

# Really Great Reading Logic Model

Study Type: ESSA Evidence Level IV

Prepared for:  
Really Great Reading

Prepared by LearnPlatform:  
Alexandra Lee, Researcher  
Avery Wall, Junior Researcher  
Meetal Shah, Ph.D., Senior Researcher

March 15, 2023



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Really Great Reading engaged LearnPlatform, a third-party edtech research company, to develop a logic model for their product. LearnPlatform designed the logic model to satisfy Level IV requirements (*Demonstrates a Rationale*) according to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).<sup>1</sup>

### Logic Model

A logic model provides a program roadmap, detailing program inputs, participants reached, program activities, outputs, and outcomes. LearnPlatform collaborated with Really Great Reading to develop and revise the logic model.

### Study Design for Really Great Reading Evaluation

Informed by the logic model, the next phase will focus on planning for an ESSA Level II study to examine the extent to which Really Great Reading implementation relates to teacher knowledge and instruction and student literacy outcomes.

### Conclusions

This study satisfies ESSA evidence requirements for Level IV (*Demonstrates a Rationale*). Specifically, this study met the following criteria for Level IV:

- ✓ Detailed logic model informed by previous, high-quality research
- ✓ Study planning and design is currently underway for an ESSA Level I, II or III study

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<sup>1</sup> Level IV indicates that an intervention should include a “well-specified logic model that is informed by research or an evaluation that suggests how the intervention is likely to improve relevant outcomes; and an effort to study the effects of the intervention, that will happen as part of the intervention or is underway elsewhere...” (p. 9, U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Logic Model	6
Table 1. Logic model core components	6
Figure 1. Really Great Reading logic model	7
Study Design for Really Great Reading Evaluation	10
Conclusions	10
References	11

## Introduction

Really Great Reading engaged LearnPlatform, a third-party edtech research company, to develop a logic model for its program. LearnPlatform designed the logic model to satisfy Level IV requirements (*Demonstrates a Rationale*) according to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Recognizing that 65% of students cannot read proficiently by 4th grade (McFarland et al., 2019), which is due in part to the enduring research-practice gap (Schneider, 2018), Really Great Reading provides teachers with the tools to implement research-based science of reading instruction to help students develop word-level literacy skills using phonics, phonemic awareness, orthographic mapping, and deciphering word meaning.

The study had the following objectives:

1. Define the Really Great Reading logic model and foundational research base
2. Draft an ESSA Level I, II, or III study design

**Previous Research.** The design of this logic model was guided by previous research examining the science of reading, pedagogy, and teacher professional learning. Prior research suggests that the best way to teach reading is to use an approach called “the science of reading” (Petscher et al., 2020). The science of reading synthesizes knowledge about reading instruction practices and emphasizes multi-strategy instruction that helps students develop the foundational skills most important for reading fluency: phonemic awareness (National Reading Panel, 2000) and graphemic awareness (Ehri, 2020). Systematic phonics instruction provides students with phonemic and graphemic knowledge (i.e., sounds connected to letters) which enables them to develop spelling-sound word units (i.e., syllables and morphemes), and in turn, increased vocabulary (Ehri et al., 2001; Ehri, 2020). Furthermore, explicit vocabulary instruction and using a variety of texts complement systematic phonics instruction and facilitate the development of reading comprehension skills (National Reading Panel, 2000; Shanahan et al., 2010). In the long-term, teaching these foundational literacy skills helps all students with reading comprehension (Suggate, 2016). It is an approach that is particularly beneficial for students with English language learners and students with reading disabilities (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007; National Reading Panel, 2000). Really Great Reading provides a science of reading aligned curriculum that is focused on equipping students with the decoding skills critical for reading fluency.

Effective reading instruction aligns with students’ skill level (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Morrison et al., 2005). Therefore, it is recommended that teachers regularly assess students’ fundamental literacy skills to identify targeted instructional priorities to increase reading abilities (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2010). Identifying students’ unique needs allows teachers to then provide one-on-one or small group targeted instruction, both of which are shown to promote reading skill development (Begeny et al., 2018). Using small groups for teaching students phonemic awareness tends to be more effective than full class instruction (National Reading Panel, 2000). Really Great Reading makes both assessment and small group instruction more manageable for teachers by providing a data management tool to organize both sets of information.

Sound pedagogical practices are also critical for ensuring students learn how to read (National Reading Panel, 2000). Specifically, teachers should model decoding strategies (e.g., using phonemic and graphemic awareness to sound out a new word) prior to having students practice the strategy on their own (Aldahri et al., 2013). A research-based approach for explicit modeling is the “I do, we do, you do” instructional routine (Shanahan, 2005). Providing scaffolding including reminding students of reading strategies and gradually increasing difficulty positively impacts student engagement and achievement (Clark & Graves, 2005; Lutz et al., 2006; Vadasy & Sanders, 2010). Scaffolding is also important for boosting students’ sense of self-efficacy, which is associated with reading achievement (Guthrie et al., 2004; Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999). Finally, for students in early elementary school, it is important for reading instruction to be playful to promote enjoyment and engagement (Malanchini et al., 2017). Really Great Reading infuses these pedagogical best practices into its curriculum resources and teachers’ guides.

It is not enough to simply provide teachers with curriculum materials – they must also be knowledgeable about how to implement science of reading instruction focused on systematic phonics development (Hudson et al., 2021; Mosley Wetzel et al., 2020). Furthermore, it is important to dispel common misconceptions about teaching reading and for teachers to understand why science of reading is the best approach (Bos et al., 2001; Washburn et al., 2016). Teacher preparation programs vary in their focus on the science of reading, therefore, teachers often learn about the science of reading once they are on the job (Castles et al., 2018). However, a well-designed curriculum alone is not enough to dispel misconceptions (Cohen et al., 2017). Teacher professional learning is a proven avenue for helping teachers learn how to effectively teach phonics aligned with science of reading best practices (Basma & Savage, 2018; Podhajski et al., 2009). Recognizing the need to provide teacher professional learning in addition to curriculum resources, Really Great Reading also provides readily-accessible online courses for teachers.

## Logic Model

A logic model is a program or product roadmap. It identifies how a program aims to impact learners, translating inputs into measurable activities that lead to expected results. A logic model has five core components: inputs, participants, activities, outputs, and outcomes (see Table 1).

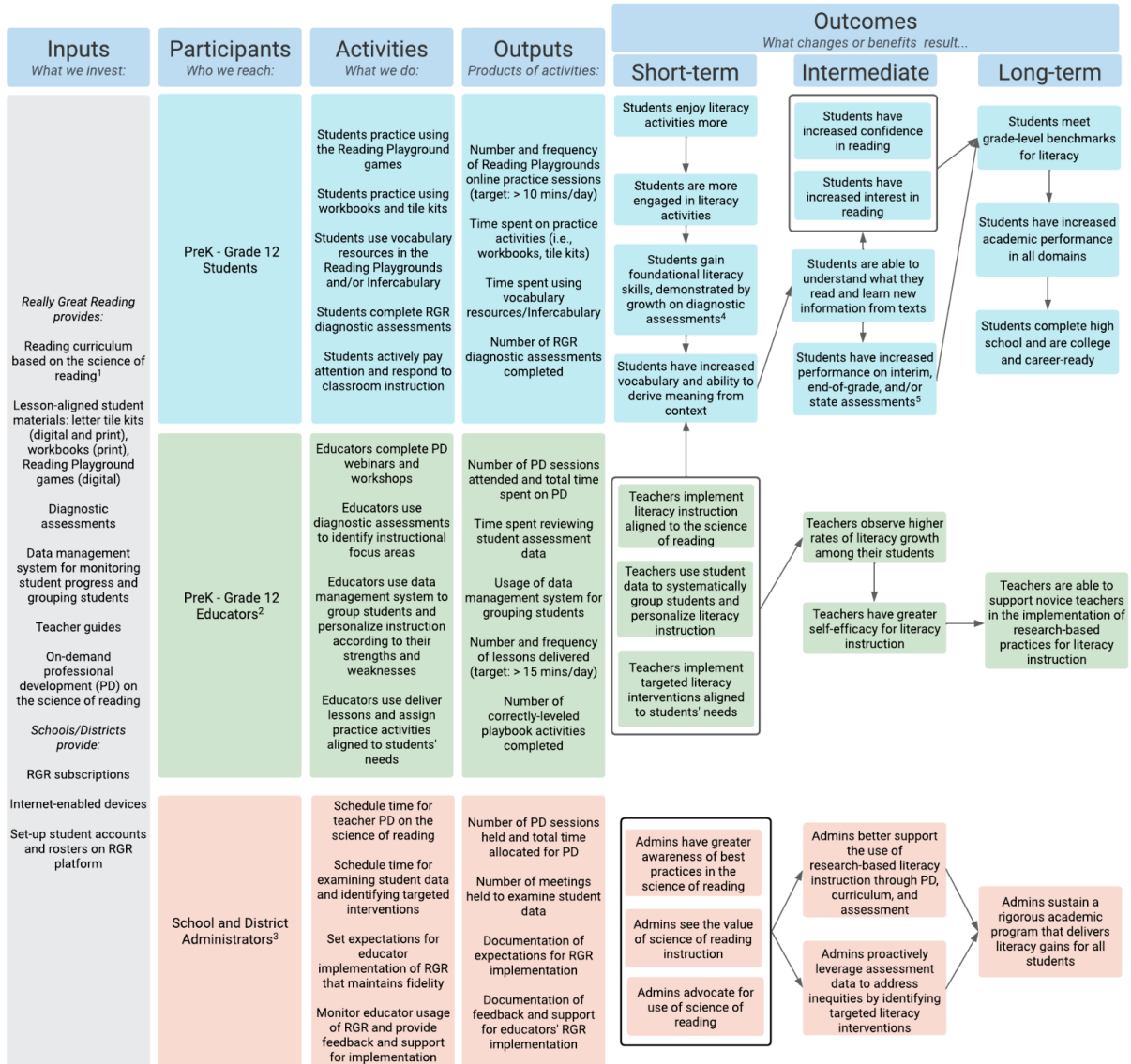
Table 1. Logic model core components

Component	Description	More information
Inputs	What the provider invests	What resources are invested and/or required for the learning solution to function effectively in real schools?
Participants	Who the provider reaches	Who receives the learning solution or intervention? Who are the key users?
Activities	What participants do	What do participants do with the resources identified in Inputs? What are the core/essential components of the learning solution? What is being delivered to help students/teachers achieve the program outcomes identified?
Outputs	Products of activities	What are numeric indicators of activities? (e.g., key performance indicators; allows for examining program implementation)
Outcomes	Short-term, intermediate, long-term	<p>Short-term outcomes are changes in awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and aspirations.</p> <p>Intermediate outcomes are changes in behaviors or actions.</p> <p>Long-term outcomes are ultimate impacts or changes in social, economic, civil or environmental conditions.</p>

LearnPlatform reviewed Really Great Reading resources, artifacts, and program materials to develop a draft logic model. Really Great Reading reviewed the draft and provided revisions during virtual meetings. The final logic model depicted below (Figure 1) reflects these conversations and revisions.



**Problem Statement:** Sixty-five percent of students are not able to read proficiently by 4th grade, which is due in part to the enduring research-practice gap. Really Great Reading (RGR) provides teachers with the tools to implement research-based science of reading instruction, which helps students develop word-level literacy using phonics, phonemic awareness, orthographic mapping, and deciphering word meaning.



<sup>1</sup> The science of reading is a set of research-based practices that support the development of reading by helping students to relate written text to spoken language by focusing on malleable factors that underpin reading ability, including phonics, phonemic awareness, and decoding (Petscher et al., 2020).  
<sup>2</sup> Educators may include primary classroom teachers, interventionists, Title I coordinators, paraprofessionals, and special educators.  
<sup>3</sup> School and District Administrators may include literacy/ELA instructional coaches, curriculum specialists, special education directors, district-level PD directors, principals.  
<sup>4</sup> Foundational literacy skills for students in Pre-K - 2nd grade include phonemic awareness, alphabetic principals, and oral reading fluency, skills for students in 3rd grade or higher include decoding, word reading, and reading fluency.  
<sup>5</sup> Examples of interim, end-of-grade, state assessments include DIBELS, iReady, NWEA, and MAP.



Figure 1. Really Great Reading logic model

**Really Great Reading Logic Model Components.** Really Great Reading invests several resources into their program, including a reading curriculum based on the science of reading, lesson-aligned student materials (letter tile kits, workbooks, Reading Playground games), diagnostic assessments, data management system, teacher guides, on-demand professional development on the science of reading. Ultimately, the Really Great Reading program aims to reach PreK - Grade 12 students, educators, and school and district administrators.

Using these program resources, the following participants can engage with the Really Great Reading platform in the following activities:

- PreK-12 grade students:
  - practice using the Reading Playground games;
  - practice using workbooks and tile kits;
  - use vocabulary resources in the Reading Playgrounds and/or Infercubulary;
  - complete diagnostic assessments;
  - actively pay attention and respond to classroom instruction.
- PreK-12 grade educators:
  - complete professional development webinars and workshops;
  - use diagnostic assessments to identify instructional focus areas;
  - use data management system to group students and personalize instruction;
  - deliver lessons and assign practice activities aligned to students' needs.
- School and district administrators:
  - schedule time for teacher professional development on the science of reading;
  - schedule time for examining student data and identifying targeted interventions;
  - set expectations for educator implementation of Really Great Reading that maintains fidelity;
  - monitor educator usage of Really Great Reading and provide feedback and support for implementation.

Really Great Reading can examine the extent to which core activities were delivered and participants were reached by examining the following quantifiable outputs:

- PreK-12 grade students:
  - Number and frequency of:
    - Reading Playgrounds online practice sessions;
    - diagnostic assessments.
  - Time spent on:
    - practice activities;
    - using vocabulary resources/Infercubulary.
- PreK-12 grade educators:
  - number of professional development sessions attended and total time spent on professional development;
  - time spent reviewing student assessment data;
  - usage of data management system of grouping students;
  - number and frequency of lessons delivered;



- number of correctly-leveled playbook activities completed.
- School and district administrators:
  - Number of:
    - professional development sessions held and total time allocated for professional development;
    - meetings held to examine student data.
  - Documentation of:
    - expectations for Really Great Reading implementation;
    - feedback and support for educators' Really Great Reading implementation.

If implementation is successful, based on a review of program outputs, Really Great Reading can expect the following short-term outcomes among *students*. Students enjoy literacy activities more, are more engaged in literacy activities, gain foundational literacy skills demonstrated by growth on diagnostic assessments, and have increased vocabulary and ability to derive meaning from context. In the intermediate term, students are able to understand what they read and learn new information from texts, have increased confidence and interest in reading, and improved performance on interim end-of-grade, and/or state assessments. In the longer term, students meet grade-level benchmarks for literacy, have increased academic performance in all domains, and complete high school and are college and career-ready.

Really Great Reading can also expect the following short-term outcomes among *educators* with successful implementation. Teachers implement literacy instruction aligned to the science of reading and targeted interventions aligned to students' needs. Teachers also use student data to systematically group students and personalize literacy instruction. In the intermediate term, teachers observe higher rates of literacy growth among their students, which leads them to have greater self-efficacy for literacy instruction. In the longer term, teachers are able to support novice educators in the implementation of research-based practices for literacy instruction.

There are also several expected short-term outcomes among *administrators*. Administrators have greater awareness and see the value of science of reading aligned instruction, which leads them to advocate for the use of the science of reading. In the intermediate term, administrators support the use of research-based literacy instruction through professional development, curriculum, and assessment. They also proactively leverage assessment data to address inequities by identifying targeted literacy interventions. In the longer term, administrators sustain a rigorous academic program that delivers literacy gains for all students.

## Study Design for Really Great Reading Evaluation

To continue building evidence of effectiveness and to examine the proposed relationships in the logic model, Really Great Reading has plans to conduct an evaluation to determine the extent to which its literacy programs produce the desired outcomes. Specifically, Really Great Reading has plans to begin an ESSA Level II study to answer the following research questions:

### Implementation Questions

1. Among teachers, what were the usage patterns of Really Great Reading resources?
  - a. What was the average number of views of teacher online tools?
  - b. What was the average number of subscriptions and/or licenses used for teacher tools?
  - c. Did teachers complete professional development on implementation of RGR programs?
2. Among students, what were usage patterns of Really Great Reading resources?
  - a. What was the average number of active licenses?
  - b. What was the average level of usage of print and online resources?

### Outcome Questions

3. After controlling for students' prior literacy levels, how was the use of Really Great Reading related to student performance on:
  - a. Standardized literacy assessments?
4. After controlling for students' prior literacy levels, what is the magnitude of observed differences of students who used Really Great Reading compared to students who did not use the program for:
  - a. Standardized literacy assessments?

Really Great Reading plans to begin an ESSA-aligned study in spring 2023.

## Conclusions

This study satisfies ESSA evidence requirements for Level IV (*Demonstrates a Rationale*). Specifically, this study met the following criteria for Level IV:

- ✓ Detailed logic model informed by previous, high-quality research
- ✓ Study planning and design is currently underway for an ESSA Level I, II, or III study

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