Lexia® English Language Development™

and

The ELPA21 English Language Proficiency Standards

Alignment Report
Submitted
November 18, 2020

Introduction

This alignment report was prepared by LearnEd Creative Solutions, an independent consulting firm, after a thorough review and analysis of the Lexia® English Language Development™ Program and alignment to the ELPA21 English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards.

The report contains three sections. Part I provides background information on the team who completed the work. Part II outlines the alignment methodology for the project. And Part III contains an overview describing the alignment between the Lexia English Program and the ELPA21 ELP Standards.

PART I: The Alignment Team

The Lexia English Language Development Program alignments were conducted by LearnEd Creative Solutions and a team of highly qualified independent consultants with decades of experience in the field of language education. LearnEd Creative Solutions is a private consulting firm whose mission is to improve people's lives through lifelong educational opportunities and cultural enrichment. With over 30 years of experience in the field of education and second language learning, LearnEd provides a range of services that include but are not limited to the development of assessments and program content, alignments to educational standards, and project management.

Lexia English Alignments Project Manager
Robin Stevens, M.A., has over 30 years experience in the field of second language education and assessment, including the development of curriculum and tests for K-12 English learners, research, standards alignments, and English instruction in the U.S. and Asia. Currently the owner of LearnEd Creative Solutions, her former roles have included Assistant V.P. of Assessment & Curriculum at Ballard & Tighe, Publishers; Senior Manager of Assessment at Lexia Learning; and Policy Analyst at the University of California Los Angeles' Center for the Study of Evaluation/CRESST. A former Fulbright scholar to Taiwan, she holds a B.S. in International Business and M.A.s in TESOL and Asian Studies.

Lexia English Alignment Team
Andrea Casper has over 20 years experience in classroom teaching and curriculum development for English language arts. As an independent contractor, she develops, reviews, and edits standards- based curriculum and assessments for ELA and English language development for English learners and writes high-interest literary curriculum for intensive reading programs that include standards-based progress monitoring. In the classroom, she aligned all learning activities and assessments to state standards and used standards-based grading to assess, target, and provide relevant feedback on student progress. She holds a Florida Educator's Certificate for English 6-12 and a B.A. in English from Mercer University.

Sandy Chang, Ph.D., specializes in assessment and the learning and teaching of language and literacy, especially for English learners. Her research includes analysis and review of college- and career-ready and English language development standards, alignment of standards to curriculum and assessment, and content analysis of large-scale assessments. She has also developed language learning progressions for English learners. Sandy earned her Ph.D. in Human Development and Psychology from University of California, Los Angeles and her Ed.M. in Language and Literacy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Sandy is a National

Board Certified Teacher in Literacy. She worked with English learners as a K-8 classroom teacher and reading specialist.

Maria Serna Dennis, M.A., has worked in the field of language assessment for ten years. She has developed grades 3-11 CCSS-aligned Spanish Language Arts State assessments and transadapted grades K-11 CCSS- and TEKS-aligned Math assessments. She has also worked on numerous language proficiency tests for the government and private sector, in addition to teaching both English and Spanish language courses based on a communicative functional approach. She earned her M.A. in Spanish Language and Literature from University of Maryland, College Park, specializing in Hispanic Applied Linguistics and Teaching.

PART II: Alignment Methodology

This section first provides an overview of the scope of the Lexia English Program alignments project and then describes the methodology used to complete the work.

Lexia English Program Alignment Project
The Lexia English Program was designed and written to align closely to the ELPA21 ELP Standards. After the Lexia English Program was completed, the LearnEd alignment team conducted an in-depth analysis to verify the alignments of each program level, activity, encounter, and offline lesson to the ELPA21 ELP Standards. This was done not only to assure that the original alignments were accurate but also to ensure that detailed guidance could be provided to educators about learners' progress toward mastery of the ELP standards in myLexia® reports.

Lexia English Alignment Methodology
A rigorous process for establishing linkages between Lexia English Program content and the ELPA21 ELP Standards was undertaken by a team of educators with experience in standards alignments and the education of English language learners, or dual language learners. There are several ways an alignment can be performed, including sequential development, expert review, and document analysis (Case and Zucker, 2005). The methodology adopted for the Lexia English alignment work was the expert review process, in which a panel of content experts compares the selected standards to a program's educational content (Webb, 1997). This process consisted of a series of steps that included: training on the standards, calibration rounds prior to beginning the actual alignment work to assure consistent application of the standards to program content, frequent agreement checks for alignment consistency among team members, and regular meetings to discuss potential alignment issues, interpretation of the standards, and consensus.

The first step of the process was to develop a detailed alignment guidelines document for the ELPA21 ELP Standards. The guidelines document includes a full review of the standards, development of a notation for the standards, an analysis of how the standards would be applied during the alignment to the Lexia English Program, and steps for completing the work. Concurrently, the standards were organized and uploaded into a spreadsheet along with the notations to be used, and spreadsheets were created for tracking the alignments for both the online lessons and offline lessons.

The second step of the process was to train and calibrate the alignment team on the standards, following a rating procedure that included practice rounds, discussion of aligners' judgments, and

the establishment of decision rules to guide consistent application of the standards to content (Bailey, Butler, & Sato, 2007). This began with a thorough review of the guidelines document and standards. Then the team conducted multiple practice rounds in which each person matched the standards to Lexia English Program content. The content for practice rounds was selected based on shifts in grades and proficiency levels in the standards, since these are the areas that often present the greatest challenge when doing alignment work. Small changes in the wording of the standards can occur from one grade or proficiency level to the next, resulting in different alignments of the Lexia English content for a particular standard for that grade or proficiency level. After each practice round, the team met to discuss the alignments and reach consensus. Once the team worked through the practice rounds and reached agreement on all of the alignments, the alignment work began.

The third step of the alignment process was to review each level, activity, and encounter in the Lexia English Program, as well as the offline lessons, and match the program content to the standards by grade and English proficiency level. Aligners reviewed the content and matched standards independently. Then, to assure a high level of agreement in applying the standards to the content, the team conducted systematic agreement checks, which involved having two team members code sections of the same content and then check the level of agreement. There were three steps for calculating the level of agreement. First, all of the alignment tags assigned to the content being reviewed by each aligner were summed to reach the total number of alignment tags. Second, the number of disagreements were summed to reach the total number of disagreement tags. A disagreement is defined as an alignment tag used by one aligner but not the other for the same lesson. Finally, the total number of disagreements was divided by the total number of alignment tags to arrive at the level of agreement. An example of an agreement calculation is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sample Agreement Calculation

	Online Lesson: Level 7 Activity 3 Encounter 3 – Main Lesson	Online Lesson: Level 7 Activity 3 Encounter 3 – Presentation of Knowledge	Offline Lesson: Level 7 Activity 3 Listening Practice
Rater 1 tags*	2, 9, 10	1, 10	1, 2, 9, 10
Rater 2 tags	2, 9, 10	9, 10	1, 2, 9, 10
Agreement Subtotals	6 tags 0 disagreements	4 tags 2 disagreement	8 tags 0 disagreements
Agreement Calculation	18 tags, 2 disagreements 2/18 = .11 or 11% Level of agreement: 89%		

*Note that each tag number is associated with a standard, so the numbers 2, 9, and 10 are each associated with a particular standard.

In this example, the level of agreement between the two aligners is above the target of 80% agreement. In this situation, the person conducting the agreement check would leave comments, if any, about alignment choices that were different from the original aligner's choices. Then the original aligner reviewed those comments and resolved any disagreements, either by keeping the original alignments or by revising alignments based on the comments. Sometimes the two aligners decided to meet to discuss particular standards or lessons that might be more challenging to align. If the level of agreement were to fall below 80%, the two aligners would review their original alignment choices for accuracy, articulate rationales for the alignments, and then meet to discuss the lesson and alignments. Together, they would reach consensus on any disagreements prior to continuing the alignment work. In both situations, the goal of the agreement checks was not only to maintain consistency in matching the standards to the program content among aligners, but also to produce alignments between standards and program content that are apparent to teachers and educators when working with their students. However, the level of agreement never fell below 80% during the alignment project; the average agreement across the four aligners was 91%.

Finally, once the alignments were completed, reports to show the depth and breadth of

alignment to each set of standards were prepared and the data disseminated for reporting purposes (i.e., to show which standards apply to particular encounters in the online program or in offline lessons when reporting on individual student performance) or publication.

PART III: Alignment of the Lexia English Program to the ELPA21 ELP Standards

In this section, a brief description of the Lexia English Program is provided, followed by an overview of the ELPA21 ELP Standards and how the Lexia English Program was aligned to the standards. Finally, a summary of the alignments to the standards is presented.

Overview of the Lexia English Program
Lexia English is a blended-solution product that delivers online instruction and practice in grammar, speaking, and listening aimed at increasing K-6 students' academic English language proficiency. Students work independently to learn grammar that is systematically introduced in interactive online lessons, first repeating new forms embedded in academic language frames and then independently using the forms they learned to ask and answer questions in increasingly rigorous tasks that include listening to informational and literary texts and answering comprehension questions about what they have heard.

The online component is supplemented with offline educator-delivered lessons for small-group instruction. Students' progress in the program is constantly monitored using myLexia. This data-driven tool flags students that are struggling and need additional support in a small-group setting. There are two types of teacher-led offline lessons: 1) Speaking Practice and 2) Listening Practice. Both types of lessons provide students the opportunity to use academic language frames in teacher-led activities and then to practice and collaborate with peers.

In both the online and offline lessons, content anchored in math, social studies, science, and general academic topics sets the context for language instruction. The program has 19 levels of instruction with four sections of instruction per level, each focusing on a different subject area and linguistic content. Each level targets a particular language proficiency level and grade band, becoming increasingly more complex as students complete a level. Although the focus of the program is on speaking, listening, and the development of grammar and syntax skills and knowledge, students also participate in collaborative speaking, listening, and close reading activities with their peers during the offline lessons, as well as guided writing activities.

The ELPA21 ELP Standards
The ELPA21 ELP Standards were released in 2014 by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). They are intended to correspond to K-12 practices in the content areas of ELA, Mathematics, and Science, as well as the Common Core State Standards for ELA, Math, and Literacy.

There are 10 standards that are organized by grade level or grade band (K, 1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-9, and 9-12) across five proficiency levels, Levels 1-5, with Level 1 representing the lowest level of proficiency and Level 5 being the highest. The descriptors for each proficiency level for each of the standards describe targets for English learner (EL) performance at the end of each ELP level.

The 10 standards can be organized two ways, numerically or via an alternate organization by domain (Receptive: Listening and Reading, Productive: Speaking and Writing, Interactive: Listening/Speaking/Reading/Writing, and Linguistic Structures, which relate to the CCSS Language Domain). Standards 1-7 focus on language central to the content areas, beginning with an emphasis on deriving meaning and engaging with content. Standards 8-10 focus on micro-level linguistic features that support standards 1-7. Table 2 below presents the standards numerically according to their importance to ELs' participation in instruction related to ELA, mathematics, and science standards, along with the domain associated with each standard.

Table 2: ELPA21 ELP Standards

Standard	Domain	Text of Standard
1	Receptive: listening and reading	Construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade appropriate listening, reading, and viewing
2	Interactive: listening, speaking, reading, and writing	Participate in grade-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions
3	Productive: speaking and writing	Speak and write about grade-appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics
4	Productive: speaking and writing	Construct grade-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence
5	Interactive: listening, speaking, reading, and writing	Conduct research and evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems
6	Interactive: listening, speaking, reading, and writing	Analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing
7	Productive: speaking and writing	Adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing
8	Receptive: listening and reading	Determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text

9	Linguistic structures	Create clear and coherent grade-appropriate speech and text
10	Linguistic structures	Make accurate use of standard English to communicate in grade-appropriate speech and writing

How the Lexia English **Program is Aligned to the ELPA21 ELP Standards**

The Lexia English Program prepares students to participate in a broad range of academic classroom activities that align to the instructional goals in the ELPA21 ELP Standards. The focus of the alignment was on the tasks that students complete in their online and offline activities. Since the online program models simulated partner discussion, which helps students prepare for authentic classroom activities, the program was aligned to all standards related to the linguistic features of the language frames being taught and their associated language purpose, such as to describe, explain, compare, and to justify with reasons or evidence. Likewise, any language frames and activities that model and allow for practice of linguistic skills that are used in collaborative speaking, listening, close reading, and guided writing activities in the classroom were aligned to the standards, as long as tight and defensible alignments were possible.

Summary of Lexia English Alignments to the ELPA21 ELP Standards

An overview of the alignments to the ELPA21 ELP Standards is provided in Tables 3 and 4 below, with Table 3 representing kindergarten through second grade and Table 4 representing third through sixth grade. The ELPA21 ELP Standards are listed in the columns on the left, and the Lexia English Program, which includes the online and offline components, is represented in the column on the right. A check mark in the column on the right indicates that the Lexia English Program aligns to the particular ELPA21 ELP Standard listed in the left column of that row.

Table 3: Alignment between ELPA21 ELP Standards and Lexia English, Kindergarten-Grade 2

Kindergarten – Grade 2		
Standard	**Text of Standard**	**Lexia English**
1	Construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade-appropriate listening, reading, and viewing	✓
2	Participate in grade-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer, audience, or reading comments and questions	✓
3	Speak and write about grade-appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics	✓
4	Construct grade-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence	✓
5	Conduct research and evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems	✓
6	Analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing	✓
7	Adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing	✓
8	Determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text	✓
9	Create clear and coherent grade-appropriate speech and text	✓
10	Make accurate use of standard English to communicate in grade-appropriate speech and writing	✓

Table 4: Alignment between ELPA21 ELP Standards and Lexia English, Grades 3-6

	Grade 3 - Grade 6	
Standard	**Text of Standard**	**Lexia English**
1	Construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade-appropriate listening, reading, and viewing	✓
2	Participate in grade-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer, audience, or reading comments and questions	✓
3	Speak and write about grade-appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics	✓
4	Construct grade-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence	✓
5	Conduct research and evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems	✓
6	Analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing	✓
7	Adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing	✓
8	Determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text	✓
9	Create clear and coherent grade-appropriate speech and text	✓
10	Make accurate use of standard English to communicate in grade-appropriate speech and writing	✓

Overall, the tables indicate that the Lexia English Program aligns strongly to the ELPA21 ELP Standards. There is evidence—in either the online lessons, offline teacher-led practice, or both—that students engage in learning and practicing the skills associated with each standard. During online lessons, for example, students respond to questions about academic texts that they have heard; in the offline Speaking Practice, they practice using newly learned academic language frames and then learn to write short texts using the frames; in offline Listening Practice, they engage in close-reading activities as a class and then interact with peers to ask and answer questions about academic texts; and in online Conversation and Grammar units, they learn a wide variety of linking words and transitional words and phrases to connect events, ideas, and opinions, in addition to a variety of adverbs, prepositional phrases, and subordinating conjunctions to produce and expand different sentence types. Through practice and engagement with all aspects of the program, students are provided with the linguistic tools needed to express themselves and interact with others on range of academic topics that become increasingly complex across each level of the program.

Conclusion
A rigorous alignment process to analyze and verify the linkages between the Lexia English Program content and the ELPA21 ELP Standards reveals a strong relationship between the program and the standards. Students who participate in the program will build a range of academic language skills that will enable them to increase their overall language proficiency and succeed in academic contexts across the subject areas in classrooms that use the ELPA21 ELP Standards to guide instruction.

References

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