

# Product Analysis: A2i vs i-Ready



With school and district budgets constantly in flux and innumerable products and services being promoted to support teachers in the process of education it can be difficult to separate effective and proven approaches and tools from flashy products that promise a 'silver-bullet' but have no evidence to back up these claims. Regardless of budget or sales pitch, the central goal should always be the same: *working to improve student outcomes.*

**At Learning Ovations, improving student outcomes is not just a goal, but our guarantee.** Whether A2i is the sole source of data, instructional recommendations, and materials, or is used in conjunction with other resources (core curriculum or supplemental products), our professional support system has been proven to get over 90% of students reading at, or above, grade-level. Below is an explanation of how our outcomes, evidence, and implementation compare with i-Ready.

	The A2i Professional Support System	i-Ready Reading
<b>Research Summary</b>	<p><b>Evidence Overview:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Developer:</u> Dr. Carol Connor PhD (SLP &amp; reading researcher) in 2004.</li> <li>• <u>Funders:</u> US Dept of Education &amp; NSF</li> <li>• <u>Research Span:</u> 2004 to present</li> <li>★ <b><u>Research Publications:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>RCTs:</i> 7</li> <li>○ <i>Acad. Journal Articles:</i> 14</li> <li>○ <i>Book Chpts:</i> 3</li> </ul> </li> <li>★ <b><u>WWC Studies Accepted:</u></b> 3</li> <li>★ <b><u>ESSA Rating:</u></b> Strong</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evidence Overview:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Developer:</u> Four educators from Boston, including Frank Ferguson.</li> <li>• <u>Funders:</u> Berkshire Partners LLC</li> <li>• <u>Research Span:</u> 2016 to present</li> <li>• <b><u>Research Publications:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>RCTs:</i> 0</li> <li>○ <i>Acad. Journal Articles:</i> 0</li> <li>○ <i>Book Chpts:</i> 0</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b><u>WWC Studies Accepted:</u></b> 0</li> <li>☆ <b><u>ESSA Rating:</u></b> Promising to Moderate</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<p><b>Overview:</b> The A2i Professional Support System is an outcomes delivery system. The software platform is a teacher-facing planning tool that delivers instructional recommendations, using student data, to ensure students receive individualized instruction. These recommendations are paired with coaching and support to assist teachers and administrators in the process of turning evidenced-based recommendations into common practice in the classroom.</p> <p><b>Impact:</b> A2i was created by researchers and teachers with the singular goal of improving literacy outcomes for all students. In numerous studies, including seven</p>	<p><b>Overview:</b> i-Ready can be used in a number of configurations: as a diagnostic assessment alone, or an assessment paired with teacher and/or student lessons. Typical i-Ready implementation involves connecting diagnostic data to instructional next steps on the computer or via the i-Ready instructional materials.</p> <p><b>Impact:</b> Research on i-Ready reading has shown that use of i-Ready Diagnostic and Instruction may improve student outcomes. Across multiple studies, results have been</p>

	<p>randomized control trials (RCTs), A2i was proven to cause improvement in student reading outcomes. It was also shown that these results are cumulative, with students receiving A2i-based instruction over three consecutive years (grade 1-3) ending third grade reading at a 5th grade level. Over 90% of the students in this cohort were reading at, or above, grade-level.</p> <p><b>User:</b> The A2i Professional Support System was designed with teachers in mind as the main users. Students interact with the platform to take the assessments, but do not receive direct instruction from the platform. Teachers use the A2i information to plan instruction that meets the needs of every student.</p> <p><b>Components:</b> The A2i Professional Support System combines technology and professional development to increase literacy achievement by equipping and empowering educators to effectively individualize instruction in grades K-3. The A2i Professional Support system includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A2i Online Assessments</li> <li>● Data-Driven Recommendations</li> <li>● Aligned Lesson Plans</li> <li>● Customized Support</li> </ul>	<p>mixed as to the impact of i-Ready on student outcomes, as well as to the components that are most impactful (use of the i-Ready diagnostic vs the combined use of the i-Ready instructional components and assessment).</p> <p><b>User:</b> The i-Ready Diagnostic is an assessment students take that provides a teacher with a diagnostic breakdown of a students skills and recommends instructional groups. The i-Ready Instruction platform is student facing and delivers activities to students on a computer.</p> <p><b>Components:</b> The i-Ready reading platform includes the diagnostic assessment and the learning components (optional). Students take the assessment, which provides the teacher with a diagnostic breakdown of a students skills and instructional groupings.</p> <p>If the teacher also has access to i-Ready Instruction or curriculum the assessment information can also be tied to specific lessons.</p>
<p><b>Outcomes &amp; Results</b></p>	<p><b>Results:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A2i was developed for teachers, by teachers.</li> <li>● Born out of 13 years of rigorously tested research and development, more than 2,000 hours of classroom observation, <b>seven randomized control trials</b>, and 30+ journal articles.</li> <li>● The A2i Professional Support System has been given a rating of Strong by ESSA standards.</li> <li>● Multiple A2i studies meet the What Works Clearinghouse Without Reservations.</li> </ul> <p>Use of the A2i Professional Support System is</p>	<p><b>Results:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Quasi-experimental study results show that the use of i-Ready Diagnostic and Instruction together may impact student reading outcomes in Grades K-8.</li> <li>● The significant impact of i-Ready Instruction on student outcomes differed by grade.</li> <li>● No RCTs have been conducted.</li> <li>● Most studies related to i-Ready reading meet the Level 2 (moderate) ESSA rating.</li> <li>● No i-Ready studies have been peer-reviewed or accepted by the What Works Clearinghouse or been</li> </ul>

	<p>centered on a <u>partnership</u> created between school districts and the team at Learning Ovations. This collaboration allows us to promise all students will be reading at, or above, grade-level by the end of third grade.</p>	<p>submitted for peer review.</p>
<p><b>How It Works</b></p>	<p><b>A2i is a teacher planning tool, designed to help teachers use the instructional time they have in the most impactful way possible for each student.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Short assessments (5-15 min) are given throughout the school year to monitor student progress. The A2i algorithms update in real-time to provide teachers with instruction information for each student.</li> <li>● Data-driven recommendations, provided for each student in minutes, inform teachers how to structure small groups and effectively balance the most important classroom resource: teacher time.</li> <li>● The aligned Lesson Plan uses a teacher's existing curriculum and other online resources to streamline differentiation.</li> <li>● Customized support from a Literacy Outcomes Specialist ensures each implementation plan reflects the unique circumstances and goals of each district, school, and teacher.</li> </ul>	<p><b>i-Ready is an online platform that uses assessment data to guide students through digital games and lessons while they are not with the teacher.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The i-Ready Diagnostic takes approximately 45 minutes to administer and assess student's skills in reading across various areas.</li> <li>● Teachers have access to the data for reports, monitoring student growth and student groupings.</li> <li>● Assessment results can be connected to the i-Ready Instruction learning resources (delivered by a computer/device).</li> <li>● i-Ready Instruction provides students with games and activities along with teacher resources.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implementation &amp; Support</b></p>	<p>Each school works directly with a dedicated Literacy Outcomes Specialist who guides implementation and customizes the professional development to meet the unique needs of each teacher. This is included in implementation of the A2i Professional Support System (no added cost or a la carte options).</p> <p>Our Literacy Outcomes Specialists are available during scheduled sessions and on-demand. They provide training throughout the school year to teachers and administrators.</p> <p>This customized approach allows for systems alignment, so you get the most out of programs and resources you already have, instead of adding on "one more thing".</p>	<p>An account team that works alongside a school to support the use of the i-Ready components.</p> <p>For an additional cost, participation in Professional Development can be added to aid in implementation.</p> <p>Technical support is available if issues arise with the software platform.</p>

<p><b>Impact on Teaching</b></p>	<p>Learning Oventions helps teachers create classroom environments that reflect and honor individual student learning styles and needs. We are also dedicated to empowering educators by providing ongoing professional development in a variety of ways.</p> <p>All support and training is guided by the Learning Oventions Framework. Teachers' progress is guided across five areas that are critical for putting the information provided by A2i into action in the classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A2i Usage</li> <li>● Differentiation</li> <li>● Classrooms Structure</li> <li>● Instructional Materials</li> <li>● Partnership</li> </ul> <p>Tracking movement along the framework allows us to capture a true shift in teacher pedagogy. Both the teacher and Literacy Outcomes Specialist share the responsibility of this collaboration, with the goal of adopting the best and most effective instructional practices, ultimately leading to improved learning for all students.</p>	<p>i-Ready uses data (i-Ready Diagnostic) and virtual lessons/games (i-Ready Instruction) to inform teachers of their students' performance.</p> <p>Implementation recommendations advise teachers to spend time preparing students for the assessment, reviewing the data, and encouraging students to spend at least 45 minutes on the i-Ready Instruction platform (screen time) per week.</p> <p>Teachers are also encouraged to differentiate their instruction in small groups with iReady teacher resources provided.</p>
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### **Already have i-Ready?**

The results described above are achieved by forging trusted relationships with school leaders and teachers, applying research in literacy acquisition, and using technologies that allow teachers to apply the science of reading, and other best practices, without altering their curriculum or increasing their workload. By staying solely focused on this mission to create a systems-level approach that improves student reading outcomes, we've been able to create an outcomes delivery system that doesn't require previous investments or resources to be discarded, but instead align them. This allows teachers to use all of the tools at their disposal in a way that is also effective for students.

Many of our partner districts use A2i and i-Ready together. While many teachers value the diagnostic break-down i-Ready provides, we know diagnostic data alone is not enough to impact student outcomes ([Bjorklund-Young & Borkoski, 2016](#); [IES, 2019](#)). Combining the i-Ready data with the proven A2i instructional recommendations allows teachers to utilize both together. Similarly, student-facing programs like i-Ready Instruction fit into the A2i recommendations for child-managed instructional time. However, the A2i instructional recommendations also ensure that each student experiences the ideal amount of time with the teacher as well. Our studies show, small-group instruction from the teacher is 4-10x more impactful compared to other types of instruction (Al Otaiba et al., 2011).

By combining these resources, teachers and administrators can feel empowered to use the tools and platforms they may already be familiar with, but in a way that ensures instruction is effective and results in improved literacy outcomes for all students!

**Comparison Table: A2i & i-Ready**

	<b>A2i Professional Support System</b>	<b>i-Ready Diagnostic &amp; i-Ready Instruction</b>
<b>Adaptive reading and language assessment</b>	X	X
<b>Recommends student groupings</b>	X	X
<b>Data-driven resources</b>	X	
<b>Recommends open source, evidenced-based activities tailored to student needs</b>	X	
<b>Rigorous proof that use of the platform <i>causes</i> improvement in student outcomes</b>	X	
<b>Prescribed instructional minutes for each student across the full ELA block</b>	X	
<b>Real-time algorithms</b>	X	
<b>Customized implementation plan</b>	X	
<b>Expert on-demand support</b>	X	optional/by request only
<b>Expert in-person professional development</b>	X	optional/by request only
<b>Integrates with existing curriculum/resources</b>	X	
<b>Student-facing activities on computer/tablet</b>		X

**References**

Al Otaiba, S., Connor, C. M., Folsom, J. S., Greulich, L., Meadows, J., & Li, Z. (2011). Assessment Data-Informed Guidance to Individualized Kindergarten Reading Instruction: Findings from a Cluster-Randomized Control Field Trial. *The Elementary School Journal*, 111(4), 535–560.  
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Bjorklund-young, A., & Borkoski, C. (2016). Do Formative Assessments Influence Student Learning?: Research on i-Ready and MAP. Retrieved from <https://edpolicy.education.jhu.edu/formative-assessments>

Institute of Education Sciences (IES). (2019) Evaluation of Support for Using Student Data to Inform Teachers' Instruction. U.S. Department of Education. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20194008>