

RESEARCH RESULTS

READ 180: Jamestown Elementary School

STUDY PROFILE

DISTRICT:

Jamestown Elementary School, Jamestown, CA

GRADES:

6–8

STUDY DESIGN:

Demonstrates a Rationale (ESSA)¹

EVALUATION PERIOD:

2020–2021 school year

STUDY CONDUCTED BY:

RMC Research

OUTCOME MEASURE:

- *Reading Inventory*
- Renaissance Star Reading Assessment
- Smarter Balanced ELA Assessment
- Teacher and Parent Survey

IMPLEMENTATION:

40–50–Minute Model
In-person, Hybrid, and Remote Instruction

DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

Jamestown Elementary School, Jamestown (CA), serves 317 students in Kindergarten through Grade 8. The school had a majority of White students (59%), and non-White students were predominately identified as Hispanic (31%). All students in the school were eligible for free or reduced-price school meals (FRM) through the community provision of the national school lunch program. Just over 13% of students were English learners, about 19% of students were identified for special education services, and no students were identified as gifted/talented. Less than 25% of students at Jamestown Elementary School tested as proficient in reading on state assessments. The per pupil expenditure at Jamestown Elementary School was \$13,606 per student.

IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

Jamestown Elementary School committed to implement *READ 180*[®] Universal during the 2020–21 school year at recommended dosages; provision of technology support, equipment/devices, and personnel for program implementation; communication and support to school personnel; implementation monitoring; and provision of administrative data including student demographics and assessment scores. Free licenses for the *READ 180* Universal program were provided. Training was

provided for teachers and administrators with information about setting up classes, using the program, and using program resources to monitor student performance.

Students in Grades 6–8 who scored at the basic or below basic level on the baseline administration of the *Reading Inventory* were eligible to participate in the study. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt[®] (HMH[®]) coordinated with the school to select an implementation model for *READ 180* Universal that fit within the schools' schedule and allowed for the completion of whole group, small group, and independent activities. Student usage was monitored through the online *READ 180* Universal platform. Classrooms were expected to use the following implementation components: whole-group learning, student application (student app), small-group learning, independent reading; and station rotations.

Jamestown Elementary School engaged students in three different instructional models during the 2020–21 school year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, program implementation was examined separately for the following three instructional models/time periods:

- "Remote instruction" – August 19, 2020 – January 18, 2021 (22 weeks);
- "Hybrid instruction" – January 19 – April 5, 2021 (10 weeks); and
- "In-person instruction" – April 6 – May 26, 2021 (7 weeks).

¹ Demonstrates a Rationale: practices that have a well-defined logic model or theory of action, are supported by research, and have some effort underway by an SEA, LEA, or outside research organization to determine their effectiveness.

During school closure in fall 2020, *READ 180* Universal was provided via remote instruction. The school then used a hybrid model and returned to a remote model before resuming in-person learning in spring 2021.

IMPLEMENTATION MODEL

Educators provided students with 40 to 50 minutes of *READ 180* Universal during all modes of instruction. During remote instruction, educators primarily engaged students with whole- or small-group instruction or use of the student application; few engaged in independent reading. Students in Grade 6 used the Real Book once a week and the student application once a week. Students in Grades 7 and 8 used the Real Book twice a week and the student application twice a week. When instruction went back to in person in spring 2021, rotations were done with whole group, the student application, and small groups.

PARTICIPANTS

Students in Grades 6–8 were administered the HMH *Reading Inventory*® as a screener for participation in the study. Those who scored basic or below basic on the HMH *Reading Inventory* were eligible to participate. Students eligible for special education services in reading were excluded from the study because they were likely to receive multiple additional supports that could not be reliably documented, which has the potential to influence estimates of the relationship between *READ 180* Universal use and outcomes.

The sample consisted of 17 students. Approximately 18% of the students were identified as female. The percentage of students belonging to each race/ethnicity group were as follows: 47% identified as White, 41% identified as Hispanic, 6% identified as Native American/Alaska Native, and 12% identified as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. About 30% of students were identified as English learners and 100% were identified as eligible for free and reduced-price meals. The average age was 12.4 years, and the average attendance rate was 94.8%. Six students were in sixth grade, six were in seventh grade, and five were in eighth grade. See Table 1.

TABLE 1. JAMESTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL *READ 180* UNIVERSAL STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, GRADES 6–8 (N = 17), 2020–2021

| Characteristics | <i>READ 180</i> Students (N = 17) |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Gender | |
| Female (%) | 17.6 |
| Male (%) | 82.4 |
| Race/Ethnicity | |
| White (%) | 47.1 |
| Hispanic (%) | 41.2 |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (%) | 11.8 |
| American Indian/Alaska Native (%) | 5.9 |
| English Learner (%) | 29.4 |
| Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals (%) | 100.0 |
| Age (M(SD)) | 12.4 (0.8) |
| Attendance Rate (M(SD)) | 94.8 (8.5) |

STUDY DESIGN

To examine the relationship between *READ 180* Universal and student achievement outcomes and how *READ 180* Universal is implemented in different instructional models, RMC Research conducted a mixed-methods correlational study of the *READ 180* Universal program in one school. All eligible students in Grades 6–8 participated in the program.

MEASURES

PROGRAM SOFTWARE DATA

Student software usage data for *READ 180* Universal were provided by HMH. Available software usage data included the number of completed instructional segments, sessions, total time, time in each zone, median session length, the average number of sessions required to complete a segment, median session time, number of sessions that were 15 minutes or longer, and average scores on assessments completed within the software.

READING INVENTORY

Reading Inventory is designed to measure how well readers comprehend literary and expository texts. It focuses on the following skills: identifying details in a passage; identifying cause-and-effect relationships and sequence of events; drawing conclusions; and making comparisons and generalizations. During test administration, the computer adapts the test continually according to student responses. Performance on the *Reading Inventory* is reported as a Lexile® (L) score. The higher a student's score, the more challenging material that student is likely to be able to read and understand. Scores can range from Beginning Reader (below 200L) to Advanced Reader (above 1700L). The *Reading Inventory* was administered during three testing windows: 1) September/October, 2020; 2) January, 2021; and 3) June, 2021.

RENAISSANCE STAR READING ASSESSMENT

Renaissance Star Reading scores were collected as the primary study measure of student reading achievement. Developed by Renaissance Learning, Star Reading is a short (20-minute) and adaptive formative assessment designed for students in Grades K–12 (Renaissance Learning Inc., 2021). The assessment produces a vertically aligned scaled score to allow for the tracking of progress across grade levels. Students completed the Star Reading assessment between 4 and 10 times throughout the year. Analyses include baseline (fall 2020), mid-year (coinciding with the end of remote learning), and spring scores. Student data include a flag denoting when students were provided additional time to complete the assessment. For the fall 2020 administration, 65% of students were provided additional time, and for the mid-year and spring assessments 77% were provided additional time.

SMARTER BALANCED ELA ASSESSMENT

The Smarter Balanced English language arts (ELA) assessment is completed annually by students as part of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress. These summative assessments are aligned with the Common Core State Standards and consist of two sections, a computer adaptive assessment and a performance task. Scale scores are used to designate student performance according to the following levels: standard not met, standard nearly met, standard met, and standard exceeded. Scores were available for spring 2019 and spring 2021.

TEACHER AND PARENT SURVEYS

RMC Research administered electronic surveys to teachers and parents in spring 2021. The teacher survey was designed based on surveys developed as part of a recent evaluation of HMH Professional Services Coaching conducted by RMC Research (Weston-Sementelli, Meyer,

Fredericks, & Brown, 2021). The survey included questions about demographics, professional learning participation, curricula provided to intervention and comparison students, perceptions of preparedness and confidence to teach reading, teaching efficacy and beliefs, reading instructional practices and interventions, *READ 180* Universal program implementation, perceptions of value and utility related to *READ 180* Universal, and perceived impact on students. The electronic survey was administered via SurveyMonkey during April 2021 and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The two *READ 180* Universal teachers at Jamestown Elementary School who were invited to complete the survey completed it. They were Title I Reading classroom teachers who taught students in the sixth, seventh, and/or eighth grade during 2020–21. Their formal education and/or training emphasized reading methods, reading intervention, and reading theory, and provided an overview or introduction to children's language development, special education, and English learner support. Due to the limited response rate, survey responses are summarized in narrative text.

The parent survey included questions about parent demographics, the technology used to access *READ 180* Universal, perceptions of the ease of access of *READ 180* Universal, the support parents provided to their child while using *READ 180* Universal, parent use of *READ 180* Universal website resources, support for using *READ 180* Universal during remote and hybrid instruction, and their perceptions of their child's engagement with the program and its impact on their reading achievement. The survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete. There were three parent respondents that had a child in the sixth or eighth grade who were familiar with their child's involvement in *READ 180* Universal during 2020–21 and responded to the survey. Due to the limited response rate, survey responses are summarized in narrative text.

TEACHER FOCUS GROUP

Teacher focus groups were conducted virtually in fall 2020. They were asked about their background; professional development participation; *READ 180* Universal program implementation; available support for teachers implementing the program, changes in instructional practice, and collaboration; and perceptions of program quality and impact, including any variations based on student characteristics or other factors. Teachers were also asked about factors that facilitated or impeded effective program implementation, lessons learned, suggestions for improvement, comparison of *READ 180* Universal to other programs and approaches for striving readers, and advice for those implementing *READ 180* Universal during remote or hybrid instruction.

ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW

The administrator interview was conducted in fall 2020 and spring 2021. The administrator responded to questions about background; support provided to teachers; *READ 180* Universal program implementation; and perceptions of program quality and impact, including any variations based on student characteristics or other factors. The interview also asked about factors that facilitated or impeded effective program implementation, lessons learned, suggestions for improvement, comparison of *READ 180* Universal to other programs and approaches for striving readers, and advice for those implementing *READ 180* Universal during remote or hybrid instruction.

PARENT INTERVIEW

Parent interviews were conducted in early May 2021. One parent of a *READ 180* Universal student was asked to respond to questions about how their child used *READ 180* Universal and any issues with access to the program, their support of the child's learning, support they received to help work with their child on *READ 180* Universal, perceptions of their child's engagement with *READ 180* Universal, perceptions of program impact, perceptions of program quality, whether they would recommend *READ 180* Universal to other parents and students, and suggestions for improving *READ 180* Universal.

RESULTS

STUDENT SOFTWARE USAGE

Students' information about *READ 180* Universal software usage on the total number of sessions, number of sessions longer than 15 minutes, median session time, sessions per week, segments completed, and sessions per segment are presented in Table 2. Results are presented for the full year and separately for remote, hybrid, and in-person instruction for the total number of sessions, number of sessions longer than 15 minutes, and the median session time. On average, students completed about 49 sessions, 24 of which were longer than 15 minutes. The median session time was about 23 minutes. Most sessions were completed on average during hybrid (16 sessions over 10 weeks), followed by sessions during in-person instruction (12 sessions over 7 weeks), and sessions during remote instruction (9.5 sessions over 22 weeks). Median session times were similar across remote, hybrid, and in-person instruction, ranging from about 20 to 23 minutes each. The average number of sessions per week, total segments completed, and average number of sessions per segment were only available for the full year. On average, students completed about 2 sessions per week. Students completed between 1 and 7 segments with an average of 4 segments and 12 sessions per segment.

TABLE 2. *READ 180* UNIVERSAL SOFTWARE SESSION AND SEGMENT COMPLETION, GRADES 6–8 (N = 17), 2020–2021

| | Full Year | Remote (22 wks.) | Hybrid (10 wks.) | In-Person (7 wks.) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Total Sessions | | | | |
| Min | 26 | 1 | 5 | 2 |
| Max | 78 | 14 | 29 | 20 |
| Mean (SD) | 44.8 (15.7) | 9.5 (4.0) | 16.0 (7.1) | 12.3 (5.5) |
| Sessions Longer than 15 min | | | | |
| Min | 10 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Max | 41 | 12 | 25 | 14 |
| Mean (SD) | 23.8 (9.0) | 6.1 (3.6) | 10.5 (5.8) | 7.2 (3.7) |
| Median Session Time (min) | | | | |
| Min | 13.5 | 1.2 | 11.1 | 4.2 |
| Max | 32.2 | 35.3 | 34.3 | 33.5 |
| Mean (SD) | 22.7 (5.4) | 19.8 (8.3) | 22.9 (6.2) | 20.8 (7.7) |
| Average Sessions Per Week | | | | |
| Min | 1.3 | -- | -- | -- |
| Max | 2.9 | | | |
| Mean (SD) | 1.8 (0.5) | | | |
| Total Segments Completed | | | | |
| Min | 1 | -- | -- | -- |
| Max | 7 | | | |
| Mean (SD) | 3.8 (1.8) | | | |
| Average Sessions Per Segment | | | | |
| Min | 5.4 | -- | -- | -- |
| Max | 29.0 | | | |
| Mean (SD) | 12.3 (6.4) | | | |

Note: Data reported for the full year by HMH included more records of sessions than the sum of the records for the remote, hybrid, and in-person time periods. Data for average sessions per week, total segments completed, and average sessions per segment were available only for the full year. Remote instruction occurred from the beginning of the school year through January 18, 2021, hybrid

EFFECTS OF *READ 180* UNIVERSAL ON STUDENT LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT

As part of their normal instructional activities, students completed the Renaissance Star Reading assessment multiple times during the year. Star Reading scores increased over time with students scoring, on average, 12 points higher on the midyear assessment, and 22 points higher on the spring assessment compared to fall 2020. The increase in scores observed from fall 2020 to spring 2021 was significant, $t(15) = 2.39$, $p = .03$.

Students completed the HMH *Reading Inventory* to assess their reading skills as part of the program. On average, *Reading Inventory* scores increased over time. Students scored an average of 44 points higher on the mid-year assessment and 47 points higher on the spring assessment, compared to fall 2020. The percentage of students identified as Below Basic in reading decreased from fall (47%) to spring (43%).

Scores on the spring 2019 and spring 2021 Smarter Balanced summative ELA assessment were provided by the district for *READ 180* Universal participants. On average, students scored between Levels 1 (has not met the achievement standard) and 2 (has nearly met the achievement standard) on both the spring 2019 and spring 2021 Smarter Balanced summative ELA assessments. Although average scale scores increased from spring 2019 to spring 2021, no significant difference was observed, $t(16) = -2.07$, n.s. The proportion of students performing at the lowest level decreased from spring 2019 (70%) to spring 2021 (59%).

PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTS BY EDUCATORS AND PARENTS

Educators reported observing several positive effects of student participation in *READ 180* Universal including vocabulary and language development, fluency, expression, and spelling. Teachers expected to see improvement among English learners in vocabulary acquisition, listening, and reading, and most improvement among students who came to class consistently. Otherwise, respondents did not anticipate substantial variation in impact by student characteristics such as grade level, racial/ethnic background, socioeconomic status, or special education status because the school is relatively homogenous. Comments included the following:

"For the students who use it the most, they have a higher level of vocabulary development."

"Right now, I think the greatest impact is developing language, whether it's for low students or English learners who are developing the language. I think the program really helps strengthen those areas."

"I've been looking at students' fluency grades and expression. Their fluency is increasing, but also their punctuation and expression are increasing. I've also noticed that they are getting better with spelling because of the repetition. I'm looking at the HMH program-based assessments."

Teacher survey responses suggest that participation in *READ 180* Universal improved their students' understanding of print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, spelling, reading comprehension, vocabulary, academic vocabulary, grammar, reading fluency, overall reading ability, interest in reading, and confidence in reading.

Parents reported that their child's reading ability improved as a result of participation in *READ 180* Universal, and they were satisfied with how *READ 180* Universal supported their child's learning. One parent emphasized the value of feedback on student progress and their child's improved confidence.

EFFECTS OF *READ 180* UNIVERSAL ON STUDENT SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

When educators and parents were asked about the extent to which student participation in *READ 180* Universal led to improved social and emotional learning (specifically growth mindset, teacher-student relationships, engagement, and confidence), educators reported challenges making that connection and suggested that remote and hybrid instruction likely reduced potential effects. One teacher suggested that, because *READ 180* Universal activities were well aligned with individual student abilities, they contributed to development of student confidence. Respondent comments also focused on the importance of growth mindset, teacher-student relationships, engagement, and confidence for success in *READ 180* Universal. They anticipated seeing more positive learning outcomes for students with these characteristics.

"Students with a higher-level growth mindset tend to perceive themselves as improving all the time. Because of that, they tend to pay more attention to conversations, they ask more questions. I've got one child who is really trying to use higher-level language as a result."

Parent responses suggested improved engagement and improved relationships with students and teachers as a result of participation in *READ 180* Universal. One parent's comments emphasized improved student ability to communicate needs to their teacher and student enjoyment of the program.

EFFECTS OF *READ 180* UNIVERSAL ON TEACHER INSTRUCTION

Teachers who participated in focus groups were asked if their instructional practices changed as a result of using *READ 180* Universal. One described paying more attention to vocabulary instruction as a result of better understanding student needs. Another mentioned better understanding how to effectively scope and sequence lessons as a result of using *READ 180* Universal. Comments from teachers included the following:

"I am paying much more attention to vocabulary instruction. I thought my students had a better understanding of common words than they actually do. Teaching *READ 180* Universal, I am learning just how low their vocabulary is. I've also learned that I have to use the same amount of synonyms in my talking with students as I did with second and third graders because I am using vocabulary that is really out of their range of knowledge. I have to go back and give them lower-level vocabulary."

"The flow of lessons and the incorporation of suffixes is helpful at any grade level. I like how the lessons flow and that helps me with my instruction."

Teachers also reported increased collaboration as a result of implementing *READ 180* Universal. They reported emailing one other and talking by phone during school closure. During in-person learning, they talked during office hours, observed one other, and discussed student progress and lesson delivery.

IMPLEMENTATION FACILITATORS

Educators described several program components that facilitated effective implementation during in-person instruction, including Do Nows and program modules; time for staff to meet with students one on one; and having students talk to one other, form pairs, ask questions, and complete rotations. During school closure, teachers indicated that the online teacher's manual was particularly helpful. They also described the use of dual monitors as helpful during remote instruction, allowing them to refer to the manual on one screen and see students on the other.



IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Asked to describe challenges to implementation, educators emphasized challenges related to hybrid and remote instruction, including managing transitions between instructional models. Respondents also described difficulty engaging students in discussion during remote instruction, that many students had their microphones turned off, that students did not like reading online, and that students did not like seeing and hearing themselves via the virtual learning platform.

PARENT SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING DURING HYBRID AND REMOTE INSTRUCTION

Parents reported providing support during hybrid and remote instruction and that they were somewhat to very confident that they were able to support their child's participation in *READ 180* Universal. They described providing support through conversations with their child on what they were learning, reading with their child, and practicing spelling. Parents also reported helping their child with writing and with understanding of vocabulary used in *READ 180* Universal.

EDUCATOR AND PARENT PERCEPTIONS OF *READ 180* UNIVERSAL QUALITY AND UTILITY

Educators described the overall quality of *READ 180* Universal as being very high, with some suggestions for improvement. Respondents reported that student needs were addressed, and program activities were challenging and engaging. They identified several aspects of program content that they appreciated including spelling and vocabulary activities, opportunities for students to record and listen to their reading, and the engaging nature of the content. Teachers noted that the program content, print resources, digital resources, and other materials were useful to their reading instruction for the *READ 180* Universal classes they taught, and that the overall quality of these components was excellent. They reported that the classroom library was slightly less useful to their instruction. Representative comments are below:

"[*READ 180* Universal] is a quality program. When implemented correctly, I believe it meets all students' needs from the perspective of reading growth and language acquisition. It is an impressive program."

"The program is not below their level. It is challenging. It does not look or feel like a remedial program."

"[Program quality] is very high and I would like it to continue after this research project is done. I know my superintendent is interested in making this the way to go."

"I love the program content. The articles in the textbooks are very well written. The content they used in the mid-term assessment made it easier to administer and made the students pay attention."

"I love the spelling where they only have to focus on the words they missed. I like the vocabulary and that they have the synonym and antonym sorts. They use pictures to help those meanings. I like that the [software] asks the students to read and record their reading and then go back and listen to it. It gives them an idea of what they sound like and what they can do to improve. I like the frames for writing that give students both writing and vocabulary in the student application."

"The other program we've used is SCILEARN, but it does not have the extensive vocabulary development or writing, spelling, comprehension and is not set up for success. I've used Study Island and Reading Assistant too. With Study Island, students become quickly disengaged. They are more engaged with *READ 180*."

Parents also had positive views of *READ 180* Universal program quality. Parents reported that program content was appropriate, addressed student needs, and that they would recommend the program to others. Parents reported that it was easy for their child to access *READ 180* Universal and that the number of assignments was appropriate. Parents also noted that the topics and activities offered in *READ 180* Universal matched their child's interests. Parents who reported using the resources available through the family portal on the *READ 180* Universal website indicated that they were moderately helpful and that they liked receiving online tips and resources to help their child use *READ 180* Universal during school closures. No parent reported suggestions for improving the program. Parents stated the following comments:

"From what I've seen, it's good quality and good content. It's age appropriate for different skill levels."

"I would recommend [*READ 180* Universal] to other parents and students. They could even use it during the summer. It is easy to use, the format is easy, and you can go right to what you are looking for."

During School Closure. Educators reported that *READ 180* Universal was generally easy to transfer from remote to hybrid to in-person learning, noting that some students responded best to in-person learning. Teachers also noted that program pacing was slower during in-person instruction than during remote instruction because there were more student distractions in the classroom. Respondents indicated that maintaining instructional pacing was made difficult by the need to switch back and forth between remote and hybrid instruction in fall 2020 because each instructional mode required different pacing.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, results from this mixed-methods correlational study conducted by RMC Research examining the effects of *READ 180* Universal during the 2020–21 school year on the Jamestown Elementary School students found that student performance on formative and summative literacy assessments showed improvement over time. The analysis of the Renaissance Star Reading scores revealed an increase in scores at each testing administration with a statistically significant increase observed from fall to spring. Educators and parents described positive effects of participation in *READ 180* Universal on student achievement outcomes. Parents reported that their child's reading ability improved as a result of participation in *READ 180* Universal, that they were satisfied with how the program supported their child's learning, and that the program contributed to improved confidence in reading. Improved social and emotional learning outcomes were also attributed to student participation in *READ 180* Universal. In addition, teachers reported positive changes to instructional practices and collaboration as a result of their participation in *READ 180*. Both educators gave high ratings of the quality of *READ 180* Universal and noted that it was generally easy to transition across instructional models from remote, to hybrid, to in-person instruction. Parents also had positive views of the quality of *READ 180* Universal and that the program facilitated learning during remote instruction as well. Overall, *READ 180* supported students' learning at the Jamestown Elementary School through all three instructional models from remote, hybrid, and in-person instruction.



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