From: beth.laduca@state.or.us
Sent: Wednesday, September 08, 2010 10:51 AM
To: info@whatworks.ed.gov
Subject: IES Website: Contact Us: Publications, Quick Reviews, Reference ID
Number: 1879324836

info@whatworks.ed.gov, this email was automatically sent through the Contact link on the WWC website.

From: beth.laduca@state.or.us

Message: I don't understand the following paragraph in your Quick Review of "Reading and Language Outcomes of a Five-Year Randomized Evaluation of Transitional Bilingual Education." If differences between the groups are all statistically insignificant, why are you citing effect sizes for two of the outcomes? My interpretation is that you are citing differences which may be due to error. Why are you highlighting these effect sizes with so little justification? "When the students reached fourth grade, they only received English instruction. At this time, differences in English-reading skills between the groups were all statistically insignificant. Two of the four outcomes, though, showed large enough differences favoring structured English immersion that the WWC considered them noteworthy: the effect sizes were roughly equivalent to the skill difference between the 50th and 61st percentiles of English reading achievement."
From: WhatWorks
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2010 1:37 PM
To: 'beth.laduca@state.or.us'
Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2421)
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From: LADUCA Beth [beth.laduca@state.or.us]
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2010 6:36 PM
To: WhatWorks
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2421)

One more follow up comment. Please check this link for an example of the type of misunderstanding which may arise from the review: http://edupdates2.blogspot.com/2010/09/wwc-compares-two-approaches-to-teaching.html.

From: WhatWorks [mailto:WhatWorks@icfi.com]
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From: WhatWorks
Sent: Friday, December 17, 2010 9:34 AM
To: ‘LADUCA Beth’
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2421)

Dear Ms. LaDuca,

The Quality Review Team is actively working on a response; however, we are currently unable to provide a timeline for its completion.

Thank you,

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From: LADUCA Beth [mailto:beth.laduca@state.or.us]
Sent: Thursday, December 16, 2010 3:44 PM
To: WhatWorks
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2421)

Any update on the Quality Review promised below?

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From: WhatWorks [mailto:WhatWorks@icfi.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2010 3:14 PM
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Ms. Beth LaDuca  
NAEP State Coordinator  
Oregon Department of Education  
beth.laduca@state.or.us  

Reference: QR2010017  

Dear Ms. LaDuca:

Thank you for your email concerning the WWC quick review of “Reading and Language Outcomes of a Five-Year Randomized Evaluation of Transitional Bilingual Education.” In response to your inquiry, the WWC quality review team undertook an investigation of the issues you raised. When a quality review is conducted, researchers who were not involved in the review independently assess the study in question and examine whether the WWC adhered to its procedures and protocols.

The quality review team first considered whether the review adhered to WWC standards in reporting effects that were not statistically significant but had effect sizes of 0.25 or greater. Under WWC standards, results that are deemed substantively important are reported as qualified positive effects. The default value for a substantively important result is a student-level effect size of 0.25 or greater (WWC standards are available here, see page 22). The effect sizes for the reported results were 0.29 and 0.31. For these reasons, the quality review concluded that WWC standards were followed in reporting the results. The WWC has adopted this standard because large effect sizes are evidence that the program may be effective and that the sample size used in the study was not large enough to identify even a substantial effect with statistical significance.

The quality review team then considered the manner in which the results were reported. The quality review concluded that the quick review should follow the WWC standards by using the term “substantively important” instead of “noteworthy.” Use of the term “substantively important” will increase accuracy and clarity as the term has a specific technical definition in the WWC standards. The quality review recommended that the final paragraph of the quick review be revised to the following:

When the students reached fourth grade, they only received English instruction. At this time, differences in English-reading skills between the groups were all statistically insignificant. Two of the four outcomes, though, showed large enough differences favoring English immersion that the WWC considered them substantively important: the effect sizes were roughly equivalent to the skill differences between the 50th and 61st percentiles of reading achievement. The findings suggest that English immersion had a qualified positive effect on these English outcomes but the study sample for fourth grade outcomes was not large enough to test effectiveness.
The quality review recommended the paragraph include the following footnote: “The WWC reports results for statistically insignificant effects if the estimated impact is 0.25 standard deviations or greater.”

You mentioned in your email that the WWC interpretation of the findings is different from the interpretation by the authors. The authors concluded that the findings suggest that students learn to read in English “equally well” under the two approaches. The WWC concluded that the effect of structured English immersion is substantively important. The difference in conclusions comes from the WWC’s standards for reporting substantively important effects even if they are not statistically significant.

Based on the findings of the quality review, we will be revising the quick review as recommended. 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.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Jill Constantine
Director, What Works Clearinghouse

cc: (b)(6)