

ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER • DENVER, COLORADO

Doubling the Rate of Student Reading Growth in Only 50 Days with the Learning Ally Audiobook Solution



Through a partnership with the Archdiocese of Denver and the ZarlenGO Foundation, break-through results were achieved with struggling readers, who saw double the rate of reading growth with an ease of effort and time investment for educators through the implementation of the Learning Ally Audiobook Solution. With insight and funding from the ZarlenGO Foundation, educators at the Archdiocese of Denver were able to deliver all the benefits of student reading achievement, including academic success, heightened motivation, reduced frustration, and a culture that fosters a joy and celebration of reading for their students and families.

The Challenge

STRUGGLING READERS NATIONWIDE

In 2019, 65% of American students read at a level considered below proficient. This challenge can be particularly acute among underserved students, especially those who struggle to read due to neurological differences that impair reading, including conditions like dyslexia.

The data suggest that schools and districts wishing to improve reading performance need solutions that enable educators to deliver evidence-based reading support to their students who struggle to read. As children age—and learning shifts from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*—support can mean the difference between learning from reading or suffering sustained academic failure.

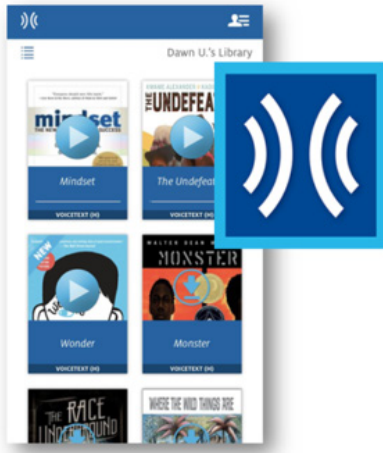
TARGETING THE CHALLENGE

In 2017, this nationwide struggle led the Archdiocese of Denver to turn to Learning Ally to support their students who were at risk of falling behind because they struggle to read grade-level text. They were also facing an imperative to be inclusive in their schools and accessible to all families.

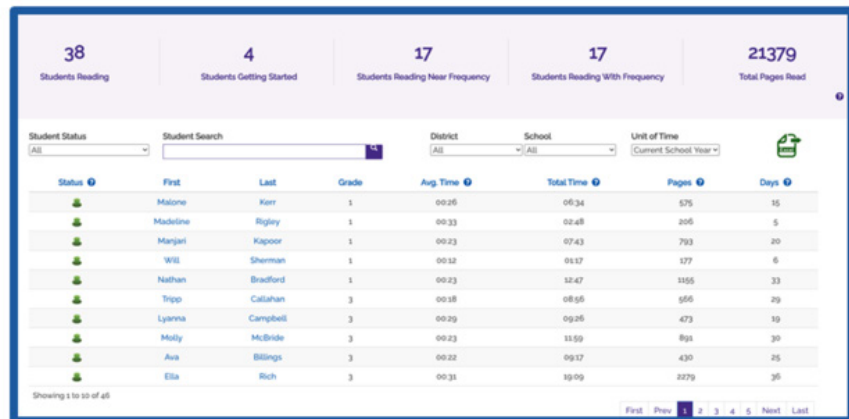
- » Students used the Learning Ally Audiobooks App to download books and read, thereby developing essential comprehension and background knowledge necessary to make progress in their education.
- » Educators used the Learning Ally Educator Portal to help students select books and monitor their progress during school and throughout the summer.

Methodology

To measure the impact of the Learning Ally Audiobook Solution (LAABS), the Denver Archdiocese provided student performance data related to reading level performance, as measured by the STAR Assessment.



The Learning Ally Audiobooks App



The Educator Portal

Students in grades 3-8 were evaluated over a series of three benchmark assessments during the 2018-2019 school year. The Learning Ally Audiobook Solution measured the extent to which students engage and achieve fidelity of the solution’s implementation.

Learning Ally compared students’ performance on the STAR Assessment and the extent to which they demonstrated fidelity of implementation—or reading with frequency (at least 20 minutes a day for 33 days) showed correlations to reading level performance. Approximately 800 students attending 34 schools were included in the sample. The results were very significant.

Why the Learning Ally Audiobook Solution?

Learning Ally Audiobook Solution is a proven multisensory reading support designed for struggling readers in grades K-12. With an extensive library of more than 80,000 human-read audiobooks, it provides equitable access to all the books students need and want to read, including curriculum-aligned textbooks, literature, and popular fiction. It enables deep comprehension, allowing students to keep pace with class and read to their cognitive capability. With a suite of educator tools for real-time progress monitoring and reporting, it helps educators implement personalized instruction and develop engaged learners, able to reach their full potential.

About The Zarlengo Foundation:

The Zarlengo Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that supports schools and programs for learning disabled children in and around the Denver community. The foundation provides scholarships, classroom resources, teacher training, and supports the Zarlengo Foundation Learning Evaluation Center at Havern School. Since its inception, the foundation has contributed \$1,251,691 to education-related causes in the Denver area. For additional information about The Zarlengo Foundation, please visit <http://www.zarlengofoundation.org>.

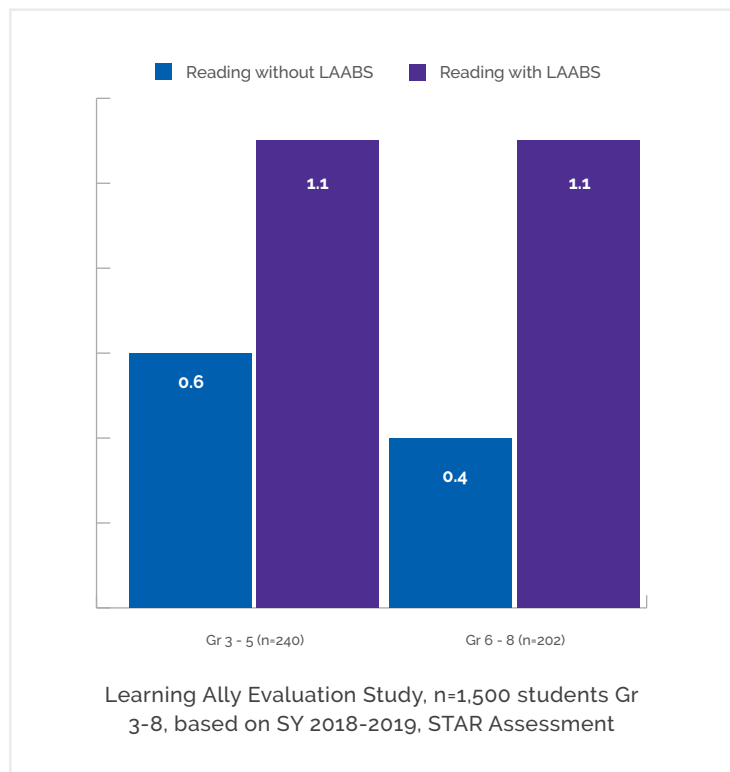


Results: Double the Rate of Reading Growth in Just 50 Days

Prior to using the Learning Ally Audiobook Solution (LAABS), educators in the Denver Archdiocese could expect to improve reading levels among typical students who struggle to learn due to neurological differences in reading at a rate of about 0.4-grade levels of improvement.

When examining students who engaged with LAABS at rates indicative of reading with frequency, they typically achieved about **double the rate of reading growth (0.9)**.

In addition to students making about double the rate of reading growth, the probability of students **achieving a full grade level of reading growth was almost twice as likely to occur** when students were engaged in reading with LAABS at rates approaching reading with frequency.



» **BASED ON START OF YEAR VS. END OF YEAR USING GRADE EQUIVALENCE SCORE FROM STAR ASSESSMENT OF READING**

» **READING WITH LAABS GROUP ACHIEVED AT LEAST 50 DAYS OF READING ABOUT 30 MINUTES PER DAY**

Teacher Testimonials

THE LEARNING ALLY AUDIOBOOK SOLUTION IN THE GEN ED CLASSROOM

Brigid Ryan, a 4th-grade teacher, implemented the Learning Ally Audiobook Solution and saw firsthand how it helped her struggling readers to get through challenging textbooks and discover the joy of reading.

Click on Brigid's picture to hear her testimonial!

"Now that all my students have access to an audio version of the majority of our textbooks, I've seen how much growth they've had in subjects like science and social studies."



**BRIGID
RYAN**
4TH GRADE
TEACHER

CENTENNIAL, COLORADO

THE LEARNING ALLY AUDIOBOOK SOLUTION FOR READING INTERVENTION

Kristen Trinder, a reading intervention teacher, speaks to her experiences with the Learning Ally Audiobook Solution, helping shift the educator, student, and parent experience from frustration and low motivation to confidence and success.

Click on Kristen's picture to hear her testimonial!

"Prior to having access to Learning Ally, not only did we have students who were struggling, but we had frustrated teachers as well."

"Learning Ally simply helps level the playing field so that all students can have access to grade level material."



**KRISTEN
TRINDER**
READING
INTERVENTION
TEACHER

ARVANA, COLORADO

LEARNING ALLY is a leading nonprofit education solutions organization dedicated to equipping educators with proven solutions that help new and struggling learners reach their potential. Our range of literacy-focused offerings for students Pre-K to 12th grade and catalog of professional learning allow us to support more than 200,000 educators across the US. The Learning Ally Audiobook Solution is our cornerstone award-winning reading accommodation used in more than 18,500 schools to help students with reading deficits succeed. Composed of high quality, human-read audiobooks and a suite of teacher resources to monitor and support student progress, it is designed to turn struggling readers into engaged learners. For more information, visit www.LearningAlly.org.