

Research Brief: Impact of Core5 in a Summer Program for English Learners

John Albert, Ed.D., Carrie Bauer, Dahlya Resendez, & Ruben R. Puentedura, Ph.D.,
California Elementary School Orange Unified School District
Lexia Research & Analytics (research@lexialearning.com)

Key Findings

- ❖ English Learners showed gains in Lexile scores on the Reading Inventory (a common reading assessment) following Core5 use as part of a summer program.
- ❖ Percent gains in Lexile scores made by English Learners in the summer program were more than four times greater than percent gains made by control students.

Purpose

Students who are English Learners are known to have particular difficulty achieving reading proficiency in U.S. schools. Based on a report from the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), 68% of English Learners in fourth grade score below proficiency levels in reading compared to 28% of non-English Learners.¹ Finding methods to enhance reading performance in English Learners is critically important. The present study considers whether participating in a summer program can help prevent summer slide – a decline in academic skills that may occur over the summer – and thus provide benefits for English Learners.

Sample

Included in this study were 50 English Learners who completed third grade in an urban school district. Twelve of these students were randomly assigned to participate in an 8-week intensive summer program. They were provided with iPads to use at home to work on their reading and math skills. This report focuses on use of the Lexia® Core5® Reading program (Core5) to support their reading skills. One of the recommendations for the summer program is that

¹ National Center for Education Statistics. (2017). [Tables of 2017 Reading Scores for Grades 4 and 8 by Demographic]. 2017 Reading Grades 4 and 8 Assessment Report Cards: Summary Data Tables for National and State Average Scores and Achievement Level Results. Retrieved from https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_2017/files/2017_Results_Appendix_Reading_State.pdf

students should spend at least 75-minutes per week using Core5. The students also participated in a weekly, online chat discussion as part of “book study” in the summer program, and their parents attended a 3-hour education workshop on providing support for their children during the summer. The remaining English Learners who were not assigned to the summer program served as a control group.

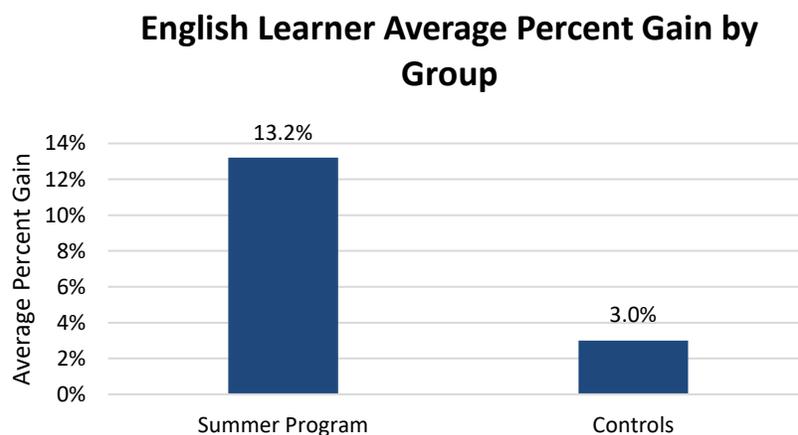
Assessment

The Reading Inventory² was administered as a pretest and posttest to assess reading performance prior to and after participation in the summer program. The Reading Inventory provides a Lexile score (L) based on students’ success reading texts at different levels of difficulty.

Results

Core5 Use. The average number of minutes English Learners used Core5 during the summer learning program was 305 (range: 51 – 705). This converts to an average of 38 minutes per week, which falls below the recommendations provided in the summer program.

Lexile Gains. English Learning in the summer program showed an average gain of 30.3L ($sd = 56.7$), which approached statistical significance: $t(11) = 1.83, p = .091$. In contrast, English Learners in the control group had an average gain of 19.3L ($sd = 79.8$), which was not statistically significant. This discrepancy corresponds to an average percent gain (gain/pretest score) which was more than four times greater for English Learners in the summer program (13.2%) than control students (3.0%).



² Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (n.d.). Meet college and career readiness goals with HMH assessments. Retrieved from <https://www.hmhco.com/programs/reading-inventory/research>

Conclusions

The outcomes of this study demonstrate the benefits of using Core5 as part of a summer program for English Learners. Home use of Core5 on iPads contributed to Lexile score gains on the Reading Inventory. Percent gains for English Learners in the summer program were more than four times greater than percent gains made by control students who were not in the program. These findings are particularly noteworthy because, on average, English Learners in the summer program did not reach recommended minutes of Core5 use. Even greater gains could be expected if Core5 use were stronger over the summer.