Literacy is an area where much is known about the relationship between instructional practices and achievement. We start by making an important distinction. Commercial programs are only evidence based if they have been studied in true experiments. Relatively few programs have been studied this way. However, there are many specific practices with a strong evidence base; when we combine these, we have programs based on evidence.

**Start with a program audit.**

- To what extent have the programs your teachers are currently using been studied? Have researchers found them effective in the grades you serve?

- If resources are scarce, think carefully about your improvement targets. Does it make sense to begin with Tier 1 resources, potentially influencing all students, or to start with Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions?

- What training and support will be necessary to use new programs? Do you have the capacity to ensure that teachers can use them as designed?

**Access the research yourself.**

The Institute for Education Sciences has both intervention reports (combining results across studies) and reviews of individual studies. Be sure that you know whether there is peer-reviewed evidence before you purchase any program. These resources are updated often to reflect new findings.

**Also consider practices, alone or in combination.**

IES Practice Guides are an essential resource. Here are our starter recommendations.

**Elementary Reading and Writing**

- *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*
- *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*
- *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*
- *Rubric for Evaluating Reading/Language Arts Instructional Materials for Kindergarten to Grade 5*

**Adolescent Reading and Writing**

- *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*
- *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively*
- *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy*
- *Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High School*

**Children Learning English**

- *Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School*
- *Instructional Models and Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners*
- *Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for ELs in the Elementary Grades*
- *Identifying and Supporting EL Students With Learning Disabilities*

For more information, contact UD’s faculty in *Literacy Development and Learning Problems*. 