

Digital Reading in Early Primary Grades: Results from the All Children Reading iREAD 2 Ghana Study

Literacy is a foundational skill that sets up children for lifelong success, and at the same time, advances in technology have unlocked solutions to battle resource scarcity and inequity in ways that were unimaginable even a decade ago. The final evaluation of Worldreader's iREAD 2 Ghana Study showed that such digital reading interventions can lead to the development of positive attitudes and habits around reading in young students, in addition to dramatic improvements in reading fluency and comprehension.

Summary

From January 2013 - July 2014, the iREAD Study affected 574 Primary 1- 3 students in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The program provided

- 240 digital books in English and Twi
- In-service teacher training on literacy instruction
- Extra-curricular reading activities.

E-readers were managed at the local level through School Management Committees of teachers, parents, and project coordinators.

The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) methodology was used to measure progress on reading skills. Additional data were collected via student surveys and other tools.

Results: Reading Fluency

Students read 19 more words per minute (WPM) in Twi, resulting in an average reading fluency of 34.1 WPM. In English, students read 24 WPM more, resulting in an average reading fluency of 41.5 WPM. In both cases, students in a control group improved 10 WPM less. By the end of third grade, 41% of students could read above a minimum proficiency level of 45 WPM in English.

Results: Lower Performing Students

Running counter to expectations, significant impact was detected among lower-performing students. Students who could not read a single word in Twi decreased dramatically from 65.7% to 10.7%.



Results: Reading Comprehension

Students more than doubled their reading comprehension scores in both Twi and English.

Results: Reading Habits

Students receiving digital books reported reading nearly three books a day.

Next Steps

Exploratory conversations with stakeholders are in process regarding project scale-up. Worldreader seeks partnerships to take digital reading nationwide in Ghana, and to add ICT to existing reading programs, principally in Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, and India.

For more information, contact Sarah Jaffe, Sr. Research Manager:
sarah@worldreader.org