
Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding available research on the “Letterland” program. Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the ten regional educational laboratories (REL) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. It provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations on research based education questions.

The information below represents the most rigorous research available. Researchers consider the type of methodology and give priority to research reports that employ well described and thorough methods. The resources were also selected based on the date of the publication with a preference for research from the last ten years. Additional criteria for inclusion include the source and funder of the resource.

Question: *Has there been any research done on the “Letterland” program?*

Key words and search strings used in the search: *research AND Letterland; pictorial mnemonics to teach phonics; pictorial mnemonics AND phonics instruction*

Search databases and websites:

1. ERIC: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>
2. JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/action/showAdvancedSearch>
3. Google Scholar: www.google.com/scholar
4. Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Resources: <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/>
5. What Works Clearinghouse: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

Results:

Based on the database searches described above, there were no causal studies specific to the Letterland program. Below are some related articles and resources to guide your search for information pertinent to your question.

Citations Retrieved: (NOTE: Abstracts and executive summaries are copied directly from the reports when possible to ensure accuracy):

de Graaff, S., Verhoeven, L., Bosman, A. M. T., & Hasselman, F. (2007). Integrated pictorial mnemonics and stimulus fading: Teaching kindergartners letter sounds. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77(3), 519–539. doi: 10.1348/000709906X160011

Abstract/Summary: The conclusion from a vast literature on literacy acquisition is that letter knowledge is one of the best predictors of literacy development. The question of the best way to

teach children letter sounds has not, as yet, been answered satisfactorily. The aim of this study was the evaluation of a computer training program using integrated-picture mnemonics combined with a fading procedure to teach children letter sounds. Thirty-nine kindergartners attending mainstream primary education participated in this study. A within-subject design was used. Each kindergartner learned letters under three conditions: (a) a fading condition in which letters are taught using a picture-supported first-sound mnemonics procedure in combination with a fading procedure; (b) an embedded condition in which letters are taught using the picture-supported first-sound-mnemonics procedure only and (c) a without-picture condition in which letters are taught using a first-sound procedure without-picture support. Dependent measures included a productive and receptive letter-sound test, and a first-sound isolation task. Productive letter-sound knowledge in the fading condition was better than in the other two conditions. In addition, kindergartners with good and those with poor first-sound isolation ability performed equally well in the fading condition. However, in the embedded and in the without-picture conditions, the kindergartners with good first-sound isolation ability outperformed those with poor isolation ability. These findings indicate that an integrated-picture mnemonics procedure combined with a fading procedure is effective in teaching kindergartners letter sounds and that the success of such a procedure does not depend on their initial first-sound isolation ability.

Ehri, L. C., Deffner, N. D. & Wilce, L. S. (1984). Pictorial mnemonics for phonics. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76(5), 880-893. doi: 10.1037/0022-0663.76.5.880

Abstract/Summary: Two experiments evaluated whether picture mnemonics help prereaders learn letter-sound associations. Pictures integrating the associations were compared with disassociated pictures and with a no-picture control condition. Children in the integrated-picture group learned five letter-sound associations (e.g., /, HI), each represented by a picture whose shape included the letter (e.g., letter / drawn as the stem of a flower) and whose name (flower) began with the letter's sound. Children in the disassociated-picture group learned letter-sound associations with pictures having the same names as the integrated pictures, but drawn differently—without letter shapes. Children in the control group learned associations with picture names but no pictures. Prior to letter-sound training, all groups were taught how to segment the initial sounds of the picture names. Results revealed that children taught with integrated mnemonics learned more letter-sound associations and also more letter-picture associations than did the other two groups, which did not differ. Integrated pictures were effective because they linked two otherwise unconnected items in memory. The shapes of letters included in pictures reminded learners of previously seen pictures with those shapes whose names began with the relevant letter sounds.

Referrals

Federally Funded Resources:

- Institute of Education Sciences (IES), public search engine available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/>
- What Works Clearinghouse: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

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