

Language, Learning & Literacy (L3) Review

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation

Background

Language, Learning & Literacy (L3) is a pedagogical approach to teaching reading and writing (not a collection of curriculum resources or a programmed scope and sequence). L3 Kindergarten was developed first as a Tier 2 intervention to provide personalised instruction for individuals and small groups of students within a whole class setting. L3 Stage One was developed later not as a tiered intervention, but as a professional learning program for Stage One teachers.

Evaluation

The aim of this review was to examine the design, content and implementation of L3. This review does not include an outcome evaluation. In this review we addressed seven research questions:

1. What was the original research base for L3?
2. How was L3 originally designed and implemented?
3. To what extent does L3 reflect current departmental policies and publications?
4. How is L3 currently designed and implemented?
5. Why did NSW government primary schools choose to use L3?
6. What aspects of L3 are perceived to be working well?
7. What aspects of L3 could be improved?

Recommendations

1. Consider key elements of the L3 professional learning model for future training.
2. Clarify how best to program and implement the K-6 English syllabus.
3. Clarify how best to differentiate phonics instruction in different contexts.
4. Clarify the purpose of different assessment tools and how to use the data they generate.
5. Develop a logic model and an evaluation plan for a comprehensive outcome evaluation of future programs.

Main findings

While L3 drew on some research, it did not draw on the full range of available research into early literacy teaching, especially research that emphasised the use of code-based approaches to early reading instruction through explicit and systematic pedagogies.

L3 provides only limited 'systematic' teaching and a form of 'explicit' teaching that is not consistent with current best practice, especially with regards to phonics and phonemic awareness.

Over time, L3 shifted away from being a closely monitored and targeted intervention to being perceived as a general literacy pedagogy suitable for any school. This shift was exacerbated by a lack of alternative departmental whole class literacy programs from which schools could choose.

The demand for teacher professional learning in literacy has driven the use of L3. L3 filled knowledge gaps in both pre-service and in-service training in the fundamentals of teaching reading and writing.

Three in every five schools reported using L3 in 2019 and implementation of L3 varied considerably between schools. In addition, 84% of these schools reported adopting other programs alongside L3. Two-thirds of schools reported modifying L3.

Teachers reported that a key strength of L3 was a substantial change in their knowledge, practice and confidence. The five-weekly goal setting and use of data to inform practice supported teachers' reflective practice. Many reported that they were impressed with the training model, especially the in-school coaching.

Teachers reported that some of the L3 strategies were time consuming and challenging to implement, with some students needing more support than L3 offers. Implementation of L3 also presented challenges for classroom management, with some schools reporting that students struggled with the requirement to work independently during L3 lessons.