

What School Leaders Need to Know about LETRS Implementation

Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) is a comprehensive professional development course of study appropriate for all staff instructing and supporting reading, spelling, and related language skills. LETRS, although not a curriculum, provides a basis of evidence-based practices from which to improve selection of curriculum, materials, assessment, and instructional routines.

Ongoing, robust support and coaching is needed to transfer knowledge and skills learned in training to classroom practice. Research on professional learning clearly indicates this. Joyce and Showers (2002) concluded that on average teachers required 20 practice opportunities to master a new skill. Fuller (2001) indicated that the biggest challenge for educators was not learning a new skill, but implementing it. Moreover, research confirmed that educators shifted their underlying beliefs only after they saw student success (Gusky, 2002). The Center for Public Education stated: “To internalize a practice and change beliefs, teachers must see success with their students, but student success is very hard to come by initially, as learning new skills takes several attempts to master” (Gulamhussein, 2013).

There are three approaches school leaders could take with the LETRS professional development. Table 1 includes more in depth on what the work looks like.

Letting it Happen: This describes the application of a policy or program that has been mandated or adopted with minimal supports (NIRN, 2022). **Letting it Happen: only a 5% transfer of learning** to classroom practice is likely (Joyce & Showers, 1982; See also [Center for Public Instruction](#)).

Helping it happen: This describes the application of policy or program that has been mandated or adopted with materials, training resources, and websites to support practitioners. Practitioners are left to figure out how to solve problems while being held accountable for achieving positive outcomes (NIRN, 2022).

Making it Happen: This describes the application of a policy or program that has been mandated or adopted with active and purposeful implementation best practices to support practitioners and administrators. An Implementation Team is accountable for developing the implementation support systems, resolving organization and system issues, and achieving positive outcomes (NIRN, 2022). **Making it Happen: a 95% transfer of learning** to classroom practice is likely (Joyce & Showers, 1982, Snow, 2020).

The graphic below represents **Making in Happen**, which is strongly recommended if you are really committed to improving student outcomes. According to implementation science research, you need all three boxes/components to move the needle on student outcomes.

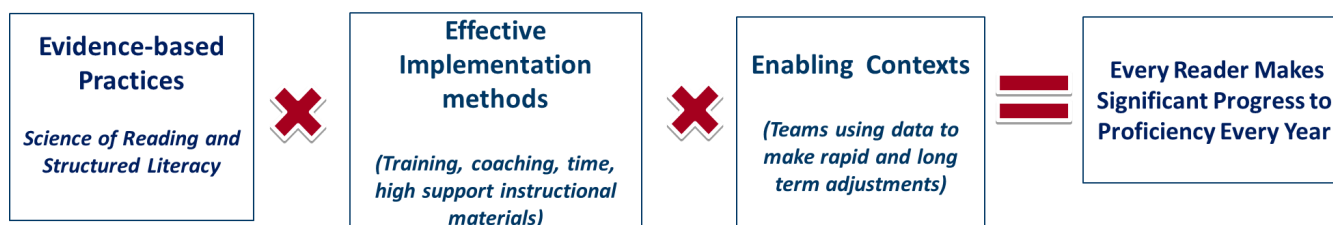



Table 1

	Letting it Happen:	Helping it Happen:	Making it Happen:
Definition	<p>Provides professional learning with minimal supports.</p> <p>Data use is inconsistent.</p> <p>Practitioners are expected to translate information to practice. Practitioners are held accountable for intended outcomes.</p>	<p>Provides professional learning with websites and training resources for instructional routines and materials.</p> <p>Data use tends to focus only on student outcomes.</p> <p>Practitioners are left to figure out how to solve problems. Practitioners are held accountable for intended outcomes.</p>	<p>Provides professional learning with coaching and active and purposeful implementation best practices to support practitioners and administrators.</p> <p>Data use includes system capacity, practice fidelity and student outcomes.</p>  <p>Teams are accountable for using implementation data to resolve organization and system issues. Teams are held accountable for intended outcomes.</p>
Examples of what the work looks like	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator registers groups of participants for training. Time and resources are allocated to support or incentivize staff to complete training. Staff are offered training and may or may not complete it. Practitioners are on their own to make changes to instruction. Policies and procedures critical to supporting practitioners are presumed in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders create training plans that allow for cohorts and completion of all portions of training. Training materials are centralized for staff to access. A webpage is created to house information, supports, recorded presentations and networking opportunities. A leadership team agenda may include literacy practices and student outcomes. Professional learning team agendas may include discussion of results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership teams are formed at school and district with clear roles and responsibilities for improving literacy. Teams use data to actively plan to monitor training and ensure staff complete it as designed. Instructional materials and resources are evaluated and selected to support daily implementation of training. Training gives way to coaching, with coaches completing fidelity and coaching observations to move staff toward independent use of practices. Leadership teams continue to analyze fidelity, organizational capacity, and student outcome data and conduct action planning. The local literacy plan and position descriptions include statements of what teachers are to know about and do with the Science of Reading. Communications to parents, board, and staff reflect progress, next steps, and improvements.
Data used		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training results Student outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training results and effectiveness Coaching results and effectiveness System capacity Fidelity Action planning Student outcomes

More on Coaching and Implementation

The 2002 meta-analysis by Joyce and Showers makes a compelling case for the need for skillful coaching. The authors noted that even very good training that included demonstration, practice, and feedback resulted in only 5% of teachers using the new skills in the classroom. Only when training was accompanied by coaching in the classroom was there substantial use in the practice setting. An internal implementation coach has a critical role in helping to guide teams to make effective implementation decisions. Quality coaching offers critical support for trying out new approaches during that “awkward stage” just after initial exposure through training, and helps teachers and staff persist in developing skill, judgment, and the artful and individualized use of the new practices or programs (NIRN, 2022).

References

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