

**NEW INDEPENDENT EFFICACY STUDY:**

# Core Knowledge has a significant positive impact on state reading test scores.

A groundbreaking longitudinal study released in April 2023 from researchers at University of Virginia, University of Notre Dame, and Auburn University reveals statistically significant positive effects of Core Knowledge curriculum on reading achievement.

Involving over 2,000 Colorado students across different socioeconomic statuses, the study examined the efficacy of Core Knowledge curriculum. This curriculum is based on the Core Knowledge Sequence, which is content-specific, cumulative, and coherent. Specific content knowledge is taught each year, developed over time, and connected within and across grades.

Core Knowledge curriculum has long been hypothesized to increase comprehension and reading achievement, but this is the first study to use an experimental design to evaluate its long-term impact.

## Study background

### Setting and participants

This study was conducted in nine Core Knowledge charter schools in the Denver, Colorado area.

With 2,360 kindergarten applicants and only 688 seats, these schools used a lottery system; the 688 students awarded a seat served as the treatment group of this study. The students who did not get a seat in the lottery served as the control group.

### Longitudinal approach

Achievement data was collected after four years, when standardized testing began in third grade. Test scores continued to be collected and analyzed through sixth grade.

# Conclusions

## FINDING 1

### Test scores significantly improved with the Core Knowledge curriculum.

- 📖 The treatment group **outperformed the control group on all state reading tests**, with a statistically significant effect size of 0.473.
- 📖 From kindergarten to sixth grade, the **cumulative long-term gain for the Core Knowledge students** was approximately 16 percentile points.

“To put this into perspective... national student gains [in reading] similar to the gains realized in this intervention would place the U.S. among the top five countries.”

**Daniel Willingham**

Professor of Psychology, University of Virginia

## FINDING 2

### Income-based achievement gaps were eliminated.

- 📖 While students from high- and middle- income areas also outperformed the control group, **students from the low-income area experienced even greater gains.**
- 📖 The effect size for the treatment group from the high-income area was 0.445—a strong effect size for an instructional program in K–12 education. For the low-income area, **the effect size was a remarkable 1.299—virtually unheard of in studies of K–12 program impact.**
- 📖 Students in the low-income area also saw **increases in state math test scores** in third and sixth grade, as well as **gains in state science test scores in fifth grade.**

[Read the full report here >](#)

## Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts® (CKLA) brings the Core Knowledge approach to life.

Embodying the content-specific, coherent, and cumulative Core Knowledge approach, Amplify CKLA integrates rich knowledge-building and foundational skills instruction.

While other programs may claim to build knowledge, Amplify CKLA is unique in its breadth and depth of topics spanning history, science, literature, and the arts.

Used by over three million students nationwide, Amplify CKLA's comprehensive and engaging literacy curriculum is proven to boost outcomes and close achievement gaps.

To learn more about Amplify CKLA, go to [amplify.com/ckla](https://amplify.com/ckla).

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