Report of Clicker 7 Trial in Angus Council (January – June 2017)

Summary

The study was carried out across 8 schools. Training was delivered as two 1.5 hour sessions with a minimum of 4 weeks between sessions. All training was complete by end of March 2017.

Work samples were received from 5 of the 8 schools, with samples from 28 pupils being received in total. These showed considerable benefits of using Clicker 7 across all of the schools. This was consistent for pupils of differing abilities and differing levels of experience using Clicker 7. More words were written, more multi-syllabic words were used, less time was taken and less prompts/help was required when pupils used Clicker 7; thus providing benefits to pupils and teachers. Quotes from both teachers and pupils were provided by some participants, which were extremely positive.

Background

Clicker software has been used to varying degrees in school across Angus for many years. Two schools had whole school licences of Clicker 6 but many were using a few licences of much older versions. Clicker 7 brings new features and greater usability than previous versions, in particular the ability to use mind mapping (Clicker Boards) in whole class teaching and then rapidly create differentiated resources (Word Banks) to support pupils in their subsequent writing.

Some studies have shown the benefits of using speech feedback and word prediction (Williams, 2002). Limited research has been carried out into the use of technology to support writing and none was found comparing the use of technology to support pupils with varying levels of support needs (MacArthur, 2000). Existing studies have been into the use of older versions of writing support software, hence the need for a study using the latest version (Meredith and Linda, 2009).

Purpose

This study was undertaken to investigate the impact of using Clicker 7 to support pupils in Angus with writing. A comparative study was undertaken to establish if there were particular benefits of using Clicker 7 with identified pupils, with additional support needs, and if benefits were also found for pupils without additional support needs. The use of Clicker 7 across the whole school and only with identified pupils was also investigated to try to establish if inclusion was improved by a whole school approach.

Results and Conclusion

The study is nearing completion. It would have been preferable to analyse a greater number of work samples, particularly more samples from pupils who require only minimal support. Many schools reported a lack of laptops for running the software; hence they targeted the pupils with the greatest need.

Some teacher and pupil comments were provided along with the work samples; however, online surveys will be sent out to gather more detailed feedback from teachers and pupils regarding their experiences of using Clicker 7. It is also planned to gather the parent voice through on-line or paper-based surveys.

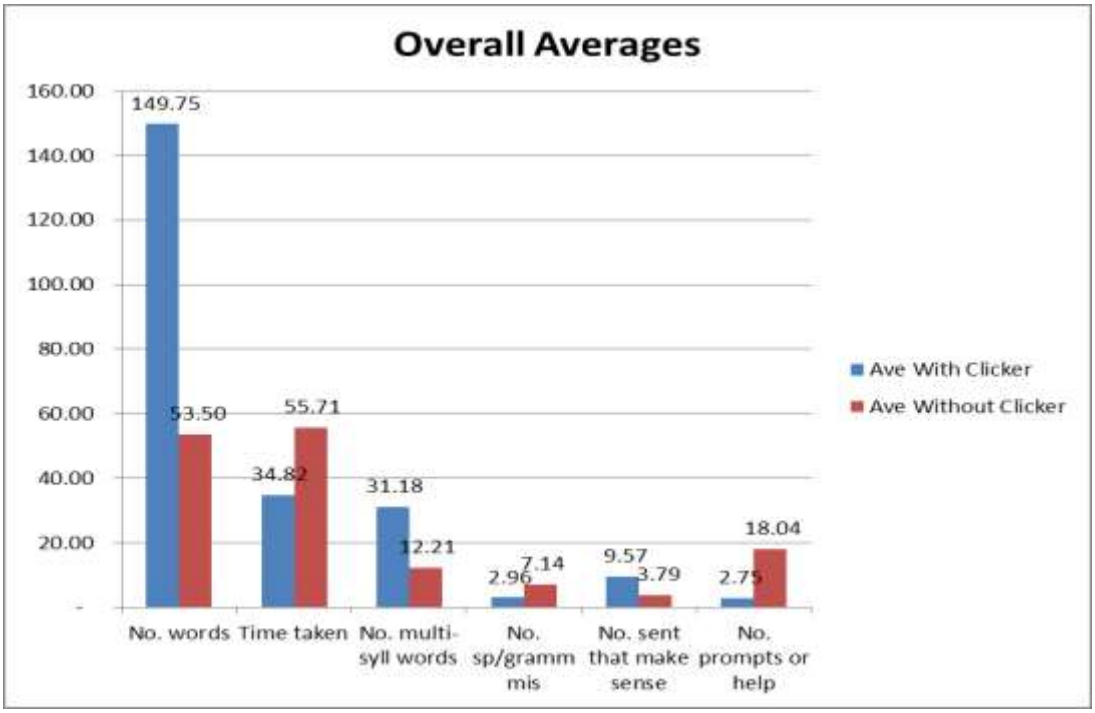
The results of the work samples were very positive, with considerable benefits being shown.

Table 1: Averages of all pupils comparing use of Clicker 7 and without

	No. words	Time taken (min.)	No. multi-syllabic words	No. spelling/ grammatical mistakes	No. sentences that make sense	No. prompts or help
Ave With Clicker	149.75	34.82	31.18	2.96	9.57	2.75
Ave Without Clicker	53.5	55.71	12.21	7.14	3.79	18.04
Benefits (how many times more)	2.8	1.6	2.55	2.41	2.53	6.56

Use of Clicker 7 resulted in almost three times the number of words being written, with more than twice the number of multi-syllabic words used; also, work was produced more quickly and with less than half the number of mistakes made. Additionally, pupils required help or prompting over 6.5 times more when not using Clicker 7 to support writing; thus showing Clicker 7 to be significant in encouraging independent work.

Figure 1: Impact of using Clicker 7 compared to without Clicker 7



The benefits were consistent when analysed across different levels of additional support need (significant, average and minimal) and across different levels of experience of pupils in using Clicker 7 (new, moderate and experienced). Pupils requiring significant or average support wrote 3 times more words, taking over a third less time to complete the work and with over 4 times less help needed. It could tentatively be said that use of Clicker 7 benefits pupils of all levels of ability and benefits can be seen rapidly, even when pupils had used Clicker 7 less than 5 times; however, a greater number of work samples would be required to verify these findings.

The comments that were shared were extremely positive:

Pupils: "I much prefer writing using Clicker." "I can write more." "It is easier and it looks better." "Clicker is good because it helps you with words." "It helps me do my writings and it is good." "I like Clicker because you get to voice record and do pictures." "I like to use Clicker because it helps me with my spelling." "My hand doesn't get sore using Clicker."

Teachers: "The children were able to identify errors and correct them independently." "It greatly increases the children's motivation to write". "I find Clicker 7 very intuitive and easy to use. It takes minutes for templates and activities to be set up and these can then be easily adapted for future activities. The children are motivated and engaged by Clicker 7 and it provides them with good word processing skills for their future development. It has enabled a good deal of our pupils to become much more independent with their writing work." "It was simple to differentiate work to be suitable for all pupils in the class." "With a high ratio of EAL children, the read back facility is invaluable." "From what we've seen, the pupils who've used this have benefitted enormously. I have observed greater confidence and independence in their work. They have also enjoyed the opportunity to self-check."

Further surveys are required to establish differences in using Clicker 7 as a whole school approach rather than for specific small groups or individual pupils, and if inclusion is improved using different approaches. These will be carried out in August/September 2017.

References

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