

# The Impact of a Meaningful Reading Program on Academic Success in 5th Grade: A Case Study

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## Abstract

This study explores the impact of a structured reading program implemented in a private educational institution in Milagro, Ecuador, aimed at enhancing academic performance and cognitive development in 5th-grade students. Coming from a culture where independent reading was not a common practice, students were challenged to read one book per month, supported by comprehension activities, summaries, and reflective exercises. The program resulted in significant improvements in reading comprehension, vocabulary, spelling, and classroom participation. To extend its impact, extracurricular reading clubs were created for parents and students, offering a shared space for reading and discussion. These sessions were enriched by the presence of professionals, including psychologists, who recommended books tailored to specific student needs or concerns expressed by parents, especially for those with learning difficulties. Psychologists also offered emotional and cognitive support to families during the sessions. This initiative helped build a reading culture where parents led by example, fostering a positive reading routine at home. Students became more motivated, with some voluntarily reading beyond the required texts. The program demonstrated that reading can be a transformative academic and emotional tool when supported through collaborative efforts between schools, families, and mental health professionals.

**Keywords:** reading motivation, cognitive development, family engagement, educational psychology, motivated