

From: WhatWorks
Sent: Wednesday, July 07, 2010 12:27 PM
To: 'info@readnaturally.com'
Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2259)

Dear Mr. Ihnot:

Thank you for contacting the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). We received your voicemail from today, July 7, 2010.

Due to the need to maintain a written record of key decisions, the WWC can only respond to written questions. If you have questions about the WWC English Language Learners review, please submit them in writing and someone from the team will respond. You may respond to this email.

Thank you,

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/>.

From: Karla Ramy [kramy@readnaturally.com] on behalf of info@readnaturally.com

Sent: Wednesday, July 07, 2010 12:53 PM

To: WhatWorks

Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2259)

WWC,

Please email the contact information for the lead reviewer for your English Language Learners section.

Thank you,
Tom Ihnot

Read Naturally, Inc.
2945 Lone Oak Drive, Suite 190
St. Paul, MN 55121
www.readnaturally.com
www.oneminutereader.com
651-452-4085
800-788-4085
651-452-9204 - fax

Maximize the benefits of your Read Naturally program. Attend one of our full-day training seminars near you!

Join Read Naturally on Facebook



From: WhatWorks [mailto:WWorks@icfi.com]

Sent: Wednesday, July 07, 2010 12:31 PM

To: info@readnaturally.com

Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2259)

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From: WhatWorks
Sent: Wednesday, July 07, 2010 4:23 PM
To: 'info@readnaturally.com'
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2259)

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From: Karla Ramy [mailto:kramy@readnaturally.com] **On Behalf Of** info@readnaturally.com
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From: Karla Ramy [kramy@readnaturally.com] on behalf of info@readnaturally.com
Sent: Friday, July 09, 2010 1:57 PM
To: What Works; WhatWorks
Subject: WWC 2259

It is very discouraging that WWC has selected another study to review that was not designed to evaluate Read Naturally.

The Kemp study was a study of SSR. It used Read Naturally passages but not the Read Naturally strategy. It was not a study of Read Naturally and should not be used to evaluate Read Naturally.

The Read Naturally group of students in the Kemp study achieved equivalent and significant growth in spite of the fact that Susan Kemp stated that the purpose of her study was not to evaluate Read Naturally. As a result, she did not adhere to several guidelines of the Read Naturally strategy. Notable discrepancies between the Kemp study and the intended use of Read Naturally include the following:

- Of the 157 students in Kemp's study, only 47 were at or below the 50th percentile in oral reading fluency based on the Hasbrouck/Tindal norms. The other 110 students were above the 50th percentile in fluency. Read Naturally is designed for students who are below the 50th percentile in fluency. Since 70 percent of the students in the study had fluency above the 50th percentile, Kemp could not have evaluated the effectiveness of the Read Naturally strategy and should not have used Read Naturally with these students.
- Kemp clearly stated on page 74 of her dissertation that Read Naturally was developed for at-risk readers:

"Another limitation [of the study] is that Read Naturally was not just used with at-risk readers. The Read Naturally program was developed to help students who are at-risk. Typically this would represent students who are scoring well below the 25th percentile. Students participating in this study did not fit the description of at-risk. Many scored well above the 25th percentile. Perhaps, if this study was only completed with at-risk students, results would have been different. In addition, because two of the participating schools were California Distinguished schools, the quality of instruction of the core program could have influenced results as well."
- Of the 47 students at or below the 50th percentile, only 28 were assigned to Read Naturally. The other 19 were assigned to SSR. The students assigned to Read Naturally gained an average of 16.8 words correct per minute (WCPM) in oral reading fluency, and the SSR group gained 15.2 WCPM, based on data from Dr. Kemp. Both groups' gains were significant.
- Read Naturally recommends a teacher-to-student ratio of 1 to 6. Kemp's study had a teacher-to-student ratio of 1 to 20. Consequently, the critical pass step would not have been completed by students and a teacher. Holding the students accountable at the pass step is critical for student success in Read Naturally. At the pass step the teacher checks whether the student can do the following:
 1. Read at the goal rate.
 2. Make three or fewer errors on the final timing.
 3. Read with good expression.

4. Answer all the comprehension questions correctly.

The teacher also checks the progress the student made in words correct per minute, from the cold timing of the story to the final timing. If the student fails any of the criteria, he is required to go back and master the failed criteria before he can move on to another passage.

In addition, the Kemp dissertation is flawed as a review of the Read Naturally strategy due to the following issues:

- The Kemp study excluded special education students from its analysis. These students, a target demographic for Read Naturally, would have likely performed poorly in SSR and performed well in Read Naturally.
- When comparing the Kemp study's Read Naturally group with the SSR group, the mean pretest scores in fluency for the native-speaking students in the "poor readers" category were substantially different. The mean score for native-speaking "poor readers" in the Read Naturally group was 40.5 WCPM, and the mean score for the native-speaking "poor readers" in the SSR group was 75.2 WCPM. Nonetheless, these disparate groups were compared.
- As stated above, the Kemp study imposed an intervention intended for students struggling with reading fluency on students who were not struggling with fluency. Seventy percent of the students in Kemp's study were above the 50th percentile in reading fluency.

It is also important to note that, in spite of the Kemp study's implementation flaws and comparison group design flaws, the Read Naturally group did make significant gains in fluency. The Read Naturally students averaged 1.5 WCPM per week. The Hasbrouck/Tindal data shows that the average fluency gain per week for third grade students is 1.1 WCPM. This data indicates that the students in the Read Naturally group were accelerating their progress. Kemp states in her study that both groups made significant gains in fluency.

Also, note that combining the Kemp study and the Denton study in the same ELL analysis produces two inappropriate reviews of Read Naturally. WWC does recognize that the Denton study modified Read Naturally, but the extent is not captured in its description. The other glaring problem with the Denton study is that the assessments were flawed. The Denton study was designed to evaluate Read Well. Consequently, the study used phonemic decoding as an assessment measure, and phonemic decoding is not part of the Read Naturally strategy. Also, the Denton study did not use fluency as an assessment measure and Read Naturally is regarded as the best fluency-building program (see attached analysis of the Denton study).
<http://www.readnaturally.com/approach/denton.htm>

Please drop the Kemp study as a review of Read Naturally. If it remains on the WWC website it will mislead educators. I would appreciate the opportunity to have a phone conversation about the Kemp and Denton studies. Please contact me with the best time to call.

I look forward to discussing this issue with you.

Sincerely,

Tom Ihnot
CEO
Read Naturally, Inc.

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