



MONTESSORI

Blended Learning
Personalized Learning
Early Literacy

“Lexia® supports the Montessori value of individualization. Just as students have choice within their classroom communities, they have choice in Core5®.”

– KAREN WEISS, TEACHER,
INTERCULTURAL MONTESSORI
LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Intercultural Montessori Language School Chicago, IL

Supporting Reading Intervention in a Montessori Model

Challenge

At Intercultural Montessori Language School, classroom communities are composed of multi-age small groups, where, following the Montessori Method, students take ownership of their learning by choosing independent activities in subjects of their interest, working at their developmental level. Intercultural Montessori students are immersed in a target language—Spanish, Mandarin, or Japanese—with the goal of creating citizens of the world.

With its distinctive program, Intercultural Montessori faces a unique challenge: Having enough instructional time in the day to personalize learning in two languages.

When Executive Director Dr. Nimisha Bhatt joined the school in 2018, she was looking for an English language arts intervention that offered targeted,

individualized instruction and practice, especially in early literacy skills. Robust, actionable data was important for helping both teachers and parents support students, and the program had to fit into the Montessori philosophy and support dual-language learners. Further, the tool needed to build teacher capacity, so teachers could help students make the most of their English work cycles.

Solution

For the 2018-2019 school year, Intercultural Montessori purchased Lexia® Core5® Reading, a research-proven, technology-based literacy program designed for grades Pre-K-5. Bhatt used federal grant funding through Title IV-A: The Student Support and Academic Enrichment program to pilot the program.

She was familiar with Lexia’s programs from her previous role as a principal in Oak Park, IL (a Chicago suburb), where she saw “phenomenal” results.

“I found Lexia to be just amazing,” she said. **“The kids gained skills so quickly through intense, targeted lessons.** Whether they struggled with long sounds or BPD discrimination, once they mastered it, they were golden. **You could see the benefits right away in their reading.”**

In Core5, students are automatically placed at their individual level and work on self-directed activities to develop their skills in the six areas of reading. The program provides explicit, systematic, and adaptive learning, scaffolding students as they struggle and advancing them to higher levels as they demonstrate proficiency.

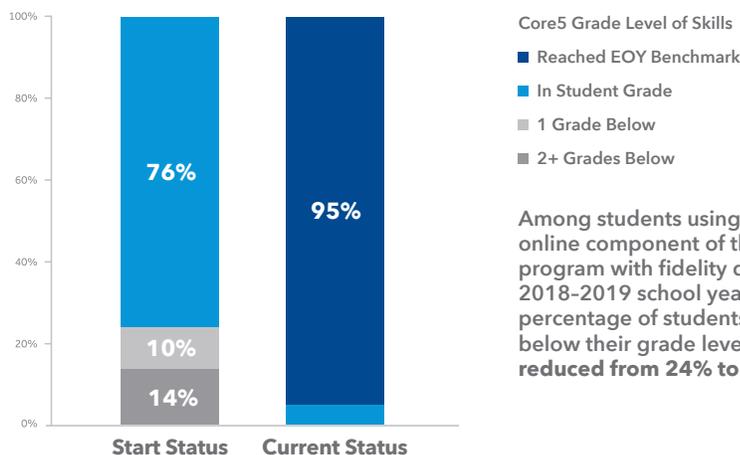
According to teacher Karen Weiss, who oversees the school’s Core5 usage, progress in Core5 offers students a sense of accomplishment—they enjoy both the digital rewards of unlocking new, interesting level content, and the printed achievement certificates they can take home.

“I’ve watched the kids who worked in Core5 every single day go from struggling to really loving learning,” she said. **“The certificates are key. They give the kids motivation to work harder and do better on a daily basis.”**

Through myLexia, the educator dashboard, student data is easy to access and simple to interpret. Lexia’s patented embedded assessment system, Assessment Without Testing®, provides actionable, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced performance data without administering a test. Weiss monitors students’ usage and skill progress daily and shares the reports with teachers, administrators, and parents.

In addition to the online program, Core5 offers offline resources to help educators target direct instruction.

Figure 1. Progress of Students Meeting Usage (N=21)



Among students using the online component of the program with fidelity during the 2018–2019 school year, the percentage of students working below their grade level in Core5 reduced from 24% to 0%.

Because many of the lessons are scripted, they can be delivered by teachers, paraprofessionals, or parents.

Some parents have taken the extra step to support the use of Core5—both the online program and supplemental materials—with their children at home, under the faculty’s guidance.

“Parents read with their kids often, and Lexia is another great way to get parents involved in literacy,” Weiss said.

“When I show parents where their child started in Core5 and the growth they’ve made, that gives us such credibility,” Bhatt added.

Results

During the first year of implementation, Intercultural Montessori used Core5 as a Tier II intervention (based on their benchmark assessment tool) with 38 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Of those who used the online component of the program with fidelity¹, 24% began the school year working below grade-level material in Core5, and 76% within their grade level. By the end of the year, 95% of students who met usage finished their grade-level material in Core5, reaching or exceeding their end-of-year Core5 benchmarks.

All students who started Core5 below grade level and met usage closed the gap, reaching at least grade-level material.

Due to Intercultural Montessori’s positive results, Bhatt has expanded Core5 use from a Tier II intervention to Tier I in kindergarten and first grade for the 2019–2020 school year. The success, according to Bhatt, is clear.

“I would absolutely recommend Lexia Core5 Reading. I wouldn’t use anything else for reading intervention,” Bhatt said. **“I’ve worked with a lot of different programs over the years, and I feel that the quality of instruction and the growth that students achieve with Lexia is just phenomenal.”**

Profile: Intercultural Montessori Language School, Chicago, IL

• Enrollment	224
• Grades	PS-8
• Race	
Two or more races	33.7%
Caucasian	30.8%
Asian	21.3%
Latino	7.6%
African American	6.7%

¹ Use with fidelity defined as meeting their weekly usage targets in the online component of the program at least 50% of weeks, for at least 20 weeks. N=21