

From: keiths@ori.org
Sent: Sunday, January 30, 2011 5:22 PM
To: info@whatworks.ed.gov
Subject: IES Website: Contact Us: Evidence Standards, Reference ID
Number:
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info@whatworks.ed.gov, this email was automatically sent through the
Contact
link on the WWC website.

From: keiths@ori.org

Message: Hi. I recently read the WWC report on Pre-K Mathematics, and it
raised some concern about the WWC evidence standards. In particular, I
suggest that WWC either restrict its use of unpublished reports or
provide
additional scrutiny.

WWC report on Pre-K Mathematics:

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/early_ed/prek_math/

WWC uses unpublished progress reports and presentations to demonstrate
evidence in support of programs, which have not been scrutinized by the
peer
review process nor are unavailable for review by interested researchers.
While the peer review process is not perfect, and I have more to say
about
that below, it serves as a useful primary screener for results, as WWC
reviewers can't be expected to capture every issue. The use of
literature
that has not been reviewed may lead to tenuous conclusions and incorrect
reports by the WWC.

In the present case, with Pre-K Mathematics (link below), the WWC
includes a
reference to an unpublished progress report as "met" and a
presentation at the IES conference as "met with reservations."
I
was unable to find either of these documents. The project that produced
the
progress reports, however, and perhaps the presentation, appears to
include a
design flaw, which appears in the investigators' 2008 publication in JREE
(Klein, Starkey, Clements, Sarama, & Iyer, 2008, volume 1, issue 3).
This
paper is cited as a publication from the project that produced the report
that
met WWC standards.

The JREE paper states that "a total of 40 preschool classroom . . .
were
randomly assigned" (p. 160). The analyses nested observations
within

