

# REP: ROTARY ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME

AN EVALUATION

FEBRUARY 2020

# REP: Rotary Enrichment Programme

## An Evaluation

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### CONTENT

REPORT SUMMARY .....	2
REPORT.....	5
Introduction .....	5
Key elements of the programme .....	5
Assessment within the Programme .....	6
Expectations for and Outcomes of the Programme .....	7
Methodology.....	9
PART 1: Analysis of Achievement Results .....	9
Quantitative Findings.....	10
Data Analysis.....	12
Conclusions from the Quantitative Data .....	21
PART 2: Analysis of Student Responses .....	22
Literacy Skills.....	22
Transition .....	24
Student Participation in REP .....	26
Motivation for Learning: Self-efficacy.....	28
Enjoyment of reading.....	31
Social and emotional well-being .....	32
Conclusions .....	35
Recommendations .....	36
References .....	38

# REPORT SUMMARY

The overarching question underpinning this evaluation is, “What are the long-term effects of the Rotary Enrichment Programme (REP) intervention on students’ reading achievement, NCEA achievement, and attitudes to reading and learning?” The study was also interested in student transition to high school, retention to senior school and positive aspirations for study/work beyond school. It is important to note that this evaluation should not be seen as an academic research report.

This study looks at data collected from students who were in the REP programme at One Tree Hill College in 2014 and 2015. These students completed questionnaires and participated in focus group discussions in 2018 when they were in Year 13 and Year 12 respectively.

Analysis of REP students’ e-asTTle and NCEA Levels 1 and 2 data have provided quantitative evidence of the effect of the REP programme. Comparison groups have been used to compare NCEA results between a cohort of Non-REP students with their REP peers.

## Successful Literacy Attainment

Analysis of data by Length of Intervention, Ethnicity, Gender, Achievement Level, and Attitude to Reading is presented.

### Length of Intervention

- most students (70%) participated in the REP programme for part of the year.
- 30% of the students participated for a full year.
- both groups made mean scale score gains.
- students that received the programme for the full year made greater mean scale score gains.

### Ethnicity

- all ethnicity groups made gains.
- the Pacific group made the greatest gains.

### Gender

- slightly more males participated in the programme.
- both Female and Male groups made gains.
- the Female group made greater gains than the Male group.

### Achievement Level

- at pre-test 16.5% of REP students were ‘At’ or ‘Above’ the expected curriculum level and by post-test this increased to 89.5%. For 70% of students the pre- and post-test interval was one semester. For 30% of students the interval was a whole year.

### Attitude to Reading (Interest)

- the students’ attitude to reading increased from pre to post test (+0.54-point gain).

### NCEA Level 1 (23 students from 2015 REP)

- all students achieved NCEA Level 1, 6 with Merit.

- all students achieved Literacy level 1.

NCEA Level 2 (23 students from 2015 REP)

- 22 students achieved NCEA Level 2, 3 with Merit.
- 16 students achieved Literacy Level 2.

#### **Improved literacy skills**

- Students believed that the programme really helped with their literacy skills and that they gained confidence in reading and writing through the programme.
- Students felt that the individual attention they received from the tutors helped them concentrate on their learning.

#### **Successful transition to high school**

- These senior students had little to say about transition, but they felt that being part of the programme helped to give them positive experiences of the first few months of high school.
- They were very keen to recommend the programme to other students and other schools.

#### **Positive participation in a special group**

- Students enjoyed feeling special because of the individual invitation to join the programme.
- They really enjoyed the learning activities designed to encourage them to improve their literacy skills.
- They acknowledged the benefits of group membership.
- Students identified that there was a stigma attached to being a part of the programme that took them out of regular classes but they also felt that the group helped each other to face any negativity. They also acknowledged that the REP tutors' attitude helped them forget negative attitudes.

#### **Strong self-efficacy as a learner**

- Students felt that participation in the programme changed their perspective about learning and they were more prepared to challenge themselves to attain better grades.
- They could see that experiences of success propelled a belief that they could be successful learners.
- Students reported that the skills and knowledge gained from the programme could be transferred into other subjects and other levels of schooling. They felt they could be successful in language-rich subjects such as Biology and History. A number of students reported gaining strength in English as a subject.

#### **Positive aspirations for a post-school future**

- Students valued the life and work experiences the tutors were willing to share. Many found the tutors' experiences inspirational.
- Students deeply appreciated the stories of the 'outside' world the tutors shared.
- Many students felt that the tutors had influenced their career and study choices and ambitions.

### **Positive attitude to reading**

- Students could see the value of reading and writing in terms of gaining and expressing knowledge. There was a positive shift in their attitude towards reading.
- A good majority of students reported that they now read for relaxation. A number talked about their love of reading.

### **Improved social and emotional well-being**

- There was ample evidence to demonstrate that the programme improved well-being. Students reported a positive effect on their self-belief.
- Students were not quiet about the power of the relationships they built with their tutors: they loved the stories, the laughs, the advice and the smiles.
- Students appreciated the tutors' time and willingness to share and build relationships – age, race, gender, economic status did not seem to be important, it was the tutor's attitude that made the difference. Students acknowledged the tutors' dedication and commitment.

### **In summary**

There is clear evidence of a positive effect of the programme on reading achievement at the end of the transition period, while the quantitative data demonstrates the strength of achievement in the long-term, and although there are some limitations with the comparative data, it is encouraging to see the high achievement rates at Level 1 and 2. The most heartening evidence is that the students themselves express confidence in their ability to learn, they see themselves as successful learners.

And from a Year 12 student:

I'd like to say thank you because they (the tutors) always had hope for each student and the hope that they had led us on to believe in each other – it was quite a joyful thing to see at such a young age. From then on you started to get the positive vibe in you, especially when you are a teenager there can be lots of negative vibes but the tutors always shared experiences and from that experience it would help us to be positive. FG Y12

# REPORT

## Introduction

The Rotary Enrichment Programme (REP) is a school led /community driven programme that brings voluntary community tutors into a local secondary school to support selected Year 9 students in groups of around 10, with their literacy development. The programme has operated at One Tree Hill College (OTHC) with volunteers organized in association with the Penrose Rotary Club since 1997. In 2014 the programme expanded to include Otahuhu College and in 2018 has expanded further to two other locations, PASS and Wesley College, with Bay of Islands College and Papatoetoe High School joining in 2019.

## This Evaluation

This report describes and evaluates the REP programme as it operates at One Tree Hill College (OTHC).

Key elements of the REP programme are described, including a comment about the ways students are assessed and the expected outcomes of the programme. There follows a picture of the methodology of the evaluation. A substantial part of this report discusses the outcomes of the evaluation including: quantitative literacy achievement results from e-asTTle and NCEA and qualitative data from focus group sessions and questionnaire, arranged into themes of Literacy Skills, Transition, Student Participation, Aspirations and Motivations for Learning, Enjoyment of Reading, Social and Emotional Well-being.

In 2012 a University of Auckland Masters student, Lindsay Fish, completed a comprehensive study of the literacy features of the REP programme at OTHC. The Fish thesis presents in detail, theory relating to adolescent literacy acquisition and the efficacy of the multi-dimensional approach that is practised in the REP programme. This report could be read in conjunction with the Fish thesis.

This current report is not, and should not be seen as, an academic evaluation of the REP programme. The purpose is to gain a picture of the long-term effects of REP as it operates at OTHC. It is a firm hope of the writers of this report that at some stage in the future a wide-ranging impact study of the REP programme (including locations other than OTHC) be undertaken. While this study interviewed students, it would be valuable for a future study to also capture the voice of the adult volunteers and teachers.

## Key elements of the programme

REP is a literacy programme focused on enrichment rather than remediation. In the words of Curriculum Leader, Brian Langdon, REP is a holistic programme that focuses on literacy in the widest sense. It not only operates to enrich basic reading skills and develop depth of thinking about what a student has read, but also endeavours to lift students' confidence, self-esteem and self-empowerment, through the enjoyment of reading and literate conversation with adult tutors.

During the primary/secondary transition there is a transfer from a primary focus on engagement with print to a secondary focus of generating rich knowledge via print, and some students require support as the emphasis changes. This support at an individual level is not usually available in a 1:25+ teacher to student classroom ratio but the one-to-one structure of REP allows individualised attention and as the students themselves point out, they are not allowed to skip the difficult words.

While funding arrangements vary according to the contributions of various Rotary clubs and philanthropic donors, a constant is that the school makes a genuine commitment to the programme through professional staffing of the Programme Coordinator, and a comfortable environment to work in. The school uses engaging and highly structured reading material, eg The SRA Reading Lab Programme (USA) or Australian Green Box, as a baseline activity that is closely linked to the school's curriculum. The importance of the programme is reinforced by specific time allocated in the timetable. Minimum delivery at OTHC is two tutor sessions and one teacher-led, group session per week for two terms – that is 3 hours a week for 15 to 18 weeks, although one group of around 10 students has REP for the entire year. Students are allocated to groups of 10 and there are five groups operating throughout the year.

Students take part in the normal Year 9 testing at the start of the year. Likely candidates are identified from this testing, along with various transition recommendations from school whānau leaders, teachers, SENCO, contributing schools and parents. There is an interview process and students are invited to be part of the group. Places on the programme go to students who are prepared to commit to REP expectations. Whānau are asked to sign an agreement that they will support their child in the REP participation. The aim is for students and whānau to see participation in REP as a privilege.

The programme itself is uncomplicated. 1:1 tutor/student pairings work as teams within a professionally supervised group environment. Activities include social interaction, reading together, practising effective reading strategies and discussing the reading material and wider issues that arise. The enjoyment of learning new vocabulary is a particular focus – while extension reading opportunities are actively encouraged.

Tutors (and the tutor coordinators) are community volunteers. Tutor commitment ranges from one to four hours per week (over two separate days). Every effort is made to provide consistency of pairings, but it is not unusual for students to have two tutors - and all seem to be very comfortable about the opportunity this represents. If needed, the tutors are supported to acquire necessary tutoring skills.

### **Assessment within the Programme**

At the beginning of the school year, all Year 9 students at One Tree Hill College take an e-asTTle reading test. Data from this is used to inform REP selection.

The school co-ordinator reports that consistency in assessment is achieved by the same teacher administering the assessments and using the same Running Record activity.

A range of assessment measures are used for REP including:

- Running Records using the text “Just Busking” from Handy Resources Informal Prose Inventory Part 2; this text has a reported readability level of 11-12 years; this text is used for both pre and post testing.

- e-asTTle reading assessment – a customised test that is used for both pre and post testing. The test has been created at mainly (60%) Level 4, 20% Level 3, and 20% Level 5. Year 9 students are typically working at Level 4, so a typically “achieving” Year 9 student should find some parts of the created test easy, most of it at the right level, and some of it challenging. This is the recommended process when creating an e-asTTle test. The test emphasises the following four curriculum strands: *Processes and Strategies* (eg comprehension strategies such as predicting, cross-checking, confirming, self-correcting), *Language Features* (e.g vocabulary, sentence structure, conventions of print), *Ideas* (e.g. making connections and inferences from the texts, identifying underlying ideas within and between texts) and *Purpose & Audience* (e.g. identifying different points of view, texts can have different purposes and different audiences).
- Teacher observations.
- Parent and student feedback.

## Expectations for and Outcomes of the Programme

Students are selected for REP on the basis of the following criteria.

- The students’ literacy levels will cause some difficulty in accessing the curriculum.
- Students are at risk of poor transition to high school.
- Students have poor levels of confidence.
- Reading not seen as enjoyable by students.

There is an expectation that students in this programme will transition well into secondary school, gain social and academic confidence, go on to achieve their academic potential at NCEA, and gain a positive attitude to reading. Expectations of the programme are outlined in the table below.

**Table 1: Expectations of the REP programme.**

	By... (Action)	Then... (Expected outcomes)		
		Short Term (End of Programme)	Mid Term (NECA level 1)	Long Term (End of School, Post School)
Literacy Skills	By Tutor and student sharing the reading lab programme and practising effective literacy strategies.	Accelerated improvement in reading, comprehension and speaking in front of others. Students aware of their growth in vocabulary and enjoyment of reading.	Improved literacy attainment – reading and writing in the range of curriculum subjects.	Positive attitude to reading. Independent reading.



Transition	By Building a sense of belonging – shared interests and purpose in REP groups.	Students feeling supported by a very safe and positive group culture. Reduced anxiety, improved confidence.	Resilience in transition into senior school.	Taking student leadership roles in school.
Participation in a specially invited group	By Inviting students into a programme of literacy extension, held in a special place within the normal school timetable.	Students feeling proud of involvement in a select, prestigious programme. Students happy to identify with the programme.		Students regard their participation in the REP group as a benefit and recommend participation to others.
Motivation for Learning, Self-efficacy	By One to one tutoring with a caring adult, having fun in focused learning.	Students show improved attention to learning, spend increased time on task and have an improved motivation for learning.	Success in gaining literacy credits. Students taking control and responsibility for their own learning.	Improved retention to senior school. Successful secondary school completion. Students seeing themselves as successful learners.
Enjoyment of Reading	By Modelling and sharing the enjoyment of reading and associated literate activities.	Students learn that reading can be fun and is a very useful skill to possess. Reading becomes a regular habit.		Students read regularly for fun and relaxation.
Social and Emotional Well-being	By Developing a positive relationship with a stranger of significantly different background, who is interested and cares for the student.	Students feel they are in a safe environment – in a room full of smiles, and that adults of different backgrounds can be trusted people, supporting their growth and success.		Students prepared to participate in a global world requiring intergenerational cultural fluency. Tutors developing positive intergenerational understandings.

## Methodology

This evaluation can be seen in two parts. The first part concerns the analysis of achievement results. The overarching question underpinning the quantitative evaluation is, “What are the long-term effects of the REP intervention on students’ reading achievement, and NCEA achievement?” The effects of the intervention on students’ reading achievement during the year in which they participated in REP is also examined. The second part of this evaluation concerns analysis of student responses to reflective questions, through questionnaire and focus group discussion, about the REP programme, and answers the question “What are the long term effects of the REP intervention on student’s attitude to reading, self- efficacy as a learner, social/emotional well-being, and aspirations for the future?”.

### PART 1: Analysis of Achievement Results

Analysis of e-asTTle and NCEA Levels 1 and 2 data has informed the evaluation. In addition, comparison groups were used to compare NCEA results between a cohort of Non-REP students from 2015 and 2016 with their REP peers.

Term 1, Year 9 2015 and 2016 e-asTTle data (not the REP e-asTTle test) were used to create the comparison groups. REP students were matched with a Non-REP student according to gender and individual e-asTTle ‘Overall Scores’.

This review is a retrospective report of the years 2014-2017.

Data across the four years (2014-2017) have been aggregated. This decision was made as the same e-asTTle test has been used over that time, the programme methodology has remained the same, and aggregating the data has resulted in a larger sample size.

Analysis of the following groups has been conducted to measure the impact of the REP intervention as measured by e-asTTle:

- Length of intervention
- Ability
- Ethnicity
- Gender

In addition, analysis of students’ Attitude to Reading (interest), and NCEA Levels 1 and 2 achievement (where applicable) are also reported. Results of the Attitude to Reading analysis are presented later in the report.

#### REP Participants 2014-2017

115 Year 9 students, 52 female and 63 male, participated in the REP programme from 2014 to 2017. Pacific students made up 59% of the total group, the “Other” group represented 19%, New Zealand Māori 14% and New Zealand European had 8%.

Table 2 gives a breakdown of students according to gender, ethnicity, and year of participation.

Table 2: *Number of Participants According to Ethnicity, and Gender*

	<b>N</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>		<b>NZ Māori</b>	<b>NZ European</b>	<b>Pacific</b>	<b>'Other'</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>63</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>22</b>

### **Curriculum Level Expectations for Year 9**

Nationally, students at the beginning of Year 9 are typically working at Level 4 P (Proficient) indicating they are working in the middle of Level 4. By the end of Year 9 students will typically be working at Level 5B (Basic), that is at the beginning of Level 5.

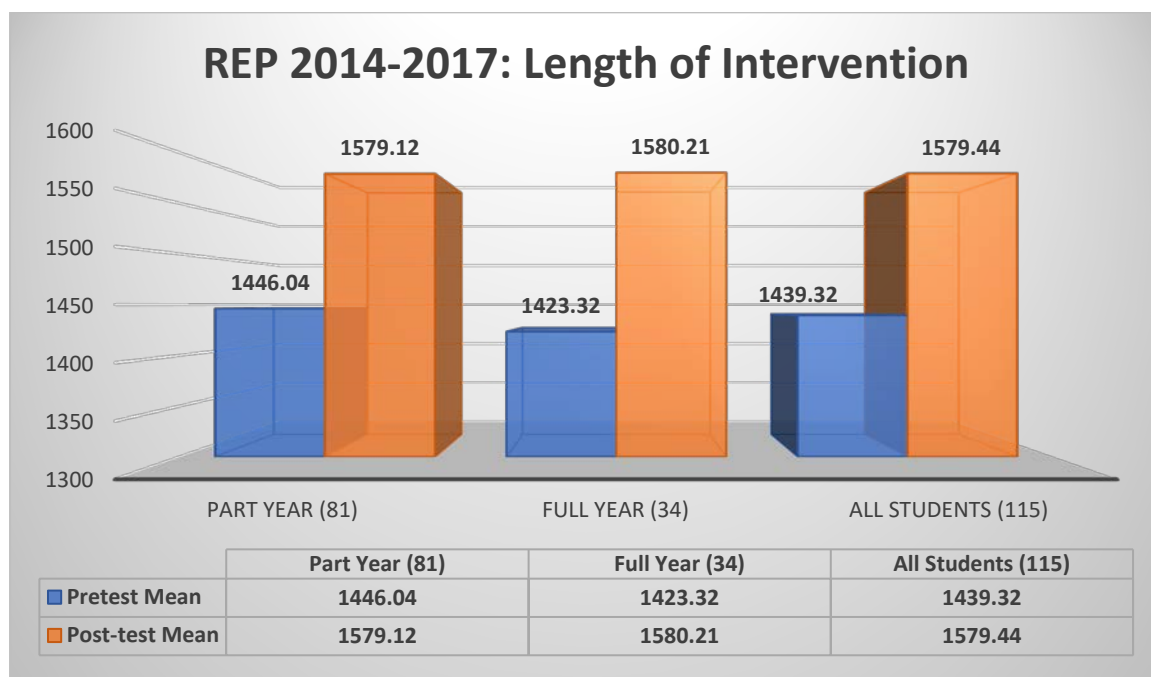
The e-asTTle mean scores which correspond to these levels are as follows:

	<b>Curriculum Level</b>	<b>e-asTTle Mean Score</b>
<b>Beginning of Year 9</b>	4P	1497
<b>End of Year 9</b>	5B	1519

### **Quantitative Findings**

To see if teaching time has been a moderating factor in the results the programme is assessed over the 2 different "teaching time periods". Not surprisingly the full year group improved more but the analysis in this way demonstrates the extent of the improvement.

## Length of Intervention



### Comparison of mean gains all students:

Part Year	+ 133.08
Full Year	+ 156.89
All Students	+ 140.12

Of the 115 students who participated in REP from 2014-2017, 81 (70%) received an intervention that ran for part of the year (one semester), while 34 (30%) received a full year intervention.

The higher-needs students who participated in the programme for a full year made greater mean scale score gains than students who participated for part of the year.

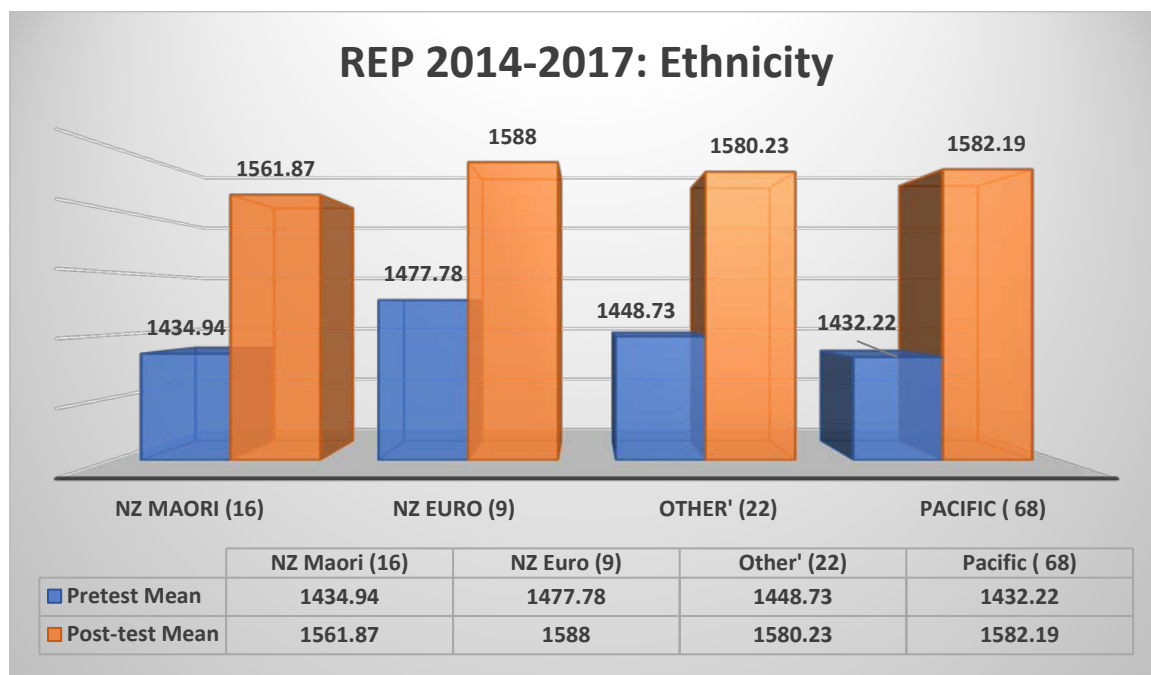
A gender breakdown by length of intervention is as follows:

	Part Year	Full Year
<b>Female</b>	41	11
<b>Male</b>	40	23
<b>Total</b>	81	34

## Data Analysis

Analysis of data by ethnicity, gender, achievement level, and NCEA Levels 1 and 2 attainment is presented in the following tables. The data analysed are a combination of both the half and full year groups.

### Ethnicity



### Comparison of gains all students:

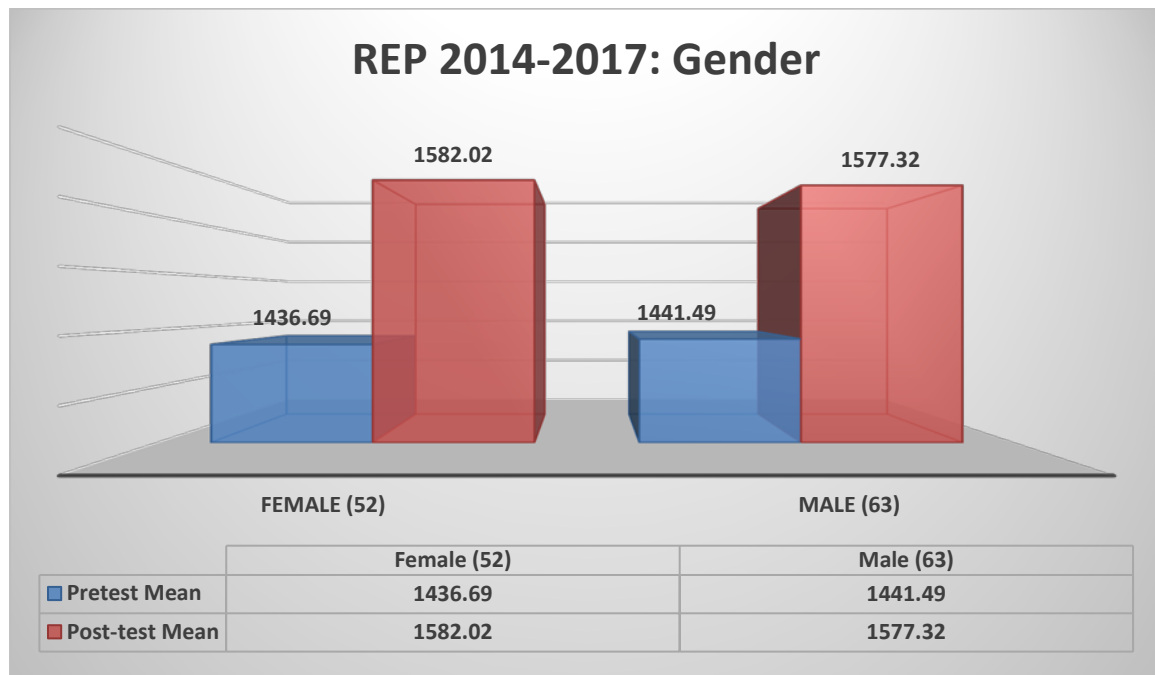
NZ Māori	+ 126.93
NZ European	+ 110.22
'Other'	+ 131.50
Pacific	+ 149.97

Information provided by the school indicated that students identified as belonging to one of four main Ethnic groups: NZ Māori, NZ European, Pacific, 'Other'.

Most of the students identified belonging to the Pacific ethnic group (59%), with 19% 'Other', 14% NZ Māori, and 8% NZ European.

Analysis of the aggregated data revealed that all four groups made mean scale score gains from pre to post-test, ranging from 110.22 for the NZ European group to 149.97 for the Pacific group. The Pacific group made the greatest gains.

## Gender



### Comparison of gains all students:

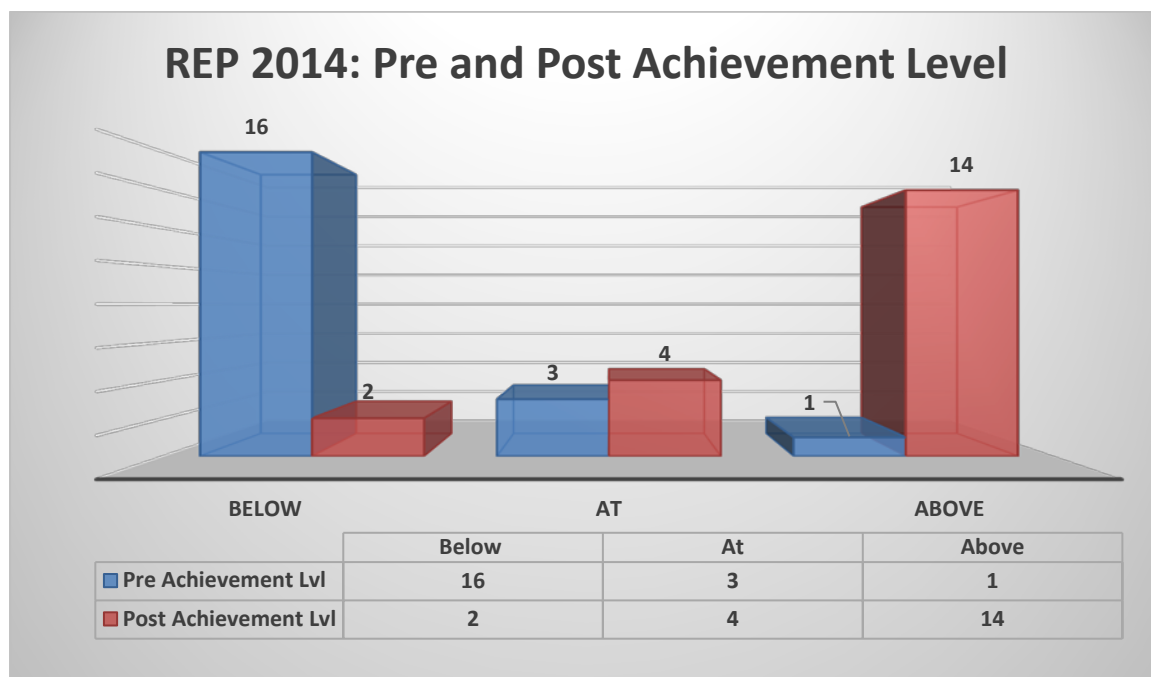
Female	+ 145.33
Male	+ 135.83

Of the 115 students who completed both the pre and post-tests between 2014-2017, there were slightly more Males (55%) than Females (45%).

Both groups made gains from pre to post-test, however the Female group made a greater gain than the Male group. Although a smaller percent of Females completed the full year programme, they made greater gains from pre to post-test.

## REP 2014: Students who are in Year 13 in 2018

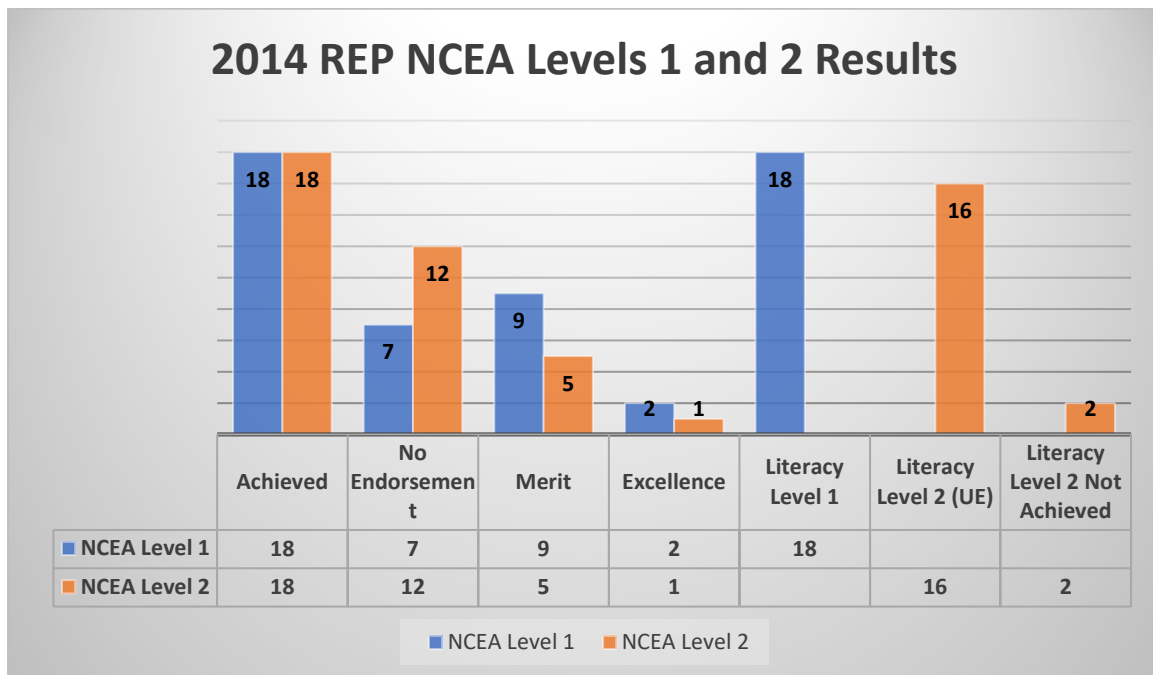
Attainment: pre and post test



In 2014, 20 students participated in REP. At pre-test, 16 of the 20 students (80%) scored a level which was below the level typically expected at Year 9. Three students (15%) were 'at' the expected level and one (5%) was 'above'.

At post-test, two students (10%) scored 'below' the expected level, four (20%) were 'at' and 14 (70%) scored at a level 'above' that typically expected.

**Attainment: NCEA Level 1&2**



Of the 20 students who participated in REP in 2014, NCEA Levels 1 and 2 data are available for 18. Analysis of the NCEA Levels 1 and 2 results indicated that all students (18) achieved both Levels. In addition, all achieved Literacy Level 1, while 16 achieved Literacy Level 2 (UE).

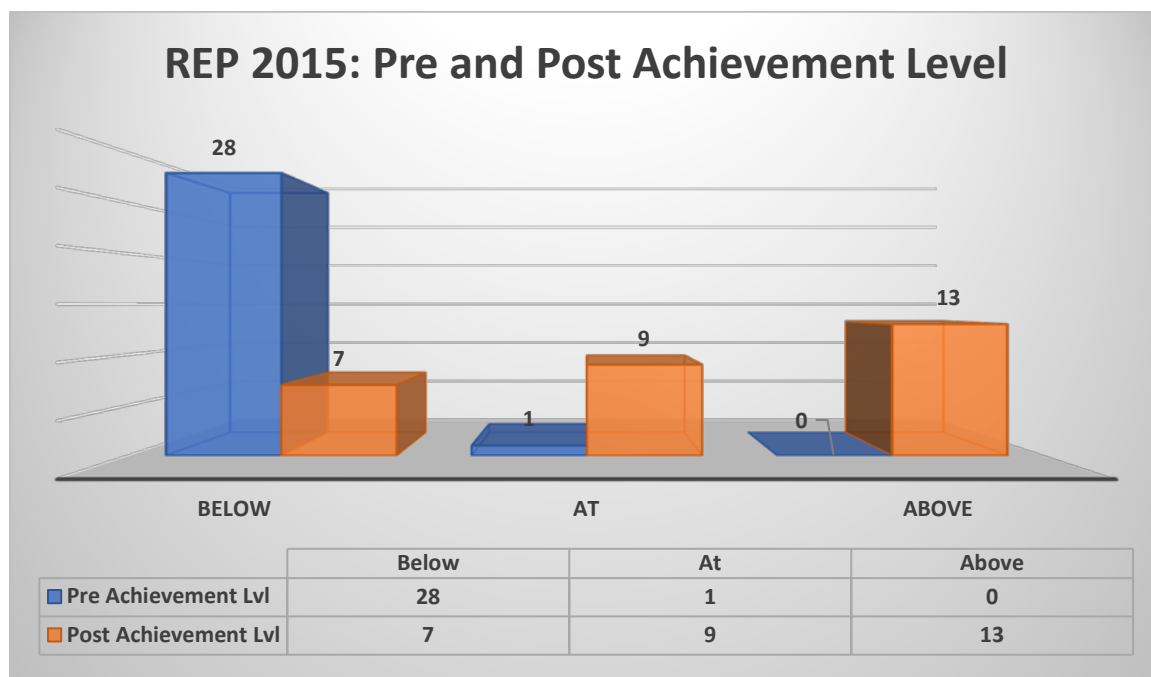
At Level 1, half of the students received a Merit endorsement and two received Excellence.

At Level 2, five achieved Merit and one Excellence.



## REP 2015: Students who are in Year 12 in 2018

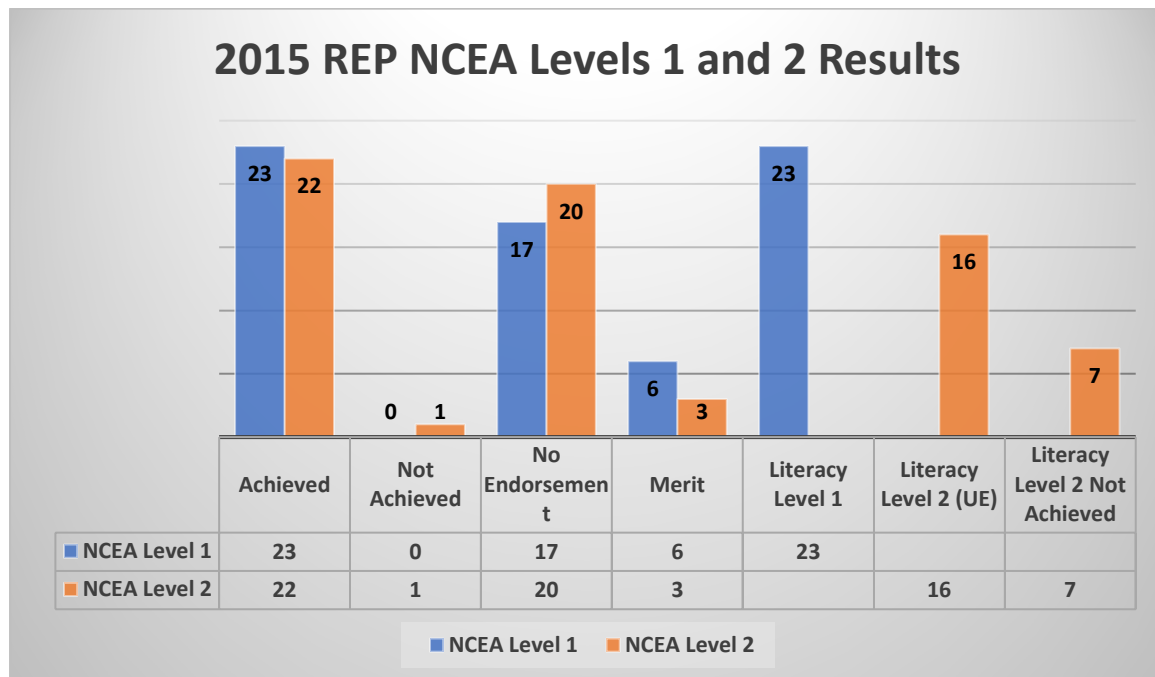
Attainment: pre and post test



In 2015, 29 students participated in REP. At pre-test, 28 of the 29 (97%) scored at a level below the expected level and one student (3%) scored 'at' the expected level.

At post-test, seven students (24%) scored 'below' the expected level, nine (31%) scored 'at', and 13 of the 29 students (45%) scored 'above' the expected level.

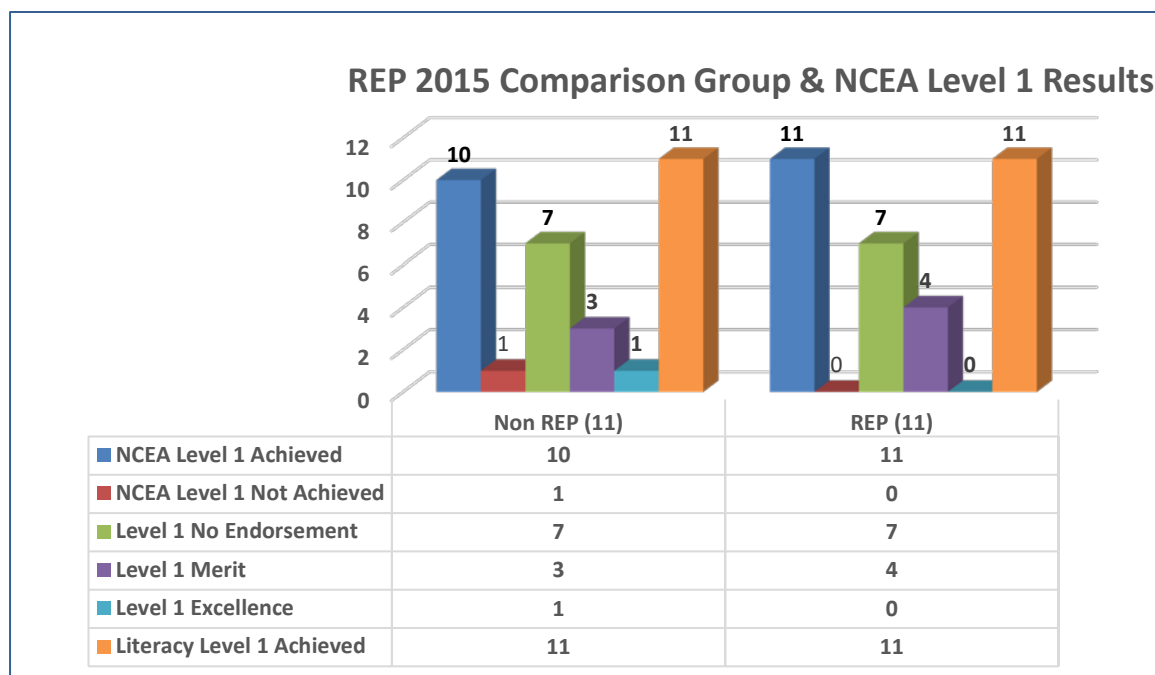
## Attainment: NCEA Level 1&2



Of the 29 students who participated in REP in 2015, NCEA Levels 1 and 2 data are available for 23. NCEA Levels 1 and 2 results for the REP students (23) revealed that all students achieved NCEA Level 1 and Literacy Level 1, while 22 achieved NCEA Level 2 and 16 Literacy Level 2(UE).

Six students achieved a Merit endorsement at Level 1, and three at Level 2.

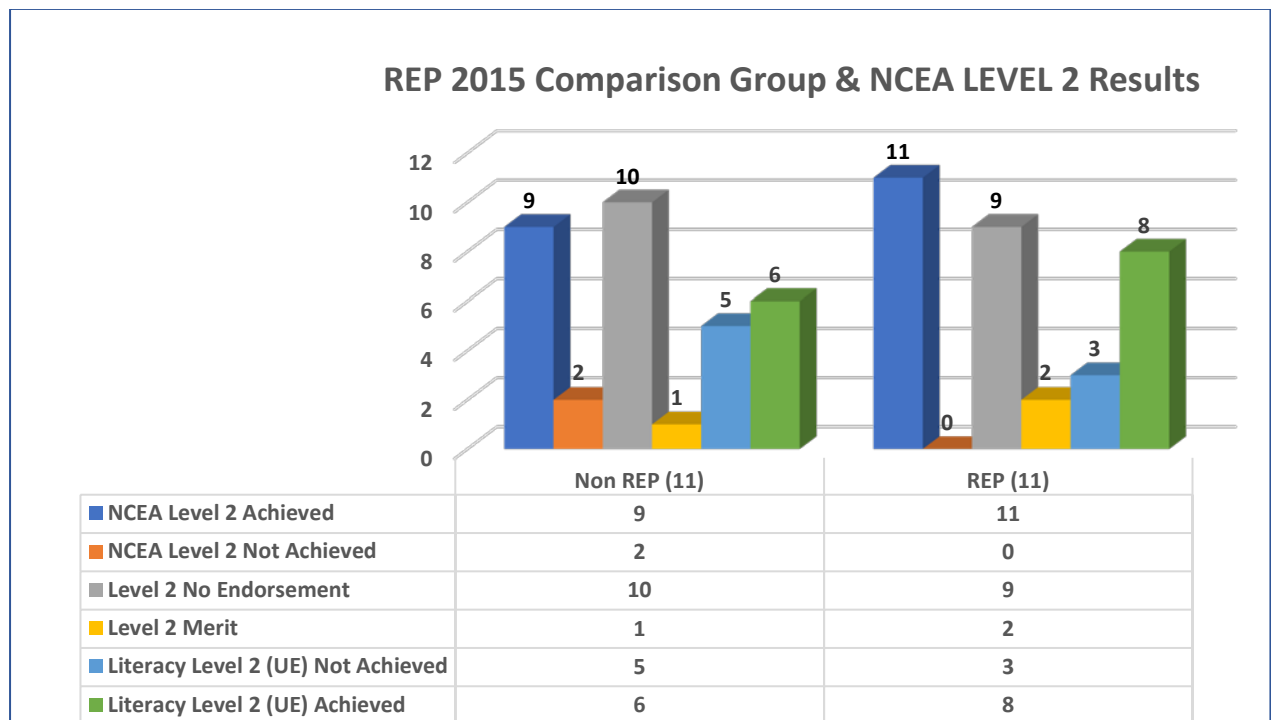
## REP 2015 Attainment with comparison group (NCEA Level 1)



The 2015 REP and Non-REP (comparison group) students NCEA Level 1 (2017) and Level 2 (2018) results were collated and compared. Complete data was available for 11 matched pairs.

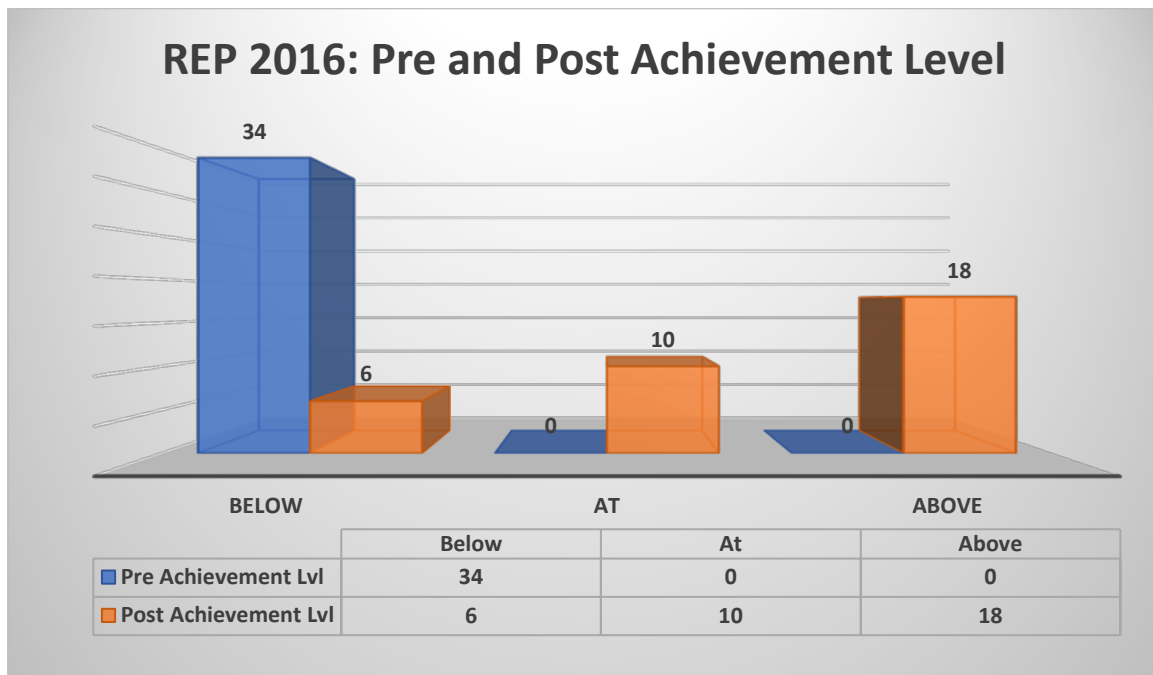
Comparison of NCEA results for both groups revealed that the REP group achieved slightly better overall results with all 11 students achieving both NCEA Level 1 and Literacy Level 1. All Non-REP students achieved Literacy Level 1 and 10 achieved NCEA Level 1. Four REP students received a Merit endorsement while three Non-REP students achieved this. One Non-REP student received an Excellence endorsement.

### REP 2015 Attainment with comparison group (NCEA Level 2)



Analysis of NCEA Level 2 results for both groups indicated that the REP group achieved slightly better results than the Non-REP comparison group. All 11 REP students achieved NCEA Level 2 while nine Non-REP students achieved this. In addition, eight REP students achieved Literacy Level 2 (UE) while six Non-REP students achieved this. Two REP students and one Non-REP student received a Merit endorsement.

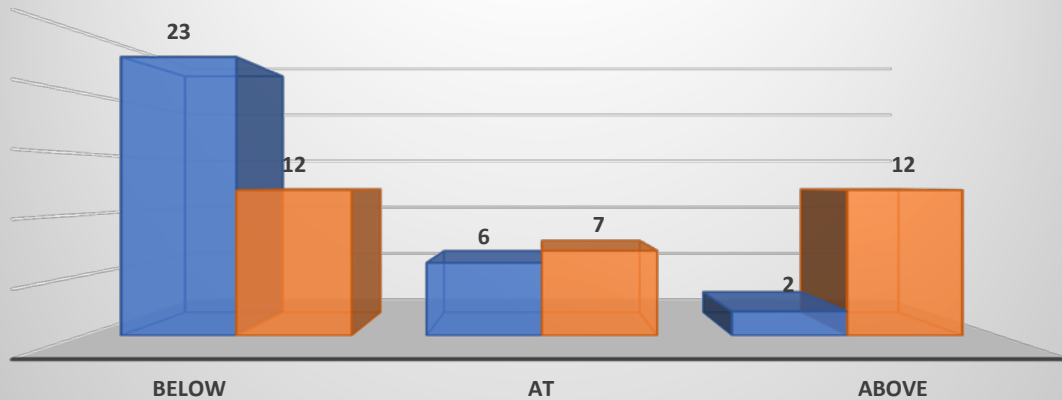
## REP 2016 and 2017



At pre-test, all the REP 2016 students scored 'below' the typical level for Year 9.

Post-test results indicated that six students (18%) scored 'below' the expected level, 10 (29%) scored 'at' and 18 students (53%) scored 'above' the expected level.

## REP 2017: Pre and Post Achievement Level

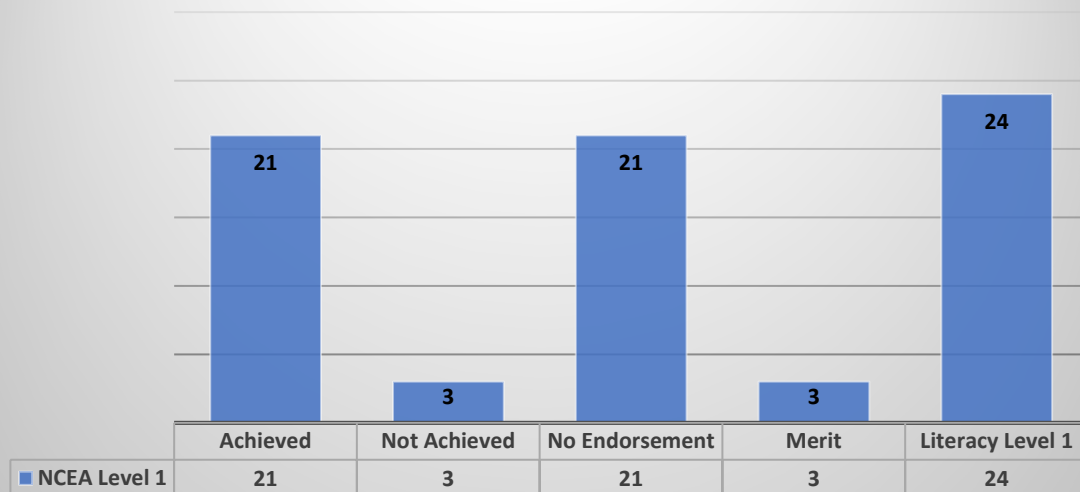


	Below	At	Above
Pre Achievement Lvl	23	6	2
Post Achievement Lvl	12	7	12

At pre-test, 23 out of the 31 (75%) 2017 REP students scored below the level expected, six (19%) scored 'at', and two (6%) scored 'above' the expected level.

At post-test, 12 students (39%) scored 'below' the expected level, seven (22%) scored 'at', and 12 students (39%) scored 'above' the level typically expected.

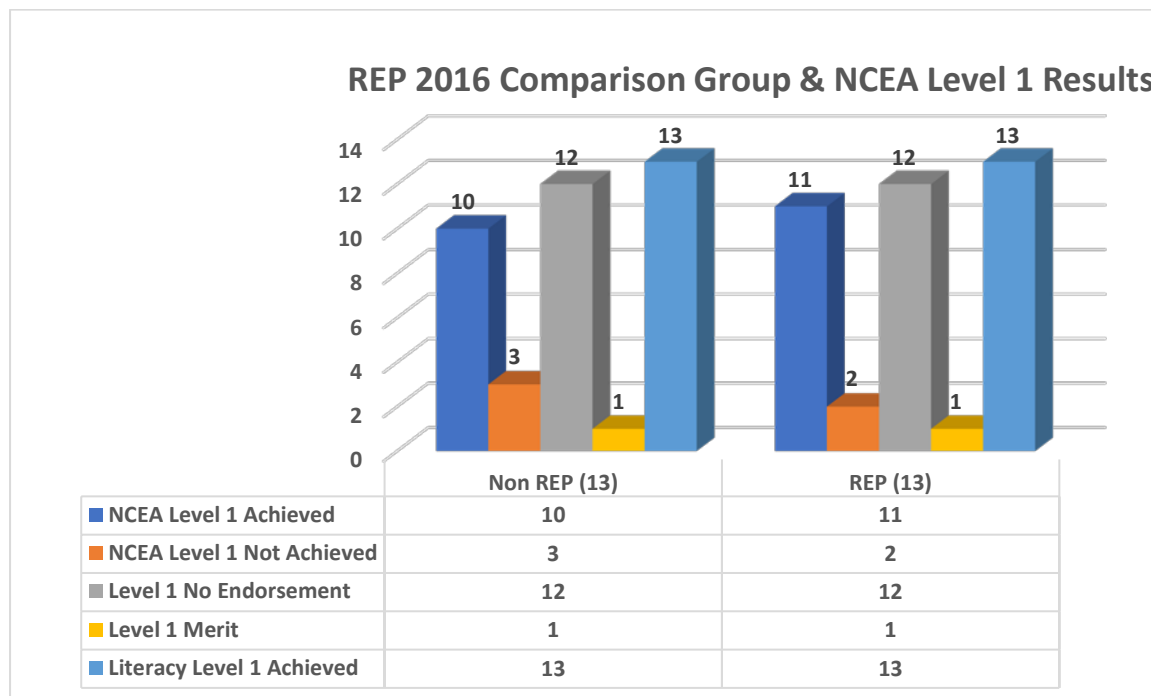
## 2016 REP NCEA Level 1 Results



■ NCEA Level 1

Of the 24 2016 REP students who undertook NCEA Level 1 in 2018, 21 achieved this. All 24 students achieved Literacy Level 1. Three students received a Merit endorsement.

### REP 2016 Attainment with comparison group (NCEA Level 1)



Complete data were available for 13 matched pairs.

Once again, the REP group achieved slightly better results than the Non-REP comparison group. All students achieved Literacy Level 1 while 11 REP and 10 Non-REP students achieved NCEA Level 1. One student from both groups received a Merit endorsement.

### Conclusions from the Quantitative Data

Analysis of the REP e-asTTle data 2014-2017 indicates that gains were made from pre to post test for all students. Of the 115 students who participated between 2014-2017, 103 (89.5%) were At or Above the expected curriculum level at post-test compared with 19 (16.5%) at pre-test.

Analysis by Group indicates that the greatest gains were made by the 'Below', 'Female', 'Pacific', and 'Full Year' groups.

Overall, these results indicate the REP programme as measured against the REP e-asTTle assessment is having positive effects on the reading achievement levels of students involved.

A comparison of NCEA results between the 2015 and 2016 REP and Non-REP groups indicated that the REP students achieved slightly better results in NCEA than their Non-REP peers. As full data was only available for a small number of students this presents a limitation with this result.

## PART 2: Analysis of Student Responses

This study collected qualitative data from ex-REP students who were, in 2018, in Year 13 and Year 12. These students had participated in the REP programme in 2014 and 2015 respectively. Data was collected in two forms:

- **Questionnaire:** 33 students (12 from Y13 and 21 from Y12) completed the questionnaire. Questions included attitudes to reading, attitudes to learning/study, plans beyond school (see Appendix 1).
- **Focus Groups:** From the questionnaire participants two focus groups were randomly selected. 7 students attended the Year 13 focus group and for the Year 12 group, 10 students attended at first but 4 left to attend a sports meeting. The focus group discussions went for approximately 40 minutes and were conducted in morning tea and lunch breaks. Student participation was voluntary and individual opinions were confidential to the group. This report reflects aggregated comment, conducted in September, towards the end of term 3. The conversation was recorded and semi-transcribed into overarching themes. Typical questions in the focus group were
  - i. What were the best things about being part of the REP?
  - ii. What were the challenges about being part of the REP?
  - iii. In what way has being part of REP helped you in later years at school?
  - iv. The programme is expanding to other schools what would you recommend?

In the report below, student comments from the questionnaire and the focus group interviews are collated under themes, based on expectations identified in Table 1 above. That is comments regarding acquisition of literacy skills, transition to high school, participation in REP by special invitation, student self-efficacy as learners, student enjoyment of reading and the social/emotional wellbeing of participants.

Individual questionnaire responses are identified by a Q and a 4 digit number, the first two numbers signify if the respondent was a REP student in 2014 or 2015, that is they were Year 13 or Year 12 respectively at the time of the data collection, and the second two digits are a unique student identifier. For example: Q1407 indicates the quote is a questionnaire response from number 07, Year 13 student (in REP in 2014). Focus group comments are identified by the code FG followed by the year group eg. FGY13. Individual respondents were not identified in the focus group discussion.

### Literacy Skills

Literacy instinctively holds a place of importance in our learning system. The NZ Curriculum (2007) states that Literacy in English gives students access to the understanding, knowledge and skills they need to participate fully in the social, cultural, political and economic life of New Zealand and the wider world. We expect that to be successful in society requires functional competency in reading and writing. This expectation is reflected in the basic qualification we assume young people will hold, namely NCEA Level 1 or equivalent. NCEA Level 1 recipients are required to have gained 10 literacy credits (both reading and writing). Text is one method of knowledge transmission – so it is vitally important that secondary school students engage with text, can access knowledge through text and are able to express their thoughts and knowledge in text (either by handwriting or through a keypad).

While secondary teachers acknowledge their role in developing subject specialist knowledge through text, they do not often see themselves as teachers of basic reading and writing. The REP programme, with its focus on individualised attention not possible in a subject classroom, provides support to enable students transitioning from primary to secondary school to improve their literacy skills, as they use reading and writing as a means of acquiring and communicating knowledge.

## Findings

Reading is a very clear focus of the REP programme and students expressed their belief that their reading had improved through the programme.

- REP helped a lot with my literacy skills. When I was in Year 9 my numerical skills were very good but my reading and writing skills weren't on par. REP helped a lot with my reading and writing. REP actually taught me to read and how to extract valuable information efficiently. I enjoyed REP and I am very thankful for the literacy and life skills I have acquired from the REP programme. Q 1407
- REP helped me gain confidence in reading and writing. Through REP I was able to develop a wider vocabulary. Q1503
- They (the tutors) helped me when I was stuck and with words I didn't know or understand. Q1409

At times, students were very specific about the literacy skills they developed

- I am more confident when it comes to speaking and reading aloud. I can also pinpoint important information. Q1405
- Helped me learn new words...helped me understand what I was reading and how to spell better...I can spell more words. Q1509
- My vocabulary increased and improved. Q1409
- Developed my confidence when reading in front of an audience. Q1508
- The tutors would help me if s/he sees me mispronounce a word. Q1512

Throughout the research data there are examples of these Y12 and 13 students using sophisticated language.

Vocabulary such as: adamant, interaction, selective, flicking through, impact, inspirational, distractions, enhanced, bonding, learning capability, comfort zone.

A particular example of this well-developed language can be seen from the following written comment from a Year 13 student.

- This was helpful because we eventually formed a personal relationship where we could trust our tutors and let them know what was happening in our lives. It took pressure and strain out of feeling like the classroom was a daunting prison of learning. It was fun and really refreshing. Q1406



Students acknowledged and appreciated that tutors were able to give them the attention they needed but were not able to access in their main classes. Students saw this as beneficial to their learning.

- In the REP programme you have a tutor for yourself which is very helpful, unlike in the classroom where it is one teacher with many other students. Q1402
- I learnt more when we had one to one time with the tutors because they really helped me. Q1522
- I found this (one to one tutor time) helpful because I was able to get more in-depth answers to many questions. Q1501
- With one to one you were able to target what it was you needed help with. If you were in a classroom the teacher might go over something you already know but in the one to one session you could focus on what you really need help with. FG Y13
- The tutors could just focus on that one student and put all their time and energy helping to teach us, without being rushed and at our own pace. Q 1514

A number of students could see that the one to one sessions had helped them focus on their reading challenges. Tutors were able to help individual students deepen their understanding of the text.

- During a reading activity, if we came across a word that was challenging – we can read it but they (tutors) would ask us ‘what does this mean’? – This helped because they question us to really understand what the sentence is saying. FG Y13
- My tutor was so nice and when we read and got stuck, she would not let me give up, sometimes she would tell me some stories, which helped me understand what I’m reading more in-depth. Q 1510

## Transition

Successful transition into high school is an important phase in a young person’s learning journey. Webber et al (2018) point out that adolescence is a time when students develop a strong picture of themselves as learners and that notions of success as a learner or failure as a learner are clearly established by the end of Year 10. By supporting Year 9 students to experience learning success, the REP programme has a long-term impact as the students see themselves as confident readers, writers and speakers.

The time of transition to secondary school is a particularly risky for teenagers. They are told that high school will be hard and that a lot will be expected of them. At the age of 12 or 13 they are at that tricky time of early teen development: unsure, anxious, in the process of letting go of childhood and preparing for independence and responsibility. In 2004 Hawk and Hill wrote a report for NZPPTA about transition to high school. They identified a number of needs that should be considered at this critical stage of student development. They stated that students need

- A sense of competency and achievement
- Supportive social interaction with peers and adults
- A diversity of experience

The designers of the REP programme clearly expect that by participating in the programme, students will gain a strong sense that they are capable readers, able to aim for and achieve high levels of academic competency. The simple formula of volunteer tutors, bringing a wealth of personal life experience, meeting a group of apprehensive Year 9 students needing support, leads to a secure exchange in an environment that is safe for both parties.

## Findings

Students, in the study, had little to say about transition, other than they were shy and scared at the start of their high school career but being invited to participate in REP helped.

In discussion with the Year 13 Focus Group the interviewer asked, “When you first came to One Tree Hill College what were you feeling?”

- Students said that they were “a bit scared” and felt “pretty lost”.

The interviewer then asked, “How did REP help?”

Students said that the programme helped them to feel comfortable and that they made friends with other students that had lasted through their years at high school.

In the Year 12 Focus Group students reported the same belief that REP helped them build confidence that countered the unsettled feelings of transition.

- I strongly recommend it (REP), especially in high school, when we came, we were scared in classrooms and wouldn't raise our hands to answer questions or anything; we would hold back. REP allowed us to grow with confidence in ourselves, like not doubt ourselves. It's a really good programme to be part of, it helped me a lot. FG Y12

One Year 12 student in the questionnaire was very clear that the relaxed supportive attitude of his tutor was important in his transition. He remembered:

- Laughing with tutors joking about our football teams, (name) was my tutor. He helped me a lot through Year 9. Q1513

Although the students had little to say about transition it was clear throughout the data that these students saw themselves as successful, confident learners and they were now prepared to support those younger than themselves as they adjusted into secondary school. 59% of those who completed the questionnaire stated that they had spoken to Year 9 students about the REP programme and 34% of Year 13 students said they were members of the school's peer-support team helping Year 9 students transition to high school.

When asked to make a recommendation to others about REP one Year 13 student stated

- It will be a big impact in their starting year of college. As well as ~~that that~~, what they learn will help them all the way through high school. Q1402

## Student Participation in REP

The REP programme, as it operates at One Tree Hill College (OTHC), is very specific in its structure. Students are invited to participate; whānau are specifically expected to support their children involved in the programme. Participation in the class is in addition to 'normal' timetable. Being withdrawn from the normal timetable did not seem to create a problem for most REP participants we interviewed, although one student expressed concern about missing Science. When asked "was missing classes a problem?" a Year 12 student said, "Not really cause we made up for it eventually". FGY12

REP classes are usually made up of about 10 students and last for half a year (although some students identified with higher needs or requesting extension are invited to participate for a further half year). The invitation process allows students to feel special. The small-group approach enhances a feeling of belonging, increasing a sense of security, helping students reach early stages of Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs and giving them freedom to focus on learning and having fun. With a small number in the class, individuals get more attention than they would in a full class of 30. There is time and an expectation that all individuals participate in activities. The routines and familiar activities of the small REP class again reinforces the sense of belonging, that enables students to enjoy class competition.

- REP made me feel special because it was only a certain group of students who could be part of it. We were selected especially for this. FG Y13

## Findings

### Programme design

The REP programme is a carefully designed combination of small group teaching (once per week) and one-to-one tuition (twice per week). The benefits of the one-to-one tutoring are highlighted elsewhere in this report, but students also commented on a very positive experience in the teaching sessions.

- I really enjoyed doing the word memory game as it made me try hard to remember all the words. Q1404
- You have the activities where you read out loud, it helped us with our confidence. FG Y12
- Having reading competitions against the rest of the students. Q 1508
- I remember winning a Pepsi can every time I managed to obtain ten points from reading books. In a way that helped with my motivation to read during the present day. However, the reward from reading isn't a Pepsi can, but rather knowledge. Q 1407
- The book-points thing – it was quite sad to see others finish a book and you didn't finish it – you want to speed read the whole thing so that you can get a prize at the end. FG Y12

### Group Structure

Students were clear that they enjoyed the small group structure. Some saw the advantage of this structure for their learning.

- We were all more open – in a small group you can understand each other. (The interviewer asked, "In a small group you were able to relate to other people better?") – the whole group answered "Yeh". FG Y12.

- We were all given a chance to actually say something, we all have to say something different – it's one of our rules. FG Y12
- The classes were different because few were chosen for this class and even fewer had these privileges eg. movie trips etc. Q1521

Friendships and support gained through this structure have lasted throughout their schooling.

- I became closer and met some new faces in the group that I see very often now around the school and we say hello every now and then. Q1405
- The help we received from both tutors and students, also the bond we gain with each other and seeing everyone achieve their goals at the end of the experience. Q1502
- I remember some friends and still see them now. Q1410
- Meeting new people that are still in my life now. The tutor that I had was very kind to me and cared a lot about me. Q1402
- There are lots of memories, and I also have friends that took part in the REP programme with me. Q1506

Students acknowledged REP graduation as a highlight of the programme.

- REP Graduation. It acknowledges everyone's efforts whereas Pasifika/Māori Awards and Junior Prize-Giving is selective. Q1406
- In the REP room, there is a photo of my nana and I. My REP graduation was the only awards ceremony of mine she attended before she passed. I'm blessed to have been given the opportunity to work hard and to be awarded for it because my nana was there to visit, despite her battle with cancer. Today I try to work with passion and strength in honour of that time. I love school despite the many mental and emotional roller coasters. God bless! Q1406

### **The issue of stigma**

As part of the interview we asked students to tell us about challenges they faced from being part of the programme. It didn't take long for the following comments to be made. The following exchange comes from the Year 12 Focus Group.

Not really a challenge but we just grew – the whole stigma of being in that REP class, like outside that class (REP) was probably difficult – like they thought you were less educated sort of...

(others strongly agreed) Yeh, true.

(Interviewer: How did being part of the group help?)

Like we stuck together I guess, we were still able to connect together and share the same thoughts and process the same things that were happening outside the classroom as well as inside.

(Interviewer: Did you all feel that pressure?) Yeh.

The group quickly reassured the interviewer

Other than that, it was fine.

The second interview group (Year 13) identified the same issue but again saw benefit and gained reassurance from the special nature of the programme and the invitation they received to join the group.

At times, it kind of implied that we were people who needed help – other students might think ‘they are dumb students’.

They look down on us.

Yeh we got that vibe.

(Interviewer: so, did being part of REP help with that?)

When you came to REP you didn’t think about it. When you were out of REP people talked about it.

A number of students commented about the negative peer pressure they were under because of their membership of the class, but they were also clear that the time with tutors helped them to overcome this challenge.

- Other (students) think it might be for dumb people or people incapable of reading. You kind of forget about that when you are with the tutors because they connect with you on a personal level. When they are sparking a conversation, you tend to think it’s just a normal thing, it doesn’t treat you like what the other people outside say but rather that they are there to better you for yourself, in a way that they are longing – like holding your hand at the same time. FG Y13

## Motivation for Learning: Self-efficacy

It is an old adage that ‘success breeds success’ but we can go further: success builds confidence and as students gain confidence, they enjoy the activity more and that feeling drives motivation to keep doing the activity. Students who experience success at reading and writing have more confidence as learners and are motivated to learn more. Confident learners are prepared to take risks, make mistakes and therefore learn more.

Self-belief and self-efficacy sustain a student’s motivation to learn and succeed. The Starpath Project (2017) reported that students with a strong sense of efficacy are more likely to challenge themselves with difficult tasks and be intrinsically motivated; that self-efficacious students put in a high degree of effort in order to meet commitments, recover quickly from setbacks and ultimately are likely to achieve their personal goals.

- REP for me before it finished, was always a challenge – I wanted it to be a challenge, like could I improve my English or not – so that motivated me in a way to make Year 11 and 12 not just something easy but as a challenge. Pretty much the challenge I had in REP is the same challenge I had in Level 1 and Level 2, personally in life and in education – and helped me overcome each obstacle, like I knew if I can overcome one challenge then I can do it in English, Maths, Geography as well – challenge yourself about the quality of grade at level 1, you would get motivated to go for merits and excellences – yeh (general agreement). FG Y12

## Findings

### Motivation for learning

Undoubtedly the REP graduates gained confidence from being part of the programme. They all talk about it often. This in only one example

- Before REP I wasn't a confident speaker and writer, after I graduated, I saw big improvements. Q1403

As they experienced success in their language development, the students were able to be more successful learners. They were able to see ways to solve learning problems.

- When I was answering questions, my tutor gave me a tip on how to answer it. It was to read the full question and find the main words and use them in my sentence/answer. Q1516
- REP has changed my perspective on learning, it also helped me increase my vocabulary and understanding, inside class sessions and outside of the classroom. Q1514
- A significant aspect for me is innovation, finding new ways to complete a certain task if I'm finding it difficult to do something. Q1511

Students had a lot to say about their success in English. An opening question in the focus group interviews was about favourite subjects at school. **It was heartening and somewhat surprising to note that 25% of Y13 respondents and 30 % of Y 12 said that their favourite subject was English. It is also positive that for 55% of students interviewed, their favourite subject would be seen as a language-rich subject requiring significant amounts of reading and writing, eg Biology and Geography.**

- It helped me a lot to understand English, like that was my weak subject and now it is my strongest. My parents were quite happy about that. FG Y12
- English skills for me currently, is way better than the English skills I had before joining the REP programme. Q1504
- Especially with English because it's helped with essays and speeches. Q1409
- I believe REP made a big difference in my schooling as my writing has got better for example, I'm getting Merits and Excellences in English. Q 1516

In the interviews we asked students to expand on the idea that REP had helped their learning in later years of schooling. Students gave some very specific answers.

- Learnt different things from the books we used to read, helped me with some important things for my subjects. FG Y12
- In subjects like Biology there is a lot of reading, sometimes there are challenging words and being in REP has helped me to improve my vocabulary and my understanding of the words and comprehend the question. FG Y13
- Reading the novels and stuff, the work that was required in REP we would have to comprehend what it was about and give our own opinion about it. This helped me through level 1 and level 2 with the reading logs for English. We were able to implement the same skills that we learnt then into that (directly helped with English – yeh). FG Y12
- Geography as well – like answering the right questions. (several others agreed) Interviewer asked, “to understand the questions and to follow the instructions?” yeh (general agreement). FG Y12

### **Aspiration for the future and motivation for positive life choices**

Students valued the life and work experiences tutors were prepared to share. They found the tutors' work experiences informative and inspirational.

- They told us about their professions before. FG Y 13

- I found it interesting; inspirational. FG Y13
- When I was younger, I wanted to be a paediatrician and my tutor’s son is a paediatrician. FG Y13
- All the tutors have had different jobs and you can find out a little bit more about that job and it might be something you are interested in. FG Y13
- Helped to make right decisions re work – when they asked you what you wanted to do in the future, they gave some insight about what they know about it. FG Y13

Students were enthusiastic about the stories their tutors told them and they drew life lessons from the sharing

- (they gave) A glimpse of the outside world. FG Y12
- The stories were relatable, like we could understand. FG Y12
- ...you are engaged with tutors who have a lot of knowledge and are willing to better you. Q1516
- My tutor was a great role model for me. Being a retired judge, he told me about the challenges he faced as a teenager and told me how I can prepare to face them. Q1511
- Has helped me achieve more in high school and develop more skills for life. Q1502

From the interviews and the questionnaire data, it is evident that discussion with the tutors has had some influence on the participants’ aspirations for the future.

From the Year 13 questionnaire, 50% of students had aspirations for study at university while 42% intended to do further tertiary study while working, 8% were intending to go directly into the workforce.

From the questionnaire for Year 12 students, 43% stated that they wanted to go to university, 43% saw themselves doing further tertiary study, (including specialist work training), 10% saw themselves going to work in their first year from leaving school. One student intended to take a year off study before going onto degree level study.

Most students had a definite idea of a future career and those who were unsure were clear that they wanted to continue study with at tertiary level.

<b>Stated career direction</b>	
Building/ Engineering: including being a qualified builder	26%
Services eg retail, flight attendant, IT	16%
Public Service, eg Police, Customs	13%
Health Services eg physiotherapist	13%
Design and Fashion eg modelling	10%
Law	10%
Science	6%
Sport and sport services eg professional athlete	6%

Having such aspirations is a positive step forward but it is beyond the scope of this study to determine if the students reached the career outcomes they aspired to.

- ...it boosts you in a way to choose what career you want and what career you don't want. From then you can identify the skills you have, to identify the career that will be right for you. FG Y12

## Enjoyment of reading

The designers of the REP programme clearly wanted to encourage an enjoyment of reading. This is based on a belief that if reading is something enjoyable, then students will engage more readily and that a regular engagement with text will lead to improved skill levels. The theory goes further that as students improve competence as readers, they will engage more readily, and that this improvement cycle leads to better engagement with text.

### Findings

In an attempt to gauge enjoyment of reading we asked students to self-report (through the questionnaire) their patterns about engagement with reading. We might have hoped that more students read for relaxation every day, but it is encouraging that 79% of respondents stated they read for relaxation at some level.

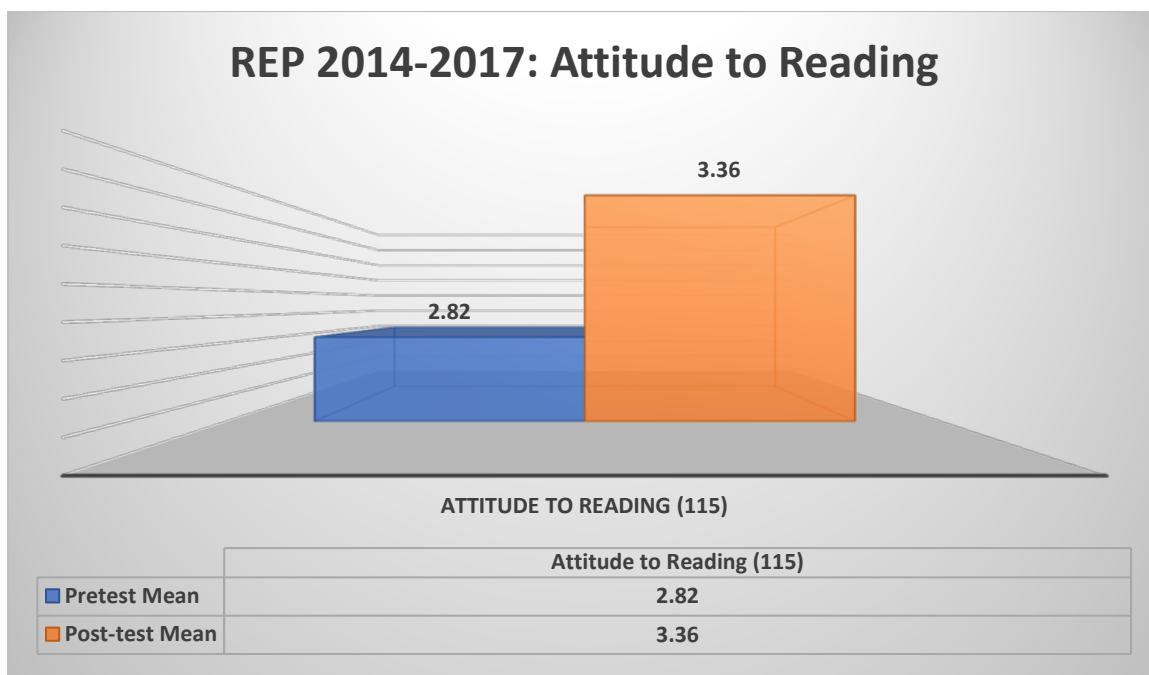
40% claimed they read for relaxation on a regular basis, 6% of students said they read for relaxation every day, 33% students stated they read for relaxation occasionally while 21% did say they did little reading for relaxation.

In the interviews and questionnaire, however, students indicated that they did enjoy reading

- I found the love for reading and learning from my mistakes and failures. Q1408
- This programme inspired me to think more deeply about the great things behind reading, teaching me more and expanding my vocab. Q1521
- I really liked being able to expand my knowledge, like my vocab – encouraged us to read. FG Y12
- I carried on reading – helped with English assessments. FG Y13
- I am confident in reading and writing and I also enjoy reading challenging books. Q 1515

Another indication of reading enjoyment comes from the pre- and post- asTTle test that REP students sit in Year 9. In the first section of the e-asTTle Reading Test, students are asked to respond to six statements about their interest in reading. There are four possible responses to each statement: 'Very Unlike Me', 'Unlike Me', 'Like Me', 'Very Like Me'. The student chooses which response best fits their feelings towards each statement. 'Very Unlike Me' is the weakest indication of the attitude domain, so is marked as 1. 'Very Like Me' is the strongest indication of the interest domain, so is marked as 4.





Analysis of the Attitude to Reading (Interest) data from 2014-2017 shows that the mean interest score increased from pre to post-test by 0.54 points indicating that at post-test the mean attitude score was 0.64 less than the strongest indication of interest.

### Social and emotional well-being

For some time now, educational researchers and writers have emphasised the importance of student well-being as a key factor in successful learning. The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) is clear that students who relate well to others are open to new learning, they learn new approaches, new ideas and new ways of thinking.

The Education Review Office (2016) believes that the well-being of our young people is central to their success as confident lifelong learners and that this learning occurs as students take risks in a safe and relaxed environment, away from the anxiety of assessment. For young people, development of well-being is based on respectful relationships with peers and adults. In the REP classroom, adults see students as inherently capable and students are expected to contribute and to be accountable to others.

Teghe and Rendell (2005) put these well-being concepts in a slightly different way. They write that the development of social wellbeing is based on a number of factors: a sense of belonging, social inclusion, social acceptance, feel-good factors, contribution, and social integration. The adult/student pairing of REP connects young people in an inclusive way to a community beyond their home experience.

Bishop and Berryman (2006) contend that relationship is the most influential factor in ability to achieve, and although their emphasis is on the importance of teachers caring for students, something similar could be said about the relationship between tutors and students. Bishop and Berryman

emphasise the importance of adults having high expectations of students, knowing what they need to learn, and managing interactions in ways that support student learning.

Longitudinal research cited by Van Dam (2017) has shown that youth who formed bonds with supportive non-parental adults are more resilient. Through interactions with tutors, students can develop a confident sense of the future, they learn to build trust, they connect to a wider community, and experience the power of networking.

## Findings

The REP programme offers students more than technical skills. In an environment that supports and enhances student well-being, participants talked about the ways they socially and emotionally benefitted from the programme.

## Self-Belief

While students gained literacy competency and confidence through the tutor sessions, they were clear that the relationship gave them something beyond skill acquisition. The tutors' high expectations and non-judgemental encouragement had a positive effect on student self-belief.

- It gave me hope, a belief in myself. Q1514
- Before I didn't have the confidence to read to anyone and I am always told "You can't read" by most people and with REP I can prove them wrong. Q1510
- ... They gave us hope, they saw a potential in us, they believed that we could accomplish things that we didn't think we could do. FG Y12

## Relationships

Students talked about the relationships that were built between tutors and themselves. The students did not see age or ethnicity as barriers: it was the attitude of the tutors that made the difference. It is evident that the students enjoyed the safe, relaxed learning environment and appreciated the sense of fun and the stories shared by the tutors.

- The tutors aren't teachers, the relationship with them is different – they are much more friendly – they are like another friend. FG Y13
- Building the confidence in communicating and socialising with people other than my age group. Q 1408
- Also having the feeling that they want to help you as a person and develop your reading is really good, as it engaged me to become the best. Q1516
- Nothing but good memories. Our tutors would always praise us and encourage us to do our best, especially when [our teacher] would ask us who played sports this weekend and then would ask who won individually. I remember one time I had stood up and I replied we had lost our game. I sat down, sort of sad but my tutor she just motivated me not to give up. Q1514
- The tutor that I had was very kind to me and cared a lot about me. Q 1402
- It (age/ethnicity) wasn't really a big deal, like they were approachable. FG Y12
- They were jesters, I enjoyed their humour. FG Y12
- Thanks for giving us laughs, all the stories. FG Y12

- Having tutors share their experiences with us – how they were able to give us advice on how to survive at school. FG Y12
- They gave us tips – like what subjects we should take for the future. FG Y12
- One tip left a lasting impression on a student “...like no idea is a dumb idea.” FG Y12

Elsewhere in this report there is evidence that students made long-term friendships with other students who were not members of their normal class but the comment below indicates the mixing of students had a spin-off effect.

- My memories with other students from different classes gave me confidence in interacting with unfamiliar people. Q1515

Some students were careful to acknowledge the ongoing support they gained from their REP teacher.

- [my teacher] has continued to support and remind me of my worth and talents since Year 9. I am almost 18 now and his support has never swayed. Q1406
- [I remember] The strict teachings/notes [my teacher] makes about posture/respect. Q1406

### **Lessons for life**

Students recognised that through their relationships with their tutors they were connecting to a wider community. By tutors sharing life experiences the students were learning to think about life beyond the classroom and connecting to life in a socially-diverse community.

- I really loved the advice and tips my tutors had given me. I learnt valuable lessons from them, and this would probably be a very fond memory of REP for me. Q 1507
- Of course, it has made me develop lots of skills for life. Q1502
- Thanks to REP I have developed many skills to use in my everyday life. Q1507
- The tutors kind of gave us an insight on how it is – what subjects might be useful especially towards your career and goals. FG Y12

### **A room full of smiles**

The ability of the tutors and the students to relate to each other in a friendly relaxed way enhanced the sense of trust, social acceptance and social inclusion. The welcoming smile, the jokes, the kindness deepened the sense of care, demonstrated interest, and fostered the power of relationship.

- (memories) Greeting the teachers (tutors) and making friends from people in different classes. Q1408
- They were there as someone who was present to listen and were very kind. There was no nervous feeling as they were friendly and built conversation with us. Q1405
- Just being able to feel welcomed and supported but mostly have fun. Q1501
- The interaction with the tutor and me, learning new and bright words, having fun with other classmates. Q1521

This little quote demonstrates how developing a sense of group identity in the REP programme supported a sense of belonging and inclusion, creating a structured, secure environment for learning.

- My tutors knew a lot about English, quite boosted my confidence, it really, really did – so I still have the badge on me [shows the REP badge]. FG Y12

## Appreciation

Students appreciated that tutors gave up their time. They also enjoyed the time tutors shared beyond the scheduled school classes.

- [Thank you for giving us a chance to actually improve our English. FG Y12](#)
- [One student advised others “treasure the time the tutors have dedicated to your learning.” Q1406](#)
- [When I went to chorale, one of my tutors came to the city to support. Q1512](#)
- A number of students fondly remembered when they had trips to the movies with their tutors.

Two students expressed what many felt.

- [I will always be grateful. Q1515](#)
- [...getting to meet amazing tutors has been awesome, I will never forget those days. Q 1518](#)

## Conclusions

Although REP has a strong foundation as a literacy programme it is evident that it has far-reaching benefits for student social development, their motivation to learn and their willingness to form trusting relationships with adults.

There is clear evidence of a positive effect of the programme on reading achievement at the end of the transition period, while the quantitative data demonstrates the strength of achievement in the long term and although there are some limitations with the comparative data, it is encouraging to see the high achievement rates at Level 1 and 2. The most heartening evidence is that the students themselves express confidence in their ability to learn, they see themselves as successful learners.

They attributed their positive results in NCEA to the grounding they received through the REP programme. Many of the students stated a strong belief that being part of REP was beneficial to their learning later in schooling. A number of students linked their senior school learning success to their participation in the REP programme when they were in Year 9.

Many students were able to articulate the skills they developed in the REP programme. They knew what they learnt and how that skill could be used in future learning. This level of metacognition demonstrated an interest in learning that may well lead to further tertiary study. The students clearly demonstrated they had an ambition for further qualification. Most expressed a wish to go on to further study or training and it was impressive to see that a number of those interested in the building trade wanted to be a qualified builder.

The end of programme test clearly shows that the students left with a positive attitude to reading and while some of them continued study in the physical and practical subjects, there was a large group comfortable with the reading-rich subjects. It was more difficult to demonstrate that the majority of students had formed a reading for pleasure habit, but it was encouraging to see that the majority claimed to read regularly, and a number commented that they enjoyed reading. It was certainly clear

that they enjoyed the reading activities within the programme and appreciated the learning benefits that one to one tutoring gave them.

Although we were not able to collect retention data it is clear that those students who stayed to Year 12 and Y13 were secure, happy learners able to speak their mind and to feel very positive about their schooling. They were comfortable talking about their early years at high school and although they gave examples of being shy and scared as Year 9 students, they also recognised that being part of REP had given them confidence in classroom situations. It was evident that they saw themselves as successful learners, not in a boastful way but in a strong confident view of themselves as learners. This clearly demonstrated the long-term benefits of a successful transition. Many of them were able to show that as they entered senior secondary school, they were taking up leadership positions amongst their peers and as leaders for younger students.

Participation in REP was seen as beneficial. Students identified feeling special at being invited to take part. They enjoyed the feeling of identity that a small group meeting in a special place gave them. They did talk about negative identity they encountered outside the group, but the time with their tutors, the REP teacher and their REP mates more than compensated. They all talked about special memories they had of the programme, that they enjoyed their time with the programme, and they were keen to recommend it to others.

Students reported on long-term impact of the relationships they had formed through REP. They could all remember their tutor or tutors and although some might not remember names, there were others who not only remembered names but remembered conversations. They felt they would be comfortable meeting strangers in the future. Students said how the programme had made it easy to form intergenerational relationships. They trusted their tutors and saw long-term benefits for the conversations they had had. Students contended that their shared stories with tutors inspired their thinking on careers. They were grateful for the 'tips' about life that the tutors shared. In their recommendations to younger students it is evident that they saw an obligation to share experiences with others and to make positive contributions to future society.

This last comment summarises student voice about the REP programme at OTHC.

- REP has prepared and changed me in many ways. During REP I learnt how to manage my time and of course read a lot more in my everyday life. It also taught me how to prepare for exams and tips on getting around the exam. Most importantly it made me strive for higher things and believe in myself. I have also made friends while I was in REP which some are still my friends till this very day. Q 1402

## Recommendations

### Suggestions/Recommendations for the Future

- while the REP programme is having a positive impact on student reading achievement, it is difficult to determine how much of the improvement is attributed to the programme itself and how much to other variables such as class teaching programmes, whānau input etc. To

help address this issue, future programmes may consider having a control group of students achieving at the same level at pre-test but who do not participate in the intervention. This would allow for greater validity of the data. Consideration could be given to two possible control groups: one for e-asTTle and the second for NCEA.

- to support any future evaluation of the REP programme, it would be beneficial to retain all REP student data even for students who may withdraw from the programme or who leave the school.
- use of the same e-asTTle test for pre and post testing when the intervention period is relatively short (ie. less than 5/6 months) can be problematic as practice effect can impact on students' results. In order to address this, a 'similar' test could be created in e-asTTle which would test the same strands and level but would have different texts and questions.
- a few students appear to have completed the REP e-asTTle assessment more than just at pre and post testing. This increases the likelihood that 'practice effect' will have influenced their results. It is important to ensure that the pre and post tests are not used at other times to increase the validity of the data.
- This study has collected student voice as well as looking at achievement results. It seems highly appropriate that further work collecting tutor (volunteer) and teacher voice would add valuable perspectives to understanding the REP programme.

### Recommendations from students

The students are very definite in their recommendations. They spoke to their own school, the prospective students and other schools thinking of adopting the programme.

The Year 12 focus group were careful to recommend REP to other schools:

- I'd recommend REP to be spread out even more to other places. I reckon it's good for students especially at a young age, like building confidence, it really helped build your confidence up and it boosts you in a way to choose what career you want and what career you don't want. From then you can identify the skills you have you can identify the career that will be right for you. FG Y 12
- Continue the same work they did with us. It was really good for us. FG Y12

Students, having benefitted from REP themselves, were keen to encourage younger students to join the programme

- Take it and make the most of it as it really gears you up. Q1403
- My advice would be to take it because you learn more, read more and succeed more than anyone else. It's a one chance of a lifetime. Q1521
- To take the opportunities no matter what people say or despise the programme, it will help you heaps. Q1502
- You will not regret being a part of this amazing programme, and you will open up a lot more opportunities for yourself in the future. Q 1510
- Take REP because it will benefit you in the future for example NCEA Level one, two and three. Q1503

For one student it was important to recommend more time with the tutors

- That relationship was really of value and you would like more time. FG Y12

For another student the recommendation was to have more tutors

- I'd recommend to have more tutors and then there would be more students in the REP programme. FG Y12

Finally .....

- I'd like to say thank you because they always had hope for each student and the hope that they had led us on to believe in each other – it was quite a joyful thing to see at such a young age from then on you started to get the positive vibe in you, especially when you are a teenager there can be lots of negative vibes but the tutors always shared experiences and from that experience it would help us to be positive. FG Y12
- It's the best opportunity I've been offered in my entire life. REP taught me fundamental skills that not only helped me through college but as well as adulthood. Q1514

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**Appendix 1**

**Questionnaire for REP Graduates**

**2018**

**Introduction**

REP is now expanding to other schools. REP organisers are keen to hear any advice, experience or memories you would like to share, to ensure the programme works as well as possible, wherever it goes.

As a graduate of the OTHC REP programme you are invited to complete the following questionnaire.

Your participation in this questionnaire is voluntary. Individual responses are confidential. Information you provide will be analyzed and presented anonymously. We do, however, ask you to give us your name in case the researcher wants to clarify information you have provided. Individually completed questionnaires will be destroyed after 6 months of the completion date.

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Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the year you graduated from REP.                                 2014                     2015

Please circle the length of time you were with the REP programme.             ½ year                     full year

**Section A**

**The first set of questions relate to your experiences of school in 2018.**

A.1

Reading to learn in 2018

Tick one box to show how confident you feel about reading in different subject areas.

Little confidence	Some confidence	confident	Very confident

A.2

Reading for fun and relaxation in 2018

Tick one box that best describes how often you read for relaxation

Do very little reading for relaxation	Occasionally read for relaxation	Regularly read for relaxation	Frequently read for relaxation



A.3

Leadership roles in 2018

Please use the boxes below to note your contribution.

I have spoken to year 9 students about the REP programme	
I am a school prefect/ whānau leader	
I am part of the peer-support team	
I have been asked to support my whānau leader	
I am in a school sports team	
I am in a cultural performance group (Please state which one)	
I participate in the arts (Please state which one)	

Other leadership roles

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**Section B**

**This set of questions relate to your plans for the future.**

B.1

Future career plans.

Please complete the sentence.

Long term, I would like to work as \_\_\_\_\_

B.2

Plans for further study and training.

Please complete the sentence.

In the first year after leaving school I plan to \_\_\_\_\_

**Section C**

**The last questions relate to your reflections on the REP programme.**

C.1

Transition into high school is a special time in everyone's life and REP is a special opportunity. Now that you are a senior, what do you see as significant aspects of your Year 9 REP experience?

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C.2

REP Tutors have a different role from teachers, especially in the 1:1 focus they are able to offer. Please explain any ways you found this helpful.

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C.3

REP groups are organised differently from regular classes. Are there particular memories of tutors, teacher, other students or the group experience, that stay with you from those days?

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C.4

What advice would you give to Year 9 students who have been offered a REP opportunity, their whānau – or to future teachers running a REP programme?

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C.5

Do you believe REP has made a difference to you and your schooling? Explain.

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**Thank you for participating in this questionnaire.**