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# Integrating research-driven approaches into learning resources

04 May 2026

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Cambridge University Press & Assessment

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# Introducing today's speaker

## **Nisreen Ash**

Principal Impact Manager

Nisreen Ash works across impact evaluation, evidence-informed design and educational improvement. Her work focuses on how research can shape learning resources and assessments to better support learners, teachers and real classroom practice.



# Why this matters now: the space between resources and real impact

- Learning resources do not operate in a vacuum; outcomes are shaped by **teachers, timetables, policies, learner backgrounds and school systems.**
- If we want **evidence-informed design**, we need to understand not only whether a resource works, but under **what conditions** and **for whom.**



# Our impact statement

**All of our products and services are designed to improve the lives of our learners, teachers and wider society.**

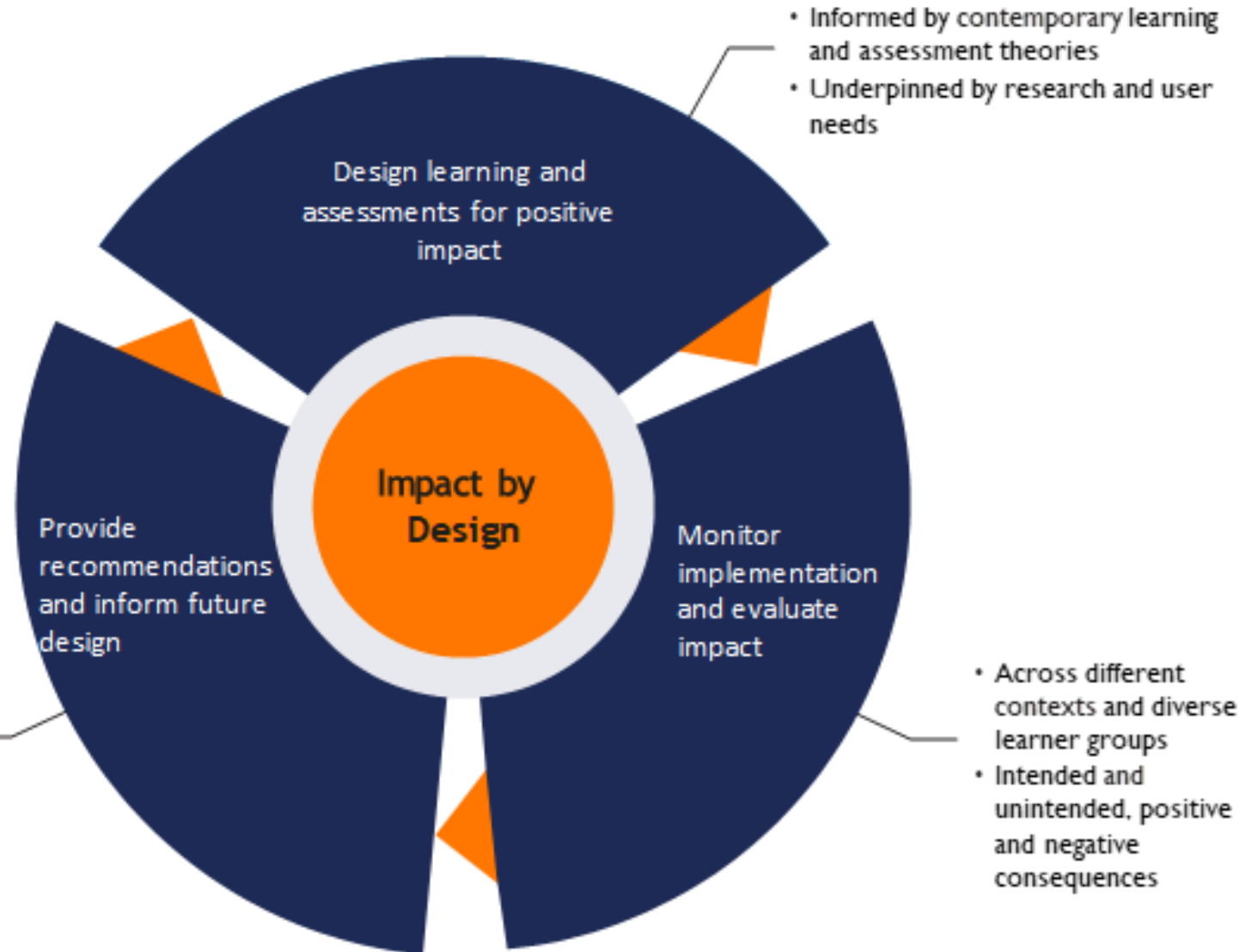
*Impact is not accidental; it is an intended design goal.*

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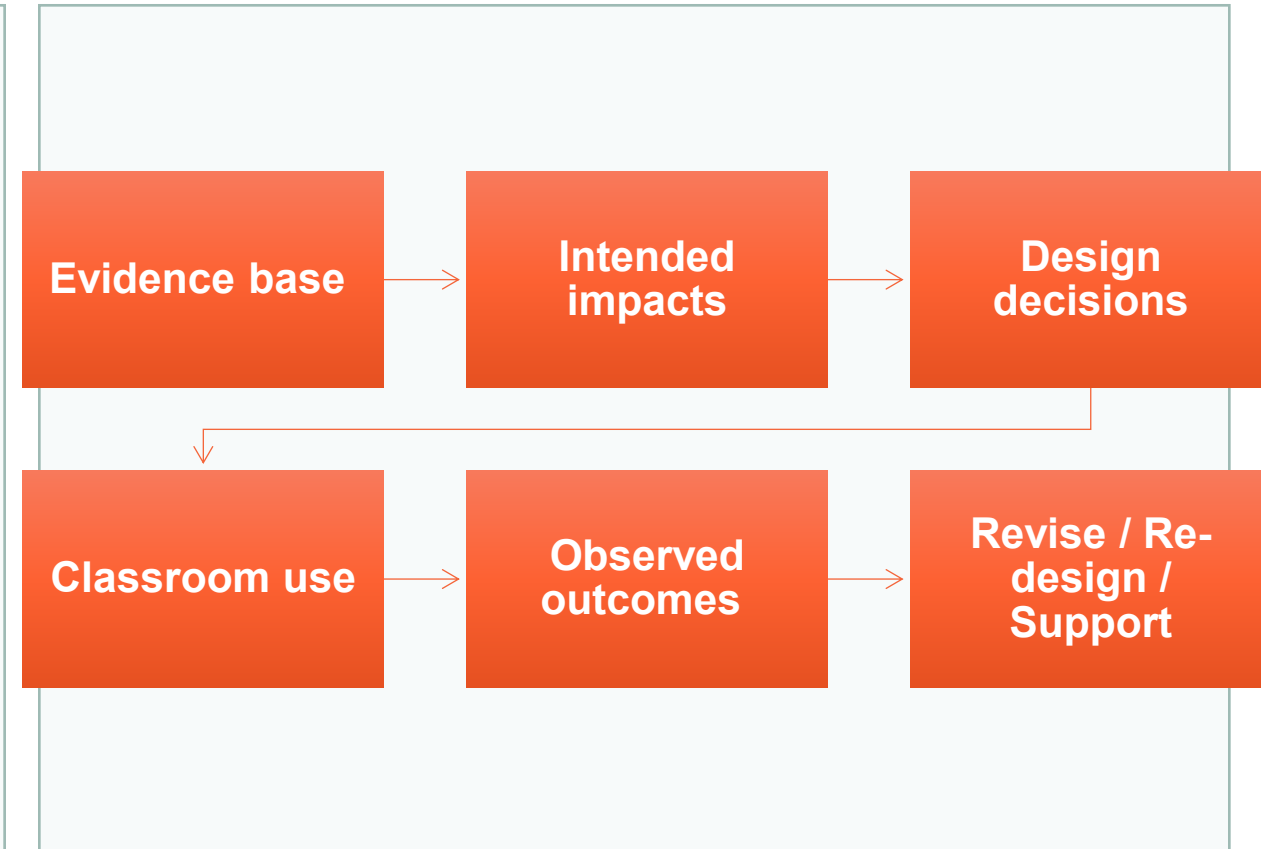
# Impact by Design

- Impact by design means building products around explicit intended outcomes.
- It also means recognising that impact is shaped by external factors, not just the resource itself.
- Therefore, research must look at both design intentions and implementation realities.



# How research fits into learning resource design

- Research can inform what outcomes matter.
- Research can inform how learning is scaffolded.
- Research can test whether intended impacts are visible in real settings.
- Research can feed back into redesign and continuous improvement, as well providing support to improve implantation.



# How I will illustrate this today

- Study 1: Primary English, literacy and speaking.
- Study 2: Pre-Primary English, early literacy and play.



# Study 1: The impact of Kid's Box on teaching and learning: insights from Brazil, Italy, Turkey and Vietnam



# Intended impacts: what this resource was designed to achieve

## Kids Box New Generation

A learning resource that blends literacy development with subject learning:

- **Learner experience:** engaging, enjoyable, age-appropriate, motivating.
- **Teaching quality:** easy to use, confidence-building, supportive of effective classroom practice (e.g. mixed ability classes).
- **Wider outcomes:** confidence in English plus collaboration, empathy and problem solving.

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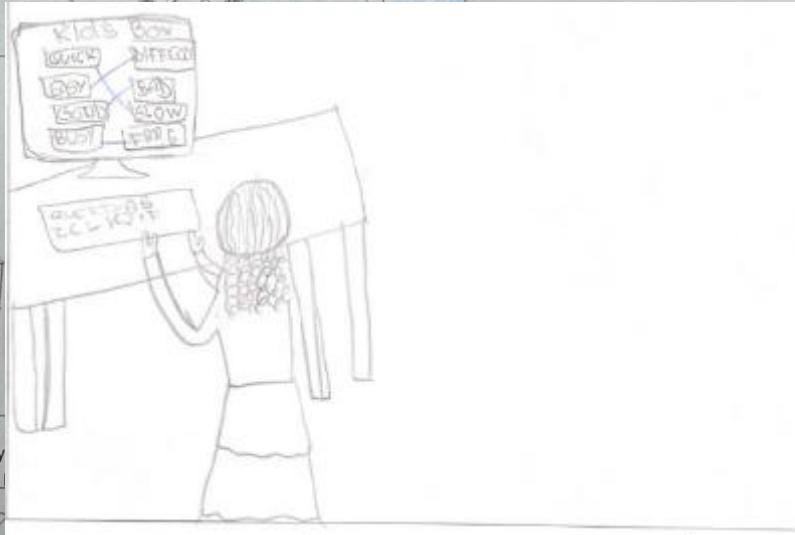
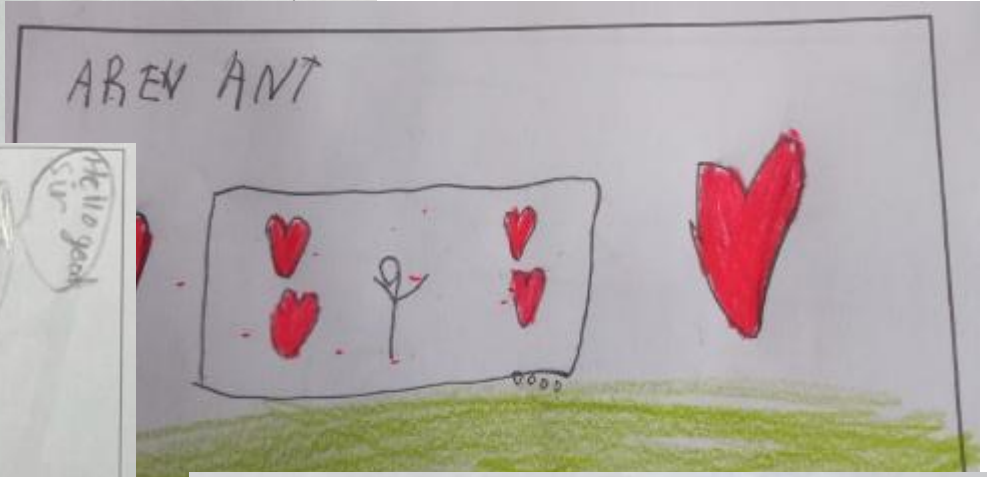
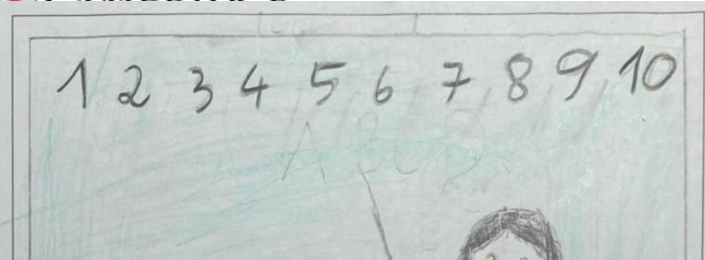
# Study context

- Evaluated Kid's Box New Generation across Brazil, Italy, Vietnam and Türkiye.
- Included 10 schools across private, public and language-school settings.
- Used mixed methods: teacher questionnaires, interviews/focus groups, lesson observations and learner drawings.
- Data set included 81 questionnaires, 22 teacher interviews/focus groups, 14 lesson observations, and 85 learner drawings.



# Positive impacts

- Students appeared **highly engaged, with reading, role-play, songs, videos, characters, games** and competition repeatedly identified as motivating features across questionnaires, interviews and observations.
- The impact extended beyond language alone, with teachers reporting gains in **group participation (74%), empathy and relationship skills (71%), problem solving (68%),** and **understanding emotions (66%)**.
- The course supported **teaching confidence and effective practice: 83%** of teachers said it helped them feel confident teaching English and **83%** said it supported effective learning practices.
- Teachers reported **strong usability and classroom fit: 88%** said they liked the course, **84%** found it easy to teach with, and **81%** said it helped create a positive learning environment.



Please describe your drawing. What can you see in the picture? What are the different people doing? What are you doing in the picture?

In picture they are looking at the board. Emma is sounding the teacher.

Please describe your drawing. What can you see in the picture? What are the different people doing? What are you doing in the picture? You can write in English or another language.

In this picture I am doing kid's Box exercises on the computer. My lessons are every time interesting, funny, and cool.

Please describe your drawing. What can you see in the picture? You can write in English or in Vietnamese.

In picture I can see tower Eiffel.

The picture above is about me talking to My English teacher.

a lot of money.



look drunk HAPPY

I am happy in English I feel good while learning English

# Issues and negative impacts

- **Uneven use of differentiation strategies** led to inconsistent support for mixed-ability classes and unequal participation.
- **Teacher's Book and guidance were not always fully utilised**, limiting the intended benefits of some activities.
- In some classrooms, **teacher-led, non–student-centred practices** reduced opportunities for active, collaborative learning.
- Not all settings appeared to make equally strong **use of the digital components**, so potential gains from digital resources were not fully realised.



# What can we do?

- Foreground mixed-ability support.
- Make life skills and real-world use more explicit.
- Make the digital layer more obviously integral, not optional.
- Encourage enhancing teacher PD by sharing impact findings and implications on learning.



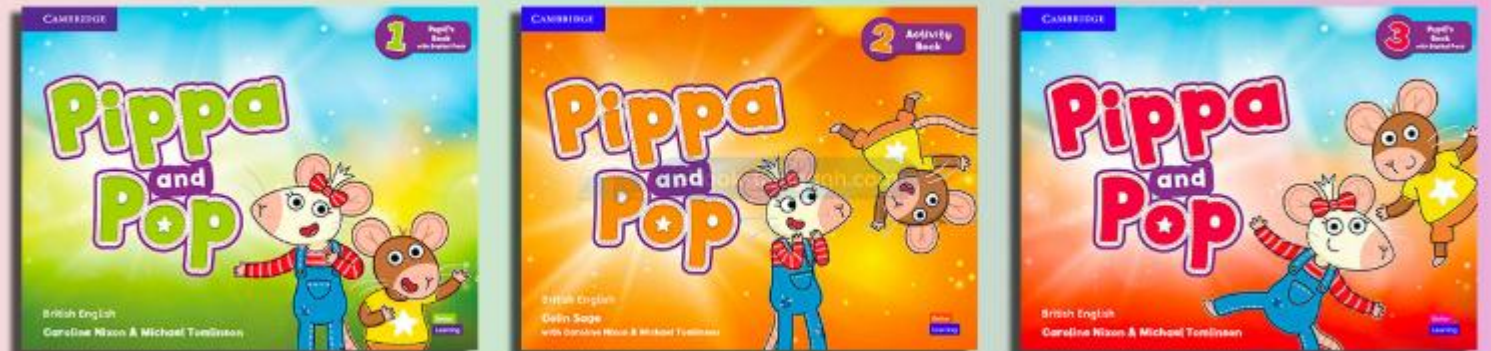
# Study 2: How a play-based course supported early literacy, English, numeracy and learning-to-learn in preschool classrooms

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# Intended impacts: what this resource was designed to achieve

- Develop **early literacy** through stories, letter–sound awareness, tracing and mark-making.
- Build **oral English** through songs, chants, repetition and classroom interaction.
- Support **early numeracy** through counting, shapes, symbols and routines.
- Foster **learning-to-learn** through attention, routines, problem solving and early agency.
- Help teachers implement **play-based, language-rich lessons** with clear guidance and resources.

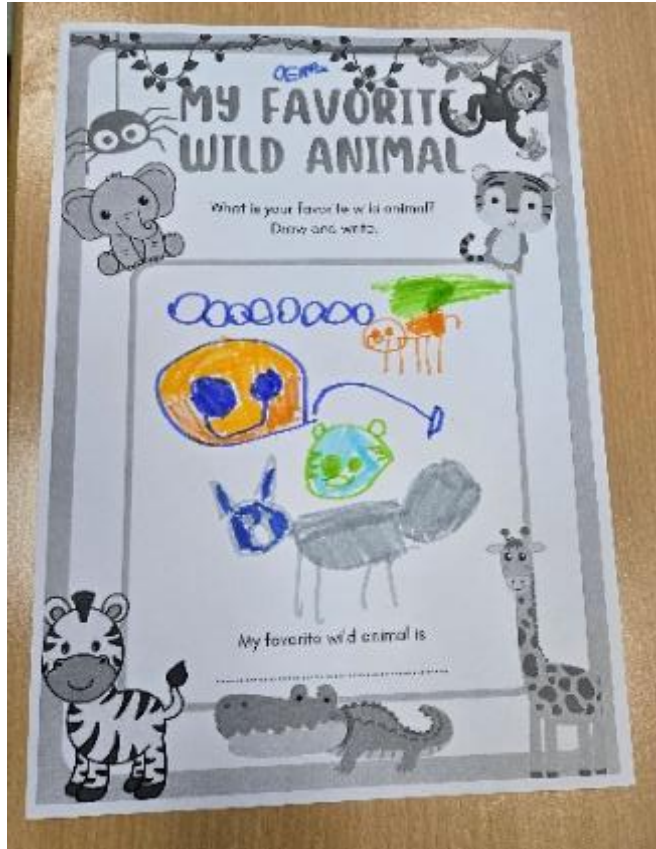


# Study context and method

- Qualitative impact study of **Pippa and Pop** in six preschools in **Türkiye** and **Mexico**.
- Learners were aged **3–5**.
- Data came from **teacher focus groups/interviews, classroom observations, and photos of classroom environments and learner outputs**.
- Analysis used **reflexive thematic analysis** (Braun & Clarke, 2022) to identify patterns across both contexts .



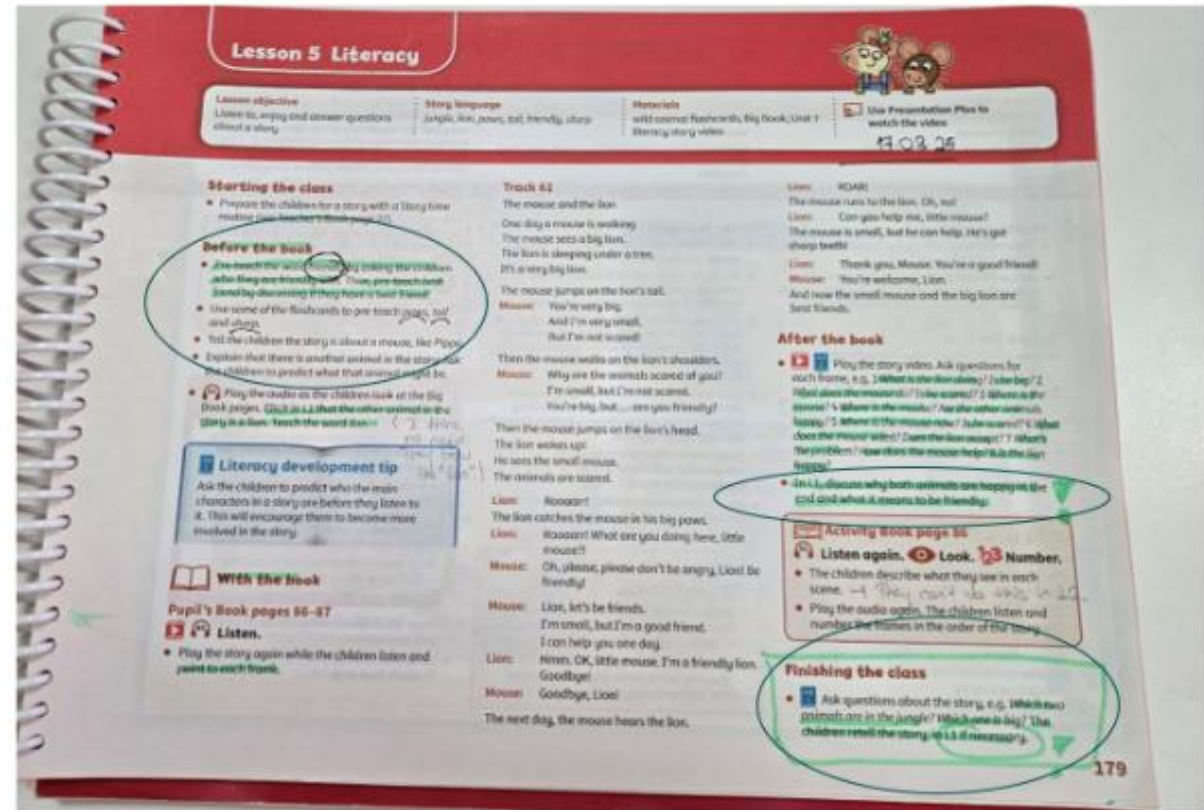
# What worked well



- Stories, songs, music, chants and visuals created **strong engagement and oral participation.**
- Repetitive routines helped children **remember vocabulary and sentence patterns.**
- Playful activities were especially effective for **children with lower confidence or developing motor skills.**
- **Numeracy was integrated naturally into classroom routines** such as counting, number work and visual displays.
- Teachers valued the **structure and clarity of the Teacher's Book**, especially where they lacked specialist early years training.

# Findings: Türkiye

- **Positive:** stories, songs, visuals and routines strongly supported engagement, oral participation and emergent literacy.
- **Positive:** tracing, pronunciation and recognition routines were used regularly and helped build familiarity and confidence.
- **Negative:** literacy progression was weakened where schools skipped earlier course levels due to preschool policy.
- **Negative:** some concepts and literacy demands were too abstract without stronger scaffolding.
- **Negative:** English-only policies sometimes conflicted with teachers' need to use strategic L1 support for comprehension and emotional security.



# Findings: Mexico

- **Positive:** structured routines, songs, movement and story openings supported listening, participation and vocabulary learning.
- **Positive:** numeracy was integrated naturally into classroom routines and daily activity.
- **Negative:** teachers wanted more sustained support for phonics, handwriting, reading and writing to prepare children for primary school expectations.
- **Negative:** literacy tasks were often mechanical rather than exploratory, playful or meaning-focused.
- **Negative:** teachers frequently supplemented the course with external worksheets and materials, increasing workload and fragmenting progression.



# Implementation implications

- Intended impact depends heavily on **how teachers enact the course**, not just on the materials themselves.
- Progression breaks down when schools **skip levels** or when course assumptions do not match local pathways.
- Teachers need more support for **differentiation, behavioural/additional learning needs**, and balancing play with early literacy expectations.
- Classroom policy and context matter: **English-only expectations**, limited time, crowded classes and resource constraints shape what is actually possible.
- **Play-based pedagogy** was valued, but in practice it was often more **structured and limited** than the design intended.



## Implications for us as publisher

- Design for **progression**, not just exposure: build clearer cumulative pathways for phonics, writing and literacy across levels.
- Add **flexible entry points** for contexts that skip levels or have uneven prior experience.
- Provide stronger support for **differentiation**, mixed ability and additional learning needs.
- Build in more **project-based, creative and collaborative tasks** to deepen play and learning-to-learn.
- Make teacher guidance more explicit around **metacognition, reflection, L1/L2 scaffolding, and realistic classroom adaptation**.
- Improve practical resource design, including usability of materials and availability of key classroom supports such as puppets and better-quality components.

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# What we learned



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# Challenges in impact research

- Resources do not act alone.
- Context shapes outcomes.
- Implementation mediates impact.
- Research must ask: **what works, for whom, and under what conditions?**



# What this means for us

- Design around **intended impact**.
- Test in **real classrooms**.
- **Support teachers**, not just products.
- **Feed evidence back into revision and implementation support**.



# Closing message

- Research should shape design, not just evaluate it.
- Evidence helps us see both strengths and limitations.
- Better learning resources come from continuous evidence-informed improvement.



Thank you  
Any questions?