster as much as possible.” SSM

Support Workers & Team

The support workers observed increases in their own understandings of the tenants and the challenges which the tenants face; with increases in compassion and fellow-feeling towards them.

- There were increases in understanding of how literacy impairment is one of the roots of the other disadvantages which the tenants face.
 - “There were great conversations that would happen amongst the support team and the extended concierge team – in talking about why we are doing this. I think that helped bring to the attention of many of the staff, not only the kinds of barriers that can come up... when you’ve improved literacy skills perhaps your opportunities, your options, your internal dialogue, can be wider in its scope as well. I think it was a core starting point to allow the staff to see that there are real barriers that have impacted a lot of people and that it may be literacy, and it may go back to schooling age, which might mean that they didn’t have good experiences at school, which means that they were then marginalised from an early age, and that led onto dropping out, poor education, and so on, and so people got to see the broader picture [for] a marginalised group – this cohort that we are working with – [of] some of the factors that contribute to them being here.” SSM
 - “[W]hen you do start to unpack it, you see ‘wow, there’s a lot going on behind that [literacy] door’.” SSM
 - “[I]t actually provided a reason to address those barriers which actually may have gone unnoticed or without any intervention whatsoever.” SSM
- And increases in fellow-feeling, which strengthened the empathy required to discharge their duties with developed, affectively-based professionalism.
 - “This has definitely led to, not just me, but other members of support, having a greater understanding of who T1 really is.” SW1
 - “[The most enjoyable thing was] building a relationship with T2. And feeding on from that was... I’m not sure if pride is the right word... yes... feeling really proud of him.” SW2

3. Gain data and increased knowledge of the efficiencies and challenges of using evidence-based direct-teaching to address reduced literacy in the tenant-participants

This goal was also richly achieved. It was intended that GLL would gather information about what works and what obstacles exist in providing direct literacy intervention in a residential setting for the formerly chronically-homeless. It was also intended as a learning outcome for Chatter Matters Tasmania, CGT, and their funders, regarding the shaping of the GLL project for efficiency and efficacy, as well as sustainability of the inputs made, beyond the immediate project.

Efficiencies – what worked

The GLL project demonstrated clear efficacy for building the access of the tenants to skills and information, personal growth, aspiration, inspiration, independence and dignity in their lives; and delivered the same benefits to the support workers within their roles. These benefits have been referred to in detail above.

The other very evident efficiency was the transfer of awareness and learning to the wider CGT team and tenancy. Thus the foundations of a sustainable, literacy-aware culture which can continue beyond the reach of this iteration of GLL have been built into the grassroots of the CGT organisation.

- This was demonstrated within the CGT team.
 - “I think as a staff we have all resourced and pulled together... And we’d brainstorm how we could collectively support him.” SW1
 - “You can use the [team’s learnings about the principles of learning] as a starting point to show that maybe there are different processes and practices that underpin *other* things that we are trying to achieve. Say, it might be around trying to reduce substance use, or trying to improve mental health. Whatever that looks like, there is a process and a practice, and I *can* learn that and be part of that and help facilitate that.” SSM
 - “It comes back to the value of what is put before you. And I think that value [in the GLL project] was easily recognised [by the wider CGT team]. So then there was the corresponding investment from the staff. They wanted to be up to speed with what was going on. For me I love it when a staff member comes to work and they are enthusiastic because ‘there’s something going on today and I need to achieve that’. You’ve got a mission for the day. So in that, it provided some inspiration and motivation for the staff.” SSM
 - “It’s provided impetus and desire for us to keep literacy in place and on the radar and to keep that in the minds of the staff so that can feed through to the tenant group as well.” SSM
 - “T1 wants to continue and wants to continue to improve, his support worker has identified that he would like to bring in another person who works from 4pm to 12pm and that a person on duty in this time slot who also is tasked with supporting literacy would provide greater flexibility to the tenant regarding times at which he could be supported to work on his literacy. This person is keen to work with T1 to keep the multiple literacy contacts going through the week. We can work to make that happen. And to provide T1 with ongoing consistency.” SSM
 - “So it was kind of layered – there were the core outcomes that were trying to be achieved by the GLL program and then what we noticed was that in addition to those was:

- The staff investment
- The identification of barriers
- The additional work that was able to be done with those tenants around those barriers

And there was the benefit of seeing the smiles on their faces when they know that they have increased vocabulary; that they're able to articulate what is going on for them." SSM

- "It appeared that he came along in leaps and bounds – and it provided an opportunity for staff to see that; and the work was quite tangible – they could see what was happening. Some of the work we do here isn't quite as tangible." SSM
- "There were great conversations that would happen amongst the support team and the extended concierge team – in talking about why we are doing this. I think that helped bring to the attention of many of the staff, not only the kinds of barriers that can come up... when you've improved literacy skills perhaps your opportunities, your options, your internal dialogue, can be wider in its scope as well. I think it was a core starting point to allow the staff to see that there are real barriers that have impacted a lot of people and that it may be literacy, and it may go back to schooling age, which might mean that they didn't have good experiences at school, which means that they were then marginalised from an early age, and that led onto dropping out, poor education, and so on, and so people got to see the broader picture [for] a marginalised group – this cohort that we are working with – [of] some of the factors that contribute to them being here." SSM
- "This was feedback that I received – mostly from Staff1, who had a lot to do with him. [So to clarify, Staff1 was able to see that these changes in behaviour were coincident with the program?] Yes. [And Staff1 attributed these changes to the input from the program?] That's where our conversations went around it; was that he had witnessed these things during the time T2 was doing the program." SW2
- "I can't think of any negatives." SSM
- And the foundations of a sustainable, literacy-aware culture were also demonstrated within the broader tenancy.
 - "It's all been a great experience; and great for the tenants. Can I let you know this as well; when T1 is up on the balcony having a smoke or whatever, there are other guys, and they are older guys who have been around traps, and I think they're paying him respect. They don't know [exactly] what he's doing, but they understand that he's going down to do some schooling and to do some reading and they give him respect. And that's an energy that we want to foster as much as possible." SSM

Challenges

Along with the success of the GLL project there were of course challenges to be noted and used as grist for the mill of continual improvement. These all related to the tail-end drop-off in attendance.

Though the tail-end drop-off in attendance had been clearly identified as a risk well-known to be associated with this cohort, and though it was clear that changes in the tenants' personal circumstances largely contributed to it, it nevertheless brought some disappointment to the team. This disappointment may have been more especially acute because the team had seen how much gain the men had made in the first half of the program, as well as the high consistency of their attendance in the first half; and so both awareness and expectation were raised for this to continue throughout the GLL plan.

Evaluative discussion focused on program structure which would mitigate this risk in future projects. The conclusions of these discussions are noted in the recommendations.

Recommendations

From the learnings arising in the GLL pilot project, the following recommendations are made to both complete this iteration of the project and to inform future iterations:

1. In-service to CGT whole staff.

The full time allowed in the project, which was not used by the speech pathologist because of the tail-end drop-off in attendance, be used instead to prepare and deliver to the CGT team a whole-of-staff in-service about literacy, and the organisational expansion of a literacy-aware and literacy-active culture. It is also recommended that this in-service opportunity be made available to all tenants who also have interest.

The timing of this in-service – that it is taking place *after* the experiential program – is expected to be more effective than if the in-service had been delivered before the experiential program. This is because the team now have affectively-based experience within which the content of the intended training will bed-down more readily; and from which enlivened questions will arise more readily. That is to say, the team is more prepared to receive such training because of their embodied experience of GLL.

- The team will also receive specific input about how to transfer the skills they learned in GLL to other clients and other learning situations; particularly those skills pertaining to manner of delivery of instruction – direct instruction, intensity of practice, schedules of reinforcement, maintenance of high-levels of overt encouragement and joy in the process.
- In its content, the in-service will also address the suite of recommendations (given below) arising from GLL, as points of learning which will amplify the learnings which the team have already made.

2. The GLL program be shortened to six sessions with the speech pathologist.

Through reflection and discussion it was agreed that a future iteration of GLL be structured with only six sessions from the speech pathologist instead of ten. These six sessions would still be spaced three weeks apart; and the intensive sessions delivered by the support workers would still take place in between. It was agreed that the tenants' success, and sense of success, would be more completely served by finishing the program on a high point of achievement.

3. Subsequent iterations of GLL be planned to include modules of targeted learning.

This model will allow systematic extension of the tenants' skills, but within blocks which permit them to finish on a high point of achievement.

4. Funders and other interested stakeholders be supported to understand the points of differentiation within GLL which further served positive outcomes of character development and independence well beyond the intended literacy gains. It served the very targets for

independence and positive personal-growth which are embedded within the higher purposes which CGT holds for its tenants. The literacy development, in addition to its own highly-valuable and life-changing utility, was a vehicle by which to create opportunity to serve these other targets also. This was accomplished by the combination of high-quality instruction and high-quality relationship.

5. Funders and other interested stakeholders be supported through awareness-raising, including by direct address, to better understand, just as the CGT team came to do through their embodied experience in GLL, that teaching literacy to those who have reached adulthood without having acquired it, is possible. Everyone can learn to read – even those whose skills are three standard deviations below the mean. It is never too late for change when support and programs to stimulate that change combine skilful, evidence-based intervention with high-level respect and honour within positive relationship. This combination of program-essentials brings about the targeted positive changes in the learner; and it also has power, through involved-others witnessing its effectiveness, to make positive changes in the wider social context within which the learner leads his daily life.
6. Funders and other interested stakeholders be supported to better understand that expert input for literacy instruction, much more quickly and efficiently than non-expert input, brings the tangibility of skills-gains which were observed and commented upon by the CGT team in relation to GLL. This is, indeed, the dignity and benefit of intervention which is evidence-based. It serves the ‘access to excellence’ of CGT’s motto.
7. Funders and other interested stakeholders be supported to better understand that tenacity is a skill which is learned by successfully *going through the process* of being tenacious. GLL rapidly delivered large literacy gains, which gave positive experiences of ‘achievable tenacity’ to the tenants and the team. In subsequent iterations, this is expected to be further enhanced through the use of a program structure which delivers its content in modules. This structure is recommended for future iterations of GLL.

Gratitudes

The tenants

The tenants were fabulous – and they were vulnerable, hopeful and courageous: the perfect ground for astounding learning – which they achieved. And which, as a result, allowed the rest of us to learn much too. I’m so proud of these guys. And so grateful.

The support workers

The support workers were also vulnerable, hopeful and courageous. I recall their slight nervousness at the beginning – wondering what they might be about to experience – and how quickly it turned into empowerment and pleasure. They were all fabulous to work with; open, eager compassionate professionals. Thank you so much for your participation and your insights.

The Support Service Manager

Thank you for allowing yourself to be inspired enough to take this project on; and for seeing that GLL could make a real difference for your tenants and team. It's been a pleasure to work with you – positive, optimistic, realistic, enabling, warm and kind. Much gratitude.

The Managing Director

The visionary, the calculated-risk-taker. Thank you for your courage and willingness to try a different model – bringing access to excellence. Chatter Matters Tasmania, and myself personally, are very grateful for the opportunity to have provided input to your team and tenants, and to have learned in ways which allow us to continue to improve the delivery of the GLL program. We delivered much; and gained much. A mountain of gratitude.

Tasmanian Community Fund

Much gratitude is extended to the Tasmanian Community Fund for its openness to the Managing Director's recommendations and judgment. Chatter Matters Tasmania, and also myself personally, are very grateful. We trust you can see that you have enabled work which has the humanity and the science to change the way adult literacy instruction, with its concomitant acceleration of personal growth, is delivered in Tasmania and across the nation.

Rosalie Martin

Speech Pathologist | Criminologist | Courage Facilitator

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