

From: Bridget Long [longbr@gse.harvard.edu]
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2010 10:34 AM
To: What Works; info@whatworks.ed.gov
Cc: Bettinger, Eric; Philip Oreopoulos
Subject: WWC Quick Review - INACCURATE information in a report

To Whom it may concern,
We just received a preview copy of the upcoming WWC report that reviews our study. There appears to be a HUGE mistake in the report as it suggests we had high rates of sample attrition and that this attrition differed substantially across the treatment and control groups. This is absolutely untrue, and we are puzzled how that conclusion was drawn (of the many who have reviewed the paper, none have come to a similar conclusion). None of our tables or results point to the concern highlighted in the WWC report, and we are baffled at the percentages reported on page 2 concerning sample attrition. How were these even calculated? It is worth noting that the way we track our sample using administrative data prevents such sample attrition.

We are extremely concerned that the WWC is about to put out an inaccurate report about our work. While we understand that the Quick Review process does not entail confirming study results with the authors, the WWC should at the very least report accurately what is in the report. The reservations about sample attrition are unfounded based on everything written in our study.

How can we remedy this situation?

Sincerely,
Bridget Long (with Eric Bettinger, Phil Oreopoulos, and Lisa Sanbonmatsu)

Prof. Bridget Terry Long, Ph.D.
Professor of Education and Economics
Harvard Graduate School of Education
<http://gseacademic.harvard.edu/~longbr/>

> From: "What Works" <whatworks@mathematica-mpr.com>
> Date: May 28, 2010 6:57:53 AM PDT
> To: <ebettinger@stanford.edu>
> Subject: What Works Clearinghouse Quick Review of Study
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> Dear Dr. Bettinger:

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> We are emailing to inform you that a What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)
> quick review of your report, "The role of simplification and informa
> tion in college decisions: Results from the H&R Block FAFSA experime
> nt," will be posted on the WWC website Tuesday, June 1, 2010. As par t
> of this process, we are sharing with you a courtesy copy of the qu ick
> review (attached as a PDF to this e-mail). This quick review is
> embargoed until Tuesday, June 1, 2010, at 10am Eastern Time and can
> not be circulated until that time.

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> Quick reviews assess whether a study's design is consistent with WWC
> evidence standards. WWC quick reviews are based on the evidence pub
> lished in the report cited and rely on effect sizes and significance
> levels as reported by study authors. WWC does not confirm study aut
> hors' findings or contact authors for additional information about t
> he study. The WWC rating refers only to the results summarized in th e
> review and not necessarily to all results presented in the study.

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> To learn more about WWC quick reviews, you can visit the WWC quick
> review page at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/quickreviews/>.

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> Because of the volume of correspondence the WWC receives, questions
> regarding WWC reports and quick reviews should be submitted to the
> Help Desk at info@whatworks.ed.gov. Your questions will be forwarded
> to the appropriate staff member on the WWC team and you will receive
> an e-mail response.

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> Sincerely,

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> The What Works Clearinghouse Team

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