

From: Robert E. Slavin [rslavin@SuccessForAll.org]
Sent: Thursday, August 28, 2008 12:33 PM
To: What Works; info@whatworks.ed.gov
Cc: Nancy A. Madden; Bette Chambers
Subject: WWC Beginning Reading Review

TO: Jill Constantine
CC: Nancy Madden, Bette Chambers
FROM: Bob Slavin

Dear Dr. Constantine:

I'm delighted to hear that you are looking again at the WWC beginning reading review.

I'm responding to your questions about our Success for All program. I've reviewed your list of studies, which is quite comprehensive. There was only one study I had a question about:

Chambers, Slavin, Madden, Cheung, & Gifford (2004).

You list this as a "related citation" under Borman et al., but it is different. It compares 4 SFA to 4 control schools serving Hispanic students. Two of the experimental and two of the control schools were from the Borman et al. sample, but two of each were not. Otherwise, I think your list is complete.

The program description is fine.

I hope you will use this update as an opportunity to correct the characterization of

research on Success for All. Our main concerns were as follows:

1. The Madden et al. (1993) study compared 5 SFA and 5 matched schools. There were two slightly different variations of the program. The previous WWC review said there were three variations (this is not true) and analyzed each variation separately. The 10 schools should be analyzed together, as all 5 experimental schools are full-scale Success for All implementations. The reason this matters is that given the WWC focus on clustering, the Madden et al. study is the only one beyond the national randomized evaluation (Borman et al. 2007) with a sufficient number of schools to have (barely) adequate statistical power after adjustment for clustering.

2. Also on the clustering issue, I would recommend that the WWC combine data (e.g., z-scores) across studies to build up adequate numbers of schools (when schools are the unit of intervention). In the case of Success for All, there are many similar matched comparisons of 1-1, 2-2, and 3-3 schools, each of which is too small for adequate power after accounting for clustering, yet if combined, there would be sufficient power.

3. I don't understand why the effects for comprehension are listed as "mixed." The WWC notes positive statistically significant effects on Woodcock Passage Comprehension in the Borman et al. (2007) study. It notes a positive but not significant (due to clustering) effect in a second study. Four matched studies had "indeterminate" effects, but none were negative. Elsewhere in the WWC, positive effects from a randomized study trump other findings. In light of the fact that a very large cluster randomized experiment found significant positive effects and there is no indication in any study of a negative effect, I do not see why the comprehension effects are considered "mixed."

Please contact me if you need anything further. Thanks.

-Bob Slavin

From: What Works
Sent: Friday, September 12, 2008 8:45 PM
To: 'Robert E. Slavin'
Cc: 'Nancy A. Madden'; 'Bette Chambers'
Subject: RE: WWC Beginning Reading Review (WWCPC - 639)

Dr. Slavin-

Jill Constantine forwarded your questions to the WWC Help Desk. We wanted to let you know that we are looking into the issues you raise and will prepare a written response. We expect to send the response within 30 days.

What Works Clearinghouse Help Desk

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From: WhatWorks
Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2008 3:08 PM
To: 'rslavin@SuccessForAll.org'
Subject: RE: WWC Beginning Reading Review (WWCPC - 639)
Dr. Slavin,

We are still working on a response to the issues you raised in your email dated August 28, 2008. We hope to send you a response shortly.

What Works Clearinghouse

From: What Works
Sent: Friday, September 12, 2008 8:45 PM
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-Bob Slavin

From: What Works
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2009 10:02 AM
To: 'rslavin@SuccessForAll.org'
Subject: WWC Beginning Reading Review of Success for All (SFA)®

Dear Dr. Slavin,

The attached letter is to notify you that the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) has completed the review of the research on Success for All (SFA)® and determined that this intervention is eligible for an intervention report according to the Beginning Reading review protocol. We have also attached a courtesy copy of the report which will be posted on the WWC website on August 11, 2009. As a reminder, this report is covered by the embargo agreement signed by you on August 27, 2008, requiring you not to copy, distribute, or discuss the report with members of the public outside your organization, prior to release of the report by the Institute of Education Sciences.

Sincerely,
Mark Dynarski
Director, What Works Clearinghouse



What Works Clearinghouse **WWC**

A central and trusted source of scientific evidence for what works in education.

August 10, 2009

Dr. Robert E. Slavin
Success for All Foundation
200 W. Towsontown Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21204-5200

Dear Dr. Slavin,

The purpose of this letter is to notify you that the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) has completed the review of the research on *Success for All*® and determined that this intervention is eligible for an intervention report according to the Beginning Reading review protocol.

In updating this review, we also looked into the concerns you raised in your August 28, 2008 letter. Your letter listed four specific concerns about the Success for All (SFA)® intervention report released by Beginning Reading team in August 2007. First, you questioned connection between the two studies: Chambers et al. (2004) and Borman et al. (2006). For the Madden et al. (1993) study, you indicated that the report mistakenly separated two SFA® implementations: full implementation and dropout prevention. Third, you recommended that the WWC combined data across studies to build up adequate numbers of schools, when schools are the unit of intervention. Finally, you questioned the mixed effects rating for the comprehension domain.

We reviewed your concerns carefully. Independent reviewers confirmed (1) that the Chambers et al (2004) is not a related citation for the Borman et al. (2006) study. It is now placed as an additional source to the following study:

Chambers, B., Cheung, A. C. K., Madden, N. A., Slavin, R. E., & Gifford, R. (2006). Achievement effects of embedded multimedia in a Success for All reading program. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(1), 232–237.

(2) On the same note, the updated report does not distinguish between the two implementations. It was determined that both used the same reading curriculum. The study description now reads: “Madden et al. (1993) evaluated the effects of SFA® in Baltimore City elementary schools. The study investigated the effects of two versions of the SFA® program: full implementation and dropout prevention. Although these versions varied in their implementation of the whole-school reform model, the reading curricula are essentially the same at all schools, with each school receiving the same training, coaching support, and materials. Ratings presented in this report are not disaggregated by the variations in implementation of whole-school reforms.”

(3) However, the WWC would not recommend combining data across studies, as differences across studies in population sampled, outcome measures, intervention, and other important factors may make it inappropriate to group them together. As an example from the updated SFA® report (Appendix A3.3), we can only combine data from Ross et al. (1998) and Smith et al. (1993) studies for the WRMT Passage Comprehension subtest, as the “unpaired” Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Vocabulary (PPVT) outcome measure from the Smith et al. (1993) would be lost for the program impact analyses.

(4) The WWC also upheld the mixed effects effectiveness rating for the comprehension domain. According to the WWC intervention rating scheme, mixed effects (or evidence of inconsistent effects), can be demonstrated through either of the following:

Criterion 1: At least one study showing a *statistically significant* or *substantively important* positive effect AND at least one study showing a *statistically significant* or *substantively important* negative effect, but no more such studies than the number showing a *statistically significant* or *substantively important* positive effect.

Criterion 2: At least one study showing a *statistically significant* or *substantively important* effect AND more studies showing an *indeterminate* effect than showing a *statistically significant* or *substantively important* effect.

For the outcome domain of comprehension, the WWC rated Success for All[®] as having mixed effects. Evidence of inconsistent effects was demonstrated through criterion 2, that is, one study showed a statistically significant positive effect, one study showed a substantively important positive effect, and four studies showed indeterminate effects.

For details on Intervention Rating Scheme, please consult WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook Version 2.0 – December 2008;

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/references/idocviewer/Doc.aspx?docId=19&toCId=5#ratingscheme>

We hope this information clarifies the WWC Success for All[®] review and answers your questions.

We are sharing with you a courtesy copy of the report which will be posted on the WWC website on August 11, 2009. As a reminder, this report is covered by the embargo agreement signed by you on August 27, 2008, requiring you not to copy, distribute, or discuss the report with members of the public outside your organization, prior to release of the report by the Institute of Education Sciences.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact the WWC via email (info@whatworks.ed.gov) or the Help Desk (866-503-6114). For your convenience, we have attached a document that includes answers to some frequently asked questions about the WWC intervention reports.

Sincerely,

Mark Dynarski
Director, What Works Clearinghouse
866-503-6114

Attachments: Intervention Report
Frequently Asked Questions