RAZ-PLUS EFFICACY PROJECT

Learning A-Z is offering districts and schools an opportunity to use Raz-Plus materials free of charge for up to eighteen months by participating in an efficacy study. The study is designed to understand whether and how teachers can utilize the Raz-Plus program to help their students, especially those who are struggling with reading, in classroom settings to improve their reading skills and outcomes. The following information is meant to increase your understanding about this research project.

WHO?

Learning A-Z, the developer of Raz-Plus, is an education technology company dedicated to expanding literacy through thoughtfully designed resources for empowering teachers to have a greater impact on student learning through personalized instruction. Learning A-Z is contracting McREL, a major national non-profit research organization, to perform the research study of Raz-Plus.

WHAT?

Raz-Plus is a blended learning platform that supports multiple levels of teacher practice and student experiences at the K-5 level, including differentiated and personalized online reading instruction, classroom instructional resources, formative assessment, and data-driven reporting to determine future instruction and enhance student reading performance. For this study, we are inviting teachers from kindergarten to fifth grade to participate. Within participating schools, teachers will be randomly assigned to treatment and control conditions.

Treatment teachers will incorporate Raz-Plus into their reading classrooms and will participate in the following data collection activities:

- Professional development (PD) opportunities
- Biweekly (approx. 15 mins each) online surveys asking about their (1) reading instruction, (2) implementation of Raz-Plus, and (3) PD experiences
- Classroom observations (two sessions; approx. 30 minutes each) by McREL staff
- One interview (approx. 20 minutes) by McREL staff about their perceptions, experiences, and feedback on the Raz-Plus program
- One perception and experience survey asking about their overall experiences and perceptions with Raz-Plus at the end of the implementation
- Assist with student online survey and assessment administrations (four short 10-minute assessments total – two at the beginning of the semester and two at the end)

Control teachers will be instructed not to use the Raz-Plus materials in the fall of 2017 (they will receive them in spring of 2018) and participate in the following data collection activities.

- Biweekly (approx. 10 mins each) online surveys asking about their (1) reading instruction and (2) PD experiences.
- Assist with student online survey and assessment administrations (four short 10-minute assessments total – two at the beginning of the semester and two at the end)
Treatment teachers will implement the Raz-Plus program in the fall and/or spring during the 2017-2018 school year for a total of 12-16 weeks depending on when the study starts. Control teachers will have an option to receive the intervention after study completion. If control teachers choose to take advantage of implementing the Raz-Plus program in their classroom, they will receive the same PD offerings that treatment teachers received without the expectation to participate in additional data collection.

This study will contribute to the empirical knowledge base on the effectiveness of the Raz-Plus program and ultimately provide educators with information that will help them select effective reading interventions for their students in elementary grades.

McREL will be working in collaboration with your school principals and teachers regarding the project and expectations, and schedule for data collections. Although principals will support the recruitment of teachers, participation is completely voluntary and individuals can stop participating at any time without consequence. Also, because this is not an evaluation of teachers or schools, there are no known risks for participating in these data collection efforts.

We are aware of the many demands on teachers’ time and appreciate teachers working with us to conduct this study. We offer all participating teachers — from both intervention and control groups — free of charge continuous access to the Raz-Plus program resources for up to a total of 18 months.

For more information about the Raz-Plus program, please visit [www.learninga-z.com](http://www.learninga-z.com). For more information about the study, please contact Hsiang-Yeh Ho (hho@mcrel.org; 304.347.1845) at McREL.