

**Product Evidence Base**

# **Lexia<sup>®</sup> PowerUp<sup>®</sup> Literacy Efficacy Research**

November 2024



## Introduction

Lexia® has a long history of building digital programs to help students become proficient readers. Included in the portfolio is the Lexia® PowerUp Literacy® blended learning program for students in grades 6–12. PowerUp is designed to accelerate literacy gains, whether students are several grade levels behind or show some risk of not meeting College- and Career-Ready Standards. PowerUp respects the maturity of adolescents with high-interest authentic texts and motivational elements. Lexia conducts rigorous scientific research to demonstrate the efficacy of its programs. This document summarizes the efficacy research studies that constitute the evidence base for PowerUp.

Content specialists continually update PowerUp to meet guidelines for inclusivity principles drawn from literature on culturally responsive pedagogy. As a blended learning program, PowerUp integrates online activities with offline instruction. PowerUp simultaneously addresses gaps in fundamental literacy skills while building higher-order analytical skills to accelerate learning across a broad range of skills and enable students to access grade-level content. It motivates adolescent learners to work towards grade-level literacy standards, while offering true personalization through individualized learning pathways, adaptive instruction, and data-driven action plans. PowerUp also provides progress-monitoring data and instructional resources tied to student performance without having to stop to administer a test.

# Key Findings

Across multiple studies, we found:

- **Significant effects of PowerUp in comparison to alternative forms of classroom instruction.**

Using PowerUp had a greater impact on student performance than alternative forms of instruction. Effect sizes in studies of the current product ranged from 0.14 to 0.74.

- **PowerUp was effective for all students.**

PowerUp helped all students learn, regardless of race/ethnicity, English Learner, or special education status.

- **Benefits of PowerUp with different lengths of implementation.**

PowerUp contributed to literacy gains in studies lasting one school year as well as half-year studies and studies of summer programs.

The [PowerUp Logic Model](#) illustrates how PowerUp is expected to impact students, educators, and school/district leadership. It operationally defines the key inputs and activities involved in implementing PowerUp, and the outcomes expected to result. The PowerUp Logic Model helps satisfy the “Demonstrates a Rationale” level of evidence for the effectiveness of an educational program as described by the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA).

A **logic model** is a visual representation of the assumptions and theory of action that underlie the structure of an education program ([IES](#)).

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Lexia PowerUp Literacy (PowerUp) was designed to address the needs of students in grades 6-12 who are not reading proficiently and are at risk of not meeting College- and Career-Ready standards.

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The studies summarized in the tables below provide an evidence base establishing the efficacy of PowerUp. Included are early studies on the precursor to PowerUp – Lexia Strategies for Older Students (S.O.S.) – together with more recent empirical studies on PowerUp. We consider studies on S.O.S. to demonstrate a rationale that PowerUp would be effective for students. Seven of the 12 studies on PowerUp are published in peer-reviewed, scientific journals. Of these published studies, three meet the highest standards of strong evidence for an educational intervention described by ESSA.

## Peer-Reviewed Publications

Lexia regularly submits its studies for peer-review. The peer-review process subjects Lexia’s research studies and findings to the scrutiny of other experts in the same field (peers). This process is considered necessary to ensure academic scientific quality. As of November 2024, there are 7 peer-reviewed scientific studies of PowerUp, all listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

*Peer-Reviewed Publications on PowerUp.*

#	Year	ESSA Tier	Effect Size	Grades	# Students	Targeted Demographics
<b>1</b>	2024	Moderate	0.14	6-10	26,029	Struggling Students, English Learners
<b>2</b>	2022	Strong	0.69	6	122	Struggling Students, English Learners
<b>3</b>	2022	Strong	-	6	570	Struggling Students
<b>4</b>	2021	Strong	0.36	6-8	155	Struggling Students
<b>5</b>	2019	Rationale	-	8	19	Struggling Students
<b>6</b>	2014	Rationale	-	4-6	4	Students with Disabilities
<b>7</b>	2009	Rationale	0.78	6-7	47	Struggling Students

## External Evaluations

PowerUp has been evaluated by external organizations and researchers unaffiliated with Lexia Learning. PowerUp has been reviewed by the independent research review organizations Evidence for ESSA and the National Center on Intensive Interventions at the American Institutes for Research. PowerUp has also been independently evaluated and endorsed by the Council of Administrators of Special Education, following a rigorous review process. Independent researchers have also evaluated the effectiveness of PowerUp as part of their doctoral dissertations. These research studies – summarized in Table 2 below – provide further independent confirmation that PowerUp is an effective program.

Evidence for ESSA is a free, web-based resource that provides information on programs that meet the evidence standards as defined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). It was created by the Center for Research and Reform in Education housed within the Johns Hopkins School of Education. For more information about this organization, please visit their website at [www.evidenceforessa.org](http://www.evidenceforessa.org)

As of November 2024,  
PowerUp has received a

**STRONG Rating**

on Evidence for ESSA.



READING

GRADES STUDIED

6-8

## Lexia PowerUp Literacy

Essa Rating

 **STRONG**

No. Studies

**1**

No. Students

**155**

Average Effect Size

**+0.36**

[www.evidenceforessa.org/program/lexia-powerup-literacy](http://www.evidenceforessa.org/program/lexia-powerup-literacy)

The National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) is a technical assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). One of its goals is to review commercially available assessment and intervention programs in behavior and academics to help schools identify programs that are best suited to their students. NCII's review of our PowerUp research can be found by accessing the link located [here](#).



The Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) Product Review Committee evaluates products for special education populations and recommends endorsement based on rigorous criteria. The goal of the committee is to advance research-based practices in special education leadership that are highly correlated to improved student outcomes. To access the CASE list of endorsed products, please visit website at [www.casecec.org/endorsed-products](http://www.casecec.org/endorsed-products)

Table 2.

*Doctoral Dissertations on PowerUp.*

#	Year	ESSA Tier	Effect Size	Grades	# Students	Targeted Demographics
<a href="#">8</a>	2023	Rationale	-	6	-	Students with Disabilities
<a href="#">9</a>	2022	Rationale	0.74	-	20	Students with Disabilities
<a href="#">10</a>	2021	Rationale	0.50	5-6	703	Struggling Students

## Internal Research and Reports

Lexia regularly publishes the results from internal studies to communicate the impact of PowerUp to the public. Research Briefs are short, accessible reports that provide relevant details about the research studies, focusing on key findings. These briefs are often released before full-length manuscripts are published with results from the research study.

Table 3.

*Research Briefs on PowerUp.*

#	Year	ESSA Tier	Effect Size	Grades	# Students	Targeted Demographics
<a href="#">11</a>	2020	Strong	0.54	6	38	Struggling Students
<a href="#">12</a>	2018	Rationale	-	8	33	Struggling Students

The 12 research studies summarized in the above Tables 1-3 constitute the evidence base for PowerUp, providing robust and diverse evidence that PowerUp is effective at improving literacy outcomes for all students. The remainder of this document provides detailed information about each study, including links to the original publications where available. As additional evidence about the effectiveness of PowerUp becomes available, this document will be updated.



## 1



## Can Computer-Assisted Instruction Help Schools to Close the Achievement Gap: Evaluation of a District-Wide Reading Intervention

# Schools	-
# Students	26,029
Assessment	-
Duration	School Year
Effect Size	0.14
ESSA Tier	Tier 2 (Moderate) – Quasi-Experimental
Evaluators	External Researchers
Grades	6 – 10
Program	Lexia PowerUp Literacy
State	-
Targeted Demographics	Struggling Students, English Learners
Years	2024

A concerning number of U.S. students in middle and high school lack fundamental reading skills. To address this issue, a large Southeast school district decided to use Lexia PowerUp Literacy in the 2022-23 school year for Tier 3 students in grades 6 – 10. There were 9,792 students who used PowerUp and the remaining 16,237 students served as controls. The state English Language Arts (ELA) test was used to assess reading. The ELA test given in the spring of 2021-22 – prior to PowerUp use – served as a pretest, and the ELA test given in the spring of 2022-23 was the posttest. On average, control students had significantly higher pretest scores than PowerUp students. A “difference in differences” (DID) approach was used to estimate the effect of PowerUp on ELA scores. This approach takes the average outcome (posttest minus pretest) for treatment students and SUBTRACTS the average outcome for control students. *DID results showed a significant effect of PowerUp with an average effect size of 0.14. Notably, there was an even larger effect size – 0.25 – for the subgroup of English Learners.* In addition, students who started PowerUp early in the school year and used it for at least an hour per week experienced higher gain scores. These results suggest that effective use of PowerUp can help boost students’ reading scores, particularly English Learners.



## Bolstering Middle School Students' Component Reading Skills: An Evaluation of the Lexia PowerUp Literacy Blended Learning Program

# Schools	2
# Students	122
Assessment	PRO-ED TOSWRF2, TOSREC, TOSCRF2
Duration	School Year
Effect Size	0.69
ESSA Tier	Tier 1 (Strong) – Experimental
Evaluators	Lexia Research
Grades	6
Program	Lexia PowerUp Literacy
State	Massachusetts
Targeted Demographics	Struggling Students, English Learners
Year	2022

This study explored how PowerUp contributed to gains on fluency tests that tap into various reading skills and whether benefits of PowerUp occurred for both English Learners and native English speakers. Students in the study were enrolled in six supplemental reading classes across two middle schools in the same district. All supplemental reading classes within each school were taught by the same teacher. Half of the classes were randomly assigned to use PowerUp, and the other half were control classes using an alternative reading program. Three standardized reading fluency tests – Test of Silent Word Fluency (TOSWRF2), Test of Silent Reading Efficiency and Comprehension (TOSREC), and Test of Silent Contextual Reading Fluency (TOSCRF2) – were administered as a pretest in the fall and a posttest in the spring. Results showed no differences between groups in gain scores on TOSWRF2 and TOSREC. However, there was a significant group difference on the TOSCRF2. *The PowerUp group gained 26.7 points on the TOSCRF2 while the control group declined 2.5 points. Gains for the PowerUp group reflect a 35% improvement over the school year.* The TOSCRF2 is the most complex of the fluency tests administered and assesses multiple reading skills. This difference favoring PowerUp students was evident for both English Learners and native English speakers.

## 3



## Impact of Lexia PowerUp Literacy Program on Sixth Grade Student Reading Achievement

# Schools	5
# Students	570
Assessment	Renaissance STAR Reading
Duration	Half Year
Effect Size	-
ESSA Tier	Tier 1 (Strong) – Experimental
Evaluators	Lexia Research
Grades	6
Program	Lexia PowerUp Literacy
State	Massachusetts
Targeted Demographics	Struggling Students
Year	2022

This randomized control study investigated the impact of Lexia PowerUp Literacy on reading achievement for students in grade 6. The study was conducted in five public middle schools during the first half of the school year. District leaders decided to offer literacy support to students reading on or below grade level. Three schools were randomly assigned to the intervention group and two to the control group. Intervention students used PowerUp during their English Language Arts/Reading classes, while control students received alternative forms of literacy instruction during these classes. Outcomes of this study focused on students in grade 6 who used PowerUp for at least 18 weeks. Fall and Winter scores on STAR Reading served as pretest and posttest, respectively. *Students using PowerUp scored significantly higher than control students at posttest, earning Winter STAR Reading scores that were 21 points higher* than control students after accounting for Fall STAR Reading scores and student characteristics. Students who used PowerUp were also 1.48 times more likely to move up a benchmark level on STAR Reading as compared with control students. These findings show that, even in a half-year implementation, consistent use of PowerUp supports significant reading gains for middle school students.

# 4



## Supporting Struggling Middle School Readers: Impact of the Lexia PowerUp Literacy Program

# Schools	2
# Students	155
Assessment	Renaissance STAR Reading
Duration	Half Year
Effect Size	0.36
ESSA Tier	Tier 1 (Strong) – Experimental
Evaluators	Lexia Research
Grades	6-8
Program	Literacy PowerUp Literacy
State	Michigan
Targeted Demographics	Struggling Students
Year	2021

This study examined how well Lexia PowerUp Literacy promotes reading ability among a sample of struggling middle school readers. Students in the study were enrolled in supplemental classes, receiving 40 minutes of literacy instruction per day. Each class contained a mix of students in grades 6-8. Seven classes were randomly assigned to use PowerUp for six months, and three classes served as a control group in which instruction was delivered with the traditional supplemental curriculum. Scores on STAR given at the beginning of the year and end of year served as a pretest and posttest, respectively. Students in classes that used PowerUp scored significantly higher at posttest than students in control classes. The effect size for this outcome was 0.36, which translates to *improvement of about 10 percentile points*. The effect of treatment did not interact with students' identified race, showing that the *impact of PowerUp did not differ for Black and White students*.

## 5



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## The Effects of Individualized Literacy Interventions on Eighth-Grade Students' Perceived Self-Efficacy in Content Reading and Reading Achievement

# Schools	1
# Students	19
Assessment	Renaissance STAR Reading
Duration	4 Months
Effect Size	-
ESSA Tier	Tier 4 (Demonstrates a Rationale)
Evaluators	External Researchers
Grades	8
Program	Lexia PowerUp Literacy
State	-
Targeted Demographics	Struggling Students
Year	2019

A group of 19 eighth-grade students from a small Midwestern school district were provided with individualized literacy interventions over a 4-month period. A key component of the interventions was use of Lexia PowerUp Literacy, which was implemented in groups of five or less students. In addition to the literacy interventions, half of the students in the study were randomly selected to engage in 8 weeks of 1-on-1 conversations with the researcher about reaching personal literacy goals. *Students who received literacy interventions coupled with 1-on-1 conversations showed a mean grade equivalency gain of .55 on STAR Reading over two months* in the second half of the intervention period. These students also showed evidence of improved literacy-related self-efficacy. Students who were provided with literacy interventions but without 1-on-1 conversations made more modest gains over the same time period. Overall, outcomes of this study suggest that individualized, PowerUp-based literacy interventions coupled with literacy goal conversations can provide strong benefits for struggling readers in middle school.

## 6



## Effects of Computer-Assisted Instruction for Elementary Readers with Disabilities

# Schools	1
# Students	4
Assessment	Lexia Quick Reading Test
Duration	3 Months
Effect Size	-
ESSA Tier	Tier 4 (Demonstrates a Rationale)
Evaluators	External Researchers
Grades	4-6
Program	Lexia Strategies for Older Students
State	-
Targeted Demographics	Students with Disabilities
Year	2014

This study examined how well Lexia programs could support the development of reading skills. Four students with reading disabilities participated in this study. These students used a precursor to Lexia PowerUp Literacy – called Lexia Strategies for Older Students – in remedial reading sessions. The students were administered the Lexia Quick Reading Test to identify skills where instruction was needed. For each student, three skill areas were targeted for instruction. In each skill area, a set of word identification probes was constructed that contained words directly taught in the Lexia program. *Effects of instruction were seen when percent accuracy on word probes improved from baseline. There were 11 out of 12 instances of students achieving skill mastery (over 90% accuracy).* Additional teacher-led instruction beyond the program was needed in 33% of these instances. After instruction, skills were maintained at a rate of 93% across students. Ability to generalize skills to untaught words was also assessed and occurred at a rate of 80% across students.



# Schools	1
# Students	47
Assessment	Riverside Publishing Woodcock-Johnson III
Duration	School Year
Effect Size	0.78
ESSA Tier	Tier 4 (Demonstrates a Rationale)
Evaluators	Lexia Research
Grades	6-7
Program	Lexia Strategies for Older Students
State	Utah
Targeted Demographics	Struggling Students
Year	2009

This study investigated how well Lexia programs could benefit struggling readers in middle school. Students were enrolled in one of three remedial reading classes. The classes were taught by the same teacher and contained students in grades 6-7. Two classes were randomly assigned to use a precursor to Lexia PowerUp Literacy – called Lexia Strategies for Older Students – as a supplement to the schools’ core curriculum, and the third served as a control class and received the core curriculum. Subtests from the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement were given at the beginning and end of the school year. *Middle school students using the Lexia program made significant gains on three subtests – Word Attack, Letter-Word Identification, and Comprehension.* Gains were significantly greater on Word Attack for students using the Lexia program (4.3 standard score points) than control students (-2.4 standard score points). Further analyses revealed that Lexia students with the lowest scores at pretest on Word Attack and Letter-Word Identification showed the greatest gains. No such relationships were seen in the control group.



# Schools	16
# Students	Unavailable
Assessment	Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness
Duration	2 Years
Effect Size	-
ESSA Tier	Tier 4 (Demonstrates a Rationale)
Evaluators	External Researchers
Grade	6
Program	Lexia PowerUp Literacy
State	Texas
Targeted Demographics	Students with Disabilities
Year	2023

This study aimed to evaluate the implementation of Lexia Power Up Literacy in sixth grade special education classes to improve student outcomes in reading. A large suburban school district adopted PowerUp to use during the 2020–21 and 2021–22 school years in 16 schools. Due to district policies, student-specific data were not made available to the researcher so only aggregated outcomes were reported. Students made progress in PowerUp during both years of the study. The percentage of students completing PowerUp activities was 93% and 77% in the Word Study strand, 94% and 70% in the Grammar strand, and 99% and 91% in the Comprehension strand. Scores on the Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) were obtained at the end of each school year. Students had a passing rate of 44% on the STAAR at the end of 2020–21. This was a slight decrease from the rate of 47% at the end of the 2018–19 school year. The decrease can be attributed to the impact of the COVID–19 pandemic which disrupted the 2019–20 and 2020–21 school years. *From 2020–21 to 2021–22, the passing rate on the STAAR increased from 44% to 51%.* The latter outcome surpassed the pre-pandemic rate of 47%. Overall, this study identified potential benefits of PowerUp for students receiving special education services.





## The Lexia PowerUp Literacy Program as an Intervention to Increase Word Recognition Automaticity and Reading Self-Efficacy in Middle School Students with Disabilities

# Schools	1
# Students	20
Assessments	Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement–Third Edition Reader Self-Perception Scale-2
Duration	12 Weeks
Effect Size	0.74
ESSA Tier	Tier 4 (Demonstrates a Rationale)
Evaluators	External Researchers
Ages	10–15
Program	Lexia PowerUp Literacy
State	New Jersey
Targeted Demographics	Students with Disabilities
Year	2022

This study employed a one group pretest/posttest design to investigate the impact of Lexia PowerUp Literacy on word recognition automaticity and reading self-efficacy in middle school students with disabilities. Twenty students with various types of disabilities – the most common being Specific Learning Disability – participated in this study. Students used PowerUp three times a week in their Language Arts classes for 12 weeks. Scores on the Word Recognition Fluency subtest of the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement–Third Edition were used to assess word recognition automaticity, and reading self-efficacy was evaluated with the Reader Self-Perception Scale-2. Results showed that *use of PowerUp contributed to a significant gain in word recognition automaticity*. The effect size for this outcome is 0.74. Use of PowerUp was also associated with a small, non-significant increase in reading self-efficacy. These findings show that use of PowerUp can help enhance students’ automatic word recognition and thus contribute to reading success, though the gains in automaticity were not tied to a significant increase in self-efficacy.



# Schools	1
# Students	703
Assessment	NWEA MAP
Duration	5 Weeks
Effect Size	0.50
ESSA Tier	Tier 4 (Demonstrates a Rationale)
Evaluators	External Researchers
Grades	5-6
Program	Lexia PowerUp Literacy
State	Connecticut
Targeted Demographics	Struggling Students
Year	2021

This study employed a quasi-experimental design to assess if participation in an intensive, 5-week Summer Academy could lead to improved reading scores for middle school students. All participants in the Summer Academy had a Spring reading score at the 25th percentile or lower on NWEA MAP. Students scoring above the 25th percentile served as a comparison group. The intervention included reading and writing instruction and a STEM performance task. For reading instruction, whole group activities focused on comprehension strategies, and small group activities targeted word study, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. A key component of small group activities was use of PowerUp to provide students with individualized instruction. *Participants in the intervention demonstrated significant growth in MAP reading scores over the summer and, further, showed significantly more reading growth than comparison students.* Effect size for this comparison is 0.50. In contrast to reading growth, participants in the intervention regressed in MAP math scores over the summer. Overall, the Summer Academy – which included PowerUp as a key component in the intervention – resulted in improved reading performance for middle school students.



# Schools	2
# Students	38
Assessment	Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP)
Duration	Half Year
Effect Size	0.54
ESSA Tier	Tier 1 (Strong) – Experimental
Evaluators	Lexia Research
Grades	6
Program	Lexia PowerUp Literacy
State	Michigan
Targeted Demographics	Struggling Students
Year	2020

This study evaluated how well PowerUp could support reading for students in middle school. All students in the study were in grade 6 and enrolled in supplemental classes, receiving 40 minutes of literacy instruction per day. Four classes were randomly assigned to use PowerUp for six months, and two classes served as a control group in which instruction was delivered with the traditional supplemental curriculum. Scores on the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) at the end of grade 6 were the post-test. There were no differences in M-STEP scores between PowerUp and control students at pretest. However, after the intervention, PowerUp students averaged more than 6 points higher than control students. Effect size for this comparison was 0.54 – nearly five times the impact seen with typical middle school reading interventions. The difference is equivalent to an *improvement of over 20 percentile points*.



# Schools	1
# Students	33
Assessment	Ohio State English Language Arts Test
Duration	School Year
Effect Size	-
ESSA Tier	Tier 4 (Demonstrates a Rationale)
Evaluators	Lexia Research
Grades	8
Program	Lexia PowerUp Literacy
State	Ohio
Targeted Demographics	Struggling Students
Year	2018

This study examined the extent to which use of Lexia PowerUp Literacy was related to reading gains in struggling middle school readers. All students in the study had scored in the “non-proficient” range on the state ELA test at the end of grade 7. They then used PowerUp in grade 8. By the end of the school year, PowerUp students showed a statistically significant 5.1 scaled score gain on the state ELA test. *One-third of students improved to the extent that they no longer scored in the non-proficient range on the test.* It was also found that students’ time-on-task in PowerUp was related to performance on subsections of the state test. Every 10-minutes spent in PowerUp’s Comprehension strand per week was associated with a statistically significant 5% increase in Reading for Information scores and a 3% increase in Writing scores on the state test. In addition, every 10 minutes students spent in PowerUp’s Grammar strand per week was associated with a statistically significant 4% increase in Writing scores. These findings showed that use of PowerUp was tied to reading gains in middle school students.

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