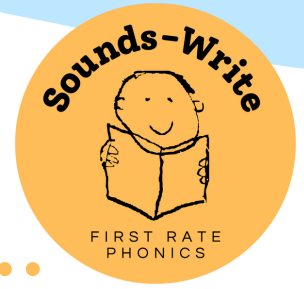
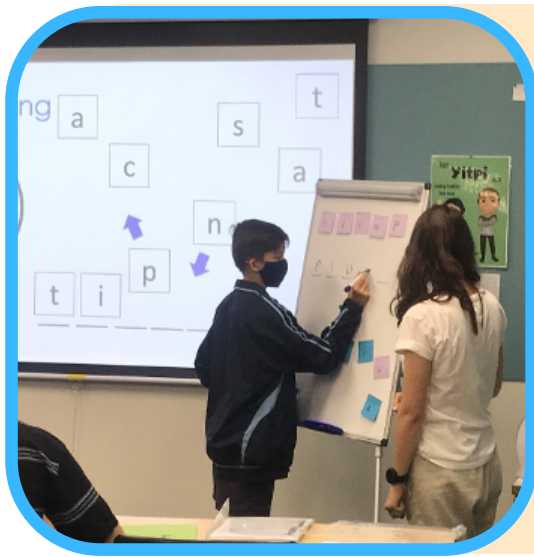


‘The kids were getting it; it was joyful, it was engaging’

Parafield Gardens High School, Australia, March 2022



We spoke with Christine D’Arcy, speech pathologist at Parafield Gardens, a high school in Northern Adelaide with a diverse population from more than 40 nations.



- 📌 School: **Parafield Gardens High School**
- 📌 Location: **Northern Adelaide, South Australia**
- 📌 Pupils on roll: **1226**
- 📌 Age range: **11 - 18**
- 📌 Low socio-economic background: **40%**
- 📌 English as additional language: **34%**
- 📌 Additional learning needs: **15%**
- 📌 Aboriginal learners: **7.5%**

When did you start implementing Sounds-Write and how did you do that?

In 2021 many of our Year 8 enrolments were significantly below the standard of educational achievement (SEA) for reading. Our on-site speech pathologist was familiar with Sounds-Write and recommended a trial as a Tier 2 intervention for students with decoding and word recognition skills significantly below the expected level. A local school with a similar demographic had already started Sounds-Write with promising initial results, so we got support and guidance from them. Sounds-Write was initially implemented in Term 2 of 2021 across three intervention classes totalling about 55 Year 8 students, including one class with 22 students with English as an additional language. It was crucial to adapt the program for our secondary context and timeframe - we had just 3 terms to implement a program that can take up to 3 years. We decided to move onto polysyllabic words as soon as students were ready because when you start increasing word complexity that’s when they really start to get into it. We incorporated a lot of morphology and etymology and explained how it could help them read and understand academic vocabulary from different subject areas.

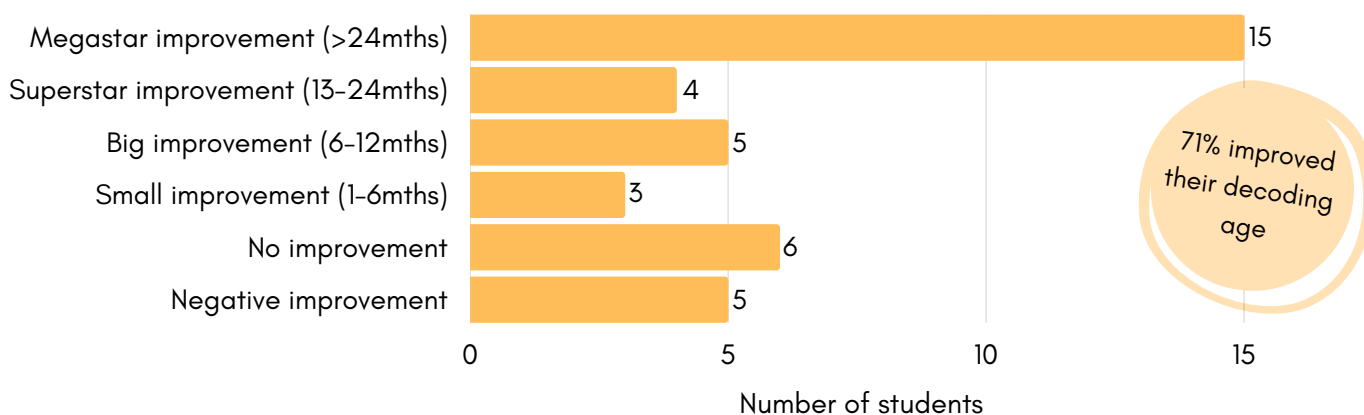
‘I know how to say difficult words, but I normally don’t know how to spell them. I can spell them now, after I was in that program.’
(Student with significant learning difficulties)

What impact has Sounds-Write had on student progress?

We have a lot of data to suggest that Sounds-Write is having a really positive impact on students' reading. Fifteen students improved their non-word decoding skills by more than 2 years! We also looked outside the program for evidence of progress. For example, a student with learning difficulties who never really had much success in literature-rich subjects and still struggles in a lot of ways, made a lot of progress and their confidence increased. They explained, and the English teacher confirmed, how the skills learnt in Sounds-Write had improved their confidence and ability to both read and spell increasingly complex words in all subject areas but particularly in English.

Improvement in decoding age

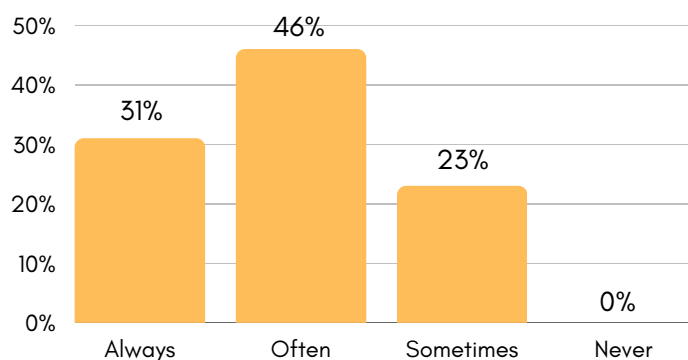
after 3 terms of Tier 2 Sounds-Write intervention program



What has been the reaction from students to the adoption of Sounds-Write?

There was some initial resistance but once we were able to communicate the intention of the program, they were supportive. They quickly became used to the structure of Sounds-Write and towards the end of our second term the kids were getting it; it was joyful, it was engaging, and we started to have real success. For the students that attended the program consistently, they not only improved their reading skills, but you could see they were more confident socially. When surveyed at the end of the year, 71% of students rated their reading skills higher and more reported they had improved their ability to read and spell polysyllabic words.

Can now READ polysyllabic words



Can now SPELL polysyllabic words

