Intercultural Montessori Language School
Chicago, IL

Supporting Reading Intervention in a Montessori Model

Challenge
At Intercultural Montessori Language School, classroom communities are composed of multi-age small groups, where, following the Montessori Method, students take ownership of their learning by choosing independent activities in subjects of their interest, working at their developmental level. Intercultural Montessori students are immersed in a target language—Spanish, Mandarin, or Japanese—with the goal of creating citizens of the world.

With its distinctive program, Intercultural Montessori faces a unique challenge: Having enough instructional time in the day to personalize learning in two languages.

When Executive Director Dr. Nimisha Bhatt joined the school in 2018, she was looking for an English language arts intervention that offered targeted, individualized instruction and practice, especially in early literacy skills. Robust, actionable data was important for helping both teachers and parents support students, and the program had to fit into the Montessori philosophy and support dual-language learners. Further, the tool needed to build teacher capacity, so teachers could help students make the most of their English work cycles.

Solution
For the 2018-2019 school year, Intercultural Montessori purchased Lexia’s Core5® Reading, a research-proven, technology-based literacy program designed for grades Pre-K-5. Bhatt used federal grant funding through Title IV-A: The Student Support and Academic Enrichment program to pilot the program.
Because many of the lessons are scripted, they can be delivered by teachers, paraprofessionals, or parents. Some parents have taken the extra step to support the use of Core5—both the online program and supplemental materials—with their children at home, under the faculty’s guidance. “Parents read with their kids often, and Lexia is another great way to get parents involved in literacy,” Weiss said.

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“When I show parents where their child started in Core5 and the growth they’ve made, that gives us such credibility,” Bhatt added.

**Results**

During the first year of implementation, Intercultural Montessori used Core5 as a Tier II intervention (based on their benchmark assessment tool) with 38 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Of those who used the online component of the program with fidelity¹, 24% began the school year working below grade-level material in Core5, and 76% within their grade level. By the end of the year, 95% of students who met usage finished their grade-level material in Core5, reaching or exceeding their end-of-year Core5 benchmarks.

All students who started Core5 below grade level and met usage closed the gap, reaching at least grade-level material.

Due to Intercultural Montessori’s positive results, Bhatt has expanded Core5 use from a Tier II intervention to Tier I in kindergarten and first grade for the 2019-2020 school year. The success, according to Bhatt, is clear. “I would absolutely recommend Lexia Core5 Reading. I wouldn’t use anything else for reading intervention,” Bhatt said. “I’ve worked with a lot of different programs over the years, and I feel that the quality of instruction and the growth that students achieve with Lexia is just phenomenal.”

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¹ Use with fidelity defined as meeting their weekly usage targets in the online component of the program at least 50% of weeks, for at least 20 weeks. N=21

Profile: Intercultural Montessori Language School, Chicago, IL

| • Enrollment | 224 |
| • Grades | PS-8 |
| • Race |  |
| Two or more races | 33.7% |
| Caucasian | 30.8% |
| Asian | 21.3% |
| Latino | 7.6% |
| African American | 6.7% |