

# Reading Together Project 2014

## Analysis of feedback on changes in student achievement and engagement

*Analysis by Fay and Ray Madden, February 2015*

This report examines the feedback provided by caregivers and teachers on changes in achievement and engagement for 479 students whose caregivers participated in the Reading Together workshops.

The reporting requirements for schools participating in the Reading Together Project do not include specific achievement data and are focused on an attendance profile and on feedback from the adults attending the Reading Together workshops. An analysis of the attendance and the full range of feedback for the 2014 reports has been completed. Refer to our *Report on Feedback 2014*.

This additional report analyses only those comments where specific qualitative or quantitative mention was made of a student's performance. As each student's identity was anonymous it is possible that more than one comment did in fact refer to the same student, either by duplication within sections of a feedback questionnaire or by both the teacher and caregiver commenting about the same student.

The comments in the feedback were divided into six categories. Three categories referenced the students' reading achievement.

These were:

- Qualitative assessment of a student's gain in reading achievement
- Quantitative measures of a student's gain in reading achievement
- Responses that noted either no improvement or questionable improvement

A further three categories referenced changes in the students' engagement with reading.

These were:

- Increased enthusiasm for reading
- An improvement in confidence when reading
- Responses that noted either no improvement or questionable improvement

The following table shows the number of responses in each category and the percentage each contributed.

	Qualitative assessment of improved achievement	Quantitative measures of improved achievement	Questionable or no improvement in achievement	Increased enthusiasm for reading	Improved confidence when reading	Questionable or no improvement in engagement
Number of responses	72	47	6	248	97	11
Percentage of responses	15%	10%	1%	52%	20%	2%

97% of the responses attributed gains in either achievement or engagement with reading to caregiver participation in the Reading Together workshops.

## Qualitative assessment of a gain in reading achievement

15% of responses recorded a qualitative assessment that a student's reading had improved. Of the 72 responses in this category 35 were from caregivers who had noticed a marked improvement in their child's reading over the course of the workshops.

- Typical comments from caregivers are:

*This programme has helped my whole family tremendously. Reading is now so much fun, as a family reading together and attending the Library together has improved the children's reading level as well as mine. Who would ever have thought attending the Library as a family could be so much fun?*

*Massive difference – they are excited to read and have gone up reading levels in the short time of the programme.*

*Enjoyed the 4 week reading with my children programme. Not only did I get to meet other parents but my sons reading improved and I got some different skills to help him achieve his reading goals.*

*I enjoyed the resources and activities from the course and have used them on my child at home too. I have noticed that her reading has improved a lot too since I've been attending this course.*

The remaining 37 responses were from teachers who noted that they had noticed an improvement in the student's reading level subsequent to the workshops, but did not record any test results in their feedback.

- Examples of such comments are:

*Teachers have commented very positively about the levels of engagement and interest the students have since their parents have been attending the programme. All students have made gains in their reading levels and have sustained these gains.*

*All students whose whanau participated in the Reading Together Workshops showed significant improvement in their reading and teachers noticed that they were keen to do their homework.*

*One family went from very little home support to great support, and their kids have shot ahead in confidence and ability.*

## Quantitative measures of improved achievement

Five schools provided specific quantitative measures of student performance before and after the workshops. The number of students in each school group varied from two to 15 and together covered a total of 25 students.

No change was recorded for three of the students, while an improvement was recorded for the remaining 22 students. There was an average gain of 3.5 reading levels over this group of students.

A further 10 schools provided less specific data, simply noting that students had gone up one or more reading levels.

- The following feedback from schools illustrates the effect of the Reading Together workshops on student achievement:

*Teacher 9 acknowledges that the progress the student has made is due largely to the Reading Together program which has built up the parents confidence and made them aware of his needs and it has provided them with the necessary strategies to assist him in reading. He has made a shift of 79, moving from 2B to 2A in one term.*

*We were approached by a parent who had completed the programme in the first group, she came to say that her child had moved three levels in reading and when the teacher had asked the child why she felt she was improving, the child's response was that reading with Mum was fun now. The parent felt this was due to her participation in the Reading Together Programme.*

*No 3 moved up 2 years in reading age in 6 months. Expression started to show development and comprehension was maintained at a high level as she moved up the reading levels.*

*No 4 moved up one and a half years in reading age in 6 months. She gained in confidence and is able to engage in higher level comprehension questions posed. Much more recreational reading is happening now.*

*No 5 and 8 moved from below National Standard expectations to meeting which was a real celebration for them, their teacher and their parents. Homework is being done enthusiastically by both these children now.*

## **No or questionable improvement in the student's reading achievement**

Only six responses fell into this category. Three of these were from quantitative testing of the student's reading level and one was a qualitative assessment from a caregiver whose student was already a competent reader. Also, teachers from two schools gave the following guarded endorsements of the Programme:

*Hard [to] attribute improved levels to Read Together as we have a very robust reading programme. But definite improvement in enjoyment of reading.*

*Some children who are well below with their reading ability have actually made excellent progress. We can't know if this is just because of the programme but feel it did make a difference.*

## **Increased enthusiasm for reading**

This was the most frequently remarked upon benefit of the workshop. 52% of the feedback comments from teachers and workshop participants noted that the skills learned by the participants in the workshops resulted in an often dramatic increase in the child's enthusiasm for reading.

- Comments from parents and caregivers who noted more enthusiasm in their children towards reading include:

*It's helped me make it more enjoyable, by not rushing in, by letting her work it out and having more fun by talking about the book. She learned that reading can be real fun. This was a good thing.*

*My daughter is reading a lot more at home. We have established more set reading times. The programme was helpful to use with my younger child too and we enjoy reading more.*

*It is really helping both of us at home. She now wants to show me the book and discuss it before we read. I am able to also show the kids that I am a learner by coming to this programme at school. All my children are more motivated and engaged within their reading now.*

*I try to make it fun now and we find interesting places to read. He is much more interested in reading now. Before the ideas we had trouble getting him to read. This programme has saved frustration at homework time.*

- Teachers made similar comments:

*As the teacher of a number of the students whose parents are completing the 'Reading Together' programme I have noticed a big change in their attitudes towards reading. It has become more fun for them and they now burst through the class door and tell me about what they have been doing at home with their whanau. It has been awesome to see. The parents also seem a lot more confident with their children.*

*Another teacher said that one of the children have been very excited about having his own special kete of books at home and talks about it every day.*

*A teacher said that the Reading Together Programme has been hugely beneficial in engaging some of the readers sitting just below National Standards in my class. The kids are very excited to have their own books at home that they are capable of reading independently and this enthusiasm has carried over into the classroom and their reading groups.*

*"D" came to school telling me that he sat down and read with his father for the first time ever and was so excited about doing it again. It has changed his whole attitude to reading at home – he is positive and eager to do reading homework now.*

*It also most seems like a light has come on for most of the siblings in one family. Although they enjoyed reading there seemed to be a disconnect between reading and "have done that" to now, reading and talking about what they read and the older ones discussing books more animatedly.*

### **Improved confidence when reading**

20% of the feedback comments attributed an improvement in the student's reading confidence to caregiver participation in the Reading Together workshops. Of these responses 25% were from teachers and 75% were from caregivers. This increase in confidence was accompanied by an increased frequency and enjoyment of reading.

- The following comments from parents and caregivers illustrate the positive effect of their workshop involvement on their child's engagement with reading:

*She has increased confidence when she is reading. We now read more as a family. We ask lots of questions when she is reading to ensure she understands what she is reading. The book voucher was a great bonus!*

*I don't force him to do it now as he is more likely to focus if he comes to me with it. He is more confident in going back and fixing his mistakes. I'm not jumping in straight away instead I am giving him a chance to work it out for himself.*

*J really enjoys reading with me and is much more happy in general when reading a new book that may be a challenge. It is now quality time spent together rather than a chore.*

- Teacher comments in this category were in a similar vein:

*T is just so much happier and confident in both Reading and now Writing. He sees himself as successful. All the children involved seem to now engage in the reading process with higher levels of enthusiasm on a range of levels from somewhat more engaged to highly motivated.*

*Confidence in the class by the children has increased. All at Emergent (three of the group) and are learning 1:1 more easily, seem to have more knowledge of the book and talking about what is happening.*

*S already has a positive attitude to reading and since the programme he has begun to challenge himself to read harder books and give them a go. I have noticed that he is keen to participate in reading sessions and attempts the strategies he is learning. He is beginning to read again when it doesn't make sense and his writing is making an improvement. I have not been able to test him yet but his confidence to use strategies has improved.*

### **Questionable or no improvement in engagement**

Eleven responses (2% of those recorded) fell into this category. None of these responses were negative, but noted either that the child was already an able and enthusiastic reader, that it was too soon to tell if there was a difference, or were cautious in attributing gains to the Reading Together workshops.

- For example:

*3 children were highly engaged readers already so there has been no obvious change in their attitude to reading or reading habits as they were excellent already.*

*One child has become more confident with his reading and has improved this term although I can't say if this is because of the Reading Together programme.*

## Appendix

Five schools provided the following data on the students' achievement before and after their caregivers participation in the Reading Together workshops.

### Reading Level Shifts

Individual data for reading levels Before and After Reading Together Programme.

Each row represents the achievement and shift of a single student.

School	Reading Level		
	Before	After	Shift
School A	3	7	+4
	2	13	+11
School B	3	7	+4
	17	17	0
	17	21	+4
	9	9	0
	15	17	+2
	6	11	+5
	6	10	+4
	7	16	+9
	5	9	+4
	15	17	+2
	6	11	+5
	10	10	0
	19	20	+1
	5	9	+4
4	7	+3	
School C	17	18	+1
	12	17	+5
	4	5	+1

**Average shift in Reading Level:  
(20 students)                      +3.5**

The following shifts are not included in the Average Shift in Reading Level but were reported as gains in reading age.

School D*	7	9	+2
	8	12	+4
	5	7	+2
	9	11	+2
School E	2B	2A	+2

\* Shifts in this school were by Reading Age rather than Reading Level.