

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 1:13 PM
To: What Works
Cc: Barbara Denbow
Subject: Read Naturally reviews

Dear Susanne,

I wanted to email you in support of the Read Naturally company of which I've known for 12 years. I understand that an updated review is in process and I would like to lend my support of their researched-based strategies and powerful intervention materials.

In 2000, I moved from a very affluent school in Forsyth County, Ga to a Title I school after which I discovered they were in a serious situation having been on the Needs Improvement list for 4 years. We were in jeopardy of the state taking over the school. I researched what was available, talked to a Read Naturally teacher in Kansas City and then flew to Texas for training. We implemented the Read Naturally fluency intervention for our struggling students and the next year were off the Needs Improvement list. After several years we were a National Title I Distinguished School and recognized by Standards and Poor. Because of our success, the software edition was later purchased for our large and very technically superior county school system.

I know that studies from Hancock, Denton, Kemp and Chenault as reviews of Read Naturally were not intended to evaluate the program since they did not implement the steps. As a trainer, I stress to other teachers that for fidelity, the steps need to be followed carefully so the students take full advantage of the highly effective, research proven strategies.

My school conducted a control study of first graders using Read Naturally and learned first hand how supportive the program is for beginning and developing readers. Those using Read Naturally made significant gains over their peers.

I urge you to look into revising the review studies that are included in What Works Clearinghouse to reflect the true picture of how students benefit from using Read Naturally. I've seen it personally and through the testimonies of hundreds of teachers across the nation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,
Barb Denbow, Ed.S., NBCT

From: WhatWorks
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 4:48 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Read Naturally reviews (WWC 3565)

Dear Ms. Denbow,

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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From: What Works
Sent: Friday, May 11, 2012 10:52 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Read Naturally reviews
Attachments: QRT 2012003.pdf

Dear Ms. Denbow,

Attached is a response to the questions you raised in your March 20 message to the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC).

Thank you,

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May 11, 2012

Ms. Barb Denbow

(b)(6)

Reference: QR2012003

Dear Ms. Denbow:

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 Hancock, Denton, Kemp, and Chenault because the 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 the steps for Read Naturally® were 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.

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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. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

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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).

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)