

2020 Analysis Report

Community Literacy Tutor Program

Sobambisana Primary School

This report covers the period 1 January to 30 November 2020 but focusses specifically on the **quantitative** outcomes of the internal evaluation of the progress of the 2020 Literacy Tutor cohort and the change in learner scores on the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), a standardised literacy assessment tool for South African learners.

Help2read Impact since Inception

Help2read is an educational English literacy development program that has been in operation since 2006, cumulatively reaching over **24 000** primary school learners in **400** schools with the assistance of thousands of volunteer reading helpers and township youth developed and trained as Literacy Tutors. The focus is on supporting primary school learners who are not first language English speakers and who come from disadvantaged communities. Help2read supports children learning to read in Grades 2 through 4 so that they can read to learn thereafter. In 2020 the help2read English literacy intervention program was implemented at **32** public primary schools, providing **1 006** learners who have fallen behind with attention from a Volunteer Reading Helper or Literacy Tutor (LT).

Help2read's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Help2read, like any organisation that works in the school space was presented with a great deal of challenges in 2020. School closures in line with the national lockdowns issued by the South African government led to Help2read pivoting our offerings to the schools we work in. There were two major adjustments to the Help2read programme in 2020:



1. We were only able to conduct a limited number of one-on-one reading sessions. Consistent one-on-one reading is core to the support Help2read offers, findings from 2019 will be compared to the 2020 findings to examine the impact of one-on-one reading support as opposed to group reading support. The 2020 findings are based on a mix of limited one-on-one reading support and group reading support.
2. The continuous nature of the Help2read intervention was disrupted when schools were closed and access to learners was limited. Reading support was now offered in a physically distanced classroom reading sessions and other group reading sessions such as Reading Clubs and Holiday Clubs.

Impact of the help2read Training and Support: Literacy Tutors

The Western Cape Literacy Tutors (LTs) completed the same two-part questionnaire.

Part 1 of the questionnaire focussed on the following Personal Capabilities:

- Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses

- Receptiveness to learning
- Drive
- Confidence
- Resilience
- How informed they felt about the job market and career opportunities

Part 2 of the questionnaire was directed at the following Employability Skills:

- Verbal communication
- Written communication
- Teamwork
- Problem solving
- Organisational skills
- Numeracy

The Senior LT also rated the LTs on the same questionnaire. Table 1 below shows the percentage of Literacy Tutors that rated themselves higher (1 – 5 rating) in the final self-assessment than in the baseline self-assessment in terms of Personal Capabilities. A total of 50% of Literacy Tutors rated themselves higher on being receptive and driven at the end of the Help2read Program than at the start. The gains made by the LTs in improvements in Personal Capability Skills are significant.

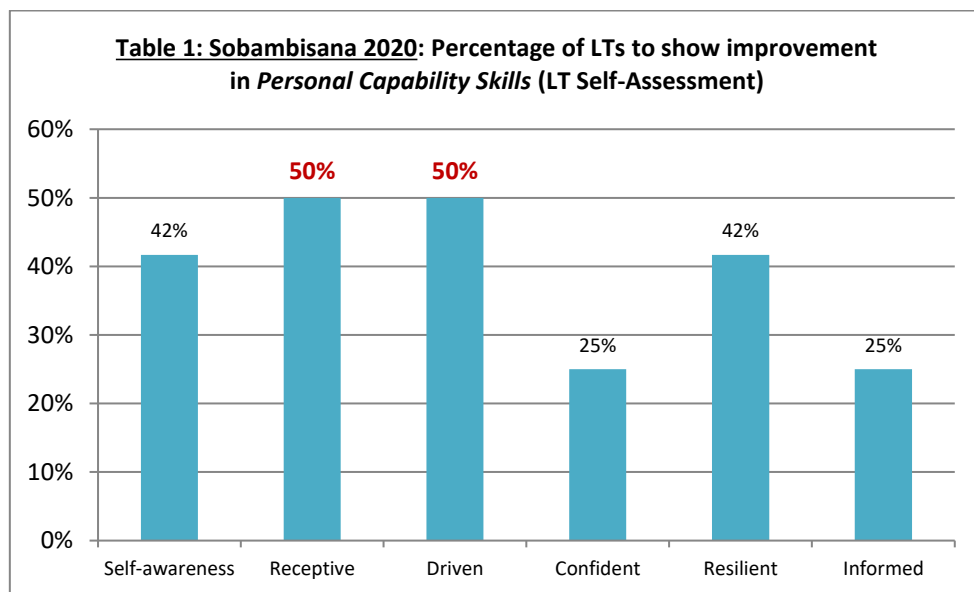


Table 2 (below) shows the rating of the Senior LT of the Personal Capability Skills improvements of the LT team at Sobambisana Primary School. The Senior LT was rated by the Senior Reading Programmes Manager, Melody Volmink. In all the instances the Senior LT has rated her peers equal or higher than themselves, except in the measure of Self-awareness. The Senior LT was able to observe an improvement 50% of the tutors in being resilient, drive and being more receptive.

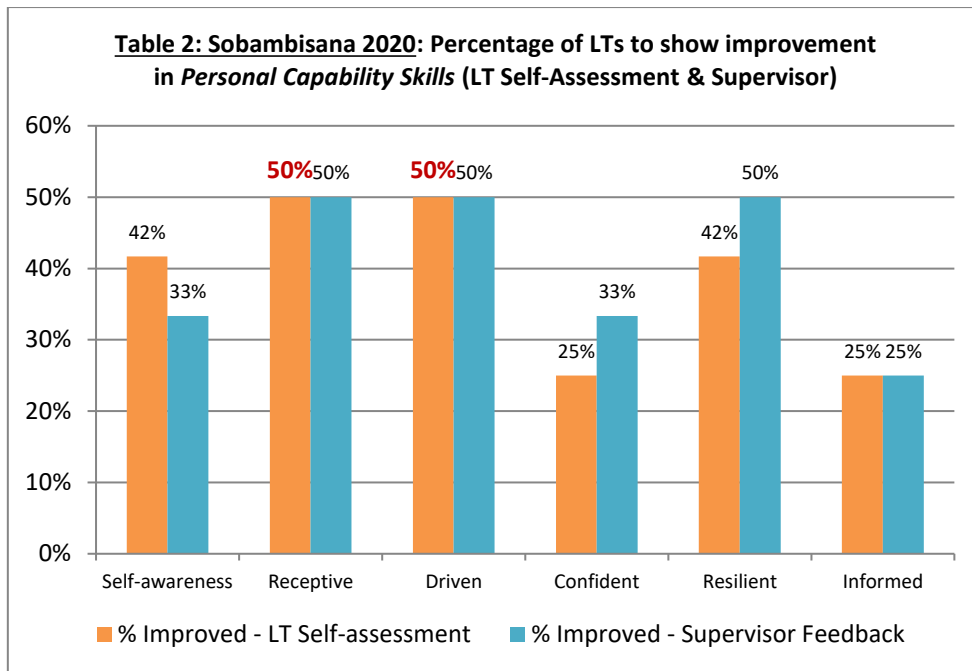
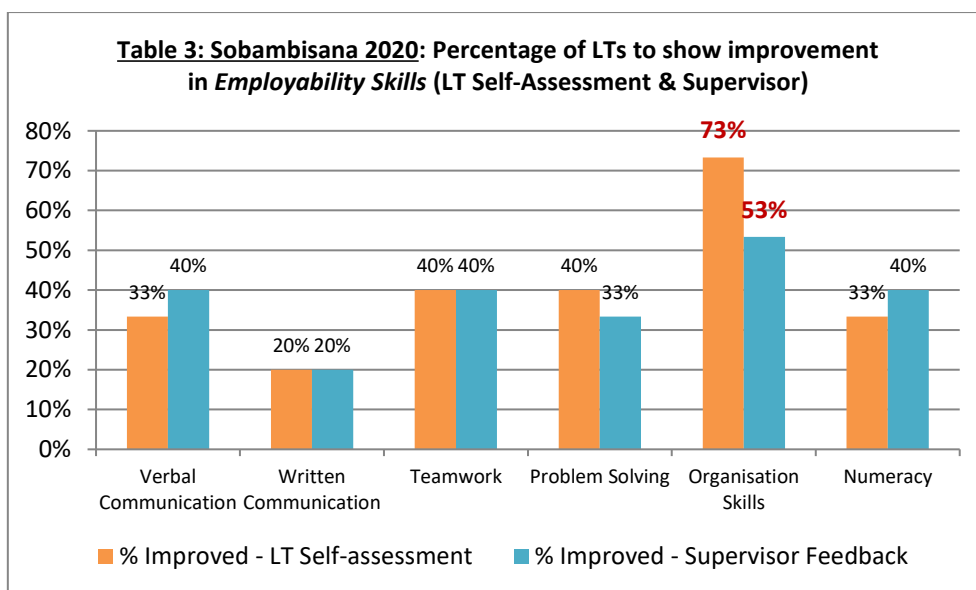


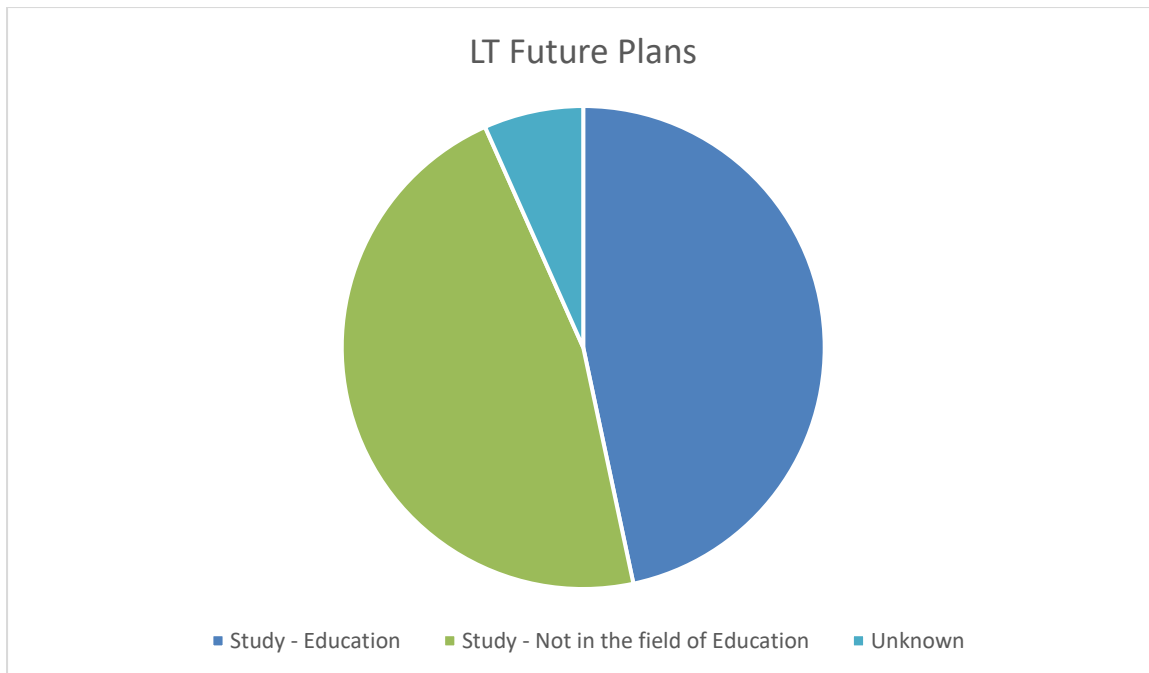
Table 3 below shows both the LTs rating of themselves as well as the rating their Supervisor gave them. The Supervisor gave 53% of LTs a higher rating at the final assessment than at the first for organisations skills and 40% of LTs a higher rating for numeracy, teamwork and verbal communication. A total of 73% of LTs rated themselves higher in organisational skills at the final assessment compared to the first.



Exit Interview

At the conclusion of each year an Exit Interview is conducted with each Literacy Tutor. The Tutors are asked the following questions:

- What are your future plans?
- How did the internship at Help2read benefit you?
- What would you change about the Help2read programme?



Of the 15 Literacy Tutors who completed the Literacy Tutor Programme at Sobambisana Primary School all but one has said that they intend to study further in 2021. Seven LTs have said that they plan to study education, one LT has said that they intend to study sports management, one LT hospitality and catering, one LT chemical engineering, one LT social work and three did not specify what they would be studying. One LT did not answer the question.

How did the internship at Help2read benefit you?

In the Exit interview each LT is asked how their year with Help2read benefited them, if at all. Their responses were:

- “I have gained more confidence and experience through Help2read trainings.” – Amanda Njani
- “Has helped me to gain interest on teaching young children.” – Asanele Luxande
- “I have more knowledge and experience on how to work with children.” – Esona Makambi
- “It has boosted my confidence, changed my way of thinking and my lifestyle.” – Likho Pasman
- “Computer skills, organising learning programmes for young children and leadership skills.” - Zonke Mtshixa
- “By instilling knowledge and experience of working in a team.” – Thomalalisa Wezi
- “The internship has taught me how work people and how to engage myself in learning programmes.” – Tandokazi Mazikay
- “Gained more knowledge and have learnt how to work with children.” – Siyaya Mdingi
- “Computing skills, admin work, emailing, communication skills, leadership skills and organising child's learning programmes.” – Mbulelo Ndlovu
- “Professionalism, teamwork, communication skills and also creativity.” – Shirley Mfene
- “Gained more experience and I have realised that I can be a great teacher in future.” – Sisipho Mgodeli
- “Self-growth, motivation and self-confidence.” – Sange Tembani



- “I have better understanding on how to work with children.” – Masonwabe Botomani
- “Accountability, self-confidence, professionalism.” – Siphokuhle Sifile

What would you change about the Help2read programme?

The Literacy Tutors at Sobambisana Primary School were asked what they would change in the Help2read programme. Their responses were:

- “To engage more with leadership and management.” – Amanda Njani
- “Workshops should be held every month so that we could gain more skills.” – Asanele Luxande
- “Encouraging children to read aloud and ask questions.” – Esona Makambi
- “I want it to expand to other schools and also be beneficial to elderly people.” – Likho Pasman
- “To extend our working time or have an after-school programme.” – Zonke Mtshixa
- “I would like to see more trainings implemented.” – Thomalalisa Wezi
- “Better leadership development.” – Tandokazi Mazikay
- “Have more workshops.” – Siyaya Mdingi
- “Visiting local ECD centres, Old age homes and libraries so that we can become more visible in Khayelitsha.” – Mbulelo Ndlovu
- “I want us to be given a platform whereby we can assist all grades with reading not just grade R-4.” – Shirley Mfene
- “There's nothing I can change about the programme.” – Sisipho Mgodeli
- “More trainings and workshops with other schools.” – Sange Tembani
- “More resources for reading club sessions.” – Masonwabe Botomani
- “Engage more with leadership and management.” – Siphokuhle Sifile

Impact of the help2read Training and Support: Learners

Help2read continuously seeks to find the best and most accurate way to show that one-on-one time spent with learners makes a difference to their ability to read, comprehend what they are reading, enjoy what they are reading and also to use their reading skills as tools to learn. After researching the options available to help2read, the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) was chosen as the instrument to measure the change in learner scores before and after the help2read intervention.

The reasons why the EGRA is suitable for measuring impact are as follows:

- The EGRA is a diagnostic reading assessment that focuses on four key reading components viz. phonetic awareness, phonics, word recognition and oral comprehension;
- The specific purpose of the EGRA is to establish easily-measurable criteria for tracking reading competency in Foundation Phase learners;
- The EGRA has been standardised for SA and piloted by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). The assessment is benchmarked by Grade and according to whether English as the Language of Learning and Teaching or English as the First Additional Language is being assessed;



- Provincial Education Departments are implementing the EGRA as part of their Literacy Strategies;
- Unlike many other standardised literacy assessments, the EGRA does not need the assessor to be a registered Psychometrist or Educational Psychologist. All teachers in the Western Cape have been trained as assessors;
- The EGRA is an individual test and takes 15 minutes to administer. The EGRA is designed to be administered multiple times during the school year.

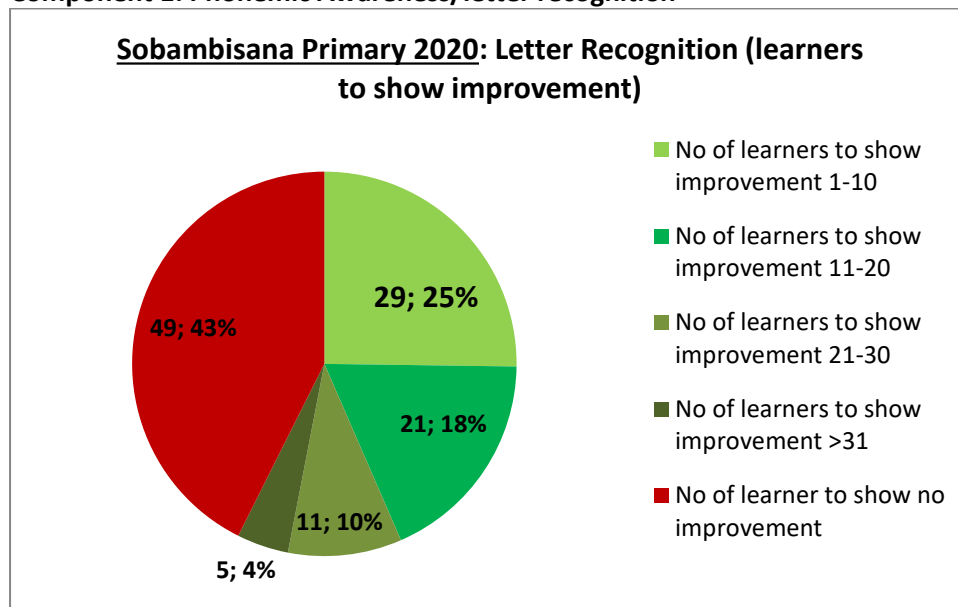
As the EGRA is only standardised for the Foundation Phase. The Grade 5 and 6 learners, at some schools, were assessed on the EGRA but their scores are not benchmarked to a minimum requirement. The final EGRA scores were compared to baseline scores in order to measure improvement in learners' reading ability.

The help2read LTs were trained on the EGRA during the first term. The EGRA was administered in the first term in March before the first national lockdown and again at the end of the fourth term, in November. Help2read can very proudly report that the help2read learners have made gains despite not being afforded the correct number of one-on-one sessions.

In addition to the administration of the EGRA, help2read obtained the learners results for Language of Learning and Teaching and First Additional Language (English) from their school reports. This was done in order to assess whether the help2read learners were making progress in class.

EGRA Results

Component 1: Phonemic Awareness/letter recognition



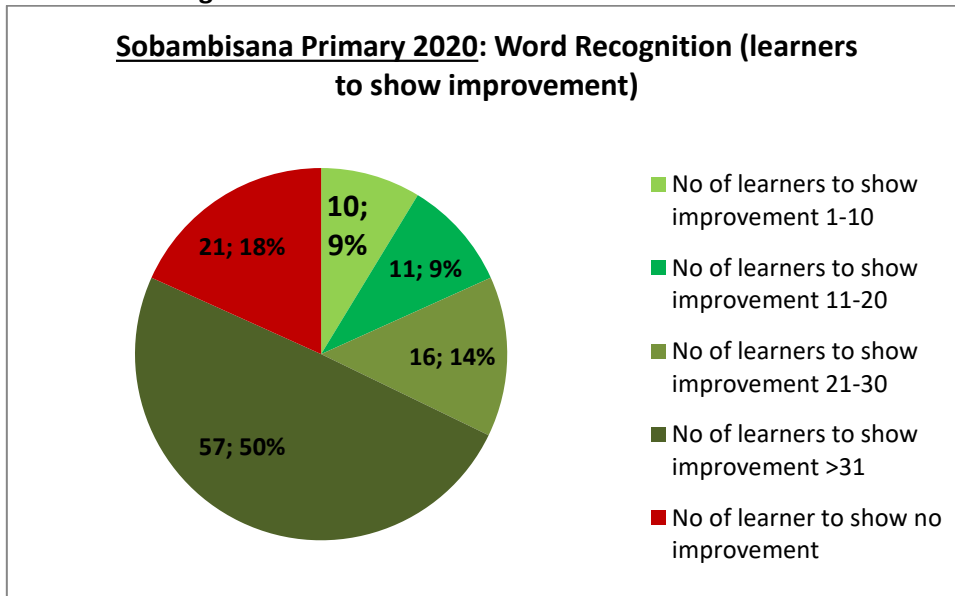
Highlight: 57% of learners show an improvement in phonemic awareness with only 43% not showing any improvement from March to November. This shows that 57% of learners could sound more letters correctly in one minute at the final EGRA assessment than at the baseline assessment, with 14% of learners making a significant improvement.

Comment:

- This component is an area which the LTs, at training on the EGRA, said that there would be an issue with the learners. Emphasis was paid to this component in the limited one-on-one sessions that took place and in group reading sessions.

- In 2021, with access to learners in the one-on-one setting once again, Help2read will endeavour to raise this to 80% of learners to show an improvement on the component of phonetic awareness/letter recognition.

Component 2: Word Recognition

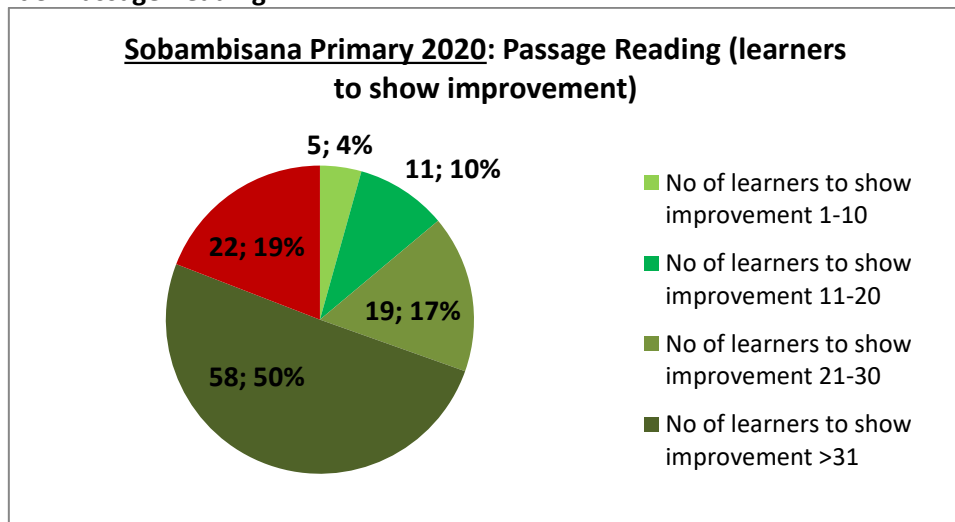


Highlight: 82% of learners show an overall improvement in word recognition with only 18% not showing improvement. In 2019 only 4% of learners showed an improvement of >31 words, where as 50% of learners improved in word recognition (>31 words) in 2020. There has been an 19% improvement in word recognition from 2019 to 2020, with 63% of learners showing an improvement in 2019 compared to 82% in 2020. This is attributed to emphasis paid to the component as well as a longer period of support in 2020 of 8 months, (including national lockdown) compared to 4 months in 2019.

Comment:

- In 2021, with access to learners in one-on-one reading support sessions, help2read will endeavour to raise this to 80% of learners showing an improvement on the component of word recognition.

Component 3: Passage Reading

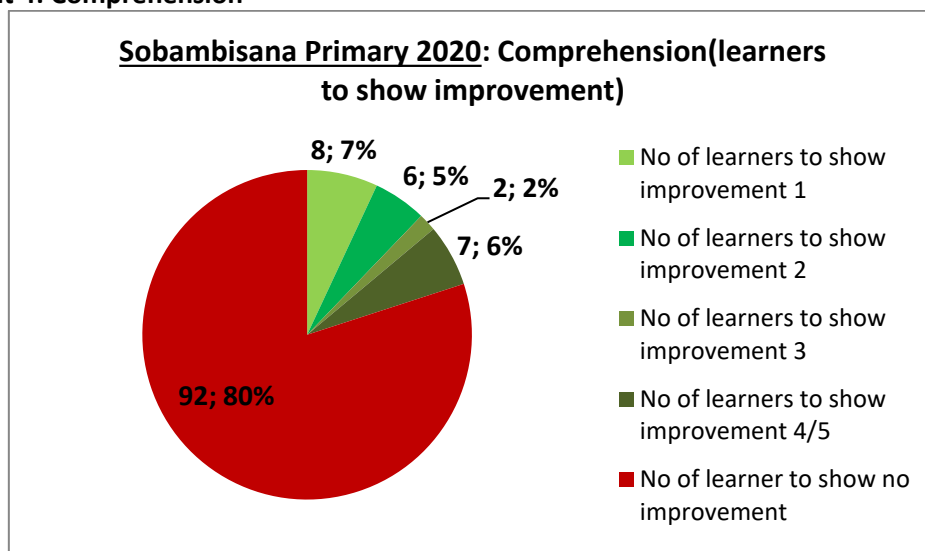


Highlight: 78% of learners show an overall improvement in passage reading with 19% of learners not showing an improvement from March to November. A total of 4% of learners reading 1-10 more words correctly at second reading than at first, 10% of learners showing an improvement of 11-20 more words read, and 67% of learners showing an improvement of more than 21 words read correctly in a passage at the final than at the baseline assessment. This shows an improvement in learner’s ability to read words correctly within a passage within one minute. There was significant improvement in passage reading from 2019 to 2020. In 2019 33% of learners showed an improvement compared to 78%. There was a longer period of time between the baseline test in 2020 when compared to 2019. 2020 – 8 months between baseline and final test compared to 4 months in 2019.

Comment:

- In 2021, help2read will endeavour to raise this to 90% of learners showing an improvement on the component of passage reading.

Component 4: Comprehension



Comment:

This component shows the least improvement with only 20% of learners showing improvement. These results are consistent with National statistics and this will be an area where help2read will focus. This was an expected outcome given the limited number of one-on-one sessions conducted in 2020 due to COVID-19 related restrictions imposed by the school and the government. We will endeavour to turn these statistics around and aim to achieve a 50% improvement in 2021. For the EGRA comprehension test learners are asked 5 questions on a passage that they have just read to assess their understanding of what they are reading. Only 6% of learners were able to answer four questions out of five correctly during the final EGRA assessment compared to the baseline EGRA assessment. In 2019 30% of learners showed an improvement, however only 2% of learners were able to answer three of out five questions correctly and zero were able to answer four out of five compared with 6% in 2020.

EGRA Results: In Summary:

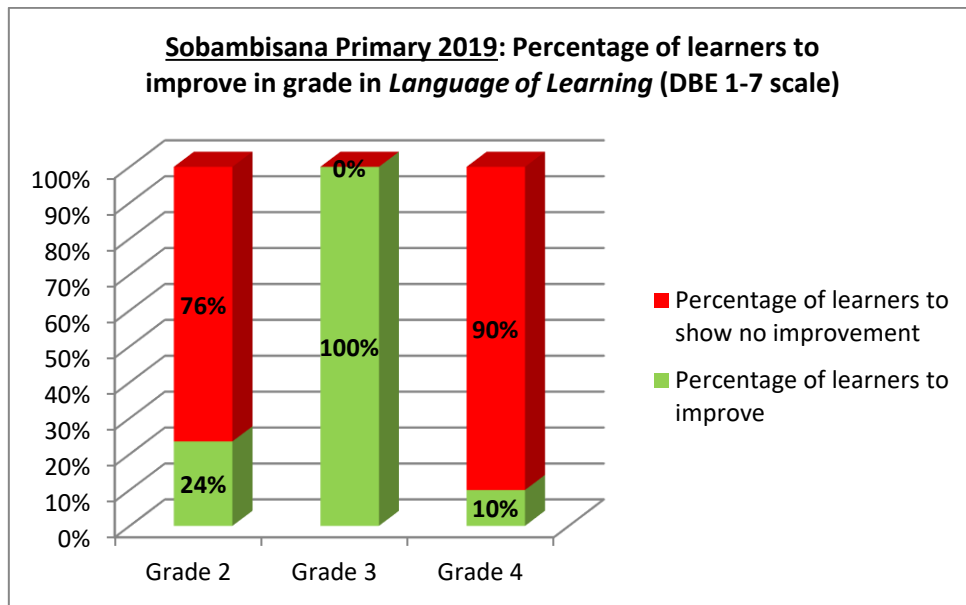
We look forward to making even more of a significant change during 2021, with a major benefit being that we will be able to work in regular consistent one-on-one sessions again. The 2019 findings show that considerable importance of one-on-one reading sessions for comprehension. The EGRA assessment tool has proved to be a strong addition to help2read’s monitoring and evaluation this year, clearly showing specific areas of reading that the help2read program is making a significant impact on

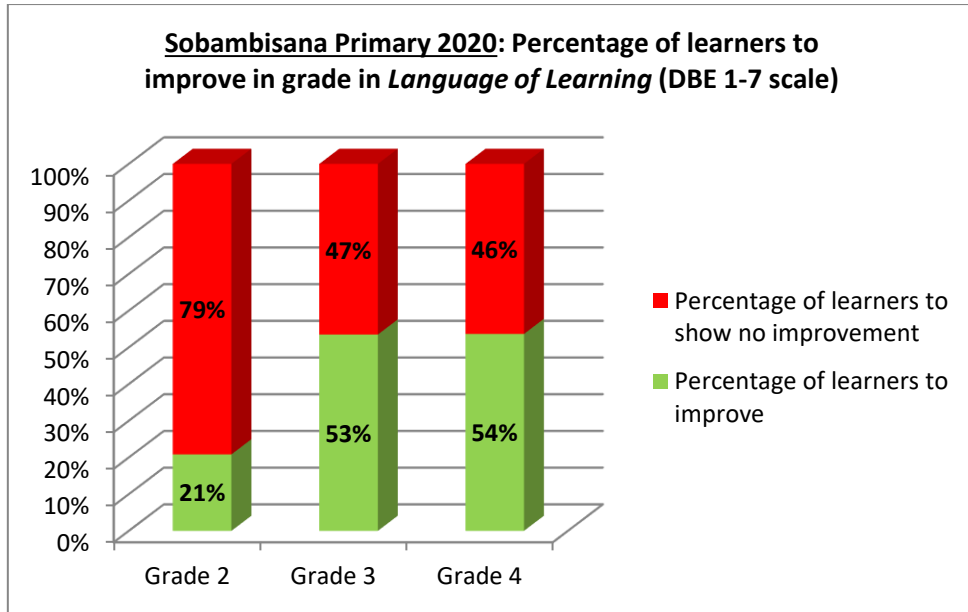
learner’s reading ability and areas of learner developed to be enforced and emphasised in LT one-on-one reading training in 2021.

EGRA Component	% improvement in 2019	% improvement in 2020	% goal for improvement in 2021
Phonemic awareness/letter sound recognition	57%	57%	80%
Word recognition	63%	82%	80%
Passage reading	33%	81%	90%
Comprehension	30%	20%	50%

Class Results

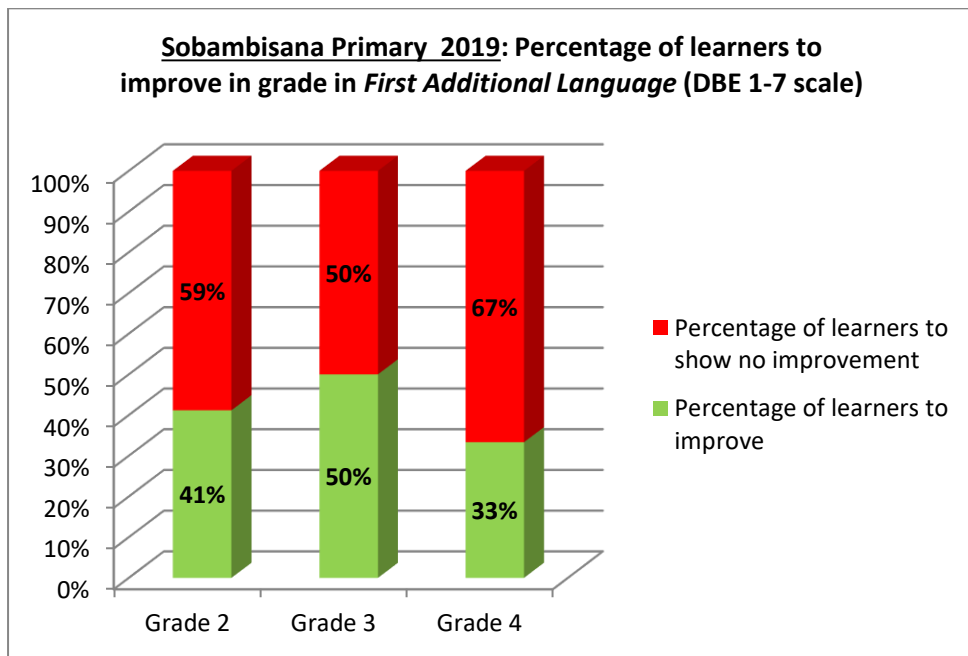
The two tables below provide evidence that the help2read learners are making progress within the context of the classroom both for Language of Learning as well as in First Additional Language and represent the help2read learners’ improvement in Language of Learning and First Additional Language results.

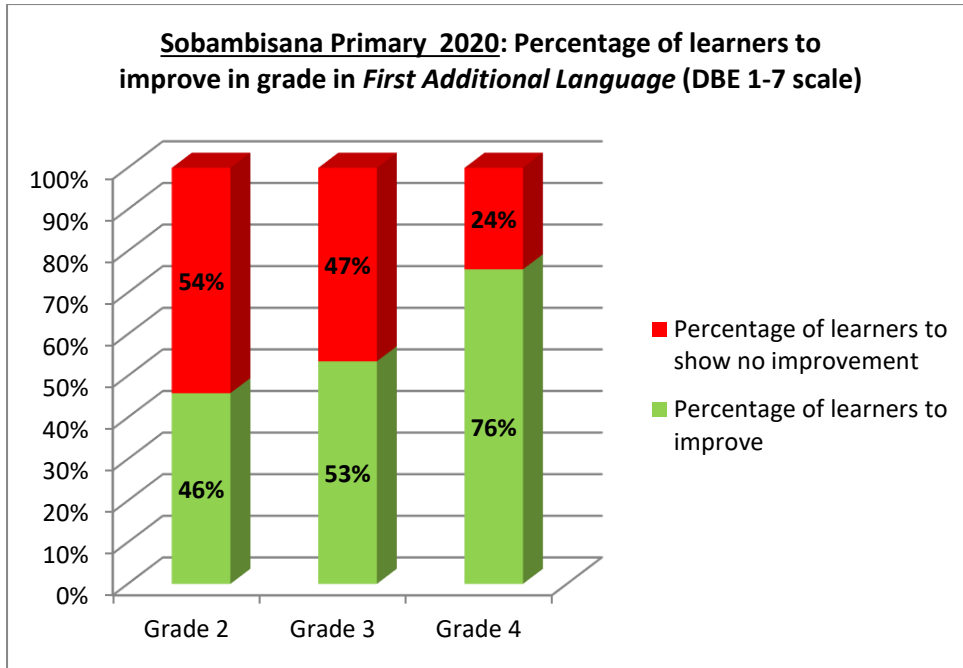




Highlight: There is improvement across all three grades that Help2read focuses on. 21% of Grade 2 learners and 53% of grade 2 learners were able to achieve a higher score for Language of Learning in term 3 than in term 1. The highest grade to show improvement in DBE 1-7 results in term 3 compared to term 1 was for Grade 4 at 54%, up from 10% in 2019.

Comments: The analysis of learner improvement by Grade highlights the immense impact that reading assistance can have on a learner’s class/school results. The difference in grade 2 results from 2019 to 2020 highlight the importance of reading in a one-on-one setting.





Highlight: 76% of Grade 4 learners were able to achieve a higher score for First Additional Language in term 3 than in term 1. The second highest grade to show improvement in DBE 1-7 results in term 3 compared to term 1 was for Grade 3 at 53% and 46% of Grade 2 learners showed improvement.

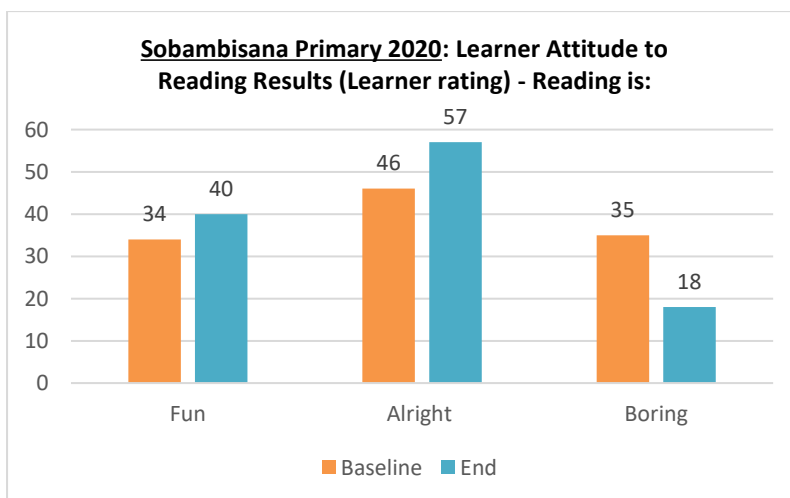
Comments: The analysis of learner improvement by Grade highlights the immense impact that reading assistance can have on a learner’s class/school results when selecting the learners who will benefit the most.

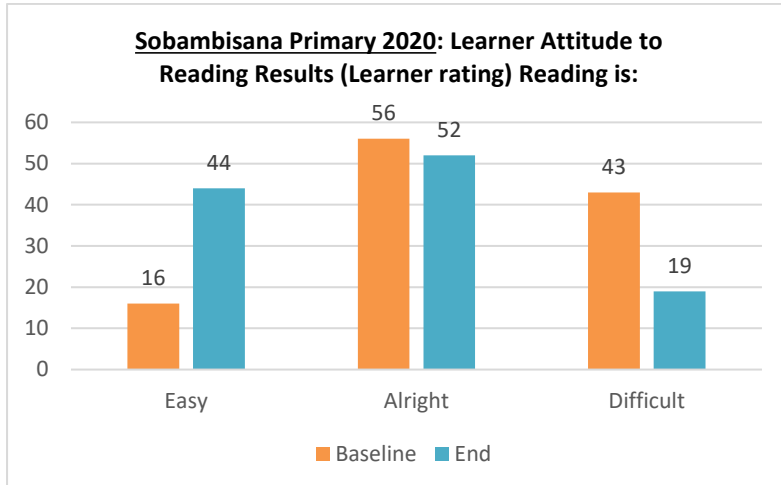
School Results: In Summary

Learners in all three grades showed improvements in both Frist additional language and language of learning. The Grade four learners showed the most improvement from the first term to the third term in both instances.

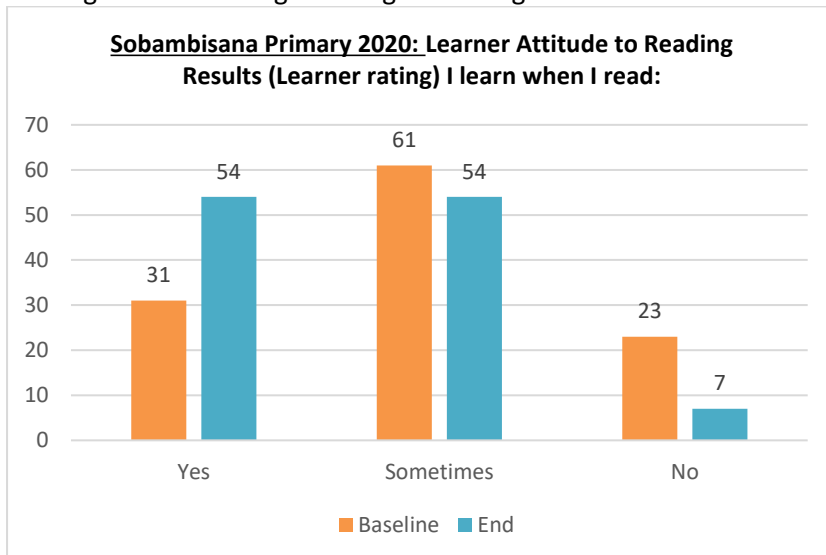
Learner attitude to reading

An attitude questionnaire was conducted in February and then again in November to ascertain learner attitude to Reading.





The above graphs show that overall learner attitude to reading improved from February, at the start of the Literacy Tutor programme to November at the end of the programme. Negative response to reading such as reading is boring or reading difficult decreased in the final questionnaire.



Learner opinion about whether or not they learn when they read improved from February to November with 54% of learners reporting that they do learn when they read in November compared with only 31% reporting this in February. Learners reporting that they do not learn when they read decreased from 23% in February to 7% in November.

Conclusion

From the EGRA as well as the classroom results, there is clear evidence that help2read is making a significant difference to the literacy achievements of learners on the help2read Program as well as on the upward career trajectory of the Literacy Tutors assisting the learners.

