



Global efforts are underway to improve education quality—to ensure children are not only in school but learning and developing to their full potential. Although many theories exist on the best approaches to improve education quality, policymakers and implementers need evidence on which programs are effective at helping children actually learn while in school.

Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) is a research and policy nonprofit that discovers and advances what works to reduce poverty and improve lives. In addition to conducting rigorous research, IPA reviews and consolidates research for policy

makers and practitioners. The objective is to distill complex, nuanced, and dynamic research findings into focused and actionable recommendations.

This brief summarizes and provides key lessons from multiple meta-analyses and over two dozen randomized evaluations (both IPA and non-IPA studies) on improving learning outcomes in low-income countries, with a focus on basic education. To identify relevant studies, we searched institutional websites (including IPAs and J-PAL's), Google Scholar, and the literature review sections of key papers. In addition, we consulted with leading experts in the field to identify any gaps.

Lessons on improving learning outcomes (supporting studies below)	
 Teacher professional development programs that provide teachers with concrete tools to improve the quality of instruction, and offer continued support, improved student outcomes.	 authentic problems—improved children's math and science abilities.
 Performance-based incentives can improve student learning, particularly when combined with other inputs—but the design of the incentive matters.	 Distributing information communications technology (ICT) alone has not improved learning; but ICT can be an effective tool for delivering quality instruction when integrated into existing curricula and teaching processes.
 Inquiry and problem-based pedagogy—in which students learn by collaboratively solving real-life	 Targeting instruction to students' achievement levels improved learning for low-performing pupils.

Important note: Although the interventions in this brief have been rigorously tested in different countries and/or contexts, sometimes what worked well in one or more studies may not work as well in another. Quality implementation and monitoring are key, and further evaluation is often needed as programs are adapted to a new context or a new scale. In addition, these lessons will evolve and change as new evidence emerges.

Improving Learning Outcomes: Lessons from Rigorous Evidence

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