



**Secret Stories<sup>®</sup>**  
**ESSA EVIDENCE PACKET**

**LXD Research**  
**Secret Stories<sup>®</sup>**



# Secret Stories® ESSA Research Summary



**27**  
studies

**800+**  
students

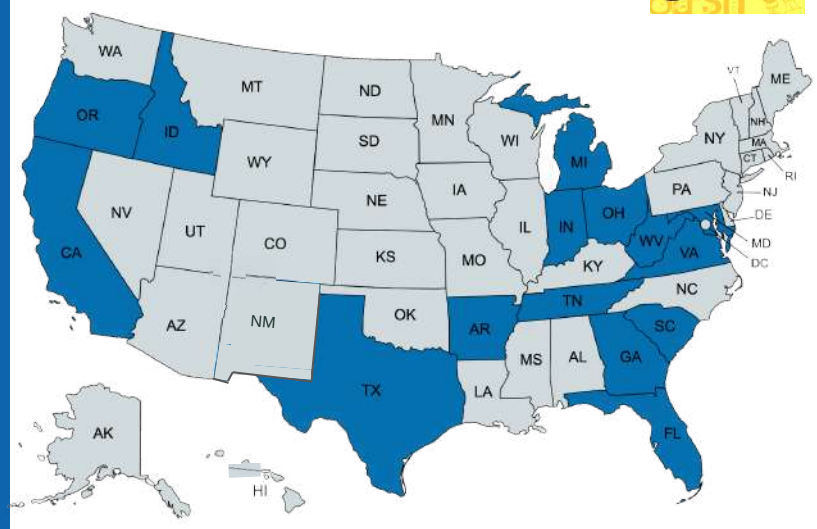
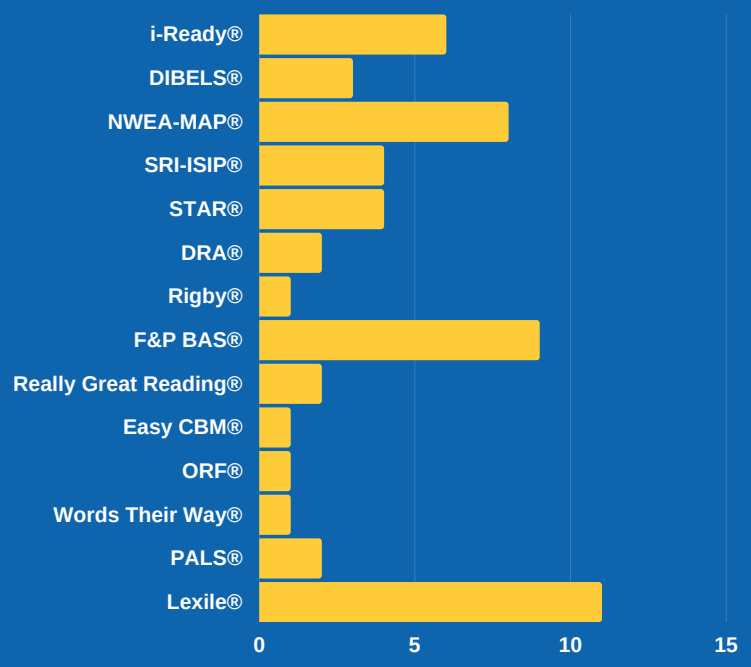


**30+**  
teachers

**1.62** Average  
Effect Size

Pre-Post Studies - ES 1.90  
Norm-Referenced Studies - ES 1.42  
Control Group Studies - ES 1.30

### Assessments Used

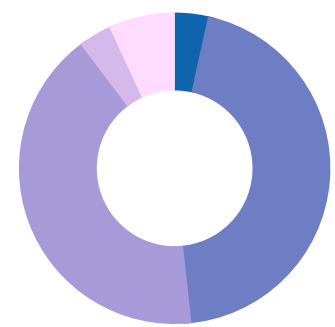


### School Locations

- 1 Arkansas
- 2 California
- 5 Florida
- 2 Georgia
- 2 Idaho
- 2 Indiana
- 1 Michigan
- 2 Maryland
- 1 Mexico
- 1 Ohio
- 1 Oregon
- 1 South Carolina
- 1 Tennessee
- 3 Texas
- 1 Virginia
- 1 West Virginia

*\*Countries Included: USA, & Mexico*

### Grade Participation



- 1 PreK
- 12 Kindergarten
- 12 1st Grade
- 1 2nd Grade
- 2 Intervention



## If kids don't know the Secrets, how do they read the words?



Secret Stories® are like reading glasses for kids.  
They help them READ words so they don't have to MEMORIZE them.



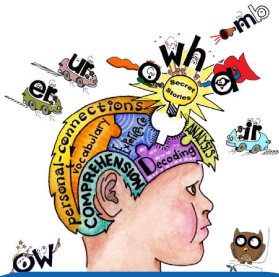
the  
this  
that  
them



saw  
draw  
because  
August



Secret Stories is a mnemonic-based, phonics tool that can be used with any reading or phonics curriculum to help children quickly connect the phonics patterns with their sounds. Aligned with the science of reading and neuroscience research, Secret Stories uses familiar, story-based frameworks to help children understand the sounds letters make together, alongside embedded mnemonic sound images to help recall them for independent reading and writing. Melodic mnemonic devices are also used to help automate sound-skill retrieval. Incorporating Secret Stories with existing reading/phonics curriculum advances the speed of phonics instruction, giving learners access to as much of the phonics code as possible, as fast and as soon as possible.



After finishing LETRS® training, I struggled with how to deliver that phonics knowledge to students. Even with our new structured literacy (science of reading-based) program, students were still memorizing more words than they were reading. Even easily decodable words, like: *the, girl, boy, too, for, all, how, she, look, her, with, that, down, they, when, etc.*, were supposed to be memorized "by heart." This involved drawing hearts around words to help students memorize them until the phonics skills needed to read them were formally taught. The problem was that almost none of these phonics skills were taught in kindergarten, based on the grade level scope and sequence. In fact, most weren't introduced until second grade.

With Secret Stories, I don't have to wait to give my students the phonics knowledge they need to read and spell words. Not just these words, but hundreds of other words that we see every day. What's the point of just looking at words all day long and then drawing hearts around them when we can actually READ them with Secret Stories?"

**Lori Beth, Kindergarten  
Teacher in New York**



### Principle 1

#### Not a program, but a way to make phonics make sense.

Secret Stories was developed based on early brain development research and cognitive theories as a way to accelerate phonics skill mastery when used alongside existing reading or phonics curriculum. Because Secret Stories is not a program, it's flexible and easy to adapt for use at any grade level, fitting neatly in between the reading and writing that students are already doing each day.

### Principle 2

#### Aligned with early brain development and the brain's systems for learning.

Secret Stories aligns with the way our brain naturally learns by appealing to as many senses as possible, through stories, sounds, feelings, movement, visuals and experiences. By engaging multiple modalities and pathways for learning, phonics skills are stored in different learning networks, providing learners with more avenues for easier retention and retrieval.

### Principle 3

#### Playful and emotion-driven learning vs. rote memorization.

This is in stark contrast with traditional phonics instruction, which targets the underdeveloped and less reliable executive processing centers through rote memorization of letter sounds and phonics skills. Secret Stories funnels complex phonics knowledge through the brain's social-emotional "backdoor" by aligning skills with behaviors that children already know and understand, like not getting along (th), getting hurt (ou/ow), having a crush (au/aw), being sneaky (y), having to listen to your mom or babysitter, riding in a car that stops fast (er/ir/ur), etc. These familiar, story-based schemas are as easy to learn as they are to remember, and with the embedded mnemonic phonics posters, students can use them to read and spell independently .

### Principle 4

#### Leverages embodied cognition.

Children are active learners, and research shows that learning is enhanced by movement, particularly when movement is embedded into instruction. Movement primes the molecular processes that help form memory. Embedding targeted movements into instruction enhances recall and aids in the transfer of skills to long-term memory.

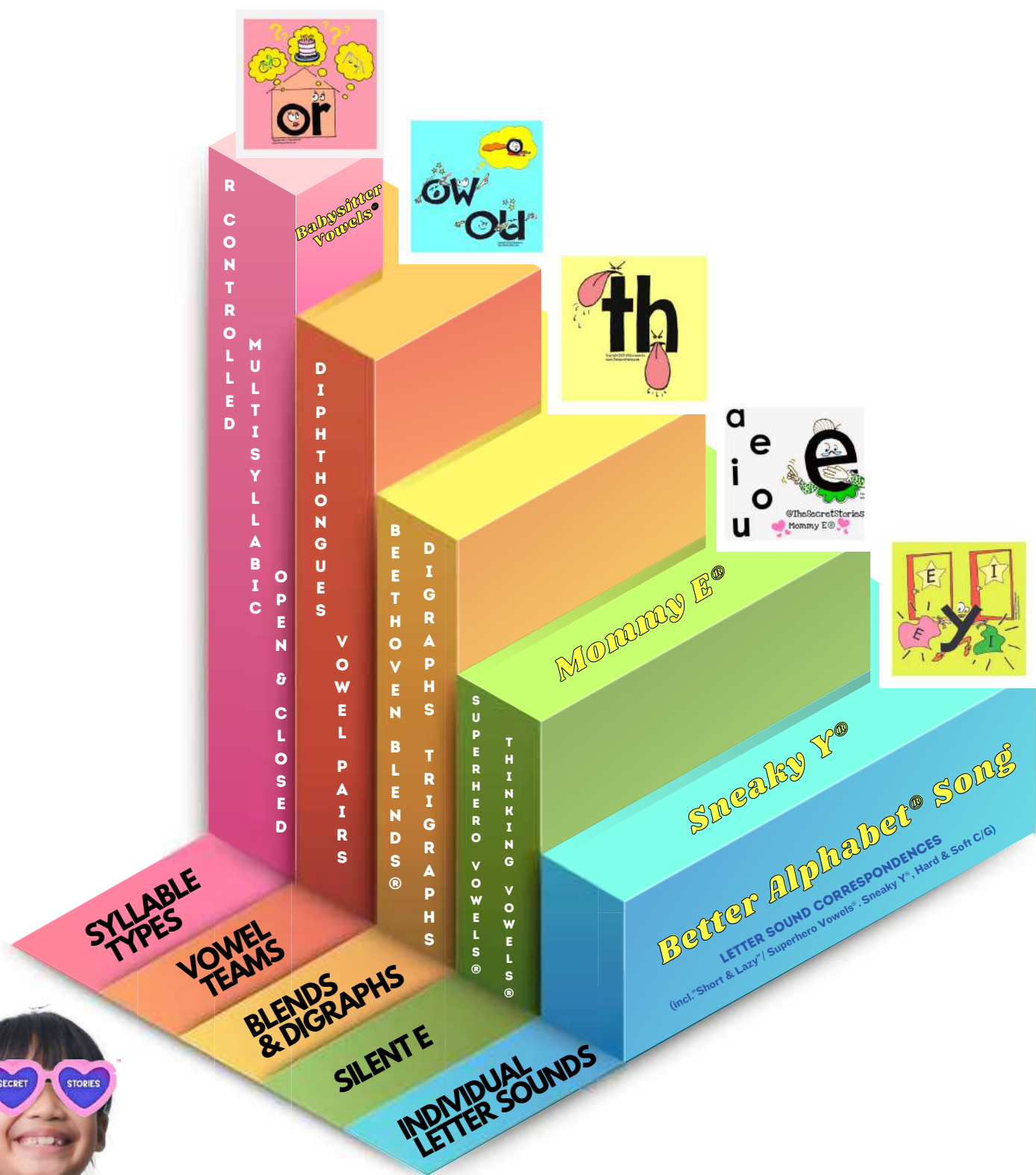
### Principle 5

#### Learner-driven and learner centered.

Secret Stories accelerates learner access to the code by shifting instructional emphasis from skill-practice to skill-understanding. Secret Stories® disguises phonics skills as "secrets" to make them important to kids—something that they are curious about and want to know. This makes phonics meaningful and relevant, and therefore, easy to teach and fun learn.



## Phonics doesn't have to be hard.



## We just make it hard.



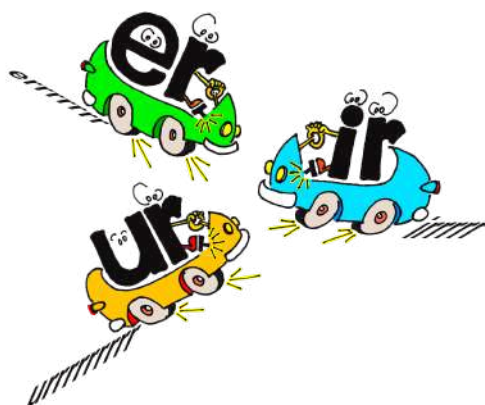
## Meta-Analysis & Literature Review



**Can Embedded Mnemonics Rooted in Familiar Schemas Help to Automate Phonics Skills for Improved Decoding?**

A Theoretical and Experimental Analysis of Secret Stories ®

**[CLICK HERE TO READ THE META-ANALYSIS](#)**





## RCT Study in Texas Kindergarten

### Better Alphabet Song® Letter ID Analysis

At the start of the 2022-2023 school year, 100 kindergarten students in a Texas elementary school were randomly selected from four classes to participate in two of four reading groups. Two teachers led the treatment group who received structured literacy instruction using Really Great Reading® along with Secret Stories®, which uses embedded mnemonics to teach grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPC) and melodic mnemonics (via the Better Alphabet® Song) to teach letter ID/sound mastery. The control group used Really Great Reading® without Secret Stories®. Pre/post tests were administered to assess students' letter ID? sound knowledge. This study examined the impact of the additional mnemonics on top of the structured literacy instruction on letter ID knowledge.

**Results after 3 months of instruction indicate that adding Secret Stories® mnemonics improved letter ID/sound knowledge and the rate of acquisition with a total mean effect size of 1.06 (Cohen's d).**

Notably, whereas only 1 student in the control group achieved mastery by November, all but 5 students achieved mastery in the treatment group. In fact, the majority of students in the treatment group had achieved total mastery by late October before Really Great Reading® had even begun exposing students in the control group to the letters. This is due to the Really Great Reading® scope and sequence which delays letter introduction. Thus, adding Secret Stories® to Really Great Reading®'s structured literacy program gave students in the treatment group access to the letters 2 months earlier than students in the control group, in addition to accelerating mastery to 60 days (on average) as opposed to a full grade level year.

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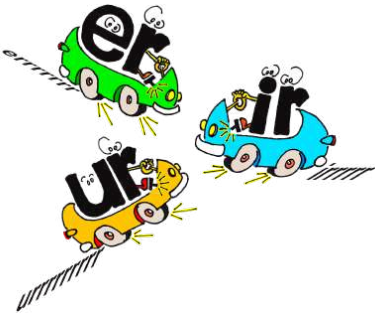
**Effect Size: 1.06**

**Grade:** Kindergarten

**Test:** Letter ID & Sound Screener

**Location:** Texas

**Population:** ESL, Low Income,  
Low Performing



This study contributes knowledge to the field in support of early exposure to phonics instruction in kindergarten, rather than using an oral-only phonemic awareness approach before introducing letter ID and sound knowledge. The control group started with 2 months of oral-only phonemic awareness instruction, whereas the treatment group started phonics instruction at the start of the study. These findings also suggest that curriculum scope and sequences may be deliberately slowing the pace of instruction. Starting phonics instruction earlier increases the acquisition of letter ID knowledge, and adding mnemonics improves the speed of learning.

***\*This study is continuing and end-of-year data will be collected to see how many letters and sounds students learn by the end of the year, and how many students achieve full mastery in each group. Additional data on the comparative rate of acquisition between groups is also being collected for inclusion.***





**Effect Size:** 1.28

**Grade:** Kindergarten

**Test:** MAP®

**Location:** Indiana

**Population:** Parochial School, Low Income, Low Performing, ESL



## Quasi-Exp Study in Indiana Kindergarten

### Better Alphabet Song® Letter Sounds Cohort Analysis

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® with their kindergarten class in an urban district of Indiana during the fall of 2018. The purpose of this study was to determine if the Secret Stories Better Alphabet® Song, which is a melodic mnemonic, could increase students' rate of acquisition for letter-sound knowledge. A three-year cohort design was used, comparing the speed of acquisition for phonics mastery between students who had access to the melodic mnemonic and those who did not. **Students who had access to the Secret Stories Better Alphabet® Song achieved phonics mastery at almost triple the rate of students who did not, with a Hedge's g effect size of 1.28.**

In fact, **most students in the treatment cohort achieved mastery within the first two weeks of school.** These results show that Secret Stories® has a high magnitude of effect on the speed of acquisition of letter sounds for kindergarten students. The positive impact of such a finding positively compounds over time and potentially accelerates skill development during future years. The faster students can decode, the sooner they can start reading independently and begin to orthographically map words.

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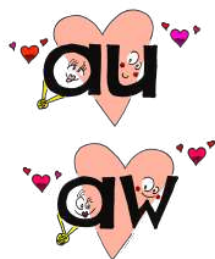
**Effect Size:** .74

**Grade:** First

**Test:** MAP®, BAS®

**Location:** Arkansas

**Population:** Low Performing, Low Income, ELL



## Quasi-Exp Study in Arkansas First Grade

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their grade 1 classroom in rural Arkansas in the fall of 2021. Of the 4 grade 1 classrooms in the school, only the case study teacher was using Secret Stories®. The other 3 classes served as control groups. Between the treatment class and the three control classes, there were 73 students total. Results were compared based on both BAS® and NWEA MAP® assessments after 1 year of school instruction. This study showed a mean effect size of 1.00 on the BAS® assessment and .48 on the MAP® assessment, with a mean overall effect size of .74.

**Despite starting significantly behind the control groups in reading ability, the treatment class outperformed all 3 control classes on both the MAP® and BAS® assessments by the end of the year. While the treatment class had 90% of students reading on or above grade level and only 1 student reading below, the 3 control classes had less than 50% of students reading on grade level and 46 students reading below.**

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**Effect Size:** 1.42

**Grade:** First

**Test:** i-Ready®

**Location:** Tennessee

**Population:** Rural



## Quasi-Experimental Study in Tennessee Grade 1

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their grade 1 class in rural Tennessee in November of 2018. Of the 3 grade 1 classes at the school, only the treatment class began using Secret Stories® in November. Results were measured using the i-Ready® pre/post reading assessment. Test scores were also compared with the i-Ready® grade standards. A mean Hedge's g effect size of 1.42 was found for this case study, suggesting a very high magnitude of effect for Secret Stories®.

By comparison, **the mean result for phonics in this grade range, according to the NRP meta-analysis, is 0.54. In this case study, the treatment group more than doubled these results.** This case study was unique because it was the only study looking at the fixed effect of adding Secret Stories® to a structured literacy approach. **Not only did all students in the treatment group surpass grade level standards, they were the only class in grade 1 to accomplish this, surpassing both comparison groups by a statistically significant margin.**

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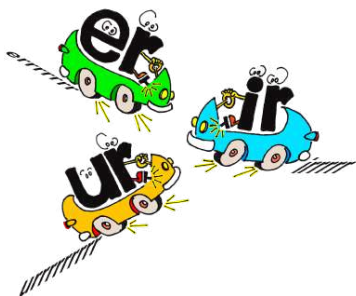
**Effect Size:** 1.41

**Grade:** First

**Test:** BAS®

**Location:** Maryland

**Population:** Low Income, Low Performing, ELL



## Quasi-Experimental Study in Maryland Grade 1

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their grade 1 class in an urban district of Maryland during the fall of 2018. Efficacy of Secret Stories® was evaluated in this case study using a pre-test/post-test model based on the BAS® reading assessment, which showed an effect size of 2.36. A secondary analysis was also done by comparing the results of the treatment class with a grade 1 class from a different school highlighted on the district website for their high performance. The treatment group outperformed the comparison group by a Hedge's g effect size of .47. An average mean effect of 1.41 was found for this study which suggests a high magnitude of effect for Secret Stories® with students in poor, underachieving districts.

Despite **91% of students starting at beginning of kindergarten level, 89% were reading at or above grade level by the end of the year, with one-third reading at a grade level 2 or higher. On average students' reading levels increased by 344% over the course of this study.**

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## Quasi-Experimental Study in Maryland Grade 1

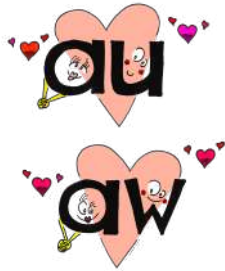
**Effect Size:** 1.01

**Grade:** First

**Test:** BAS®

**Location:** Maryland

**Population:** Low Income, Low Performing, ELL



The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their grade 1 class in an urban area of Maryland in the fall of 2018. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was evaluated in this case study using a pre-test/post model based on the BAS® reading assessment, showing an effect size of 1.62. A secondary analysis was also done by comparing the results of the treatment class with a grade 1 class from a different school highlighted on the district website for their high performance. The treatment group outperformed the comparison group by a Hedge's g effect size of .41. An average mean effect size of 1.01 was found for this study which suggests a high magnitude of effect for Secret Stories®.

Despite the **majority of students in the grade 1 treatment class starting at a beginning kindergarten reading level, 87% were reading on or above grade level by the end of the year, with 35% reading at a grade level 2 or higher.** Additionally, 85% of students had grown a total of 5 or more reading levels by year's end, increasing their overall reading level by an average by 252%.

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## Quasi-Exp Study in Virginia Grade 1

**Effect Size:** 3.01

**Grade:** First

**Test:** PALS®

**Location:** Virginia

**Population:** Low Income, Low Performing



The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their grade 1 class in rural Virginia in the fall of 2018. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was monitored with a pre-test /post-test model using the PALS® (Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies) assessment to measure students' word knowledge and spelling. A very high Hedge's G effect size of 3.01 was found for the efficacy of Secret Stories® in this case study.

The effect size of this study was extraordinary, as effect sizes above 2 are by definition 'super effect sizes'. As this effect size is above 3, it should be seen as persuasive evidence for the efficacy of Secret Stories®. Moreover, **the average student showed a 238% improvement, with 61% of students approaching a grade 3 reading level, despite only being in grade 1.**

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**Effect Size:** 2.98

**Grade:** First

**Test:** Rigby®, STAR®

**Location:** Florida

**Population:** Primary School,  
Low Performing



## Grade 1 Florida Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in a grade 1 classroom in a primary school center in rural Florida during the 2018-2019 school year. The case study teacher was the only one using Secret Stories®. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was monitored in this case study using a pre-test/post-test model based on the Rigby PM® assessment. Results were compared to district averages to calculate an effect size. A Hedge's g effect size of 2.98 was found by comparing the treatment class scores to the district scores, indicating a high magnitude of effect for Secret Stories®.

**Despite being the lowest performing class in the school at the beginning of the year, the case study class outperformed all of the other 17 other grade 1 classes in the school, increasing their reading level by 7.39x.** In fact, the average reader in the treatment class was at twice the reading level of the average reader in the same grade across the district by the end of the year. Moreover, **the treatment class showed the highest outcomes on the STAR® assessment of any grade 1 class in the district, scoring 175, as compared to the school average of 111, and the district average of 121.**

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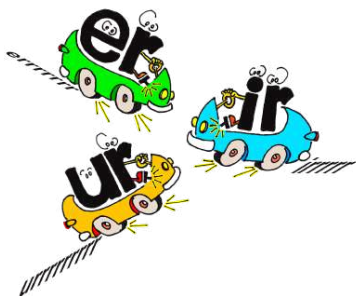
**Effect Size:** 2.30

**Grade:** Kindergarten

**Test:** MAP®, i-Ready®, BAS®

**Location:** Indiana

**Population:** Parochial School,  
Low Income, Low  
Performing, ESL



## Kindergarten Indiana Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their kindergarten parochial school class in an urban district of Indiana during the fall of 2018. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was assessed in this case study using a pre-test/post-test model, based on the i-Ready® reading assessment and the Fountas & Pinnell® BAS reading assessment. Efficacy was also assessed by comparing the student results with the BAS® and i-Ready® standards, as well as the MAP® test percentiles. A mean Hedge's g effect size of 2.30 was found for this case study, suggesting a high magnitude of effect for Secret Stories®.

This even more impressive when considering that only 43% of students in the case study school met grade level standards, whereas **all but 2 students in the treatment class were reading on or above grade level by the end of the year. In fact, 71% of kindergartners in the treatment class were reading at a mid-first grade Lexile® level or higher, and 29% were reading at a mid-second grade level or higher.** In contrast, the case study teacher's class from the previous year, who were not using Secret Stories®, had just 2 students reading above a kindergarten Lexile® level.

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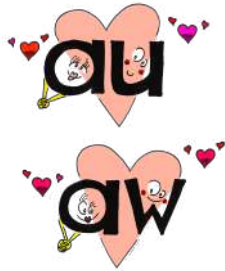
**Effect Size:** 2.20

**Grade:** Kindergarten

**Test:** i-Ready®

**Location:** Florida

**Population:** Low Income



## Kindergarten Florida Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their kindergarten class in rural Florida in the fall of 2018. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was monitored in this case study with a pre-test/ post-test model using the i-Ready® reading assessment. An effect size of 2.2 was found for this case study, suggesting an extremely high magnitude of effect for Secret Stories®.

**The results of this case study are impressive since effect sizes above 2 are considered 'super' effect sizes.** Typical i-Ready® growth for this grade is 50 points, so this class's average growth rate of 78 is 56% higher than the average growth.

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**Effect Size:** 2.19

**Grade:** First

**Test:** DRA®

**Location:** California

**Population:** ELL, Low Income,  
Low Performing



## Grade 1 California Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their grade 1 class in rural California in the fall of 2018. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was assessed in this case study using a pre-test/post-test model based on the DRA® reading assessment. An analysis comparing the student DRA® outcomes to expected DRA® levels was also completed to further bolster the validity of these results. A Hedge's g effect size was found of 2.19, suggesting an extremely large magnitude of effect for Secret Stories®.

Additionally, **students in this class increased their reading levels by an average of 458%. By the end of the year, the average student was reading at almost a grade 3 level, with the majority reading at a grade 4 level. This is even more impressive when considering that 76% of these grade 1 students were reading at a kindergarten level at the beginning of the year.**

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**Effect Size:** 1.90

**Grade:** First

**Test:** Easy CBM®, DIBELS

**Location:** Oregon

**Population:** Low Performing,  
Low Income, ESL



## Grade 1 Oregon Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their grade 1 class in rural Oregon in the fall of 2021. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was monitored in this case study using the pre-test/ post test model based on the EasyCBM® universal screener, developed by the University of Oregon. A Hedge's g effect size of 1.90 was found, showing strong evidence of efficacy for Secret Stories®.

In addition to the positive and robust effect size, **students quadrupled their reading scores over the course of the year**

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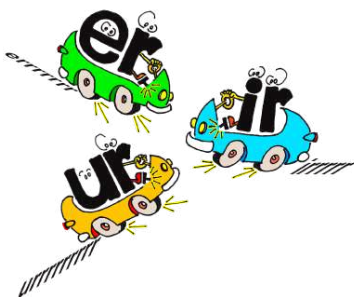
**Effect Size:** 1.89

**Grade:** Kindergarten

**Test:** ISIP®, DIBELS®

**Location:** Georgia

**Population:** Low Income



## Kindergarten Georgia Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their kindergarten class in rural Georgia in the fall of 2018. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was monitored in this case study using a pretest/post-test model, based on the DIBELS® assessment. A mean effect size of 1.89 was found for this case study, suggesting a very high magnitude of effect for Secret Stories®.

The results of this case study were extremely high with 'super' effect sizes above 2 for multiple effects, including **letter identification and sounds which showed the highest effect size at 3.1**. Not only did this class show tremendous growth, the average student outperformed the DIBELS® projected score by almost 20%. Additionally, **nearly all students (94%) exceeded their end-of-year phonemic awareness goals, and half doubling their phonics/decoding goals**. Similarly, nearly all students (94%) exceeded end-of-year Nonsense Word Fluency goals as well. In fact, the class average growth for Nonsense Word Fluency (23) was more than double the typical growth (10) by the end of the year.

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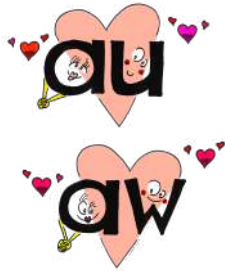
**Effect Size:** 1.83

**Grade:** First

**Test:** ISIP®, DIBELS®, ORF®, Words Their Way®

**Location:** Georgia

**Population:** Low Income



## Grade 1 Georgia Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their grade 1 class in rural Georgia in the fall of 2018. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was monitored with a pre-test/post-test model, using the SRI® fluency assessment, the developmental spelling assessment, the DIBELS® decoding assessment, the DIBELS® vocabulary assessment, the ORF® word ID assessment, and Words Their Way® sight word assessment. A mean Hedge's g effect size of 1.83 was found for this case study suggesting a high magnitude of effect for Secret Stories®.

The results of this case study are very impressive. Notably, **Spelling had a 'super' effect size of over 3, with all other subtests showing effect sizes of over 1.** It should be viewed as solid evidence for the efficacy of Secret Stories® on multiple assessments.

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**Effect Size:** 1.65

**Grade:** Kindergarten

**Test:** STAR®

**Location:** Florida

**Population:** ESL, Low Income



## Kindergarten Florida Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their kindergarten class in rural Florida in the fall of 2018. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was monitored in this case study using a pre-test /post-test model, based on the STAR® Early Literacy Assessment. A Hedge's g effect size of 1.65 was found for the differences between the pre and post-assessment, suggesting a large magnitude of effect for Secret stories®.

Despite 33% of students in the treatment class being English Second Language (ESL), **the average student in the case study went from reading at a kindergarten level to reading at or above a grade 2 level by the end of the school year.** This is especially impressive given that only 59% of students in the school were reading at grade level.

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## Kindergarten Ohio Study

**Effect Size:** 1.83

**Grade:** Kindergarten

**Test:** MAP®, BAS®

**Location:** Ohio

**Population:** Indigenous, Low Income, Low Performing



This case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in a kindergarten class located in an indigenous community in rural Ohio during the fall of 2018. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was monitored in this case study using a pre-test/post-test model based on the NWEA MAP® assessment, the Fountas & Pinnell BAS® reading assessment, a reading accuracy assessment and a high-frequency word assessment. All pre-assessments were taken in the fall and all post-assessments were taken in the spring, with the exception of the high-frequency words assessment, which was done in the winter and spring. A secondary analysis was also performed, comparing the outcomes of the treatment group with national averages on MAP® and with BAS® standards. An effect size of 1.83 was found, suggesting a high level of efficacy.

This study had two outcomes that met the technical definition of a “super” effect size (above 2.0), as well as effect sizes above 1 for all but one outcome. Additionally, **the average student in the treatment group moved up 15 percentiles on the MAP® assessment, vastly outperforming MAP® national norms. This is especially impressive given that the case study school is one of the lowest performing in the district.**

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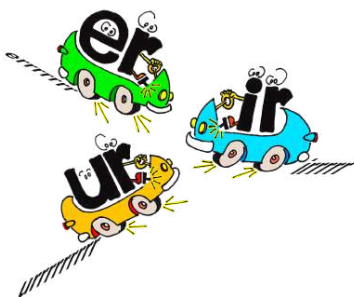
**Effect Size:** 1.35

**Grade:** Kindergarten

**Test:** MAP®

**Location:** Idaho

**Population:** Rural



## Kindergarten Idaho Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their Kindergarten classroom in rural Idaho in the fall of 2022. Pre-test scores were taken in the fall for the MAP® test and post-test scores were taken in the spring. Post-test results were compared to the projected results of the MAP® software to evaluate the efficacy of the Secret Stories® tool. The treatment class outperformed their projected MAP® scores by a Hedge’s g effect size of 1.35, suggesting a large effect for Secret Stories®.

**While the school averages only 57% of students meeting grade level expectations, 100% of the treatment class reached grade level or above, with 77% of students exceeding grade level expectations by one or more grade levels in reading.** Additionally, the class average was 16% ahead of the national average for MAP® scores. This is especially impressive considering that none of the students knew any letters or sounds at the beginning of the school year.

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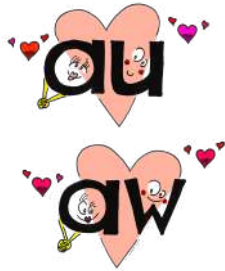
**Effect Size:** 1.05

**Grade:** First

**Test:** i-Ready®

**Location:** Florida

**Population:** Low Income,  
Low Performing



## Grade 1 Florida Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their grade 1 charter school classroom in rural Florida in the fall of 2021. Pre/post test scores were taken in the fall using the i-Ready® test, and the software created the projected scores based on normal yearly gains. In the spring, a post-intervention test was completed. Test scores were then compared to the projected scores, as well as to the same teacher's class from the previous year prior to using Secret Stories®. This case study showed a substantial evidence of efficacy with a mean effect size of 1.05.

It is worth noting that the case study teacher's class outperformed their previous year's class (who did not use Secret Stories®) by an effect size of 1.46. Moreover, **80% of students in the treatment year's class reached grade level or higher, while only 14% of the previous year's class achieved grade level expectations, with 28% failing to show any progress.**

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**Effect Size:** .90

**Grade:** First

**Test:** ISIP®

**Location:** Idaho

**Population:** Low Performing



## Grade 1 Idaho Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their grade 1 class in suburban district of Idaho in the fall of 2021. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was monitored in this case study with a pre-test/post-test model using the I-Station® Indicators of Progress® reading assessment. An average effect size of 0.90 was found, suggesting a high magnitude of growth with Secret Stories® use.

**The treatment class was the lowest performing grade 1 class in the school with just 55% of students meeting the grade level benchmark. After only 1 month of using Secret Stories®, 80% of students had met the grade-level benchmark. By March, they had outperformed all of the three grade 1 classes, including the highest performing class in which the majority of students had already met grade level benchmarks at the beginning of the year.**

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**Effect Size:** .61

**Grade:** Kindergarten

**Test:** MAP®, i-Ready®, BAS®

**Location:** West Virginia

**Population:** Rural, Low Income



## Kindergarten West Virginia Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their kindergarten class in rural West Virginia in the fall of 2018. The NWEA MAP® test served as the fall pre-test and spring post-test, with researchers using the subtests for Reading Foundations, Lexile® Levels, and letter-sound correspondences. Effect sizes were calculated using these district and national comparisons to determine the effect of the intervention (.48). Pre-post effect sizes were also calculated based on the other metrics (.74) even though a comparison was not available for an average mean effect size of .61.

The **treatment group outperformed all comparison scores with 21 of 22 students meeting or exceeding MAP® reading growth projections.** Additionally, 14 of the 22 students met or exceeded grade level expectations on the i-Ready® reading subtests, as compared to only 4 students at the beginning of the year. **By the end of the year, 42% of kindergartners in the case study class were reading at a grade 1 Lexile® level, and 29% were reading at a grade level 2 Lexile level.** These results are even more impressive when considering that the same teacher's class the previous year (before using Secret Stories®) had just 10% of students reading at a grade 1 level.

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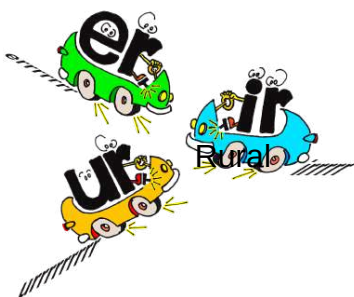
**Effect Size:** .51

**Grade:** First

**Test:** BAS®

**Location:** Michigan

**Population:** Parochial School, ELL, Low Income



## Grade 1 Michigan Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their grade 1 parochial school class in an urban district of Michigan during the fall of 2018. 100% of students in the case study school received free and reduced lunch and 60% were English Language Learners (ELL). Students were assessed using the BAS® benchmark reading test in the fall and spring. BAS® levels were compared to other classes of the same grade who were using only Fountas and Pinnell® and not Secret Stories®. The effect size was calculated based on these comparisons to determine the mean impact of the Secret Stories® intervention. A mean Hedge's g effect size of .51 was found when comparing the treatment group to the two control groups.

Not only did the treatment class outperform both control classes, **90% of students were reading at or above grade level by end of year, as compared to just 41% of students in the control groups.** In addition to having twice the number of students reading above grade level, the treatment class also had less than half the number of students reading below grade level. These results suggest a high level of efficacy for Secret Stories® use

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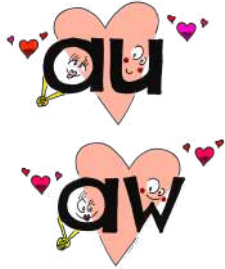


**Grade:** Pre-kindergarten

**Test:** MAP®

**Location:** Mexico

**Population:** Non-English/  
Spanish Speaking



## Pre-Kindergarten Mexico Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their English immersion, Spanish-speaking pre-kindergarten classroom in urban Monterey, Mexico in the Fall of 2018. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was examined by comparing the NWEA MAP® post-test results of the pre-kindergarten treatment group and a control group of kindergarten students at the next grade level who were not using Secret Stories®. Because the school required both the prek-kindergarten and kindergarten classes to administer the same grade 1 MAP® reading assessment for student tracking and placement, this was the instrument was used for comparison.

Despite the fact that this was a pre-kindergarten class of Spanish-speaking students, the average pre-k student scored 72% on the grade 1 MAP® assessment for PA, phonics, and writing. Most notably, **the pre-kindergarten class (which was the only class using Secret Stories®) not only outperformed the one year older kindergarten class by a wide margin in all areas of the MAP® assessment (phonemic awareness, phonics and reading), but they also outperformed the first grade class as well.** Given that a first-grade level assessment was used for comparison, these results are extremely impressive.

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**Grade:** Second

**Test:** STAR®

**Location:** California

**Population:** ESL



## Grade 2 California Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their grade 2 class in rural California in the fall of 2021. The effectiveness of the curriculum was assessed by looking at change scores on the STAR® reading assessment before and after using Secret Stories®.

Despite the case study school having an academic rating of 1 out of 10 with only 14% of students reading at grade level, **the number of students identified as needing urgent intervention decreased by more than half and the number of students scoring at or above grade level almost doubled.**

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**Grade:** First

**Test:** STAR®

**Location:** Florida

**Population:** Inclusion/ SpEd.,  
ELL



### Grade 1 Intervention Florida Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in an inclusion grade 1 departmentalized (half day) reading class in rural Florida in the fall of 2020. One quarter of the 22 students in the case study class were identified with learning disabilities. Efficacy was assessed using a pre-test/ post-test model with the i-Ready® reading assessment.

Students' end-of-year scores showed **14 of the 22 students exceeding grade level expectations on reading subtests, compared to only 4 students at the beginning of the year. Only 2 students fell short of grade level expectations, despite one quarter of the class having been identified with disabilities.**

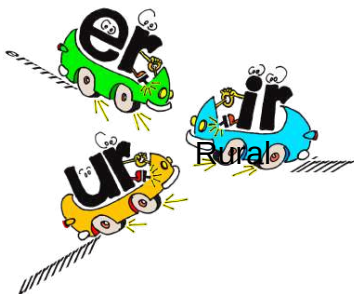
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**Grade:** Kindergarten

**Test:** DRA®

**Location:** South Carolina

**Population:** Intervention,  
Low Income



### Kindergarten Intervention South Carolina Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their kindergarten reading intervention class in rural South Carolina in the fall of 2018. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was examined based on changes in student reading levels from fall until December, based on DRA® assessments.

Despite students in the treatment class being identified as "struggling learners" and qualifying for intervention, **100% were reading at grade level after just 3 months of Secret Stories®. More impressively, 65% of students were reading above or well above grade level in this short period of time.**

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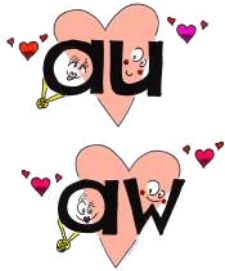


**Grade:** Kindergarten

**Test:** ISIP®

**Location:** Texas

**Population:** ESL, Low Income



## Kindergarten Texas Study

The case study teacher implemented Secret Stories® in their kindergarten class in rural Texas in late October of 2020. The efficacy of Secret Stories® was examined based on pre/post student performance on the I-station® Indicators of Progress (ISIP®) assessment in September and April.

Despite 50% of students being identified as Tier 2 or Tier 3 at the beginning of the year, almost all **(89%) had moved to Tier 1 by the end of the year. Moreover, the percentage of students at grade level rose from 50% to 80% after just 1 month of Secret Stories® use.**

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## Ethics Agreement

This case study was written by an independent firm on behalf of Secret Stories®, under a contractual agreement that all results would be published, regardless of outcomes and that no data would be withheld from said firm. All data and methods were independently checked by a third party education research firm not associated with Secret Stories® or the writers of this report.



### **Independent Verification**



Learning Experience Design (LXD)  
Research & Consulting  
a division of Charles River Media Group, LLC

This case study was written by an independent analyst on behalf of Secret Stories who verified the results. All reports were also independently reviewed by [Learning Experience Design Research](#), a third-party education research firm.