



Response to Interim Assessment Guidelines Associated with WIDA Standards and ACCESS for ELLs

In November 2018, WIDA released guidelines for stakeholders to consider when choosing an appropriate interim assessment linked to ACCESS for ELLs. The guidelines include seven Critical Categories and corresponding evidence that an interim assessment should meet in order to be used as a valid English language proficiency interim assessment that supports the ACCESS for ELLs annual summative assessment. LAS Links® 2nd Edition meets these criteria, as demonstrated in this response.

WIDA Critical Category	Example Evidence	Interim Assessment
1. Theoretical foundation	Formal test documents describing the theoretical framework within which the test was designed and content and tasks were developed.	LAS Links 2nd Edition

LAS LINKS THEORETICAL FOUNDATION SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Link to: [LAS Links 2nd Edition Interpretation Guide \(Forms C and D\)](#)

Excerpt from the LAS Links Second Edition Interpretation Guide (Forms C and D):

Uses of LAS Links 2nd Edition

LAS Links 2nd Ed. is a tool to help identify and monitor the progress of students requiring essential academic language skills. Additionally, it provides information to help classify English language learners (ELLs) who require language instruction, to inform decisions on such instruction, and to subsequently monitor students' progress toward English proficiency in social and academic language necessary to successfully participate in the mainstream classroom.

LAS Links 2nd Ed. provides educators and other stakeholders with valuable information about students' progress toward (1) meeting the demands of the (State) ELD standards, (2) accessing and using academic language, and (3) achieving English language proficiency.

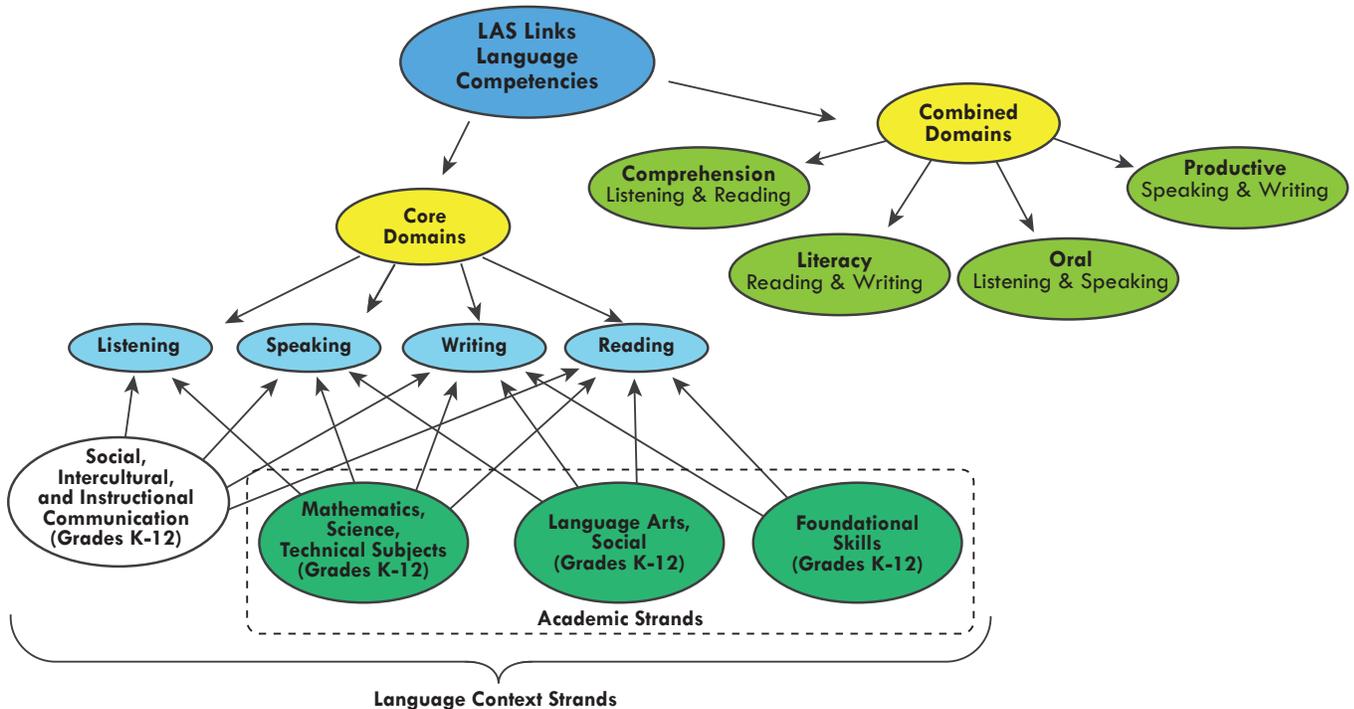
Academic Language

In the last several decades, researchers and policy makers have studied and come to understand the pivotal role of academic language in effective curriculum and instruction for both ELLs and Academic English Learners (Anstrom et al., 2010). The development of academic language skills is critical not only for ELLs, but for every student. Academic English Learners (also known as Standard English Learners) are those students (whether they speak English at home or not) who do not yet have enough academic language proficiency to succeed in the classroom. LAS Links 2nd Ed. provides stakeholders a tool to identify those students who may require additional language support in order to meet the demands of the (State) ELD standards. LAS Links 2nd Ed. refers to academic language as the language skills (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, functions, discourse, registers, and discipline practices) that students need to access and use in order to engage with academic content. For example, academic speaking and listening include skills necessary for formal communication such as classroom presentations or classroom discussions on specific topics. Academic reading and writing include comprehension of different genres and the ability to produce specific writing types such as narrative, expository, or persuasive. In order to measure students' academic language,

LAS Links 2nd Ed. targets academic language strands that are reflected in ELL development standards. LAS Links 2nd Ed. specifies three criteria related to language in academic settings:

1. Target content areas or strands of academic language: Foundational Skills; Language Arts, Social Studies, and History; and Mathematics, Science, and Technical Subjects
2. The linguistic complexity of receptive and expressive language (e.g., word/sound recognition, vocabulary, grammar, discourse features, etc.)
3. The types of language function and tasks for communicative purposes in a school context (e.g., identifying, comprehending, describing, analyzing, etc.)

The LAS Links 2nd Ed. approach to measuring academic language is designed to help students, teachers, and stakeholders understand how students access and utilize language in academic content areas. The social, instructional, and intercultural communication language context strand is equally important and targets the language used to navigate social and interpersonal contexts at school. Section 2 (of the Interpretation Guide) describes how these strands operate in the assessment framework and reporting structure.



WIDA Critical Category	Example Evidence	Interim Assessment
2. Content validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal alignment study that shows linguistic difficulty level and standards alignment • A test development report that provides a detailed description of the test content's development and review steps 	LAS Links 2nd Edition

LAS LINKS CONTENT VALIDITY SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

- Links to: [LAS Links Alignment to WIDA standards – Executive Summary](#)
[LAS Links Alignment to WIDA standards – Appendix A – Domain by Standard Alignment](#)
[LAS Links Alignment to WIDA standards – Appendix B – Domain by Level Alignment](#)



Excerpt from the LAS Links Alignment to WIDA Standards:

An alignment study was conducted for the LAS Links assessment and the WIDA Consortium English Language Development Standards. Eight reviewers analyzed WIDA Standards and the LAS Links assessment according to Dr. Norman Webb’s alignment methodology. To appropriately align the LAS Links assessment to the WIDA Standards, all elements of the standards were included. Two alignment studies were conducted to account for the interaction between the domains, standards, and levels: LAS Links to WIDA Standards and LAS Links to WIDA Levels.

Link to: [LAS Links 2nd Edition Technical Manual – Forms C and D](#)

Excerpt from the LAS Links 2nd Edition Technical Manual - Forms C and D:

DRC Content and Research experts worked together on the development of grade-level test specifications to conceptualize the LAS Links new generation of language proficiency assessments and to guide item writers through the test development process. The English Language Learners Advisory Panel (ELLAP; see Appendix A for a list of the panel members) reviewed the specifications and sample items and provided guidance during the LAS Links test specifications development process. The test specifications contain measures that are linked to the goals of the CCSS (2010). The specifications were designed to ensure that passages and items are appropriate in terms of content, difficulty level, item construct, and Universal Design considerations. A team of writers/reviewers collaborated during the development of this project. Item writers and content specialists were experts in content alignment, and the majority of content editorial and supervisory staff had classroom teaching experience. Content development specialists were assigned to a specific grade span in the creation of LAS Links. Their prior experience teaching and working with the subject matter helped them effectively develop appropriate assessment content. Detailed item specifications guided item writers, and assignments contained information on avoiding biased content with details specific to the ELL student population. Every item created during the test development process was written and aligned to a specific standard in order to ensure a wide range of skills were covered in each test skill area. Items were developed in a team environment, and each item underwent several layers of content review by senior specialists.

2.5 Quality Control Evidence

Items were reviewed for adherence to the item-writing specifications, which included developmental appropriateness, item difficulty, freedom from areas of potential bias, and appropriate answer choices and distracters on the basis of both content considerations (e.g., expert reviews) and statistical evidence (e.g., Classical Test Theory [CTT] statistics and differential item functioning [DIF] analyses). Additionally, items went through a thorough review by internal and external review panels for bias and sensitivity. During form development, items and the overall test construction were reviewed for considerations of Universal Design principles, including equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort, and size and space for approach and use.

3.1 Field Testing Design

The field testing design used for LAS Links Forms C and D included three field test forms per grade span with content characteristics and item types similar to those of the resulting operational tests (Forms C and D) being constructed. Each field test form had a similar length to the target length of an operational form. Using three field test forms per grade span was intended to provide additional items to support form selection based on content and psychometric criteria without overburdening the test administrators or student participants. To ensure item quality and minimize chances of item suppression from empirical evaluation, the Forms C and D field test items were reviewed and selected with close attention to content quality and the target student population.



WIDA Critical Category	Example Evidence	Interim Assessment
3. Technical quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical report providing the assessment’s reliability estimates by domain and grade, including errors of measurement and confidence intervals • Reports of the underlying structure of tested construct (e.g., IRT fit or factor analysis) and correlations to similar types of constructs • Reports providing details on scoring processes and procedures. For constructed response assessments and/or items, reports and guidelines on test rubrics and rater training and scoring materials. • Reports on how the interim assessment characterizes growth and how growth is unique across grade and language proficiency levels 	LAS Links 2nd Edition

LAS LINKS TECHNICAL QUALITY SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Link to: [LAS Links 2nd Edition Technical Manual – Forms C and D](#)

Excerpt from the LAS Links 2nd Edition Technical Manual – Forms C and D:

Chapter 7.1 (presents) key statistics at the item and test levels based on data from the LAS Links Forms C and D field testing with the purpose to facilitate empirical evaluation of the test forms as part of the internal evidence. Furthermore, procedural and internal evidence that relates to test fairness as documented throughout the technical manual is summarized and presented in Chapter 7.2, which is followed by an overall summary and discussion of evidence on reliability and validity in Chapter 7.3.

4.2.2 The LAS Links English Common Scale

Being able to demonstrate growth is a major advantage for an assessment. Forms C and D provide scale scores at the domain and composite levels, in addition to proficiency level scores, to help educators track student growth on the LAS Links English common scale from year to year across Grades K–12. With the common scale, students’ original scale scores can be subtracted from their scores in subsequent years, yielding a measure of growth from one grade level to the next. A common scale allows for comparison of individual and groups of students within grades and across grade spans and permits the monitoring of student performance across years. A common scale permits educators to interpret the improvement in student scores from one test administration to the next as evidence of student growth in English language proficiency across grades and years in the bilingual or ESL program. Additionally, common scaling provides a way for linking test forms built for students from different grade spans to a single underlying scale score metric. As separate test forms were built to be grade-span appropriate, linking these test forms allows for tracking progress of individual students as they move from one grade level to the next.

WIDA Critical Category	Example Evidence	Interim Assessment
4. Score reports and score interpretations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of score reports that are available to users and the interpretive guides or support materials that are available to help test users in interpreting scores • A score report on growth characteristics of students at different grades and language proficiency levels 	LAS Links 2nd Edition

LAS LINKS SCORE REPORTS AND SCORE INTERPRETATIONS SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Link to: [LAS Links 2nd Edition Sample Reports](#)
[LAS Links 2nd Edition Interpretation Guide \(Forms C and D\)](#)
[LAS Links Growth Study](#)

Excerpt from the LAS Links Second Edition Interpretation Guide (Forms C and D):

Section 2: Framework and Score Reporting Design

This section describes important features of LAS Links 2nd Ed., including the assessment framework and score reporting design. An understanding of the key features of the assessment will aid teachers and stakeholders to accurately and effectively interpret results from individual and group reports about student performance. This section addresses the following:

- framework and description of the assessment
- areas of social and academic language proficiency in student and group score reports
- types of reported scores and their meaning

Excerpt from the LAS Links Growth Study:

LAS Links Forms C and D were designed as equivalent forms and may be used interchangeably. The forms are placed on a LAS Links English common scale that was established in 2006. Reported scale scores at the domain and composite levels, in addition to proficiency level scores, help educators track student growth on the LAS Links English common scale from year to year across Grades K–12.

With the common scale, students' original scale scores can be subtracted from their scores in subsequent years, yielding a measure of growth from one grade level to the next. A common scale allows for comparison of individual and groups of students within grades and across grade spans and permits the monitoring of student performance across years. A common scale permits educators to interpret the improvement in student scores from one test administration to the next as evidence of student growth in English language proficiency across grades and years in the bilingual or ESL program. Additionally, common scaling provides a way for linking test forms built for students from different grade spans to a single underlying scale score metric. As separate test forms were built to be grade-span appropriate, linking these test forms allows for tracking progress of individual students as they move from one grade level to the next.

About This Document (Growth Study)

Student yearly scale score gains were analyzed based on data collected from 2014 to 2017 across the nation on LAS Links Form C/D. This document describes the sample used in the analysis, and presents the growth analysis results.

WIDA Critical Category	Example Evidence	Interim Assessment
5. Practicality and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test administration manuals that provide details to test administrators on how to administer the test • Explanation of accessibility tools and accommodations that are available to students 	LAS Links 2nd Edition

LAS LINKS PRACTICALITY AND INCLUSIVITY SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

LAS Links Online is delivered via the **DRC INSIGHT platform**, the same platform used to deliver WIDA ACCESS testing across the nation. Use of a common platform allows for:

Common navigational tools across both assessments for students

- For a preview of the assessments online, please feel free to access the practice tests found [here](#).
 - Be sure to use Chrome as your browser to preview the assessments



Common features between WIDA ACCESS on INSIGHT and LAS Links on INSIGHT

- Including: Rostering, scheduling test sessions, creating test tickets, etc
- Use of existing technological configurations for testing (no need to reinstall INSIGHT or create a new Central Office Service (COS))
- Same username to access both WIDA ACCESS and LAS Links accounts

Link to: [LAS Links National Digital Library](#) – a vast collection of brochures, overview documents, informational sheets, and various training videos to guide all stakeholders including administrators, students, technology directors, and teachers.



WIDA Critical Category	Example Evidence	Interim Assessment
6. Relationship to performance on ACCESS for ELLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reports of statistical analyses (e.g. regression) indicating predictive ability of the interim assessment to ACCESS scores or showing similar growth patterns• Reports showing the relationship between ACCESS proficiency levels and the interim assessment's proficiency levels	LAS Links 2nd Edition

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Data on the alignment of the LAS Links assessment were collected from the eight reviewers following the methodology developed by Norman Webb, as modified by H. Gary Cook (2007). The data collected were then analyzed to determine whether the LAS Links assessment met the criteria established by the alignment model. The major difference between the Webb methodology and the modification by Cook is the substitution of Linguistic Difficulty Level (LDL) for Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK). In addition, this alignment study is to the new 2012 Amplification of the WIDA Standards, while Cook’s 2007 ACCESS for ELLs to WIDA Standards alignment study was to the previous 2004 WIDA Standards.

The reviewers began the alignment process by first reviewing and analyzing the WIDA Standards and then the LAS Links operational items. Taken as a whole, the alignment of the LAS Links items to the WIDA Standards is very strong and is similar to the alignment results shown in Cook’s 2007 study of ACCESS for ELLs and WIDA Standards.

Given the results, the use of LAS Links as a tool for progress monitoring and student attainment of English language proficiency is recommended and would help teachers and administrators assess their students well with regard to the WIDA Standards and Levels. This report provides an overview of the studies and results of LAS Links alignment to the WIDA Standards and Levels.

WIDA Critical Category	Example Evidence	Interim Assessment
7. Consequential validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testimonials of how the interim assessment was used positively in classrooms, schools or districts contexts • Reports or studies of focus groups and/or surveys of teachers/administrators highlighting the positive influences on EL's English language proficiency development based on the assessment 	LAS Links 2nd Edition

LAS Links is utilized by districts, states, and organizations across the US and internationally. DRC will provide references upon request.

Click to view a video created in collaboration with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) in regards to how they use LAS Links Online and how it has impacted student performance: [Video Link: LAUSD and LAS Links](#)

IN SUMMARY:

Table 1: Guideline's Questions on Interim Assessments

	LAS Links Meets Category Requirements		
	Yes	Partially	No
Critical category 1: Has the test publisher provided an explanation of the theoretical approach to language development that the test is grounded in?	✓		
Critical category 2: Has the test publisher shown how the test is aligned to the WIDA ELP standards across grade clusters both in terms of content and proficiency levels?	✓		
Critical category 3: Has the test publisher provided evidence of the statistical reliability of their test?	✓		
Critical category 4: Are score reports available for the test and is there sufficient interpretative materials for score reports?	✓		
Critical category 5: Has the test publisher provided a test administration manual that provides detailed information pertaining to the logistics of administering the test?	✓		
Critical category 6: Has the test publisher conducted analyses to demonstrate the relationship of the test to ACCESS in terms of prediction and growth patterns?	<i>DRC will release Concordance Tables in Fall 2019 to allow prediction of scores on ACCESS</i>		
Critical category 7: Is there evidence provided to show the positive influence of the test on classroom practices?	✓		



***For pricing and additional information please contact DRC at:
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