Stockholm Education Administration

Multilingual Research Institute

A report on school-based Action Research

Will the implementation of *Reading to Learn* in Stockholm schools accelerate literacy learning for disadvantaged students and close the achievement gap?

Prepared for the Multilingual Research Institute, Stockholm Education Administration

by Claire Acevedo
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Acknowledgments

The Multilingual Research Institute, Stockholm Education Administration wishes to acknowledge the following for their contribution to the Reading to Learn literacy project in 2009 - 2010.

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Developer of the Reading to Learn program: Dr David Rose is the director of Reading to Learn, an international literacy program that trains teachers across school and university sectors (www.readingtolearn.com.au) and an Associate of the Faculty of Education and Social Work, and of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Sydney. The Reading to Learn program trains teachers from junior primary, through secondary to university levels in literacy scaffolding strategies. It currently conducts major training programs with state and independent school systems and in universities across Australia, in South Africa, Asia, Latin America and Scandinavia.

Within Sydney University Dr Rose has been a Principal Research Fellow with the Koori Centre. Dr Rose’s work has been particularly concerned with Indigenous Australian communities, languages and education programs, with whom he has worked for 25 years, in remote communities in northern and central Australia, as well as in NSW, Victoria and South Australia. He is a speaker of Pitjantjatjara, a language of Australia’s Western Desert, and a member of the Western Desert Indigenous Law.


Students, teachers and principals from the following Stockholm schools involved in the Learning to Read Project:

- Husbygårdsstiden
- Åkallaskolan
- Elinsborgsskolan
- Knutbyskolan
- Hässelby gymnasium
- Bagarmossens skola
- Trollbodaskolan
Executive Summary

By international standards, Sweden has an inclusive, democratic education system. However, immigrant students, on average, have weaker education outcomes than their native peers at all levels of education. The performance gaps are especially pronounced for first-generation immigrants \(\textit{i.e.}\) students who were not born in Sweden, nor were their parents born in the country), especially those who arrived at a late age. The toughest challenge appears to be completion in upper secondary education. (Taguma et. al., 2009: 64)

The OECD Review of Migrant Education in Sweden 2010, recommends that a number of measures be put in place to improve this situation including that more effort be made to:

- prioritise training of all teachers – not only language teachers but subject and classroom teachers – to be more responsive to the linguistic and cultural diversity of students and,
- provide leadership training for school leaders to implement a “whole-school approach” to migrant education. (Taguma et. al., 2009: 86).

Furthermore, the new Swedish curriculum, which comes into effect in Autumn 2011 emphasises the explicit teaching of language and content in all subject areas as exemplified in the Biology curriculum:

\begin{quote}
The course will also help students develop a familiarity with biology concepts, models and theories and understanding of how they develop in interaction with experience from investigations of nature and man. In addition it will help students to develop the ability to discuss, interpret and produce texts and various forms of aesthetic expression with science content. (http://www.skolverket.se)
\end{quote}

In response to these issues the Multilingual Research Institute in Stockholm undertook the \textit{Reading to Learn} project during the school year 2009-2010. The \textit{Reading to Learn} program has consistently been shown to accelerate the progress not only of underachieving students but in scaffolding all students in accessing the academic-literate discourses of schooling in all subject areas. The goal was to ascertain if it would be successful in accelerating literacy learning for disadvantaged students to effectively close the “gap” in achievement between the highest and lowest performing students as it has been shown to do in Australia (Culican 2006, Rose 2010). Many literacy programs offered to underachieving adolescents in Australian schools, including second language learners, failed to articulate to mainstream curriculum and assessment practices, or to scaffold students adequately in meeting the literacy demands of the increasingly abstract and specialised curriculum in secondary schooling. Literacy failure was often attributed to individual deficit and many programs led to a differentiated curriculum which compounded educational disadvantage and maintained stratified outcomes (Luke et al. 2003).

The Multilingual Research Institute, Stockholm Education Administration identified a range of similar issues for students in Stockholm, particularly those from non-Swedish speaking backgrounds.

This Report documents the outcomes of a systemic initiative carried out over 2009 and 2010 in primary and secondary schools in Stockholm. The project involved teachers implementing the \textit{Reading to Learn} pedagogy and monitoring the progress and achievement of a group of ‘target’ students using a variety of strategies designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Schools and teachers in the project received support through ongoing professional development and school-based consultancy.

Consultancy and professional development for the \textit{Reading to Learn} project was provided by Claire Acevedo an experienced international literacy consultant with many years of experience in implementing the \textit{Reading to Learn} project in Australia and was supported by Dr David Rose, the
The developer of *Reading to Learn* who is an Associate of the Faculty of Education and Social Work, and of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Sydney.

The Multilingual Research Institute’s *Reading to Learn* project involved approximately 22 teachers from 7 primary and secondary schools working with approximately 58 target students. These schools were located across Stockholm and collectively represented a broad cross-section of the cultural and socio-economic contexts within the municipality: 4 low socio-economic status schools, 2 medium status schools and one high socio-economic status school.

Key elements of the *Reading to Learn* project were:

- Teacher professional development
- Project style model of delivery
- School-based support for implementation
- Collection of school, teacher and student data
- Use of print and video resources in English
- Development of teacher resources in Swedish
- Establishment of email contact
- Teacher reflection and evaluation

Key instruments and strategies used to collect data on project outcomes for teachers and students were:

- Assessed student writing samples (pre and post)
- Standardised Reading Comprehension Tests (pre and post)
- Teacher reflections and evaluations (ongoing)

The project confirmed the effectiveness of the *Reading to Learn* (R2L) literacy pedagogy for students at all stages of schooling, particularly those for whom Swedish is a Second Language and those considered as educationally disadvantaged. While the data sample was small, it showed improvement for all learners with a tendency to accelerated outcomes for the lowest performing learners thereby significantly reducing the gap in achievement between high and low performing students in only eight months. Teachers of all subjects represented in the project also reported increased engagement in higher level texts for all students and greater participation in classroom learning particularly for marginalized students.

The findings of the project indicate that the R2L pedagogy, when adopted by groups of teachers provides a common approach to literacy built around shared approaches, materials, and methods that challenges the acceptance of “low expectations” for certain groups of learners. It equips mainstream teachers of all subject areas with the knowledge and a systematic pedagogy to teach all students effectively and explicitly while addressing the demands of the curriculum at all stages of schooling. Classroom teachers can work as part of a team with specialist teachers to meet the needs of the whole range of learners in a class not just the most disadvantaged learners. R2L offers a powerful set of strategies that address the needs of all students in all subject areas within the context of normal classroom teaching practice.

The advantages of the *Reading to Learn* pedagogy identified in Australian studies were found to be similarly apparent in the pilot study in Stockholm:

- Appropriate pedagogy for learners of any age
- Inclusive of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- Effective in both mainstream and intervention (withdrawal) contexts
- Linked to mainstream curriculum and assessment practices
- Flexible and adaptable to different models of delivery
- Supportive of different levels of literacy development, including reading, writing, spelling,
The following are key findings from the *Reading to Learn* Project in Stockholm, 2009 - 2010.

1. Significantly improved literacy outcomes for all students in the *Reading to Learn* project
2. Reduction in the achievement gap for disadvantaged learners
3. Effective pedagogy for engaging all students in classroom literacy learning
4. Advantages of the Reading to Learn literacy pedagogy
5. Teachers’ professional knowledge about language and literacy was developed
6. Project style of professional learning provided a range of data for key stakeholders
7. An evidenced based approach with capacity to lead the whole-school improvement process
Introduction

This report will describe a range of Literacy Professional Development options offered to teachers by the Multilingual Research Institute, Stockholm Education Administration, Sweden 2009 - 2010 as part of their Literacy Improvement Program but will report specifically on the Reading to Learn Project and its outcomes as the key component of the broader Literacy Improvement Program. The impact on both teacher and student learning in schools where Reading to Learn achievement data was collected will be examined and the key findings and recommendations will be presented.

The Literacy Improvement Program was conducted by staff at the Multilingual Research Institute with consultancy support and workshop leadership for Reading to Learn and some other program components from Claire Acevedo, an international literacy consultant with experience and expertise in teacher literacy professional development. It was also supported by the developer of the Reading to Learn Program (R2L) Dr David Rose, Faculty of Education and Social Work, and of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Sydney, Australia and the developer of the multimedia media resources Building Understandings in Literacy and Teaching (BUILT) and Literacy Across Secondary Schooling (LASS), Associate Professor Kristina Love, The University of Melbourne, Australia.

All of the components of the broader program involved spaced learning where teachers participated in professional development sessions, led by Claire Acevedo and literacy experts from the Multilingual Research Institute team. The participating teachers then implemented the range of pedagogical approaches from the professional development in their classrooms with the aim of improving the literacy and learning outcomes of all students and in particular those who were considered to be underachieving. Teachers subsequently engaged in joint reflection on the classroom implementation and continued to deepen their knowledge about language and literacy pedagogy over the course of the year through ongoing workshops, reflective discussions, problem solving sessions, action research and the development of classroom learning materials in Swedish. Key teachers were supported to lead some components of the professional development program in their schools and many teachers reported on their classroom work at the Literacy Inspiration Day held in Stockholm in May 2010.

Section 1 of this report locates the project within the context of literacy policy and education in Sweden, describes the professional learning options available to teachers as part of the broader Literacy Improvement Program and then outlines the theory and principles underpinning Reading to Learn and highlights its key features. Section 2 provides an overview of the design of the Reading to Learn project in Stockholm and a description of its components, the schools, teachers and students involved. Section 3 provides a summary and analysis of the Reading to Learn project results. Section 4 provides a discussion of key findings emerging from quantitative and qualitative data from the project and provides recommendations for future directions.
Section 1: Background and Context

By international standards, Sweden has an inclusive, democratic education system. However, immigrant students, on average, have weaker education outcomes than their native peers at all levels of education. The performance gaps are especially pronounced for first-generation immigrants (i.e. students who were not born in Sweden, nor were their parents born in the country), especially those who arrived at a late age. The toughest challenge appears to be completion in upper secondary education (Taguma et. al., 2009: 64).

The OECD Review of Migrant Education in Sweden 2010, recommends that a number of measures be put in place to improve this situation including that more effort be made to:

• prioritise training of all teachers – not only language teachers but subject and classroom teachers – to be more responsive to the linguistic and cultural diversity of students and,
• provide leadership training for school leaders to implement a “whole-school approach” to migrant education (Taguma et. al., 2009: 86).

It is against this background and the new imperative for all teachers to teach both language and content that the Multilingual Research Institute, Stockholm Education Administration decided to expand the range of professional development options it offered to teachers in 2009 and to enhance the “project style” learning already begun to include funded action research options with opportunities for feedback and collection of data on student achievement.

1.1 Literacy Education Issues in Sweden

Sweden is among the top OECD countries with regard to wealth, development and education. Overall educational attainment is quite high, with at least 80% of the population having attained upper secondary education. It has one of the highest overall employment rates in the OECD, (Statistics Sweden, www.scb.se). Sweden is amongst world leaders regarding equality of educational opportunities with a strong social consensus on the conception of equity in education. It has a generously funded education system and under the Education Act all children, irrespective of gender, place of residence, social or financial situation, have equal access to education in the public school system. (Taguma et. al., 2009: 14).

Today, approximately 20% of all individuals living in Sweden have an immigrant background (Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2001) and the number from less developed countries has increased in recent years. Despite Sweden’s egalitarian education policies, immigrant background students fare poorly compared to their native Swedish peers. These students on average, have weaker education outcomes at all levels of education. (Taguma et. al., 2009: 7). Nearing the end of compulsory education, at age 15, there are very significant performance disadvantages for immigrant students. These gaps are especially pronounced for first-generation immigrants (i.e. students who were not born in Sweden, nor were their parents born in the country). The toughest challenge appears to be completion of upper secondary education. The challenge, however, does not start at that level of education; it is understood that the problem starts in the earlier years and accumulates to become evident as an explicit challenge at age 15. Statistics indicate that the gap is already present in earlier years and grows bigger in the later years of education. (Taguma et. al., 2009: 15)

Immigrant students in Sweden also face a relatively higher risk of not reaching the first proficiency level in PISA than their native peers (Figure 1). Performance below Level 1 on the PISA reading scale (i.e. 335 points) signals serious deficiencies in students’ ability to use reading literacy as a tool for the acquisition of knowledge and skills in other areas (OECD, 2007). In Sweden, about 17% of first-
generation immigrant students perform below proficiency Level 1, while only about 3% of native students do so. Second generation migrants perform much better than their first-generation immigrant peers, with only 4% of them performing below proficiency Level 1. By comparison Australia has only a gap of 1% between the performance of native and first generation students with only 5 and 6 percent of students performing below proficiency Level 1 (Taguma et. al., 2009:26).

The recent OECD Review of Migrant Education in Sweden has recommended that there be targeted measures focusing on language support for underachieving students. The report identified that: “Training all teachers – not only language teachers – and school leaders for diversity and for a whole-school approach is the top priority” (Taguma et. al., 2009: 8).

The report highlighted that: “It is of critical importance that teachers and school leaders enhance the multicultural perspective in teaching practice and school management. … it is a priority in Sweden to raise the quality of teachers by providing extra funding to teachers’ education and training... Teacher education and training could include priority components such as formative assessment, action-research, second language acquisition, and intercultural education. Through such universal measures, not only immigrant students but also native students will benefit. The priority should be to build capacity for a whole-school approach with which schools leaders can engage Swedish language teachers, mother language support teachers, subject or main classroom teachers, other school staff, parents and communities. [Furthermore], there should be focus on raising the quality of learning environments in poorly-performing schools with a high concentration of immigrant students” (Taguma et. al., 2009: 8).

The challenge for policymakers is to find ways of facilitating integration to quicken the improvements in immigrant student performance with a special consideration on improving language teaching. (Taguma et. al., 2009: 26).

In 2003, the National Agency for Education evaluated the issue of teacher competence in compulsory schools and its impact on students’ learning environment. The results based on the evaluation of compulsory schools (focused on students of year nine) showed that, one in three teachers stated that they have insufficient competence to deal with students from different social and cultural backgrounds.
Teachers also feel that collaboration between subject colleagues and opportunities for skills development have declined (Skolverket, 2006). A conclusion of the Inspectorate was that schools need to raise literacy in Swedish and knowledge in other subjects at the same time. Given that immigrant students perform less well in literacy tests than their native peers, it may be important to raise basic skills at the same time as language skills, numeracy and scientific literacy (Taguma et. al., 2009: 26).

Research has indicated (Ofsted, 2002; Johnson, 2003; Brind et al., 2008; Nusche, 2009; Ofsted, 2009) that: “Language support should not be regarded as an issue exclusively for language teachers but as an issue for subject and mainstream teachers, school managers” (Taguma et. al., 2009: 42). It also shows that the quality of teachers makes a big difference to students’ learning outcomes (OECD, 2005). The evaluation by the NAE also confirms that the extent to which school staff undertake teacher training and education in the subject positively correlate with student performance in the national tests in both Swedish and English for students in grade nine (Skolverket, 2006).

1.2 The Multilingual Research Institute Literacy Improvement Program

Background

The Multilingual Research Institute which was originally located in Rinkeby, began in 1997 as an initiative of the local council in response to migrant education issues. Its original aims were to: undertake linguistic research into educational issues in second language development and bilingualism, to disseminate information about previous research and initiate collaborative research projects with schools. It was later jointly sponsored by the council and the Centre for Research on Bilingualism, Stockholm University. Since 2008 it has become a part of the Unit for Strategic Development, Stockholm Education Administration.

The Multilingual Research Institute aims to foster greater understanding about multilingualism in the education community in Stockholm. It focuses particularly on the development of student language competence at all stages of schooling. It endeavours to achieve this by offering research-based professional development for teachers and school leaders. It is part of a process designed to offer continuous school improvement through enhanced language learning outcomes.

Educators from various institutions in Sweden who had been looking to improve literacy and learning outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged learners, had been investigating various approaches to literacy development from around the world for some time. Along with a number of seminars, conferences and workshops organized by the tertiary sector, teachers and other educators had been reading and researching a range of literacy pedagogies. There had been a number of study visits by teachers, tertiary educators and students to the United States, Australia and elsewhere to see different successful approaches to literacy learning in action. In 2007 there was an international Conference on Education, Diversity and Excellence hosted in a secondary school in Upplands Väsby for teachers, school leaders, researchers, school administrators, policy-makers, government officials and the public-at-large. The motivation to organize the conference was broad ranging. Literature promoting the conference stated that it was to better meet the academic needs of growing numbers of language minority and underachieving Swedish students in schools through initiatives to improve instructional practice, school organization, and educational policy. The purpose of the conference was to learn more about pedagogical methods, organizational design, and educational policy that would support the academic needs of linguistically and socially diverse populations. Conference organisers were looking to be inspired and to inspire teachers and administrators to reflect on these needs and learn from the presenters and each other.

The main themes of the conference were:
- Connecting Literacy, Language and Content
- The Power of Reading
- Second Language Acquisition and Bilingual Education
- Sheltered instruction and content-based language learning
- Academic language and different genres of language
- Pathways to L2 academic success
- Organization & Leadership in Multicultural Schools

Participants from the United States, Australia and Europe included, Michael Apple, David & Yvonne Freeman, Arieh Sherris, Jim Martin, David Rose, John Polias, Maurice Crul, Harold Bretstein, Anthony DeFazio, Inger Lindberg, Ruth Mulvad and others (http://linguistlist.org/issues/17/17-2194.htm).

The Multilingual Research Institute then held its own international conference on Literacy and Learning in Stockholm in May 2009. The objectives of this conference however were more specific than those of the 2006 conference in Upplands Väsby. Swedish educators through their ongoing contact with scholars and literacy experts from around the world, in-country visits, reading, reflective discussion and their own preliminary classroom pilots were now focusing on a range of more specific measures and approaches that had been identified as having the potential to improve literacy and learning, particularly for migrants, in the Swedish context. The educators now wanted to gain more in depth knowledge about these approaches before deciding what to implement in Swedish schools. Promotional material for the 2009 May Conference stated that: “language has a big impact on pupils' learning in all school subjects. Knowledge about how language works in conjunction with the subject knowledge is essential to successful student outcomes”. The focus of the conference was to disseminate current research findings from Europe, North America and Australia which highlighted the role of language and cognitive development in schooling for monolingual and multilingual children and adolescents.

The topics of the conference were:
- Integrated language and subject and teaching
- Classroom situations conducive to language and content learning
- Educational approaches
- Meaning making in media other than text
- What all teachers need to know about language
- Literacy development strategies from a genre perspective
- High standards and expectations for low-performing students
- Scaffolding Strategies
- Genre Pedagogy

Invited speakers were: Lily Wong Fillmore, Aída Walqui, Bernard Mohan, Maaike Hajer, Gunther Kress, Beverly Derewianka, Pauline Gibbons, Claire Acevedo, Jill Bourne, Spencer Kagan, Eija Kuyumcu, Monica Axelsson and Inger Lindberg. (stockholm.se/.../Language, Literacy and Learning 2009.pdf)

Following this conference steps were taken to begin a program of teacher professional development that would focus on “Scaffolding” (Bruner after Vygotsky) and Genre pedagogy (Martin 1985, Rothery et. al., 1994). Scaffolding is a term that is now broadly used in education to describe a form of explicit teaching that emphasises the key role of the teacher in leading and modelling new learning for students who then practice what has been modelled (in the Zone of Proximal Development) in a variety of contexts with support and guidance from the teacher and/or peers, to gain metacognitive insights into their learning so that they are subsequently able to use the new understandings to complete tasks independently in new situations. Genre pedagogy enables teachers to understand how spoken and written language are used differently in each area of the curriculum to construct meaning. They are then inducted into an approach that allows teachers in any subject area to successfully scaffold student listening, speaking, reading and writing in each subject area in flexible ways using their usual curriculum and classroom materials.

Scaffolding using the Genre approach is based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, Martin &
Rose) and has been particularly effective in improving the performance of second language learners in Australia and elsewhere. The OECD report (2006) *Where Immigrant Students Succeed - A comparative review of performance and engagement in PISA 2003*, found that Australia was one of very few countries where immigrant background learners did not achieve below expected levels in literacy and mathematics. After having studied this approach and seeing it in action in Australia, the Multilingual Research Institute invited Claire Acevedo (International Literacy consultant from Australia, currently residing in the UK) to run workshops for teacher educators (5 days) and teachers (3 days) in May 2009 prior to the Language and Literacy Conference. The workshops focused on what has proven to be the most powerful form of Genre pedagogy *Reading to Learn* (Dr David Rose, University of Sydney, Australia). *Reading to Learn* builds on the earlier Genre approach to writing which is now part of the National Curriculum in Australia and provides teachers with a powerful pedagogy that accelerates reading, writing and spelling using the usual curriculum resources at any stage of schooling. *Reading to Learn* has been consistently shown to accelerate literacy development at twice to over four times expected rates, at the same time as it closes the gap in any class between the most and least successful students (Culican, 2006).

**Programs offered in 2009 - 2010**

The Multilingual Research Institute decided to enhance its school case work and existing provision of courses and networks by embarking on an ambitious program of teacher professional development to provide teachers with cutting edge skills to redress the unequal outcomes of students in Stockholm schools. It offered teachers a suite of professional development programs in 2009 -2010 which were designed to work synergistically to provide different layers of support for teachers to acquire knowledge about language and classroom literacy pedagogy. This provided an opportunity for all teachers from the early years to upper secondary schooling to enhance their ability to integrate literacy teaching and learning in all subjects across the curriculum as a normal part of teaching practice.

The key theoretical underpinnings of the programs are the robust and well researched approaches that have achieved success for students for several decades in Australia and are now recognised by educators throughout the world an effective way to integrate literacy and content teaching so that a whole school approach to literacy improvement can be implemented for all learners. The research has revealed that the greatest benefits of this approach accrue to the most disadvantaged learners, such as second language learners and students from low socio-economic backgrounds. (PIRLS 2006)

Teachers were able to take courses at three different levels but there was no requirement to move through the courses in succession. After completing a course, teachers could then continue with ongoing professional development as members of the Literacy Leadership Networks. Each course focused on the notion of scaffolding, the functional model of language and Genre based pedagogy in a different way but using complimentary pedagogies. The courses built different levels of knowledge and skills ranging from a general orientation to the field, to high-level linguistic skills. For this reason some teachers preferred to take the courses in succession. As adult learners, teachers realised however that they might need to do some additional home study over and above the usual course requirements if they entered a more demanding course level with minimal background knowledge.

Following is a description of the courses offered to teachers 2009 -2010.

**Program 1: Introduction to scaffolding and Genre based pedagogy**

**Study Circles: Stärk språket, stärk lärandet (Dr Pauline Gibbons)**

This two-day course, which had been running previously, has had great success in introducing teachers to scaffolding and genre-based pedagogy with a focus on second language learners. Participants explore Dr Pauline Gibbons book, *Stärk språket, stärk lärandet*, and the workshops
encourage teachers to use a range of new strategies and approaches that will enhance classroom teaching by scaffolding student learning.

Teachers are then encouraged to lead study circles in their own schools to build shared understandings and classroom practices about scaffolding and Genre across whole school communities.

**Program 2: Whole school implementation of Scaffolding and Genre-based pedagogy**

**Scaffolding for Success with Genre-based Pedagogy**
This is a three-day course with an optional fourth day for teachers who wish to undertake the leadership component. It is based on the CD ROM *Scaffolding for Success with Genre-based Pedagogy* (available in both English and Swedish in the Autumn term), which was specifically designed and prepared for teachers in Sweden.

Teachers attend the workshops in school pairs and work through six modules:
1. **Scaffolding student and teacher learning: building learning communities**
2. **The Functional Model of Language**
3. **Engagement and Support with Reading**
4. **The Genre Approach to Writing**
5. **Assessment for Learning**
6. **Whole School Literacy**

Teachers all receive a copy of the course CD which comprises: Power point slides, Facilitator Notes for presentation, Handouts for teacher workshops, articles for background reading and a Handbook of Student Learning Activities.

Participating teachers are required to form Professional Action Learning Teams in their schools during the course and implement strategies in their classrooms. They then report on their classroom implementation in subsequent workshops.

Most teachers who undertake this course also attend the fourth day, which focuses on Literacy Leadership and prepares them for using the materials on the CD to present the course to other teachers in their own schools. They subsequently expand the membership of their school based Professional Action Learning Teams and conduct classroom Action Research projects selecting the strategies that will best address the literacy learning needs of their students. They have the opportunity to report on these activities in the Literacy Leadership Network which is a forum for developing leadership skills, sharing professional learning between schools and creating new knowledge about literacy learning in Swedish using the new approaches.

**Program 3: Literacy Leadership Network – 4 days per year**

An ongoing forum for developing expertise in Literacy Leadership and building shared understandings between schools and across the early and later years of schooling.

This is an ongoing forum for teachers who have already completed at least one other Literacy professional development course run by the Institute and are leading the learning of their colleagues at school. These teachers meet for four days each year to continue their learning and develop literacy leadership skills by:

- engaging in reflective discussion with other leaders and reporting on:
  - school wide literacy, leadership and policy issues
  - the ongoing development of Professional Action Learning Teams
  - classroom literacy Action Research
- participating in workshops that deepen knowledge about language and literacy pedagogy
• learning more about literacy resources
• planning for future school based action

The Literacy Leaders will continue developing their knowledge about language through the exploration of the multimedia CD ROMs: Building Understandings in Literacy and Teaching (BUILT) and Literacy Across Secondary Schooling (LASS).

Program 4: Intensive Literacy acceleration program

Reading to Learn (Dr David Rose, University of Sydney)

Reading to Learn is Genre pedagogy at its most powerful. This eight-day program is the key component of the Literacy Professional Development provided by the Institute. It enables teachers to provide intensive scaffolding of reading, writing and spelling in all subjects across the curriculum. It accelerates the learning of all students so that even previously unsuccessful learners can read and write fluently at appropriate age levels using the usual curriculum texts. It effectively “closes the gap” in achievement between the most and the least successful learners in every classroom and in all subject areas.

Reading to Learn is designed as a project so teachers are required to attend all workshops, regularly implement the approach in their classrooms and collect data on student achievement.

Teachers attend in school pairs and are required to collect pre, post and during program data on student achievement and video tape their own classroom teaching. Teachers are provided with a comprehensive set of course books and DVDs which they are required to study between the 4 workshops spaced throughout the year.

Teachers are supported to implement the program by Institute staff who visit the schools between workshops providing advice and feedback.

Additional programs:
Ongoing Reading to Learn and Leadership Professional Development (begins Autumn term 2010)

This program takes place over four days throughout the school year and is only available to teachers who have completed a year of successful Reading to Learn implementation with students in their schools. Teachers in the program will:

• continue to implement Reading to Learn in their classrooms and further develop their understandings through ongoing student data collection and analysis;
• revise all aspects of the program, examining the key components in more detail to gain a deeper knowledge of the linguistics and become fluent in the implementation of all aspects of the pedagogy;
• gain skills in leading peer learning so that they are able to act as mentors for colleagues who are new to the program and support the work of the program leaders at the Multilingual Research Institute and
• form the “key teachers” group for Reading to Learn in Sweden and focus on collecting and developing quality resources in Swedish to contribute to the translation and further development of the program for teachers in Sweden.

Professional Development in Genre-based Pedagogy for Mathematics (Autumn term 2010)

Reading to Learn in Mathematics is a five day professional development program designed as a research project with data collection on student achievement. Teachers attend in school pairs and will implement the pedagogy between the workshops. Teachers will be introduced to the key components of Genre pedagogy and then provided with a set of carefully sequenced strategies to apply the
Reading to Learn pedagogy to the teaching of Mathematics. Teachers of students from years 1 to 9 may participate and may be working with students in either mainstream classrooms or with groups of selected students who require acceleration in Mathematics.

Teachers are required to apply the strategies to their usual classroom syllabus topics and prepare detailed lesson plans to be implemented in the classroom. In addition, teachers will collect data on student achievement in each topic before and after implementation of the strategy.

Teachers will be supported with lesson preparation during the workshops and on-site visits will be arranged for support with classroom implementation

1.3 The Reading to Learn program (Dr David Rose, University of Sydney, Australia)

Background:

The development of genre-based pedagogy has been documented by D. Rose (2008) in Writing as linguistic mastery: the development of genre based literacy pedagogy, in D. Myhill, D. Beard, M. Nystrand & J. Riley (eds.) Handbook of Writing Development, London: Sage. What follows is a summary of that account, with some additional materials, to provide a background to the description of the Reading to Learn program that has been implemented in Stockholm.

Genre-based approaches to teaching reading and writing have been developed in Australia over the past three decades in what has become known as the Sydney School (Martin, 2000, 2006; Martin & Rose, 2005). The pedagogy has been designed through a series of large-scale action research projects with teachers in various educational contexts, informed by functional linguistics and genre and register theory (Painter and Martin, 1986; Hasan and Martin, 1989; Cope and Kalantzis, 1993; Martin, 1998; Christie, 1999; Martin & Rose, 2003, 2008), by the educational sociology of Basil Bernstein (1990, 1996; Christie & Martin, 2007), and by Halliday’s ground-breaking work on language development (1975, 1994, 2004), and its ongoing elaboration by various scholars.

There have been three major phases in the pedagogy’s development: the initial design of the writing pedagogy in the 1980s, with a handful of genres in the primary school; the extension of the writing pedagogy in the 1990s, to genres across the secondary school curriculum and beyond; and the development of the reading pedagogy from the late 1990s, integrating reading and writing with teaching practice across the curriculum at primary, secondary and tertiary education levels. The strategies developed in the initial stage are now standard literacy teaching practice in primary schools across Australia and increasingly internationally, as well as in ESL and academic literacy programs.

The latest reading and writing strategies enacted in Reading to Learn have been consistently shown to accelerate literacy development at twice to over four times expected rates, at the same time as they close the gap in any class between the most and least successful students (McRae et al, 2000; Culican, 2006; Rose, Rose, Farrington & Page, 2008).

The two key dimensions of the genre writing pedagogy developed in the 1980s were an analysis of the kinds of texts that students are expected to write in the primary school, and a consistent method for supporting all students to write successfully. The pedagogy was developed in an ongoing partnership between teachers and discourse linguists, in the context of a school system that had largely abandoned the explicit teaching of writing in favour of a progressivist ideology of personal development. This kind of hands-off approach to writing in the primary school meant that, only a handful of students would independently develop the writing skills they needed for success in secondary school. Second language learners featured prominently in the group that was not achieving success beyond the primary years.
The first step in the research program was to identify and name the kinds of texts that were found, developing a map of genres written in the school. Martin (e.g. 1999) characterised genres as staged, goal oriented social processes: social because writers shape their texts for readers of particular kinds; goal oriented because a text unfolds towards its social purpose; staged, because it usually takes more than one step to reach the goal. Following Martin’s model, genres were distinguished by recurrent global patterns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>genres</th>
<th>purposes</th>
<th>subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stories</td>
<td>Narrating a series of events to engage or inform readers (may be fiction or fact)</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>text responses</td>
<td>Evaluating and interpreting a text (may be a literary, visual or musical text)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arguments</td>
<td>Arguing for a point of view, or discussing two or more points of view</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reports</td>
<td>Classifying and describing things of the natural or social worlds</td>
<td>Science, Maths, Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explanations</td>
<td>Explaining how and why events happen in the natural or social worlds</td>
<td>Society &amp; Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>procedures</td>
<td>Instructing how to do an activity such as a science experiment, maths operation, or technology procedure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 Rose 2007

This map of written genres and their staging then formed the basis for designing an explicit writing pedagogy. Drawing on work about oral language development by Halliday and Painter, a teaching/learning cycle was developed by Rothery in 1989 to make learning to write a comparable activity to learning to speak for all students, irrespective of their home background and academic strengths.

Figure 3: Teaching/learning cycle (Rothery, 1994)
The cycle features three main stages - Deconstruction, Joint Construction and Individual Construction. Deconstruction involves teachers guiding students to recognise the cultural context, staging and key linguistic features in model texts, of the genre they are expected to write. Joint Construction involves guiding the whole class to construct another text in the same genre, which is jointly scribed on the blackboard. Independent Construction involves students writing a third text, in the same genre, on their own. All three stages of the pedagogy involve building field (so that students are familiar with the content of the texts they are reading and writing), and setting context (so that students understand the social purpose of the genre). The ultimate goal of the cycle is for students to take control of the genre, both in terms of being able to write it and also reflect critically on its role.

In the 1990’s the next phase of research into Genre was the Write it Right project informed by Bernstein’s (1990) sociological model of relations between education and production. Reading and writing demands were explored in science based industries and the secondary science and maths curricula, and in media and public administration sectors and English, history and geography curricula. The Write it Right research identified close parallels in the genres and their discourse patterns that students are expected to read and write in the secondary school, and those found in the workplaces that education prepares them for, at various vocational levels. The map of genres developed in the earlier stage of the research was considerably expanded, distinguishing specific types within each family of genres.

Figure 4 Map of Genres for all stages of schooling following the Write it Right project (Rose 2005):
In the process of working closely with secondary teachers, the writing pedagogy was also refined and expanded, and teaching materials were developed that aimed to provide teachers with a high level of critical skills in both text analysis and pedagogy.

As writing skills develop ultimately from experience with reading, which is the crucial mode of learning in formal education, the genre-based approach to writing has been extended over the past decade into teaching reading, using carefully designed strategies to support students to recognise language patterns in written texts, enabling them to read with critical understanding, and then to use these language patterns in their writing. This methodology, known as Reading to Learn is designed to be integrated with classroom practice across the curriculum, at all levels of education (Rose, 2004, 2005, 2007; Rose, Lui-Chivizhe, McKnight & Smith 2004; Martin & Rose, 2005; Martin, 2006; Rose & Acevedo, 2006; Rose, Rose, Farrington & Page, 2008, www.readingtolearn.com.au).

The fundamental premise of Reading to Learn is that the contents of learning – the curriculum – has been separated from the skills that students need to learn those contents. These skills can be divided broadly into two interconnected spheres – one is the skills required to independently learn from reading, the other is the skills in classroom learning that prepares for and builds on independent learning from reading.

Reading to Learn, is designed to integrate teaching of the school curriculum with teaching the skills that students need to learn from reading and from interacting with teachers in the classroom around reading.

The Reading to Learn classroom program

The Reading to Learn classroom program is a set of carefully designed strategies that enable teachers to integrate skills in reading and writing with their normal curriculum teaching, across all year levels and subject areas (including Mathematics). Researched and designed over a decade, working with teachers across Australia and internationally, the program accelerates the learning of all students, while closing the gap between the top and bottom achievers in each class.

Figure 5 “Closing the gap”

For example, the 2008 Reading to Learn program conducted in around 90 schools in New South Wales, Australia, with teachers implementing over 2-3 terms. The graph (Figure 5) compares growth rates of top and bottom student groups in their classes, averaged across Years 1 to 8.

The top groups’ average growth, from B to A levels, is equivalent to over a year of expected growth. The bottom groups’ growth from E to C levels is equivalent to three years expected growth. The gap between them has almost halved.

The program includes three levels of support for developing students’ reading and writing skills that can be integrated at various points in a teaching program.
The three levels of teaching cycles, and their relation to the curriculum, are set out in Figure 6 below.

The first level; **Preparing before Reading, Joint construction and Independent Writing**, prepares a class for reading and comprehending curriculum texts, then uses these readings as models for guided and independent writing activities. These strategies can be used for teaching any lesson units.

The second level: **Detailed Reading, Joint and Individual Rewriting**, is used to deepen students’ understanding of written texts, and to use the information and language patterns from these readings in their own writing. These detailed strategies enable all students to read challenging curriculum texts with complete understanding, and to write successfully, no matter what their starting levels. They are applied on a weekly basis with selected text passages.

The third level; **Sentence Making, Sentence Writing and Spelling**, provides intensive support for students to manipulate language patterns in selected sentences, and to practise spelling, letter-sound correspondences and fluent writing. These intensive strategies can be used each day in early years to upper primary classes, and for additional support where required for primary and secondary students.

The program thus directly links curriculum teaching goals with the skills that all students need for successful independent learning, at each stage of schooling.

All students learn to read age and stage appropriate texts with critical understanding, and creatively write the texts required of the curriculum.

**Professional learning program**

Planning, implementing and evaluating the *Reading to Learn* strategies require high level skills in both classroom teaching and text analysis. The teaching strategies involve detailed planning of classroom interactions, to ensure that all students are able to participate actively at the same high level. Planning these lessons requires linguistic knowledge to select appropriate texts, and to analyse their language patterns.

These skills are developed through eight days of training workshops, with supported classroom practice and evaluation between workshops. In each cycle of workshops and classroom practice, teachers build up their skills in teaching reading and writing, and their knowledge about language. Each cycle also involves planning lessons within teachers’ curriculum programs, and assessing students’ growth.
Figure 7  Reading to Learn Teacher Resource Book 1, Preparing for Reading and Writing, p 1.

Workshop content includes:

Workshop 1
- Assessing baseline writing
- Selecting and analysing texts across the curriculum
- Planning reading lessons
- Links to syllabus and quality teaching
- Modelling writing

Workshop 2
- Detailed reading and rewriting strategies
- Techniques for factual and story texts
- Planning detailed reading lessons

Workshop 3
- Intensive strategies
- Language patterns in texts and sentences
- Scaffolding maths lessons
- Writing assessment

Workshop 4
- Applying language knowledge in lesson planning
- Review curriculum links in lesson planning
- Final writing assessment

Supporting the workshops and teaching practice is a set of ten course books, that teachers work through during and between workshops, and a training DVD of demonstration lessons with early years, primary, secondary and adult classes.

Workshops typically involve teachers of junior, middle years and upper secondary subject areas. This allows cross-fertilisation of ideas and practices, both across grades and across schools. Within workshops there is a balance between whole group activities, and dividing into grade and subject groups for practising lesson planning.

Teachers’ commitment

This professional learning program is more demanding than many others, but it is the basis of the exceptional results teachers achieve with their students. In order to achieve these results, teachers must make a commitment to:
- Attend all workshop sessions
- Study the coursebooks and demonstration lessons
- Implement the strategies consistently with their classes
- Plan lessons within their curriculum programs

Implementation in schools

The Reading to Learn program can transform teachers’ classroom practice, but it can be difficult to do at first, and requires significant time for planning and teaching. To achieve the best results with the program, teachers need maximum support from their colleagues, school leaders and program support staff.

Reading to Learn works most effectively as a whole school program. This can be built up in steps over two or more years, by the following means.
It is important that two or more teachers initially participate from each school, in order to support each other's planning and practice. Participants should include leading teachers from each grade level or subject faculty in the school, as they will have the experience to implement the strategies effectively, and then to mentor other teachers.

Participants may also include teachers with responsibility for literacy, special education and other support roles, who will implement the strategies as part of their roles, and be able to mentor other teachers.

The school leadership team can support participating teachers by:
- Encouraging teachers to implement the strategies consistently, on a weekly basis (daily in the early years), and to study their course materials
- Providing additional time for lesson planning
- Allowing sufficient class time to be spent on skills in reading and writing (Teachers often report that covering curriculum detail limits the time for skills teaching, particularly where students do not have the reading skills to study independently. Time devoted to Reading to Learn strategies gives students these skills within 1-2 terms, thus enabling teachers to speed up the curriculum pacing.)
- Supporting teachers to use the Reading to Learn strategies in place of teaching phonics, spelling, and other activities in isolation. The integrated approach of Reading to Learn achieves the goals of all other literacy activities more effectively
- Enabling experienced teachers to mentor others in the strategies, through in-school workshops, lesson demonstrations and lesson planning.

Program support staff can support the program by:
- Participating in training workshops, and practising with classes, to gain the experience to train others effectively.
- Visiting schools to support teachers with text selection, lesson planning and assessment
- Taking over workshop training in subsequent years.

Section 2: The Reading to Learn Project in Stockholm

The Multilingual Research Institute undertook the Reading to Learn project with its first group of teachers from Stockholm schools in the Autumn term of 2009 until the end of the Spring term 2010 in response to political imperatives to improve literacy outcomes particularly for socio-economically disadvantaged students.

Some of the reasons given for choosing Reading to Learn were that it:
- transforms a robust linguistic theory into effective classroom practice
- provides a clear and explicit pedagogy that develops teacher expertise in language and literacy teaching and learning
- offers a methodology for all teachers, not only for language teachers
- addresses both reading and writing
- possible to integrate into mainstream classrooms in all subjects
- "Democratises" the classroom by including all students in interactions
- accelerates literacy learning for all students, in all curriculum subjects
- makes the goals and learning tasks explicit for all students
- gives all students access to key concepts
- provides students with reading comprehension strategies
- provides students with a positive identity as learners
- promotes high self-esteem and positive expectations about capacity for learning
2.1 Aims of the *Reading to Learn* Project

The aim of the project was to determine if the implementation of *Reading to Learn* in Stockholm schools would accelerate literacy learning for disadvantaged students and close the achievement gap (as it had done in Australian schools).

This was to be achieved by:
- implementing an expert led eight-day teacher professional development program
- providing comprehensive print and DVD professional development resources for teachers
- Supporting teachers to implement the new pedagogy in schools with on-site visits from project staff
- requiring teachers to collect data on student achievement pre and post program implementation
- requiring teachers to video tape excerpts of classroom teaching for self reflection
- collating and analyzing project data in a final report
- celebrating and publicizing the classroom learning in teacher presented workshops at a Literacy Conference
- collecting samples of teacher developed materials to develop resources in Swedish

2.2 Design of the *Reading to Learn* Project

*Reading to Learn* is designed as a teacher professional development project drawing on the principles of Action Research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). The difference between project style learning and the more common professional development courses or workshops is that there is data collection and teacher reflection on self and student learning (see Figure 7). It is an evidence-based approach to professional development and classroom learning.

The project design is based on the premise that we must analyse the learning the needs of teachers in the same way as we consider the learning needs of students and plan carefully to scaffold teachers with opportunities for supported on-site practice if transformed classroom learning is to be achieved. *Reading to Learn* is a rigorous professional learning program that requires repeated opportunities for supported practice and reflection to enable teachers to successfully implement the new pedagogical approach. Even though teachers may have been accustomed to working autonomously or even privately in their classrooms, this type of professional development requires them to re-imagine professional working relationships with colleagues and learn to use time and structures at the school level creatively to harness the powerful synergy afforded by teacher collaboration and reflection on practice to improve student learning outcomes.

Compelling examples of improvement in teacher and student learning have been reported in the data from Australia where *Reading to Learn* has been a key vehicle for accelerating the literacy progress of "at risk" learners in a variety of contexts (Acevedo & Rose 2006, Koop & Rose, 2008). This model of teacher and student learning has been tested and refined so that student achievement results in different education sectors have consistently shown improvement rates of double to four times the expected rate since 2003 (Culican, 2006).

2.3 Model of Professional Development

The *Reading to Learn* project in Stockholm has been designed to incorporate the same elements that have brought about success in Australian projects. The model of teacher learning is based on the model of scaffolding that underpins the success of student learning in Genre based approaches.
Essentially it consists of three phases of learning for teachers conducted at two different sites following the notion of “scaffolding” proposed by Bruner after Vygotsky.

As illustrated in Figure 8 below, the professional development is carried out initially in off-site, expert led workshops and continues on-site in school teams with support through visits from outside experts and in the future from on-site mentors or coaches. The program progressively builds independent school based literacy experts who know how to collect, reflect and act on evidence of the learning taking place in their classrooms. The resulting ongoing cycles of reflection on practice promote discussion with colleagues about future action to improve student learning thus developing a culture of teacher learning that is the basis for whole school improvement.

**Off-site Professional Development - workshops**

In the first year of *Reading to Learn* the off-site professional development program brought together teachers from all stages of schooling; early years, middle years and senior secondary schooling, in a series of four centrally delivered two-day “expert-led” professional development workshops, two per term. Each participating school was required to enrol at least two teachers into the program. The workshop leader used the course booklets and DVDs to present the course material in workshop style learning with opportunities for reflective discussion and examination of classroom writing samples.

**On-site School-based Professional Development**

Following the first off-site professional development day, the two participating teachers collected and analysed base line data on the pre-program levels of reading and writing for their underachieving, good progress and high performing learners. Teachers also studied the workshop materials and DVDs of classroom practice and jointly prepared a lesson to teach or used one of the pre prepared lesson scripts for their first lesson. In some cases teachers were timetabled together for their first few *Reading to Learn* lessons to support each other with implementation. The teachers were then required to video tape a lesson segment in preparation for a visit from a project officer who listened to any concerns they had about early implementation and provided feedback and advice. This was done through a joint viewing of the video tape, inviting comments and questions from the teacher and providing feedback on the teaching episode. The video was primarily a window into the classroom that allowed for self reflection but it went on to become a vehicle to discuss a range of learning and implementation issues. While some teachers initially felt somewhat anxious about video taping a lesson, once they had done it they overwhelmingly commented on how much more beneficial it was in promoting self-awareness than classroom observation as it then provided an opportunity for joint reflection on the lesson episode.
Some teachers volunteered their videos for viewing in the subsequent off-site professional development workshop and this promoted reflective discussion and served as a springboard for refining practice and exploring deeper issues around the classroom discourse pattern being enacted in the program. It has been reported that “collaboration with teachers using detailed lesson transcripts as a basis is a powerful tool in facilitating pedagogic change. This creates a reflective space for looking closely at classroom interactions and for placing a lens on an aspect of professional practice that teachers rarely have an opportunity to analyse in detail.” (Culican, 2007: 24).

As their knowledge about language, the Reading to Learn pedagogy and how it related to the school curriculum was developed in each subsequent off-site workshop, teachers continued to discuss and reflect on their progressive implementation of the program through ongoing analysis of student achievement data. Project officers visited most teachers again later in the year and some teachers also made another video of a classroom episode for comparison and further reflection. Along with support for teachers, an imperative (a little pressure) to implement the new teaching and learning strategies was also very effective. Peer accountability from other teachers at the school and at the professional development workshops provided an imperative which was also motivational as it provided valuable feedback to teachers about the impact of their work on student learning. Presentation of teachers’ work and showing of video tapes in the workshops celebrated success and at the same time promoted accountability in terms of enacting the pedagogy.

On-site Independent Classroom Implementation and mentoring of colleagues

During the second year of Reading to Learn the school based support strengthens as teachers become more experienced and can support new teachers from their schools to develop a professional learning forum where the experienced teachers take over the role of providing support at the school level. In Australia the on-site component of the Reading to Learn professional development model has proven to be pivotal in providing support for successful classroom implementation and ensuring that as many new teachers as possible continue implementation beyond the first year. In Stockholm the teachers in their second year of Reading to Learn have begun to attend workshops to develop their skills as mentors while they continue implement the program with new groups of students.

The process of mentoring for new teachers began with an initial on-site visit by a project officer from the Multilingual Research Institute to support implementation. The mentor focused on advising and coaching in three key areas identified by Swafford, Maltzberger, Button & Furgerson (1997) as pivotal to enabling success for school based teacher learning: procedural (technical) support, affective (emotional) support and reflective support. In subsequent years of the project this role, which has been modelled by the project officers, can be taken over by school based mentors and coaches who have completed their first year of Reading to Learn and then develop skills in scaffolding their colleagues from their own experiences of being mentored and coached as well as by attending off-site professional learning workshops (one day per term) that deepen their knowledge about language learning and the Reading to Learn pedagogy. The workshops explicitly model skills in mentoring and coaching colleagues and also provide insight into leading school-based Professional Action Learning Teams (Johnson, 2003).

The on-site coaching on procedural issues may involve answering questions, providing feedback to teachers on video taped classroom teaching episodes that: highlight teachers’ strengths, suggest improvements to particular practices, emphasise important teaching points, facilitate problem solving, help teachers select materials, and suggest improvements to classroom management and organisational strategies. The coaching for affective (emotional) support can involve reassuring teachers when they have doubts about the effectiveness of their teaching and confirming their teaching strengths and areas in which they can improve. The affective support also encourages teachers to take risks in the classroom and not to give up when they experience difficulty implementing the new pedagogy. Reflective support can include conversations after viewing the video taped lesson segments that move teachers beyond discussions of procedures to clarifying issues, by
verbalising their teaching objectives and reflecting on their strengths. The discussions also help teachers to think about future lessons and changes they would make. Probing questions are progressively used to promote teacher self-reflection. Discussion and assessment of student work using the *Reading to Learn* writing analysis has contributed to the development of a shared metalanguage to discuss student literacy development.

### 2.4 Data Collection

The *Reading to Learn* project in Stockholm required teachers to collect a range of data on literacy achievement from six focus students: two high performing students, two middle range students and two low performing students. Pre-program achievement data was compared with post-program data to measure growth in student achievement over the course of the school year from September 2009 to May 2010 (8-9 calendar months). Data on teacher learning was collected in the off-site professional development and during on-site school visits.

#### Writing samples

In order to establish pre-program writing levels for students in the data collection, teachers were asked to collect two samples of writing from each of the six selected students before they began the implementation of *Reading to Learn* in the classroom (September /October 2009): one sample of fiction writing and one sample of factual writing. In the first workshop teachers were introduced to the *Reading to Learn* Assessment Criteria (Figure 10) and were guided to use the criteria to analyse and assess the writing samples as part of the workshop. The teachers recorded the grades for each student but they were later given the option to re-assess the writing samples as their knowledge about language improved over the course of the year and they had come to understand the assessment criteria based on the Functional Model of language more fully.

After each cycle of *Reading to Learn* classroom implementation during the course of the year, teachers were encouraged to collect samples of independent student writing. The purpose of this collection of data was to inform ongoing teacher learning about language, the role of assessment and the impact of the pedagogy on student learning. Discussion and analysis of these samples formed part of the on-site school visits and learning sessions in the off-site workshops. The samples were seen as an important window into classroom learning and informed text selection for subsequent cycles of learning.

The post-program collection of writing samples was conducted as close as possible to end of the school year in late May or early June 2010. The scores of the post writing samples were recorded alongside the pre-program scores to measure the growth in student writing development over the course of the school year 2009 - 2010.

As part of the final workshop in May, teachers were again led through the process of assessment by Dr Rose using the criteria with which they had become very familiar over the course of the year. This provided an opportunity for teachers to clarify and refine their understandings about the language criteria and the process of assessment. By the end of the course teachers had a well developed knowledge of the Genres they had been teaching during the year and an enhanced understanding of Systemic Functional Linguistics which enabled them to analyse their post writing samples insightfully in terms of the linguistic resources students demonstrated in their writing. At this stage they were invited to adjust the assessment of their initial samples in the light of their improved understanding if necessary.

#### Reading comprehension

Standardised Swedish reading comprehension tests, DLS™ (Järpsten & Taube, 1997), were used pre and post program in October 2009 and May 2010 to measure the improvement in reading comprehension of every focus student as well as the whole class over the course of the year.
Many teachers were familiar with the DLS™ tests and they have been used in a number of research projects into the development of reading in Sweden so they are generally regarded as credible instruments for measuring growth in reading.

**Teacher learning data**

After the first workshop, teachers were asked to comment on their classroom implementation of *Reading to Learn* at the start of each off-site workshop session. They recounted their experiences and key teaching moments in groups and made notes, they were then invited to reflect on their teaching in terms of successes and ongoing challenges. The key points from the small group discussion were recorded as they were reported orally to the whole group. During this reporting process the points were responded to and elaborated on by the presenter and other group members. Any resulting new points from this discussion were also recorded. The recorded responses were used again at the start of each subsequent workshop for reflection in the light of further classroom experience and/or as a stimulus for discussion on new issues arising. The teachers responses, together with written responses to a survey after workshop three have been tabulated and analysed as part of the data collection to provide a picture of growth in teachers’ thinking about their own learning as well as about student learning.

Classroom videos were watched by the project officers and teachers during school visits. While there were no transcripts made of the classroom videos, the project officers kept notes on school visits including excerpts from teachers’ narratives about insightful classroom episodes. All teachers viewed a small number of videos that were volunteered at the off-site workshop sessions. The videos were a source of inspiration and useful springboards for discussion. They enabled teachers to see clearly that while certain aspects of practice may vary according to the differing teaching contexts and student cohorts across schools, the key elements for success in *Reading to Learn* are constant this is why the pedagogy is so robust.

At the teacher Literacy Conference in May 2010, eight teachers from four different schools offered workshops on *Reading to Learn* to the 400 teachers and educators in attendance. Their sessions exemplified differing aspects of the pedagogy with different groups of students at different stages of schooling:

**Bagarmossens skola: Why Reading to Learn?**
- Experiences of using *Reading to Learn* in Years 6-9 in Swedish, Swedish as a Second Language Science, Social Studies and English

**Bagarmossens skola: Using Reading to Learn to work with factual and fiction texts**
- Examples of how teachers collaborated to implement the pedagogy with a variety of texts.

**Hässelby Gymnasium: Can a newly arrived student with a limited educational background write an essay with an above average outcome on the National Test for Year 9?**
- Experiences of using *Reading to Learn* to successfully teach recently arrived students in special programs (IVIK-/PRIVIK) in Swedish as a Second Language, Social Studies and Multimedia in preparation for the Year 9 National Tests.

**Akallaskolan: Applying Reading to Learn in the Secondary School**
- A practical demonstration of Detailed Reading illustrated with student texts at various stages of development.

**Knutbyskolan: Learn to read with the Genre Pedagogy in Year 1**
- A description of working with Genre Pedagogy as a tool for the literacy development of young learners.

The *Reading to Learn* teachers, along with the other teachers who presented at the conference on different aspects of Genre pedagogy, attended two professional development sessions to prepare them for the task. The first workshop focused on identifying a focus for the presentation and selecting
the specific content for the workshop. The second workshop focussed on effective presentation skills and group rehearsal for the conference session.

The experience of taking this leadership role and presenting publically what may have previously been considered as “private” classroom work was an initially daunting but subsequently rewarding experience. The conference workshops modelled the type of peer led learning that the Reading to Learn project seeks to promote. Following the conference many teachers, who had not been confident to offer a workshop when the request for volunteers was first made, told project staff that they would be willing to present next year. Even though no future conference had been announced, many more teachers could now imagine themselves as having a role to play in leading the learning of their peers which is a goal of the professional development model.

2.5 Schools, Teachers and Students in the Project

Schools
Schools self-selected into Reading to Learn and seven completed the project in 2009 – 2010:

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<th>Socio-economic Status</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

While the number of participating schools was not large, they covered a broad range of socio-economic diversity across Stockholm. Four of the seven schools in the project (57%) had low socio-economic status with high numbers of students who are second language learners. The remaining three schools in the project (43%) had medium to high socio-economic status with fewer second language learners. All schools of course had high, medium and low performing students. The participation by this diverse range of schools indicates that the link between literacy and successful learning is understood not only by schools with high numbers of second language learners who have obvious needs but by a wider range of educators.

Teachers
The cohort of 22 teachers who completed the project comprised:

- 9 generalist teachers
- 9 subject specialist teachers
- 4 special needs teachers

The relatively high number of subject specialist teachers (41%) who participated in the project in its first year indicates that there is an awareness amongst teachers in the project schools that literacy is not just the responsibility of the generalist teachers working with younger learners but an important component of learning that concerns all teachers. Some of the reasons teachers cited for participating in the project were:

- *Success for all!*
- *Find a way to work with texts (reading and writing) in social studies and science*
- *Support weak students*
- *Develop students’ knowledge about language*
- *Develop my teaching skills*
- *Get all my students read and write at a level that makes them feel competent and good enough*
• Give all the students the opportunity to succeed.
• Close the gap between the students

Students
Students in the project came from all stages of schooling:

• K – Year 3: 5 classes (≈ 119 students)
• Year 4 – 6: 4 classes (≈ 80 students)
• Year 7 – 9: 6 classes (≈ 175 students)
• Year 10 – 12: 2 classes (≈ 30 students)

A total of about 404 students from 17 classes received direct instruction using the Reading to Learn strategies during the course of the project. Some subject specialist teachers of course taught more than one class and reported that they were also using the methodology with other classes but no data was collected on the extent and frequency of that instruction or on its outcomes.

Each teacher was required to collect data on six focus students so the data collection should have been carried out on at least 102 students. The percentage of complete sets of usable data submitted however was only 57%. While the overall data collection rate was higher at around 75%, about 18% of that data was not submitted in a usable form. The submission rate for writing data was higher than the reading comprehension test data. Inadequate student identification and labeling of types of writing meant that many pre and post writing samples could not be matched accurately. Some schools returned only complete sets of writing or reading data but not both. Around 25% of teachers did not submit their post program data. While a higher rate of data collection would have provided a more robust picture of student achievement, the data collected nonetheless similar tendencies as the Australian data.

Complete data sets were collected for 58 students:

• Year 1: 6 students
• Year 4: 18 students
• Year 6: 6 students
• Year 7: 6 students
• Year 8: 12 students
• Year 10: 6 students

Section 3: Results of the Project

The qualitative and quantitative data collected as part of the pilot Reading to Learn project in Stockholm revealed positive outcomes for all concerned. The data on teacher learning showed that the participating teachers felt more empowered to improve learning outcomes for their students as a result of project participation. They reported an increased understanding about the nature of literacy learning and how to enact an effective literacy pedagogy in the classroom. Many of these teachers have continued to participate in the second year of Reading to Learn and are currently mentoring colleagues new to the program at their schools. The data on student achievement together with the teacher observation data showed enhanced literacy outcomes for all students, the greatest gains accruing to the lowest achievers. While the data sample in this project is small, it is significant that it replicates the same achievement patterns as the larger projects in Australia where Reading to Learn has been consistently shown to close the gap between the highest and lowest achieving students in every cohort.
3.1 Outcomes of the Project for Students

Achievement in writing

Development of writing in R2L: narrative
Sample of 20 students from 3 schools

![Graph showing pre and post achievement in writing](image)

While complete sets of pre and post writing samples were collected only for narrative texts from three schools, the tendency of this small sample is to replicate the pattern of achievement in the Australian studies (Culican 2006) where the lowest achieving students have consistently experienced an acceleration in writing development in comparison to their good progress and high achieving peers.

While, as illustrated above in Figure 9, the average and high achieving students have shown an improvement of more than 30% in their writing development between September 2009 and May 2010, the improvement shown by the previously low achieving students is 128% which is more than 90% over and above the rate of progress of their peers. This has effectively “closed the gap” in achievement between the highest and lowest achieving students in this sample. The initial difference between the highest and lowest achievers in the pre program writing samples was 48%. This difference or “gap” in achievement has been more than half halved in only eight months to just 18%. The performance in writing of the lowest group at the end of the data collection period was almost equal to that of the average or “good progress” students.

Some pre and post narrative writing samples will now be used to illustrate the type of progress that is depicted above. A discussion of the salient linguistic features demonstrated in the student texts will accompany the samples. The discussion is based on an analysis of each text carried out by teachers using the rigorous Reading to Learn Assessment criteria (Figure 10) which is based on the Hallidayan Functional Model of Language. The criteria systematically focuses on the language resources that students need to communicate successfully in writing at each level of the text according to its purpose from the top down. It emphasises the meaning making resources students demonstrate in their writing at the level of the whole text and the discourse level, shifting the emphasis of assessment away from the traditional focus on grammar and surface features such as spelling and punctuation.
### Assessment criteria

Here are some brief definitions for each criterion, and some questions you can ask when looking at a text. You can make quick judgements about most criteria, but the five discourse criteria are most important, and should be carefully identified and marked in the text. This will show the exact language resources the student is using. The criteria are explained in detail on page 36-38 below.

**NOTE:** Genre, field, tenor and mode are expressed by patterns of language in a text - **field** by lexicon and conjunction; **tenor** by appraisal; **mode** by reference and grammar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>You should make quick judgements about these context criteria.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>How appropriate and well-developed is the genre for the writing purpose? 0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staging</td>
<td>Does it go through appropriate stages, and how well is each stage developed? Label each stage in the text. 0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phases</td>
<td>A well-organised text goes through a logical sequence of steps. Phases are the steps that a text goes through (within each stage!). Each phase may be a paragraph or a few sentences long. <strong>Identify and mark the phases in the text.</strong> How well organised is the sequence of phases in the text? 0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field</td>
<td>How well does the writer understand and explain the field in <strong>factual texts</strong>, construct the plot, settings and characters in <strong>stories</strong>, or describe the issues in <strong>arguments</strong>? 0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenor</td>
<td>How well does the writer engage the reader in <strong>stories</strong>, persuade in <strong>arguments</strong>, or objectively inform in <strong>factual texts</strong>? 0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>How highly written is the language for the school stage? Is it too spoken? 0-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCOURSE</th>
<th>Discourse criteria should be marked in the text, to give an accurate picture.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lexis</td>
<td>Lexis is the word choices that writers use to build the field of a text. They are the content words, and the relations between these lexical words from sentence to sentence. <strong>Mark the lexical words the writer uses.</strong> How are the writer’s lexical resources? How well is lexicon used to construct the field? 0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal</td>
<td>Appraisal is the word choices that writers use to evaluate. They include feelings, judgements of people, appreciations of things, and words that amplify and diminish. <strong>Mark the appraisal words the writer uses.</strong> How are the writer’s appraisal resources? How well is appraisal used to engage, persuade, evaluate? 0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction</td>
<td>Conjunction is the logical relations between sentences, and within sentences. 0-3 <strong>Mark the conjunctions the writer uses.</strong> Logical relations may also be implicit. Is there a clear logical relation between all sentences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Reference is the words that are used to keep track of people and things through a text, including pronouns, articles, demonstratives (this, that), comparatives (each, all, same, other). <strong>Mark all the reference words.</strong> Is it clear who or what is referred to in each sentence? 0-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRAMMAR</th>
<th>You should make quick judgements about grammar and graphic criteria.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>How accurately spelt are core words (frequent) and non-core words (less frequent)? 0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>How appropriately and accurately is punctuation used? 0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Are paragraphs used? How legible is the writing? Is the layout clear? Are illustrations/diagrams used appropriately? 0-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Reading to Learn - Book 4 - Assessing Writing

Figure 10
The first sample text (No 1) is from a second language learner in Year 4 who had previously been one of the lowest achievers in the class. It is a Narrative text written independently after the implementation of the Reading to Learn cycle using a passage from Astrid Lindgren’s "The Brothers Lionheart" for detailed reading and then as a model for joint writing. The passage is taken from Chapter 7 where one of the main characters is left alone overnight on a mountain. He hears noises and his fear escalates as he realises that a pack of wolves is closing in on him. The focus identified by the teacher was an examination of how a successful author uses a series of phases in a narrative to build tension in order to engage the reader. The task was to narrate a similarly “scary” event with a focus on building tension. The student text has been translated from Swedish with the equivalent number and type of linguistic inaccuracies as the original text (Swedish text appears in the Appendix).

The sample text has initially been analysed for Purpose, Staging and Phases according to the Reading to Learn Assessment Criteria (Figure 10). Teachers begin by assessing for the understanding a student has demonstrated of the purpose of the text and how appropriate and well-developed the chosen Genre is for meeting that purpose. Teachers then need to understand the Stages a text would typically go through in order to achieve its purpose successfully. Phases are the steps that a text goes through within each stage. Each phase may be a paragraph or a few sentences long. Teachers mark the phases in the student text to determine how well organised and effective the sequence of phases is in achieving the purpose.

**Sample No 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staging</th>
<th>Purpose: To narrate a scary event</th>
<th>Phases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>A little guy was in Gröna Lund.</td>
<td>setting (who, where)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complication</td>
<td>It was extraordinary because nobody was there He saw that the roller coasters were dark but in the Goast House there was a yellow light. It was fun and scary at the same time. because sure it was fun to be in Gröna Lund, but it was uncomfortable to be there alone. He pulled his cap over his head because he didn’t want to see. but then he heard a scream and a noice Then more and more voices were heard.</td>
<td>problem 1 reflection reaction problem 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution?</td>
<td>Then I understood what it was. It was zombie. Who came towards him.</td>
<td>reflection problem 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The end</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Text translated from Swedish)

Following the analysis a teacher can then make judgements about the elements of the text and score each criteria on a scale of 0-3:

**Purpose:** partially fulfills the purpose of narrating a scary event (Score: 2/3)

**Staging:** weak Orientation, strong Complication, no Resolution (Score: 2/3)

**Phases:** setting presumed, little elaboration, series of problems, reactions and reflections but no solution (Score: 2/3)

Teachers then continue their analysis of the text and assessment of each criterion. The sample text was further analysed and assessed as follows:

**Field:** consists of the ingredients one expects in a scary event. However, the reader expects to
The student engages the reader by increasingly building some tension in the story to create a climate of expectation (Score: 2/3)

Mode: fairly written for the stage and task, drawing on the literary features in model text (2/3)

The text continued to be analysed in more detail at the discourse level to determine quite accurately the level of language resources the student is able to demonstrate in this task:

Lexis: the student has enough varied lexical resources to build the field of a amusement park: Ghost house, roller coaster, yellow light etc and construct the field for a scary event in a narrative, everyday language and literate features lexis (Score 2/3)

Appraisal: the student uses a range of evaluative expression to describe feelings of fear and an appreciation of the amusement park thereby engaging the reader: extraordinary, nobody was there, the roller coasters were dark but in the Goast House there was a yellow light. It was fun and scary at the same time. because sure it was fun to be in Gröna Lund, but it was uncomfortable to be there alone. He pulled his cap over his head because he didn't want to see. but then he heard a scream and a noice Then more and more voices were heard. Then I understood what it was. It was zombie. Who came towards him. (Score 2/3)

Conjunctions and logical relations between and within the sentences:
A little boy was in Gröna Lund. It was extraordinary because nobody was there He saw that the roller coasters were dark but in the Goast House there was a yellow light. It was fun and scary at the same time. because sure it was fun to be in Gröna Lund, but it was uncomfortable to be there alone. He pulled his cap over his head because he didn't want to see. but then he heard a scream and a noice Then more and more voices were heard. Then I understood what it was. It was zombie. Who came towards him. (Score 2/3)

Reference – keeping track of people and things:
A little boy was in Gröna Lund. It was extraordinary because nobody was there He saw that the roller coasters were dark but in the Goast House there was a yellow light. It was fun and scary at the same time. because sure it was fun to be in Gröna Lund, but it was uncomfortable to be there alone. He pulled his cap over his head because he didn't want to see. but then he heard a scream and a noice Then more and more voices were heard. Then I understood what it was. It was zombie. Who came towards him. (Score 2/3)

Grammar: accurate conventions and variety of sentence structure, accurate Graphic features: spelling, punctuation, presentation:
Grammar conventions and rules: accurate Variation: appropriate variety of sentence and word group structure for the school level and for the assignment (Score: 3/3)
Spelling: some spelling mistakes in the core words (Score: 2/3)
Punctuation: some improvement needed (Score: 2/3)
Presentation: no paragraphs, no title, legible handwriting (Score: 1/3)

Total Score 27/42

This student who had previously been one of the lowest achievers in the class was assessed at an average level of achievement on this piece of independent writing completed after the completion of the Reading to Learn cycle.

To further illustrate the successes experienced by students in the program, following are some
examples from other classes of both pre and post writing samples from the same student. The next pair of texts (Samples 2 and 3) is from a low achieving second language learner in Year 4. Sample No 2 is a Recount written independently before implementation of R2L. The task was to independently write about the summer holiday. The adjacent text (Sample 3) is also a Recount written independently after the implementation of Reading to Learn. The task was to independently write about the Easter holiday. These texts have been translated into English attempting to reflect the inaccuracies in the original Swedish texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample No 2</th>
<th>Sample No 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-program independent writing sample</td>
<td>Post-program independent writing sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have bathed in Huvestabadet this summer with fritis (=after school recreation center).</td>
<td>My Easter holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This summer I have gone to gröna lund with my mother and little brothers</td>
<td>One day at the Easter holiday my cousins came to visit. They live in Gothenburg. My cousins slept over at our place. I couldn’t do my home work because they took my pens. It was my worst Easter holiday. They stayed a week in my hose. I had to be out every day because I couldn’t do anything at hom. I was not allowed to watch tv. I could just play Computer. And when they went I could do what I wanted again. After just one free day it was school again. And I didn’t get the time to do my home work because they had visted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This summer I have also been to liseberg and ridden many merry-go-rounds. Which were very fun.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This summer I bought many New games which were very fun.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading comprehension Score before R2L: 16/35</td>
<td>Reading comprehension score after R2L: 22/35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Young learners early attempts at writing often resemble speech written down as in the pre program writing sample above. Apart from establishing that the time frame for the text is “this summer”, the writer has not built up a context to orient the reader to the people and places mentioned in the text. The writer presumes that the reader is familiar with the people and places mentioned. The events in the text have not been connected to each other and there is little reflection on the happenings. It shows very few characteristics of a successful written recount.

The post program sample however, is a much more successful and engaging piece of writing. It has an orientation stage that builds a context to establish time and place and introduce the people. There is a connected series of problems, reactions and reflections that are not resolved and serve to engage the reader in the central problem of coping with annoying visitors. Or, perhaps the writer is using his/her enhanced linguistic resources to make an excuse for not doing homework over the holidays?

The progress in writing development that can be observed in the samples above is also accompanied by an improvement in reading comprehension as measured by the DLS™ test that was administered to every class of students pre and post program implementation. So what emerges through the data collection sample is a robust picture of development in both reading and writing for all students who participated in the Reading to Learn project.

Similar results were achieved for older learners. The pair of texts that follow (Samples 4 and 5) were both written by the same student who was a low achieving, recently arrived second language learner who had almost no experience of schooling prior to arrival in Sweden. The student was in a preparatory class for recently arrived immigrant students in Year 10.

Sample No 4 is a Recount, written in the form of a letter. Students were asked to independently write a letter to a dear friend or relative in their home country. Before the task, the students read and studied other people’s letters (Swedish text appears in the Appendix).
My dear friend!
I’m worried that I don’t have frends. I don’t foroget when we climbed trees and xxxx. We play together with me. I deremed often. When came I Swede I chenged temperament. Because I was alone all the time. but maybe know you not how much mis you. I want back before the life that lived we. When we contact each other I so glad but now totally saad. I stop to laugh i thinck you often. Now know I not where you the life your mobile didn’t answer maybe spok you I don’t want to stotop contat me and you. One day will I Somalia hope that we see each other in Somalia. you are sad after me. I know you are lonely. I don’t want leave alone. but is war therefore escap to Swede. Sweden is peace country I so very glad. I go school free and food. Hope I that will the war end. and we see each other when there Give my greetings to all friends don’t forgat me. I miss you much kiss and hug

Sample No 5, written by the same student, is also a Recount. Students were asked to independently write about something that they will always remember. Before the task students had been scaffolded by the whole Reading to Learn cycle, including detailed reading and joint construction of a whole-class model text. The task was taken from a national test of Swedish for Year 9 (Swedish text in Appendix).

Something I will never forget
It happened in may and the weather was suffocatingly hot and the sun stood in the middle of the sky. I visted my friends and neigbour before I was going. After that I dressd and I stoodd in fron of the mirror and saw myself. I was nervous and I was extremely distressal I left my mother and little brother.

My mother and I hugged each other in bosom a warm and I didn’t let go but I want be left in my mother’s bosom. We had taken a taxi out from city to airport. My mother was very understandin and she comfort me that I would retun a dey and we would meet in a ordinar way. She said that everything would be all right and that it was jus cal if it was something. we passed several the fields and there are no bigg house just huts. The car turned to the right. We saw a lot of people stod in front of airport some of they return home.

I was in the aircraft and my mother stayed outside in the airport. The planes started to fly. I don’t believe to see my mother a dey on life. When my mother disappeart in the down in aircraft. I began to dispair my eyes the tears ran I became worried and felt sorrow in my my heart.

I come another country that was differ from my home country. The country has a heterogeneous population and the language was different of my language. I come out in Arliland I saw my cousin who waited for me. We embraced each other. Then drove we awau from Arliland towards home. I felt loneliness and I thoughd a loit my mother and my little brother. I was in bad in mood

The next day I callade my mother and I felt glad. Aftyer several month I talked her that I would visit her. Suddenly my mother didn’t want to visit her. I was surprisede. Mother said she was going to come here. I was very glad to again see my mother and my little brother. After a year ago my mother and brother got their residence perm in Swedan. I felt big joy. After a wek called and she said that would come tomorrow. The next day I went to airport and waited them in the airport. I lookedhappy.

Suddenly, I saw my mother coming out of the big door look around her self, her eyes searching, catch sight of her longed-for daughter. We embraced each other. I felt glad and safety and sucked in the lovely fragrance of mother. We looked nicely. In time ended worried and on the contrary I happy when my familj livred I again.

The improvement in this student’s independent writing from the pre to the post writing sample is remarkable. Like the younger learner, this student has progressed from spoken language written down in the first text (No 4), demonstrating that oral language was the main resource the student could draw on for writing, to the use of some highly literate language features the second text (No 5). This reveals that the student is now not only learning to read literary texts but can also draw on them
as a rich resource for building their own language resources for independent writing. This kind of progress which has been evident in *Reading to Learn* projects in Australia and elsewhere is also a key feature of student success in the Stockholm project.

Below are the pre and post program reading comprehension results for the same class of recently arrived Year 10 gymnasium students. The student whose writing samples appear above (4 & 5) is student “D” in the graph that follows (Figure 11). Again the reading comprehension results mirror the results evidenced in the improved writing outcomes. This is robust evidence of improved literacy outcomes for all students in the class with the greatest acceleration accruing to the lowest achieving students.

![Figure 11](image)

The teacher of this class used The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) rather than the DLS test to obtain these results.

**Achievement in reading**

Development of achievement in Reading using the DLS Comprehension Test (sample of 26 students in 3 schools)
The pattern of achievement in reading comprehension shows the same tendency as the achievement pattern for writing with the lowest achieving students making the greatest gains. Low achievers showed 31% improvement between pre and post test scores, compared to 28% for “good progress” students and 11% growth for the high achievers. Interestingly, in the pre and post reading results the percentage gains of the average or “good progress” students were almost as great as the gains for the low achievers. An initial gap of 52% between the high and low achievers in the pre test has dropped to 38% in the post test, reducing or closing the gap by 14%.

Even with a reduction of 14% in the gap between the highest and lowest achievers in just nine months (2009-2010), the potential to close the gap even further over time is apparent.

Teacher observations about student progress

In addition to the evidence gathered from writing samples and reading comprehension tests, teachers made some powerful observations about learner identity, a variety of changes in student learning behaviours and attitudes in the classroom as well as improvements in literacy outcomes. They observed some shifts in previously existing student-teacher relationships as well as shifts in power relationships between groups of students in the classroom.

The following comments were collected at the workshops, by project officers on school visits and in a written survey. The comments teachers were able to make about student learning became more insightful as the year progressed which not only provided additional data on student learning but attested to their own development in understanding the nature of literacy and its connection to learning.

During the first round of school visits and at the second workshop in December 2009, after approximately 10 weeks of classroom implementation, teachers made these comments about student learning:

- students are enthusiastic and understand more of what they read
- older students work has improved
- improved text organisation
- use of technical language
- recent arrival students are now very active in class
- students’ confidence to approach a new text has increased
- improvements in reading and writing
• enjoyment for students, sentence making strategies successful
• engages weaker students, highlighting focuses them
• reproducing texts engages students
• students beginning to apply the methodology independently

The teachers’ comments at this early stage of the program focus largely on the social and attitudinal improvements to students learning: enthusiastic, active confident, enjoyment, engagement, and independence. The observations about initial changes in students learning behaviours are generalised and not specifically linked to the impact of the R2L pedagogy on literacy learning. They focus on improvements in: work, understanding, reading and writing, text organisation and use of technical language.

During the third workshop in March 2010, in addition to reiterating many of the comments from the first workshops, they also made the following additional observations about student learning:

• they are becoming more literate, that is they are not just decoding, they are developing deeper understanding
• are now getting used to the method – highlighting etc. They are developing independence and taking control of their learning
• enjoy note taking and joint re-writing

These comments indicate the beginning of a shift from the initial emphasis on the social and attitudinal observations with only a generalised focus on learning, to some more careful observations about the impact of R2L pedagogy on the identity of the learner and literacy learning in the classroom.

In a written survey at the conclusion of the March workshops and in the final workshop in May, teachers observations had become more carefully focussed on the impact of the R2L pedagogy and on student literacy and learning:

• they can penetrate texts better, are interested in texts
• students of all ages are deeply engaged in texts
• they understand structure and begin to consciously construct their texts using phases and stages which they can “name” eg: problem and reaction
• they are producing higher quality texts
• now they are writing well structured texts and achieving well in National Tests
• they are now reading texts with ease, they don’t see the difficulties any more, they just read and write technical vocabulary without any problem
• “good progress” students can be taught by anyone – students who struggle are the challenge for teachers and R2L provides a methodology for these students who are in every classroom and can just be ignored
• students are now implementing the R2L strategies independently
• struggling students have now taken over the classroom from more advanced students
• they concentrate more with R2L as they are occupied and engaged in the learning process
• the achievement gap between the highest and lowest achievers decreases
• students are now more focussed
• they are not left alone to work on projects they are all working with the teachers
• students understand content of subjects better
• they are answering test questions much better
• students may “protest” at first with the new methodology but when they see the results they are engaged

The comments about the social and attitudinal aspects of learning have become far more specific by the end of the course and are now linked to the nature of literacy learning rather than seen as generic
Some teachers also made insightful comments about the impact of Reading to Learn on learners’ identity and the resulting shifts in the social relations in the classroom resulting from successful implementation: students are not left alone to work on projects they are all working with the teachers. So the teacher shifts from being a facilitator of individuated student learning, to a leader and partner with the students in a social learning process. Initial comments about learner identity such as; students taking control of their own learning have shifted to struggling students have now taken over the classroom from more advanced students. Some groups of previously marginalised learners by the end of the program were enjoying an enhanced status in the classroom as their ability to participate fully in the learning process was enhanced. This can bring about a change in the way in which a teacher is then required to interact with previously passive, disengaged or disruptive learners. Rose (2005) refers to this process of being able to interact with all learners in an equal manner as “democratising the classroom” which is a goal of the Reading to Learn program.

One teacher acknowledges the power that students have to influence a teacher’s pedagogical choices: students may “protest” at first with the new methodology but when they see the results they are engaged. Students need to be convinced of the value of the pedagogy before agreeing to cooperate and thereby “allowing” the teacher to lead their learning.

### 3.2 Outcomes of the Project for Teachers

The comments that teachers volunteered (above) about the development of student literacy learning using the Reading to Learn pedagogy, also provided a picture of their own learning over the course of the year. The teacher comments about student learning clearly shifted from generalized observation about social, attitudinal and generic learning early in the program, to highly specific observations about the impact of the pedagogy on the social relations in the classroom, the identity of the learners and the literacy learning outcomes. All of the aspects of the professional development program combined to enable teachers to progressively focus in more depth on their learners. The reflective activities included in the professional development workshops and during school visits while viewing video tapes enabled teachers to become articulate and reflective about their practice.

Teachers were also asked to comment on how they perceived their own learning with regard to the Reading to Learn pedagogy in workshops in December 2009 and March and May 2010. A similar picture of growth in understanding emerges from their comments. Their overt observations about their own learning focus on the additional areas of: the complexity of the reading and writing process, the quality of learning materials; texts, the level of rigor and challenge provided by curriculum texts, the importance of a staged pedagogical process to use for planning and providing structure in the learning environment and the opportunities afforded by teacher collaboration.

Initial comments in December focused on two issues; insights about literacy pedagogy and the benefits of teacher collaboration:

- now choosing more challenging texts – raising the bar
- now using reading to support students to write new texts
- using the Genre writing cycle to model the type of texts students need to write
- united teachers around the methodology
- preparing and planning together with other teachers
- teacher co-operation; same text in Swedish and Chemistry

By March the teachers were demonstrating a growing awareness of the complex nature of the reading and writing process:
They also showed an awareness of the importance of their role in making a difference to student learning:
- realisation that teachers need to be close to the text – well prepared
- teachers’ language is very important for student success
- we are starting to make better text choices
- improved text selection for younger learners

They could also see how the Reading to Learn pedagogy would support them and their learners to improve literacy outcomes:
- using the approach gradually and becoming more intensive
- in the National Tests we see how students fail because they can’t “nail down” a text, this pedagogy will make a difference
- we are learning how to highlight key wordings

By the end of the course in May 2010 teachers had become very reflective about their own learning journey and the impact that their use of the Reading to Learn pedagogy had on themselves, their relationships with colleagues and their students:
- Teachers, like students, can struggle at first with this methodology
- Teachers “dare” to use more difficult texts
- Teachers are abandoning textbooks and “finding” better texts ie considering Genre, content and language
- R2L has given teachers a way of analysing texts and motivating students
- Teachers can now use more difficult texts and a wider range of genres eg. not just simple stories in the primary school
- Teacher professionalism and collaboration has given dignity to the project
- The pedagogy “turns teachers minds around” – it is interesting and an ongoing challenge!
- Some teachers previously didn’t have a strategy at all for teaching weaker students – they were just left to fail
- Using more texts now instead of drama and oral activities because reading was too difficult for the students before
- Before R2L teachers didn’t have a methodology to work with texts, students often copied and drew pictures
- Previously teachers just hoped that a lot of reading in general would be enough
- Teachers need to read the texts more closely when planning
- Elaborations take all students understandings to a higher level
- Joint writing is a very important activity
- Other teachers can see the difference between students who are doing R2L and students from other classes who are not
- The R2L cycle gives teachers a structure to follow
- We are now teaching to the weakest students not just the top ones
- We have been able to use the curriculum guidelines and work on Science texts in the Swedish class
- Secondary teachers can spend 20-30 minutes on one key text that will model writing
- Teacher collaboration has increased
- It is better to choose short passages from quality texts for detailed reading rather than rewriting texts to make them easy reading for struggling students

They had also become conscious of the improvement in learning outcomes for students and articulated their intentions to further improve learning in the coming year by revising plans and choosing more suitable texts.
- Teachers will plan for continuity in future, this year we just had to fit in with was already planned
Teachers will focus on “core” texts and drop other things – teachers need to be disciplined!

While the overall data sample was small, the tendencies displayed by the data collected point to improvements in both teacher and student learning that reflect the patterns of improvement reported in the larger Australian projects. In spite of the fact that the Swedish teachers could be seen to be somewhat disadvantaged compared to their Australian counterparts, due to the materials and professional development sessions being predominantly in English and aligned to the Australian curriculum and only a limited number of Swedish example texts and lesson plans to guide them, their results demonstrated a high level of professionalism and commitment to improved student learning.

SECTION 4: KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Will the implementation of Reading to Learn in Stockholm schools accelerate literacy learning for disadvantaged learners and close the achievement gap?

4.1 Key findings:
Following are key findings from the Reading to Learn Project carried out in 2009 – 2010 in relation to the key question underpinning the implementation of the project

1. Significantly improved literacy outcomes for all students in the Reading to Learn project
The overall data collection revealed that all students who participated in the project showed improvement in literacy outcomes over the course of the year. The quantitative data collection recorded growth of 11% - 33% for high achieving students and 31% - 128% for low achieving students. While the collection rate of complete sets of quantitative data was only 57%, accompanying qualitative data from school visits, teacher video tapes and teacher observation records and a survey confirmed a tendency to improvement for all students.

2. Reduction in the achievement gap for disadvantaged learners
As in Australia (Culican 2006, Rose 2010) the highest rates of improvement in literacy outcomes in Reading to Learn in Stockholm accrued to the lowest achieving students. This had an acceleration effect for the students who had been considered as the most disadvantaged learners. Thus the graphically depicted achievement “gap” has shown a tendency to be reduced for students in the Reading to Learn project in under eight months. This points to the potential of this approach to eventually close the achievement gap and enhance future learning and career opportunities for even the most disadvantaged learners.

3. Effective pedagogy for engaging all students in classroom literacy learning.
The teacher observation data on student learning stressed the significant role of Reading to Learn in increasing student engagement in working closely with texts to improve literacy and learning outcomes. Teachers reported that when students experienced success in reading and writing their own texts they became motivated and engaged in learning. Teachers were then able to harness this engagement to work intensively with the whole class on higher level texts that had previously been accessible only to high achieving students.

4. Advantages of the Reading to Learn literacy pedagogy
The Reading to Learn pedagogy provided many teachers with a systemic approach to implement classroom literacy learning that for the first time enabled success for all groups of learners. It was used successfully by generalist classroom teachers, language teachers and subject specialists. Teachers articulated their feelings of inadequacy prior to the program with regard to meeting the needs of all learners in their classrooms. Reading to Learn enabled teachers to equalise the social relationships in the classroom while simultaneously accelerating learning and meeting the intellectual needs of all students. Accelerated learning meant that teachers no longer needed to “dumb down” the curriculum for disadvantaged learners as they could use high quality learning materials with the whole...
5. **Teachers’ professional knowledge about language and literacy was developed**
In addition to teachers’ overt observations about their own learning as a result of participation in the *Reading to Learn* project, their increasingly insightful comments on student learning revealed a profound development in their understandings of the nature and complexity of the literacy learning task faced by students. Their increased empathy for the difficulties encountered by struggling students translated into a heightened sense of responsibility for implementing the pedagogy effectively to meet the needs of learners who had previously been marginalised by mainstream schooling.

6. **Project style of professional learning provided a range of data for key stakeholders**
The project style of professional development undertaken in the *Reading to Learn* project in Stockholm has generated a wealth of quantitative and qualitative data for the key stakeholders in the Education Administration and the participating schools. The data that has been collected, analysed and presented in this report has provided evidence of a successful approach to teacher and student learning. Reflection on the data has provided a range of insights into the complex process of teacher professional learning for change in student learning outcomes. Nonetheless, all opportunities for analysis of the data generated have not been exhausted by this project. Further opportunities exist for future work and research in this area.

7. **An evidence based approach with capacity to lead the whole-school improvement process**
The *Reading to Learn* program, based on a number of robust theoretical frameworks and implemented as a project with data collection, has the capacity to improve literacy and learning outcomes for all learners of any age in a range of educational settings. It is an evidence-based approach to learning improvement that has proven to be effective for particularly for disadvantaged learners and has the capacity to be the principal vehicle for bringing about whole-school improvement. Using the *Reading to Learn* teacher and student literacy development project as part of a strategic whole-school plan would ensure that essential literacy skills would be developed to provide a strong foundation for a school to move forward successfully with further innovations in their chosen direction.

4.2 Recommendations

The findings of the report lead to the following recommendations:

1. **To continue with the implementation of Reading to Learn in Stockholm schools:**
   - *Reading to Learn* to become part of a plan for Literacy improvement in Stockholm schools
   - *Reading to Learn* to be available to all schools but that preference be given to schools with high numbers of disadvantaged learners
   - targets to be set each year for the numbers of schools and teachers that can be accommodated and a clear process to be established for recruiting schools for the project
   - classroom teachers and subject specialists are to be encouraged to participate in addition to special education and language teachers
   - a training program for *Reading to Learn* facilitators to be introduced for personnel from the City of Stockholm
   - the implementation of *Reading to Learn* in Stockholm to be reported on annually

2. **To strengthen the data collection process:**
   - measures be taken to improve the rate of data collection from teachers in the future
   - effective use of the online communication system to be explored for its potential improve communication with teachers and enhance the data collection process
   - processes be put in place to revise and clean data as it is submitted
• submitted usable data to be recorded in a spread sheet as soon as possible after submission
• expert advice to be sought in relation the preparation of statistical reports on the Reading to Learn data in comparison to national literacy achievement rates and other similar statistics
• possibilities for partnerships with universities be explored to conduct research on the project to exploit the data collected more fully and to use the participating schools as sites for a range of classroom research.

3. To progressively translate the Reading to Learn materials into Swedish:
   • samples of suitable Swedish curriculum materials to be compiled
   • sets of exemplary Swedish lesson plans to be compiled
   • exemplary classroom teachers to be identified for future production of classroom video tapes
   • consideration be given to an assessment project with experienced Reading to Learn teachers to develop a set of graded and annotated samples of student work for all stages of schooling.

4. To continue with support for teachers to successfully implement Reading to Learn:
   • high levels of support, including school visits, continue to be given to teachers in schools to ensure ongoing successful implementation
   • the knowledge and expertise of experienced teachers to be nurtured and progressively drawn on as a resource to further develop the project particularly through the mentoring of new teachers
   • opportunities to celebrate and showcase successful classroom implementation to be fostered through face-to-face forums, print and online publications including videos and other means.

5. To provide more information about the Reading to Learn project to school leaders:
   • school leaders to be fully informed about the project prior to the start of each new school year so that decisions to become involved can be linked to staffing and whole school improvement plans
   • schools planning to implement Reading to Learn with large numbers of staff to be provided with specific advice on how to use the teacher and student literacy improvement synergistically at the school with plans for improvement in other areas
   • links between language imperatives in the new Swedish curriculum and Reading to Learn be communicated to school leaders
   • consideration be given to documenting case studies of whole school improvement linked to Reading to Learn

6. To report on the implementation of the 2010 Reading to Learn Mathematics project:
   • consideration be given to the findings of the Reading to Learn Mathematics project
   • the learnings from the Mathematics project be used to inform the ongoing development of the Reading to Learn project
   • consideration be given to the ongoing implementation of a Mathematics component of the Reading to Learn project in conjunction with specialist Mathematics teachers

4.3 Conclusion

The implementation of Reading to Learn in Stockholm, based on the robust theories of social learning, functional linguistics and sociology of education, has provided teachers with an explicit pedagogy that has been able to simultaneously meet the needs of improving literacy outcomes and enhancing learning in all areas of the curriculum at any stage of schooling. The needs of all learners in the classroom have been addressed and the learning of disadvantaged or marginalised students has shown acceleration. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the achievement gap between high and low performing students in only eight months.

Through involvement in the Reading to Learn project teachers have seen that improvement in student learning has been a result of enhancing their own knowledge about the nature of language and
literacy development and using these insights to plan specifically for literacy and learning by consistently implementing a staged and explicit pedagogy. Some teachers called into question the notions that previously guided their classroom practice, such as the idea that development in literacy and learning were a “natural” outcome of engaging in a range of activities and doing a lot of reading. They came to understand the role of the teacher as paramount in the literacy and learning process. While they acknowledged that all students benefited from Reading to Learn, they stressed the significance of the additional gains that accrued to disadvantaged learners when teachers used this systematic literacy pedagogy to carefully select key texts and thoroughly prepare for focussed teaching in all curriculum areas.

The results of this small pilot project point to the potential of this pedagogy to significantly improve the outcomes of learners who have been identified as disadvantaged and not likely to complete secondary schooling. Continued implementation of the project with ongoing data collection would address the issue of student underachievement and at the same time work synergistically to achieve the aims of the new curriculum by providing a pedagogy for explicitly teaching both language and curriculum content to all students in all subject areas.
REFERENCES


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**Websites:**

Statistics Sweden, [www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se)

The National Agency for Education, [www.skolverket.se](http://www.skolverket.se)

The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, [www.spsm.se](http://www.spsm.se)

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate, [www.skolinspektionen.se](http://www.skolinspektionen.se)

**Tests used:**


DLS™ bas för skolår 1 och 2 (2004)

DLS™ för klasserna 2 och 3 (1999)

DLS™ för skolår 7–9 och år 1 i gymnasiet (2002)

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)
Appendix

Original Swedish student texts:

Sample No 1 (p31)
- Elev i åk 4
- Lågpresterande andraspråkselev
- Berättelse skriven (självständigt) efter implementering av R2L-strategierna.
- Modelltext: textavsnitt från Astrid Lindgrens "Bröderna lejonhjärta"
- Lärarens fokus: berättelser faser och hur författare bygger uppspänning i en text för att engagera läsarna

En liten kille var på Gröna Lund. Det var märkligt för ingen var där Han såg att berg och dal banorna var mörka men i Spökhuset lyste det gult. Det var roligt och läskigt på sama gång, för visst var det kul att vara på Gröna Lund, men det var obehagligt att vara där själv. Han drog sin luva på huvudet för att han inte ville se. men då hörde han ett skrik och ett skrammel
Sen hördes det flera och flera röster. Då förstod jag vad det var. Det var zombie. som kom mot honom.

Sample No 4 (p34)
Texten skriven av flicka i gymnasieåldern, på IVIK. Knappt 2 år i Sverige. Ingen skolbakgrund i hemlandet Somalia. Texten skriven innan läraren tillämpade R2L.
Lärare: Eva Oivio, Hässelby gymnasium, IVIK
Exempel på elevtext (skriven före implementering av R2L)

Min kära vän!
. Hoppas Jag att blir slutar kriget. och vi ses när dit Hälsa till alla kompisar glöm inte mig. Jag saknar dig mycke puss och kram

Sample No 5 (p34)
Texten skriven av samma flicka, efter att läraren tillämpat R2L under ca 5 månader

Det glömmer jag aldrig

Det hände i maj och vädret var kvävande hett och solen stått i mitten i himlen. Jag hälsade mina kompisar och grannan innan jag skulle åka. Efter det jag klädd på mig och jag stolt framför speglen och såg mig själv. Jag var nervös och jag var väldigt bedröveses lämnade jag min mamma och lilabbror.

Min mamma och jag kramade varandra i barm ett varmt och jag släptte inte men jag vill kvar i min mammas barmen. Vi hade tagit taxi ut från stad till flygplats. Min mamma var mycket förståend och hon tröst mig att jag skulle återvänd en då och vi träffas i ett vanliga sett. Hon sade att allt skulle ordna sig och att det var bar ring om det var något. Vi förbi äkarna och det
finns inte stott hus bara hyddor finns. Bilen svängde åt höger. Vi såg många människor stått i framför flygplats några av de återvån hem.


