

From: Leonard Golubchick [LGolubchick@METROPOLITAN.EDU]  
Sent: Thursday, March 29, 2012 4:02 PM  
To: What Works  
Cc: info@readnaturally.com (Info@readnaturally.com)  
Subject: Read Naturally

Importance: High

Hello Susanne:

I am writing to you regarding Read Naturally. I was a Principal for 28 years in the New York City school system. I used Read Naturally with our students beginning in 1999 and Read Naturally is still being used successfully with students at PS 20M.

When I was Principal we had 100% poverty, 66% ell's, 22% designated needing special education services (all integrated into the general education classrooms) and 28 students living in temporary housing (shelters). The total population was 931 students from pre-grade 6. I was able to establish two Apple labs and had banks of Apple computers and Dell's in individual classrooms.

Our children were programmed to receive instruction in one lab utilizing Read Naturally. In the classrooms Read Naturally was a component for differentiation of instruction and was incorporated

during our extended day and during our Saturday Academy.

The children made great gains over the course of the year utilizing the Read Naturally strategies. 76% of the struggling readers achieved gains moving from Level 1 to Level 2 or 3.

When I retired in August 2005 we were in the top 15% of the City's schools in reading. We had 86% of our children scoring at levels 3&4 in ELA and 92.6% scoring at levels 3&4 mathematics. We employed a thematic approach integrating the arts and technology around Social Studies themes. Read Naturally, being a non-fiction based computer program, was a major component guiding our success. I must also add that our Professional Development program strengthen the use of Read Naturally.

The four studies concerning Read Naturally are misleading as to the power of Read Naturally to enable students to gain fluency and vocabulary which leads to greater comprehension skills.

I do not understand how studies can be posted which had questionable validity and was not supposed to be evaluative and which failed to implement the steps in the Read Naturally process.

Furthermore, there is no mention of the fact that Read Naturally has an extremely strong research base with ten control group studies which provides creditable evidence as to the efficacy of the Read

Naturally approach in enabling the reading process amongst struggling readers.

Furthermore, there are hundreds of case studies which validates the Read Naturally paradigm which

demonstrates significant improvement amongst struggling readers in the areas of fluency,

automaticity, accuracy, vocabulary growth and comprehension.

This exactly what occurred at PS 20M with our struggling readers.

I certainly expect that misinformation concerning Read Naturally is revised and corrected. In fact Read

Naturally is now even more potent as an educational tool to meet the needs of struggling readers now

that it is Web based with a tremendous potential for students to further expand their skills and to help

build a durable bridge between the school and home. Obviously leading to greater parental

involvement in their child's education.

When we talk about intervention services, Read Naturally is at the forefront meeting the needs of

struggling readers.

Respectfully,

Dr. Leonard H. Golubchick

**From:** WhatWorks  
**Sent:** Friday, March 30, 2012 10:44 AM  
**To:** 'LGolubchick@METROPOLITAN.EDU'  
**Subject:** RE: Read Naturally (WWC 3583)

Dear Dr. Golubchick,

Thank you for contacting the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). We have received your email below. WWC staff are reviewing your request and will prepare a response.

What Works Clearinghouse

The What Works Clearinghouse was established by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences to provide educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public with a central and trusted source of scientific evidence of what works in education. For more information, please visit <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>.

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**Sent:** Thursday, March 29, 2012 4:02 PM  
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Dr. Leonard H. Golubchick



**Leonard Golubchick, Ph.D**  
Director  
MCNY Bronx Extension Center

Tel: 718.665.7787 Ext. 4001

Mobile: (b)(6)

Fax: 718.665.7788

E-Mail: [lgolubchick@mcny.edu](mailto:lgolubchick@mcny.edu)



**METROPOLITAN  
COLLEGE** OF NEW YORK  
FOUNDED BY AUDREY COHEN IN 1964





**From:** What Works  
**Sent:** Friday, May 11, 2012 11:59 AM  
**To:** 'Leonard Golubchick'  
**Subject:** RE: Read Naturally  
**Attachments:** QRT 2012007.pdf

Dear Dr. Golubchick,

Attached is a response to the questions you raised in your March 29 message to the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC).

Thank you,

What Works Clearinghouse

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**Leonard Golubchick, Ph.D**  
Director  
MCNY Bronx Extension Center

Tel: 718.665.7787 Ext. 4001

Mobile: (718) 665-XXXX

Fax: 718.665.7788

E-Mail: [lgolubchick@mcny.edu](mailto:lgolubchick@mcny.edu)



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# What Works Clearinghouse **WWC**

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

May 11, 2012

Dr. Leonard H. Golubchick  
Director, MCNY Bronx Extension Center  
lgolubchick@mcny.edu

Reference: QR2012007

Dear Dr. Golubchick:

Thank you for your email regarding your experience with Read Naturally® and your concerns with the WWC reviews of Read Naturally®. In response to your email, we conducted an independent quality review to address the concerns you've raised. The WWC quality review team responds to concerns raised about WWC reviews published on our website. When a quality review is conducted, a researcher who was not involved in the initial review undertakes an independent assessment of the studies in question. The researcher also investigates the procedures used and decisions made during the original review of the studies. These quality reviews are one of the tools used to ensure that the standards established by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) are upheld on every review conducted by the WWC.

Regarding your concern that the WWC should not have reviewed studies that were not intended as an evaluation of Read Naturally®, the quality review found that the WWC followed protocol in all four studies of Read Naturally® reviewed by the WWC: Hancock (2002); Denton, Anthony, Parker, and Hasbrouck (2004); Kemp (2006); and Chenault, Thomson, Abbott, and Berninger (2006). The WWC screens studies based on a number of factors including relevancy and methodology criteria. The WWC does not screen based on whether the author(s) explicitly intended the study as an evaluation of an intervention or whether the developer indicates implementation was acceptable, but rather whether the study presents a primary analysis of the effect of an intervention. This screening process allows for a wide range of relevant and methodologically sound studies to be reviewed. These procedures are described in the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook available in the Review Process section of our website at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/ReviewProcess.aspx> (see pages 8-10).

Regarding your concern that Read Naturally® was not implemented fully or correctly in the four studies, the quality review found that the WWC followed protocol in the manner in which the studies are described in WWC publications. As noted in the WWC Handbook, "The WWC makes no adjustments or corrections for variations in implementation of the intervention; however, if a study meets standards and is included in an intervention report, descriptions of implementation are provided in the report..." (page 16). This approach is appropriate because there is no standard metric for fidelity to intervention design. Thus, the WWC includes studies with variation in fidelity and does not evaluate implementation fidelity.



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The quality review team verified that variations in implementation that are noted in the four studies and that may affect the interpretation of findings were properly included in the WWC publications. Specifically, for each of these four studies, the quality review had the following findings:

1. Hancock (2002). This study is reviewed in a WWC Intervention Report under the Beginning Reading Evidence Review Protocol. The study does not note any deviations in implementation. However, following an inquiry from the CEO of Read Naturally® about implementation in this study, the WWC contacted the author. Hancock's response indicated that the study excluded Read Naturally's pre-reading vocabulary instruction component and the placement system to individualize instruction. The WWC Intervention Report was revised to note these variations in implementation (see <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/interventionreport.aspx?sid=407>, specifically footnote 4 on page 2 and Appendix A1.). The record of correspondence with Hancock did not note any other variations in implementation.
2. Denton, Anthony, Parker, and Hasbrouck (2004). This study is reviewed in a WWC Intervention Report under the English Language Learners Evidence Review Protocol. The quality review found that the study notes that Reading Naturally® was combined with additional activities. The WWC Intervention Report properly identifies this as a "modified version" of Read Naturally and describes the modifications (see <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/interventionreport.aspx?sid=408>, specifically footnote 7 on page 3 and Appendix A1). There were no other variations in implementation noted in the study and there is no record of correspondence with Denton about other variations in implementation.
3. Kemp (2006). This study is reviewed in a WWC Intervention Report under the English Language Learners Evidence Review Protocol. The quality review found that the study does not provide any indication of variation from program design. Specifically, the study states, "...it could be concluded that all teachers implemented the Read Naturally® program as prescribed" (page 40). Furthermore, there is no record of correspondence with the author about variations in implementation. Based on this information, the quality review concluded that there was no evidence that variations in implementation should have been noted in the WWC Intervention Report.
4. Chenault, Thomson, Abbott, and Berninger (2006). This study is reviewed in a WWC Intervention Report under the Students with Learning Disabilities Evidence Review Protocol. In accordance with the study, the WWC Intervention Report notes that the students in the study were identified by researchers as dyslexic and that they were provided only 10 sessions of Read Naturally® (see <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/interventionreport.aspx?sid=409>, specifically pages 2-3 and Appendix A1). No other variations in implementation were noted in the study and there is no record of correspondence with the authors about deviations in implementation.



# What Works Clearinghouse WWC

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Based on these findings, the quality review team recommends no changes to the descriptions of the Read Naturally® in WWC publications. However, the WWC is in the process of updating the Intervention Report for Read Naturally®, reviewed under the Beginning Reading Evidence Review Protocol. In this update, the WWC will use the current WWC evidence standards to review all studies identified for the previous report and all studies identified since that time. If the WWC needs any further clarification related to the four studies you mentioned or any other studies, we will contact the author(s).

Finally, I appreciate you providing information about additional studies available on the Read Naturally® website. The WWC is committed to a comprehensive and systematic literature search process for every review. As part of the search process for the in-progress review of Read Naturally®, we have identified all of the studies available on the Read Naturally® website. We also have requested and received studies from the developers of Read Naturally®.

I hope that this letter has addressed your concerns. If you have other concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the WWC through [info@whatworks.ed.gov](mailto:info@whatworks.ed.gov).

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Jill Constantine  
Director, What Works Clearinghouse

cc: (b)(6)