

The Summer Learning Journey Programme (2016-2017) Results

Kia ora!

Hello, my name is Rachel Williams and I am teacher and researcher from the Woolf Fisher Centre at the University of Auckland. Last summer I created a blogging programme for students at our Manaiakalani cluster schools. The purpose of the programme was to provide our young people with an opportunity to practice their reading and writing over the holiday period. All too often our students leave school at the end of the year and don't practice their reading or writing very much over the summer holiday. When they return to school they struggle to remember what they learned the year before. To avoid this 'summer slide' or 'slump' in learning, I designed a fun and educational blogging programme called a *Summer Learning Journey*. The theme of the programme was travel and adventure. Students from all mainstream, English Manaiakalani cluster schools logged onto the Summer Learning Journey site, learned about the people, customs and cultures in other countries, created learning outputs and then shared them on their blogs.

A total of 368 students registered for the holiday blogging programme and 141 actively posted their learning on their blogs. I monitored every blog and wrote comments in response to every post. I also recruited students from five countries around the world (Canada, England, Chile, Malaysia and Germany) to read the student's posts and comment on them. At the end of the summer our students had completed 2432 posts and provided 1493 comments on one another's blogs. Our blog commenting team contributed a further 2432 comments while the overseas bloggers provided 250 comments for a total of 6607 posts and comments. It was a busy summer!

At the end of the summer holiday, I evaluated the quality and accuracy of all of the posts provided by our students. I also explored the impact that participating in the Summer Learning Journey programme had on the writing and reading ability of our students. The results were really exciting! They suggest that participation in the programme led to **significantly higher writing** (e-asTTle) and **significantly higher reading** (PAT) scores in Term 1 2017 (after the summer programme) for participants than non-participants (see Figure 1, Figure 2). In fact, the participants were 31.65 asttle points (approximately 6-9 months of learning) and 5 full PAT points (approximately 6 months of learning) ahead of non-participants at the end of the summer. We believe that these differences are quite substantial and provide clear evidence that of the significant, positive effect that sustained blogging over summer can have on the writing and reading ability of the students.

On the basis of these results (and those recorded previously), we are creating a winter version of the blogging programme. It will be called a *Winter Learning Journey* and it is going to be available in all Maniakalani cluster schools over the July school holidays. I (Rachel) am really excited about it and can't wait to log on and blog with the students once again!

If you would like more information about the programme or have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me, Rachel, on 09 623 8899 ext. 46437 or email me at rachel.williams@auckland.ac.nz.

Cheers,

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Rachel

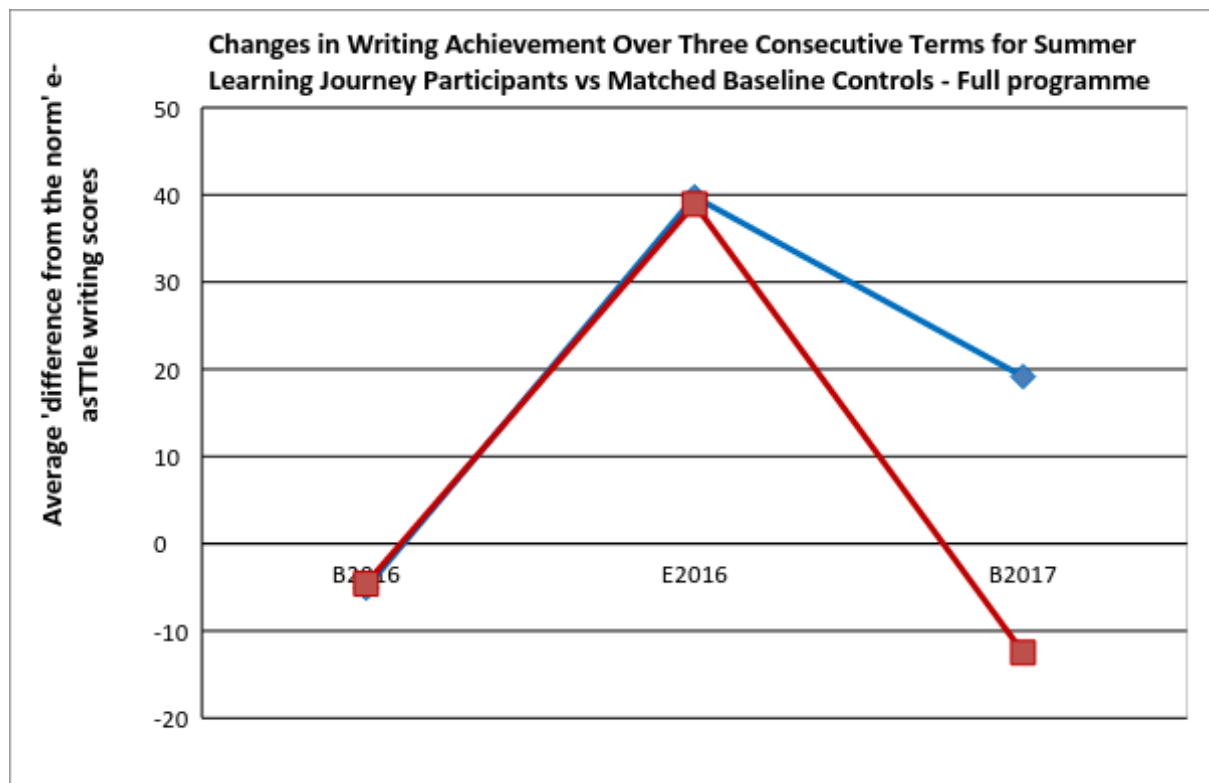


Figure 1. Differences in mean, standardised e-asTTle writing scores from the norm for Summer Learning Journey (full programme) participants and matched control students over three consecutive terms. Note: B2016 = Term 1 2016; E2016 = Term 4 2016; B2017 = Term 1 2017

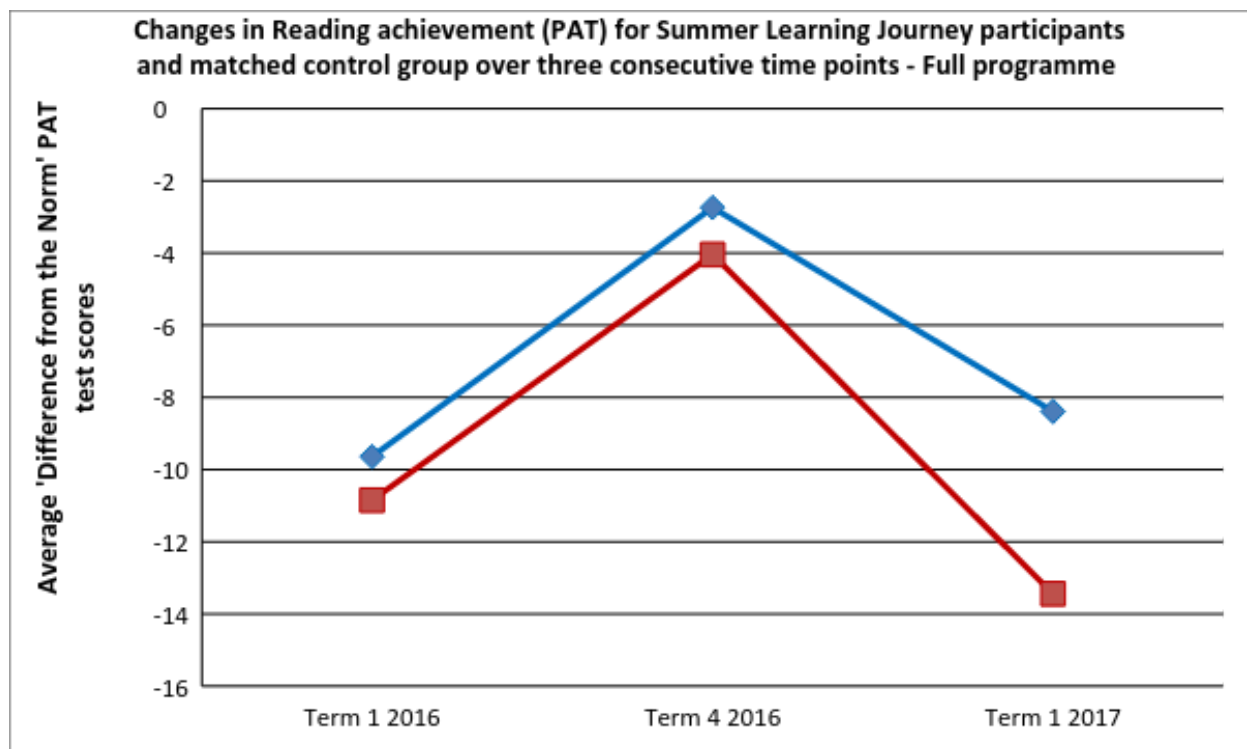


Figure 2. Differences in mean, standardised PAT reading scores from the norm for Summer Learning

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Journey (full programme) participants and matched control students over three consecutive terms.

Note: B2016 = Term 1 2016; E2016 = Term 4 2016; B2017 = Term 1 2017