

RESEARCH

LETRS BUILDS DEEP AND BROAD UNDERSTANDING OF ALL SKILLS that contribute to fluent, competent reading: phonological processing; phonics and word recognition; fluency; vocabulary and background knowledge; text comprehension; oral language; and writing. The disciplinary knowledge base of *LETRS* is explained in detail in Snow, Griffin, and Burns' (2005) *Knowledge to Support the Teaching of Reading*, a book to which Louisa C. Moats contributed, and other documents, including "Teaching Reading IS Rocket Science" (Moats, 1999) and "The Missing Foundation in Teacher Education" (Moats, 1995).

The content and teaching methods of *LETRS* have been developed by Moats over many years, with input from participants, trainers, and independent reviewers. The content evolved first in graduate courses on reading, beginning with Moats' extension courses at Harvard University. Methods for teaching practicing teachers were then adapted and developed during the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Early Interventions Project (Foorman & Moats, 2004; Moats & Foorman, 2003; Moats & Foorman, 2008), where, over four years, teachers in high-poverty, low-performing schools brought their students up to the national average in reading between kindergarten and fourth grade through intensive professional development that was later published as *LETRS*.

Two of Cambium Learning Sopris West's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grants from the NICHD show that *LETRS* is effective in building teachers' understanding of language structure, individual differences, and research-based reading practices—concepts that are often treated insufficiently in teacher preparation (Bos, Mather, Dickson, Podhajski, & Chard, 2001; Cunningham, Perry, Stanovich, & Stanovich, 2004; Walsh, Glaser, & Dunne-Wilcox, 2006).

"Thank you for providing the most valuable training I've received in my entire educational career. I now have the knowledge, backed by research, to support my teachers as we create reading success for all students!"

*—Gary Robinson
Principal, Indiana*



When *LETRS* training is followed by ongoing coaching and teamwork throughout the year in a context of leadership and support, teachers will apply what they have learned, and student achievement will improve (Moats, 2007; Moats, McCabe, Lavington, McGoldrick, & Willis, 2008).

The concepts and practices in *LETRS* are not learned with “once over lightly” courses or workshops (Spear-Swerling & Brucker, 2003, 2004), and do require the type of explicit, coherent, and cumulative learning that *LETRS* exemplifies. When teachers participate in sufficient training on reading development, language structure, individual differences, and effective teaching procedures, and are helped to apply what they learn during the year, weaker students in grades K–5 improve significantly in all areas (McCutchen et al., 2002a; McCutchen, Harry, Cunningham, Cox, Sidman, & Covill, 2002b; McCutchen, Green, Abbott, & Sanders, in press).

Integrating the implementation of innovative, research-supported practices into the classroom requires that teachers understand the knowledge base for their discipline, work in facilitative environments, implement the teaching practices with fidelity, and receive opportunities to collaborate with colleagues (Crawford & Torgesen, 2006).

If these conditions are not present, or are not carried out consistently over enough time, teachers may increase their knowledge without changing their instructional practices (National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, 2008; Roehrig, Duggar, Moats, Glover, & Mincey, in press). We strongly recommend that *LETRS* be part of a coherent, multifaceted plan that includes all conditions necessary for change.



“The LETRS training effectively connected current research to explicit instruction and gave all participants meaningful content and strategies to implement in classrooms immediately! ... The LETRS modules rank among the most extensive and in-depth training I have ever received in reading.”

—Pamela Herrera
Supervisor of Title I, Delaware



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