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Foundations A-Z

Research Foundation & Logic Model

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NOVEMBER 2023

Understanding ESSA Evidence

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Educators search for high-quality research and evidence-based interventions to strengthen grant applications, to support comprehensive and targeted schools, or to implement new programming in their schools. Evidence requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) are designed to ensure that states, districts, and schools can identify programs, practices, products, and policies that work across various populations.

Educational programs document their evidence of design, effectiveness, and impact in order to be eligible for federal funding. While there is no singular authority that determine's a program's tier, the Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology provides standards to assess the varying levels of strength of research for education products.

The categories for ESSA Evidence are: strong (Tier 1) , moderate (Tier 2), and promising (Tier 3) evidence of effectiveness, or demonstrates a rationale to be effective (Tier 4).

This product meets the requirements for Tier 4:

- Includes a logic model based on research
- A study is planned and/or currently underway
- A third-party research organization has reviewed the documentation for ESSA validation

When product designers leverage learning sciences to design their programs, educators can better target instruction, and students' skills soar. Through interviews with the product designers, an evaluation of their research-informed activities, and a planning of an efficacy study, this product meets the criteria for LXD Research's ESSA Tier 4 Evidence.

– Rachel Schechter, Ph.D., Founder of LXD Research

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RESEARCH-BASED DESIGN

LXD Research Recognition for Learning A-Z

Learning A-Z

This product has been rigorously evaluated and is hereby acknowledged for meeting the educational impact criteria of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), warranting a Level IV for **"Demonstrates a Rationale."** This recognition is based on its proven effectiveness in enhancing grade-level learning outcomes.

REVIEWED BY THE LXD RESEARCH EXPERT REVIEW PANEL

November 2023

Rachel Schechter, Ph.D.
Founder of LXD Research

DATE

Foundations A-Z

Embrace the Future of K-5 Literacy for All

Harness the power of the Science of Reading with Foundations A-Z and accelerate student literacy outcomes!

EdReports, an independent nonprofit review, rates Foundations A-Z "all green," indicating our program's application of research-based best practices and delivery of high-quality instructional materials. Read the full review on EdReports.org.

- Embedded professional development
- Explicit, systematic, and cumulative instruction
- Digital-first, independent student practice opportunities
- Clearly modelled lessons
- Engaging skill-building opportunities for students

Improve Student Outcomes

Foundations A-Z provides resources that adhere to the science of how students best learn to read, including content-rich decodable books and passages, word study passages, interleaved and spaced practice for independent activities, and more!

By combining the explicit lesson plans with point-of-use professional development support, Foundations A-Z helps teachers build confidence as they drive better student literacy outcomes.

Build Teacher Confidence

Make Learning Fun

Rich, diverse resources age-up to help students for all grades K-5 learn while having fun. The fun cast of space characters accompanies students on their learning journey as they complete quests and earn rewards through the online and mobile student portal.

Learning A-Z

Acting as a complete foundational skills solution, Foundations A-Z follows a systematic, cumulative scope and sequence while perfectly aligning with Science of Reading research. Foundations A-Z provides 32 weeks of daily standards-aligned lesson plans to help you transition to and implement this instructional approach.

Research-based Intentional Early Literacy Instruction

Rather than addressing key skills in isolation, for example, an effective program intentionally **interweaves multiple components** of early literacy instruction into a single lesson (Moats, 2007). Employing a gradual release approach - in which explicit instruction gives way to guided practice and then to the independent application of skills by students - provides scaffolded support using repetition (Pearson & Duke, 2002).

In Foundations A-Z, uppercase and lowercase letter formation are **taught simultaneously**. The Carnine order for teaching letters is an approach linked closely to phonics instruction: As students learn the sound-letter correspondence of individual letters, they simultaneously learn to write those letters.

"I've seen so much success in my classroom, and the motivation for reading and learning to read has improved so much over the last year. They're excited to learn. They're excited to read. And, that's one of the reasons why I would definitely recommend it."

Jordan Snyder
First-grade teacher and principal

A Continuum of Foundational Skills

Developed by educators and based on scientific reading research, the grade-level scope and sequences **incorporate new with known** foundational skills aligned to national and state standards. Starting with the simple alphabetic phase of reading development, instruction begins with grade-level texts that offer ample opportunities for repeated readings and fluency practice (Stanovich, 1984; Rasinski, 2019). Teacher-led and peer-to-peer collaborative learning helps students hone skills and deepen understanding (Driver *et al.*, 2000; Pappas *et al.*, 2002) as they move to the spelling-pattern phase of reading development. Culminating to the oft-neglected third phase of reading development, higher-level instruction on morphemes, syllable types, division rules and implications of the schwa sound are built into well-integrated lessons in grade 3. Conceptually rich and grade-appropriate texts lend themselves to repeated readings to advance fluency and expand knowledge (Rasinski, 2020; Cervetti & Hiebert, 2015). The Foundations A-Z program offers **progression and spiral review** of critical skills across grade levels.

Making Learning Meaningful - Building Discipline-Specific and Cultural Knowledge

Foundations A-Z program aims "to get students to the point where most of the words they encounter are automatically recognized so that their attention can be devoted to making meaning" (Rasinski, 2019). Word study that includes **academic language and discipline-specific morphemic analysis** from mathematics, science, social studies and the arts reaps enormous benefits. Studies demonstrate that students with a richer vocabulary or topic knowledge perform significantly better on reading comprehension measures compared to students with a poorer vocabulary or topic knowledge, even if the former have lower foundational reading skills (Wexler, 2020). With curricular integration in primary grades, students gain a deeper understanding of the material and link what they are learning in the classroom to real-world experiences. With Foundations A-Z, lessons enable teachers to touch on multiple standards across different subject areas in one lesson, maximizing the use of precious instructional time.

Foundations A-Z program also employs **culturally responsive teaching** to affirm and celebrate diversity, creating a sense of community that invites students' deeper engagement with the curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Texts and unit questions that reflect cultural diversity in topics, characters, and settings are used, allowing students to appreciate both their own and others' cultures. Foundations A-Z maximizes opportunities for students to share and question aspects of their culture by providing practical suggestions for teachers to present inclusive and collaborative lessons.

"I use Foundation A-Z in a self-contained, multiple-grade class, and my kids love it. It's a very well-laid-out, high-quality instruction program (with phonics!). We are loving it; I'm a huge Learning A-Z fan across the board."

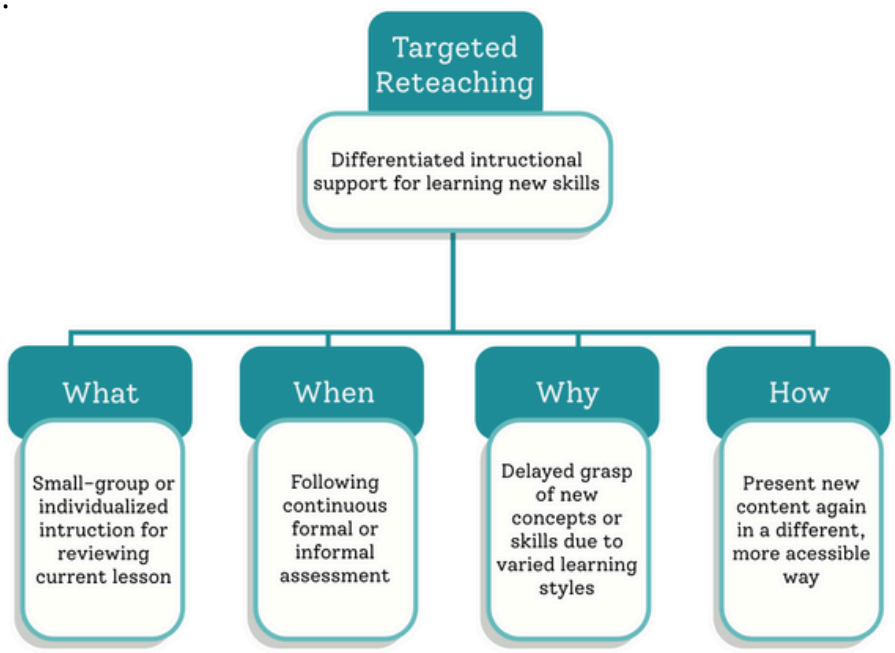
Livie Dillahay
Classroom teacher

Learning A-Z

Differentiated Instruction and Customized Individual Supports for All Student

Foundations A-Z program supports differentiated instruction for all students through an instructional sequence that incorporates ongoing assessment and systematic feedback to teachers to determine and address student needs in a given skill or knowledge area (Rupley *et al*., 2009). Once students' needs have been identified, a series of **customized multimodal activities** will be suggested to be assigned to students, to address their needs, sustain motivation and engagement, and support learning (Ankrum & Bean, 2008). These specific supports exist as either targeted reteaching or enrichment activities in the form of digital practice activities and videos.

Targeted reteaching for below-level students is an effective process used by teachers to increase the likelihood that all students learn critical skills or meet current learning objectives by adjusting the pace (how fast) and dose (how much) of lesson content.



Enrichment differentiation for students performing above grade level requires attention to variations in performance by skill and involves adjusting instruction across four areas: content, process, product and learning environment. Authentic, varied tasks that incorporate reading, writing, listening and speaking keep students engaged and motivated by requiring them to apply acquired skills in different ways and contexts.

"I am a Special Education teacher in a special needs private school where I work with various learning abilities and differences. Faz-Kids is the ONLY app that ALL of my students LOVE. It keeps them engaged in independent ELA rotations, differentiates instruction for individual needs, and provides meaningful, easily collected data to monitor each student's progress. This is the best money I have spent as a teacher."

Carrie
Teacher from Georgia

Read the entire Foundational Research Paper online!

Learning A-Z

Logic Model for Foundations A-Z

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Educators often lack the proper tools and time to teach each child to read fluently, a skill that requires distinct and interrelated processes of word recognition and language comprehension. The lack of reading proficiency strongly correlates to academic struggles throughout elementary school and beyond, creating an academic gap between readers that grows with each successive grade.

RESOURCES

32 weeks of daily standards-aligned foundational skills instruction including Handwriting and Morphology

FAZ Grade-Specific Multimodal Materials:
- Shared Readers (K-1)
- Decodable Books (K-2)
- Grade-Level Texts (2-5)
- Alphabetic Knowledge books and alphabet practice sheets (K-1)
- Instructional cards (Independent learning and practice)
- Instructional student videos
- Digital-first instructions and practice with printables and projectables

Professional Learning
- Program Guide
- Lesson Plans with gradual release of responsibility
- Differentiation tips
- Scope and Sequence
- Professional development
- Caregiver Letters
- Suggestions for how to connect and support parents and caregivers

Assessment Materials (Digital or Printable)
- Lesson-specific observation checklists
- Practice interactivities enabled with speech-recognition
- Unit assessments
- Interim assessments (summative)
- Auto-recommended resources informed by performance

Assessment Reports
- Student assignment progress
- Skill progress
- Class and Student level by question

STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES

Students
- Participate in daily explicit systematic instruction on phonological awareness, phonics, and high-frequency words
- Engage in personalized daily independent review and practice activities with instructional videos that cover each lesson's main concepts.
- Apply new and previous phonics patterns taught to reading connected texts through decodable books that feature the module's high-frequency words
- Complete weekly review and reflections
- Complete end-of-unit assessment every four weeks
- Participate in additional reteaching or enrichment activities if assigned for review or enrichment
- Receive corrective feedback during auto-recommended resources based on students' assessment performance, with nudges to avoid misconceptions

Educators
- Implement daily, logically sequenced, explicit instruction with room for flexibility
- Search and filter through the Scope and Sequence, Standard Alignments and Pacing guide to plan relevant lessons
- Model and guide group practice of literacy skills
- Leverage lesson-specific and materials recommendations for differentiation for all learners (reteaching or enrichment)
- Generate reports to monitor class and individual student progress and performance
- Use Assessment Administration and Research Guides to personalize the Foundations A-Z Assessment Suite
- Participate in on-demand Professional Development resources differentiated by topics/skills/strategy

Caregivers
- Receive tips and activities to reinforce skills at home

OUTPUTS

Students
- Interact during multimodal lessons to build foundational reading skills with their class
- Receive individualized practice activities to review and enrich learning
- Increased retainment of skills through interleaved (mixed up) and spaced practice

Educators
- Monitor individual student's performance on activities and unit assessments, reviewing their completion rates and scores
- Review skill level reports populated from practice interactivities, unit assessments, and interim assessments at individual and class levels to design relevant lessons
- Learn which question items students struggled on to tailor support and planning

Caregivers
- Build on students' progress by practicing skills at home

SHORT-TERM AND INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

- Students quickly advance in reading fluency through improved letter recognition, phonological and phonemic awareness, and phonics skills
- Students gain knowledge in sound-spelling relationships to decode and encode words, phrases and sentences
- Consistent instructional routines and varied activities promote active engagement for students of diverse achievement levels within the same class
- Students build content knowledge in disciplines such as science, social studies, and the arts while learning critical foundational literacy skills through interaction with meaningful texts, discussions and with writing activities
- Students increase their social awareness by experiencing stories that match their own lives and the lives of others, due to variety of texts that reflect diversity in topics, characters, and settings
- Teachers promptly expand their knowledge and expertise in assessment practices aligned with cognitive sciences, enhancing instructional effectiveness

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

- Students are ready to acquire skills involving language comprehension from grade 3 onwards, reducing costs associated with reading struggles throughout elementary school and beyond
- Students are motivated to read as they achieve their reading goals, gaining confidence in their academic journey in school and throughout life
- Schools reduce achievement gaps between high- and low- achieving readers as they progress through their grades
- Schools see higher teacher retention rates as they find fulfillment in contributing to their students' learning through a research-based curriculum

ASSUMPTIONS

- Teachers will be open to changing their approach to reading instruction
- School leadership will enable and support the logistics of replacing or supplementing the current reading curriculum

Learning Experience Design (LXD) Research & Consulting
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Learning A-Z

Dear Education Leader,

The Learning A-Z team would like to express gratitude for your continued use of our reading materials. Knowing that many resource options are available to you, we are delighted that you have chosen Foundations A-Z to support your educators and students.

We are excited to share our upcoming goal of assessing the efficacy of Foundations A-Z and its impact on academic outcomes, specifically reading and writing abilities. We plan to conduct a research study on the program's effectiveness to achieve this. The findings of this study will help us understand the impact of Foundations A-Z and improve it to better serve schools like yours.

We want to offer you the opportunity to participate in this study. Participants will receive free online access to the program, staff support and training, and feedback on your school's performance with suggestions for improvement.

Please get in touch to learn more details about the study and the terms of involvement. We hope you'll take advantage of this unique opportunity to help us shape the future of Foundations A-Z. If you're interested or have questions, please contact us to arrange a meeting.

Thanks in advance for considering our invitation.

Sincerely,
Erin Heinrich, Sr. Product Manager
Learning A-Z

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