

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

