

# Behind the Book Program Evaluation Analysis FY16

## Summary of Results



Behind the Book uses an evaluation methodology which is integrated into our program model. While we collect a variety of information about our programs, the most crucial is survey data from both teachers and students. Teachers complete surveys before and after participating in Behind the Book programming and students complete surveys at the end of their experiences. **All data was collected immediately on completion of the programs and the majority of programs are included in the results assembled here.** This data represents a cost-effective and sustainable methodology to not only assess our work and help us improve our programs, but to share our work with those outside of our organization. **All survey items indicated a positive change in student outcomes.** This document highlights important areas of strength and areas on which to build.

### Teacher Results

Teacher surveys measure reading engagement, knowledge and implementation of the writing process and how student behavior has changed as a result of the BtB program.

Overall, teachers reported that their students demonstrated:

- **Increased Engagement 87%**
- **Increased Motivation to Read 86%**
- **Better Understanding of the Writing Process 82%**
- **Increased motivation to write 80%**
- **Improved overall literacy 83%**
- **Improved belief in their skills 83%**
- **Higher quality writing 85%**

### Reading Engagement and Writing

BtB programs contribute to building students' reading engagement, writing skills and personal identity. The Reading Engagement construct is made up of nine items which, taken together, demonstrate a meaningful increase in engagement - of almost half a point (.43) and a 13% increase. There were eight items that measured growth in understanding and implementation of the writing process and one that measured development of student voice. Across the board, the writing items outperformed the reading engagement ones, specifically in areas where teachers report that students struggle.

Of particular note:

- A large number of teachers reported that their students **better understood how to plan and revise their writing (67% and 71%, respectively.)**
- Overall, teachers found that students were better at implementing the writing process. **63% were better at planning, 67% at writing a draft and 59% at revising, each with statistically significant percentage gains.**

In their short responses, teachers expressed how BtB:

- **was especially impactful for lower level students** (*"Meeting Zetta made even my reluctant scholars more likely to read; one of my students who did not complete any other of the assigned books this year read Bird several times."*)
- **improved students social-emotional learning skills** (*"They pushed themselves more with this challenging project than I would have thought;" "They have increased empathy for characters of their age group regardless of culture or context."*)
- **helped change their perspective on their students** (*"I learned how much creativity and experiences they have"; "They were more interested in the work than I expected."*)
- **doubled as professional development as they were exposed to strategies and tools to be better teachers** (*"Completing a final activity at the end of a project made it much more meaningful for the students;" "Try to let students lead more of their own learning;" "I learned some different ways for engagement—Victor (the author) brought in activities I used with other classes;" "How to brainstorm ideas and connect with their writing by drawing on personal experiences."*)

## Students

BtB made a conscious choice to make student surveys more reflective and less like the high stakes assessments that they frequently face. Therefore, questions are mostly long answer and focused on student learning. All ages of students (PreK - 12) participated in the survey in some capacity; younger students were supported by whole group discussion. Students were asked a total of eight questions; five of which were open-ended, three of which were binary choice. We found that:

**72% of students reported working harder** on their writing during their BtB program than other assignments. In a follow up open-ended question about why, students who responded 'yes' explained that it was because of: a) their connection to the book or author b) the meaningfulness of the assignment, or c) a harder assignment which required working harder.

**76% reported that meeting the author made them want to read more** because they were inspired by the author themselves or something they said, because the book they read was good, or because they experienced making a book themselves.

**77% plan to read another book by the author** they met (or another similar book).

During our programs students also reported that they:

