RESEARCH BRIEF

Additive Impact of Lexia English™ and Core5® on WIDA ACCESS and MCAS ELA

Key Findings

- Emergent Bilingual students who used Lexia English and Core5 made greater progress in Core5 compared to Core5-only users.
- Emergent Bilingual students who used Lexia English and Core5 together scored significantly higher on all WIDA ACCESS domains (reading, writing, listening, speaking) than students who only used Core5.
- Emergent Bilingual students who used Lexia English and Core5 together were significantly more likely than Core5-only users to progress to a higher proficiency level on the overall WIDA ACCESS.
- Students who used Lexia English and Core5 together scored significantly higher on MCAS ELA than Core5-only users.

Introduction

Lexia® English Language Development™ (Lexia English) is a blended learning program that supports the development of English language proficiency for students in grades K-6. The program helps accelerate student learning by providing targeted speaking and listening practice alongside explicit language instruction. A growing body of research suggests that Lexia English has a positive impact on learning outcomes for emergent bilingual students, including on measures of English language proficiency and English literacy.

Recently, Lexia has begun to investigate the extent to which Lexia English learning outcomes can be enhanced through the use of other Lexia programs, such as Lexia Core5® Reading (Core5). Like Lexia English, Core5 is an adaptive, blended learning program that includes an online student-facing component, offline teacher-led lessons, and continuous progress monitoring based on student performance. Core5 is designed to support the literacy development of PreK-5 students, including emergent bilingual students still developing English proficiency, by providing explicit instruction and practice in phonological awareness, phonics, structural analysis, automaticity, vocabulary, and comprehension. Previous studies of emergent bilingual students in grades 3–5 in California and Texas found that students using both Lexia English and Core5 scored significantly higher than non-Lexia peers (i.e. students who did not use either program) on state English language proficiency (Lexia, 2023; Lexia, 2025) and reading assessments (Lexia, 2025). In California, Lexia users also outperformed Core5-only students on the SBAC English Language Arts test (Lexia, 2023).

Given the results of previous studies, Lexia aimed to further examine the extent to which use of Lexia English and Core5 together impacts outcomes on standardized English language and literacy assessments as compared to students only using Core5. In the 2022-23 school year, Lexia partnered with 1 school district in Massachusetts to conduct a study on the impact of Lexia English and Core5 on the 2023 WIDA ACCESS for ELs assessment for emergent bilinguals in grades 1-5, and the 2023 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System English Language Arts assessment (MCAS ELA) for emergent bilingual students in grades 3-5. To this end, Lexia researchers conducted a quasi-experiment with an active comparison group that compared the impact of Lexia English and Core5 dual use to that of Core5-only, while controlling for differences in baseline English abilities and demographic factors.

Study Design

The sample pool consisted of 1572 emergent bilingual students across 12 schools in 1 school district in Massachusetts. All students were in grades 1-5 in the 2022-23 school year. Students were considered a user of Lexia English or Core5 if they completed at least 1 unit in the respective program, the smallest unit of meaningful program usage. Using this criterion, 1231 students used both Lexia English and Core5 and 341 students only used Core5.

Outcomes were analyzed based on grade-standardized scale scores for WIDA ACCESS domains and the overall MCAS ELA. ACCESS scale scores range from 100 to 600 and are reported for reading, writing, listening, and speaking components, in addition to an overall score. Students also receive an overall ACCESS proficiency score from 1.0 to 6.0, with whole numbers indicating WIDA levels from Entering (1) to Reaching (6). To examine changes in students' ACCESS levels, proficiency level scores were grouped by whole-number range (e.g., 1.0–1.9 = Level 1), and positive movement was defined based on whether a student scored at a higher level in 2023 than 2022. MCAS ELA contains reading and writing components, and an overall scale score ranging from 440 to 560 is reported for the overall test. The sample primarily included students with lower to intermediate English proficiency, based on their 2022 overall WIDA proficiency scores. Specifically, most students were in the Entering (36%), Emerging (30%), and Developing (30%) WIDA proficiency levels.

To measure the impact of different program usage patterns on language and literacy achievement, Lexia researchers matched Lexia English users and non-users who were similar in prior year (2023) WIDA scores (grade-standardized overall scale score), grade, special education status, and language program enrollment during the 2022-23 school year. All WIDA pre-test scores differed by less than 0.25 standard deviations between Lexia English users and non-users. The final analytic sample after matching included 630 students, and demographic information is provided in the table.

630 Students | 12 Schools | 1 District | Grades 1-5

Matched Sample Descriptive Statistics	Pre-WIDA		
	Core5 Only	**LE + Core5**	**Total**
Avg. Overall WIDA 2022 Scale Score	272	276	275
Avg. Overall WIDA 2023 Scale Score	300	318	315
Avg. Weekly Minutes- Core5	56	62	60
Avg. Weekly Minutes- Lexia English	--	33	33
% Economic Disadvantaged	80%	86%	85%
% Special Education	14%	11%	12%
% Enrolled in ESL Program	83%	84%	84%
% Grade 1	14%	13%	13%
% Grade 2	22%	24%	23%
% Grade 3	26%	25%	25%
% Grade 4	22%	22%	22%
% Grade 5	16%	16%	16%
N	108	522	630

Lexia researchers estimated program impact on students' WIDA and MCAS scores via multilevel linear regressions that controlled for school, pre-test scores, grade, special education status, economic disadvantaged status, and language program enrollment. In addition, Lexia researchers examined whether Lexia English + Core users were more likely than Core5-only users to score at a higher proficiency level in 2023 than 2022 on the overall ACCESS (1 = scored at a higher level, 0 = did not score at higher level), using multiple logistic regression with the same predictors as the scaled score analyses except replacing pre-test scale score with pre-test proficiency level score.[1]

[1] Due to model convergence issues from near-zero cluster-level variance when including school as a random intercept, proficiency-level analyses were based off of single-level regressions, with school as a covariate, rather than multilevel models.

Results

Students who used Lexia English and Core5 together made greater progress in Core5 than Core5-only students.

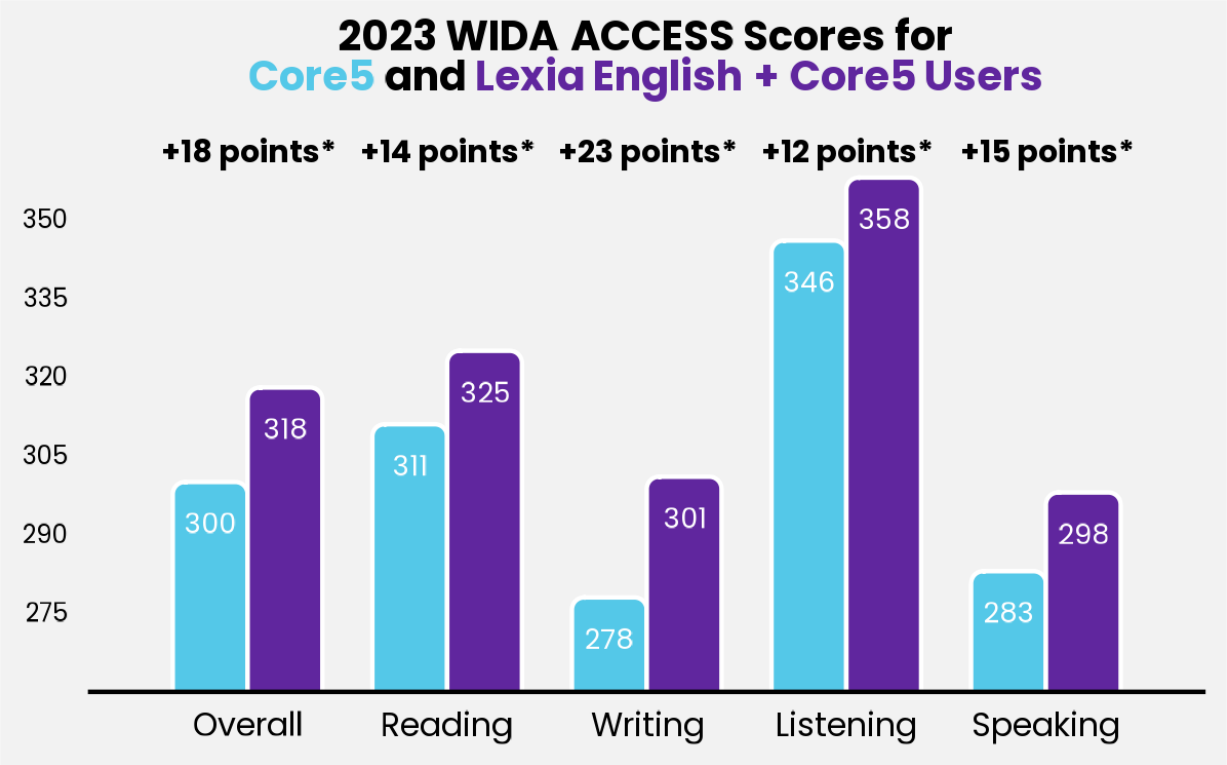
Prior to ACCESS testing (September 2022 – January 2023), median Core5 program usage was higher for dual program users than Core5-only users for total units completed (Dual: 121 units, Core5-only: 104 units) but similar for total weeks of use (Dual: 14, Core5-only: 14).[2] Multilevel regression analyses comparing groups and controlling for random school-level variance confirmed these patterns, with statistically significant group differences for total units (p = .038) but no difference for weeks of use (p = .067).[3] Similar patterns and statistical results were seen for students in grades 3-5 prior to MCAS ELA testing (September 2022 – March 2023): total units completed (Dual: 244 units, Core5-only: 165 units; p = .001), but similar total weeks of use (Dual: 25, Core5-only: 25; p = .424).

Previous studies of dual program users have reported similar use of Core5 between Lexia English users and non-users (Lexia, 2025). It is possible that in this study, students who were dual program users may have differed from Core5-only users in unobserved characteristics, such as motivation or in teacher-specific guidance on the use of Core5. Alternatively, given that Lexia English and Core5 support complementary as well as overlapping skills (e.g. academic vocabulary, comprehension), use of both programs may enable greater progress in each program through enhancements to interrelated prerequisite skills, such as English language comprehension. In the context of this study, we are unable to directly test these hypotheses because students were using both programs simultaneously and the usage data were not temporally ordered. Nevertheless, the possibility that dual program use may support students' language and literacy skills in mutually reinforcing ways should be explored in future research.

[2] Dual program users, Lexia English median usage: Pre-WIDA: 6 weeks, 20 units; Pre-MCAS ELA: 11 weeks, 52 units.
[3] Sensitivity analyses were conducted by removing outlier students who had unusually high Core5 usage (Core5 units completed: +3 standard deviations), and this revealed similar patterns of greater units (p = .043) for dual program users than Core5-only users, and similar weeks of use (p = .059).

Students who used Lexia English and Core5 together scored significantly higher on all WIDA ACCESS domains than Core5-only students.

Students who used both Lexia English and Core5 scored higher than Core5-only students on all WIDA ACCESS domains: overall ACCESS (+18 points), reading (+14 points), writing (+23 points), listening (+12 points), speaking (+15 points). The statistical analyses confirmed these trends as all differences reached statistical significance ($p < .05$). This trend can be seen in the adjacent figure, where statistically significant differences are denoted with an asterisk.



For each domain, including the overall WIDA, the effect size (ES) – which indicates the extent of difference between the Lexia English + Core5 group and Core5-only group – is considered large (> 0.20) according to Kraft (2020): overall (ES: 0.46), reading (ES: 0.54), writing (ES: 0.39), listening (ES: 0.23), and speaking (ES: 0.21). The findings of this study suggest that using both programs in combination may improve students' language proficiency more than using Core5 alone.

In contrast to previous studies of Lexia English (e.g. Feroce, Chattergoon, & Mancilla-Martinez, 2025) and Lexia English/Core5 dual program use (e.g. Lexia, 2025), the largest effects were seen in the written domain (reading, writing) rather than the oral domain (speaking, listening). On the one hand this difference may be due to differences in study design from other studies (e.g.

inclusion of students in grades 1-5, comparison to Core5-only users rather than a non-Lexia group). On the other hand, the dual program users in this study had greater average Core5 usage (total units) than the Core5-only users. It is possible that as students' language proficiency develops via working in Lexia English, that these improvements help them to engage more with Core5. However, this potential relationship may depend on the particular implementation context, including whether students are expected to dynamically use Core5 and Lexia English throughout the school year and the degree to which educators monitor students' language proficiency development and progress in Lexia English.

Students who used Lexia English and Core5 together were significantly more likely than Core5-only students to progress to a higher proficiency level on the overall WIDA ACCESS.

Of the students who used Lexia English and Core5, 57% scored at a higher proficiency level in 2023 than 2022, whereas this was 35% for Core5-only students. The statistical analyses confirmed this: after adjusting for prior year proficiency score and demographic differences, Lexia English + Core5 users were 3.0 times more likely to move to a higher proficiency level on the overall WIDA compared to Core5-only users, a statistically significant difference ($p < .001$). These results underscore how using Lexia English together with Core5 can boost students' test scores and accelerate their language proficiency development.

Students who used Lexia English and Core5 together scored significantly higher on the MCAS ELA than students who only used Core5.

For MCAS ELA, analyses were conducted based on the subset of matched students in grades 3-5 who had available MCAS 2023 scores. Given that MCAS ELA testing begins in grade 3, students' standardized 2022 WIDA ACCESS scale scores from all domains were used as a pre-test control. Analyses revealed that, on average, dual program users scored 6 points higher than Core5-only students, and this was associated with a large, statistically significant effect size of 0.28 ($p = .011$).

Matched Sample Descriptive Statistics	Pre-MCAS		
	Core5 Only	LE + Core5	Total
Avg. Overall WIDA 2022 Scale Score	300	305	304
Avg. MCAS ELA 2023 Scale Score	466	472	471
Avg. Weekly Minutes- Core5	67	75	74
Avg. Weekly Minutes- Lexia English	--	35	33
% Economic Disadvantaged	75%	83%	82%
% Special Education	17%	15%	15%
% Enrolled in ESL Program	89%	91%	91%
% Grade 3	41%	39%	39%
% Grade 4	35%	35%	25%
% Grade 5	24%	26%	26%
N	67	327	394

The MCAS results align with previous studies in which students who used Lexia English and/or Lexia English with Core5 scored higher than control groups on measures of general literacy achievement, such as SBAC English Language Arts (Feroce et al., 2025) and the Texas STAAR Reading Language Arts (Lexia, 2025). Similar to the WIDA results, the dual program students used Core5 significantly more than their Core5-only peers. It may be the case that supporting students' language proficiency development via Lexia English helped students to better understand the material in Core5 and thus make greater progress in the program. Alternatively, students who used Lexia English may have been in classrooms where educators more closely monitored usage of Core5 and/or encouraged greater use of Core5. Future research with a larger sample size can help shed light on these possibilities.

The findings from this study add to the body of research demonstrating how dual use of Lexia English and Core5 can accelerate students' language proficiency and literacy achievement. Additionally, the study highlights unique aspects regarding the extent to which students may benefit in the development of their written versus oral language proficiency, as well as how differences in Core5 program usage may emerge for students who are also using Lexia English.

Want to Learn More?

For additional information, including technical details of the analyses, or updates on research related to Lexia English and Core5, please contact research@lexialearning.com.

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