Incentivized Goal Tracking Sheets Enrich Reading Success

Results Generated with World Vision Partnership

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Overview

Worldreader partners with World Vision to provide students at under-resourced schools and community centers in America access to a digital library. To motivate students to utilize the library that’s merely available, Worldreader has created a tracking strategy for children to set individual reading goals — incentivized by World Vision. Reading minutes have since seen a significant increase.

Worldreader

Worldreader, an international non-profit, has provided free access to a digital library to over 19 million readers in 48 countries over the last 12 years, cumulatively distributing over 69 million digital books to readers in vulnerable regions including East and West Africa; South Asia; the Middle East; North Africa; Latin America; and the United States.
In 2021, Worldreader launched Keep Children Reading in the United States to support students in under-resourced communities, who have faced limited access to libraries and community centers due to the Covid-19 pandemic. KCR enables Worldreader to deliver a library of over 100 digital books to students Pre-K through 8th grade and their parents via the Booksmart app.

The KCR program focuses on Worldreader’s ABCD framework, consisting of four elements to make reading accessible and encouraged to elicit positive results: Access, Books, Continuous Engagement, and Data.

KCR has bred Worldreader’s partnership with World Vision, which began in February 2021.

World Vision

World Vision, a faith based non-profit, partners with children, families, and their communities to tackle the causes of poverty and injustice, according to the World Vision website. Worldreader works with World Vision in two models: the KidReach Appalachian site and the Warehouse Outreach program. World Vision’s Warehouse Outreach program, located in Chicago, Seattle, New York, Dallas, and Hartford offers projects such as the Teachers’ Resource Center, the Essential Supplies Program, and the Family Emergency Kit Program – meant to equip surrounding schools and community centers with school supplies and emergency resources.

In partnership with the Chicago Teacher’s Resource Center, Richardson Middle School teachers shop for classroom essentials and cleaning supplies to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic without dipping into their own pockets, said Perrise Thomas, World Vision partner coordinator.

“There's so much being put onto teachers, and they're dealing with so many different challenges outside of just being able to teach their students,” Thomas said.
Richardson Middle School

It’s difficult for families to get books, said Shelby Dettiger, World Vision national education director at the Dec. 1 U.S. Advisory Council Meeting. “For some children, choosing their own personal book to read is enormous,” Dettiger said.

Richardson Middle school, SD 299, educates children in grades 5-8. Approximately 96.1% of students at Richardson are of low-income, while the district percentage is 78% and the state of Illinois is 48.1%, according to the Illinois Report Card.
Currently, 97% of students are Hispanic, and the percentage of students learning English is 30.2%. In the district, the percentage is 20.4%, while the state is 12.9%, according to the Illinois Report Card.

For the English Language Arts portion of the IAR exam, 16% of students at Richardson met or exceeded standards in 2021, while 21% of students in the district met or exceeded the standard. In 2019, on the other hand, before the COVID-19 pandemic, 23% of Richardson students met or exceeded the standard, while 28% in the district met or exceeded, according to the Illinois report card.
World Vision’s goal is to not only be a lending hand to under-resourced teachers and students, but encourage children to read more at home and not just at school. However, there needed to be a boost, Thomas said.

“At the height of the pandemic, [students] aren’t thinking about reading. They’re hungry, or they don’t have a tablet to read on, or their parents don’t want to read. They’re tired, or maybe they can’t read as good,” Thomas said.

In order to push reading as a priority, Worldreader’s 'I’m a Superstar Reader’ tracking sheet follows progress so that students can achieve their goals and eventual reward. The sheets allow students to record how many minutes they read at home with their parents or caregivers, and the goal is for students to read at least 15 minutes each day on the Booksmart app, Thomas said. The sheets serve as a guide, although it is not mandatory for teachers to use, Thomas said.

If students reach their individualized goal, Thomas said World Vision has provided Crayola art kits and Lego gift sets to Richardson and other schools for children to win.
‘I’m a Superstar Reader’ Tracking Sheet Results

Before integrating tracker sheets, students at Richardson read on average one minute per device each day from October 1 to November 1, according to Worldreader Insights data. The tracking sheets had been introduced mid-October. The next month, from November 1 to December 1, students read on average 12 minutes and 56 seconds a day per device; and starting December 1 to January 1, students read on average 45 minutes and 49 seconds each day per device, according to the data.

“[Both] templates are designed in a way that we want students to have autonomy in selecting their goals,” said Lisa McManus, U.S. partnership and program manager at Worldreader, and since their introduction, minutes spent reading have increased, she said.

Lisa said the templates are helpful because students determine the goal of how many minutes they want to read and not the adults in their lives. She said the template allows students and families to measure and track daily progress.

“Research shows having goals that are measurable, that you can track progress with and celebrate enables families and people to reach those goals more successfully,” McManus said.
Thomas said the majority of teachers choose their top readers, who've completed their tracking goal, weekly. In some classrooms, there may only be one student who wins per week, while in others, it could be the top three, Thomas said. Whoever the top readers are, they can choose between taking home a Croyola art kit or Lego set.

“[Worldreader and World Vision] all have the same goal, which is to keep children reading,” Thomas said. McManus said Worldreader wants to support families to read more together, and the tracker gives families an opportunity to set a goal, to track and measure that goal, and then to celebrate success.

“We can't just say 'read more' and think [students] are going to, and so that's how the tracker came about. We don't want to have to guess if you've met a goal or guess if you're on the right track, and so organizing those goals into smaller increments is that map or compass to help you get to that end goal,” McManus said.

Some teachers at Richardson Middle School have incorporated and encouraged use of the Booksmart app within their classroom, instead of solely using it at home.
Teacher Perspective

Sandra Ramirez, a teacher at Richardson Middle school said she has utilized Worldreader’s Booksmart app for their after school program throughout the 2021-2022 academic year.

Ramirez also promotes the app inside her own classroom, she said. As a math teacher, Ramirez said she stresses to her students to use the Booksmart app and read more frequently. Even in math class, reading and writing are foundational to student success, Ramirez said, in addition to other subject areas.
“When I encourage the reading, it helps them get to be better readers so they’re understanding what I’m asking them to read [in math class],” she said.

One of Ramirez’s students has recently come to America from Mexico, she said. Having access to books in Spanish has allowed Ramirez’s new student to feel a sense of representation, while also making her and other students feel celebrated, Ramirez said. Bilingual books, too, enable Ramirez’s students to connect and share stories despite a language barrier, she said.

“It has been really nice having her [student from Mexico] be able to read the same book in Spanish that other students are reading in English. It makes her feel included,” Ramirez said.

**Student Perspective**

Due to the fact that 30.2% of students at Richardson are learning English, having access to a book in both English and Spanish has helped comprehension, Thomas said, based on feedback she’s heard. Thomas said she herself is learning Spanish at the moment, and she will remember Spanish words by reading the word or passage in Spanish, but then refer back to it in English to grasp which words mean what.

Richardson 5th graders shared why they enjoy using Booksmart in their afterschool program in a recent interview.

“[I like] how they are nice books, and I get to learn new words,” Kimberly said.

Haydee said she enjoys that the books are available for different age levels.

“[I like] when you finish the book it has activities,” Jocelyn said.

Thomas expressed there was concern that kids might not want to read on a screen during the pandemic because they’re learning on a screen all day, she said. But the activities have kept students engaged with what they’re reading because they get to interact with others and utilize items in their home off screen to complete the activity, she said.
“It’s like a domino effect. We’re able to assist [teachers] so they don’t have to dig in their own pockets, and then the kids are also increasing their reading skills and their language skills, but then you’re also getting these things that [students] would not normally be able to afford or have,” Thomas said.

Creating a goal tracking sheet that allows children to set individual goals depending on their needs and resources has increased reading minutes. While access to digital reading outside of the classroom benefits children, World Vision’s distribution of incentives motivate children to optimize their access. Children overall at Richardson have been more inclined to read beyond their classroom after setting rewarding goals for themselves.