THE *WAKAMARINA* FEUERSTEIN[1] PILOT

~ determining the efficacy of FIE in a rural NZ classroom

Parent Update Dec 2015

A Brief Recap [View *Sunday* news story - Feuerstein enters New Zealand[2]]

At the end of 2014 the Board of Trustees approved this pilot to run with all Wakamarina students with Vicki Eden who, by February 2015, had attended two intensive week-long training sessions in Feuerstein Instrument Enrichment. Clearly two pages do not allow much background or detail. References however, allow readers to explore further as they might wish. The basic principle of the Feuerstein Method is that all of us - regardless of our age, disability or socio-economic background, have the ability to significantly improve our level of cognitive functioning and therefore, the way we learn. By identifying and targeting specific cognitive weaknesses, we can intervene and strengthen the weak cognitive capacities that affect our learning. We can "re-design" our brains. The Feuerstein method is about:

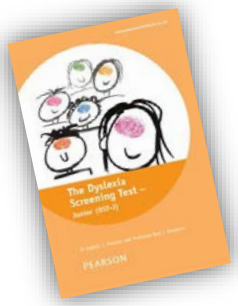
- Improving the way students learn, thereby increasing motivation and performance
- Increasing the IQ of their students
- Increasing the learning capacity of their learning-disabled and returning them to mainstream teaching
- Teaching the brain-injured to function without special education support
- Instead of measuring knowledge, the ability to learn is evaluated first - intelligence is not fixed but able to be increased.

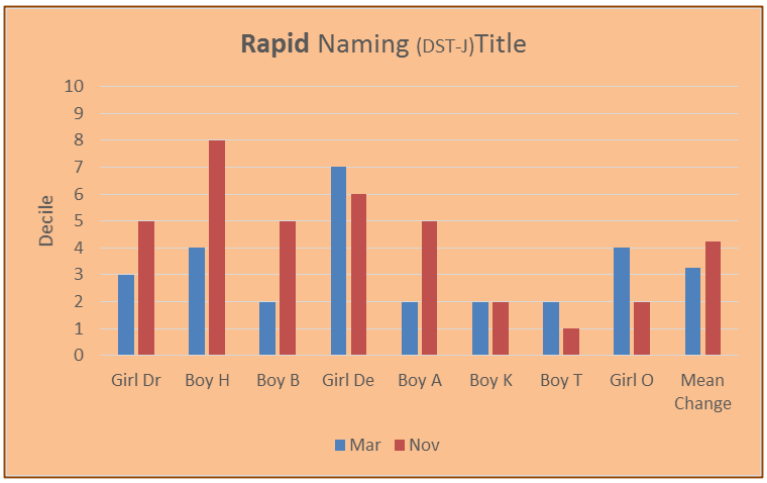
The programme can run over two to three years via multiple tasks identifying 14 written cognitive modules and delivered in schools ie full class, minimum 3 hr/wk. The full overview[3].

Why Wakamarina?

From early on it was increasingly obvious that the 2015 middle school might benefit from a curriculum tailored more closely to anticipated needs, in particular those of boys. However, learning how to learn, how to think and to then apply across the wider curriculum is a clear need for all students in the 21st Century – as our charter states and also the *NZ Curriculum 2007*. So for both ethical and practical reasons all pupils in *Wakamarina* were included in the pilot and at no cost. The BoT approved the cost from its Operations Budget. Like the professional staff, trustees and of course parents were/are very keen to find out the impact of this seven-month pilot albeit well short of a full two-year programme. A range of tools were administered by teachers and MoE Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour. The results to date we have summarised below with key comparison data sets. A full academic paper is being written alongside this pilot and the full results published by Dec 2016. In April ERO applauded the school's enterprise in exploring programmes that might help lift progress and achievement. Of the fourteen instruments in the full programme, *Wakamarina* has to date virtually completed three – so relatively early days yet. Given the results and discussion at the board's last meeting of 2015, it was resolved to extend and continue into 2016 with further training for staff so students moving to new learning areas may continue to reap the obvious benefit from the instruments. Some assessment tools involved whole of class, others random students and some specific students.

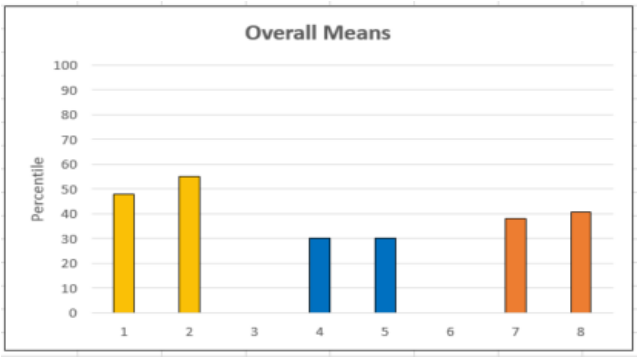
1. From the *Dyslexia Screening Test (J)* one of thirteen subtests… The Rapid Naming test measures the time it takes for the student to name a page of pictures and gives an indication of the students processing speed.

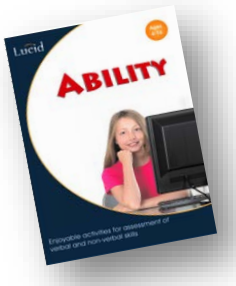


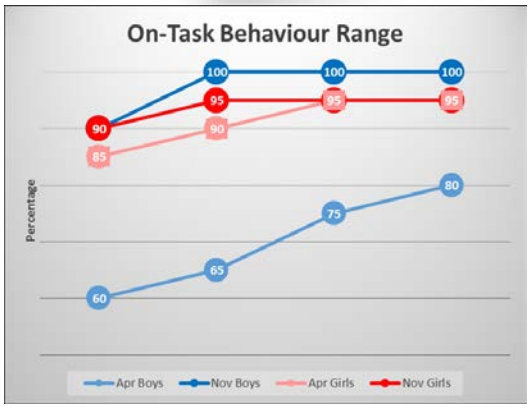


[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reuven_Feuerstein
[2] http://tvnz.co.nz/sunday-news/new-approach-dyslexia-learning-video-6052374 and also http://www.nzfie.org/
[3] http://www.havelock.school.nz/images/documents/Feuerstein Overview Ravi Feuerstein.pdf

2. *Lucid Ability* is an adaptive computerised assessment program which assesses verbal and non-verbal reasoning skills in the age range 4 - 16 years. Key: Yellow – Verbal Reasoning, Blue – Non-verbal Reasoning, Orange – General Conceptual Ability

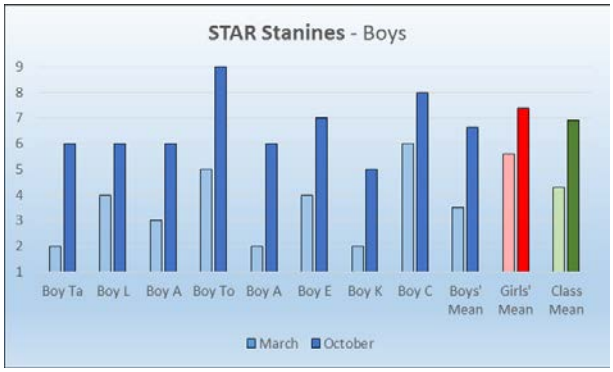






3. *Full Classroom Observation* - a formal recording focussing on student engagement undertaken by an independent practitioner. Data here is presented as a range. Boys clearly made up significant ground.

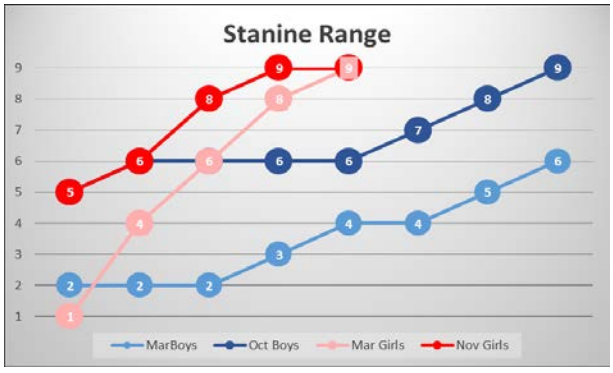
4. *Supplementary Test of Achievement in Reading (STAR)* used across NZ classrooms. Within this assessment tool it becomes much more apparent across both boys and girls that the change in stanines is significantly beyond expectations. A positive shift by a small number of students within a class of one stanine could be reasonably expected. In this class the mean positive shift was 2.6 with girls moving on average 1.8 stanines and boys a huge 3.1. No student moved down a stanine. These data reflect that boys seem to again, be the main beneficiaries of the FIE.



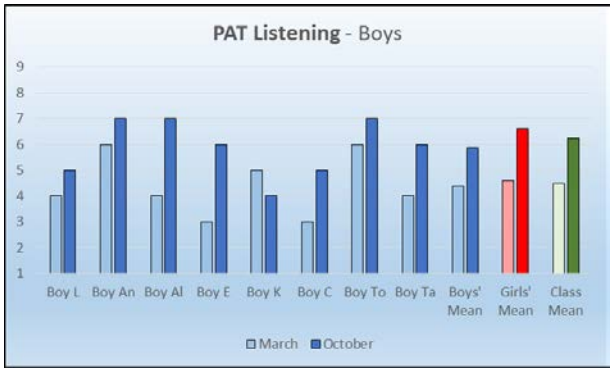
STAR makes it possible to objectively assess the targeted aspect of reading below.

- decode high-frequency and familiar words
- make meaning of a range of sentences and longer texts
- draw on their vocabulary knowledge

Amidst a number of purposes for using STAR, it helps teachers to assess how much progress classes or year groups have made over time, and validate teacher judgements about their students' abilities relative top bench marks. Given then the data collected in March and October in Wakamarina, there is little beyond the FIE that can explain the huge gain this data shows.



5. *Progressive Achievement Test - Listening Comprehension Years 3 - 10* used across NZ classrooms. These stanine data show a similar trend to the STAR results albeit a little more muted.



In Conclusion

The assessments above show significant positive variance, variance that cannot be easily explained within the context of normative progress for pupils over a year let alone seven months. Something about thinking, engagement, application teaching and learning has been changed in *Wakamarina* during 2015. These results are "abnormal" in the positive. They suggest thinking about thinking and learning is now understood and practised at levels not evident before. Both students and parents have noted the impact be it at school or at home. While there is much more to explore, the school is excited about what is yet to be achieved by these lucky students and those who will begin in 2016. We'll keep you posted.