



Attitudes and Motivation

The national monitoring assessment programme recognises the impact of attitudinal and motivational factors on student achievement in individual assessment tasks. Students’ attitudes, interests and liking for a subject have a strong bearing on progress and learning outcomes. Students are influenced and shaped by the quality and style of curriculum delivery, the choice of content and the suitability of resources. Other important factors influencing students’ achievements are the expectations and support of significant people in their lives, the opportunities and experiences they have in and out of school, and the extent to which they have feelings of personal success and capability.

Reading and Speaking Surveys

The national monitoring reading and speaking surveys sought information from students about their curriculum preferences and their perceptions of their achievement. Students were also asked about their enjoyment of and involvement in reading and speaking activities, within school and beyond. The surveys were administered in a session which included group and independent tasks, with a teacher reading the survey to year 4 students and available to help with writing. There were four questions that invited students to select up to three choices from lists of 8 to 10 options, two questions that asked for very brief written responses, and 21 questions in a 4 or 5 option rating format, with students circling the option they preferred.



PREFERRED READING ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL	% responses	
	2000 ('96) year 4	2000 ('96) year 8
silent reading	54 (62)	66 (78)
listening to the teacher reading	50 (61)	53 (58)
reading with a buddy or partner	41 (47)	29 (29)
written work	34 (31)	34 (37)
reading with the teacher	28 (30)	7 (7)
talking about books	20 (16)	19 (16)
looking at or browsing through books	19 (20)	39 (35)
reading aloud	16 (12)	12 (11)

The students were presented with a list of eight reading activities and asked which they liked doing most at school. They were invited to tick up to three activities. The responses are shown above, in order of popularity for year 4 students:

Year 4 and 8 students gave similar responses to four of the activities. However, year 8 students expressed stronger preferences than year 4 students for silent reading and browsing through books, together with weaker preferences for reading with a partner or reading with the teacher. The two most popular categories declined a little in popularity between 1996 and 2000, with little change on the other six categories.

Another question asked the students to select up to three “important things a person needs to do to be a good reader”. They were given 10 approaches to choose from. The responses are shown below, in order of indicated importance for year 4 students.

The results show that year 4 students tend to think about reading as a technical task, requiring learning hard words and listening to the teacher, whereas year 8 students place greater emphasis on enjoying reading, reading a lot, and choosing the right book. This difference has increased between 1996 and 2000.

IMPORTANT THINGS FOR A GOOD READER TO DO	% responses	
	2000 ('96) year 4	2000 ('96) year 8
learn hard words	53 (44)	21 (22)
go back and try again	37 (45)	32 (42)
read a lot	35 (32)	45 (35)
concentrate hard	34 (42)	28 (34)
listen to the teacher	33 (29)	8 (9)
enjoy reading books	29 (28)	56 (52)
sound out words	29 (31)	39 (36)
choose the right book	15 (19)	33 (28)
practise doing hard things	15 (12)	7 (6)
think about what I read	13 (13)	21 (27)

In response to a list of seven types of reading material, students indicated up to three which they liked reading in their own time. The responses are shown below, in order of popularity for year 4 students.

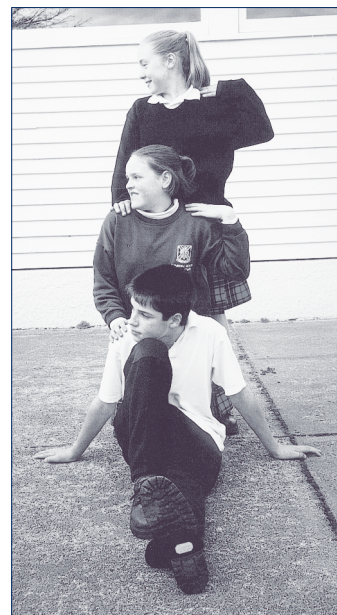
PREFERRED READING MATERIAL IN OWN TIME	% responses	
	2000 ('96) year 4	2000 ('96) year 8
story books (fiction)	68 (69)	80 (71)
comics	44 (48)	27 (31)
poetry	40 (38)	14 (19)
books about real things and people (non-fiction)	35 (57)	40 (46)
magazines	31 (26)	61 (64)
newspapers	19 (20)	14 (24)
junk mail	20 (18)	16 (14)

The results reveal some important changes of voluntary reading activity between year 4 and year 8. In particular, year 8 students reported a considerably greater focus on reading magazines, and markedly less interest in comics and poetry. Between 1996 and 2000, fiction has become more popular for year 8 students, non-fiction substantially less popular for year 4 students, and newspapers less popular for year 8 students.



The students were presented with a list of nine activities that they might do in their spare time, and asked to tick up to three activities that they most liked to do. The responses are shown below, in order of popularity for year 4 students:

PREFERRED ACTIVITY IN OWN TIME	% responses	
	2000 ('96) year 4	2000 ('96) year 8
watch TV	44 (32)	41 (41)
do art	44 (40)	14 (13)
play video or computer games	40 (49)	34 (45)
play games or sport	34 (38)	44 (51)
read	34 (17)	30 (13)
play with friends	33 (37)	41 (41)
talk on telephone with friends	26 (20)	33 (30)
music	14 (17)	25 (27)
make things	14 (42)	12 (25)



The notable differences between year 4 and year 8 responses are the markedly lower interest of year 8 students in “doing art”, and their higher interest in activities with others (playing with friends, playing games or sports, talking on the telephone with friends) and doing musical things.

When the results for 1996 and 2000 are compared, the dramatic changes are the rise in popularity of reading and the decline in popularity of “making things”. Unfortunately, these changes cannot simply be taken at face value. While all other activities were listed in the same order on the survey in 1996 and 2000, reading and “making things” were interchanged, reading moving from 7th in the list of response options to 1st, and “making things” from 1st to 7th. The impact of the order is hard to assess: the 6th and 8th response options (playing with friends and playing games or sports) were both more popular than the 2nd response option (talk on telephone with friends). Also, a relatively unpopular choice at year 8 level (doing art) was the second option listed. Our best guess is that year 4 responses are more vulnerable to order than year 8 responses, so the increased popularity of reading in 2000 may be exaggerated a little more at year 4 than year 8. The 2000 results should be viewed as probably slightly inflated, and the 1996 results rather too low, with some real gain from 1996 to 2000. Perhaps Harry Potter books have helped promote reading as a desirable activity!

Students were also asked if they had a favourite author. Sixty-one percent of year 4 students said yes (69 percent in 1996), as did 53 percent of year 8 students (56 percent in 1996).



Students were also asked "Which language do you mainly speak at home?". The responses were placed in categories and percentages are tabulated (below).

LANGUAGE MAINLY SPOKEN AT HOME	% responses	
	y4	y8
English	88	90
Māori	2	2
Samoan	2	1
Other Pacific language	1	1
Asian language	5	3
Other language	1	1
Māori and English equally	1	2

There were substantial differences between year 4 and year 8 students on some questions. Our experience with previous NEMP surveys (in all subjects) has shown that year 8 students are less inclined than year 4 students to use the most positive rating category. The comparisons used here are based on the percentages in the top two and the bottom categories. Differences of 10 percent or more between year 4 and year 8 responses were:

- 19 percent more year 4 students were positive about the stories/books in their school reading programme;
- 18 percent more year 4 students liked getting a book for a present;
- 17 percent more year 8 students said they did not know how good their teacher thought they were at reading;



- 13 percent more year 4 students liked going to a library;
- 12 percent more year 4 students liked reading in their own time — not at school;
- 12 percent more year 4 students liked talking to their whole class;
- 12 percent more year 8 students said they got to talk to others in their class "heaps" or "quite a lot".

Responses to the 21 rating items are presented in separate tables for year 4 students (p63) and year 8 students (p64). Some interesting positive features were present in the responses of both year 4 and year 8 students:

- more than 80 percent were positive about reading at school, their own competence in reading, looking at books in a bookshop, going to a library, and talking to a group in their class;
- more than 70 percent were positive about reading as an activity when not at school, getting a book for a present and having their teacher read a story out loud.

Less positive features common to year 4 and 8 students were:

- more than 20 percent did not know how good their teacher thought they were at reading, said their teacher never told them what they need to improve at in reading, and clearly disliked reading out loud to their class;
- more than 10 percent said they never read to others at school, disliked reading out loud to their teacher, and disliked talking to their whole class.

Looking at the most positive and least positive categories, there were some noteworthy changes from 1996 to 2000:

- the percentage of students who were very positive about how good they were at reading improved markedly, by 18 percent for year 4 and 13 percent for year 8 (question 2) and by 10 percent for year 4 and 11 percent at year 8 (question 14);
- 12 percent fewer year 4 and 10 percent fewer year 8 students were very positive about getting a book for a present;
- 10 percent fewer year 8 students were very positive about looking at books in a bookshop, or about going to a library;
- 12 percent fewer year 4 and 9 percent fewer year 8 students were very positive about their teacher reading a story aloud;
- 12 percent fewer year 4 and year 8 students said that they got to talk to others in their class "heaps".

## YEAR 4 READING AND SPEAKING SURVEY

2000 (1996)

1. How much do you like reading at school?



52 (50)



33 (40)



7 (8)



8 (2)

*don't know*

2. How good are you at reading?

50 (32)

39 (56)

9 (11)

2 (1)

3. How good does your teacher think you are at reading?

42 (33)

27 (23)

4 (7)

3 (0)

24 (37)

4. How good does your Mum or Dad think you are at reading?

70 (62)

17 (22)

3 (3)

1 (1)

9 (12)

*heaps**quite a lot**sometimes**never*

5. Does your teacher tell you what you are good at in reading?

14

27

50

9

6. Does your teacher tell you what you need to improve at in reading?

13

16

50

21

7. How often do you read to others at school?

14

21

51

14



8. How much do you like reading in your own time – not at school?

60 (56)

24 (29)

9 (10)

7 (5)

9. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?

63 (75)

27 (19)

7 (3)

3 (3)

10. How do you feel about looking at books in a bookshop?

62 (68)

27 (23)

8 (6)

3 (3)

11. How do you feel about going to a library?

74 (72)

20 (21)

4 (5)

2 (2)

12. How do you feel about the stories/books you read as part of your reading programme at school?

46 (47)

40 (40)

9 (9)

5 (4)

13. How do you feel when your teacher reads a story out loud?

66 (78)

21 (16)

7 (3)

6 (3)

14. How do you feel about how well you read?

63 (53)

27 (38)

7 (7)

3 (2)

15. How do you feel about reading in a group in the classroom?

41 (43)

35 (38)

15 (12)

9 (7)

16. How do you feel when you are asked to read out loud to the teacher?

32 (36)

34 (34)

16 (16)

18 (14)

17. How do you feel when asked to read out loud to the class?

28 (26)

25 (26)

19 (20)

28 (28)

18. How much do you like talking to your whole class?

38 (32)

35 (39)

16 (17)

11 (12)

19. How much do you like talking to a group in your class?

49 (57)

33 (29)

12 (11)

6 (3)

*heaps**quite a lot**sometimes**never*

20. How often do you get to talk to your whole class?

12 (10)

19 (25)

58 (61)

11 (4)

21. How often do you get to talk to others in your class?

35 (45)

33 (31)

30 (22)

2 (2)

## YEAR 8 READING AND SPEAKING SURVEY

2000 (1996)

1. How much do you like reading at school?



32 (31)



50 (55)



13 (12)



5 (2)

*don't know*

2. How good are you at reading?

31 (18)

53 (56)

14 (23)

2 (3)

3. How good does your teacher think you are at reading?

24 (10)

26 (27)

7 (8)

2 (1)

41 (54)

4. How good does your Mum or Dad think you are at reading?

45 (27)

27 (35)

8 (9)

3 (2)

17 (27)

*heaps**quite a lot**sometimes**never*

5. Does your teacher tell you what you are good at in reading?

6

15

58

21

6. Does your teacher tell you what you need to improve at in reading?

9

16

50

25

7. How often do you read to others at school?

3

15

59

23



8. How much do you like reading in your own time – not at school?

36 (39)

36 (38)

18 (18)

10 (5)

9. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?

35 (45)

37 (39)

22 (13)

6 (3)

10. How do you feel about looking at books in a bookshop?

42 (52)

41 (37)

14 (9)

3 (2)

11. How do you feel about going to a library?

43 (53)

38 (32)

14 (12)

5 (3)

12. How do you feel about the stories/books you read as part of your reading programme at school?

25 (24)

42 (52)

23 (18)

10 (6)

13. How do you feel when your teacher reads a story out loud?

42 (51)

37 (36)

15 (10)

6 (3)

14. How do you feel about how well you read?

43 (30)

41 (49)

12 (18)

4 (3)

15. How do you feel about reading in a group in the classroom?

24 (26)

39 (41)

28 (24)

9 (9)

16. How do you feel when you are asked to read out loud to the teacher?

20 (19)

37 (36)

26 (25)

17 (20)

17. How do you feel when asked to read out loud to the class?

15 (13)

30 (25)

24 (23)

31 (39)

18. How much do you like talking to your whole class?

24 (17)

37 (41)

26 (28)

13 (14)

19. How much do you like talking to a group in your class?

46 (51)

38 (39)

13 (8)

3 (2)

*heaps**quite a lot**sometimes**never*

20. How often do you get to talk to your whole class?

7 (3)

25 (30)

62 (65)

6 (2)

21. How often do you get to talk to others in your class?

40 (50)

40 (37)

19 (12)

1 (1)