RESEARCH BRIEF

RAND Study: Lexia® Core5® Reading Supports Student Learning

Key Findings

- Students using Core5 outperformed their counterparts in the comparison group with an effect size of 0.11.
- Advantages for Core5 students were found across all race/ethnicity subgroups.
- Core5 students who had high usage showed a larger effect than Core5 students who did not.
- Core5 students made gains relative to national norms.

Introduction

Educators are always looking for effective ways to help students advance their reading skills. Recently, RAND Education and Labor conducted a large-scale study which evaluated the effects of Lexia® Core5® Reading on the reading achievement of students during the post-pandemic, 2021-22 academic year. RAND researchers compared the reading gains of students who used Core5 with those of a matched group of students who did not use Core5. In addition, they considered whether the effects of Core5 varied based on students' grade, gender, race/ethnicity and baseline scores, and if student outcomes were related to meeting usage targets in the program.

Study Design

This study used a quasi-experimental, matched comparison group design. Students in a school district that used Core5 were compared to similar students across the United States who did not use Core5. The Core5 group included 6,655 third through fifth graders attending 25 elementary schools in the district. These students showed a mixture of race/ethnicity – 50% White, 28% Hispanic, 16% Black, and 7% other.

To gauge students' reading abilities, schools in the district administered NWEA's MAP Growth Reading assessment. Reading gains on MAP were analyzed from fall 2021 to spring 2022. NWEA maintains a nationwide database of MAP results, and the researchers used an NWEA service to create a matched comparison group from the database. The Core5 and comparison groups were matched on fall 2021 MAP scores, race/ethnicity and socioeconomic characteristics. The resulting comparison group consisted of more than 160,000 students in over 3,700 schools that did not use Core5.

In addition to comparing the full sample of Core5 and non-Core5 students on MAP scores, a series of secondary analyses were conducted. These included: 1) comparing subgroups of Core5 and non-Core students in terms of grade level, gender, and race/ethnicity; 2) comparing students within the Core5 group based on whether they met program usage targets; and 3) comparing outcomes for Core5 students with a set of national norms available for MAP.

Results

Core5 students outperformed their counterparts in the comparison group with an effect size of 0.11.

Overall, Core5 students outperformed their comparison group peers with an effect size of 0.11. This is equivalent to having about 54% of Core5 students score higher than the comparison group median on the MAP assessment. This Core5 effect size estimate is comparable to the effects estimated in rigorous studies of other literacy-focused interventions for students in grades 3 through 5.

Advantages for Core5 students were found across all race/ethnicity subgroups.

Effect sizes favoring Core5 students were found across all race/ethnicity subgroups. White students showed an effect size of 0.15 relative to the comparison group, while Black and Hispanic students showed effects sizes of 0.05 and 0.06, respectively. Effect sizes by grade level and gender closely matched the overall effect of Core5.

Core5 students who had high usage showed a larger effect than Core5 students who did not.

High-usage students were those who used Core5 for at least 20 weeks and met Core5 usage targets for at least half of those weeks. Approximately 40% of Core5 students were in the high-usage subgroup. These students outperformed their comparison group peers with an effect size of 0.16. This translates to 56% of high-usage students surpassing the median of their comparison group peers. By contrast, Core5 students who were not in the high-usage subgroup showed an effect size of 0.06.

Core5 students made gains relative to national norms.

The researchers also considered how well Core5 students performed relative to national norms obtained on the MAP assessment in years just prior to the pandemic. Core5 students in grade 3 began the 2021–22 academic year performing below national norms, but in the spring, they scored significantly above national norms. Students in grades 4 and 5 started the year scoring above norms and continued to show gains during the year. In contrast, the comparison group showed a small gain in grade 3 and losses in grades 4 and 5 relative to national norms.

Want to Learn More?

For more information and updates on research related to Core5, please contact research@lexialearning.com.

References

Pane, J., Seaman, D., & Doss, C.J. (2023). *Students using Lexia Core5 Reading show greater reading gains than matched comparison students.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA2859-1.html

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