

From: Links 2 Learning Online (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, March 22, 2012 2:17 PM
To: What Works
Subject: Misrepresentation of Read Naturally on What Works
Clearinghouse
Website

Hello,

We're very concerned about the misleading evaluations of Read Naturally on the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) website. The July 2010 review is based on a 2006 study by Belle Chenault, designed to examine students with persistent writing problems, not fluency concerns. Read Naturally was used as contact control and the strategy was not properly implemented. Chenault has stated that, "The Read Naturally program is a widely recognized and widely used curriculum that has been appropriately validated in other studies. This study was not intended as an examination of the Read Naturally program. Using our study to evaluate Read Naturally or its effects is a misapplication of our data."

Earlier evaluations by WWC were also based on studies that were not designed to evaluate Read Naturally. In each case, the researchers have stated that using their study as an evaluation of Read Naturally would be inappropriate and have asked WWC not to post them. The following link provides quotes from the authors, explains that their studies were never intended to evaluate the Read Naturally strategy, and details how their studies did not implement the steps of the Read Naturally strategy:
<http://www.readnaturally.com/approach/wwc-summary.htm>. Unfortunately, the four studies remain on the website, confusing countless educators every day.

Well-designed studies that implement the Read Naturally strategy with fidelity, have consistently demonstrated its effectiveness. For example, Christ & Davie (2009) found that students using Read Naturally had 39% greater gains in fluency than students in a control group. In a study by Heistad (2004), students receiving year long supplemental intervention using Read Naturally improved significantly in overall

reading proficiency. The Florida Center for Reading Research gave Read Naturally the highest possible rating for fluency and comprehension, and in a review of supplemental and intervention programs by the University of Oregon's Reading First Center, Read Naturally received a 92% rating for fluency instruction.

In addition, notable reading educators speak highly of the Read Naturally strategy. In her book, *Overcoming Dyslexia*, Sally Shaywitz speaks of the importance of fluency training and recommends Read Naturally because it, "follows the basic principles of effective fluency instruction." Jan Hasbrouck says that, "Read Naturally makes best use of the research base on fluency and has the strongest evidence of effectiveness as a fluency intervention." Kevin Feldman believes that Read Naturally is the "gold standard for intervention in fluency".

Read Naturally has a strong research base and incorporates the research proven strategies of teacher modeling, repeated reading and progress monitoring. Information about ten control group studies validating the Read Naturally strategy can be found on the Read Naturally website: <http://www.readnaturally.com/approach/research.htm>. In addition, there are hundreds of case studies proving that the Read Naturally strategy significantly improves fluency, accuracy and comprehension of developing and struggling readers.

For many years, we've worked with students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities, the majority of whom have struggled with reading fluency. We've spent a great deal of time researching fluency and effective instructional strategies and have piloted several different commercial programs. Read Naturally is by far the most effective fluency development program we've used. We have years of data to show the significant growth our students made using the Read Naturally strategy. Also, we believe that the structure of the Read Naturally program helped improve our students' confidence and attitudes toward reading.

We understand that WWC is in the process of conducting an updated review of

Beginning Reading interventions, and we're excited about the opportunity this provides to correct previous inaccuracies about the Read Naturally program. If you'd like more information about the effectiveness of Read Naturally with our students, we'd be happy to share both statistical and anecdotal data.

Thank you,

Heather Baptie, MEd
Terry Dobson, MEd

Links 2 Learning Online Inc.
1-800-839-3397
www.l2lonline.com

From: WhatWorks
Sent: Thursday, March 22, 2012 4:29 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 3570)

Hello,

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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Heather Baptie, MEd

Terry Dobson, MEd

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[1-800-839-3397](tel:1-800-839-3397)

www.l2lonline.com

From: What Works
Sent: Friday, May 11, 2012 11:37 AM
To: 'Links 2 Learning Online'
Subject: RE: Misrepresentation of Read Naturally on What Works Clearinghouse Website
Attachments: QRT 2012005.pdf


Dear Ms. Baptie and Ms. Dobson,

Attached is a response to the questions you raised in your March 22 message to the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC).

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/>.

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What Works Clearinghouse **WWC**

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

May 11, 2012

Ms. Heather Baptie, MEd
Ms. Terry Dobson, MEd
Links 2 Learning Online Inc.

(b)(6)

Reference: QR2012005

Dear Ms. Baptie and Ms. Dobson:

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 by Chenault, Hancock, Denton, and Kemp because some of the authors have said that their studies were not intended as an evaluation of Read Naturally®, the quality review found that the WWC followed protocol in choosing to review these four studies. 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 Hancock, Denton, Kemp, and Chenault studies, the quality review found that the WWC followed protocol in the manner in which the four 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.

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. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

What Works Clearinghouse WWC

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

Based on these findings, the quality review team recommends no changes to the descriptions of the Read Naturally® in WWC publications. However, as you mentioned, 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 Christ and Davie (2009), Heistad (2004), and other 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 have also 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.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Jill Constantine
Director, What Works Clearinghouse

cc: (b)(6)