ARTICLE

Gearin, B., Chattergoon, R., Kim, Y. S., Piasta, S., & Brooke, E. (2025). Evaluating a professional development program and third-grade reading achievement outcomes in the context of Colorado's READ Act, *Elementary School Journal, 126* (2), 280-306, https://doi.org/10.1086/737951

LETRS IS NOT ENOUGH TO CHANGE STUDENT OUTCOMES

WHAT DID THEY DO?

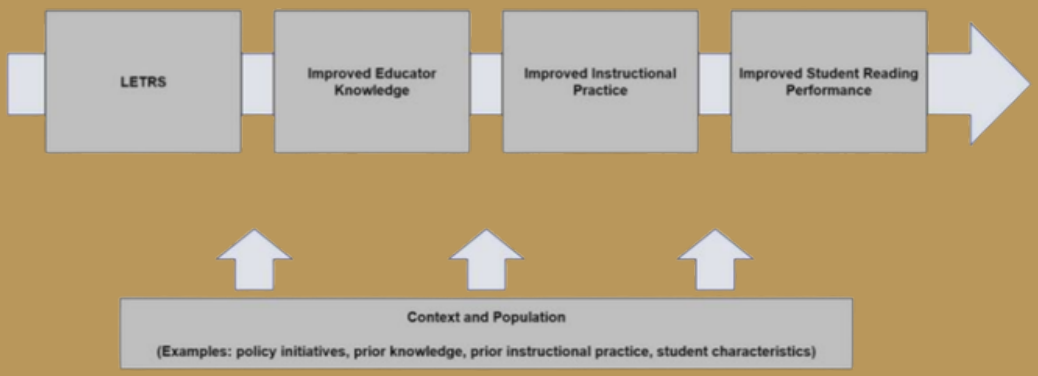
Researchers examined the relationship between Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) and student reading achievement across schools in Colorado. They compared averages of third-grade reading achievement outcomes in 113 schools that exclusively used LETRS versus 222 schools that used a variety of literacy professional development programs.They hypothesized that increased educator knowledge would impact instruction and lead to improved student outcomes, which was based on LETRS' Logic Model (see figure).

WHAT DID THEY FIND?

Researchers did not find a difference in reading achievement averages between schools that had used LETRS versus alternative literacy PD programs. While researchers found a measurable increase in educator knowledge after completing LETRS, they were not able to examine any improvements to teachers' instructional practices due to lack of access to this information. They also had questions about how schools' context and populations may have impacted literacy outcomes.

WHAT COULD THIS MEAN FOR TEACHERS?

Improved educator knowledge alone is not sufficient for improving student reading achievement. Districts, schools, and teachers using LETRS may want to prioritize observing instructional shifts alongside knowledge gains. Furthermore, the LETRS Logic Model posits that improvements in knowledge will lead to increased student reading achievement (see figure), but this study highlights existing questions about this process. Future studies should account for teacher instruction, context, and population factors to better evaluate the program's impact.



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