

Research Brief: Utah's Early Intervention Reading Software Reports

Impact of Lexia® Core5® Reading over 5 Years

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Key Findings

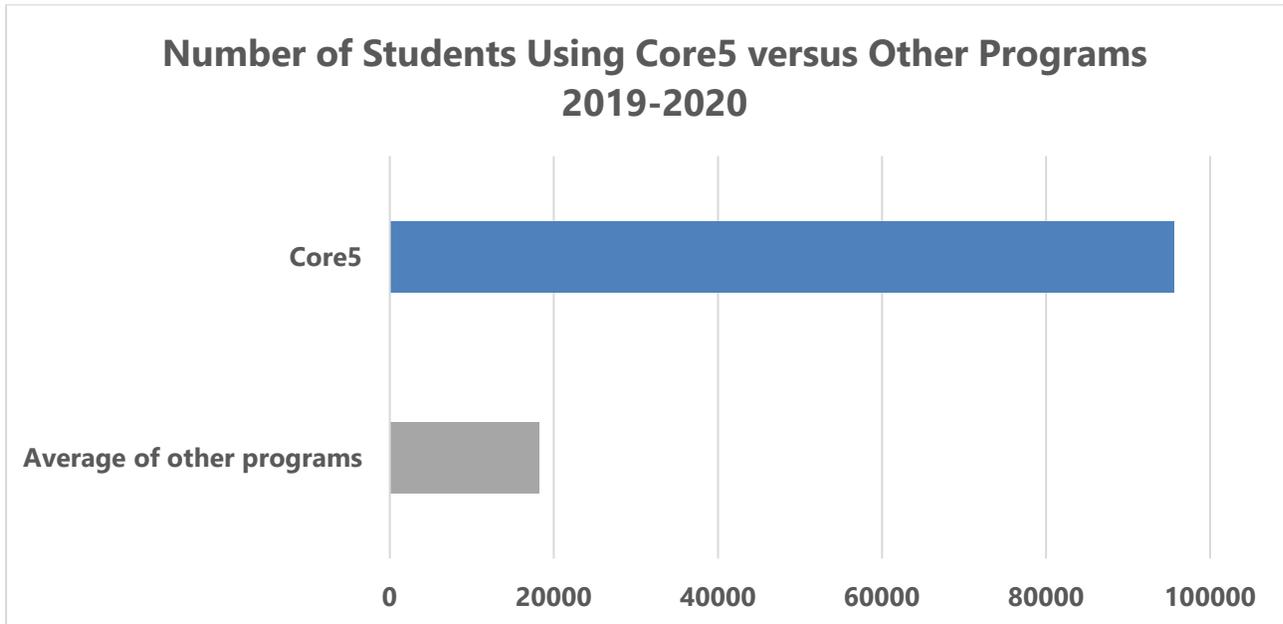
- This brief summarizes outcomes from Utah based on external, third-party evaluations.
- Core5 was selected far more often than other programs in the initiative.
- Core5 students consistently met usage targets and did so to a greater extent than students using other programs.
- Core5 was the only program to show a consistent relationship between meeting usage targets and higher literacy scores across grades.
- Use of Core5 contributed to significant reading gains relative to matched controls in both full- and half-year implementations.

Purpose

The state of Utah passed legislation to supplement students' classroom learning with support in the form of computer-based reading programs. Here we cover findings from the last 5 school years: 2015-16 to 2019-20. In 2015-16 to 2018-19, programs were used with all students in grades K and 1, and with students at risk for reading difficulties in grades 2 and 3. In 2019-20, all students in grades K – 3 were included in the initiative. The Evaluation and Training Institute (ETI) has served as an ongoing external evaluator, assessing students' usage of the programs and impact the programs have had on students' literacy outcomes. Usage and impact data were provided for individual programs in 2015-16 to 2018-19. Due to school disruptions stemming from COVID-19, outcomes in 2019-20 were based on half-year implementations and collapsed across programs. Here we highlight outcomes from the ETI reports with special focus on Core5.

Program Selection

Each year, participating schools could choose among four to eight approved reading programs. Statewide penetration for Core5 has increased year-after-year, and it has become by far the preferred program. In the most recent year (2019-20), **Core5 was selected 5 times more often than the average of other programs.**



Program Usage

Students using Core5 met program usage targets to a greater extent than students using other programs. In each of the four years in which data were analyzed separately by program, Core5 was ranked in the top two in percent of students meeting usage targets. Most recently, **Core5 was ranked first in percent of students meeting usage targets in 2017-18 and 2018-19.** These findings point to the strength of implementation support services provided to schools selecting Core5 for the initiative.

Usage and Literacy Scores

The 2019-20 report shows that across programs, students meeting usage targets were more likely to have higher literacy scores. An analysis of usage and literacy scores for individual programs was carried out in the 2015-16 report. **Core5 was the only program to demonstrate significant correlations between meeting usage and end-of-year DIBELS scores across grades.** This indicates that Core5 students who met usage targets showed higher performance on DIBELS.

Learning Outcomes

Grades K and 1. Core5 had a strong impact on reading performance in grades K and 1. This was evident in 2015-16 to 2018-19 when outcomes were analyzed separately by program. **Use of Core5 resulted in significant gains on DIBELS relative to matched controls in all four years for grade K and three out of four years for grade 1.** No other program showed significant gains for grade 1 in more than one year.

Grades 2 and 3. In 2015-16 to 2018-19, students in grades 2 and 3 included in the initiative and matched controls were at-risk for reading difficulties. Significant gains on DIBELS were sporadic and less common than in grades K and 1. A limitation of this approach was stated in ETI's 2017-18 report: using at-risk students, "the controls were also likely to be identified by a teacher or school as needing help to bring their reading skills up to grade level benchmarks.... If control students had alternative reading interventions, such as tutoring, after school programs, or other types of support, then we would not necessarily expect to see a treatment effect."

In contrast to the previous four years, all K – 3 students were included in the 2019-20 initiative and outcomes were aggregated across programs. Significant gains on DIBELS were found in all four grades. Given that Core5 was the most popular program in 2019-20, these outcomes show Core5's value for students in grades 2 and 3.¹ Further, **significant gains occurred despite COVID-19 disruptions, showing benefits of Core5 in a half-year implementation.**

Conclusion

Core5 grew to become the most popular program in the state of Utah's Early Intervention Reading Software initiative. Core5 students met usage targets more often than students using other programs, and stronger Core5 usage was related to higher literacy scores. Students using Core5 in kindergarten and grade 1 showed significant reading gains over the first four years of the evaluation. In 2019-20 when all K –3 students were included in the initiative, significant gains were found across four grades. In summary, **Core5 served as the most popular program in this initiative and use of Core5 contributed to significant reading gains.**

For more information about the Utah initiative, see ETI's [2015-2016](#), [2016-2017](#), [2017-2018](#), [2018-2019](#) and [2019-20](#) reports.

¹ Core5 was used by 6 times as many students in grades 2 and 3 than the average number of students using other programs.