



# Education Evaluation



In 2014, we commissioned an independent evaluation of Red Room Poetry Education by Bailey and Yang Consultants. Key findings of the report are informing strategies for future growth and continual improvement. The full report is available via our website.

## Executive Summary

Authors: Hung-Yen Yang, Jackie Bailey and Marc Llewellyn - Bailey and Yang Consultants, 2014

The Red Room Company is changing young people's appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of poetry. Through its Poetry Education Program, students are introduced to "live" poets, who connect poetry to students' experiences.

**The Poetry Education Program is developing student understanding, awareness and enjoyment of poetry.** Nearly 90% of students learned more about poetry. They enjoyed the course, and were proud of what they had achieved. As a direct result of the course, almost all students wanted to find out more about poetry and writing in general.

**The program got through to young people who are hard to engage in normal classes.** Teachers reported that this was especially the case for boys, who would normally switch off if poetry were mentioned, and young people from marginalized backgrounds who disengage in the usual classroom setting.

**The program made students think more creatively.** 79% of students reported that the program had helped them think more creatively. When it came to feeling inspired, most students (69%) noted that they felt inspired to work harder in the course than they would usually do in school.

**As a result of the program, teachers are changing the way they teach poetry.** All teachers interviewed said they are incorporating elements of the program into their teaching, including new ideas, methods of presenting material and ways of encouraging students to write.

Teachers view Red Room as a leader in this space. Students and teachers alike would recommend the program to others, and **teachers gave the program 9 out of 10 compared to other arts education programs they had been involved in.**



**Interactive and innovative exercises, “live” poets and staff’s dedication made Red Room stand out from other providers of arts education programs.** Teachers and students emphasised these elements and asked for more programs. Teachers and poets talked about the Red Room’s “care” factor, which they believed was critical to the program’s success.

**Through the program Red Room is supporting poets to maintain professional careers in their practice.** Poets developed employable skills in workshop delivery and were paid award rates, which allowed them to continue their practice.

**Red Room’s publication outcomes are the perfect way to celebrate the experience.** Poets and teachers felt that the publication outcomes (eg. on stones, online and in print) were integral to students feeling acknowledged for their work and making poetry more socially accepted.

**Based on this evaluation, we believe the program has room to grow.** The popularity of the program amongst students, teachers and poets suggests that the program could expand. In doing so, Red Room will need to preserve the elements critical so far to its distinctive offer – the staff “care factor” and time given to relationships with schools; working with “live” poets; and innovation in interactive, fun approaches to poetry. We recommend that Red Room retain these principles in new or expanded programs.

Illustrations by  
Leigh Rigozzi,  
*Poetry Object 2014*





## The Student Experience

"It was really cool to have a real poet come in and I think that was the main advantage and the main feature of the session that was really, really good. And because other sessions we do have at school they're mostly just talking or watching something, not really having our own opinions and really thinking deeply into what we actually can do."

~ Student, *Red Room Poetry Education* program

## The Teacher Experience

"The biggest impact for me, and we only did it this week, [is] kids finding a new love for writing and a new love for poetry. Kids coming in wanting to write at lunchtime. Who does that? Who ever saw that coming? So the biggest impact you're seeing is that kids have this love for words and love of sharing their writing. I've had the best week ever in my whole teaching career, and I've been teaching for a hundred years. That, for me, has been the biggest impact, the love and the enthusiasm that I can see in our kids."

~ Teacher, *Red Room Poetry Education* program

## The Poet Experience

"Red Room has well and truly reciprocated in giving me so many skills and given me so many attributes that I can add on to my life ... I think that's a massive key in the success of Red Room and I think that's why they do it differently and that's why they do it better."

~ Poet employed in *Red Room Poetry Education* program



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