Passing 20 Lessons and Spending 20 Hours in Imagine Language & Literacy is Associated with Significant Growth on Standardized Reading Assessments

INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in literacy is crucial for academic, social, and economic success. Extensive research underscores the significance of attaining reading proficiency by the third grade. Those who achieve reading proficiency by this stage establish a literacy foundation important for later academic achievement and transition from learning to read to reading to learn (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2019). Students who do not achieve reading proficiency by the third grade are at a higher risk of encountering academic challenges and may face limited economic prospects throughout their lives (Chiang et al., 2017).

Table 1. Recommended Student Engagement within Imagine Language & Literacy

	Grades PreK–K	Grades 1–2	Grades 3+
Time Per Session	15 minutes	20 minutes	25 minutes
Sessions Per Week	Students on or above grade level: 2		
	Students below grade level: 3		
Cumulative Year-End Total Engagement	20 hours per student 20 lessons passed per student		

Schools and districts turn to supplemental online and blended-learning programs to accelerate English language and literacy development. Imagine Language & Literacy by Imagine Learning offers a complete supplemental English language and literacy learning solution designed for students of all backgrounds. The program provides adaptive and developmentally appropriate pre-K through Grade 5 instruction that leverages the Science of Reading in building students' English language proficiency.

Research shows that students who use Imagine Language & Literacy at recommended levels tend to see more growth than those who do not use the program or use it at lower levels. Several such studies have explicitly evaluated the differential impact of meeting recommended usage on student learning outcomes. Other studies have demonstrated the direct correlations observed between increased use of the Imagine Language & Literacy program and subsequent increases in student performance on standardized assessments. Importantly, the ideal level of program use will vary by grade and a student's initial level in literacy. These studies and more can be found at https://www.imaginelearning.com/research/ or by contacting Imagine Learning.

Spending 20+ Hours and Passing 20+ Lessons in Imagine Language & Literacy is Associated with Increased Reading Achievement

*Illinois (2021–2022) and Texas (2021–2022)*

In a school district in Illinois, Imagine Learning studied the relationship between the number of lessons that students passed in Imagine Language & Literacy and performance on the NWEA MAP Growth Reading assessment. A total of 2,546 students in Grades K–5 used the program for an average of 24.5 hours and passed 13 literacy lessons during the school year. Imagine Learning found that students who passed 20 or more lessons within Imagine Language & Literacy achieved the highest NWEA MAP Growth Reading score growth (see Figure 1). The majority of students in this analysis were non-Hispanic White (74%) and were not considered to be of low socioeconomic status (77%).

Figure 1. Average NWEA MAP RIT Score Growth by Grade from Fall 2021 to Spring 2022
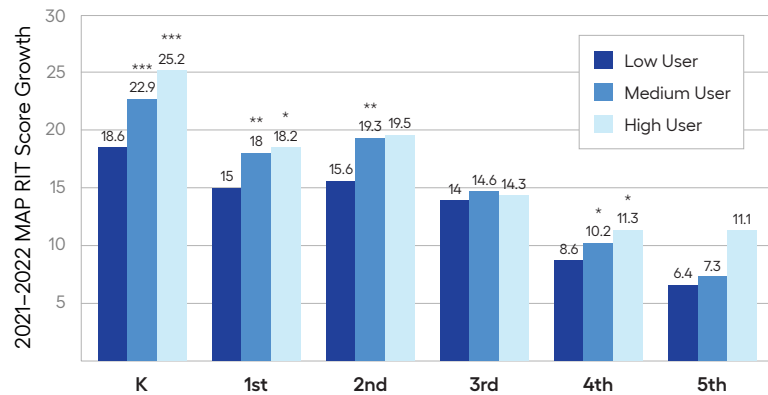
Note: Low user = students who passed 0-10 literacy lessons; Medium user = students who passed 11-20 literacy lessons; High users = students who passed 21+ literacy lessons. Asterisks denote values significantly different than the low user group. ***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$

Figure 2. Average 2021–2022 STAAR Reading Growth by Grade and Study Group
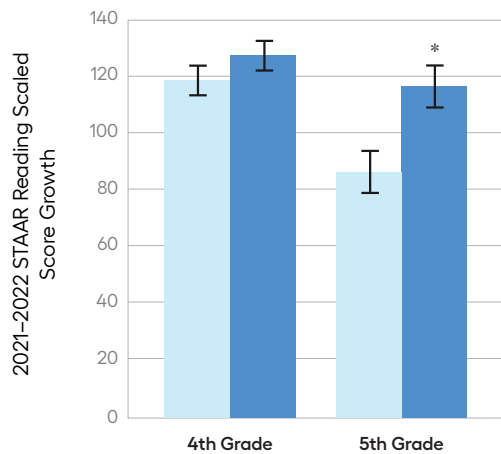
Note: *$p < .05$

Another study conducted in the 2021–2022 school year with over one thousand Texas students in Grades 4–5 evaluated the association between the time students spent in the Imagine Language & Literacy program and later performance on a standardized test of reading skill. The study found that students achieved significantly higher State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Reading growth if they spent more hours on Imagine Language & Literacy. The greatest growth was found when students spent 20 hours or more in the program (see Figure 2). The majority of students in the analysis were Hispanic (72%).

Increased Use of Imagine Language & Literacy is Associated with Improved Reading Achievement

California (2022–2023), Southeast US (2018–2019), and National (2021–2022)

Additional studies have more broadly explored the directional association between the degree to which students use Imagine Language & Literacy and the performance that those students later demonstrate on standardized assessments of reading ability. For example, in a California school district, Imagine Learning evaluated the correlation between the number of lessons that students passed in the program and their performance on the i-Ready and ELPAC assessments. For both measures, students achieved higher scores if they passed more lessons in the Imagine Language & Literacy program (see Figures 3 and 4). The majority of students in the analysis were Hispanic (91.5%) and qualified for free or reduced-price lunch (87.9%).

Figure 3. Association between Literacy Lessons Passed in Imagine Language & Literacy and i-Ready Overall Scaled Score Growth
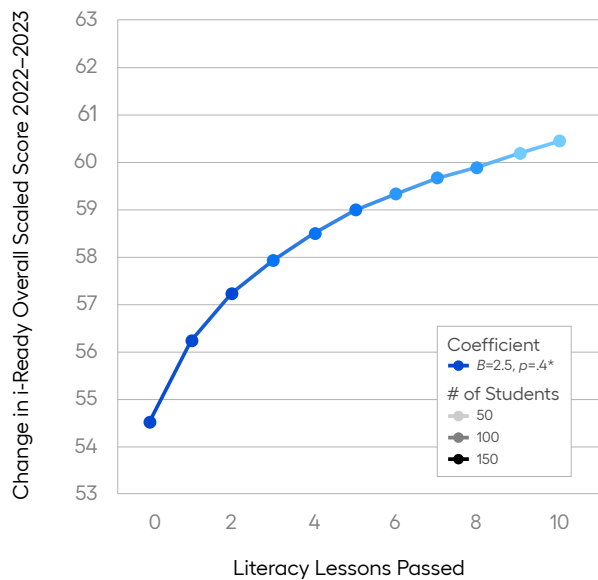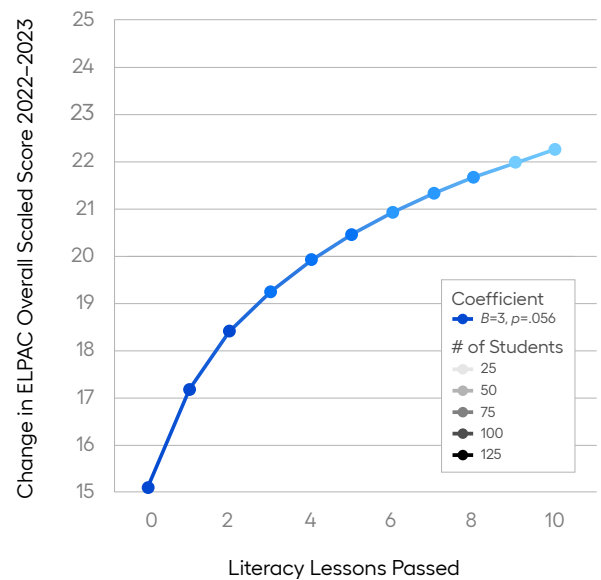
y-axis: Change in i-Ready Overall Scaled Score 2022–2023
x-axis: Literacy Lessons Passed

Coefficient
B=2.5, *p*=.4*
# of Students
50
100
150

Figure 4. Association between Literacy Lessons Passed in Imagine Language & Literacy and ELPAC Overall Scaled Score Growth

y-axis: Change in ELPAC Overall Scaled Score 2022–2023
x-axis: Literacy Lessons Passed

Coefficient
B=3, *p*=.056
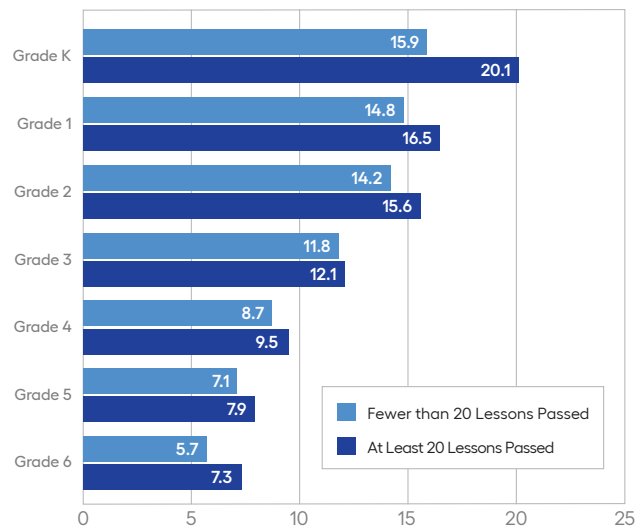# of Students
25
50
75
100
125

Further, an independent evaluation conducted during the 2018–2019 school year by RMC Research evaluated the association between use of the Imagine Language & Literacy program and performance on the DIBELS assessment for Grade K–2 students. In this multi-district study, positive associations were observed between program usage and DIBELS outcomes. Specifically, significant correlations were observed for Letter Naming Fluency for Kindergarten students and Nonsense Word Fluency for first grade students. Demographically, the study sample was predominately white (60%) with approximately 10% of students qualifying as English language learners and 60% qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch.

DIBELS Next	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
Letter Naming Fluency	Positive		
Nonsense Word Fluency: Correct Letter Sounds		Positive	
Nonsense Word Fluency: Whole Words Correct		Positive	
Oral Reading Fluency: Words Correct			n.s.
Oral Reading Fluency: Accuracy			n.s.

Note: For each outcome measure and grade level, the effect of the implementation factor for Imagine Language & Literacy program is noted as not significant, positive, or negative. Dosage indicators include total time, total activity time, total weeks of participation, average total minutes per week, average activity minutes per week, and meeting the recommended optional dosage threshold for total minutes per week. n.s. = Not significant at the p <.05 level. Shaded boxes indicated the DIBELS Next subtest was not administered to that grade.

In utilizing available data for all students who have used Imagine Language & Literacy and completed the NWEA MAP Growth assessment, a nationwide, historical analysis further demonstrates the link between varying program usage and differential performance on a standardized assessment of reading ability. Data for over 130,000 K–6 students from over 2,000 school districts across the United States who completed the NWEA MAP Growth Reading assessment was evaluated to explore the association between the number of lessons that students passed in Imagine Language & Literacy and their subsequent performance on the NWEA MAP Growth assessment. Although the analysis showed a significant, positive association between the number of lessons passed and assessment performance, specific advantages were also observed for students who passed at least 20 lessons within the Imagine Language & Literacy. This analysis further emphasizes the importance of using Imagine Language & Literacy according to recommendations to maximize student learning outcomes.

Figure 5. Average NWEA MAP Growth Reading Score Growth by Grade and Imagine Language & Literacy Usage Level

Grade K: 15.9 (Fewer than 20 Lessons Passed), 20.1 (At Least 20 Lessons Passed)
Grade 1: 14.8 (Fewer than 20 Lessons Passed), 16.5 (At Least 20 Lessons Passed)
Grade 2: 14.2 (Fewer than 20 Lessons Passed), 15.6 (At Least 20 Lessons Passed)
Grade 3: 11.8 (Fewer than 20 Lessons Passed), 12.1 (At Least 20 Lessons Passed)
Grade 4: 8.7 (Fewer than 20 Lessons Passed), 9.5 (At Least 20 Lessons Passed)
Grade 5: 7.1 (Fewer than 20 Lessons Passed), 7.9 (At Least 20 Lessons Passed)
Grade 6: 5.7 (Fewer than 20 Lessons Passed), 7.3 (At Least 20 Lessons Passed)

Legend:
Fewer than 20 Lessons Passed
At Least 20 Lessons Passed

Conclusion

An abundance of research demonstrates the significant impact that Imagine Language & Literacy can have on student learning. Specifically, statistically significant associations have been consistently observed between the level of program use and subsequent performance on standardized measures of reading ability. We expect that this same correlation would be observed in any school district that implements the Imagine Language & Literacy program at recommended levels.

While we invite educators to adjust Imagine Language & Literacy usage recommendations based on individual student needs, prior research from across the country has found that passing 20 lessons or spending 20 hours in Imagine Language & Literacy is most likely to improve student academic growth regardless of geographic region or grade level. To learn more about the studies mentioned in this paper, please visit our website at https://www.imaginelearning.com/research/ or contact Imagine Learning.

REFERENCES

1. National Conference of State Legislatures. (2019). Third-grade reading legislation. Retrieved from https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/third-grade-reading-legislation.aspx

2. Chiang, H., Walsh, E., Shanahan, T., Gentile, C., Maccarone, A., Waits, T., Carlson, B., & Rikoon, S. (2017). An exploration of instructional practices that foster language development and comprehension: Evidence from prekindergarten through grade 3 in Title I schools (NCEE 2017-4024). National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.