

From: LADUCA Beth <beth.laduca@state.or.us>
Sent: Tuesday, October 30, 2012 4:07 PM
To: 'whatworks@mathematica-mpr.com'
Cc: WhatWorks
Subject: FW: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2010017)
Attachments: QR2010017.pdf

To Whom It May Concern:

I noticed recently that a summary of the review discussed in previous emails (see below) has been posted here: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/quickreviewsum.aspx?sid=155>. According to the summary "At the end of kindergarten and first grade, students in structured English immersion had significantly better English reading and language skills than students in transitional bilingual education. The WWC interprets these effects as corresponding roughly to the skill difference between the 50th and 66th percentiles of English reading and language achievement."

The summary fails to note that kindergartners in transitional bilingual education were taught to read *exclusively in Spanish* and transitioned *gradually* to reading in English from 1st to 3rd grades. In this context, the findings cited in the summary are hardly surprising, and readers who are unaware of the context could easily draw false inferences about "what works."

The real question addressed in the study is whether there are differences in the longer term outcomes for students in transitional bilingual and structured English immersion programs. The study followed students through 4th grade, at which time, according to the full review, "differences in English reading and language skills between the groups were all statistically insignificant." The review goes on to cite two out four outcomes favoring 4th graders in structured English immersion that, while not statistically significant, the review characterizes as "substantively important." The summary of the review fails to mention any of the outcomes for 4th graders, thereby ignoring the main research question of the study.

It appears to me that the What Works Clearinghouse is misrepresenting this study in the summary of the review. Citing data that on the surface and out of context supports structured English immersion suggests a bias in favor of structured English immersion and against bilingual education.

I look forward to a response to these comments.

Beth LaDuca

From: What Works [mailto:whatworks@mathematica-mpr.com]
Sent: Monday, January 31, 2011 8:39 AM
To: LADUCA Beth
Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2010017)

Dear Ms. LaDuca,

Attached is a response to the questions you raised in your email concerning the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) quick review of “Reading and Language Outcomes of a Five-Year Randomized Evaluation of Transitional Bilingual Education.”

Thank you,

What Works Clearinghouse

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What Works Clearinghouse WWC

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

January 31, 2011

Ms. Beth LaDuca
NAEP State Coordinator
Oregon Department of Education
beth.laduca@state.or.us

Reference: QR2010017

Dear Ms. LaDuca:

Thank you for your email concerning the WWC quick review of “Reading and Language Outcomes of a Five-Year Randomized Evaluation of Transitional Bilingual Education.” In response to your inquiry, the WWC quality review team undertook an investigation of the issues you raised. When a quality review is conducted, researchers who were not involved in the review independently assess the study in question and examine whether the WWC adhered to its procedures and protocols.

The quality review team first considered whether the review adhered to WWC standards in reporting effects that were not statistically significant but had effect sizes of 0.25 or greater. Under WWC standards, results that are deemed substantively important are reported as qualified positive effects. The default value for a substantively important result is a student-level effect size of 0.25 or greater (WWC standards are available [here](#), see page 22). The effect sizes for the reported results were 0.29 and 0.31. For these reasons, the quality review concluded that WWC standards were followed in reporting the results. The WWC has adopted this standard because large effect sizes are evidence that the program may be effective and that the sample size used in the study was not large enough to identify even a substantial effect with statistical significance.

The quality review team then considered the manner in which the results were reported. The quality review concluded that the quick review should follow the WWC standards by using the term “substantively important” instead of “noteworthy.” Use of the term “substantively important” will increase accuracy and clarity as the term has a specific technical definition in the WWC standards. The quality review recommended that the final paragraph of the quick review be revised to the following:

When the students reached fourth grade, they only received English instruction. At this time, differences in English-reading skills between the groups were all statistically insignificant. Two of the four outcomes, though, showed large enough differences favoring English immersion that the WWC considered them substantively important: the effect sizes were roughly equivalent to the skill differences between the 50th and 61st percentiles of reading achievement. The findings suggest that English immersion had a qualified positive effect on these English outcomes but the study sample for fourth grade outcomes was not large enough to test effectiveness.

What Works Clearinghouse WWC

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The quality review recommended the paragraph include the following footnote: “The WWC reports results for statistically insignificant effects if the estimated impact is 0.25 standard deviations or greater.”

You mentioned in your email that the WWC interpretation of the findings is different from the interpretation by the authors. The authors concluded that the findings suggest that students learn to read in English “equally well” under the two approaches. The WWC concluded that the effect of structured English immersion is substantively important. The difference in conclusions comes from the WWC’s standards for reporting substantively important effects even if they are not statistically significant.

Based on the findings of the quality review, we will be revising the quick review as recommended. 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)

From: WhatWorks
Sent: Wednesday, October 31, 2012 9:56 AM
To: 'LADUCA Beth'
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2010017)

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From: LADUCA Beth <beth.laduca@state.or.us>
Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2013 2:02 PM
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Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2010017)

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From: LADUCA Beth <beth.laduca@state.or.us>
Sent: Thursday, September 12, 2013 11:01 AM
To: WhatWorks
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2012015)
Attachments: WWCH quick review summary.pdf

Thank you for your reply. However, in your response you cite text from the PDF of the quick review, while the comments in my 10/30/2012 email referred to the summary on your web page(<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/quickreviewsum.aspx?sid=155>), which is all that many of your users may read. I have attached a PDF of the text of the summary to this message. I am requesting that you change the text of this summary in response to the concerns outlined in my 10/30/2012. I did not request on 10/30/2012, and I am not requesting now, any change to the quick review itself.

Thank you for following up with me, and I look forward to your further consideration of this issue.

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From: WhatWorks [mailto:What.Works@icfi.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 11, 2013 8:23 PM
To: beth.laduca@state.or.us
Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2012015)

Dear Ms. LaDuca:

Attached in the document entitled *QRT 2012015_Response_9.11.2013* is a response to the questions you raised in your inquiry on October 30, 2012.

Thank you,

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From: beth.laduca@state.or.us
Sent: Wednesday, September 08, 2010 10:51 AM
To: info@whatworks.ed.gov
Subject: IES Website: Contact Us: Publications, Quick Reviews,
Reference ID
Number: 1879324836

info@whatworks.ed.gov, this email was automatically sent through the
Contact
link on the WWC website.

From: beth.laduca@state.or.us

Message: I don't understand the following paragraph in your Quick Review
of
"Reading and Language Outcomes of a Five-Year Randomized Evaluation
of
Transitional Bilingual Education." If differences between the
groups are
all statistically insignificant, why are you citing effect sizes for two
of
the outcomes? My interpretation is that you are citing differences which
may
be due to error. Why are you highlighting these effect sizes with so
little
justification? "When the students reached fourth grade, they only
received English instruction. At this time, differences in English-
reading
skills between the groups were all statistically insignificant. Two of
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From: WhatWorks

Sent: Friday, September 10, 2010 1:37 PM

To: 'beth.laduca@state.or.us'

Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2421)

Dear Ms. LaDuca,

Thank you for contacting the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). When reporting a study's effects, the What Works Clearinghouse considers both the statistical significance and the substantive importance of the effect. As noted in the What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Appendix E

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/wwc_procedures_v2_standards_handbook.pdf>), a substantively important positive effect is considered to be a qualified positive effect—and therefore is noteworthy—even though it may not reach statistical significance in a given study. The threshold for determining substantive importance for effects mentioned in quick reviews is a student-level effect size greater than or equal to 0.25. The effect sizes for the two results mentioned in the paragraph you referenced in the quick review were greater than 0.25.

The intuition is not that large differences may be due to error; rather, it is that there may not be enough statistical power to detect the differences, even though they are quite large. This is often a result of small sample sizes. In the case of this particular study, the results for the 4th graders were based on a sample size considerably smaller than that used for the other analyses.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us again. You may reply to this email.

Thank you for your interest,

What Works Clearinghouse

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-----Original Message-----

From: beth.laduca@state.or.us [mailto:beth.laduca@state.or.us]

Sent: Wednesday, September 08, 2010 10:51 AM

To: info@whatworks.ed.gov

Subject: IES Website: Contact Us: Publications, Quick Reviews, Reference ID

Number: 1879324836

info@whatworks.ed.gov, this email was automatically sent through the Contact link on the WWC website.

From: beth.laduca@state.or.us

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From: LADUCA Beth [beth.laduca@state.or.us]
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2010 6:30 PM
To: WhatWorks
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2421)

Thank you for your reply. I continue to be concerned about possible bias in this review for several reasons:

1. The use of the term “noteworthy” in the review does not seem to be in line with the term “qualified positive effect” used in the appendix. Why not say “the WWC considered them qualified positive effects” rather than “the WWC considered them noteworthy?”
2. The interpretation of the findings by the WWC is markedly different from the interpretation by the authors of the study.

Hearing Dr. Slavin and Dr. Gersten discuss this review would be most interesting.

From: WhatWorks [mailto:WhatWorks@icfi.com]
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2010 11:37 AM
To: LADUCA Beth
Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2421)

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From: LADUCA Beth [beth.laduca@state.or.us]
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2010 6:36 PM
To: WhatWorks
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2421)

One more follow up comment. Please check this link for an example of the type of misunderstanding which may arise from the review: <http://edupdates2.blogspot.com/2010/09/wwc-compares-two-approaches-to-teaching.html>.

From: WhatWorks [mailto:WhatWorks@icfi.com]
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To: LADUCA Beth
Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2421)

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Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2010 6:14 PM
To: 'LADUCA Beth'
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2421)

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From: LADUCA Beth [beth.laduca@state.or.us]
Sent: Thursday, December 16, 2010 3:44 PM
To: WhatWorks
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2421)
[Any update on the Quality Review promised below?](#)

From: WhatWorks [mailto:WhatWorks@icfi.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2010 3:14 PM
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From: WhatWorks
Sent: Friday, December 17, 2010 9:34 AM
To: 'LADUCA Beth'
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2421)
Dear Ms. LaDuca,

The Quality Review Team is actively working on a response; however, we are currently unable to provide a timeline for its completion.

Thank you,

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From: LADUCA Beth [mailto:beth.laduca@state.or.us]
Sent: Thursday, December 16, 2010 3:44 PM
To: WhatWorks
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2421)

[Any update on the Quality Review promised below?](#)

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From: What Works
Sent: Monday, January 31, 2011 11:39 AM
To: 'beth.laduca@state.or.us'
Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2010017)
Attachments: QR2010017.pdf

Dear Ms. LaDuca,

Attached is a response to the questions you raised in your email concerning the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) quick review of "Reading and Language Outcomes of a Five-Year Randomized Evaluation of Transitional Bilingual Education."

Thank you,

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From: WhatWorks
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2011 3:31 PM
To: 'beth.laduca@state.or.us'
Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2010017)

Dear Ms. LaDuca,

The changes detailed in the WWC Quality Review Team letter dated 1/31/2011 are now live on the WWC website. You may view the revised WWC quick review of “Reading and Language Outcomes of a Five-Year Randomized Evaluation of Transitional Bilingual Education” at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/quickreviews/QRReport.aspx?QRID=155>.

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From: WhatWorks
Sent: Wednesday, September 11, 2013 11:23 PM
To: 'beth.laduca@state.or.us'
Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2012015)
Attachments: QR2012015_Response 9 11 2013.pdf

Dear Ms. LaDuca:

Attached in the document entitled *QRT 2012015_Response_9.11.2013* is a response to the questions you raised in your inquiry on October 30, 2012.

Thank you,

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From: WhatWorks
Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2013 2:56 PM
To: 'LADUCA Beth'
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2010017)

Dear Ms. LaDuca,

Thank you for your email. The quality review is still in progress. You will receive a letter summarizing the findings of the review as soon as it is complete.

At this time, we are unable to provide a timeline for the response.

Thank you,

What Works Clearinghouse

From: LADUCA Beth [<mailto:beth.laduca@state.or.us>]
Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2013 1:02 PM
To: WhatWorks
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2010017)

Just curious about when I can expect to receive a response as promised below.

Beth LaDuca

From: WhatWorks [What.Works@icfi.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 31, 2012 6:56 AM

To: LADUCA Beth
Subject: RE: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2010017)

Dear Ms. LaDuca,

Thank you for contacting the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). We have received your email below. The appropriate WWC staff members are reviewing your request and will prepare a response.

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From: LADUCA Beth [<mailto:beth.laduca@state.or.us>]
Sent: Tuesday, October 30, 2012 3:07 PM
To: 'whatworks@mathematica-mpr.com'
Cc: WhatWorks
Subject: FW: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2010017)

To Whom It May Concern:

I noticed recently that a summary of the review discussed in previous emails (see below) has been posted here: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/quickreviewsum.aspx?sid=155>. According to the summary "At the end of kindergarten and first grade, students in structured English immersion had significantly better English reading and language skills than students in transitional bilingual education. The WWC interprets these effects as corresponding roughly to the skill difference between the 50th and 66th percentiles of English reading and language achievement."

The summary fails to note that kindergartners in transitional bilingual education were taught to read *exclusively in Spanish* and transitioned *gradually* to reading in English from 1st to 3rd grades. In this context, the findings cited in the summary are hardly surprising, and readers who are unaware of the context could easily draw false inferences about "what works."

The real question addressed in the study is whether there are differences in the longer term outcomes for students in transitional bilingual and structured English immersion programs. The study followed students through 4th grade, at which time, according to the full review, "differences in English reading and language skills between the groups were all statistically insignificant." The review goes on to cite two out four outcomes favoring 4th graders in structured English immersion that, while not statistically significant, the review characterizes as "substantively important." The summary of the review fails to mention any of the outcomes for 4th graders, thereby ignoring the main research question of the study.

It appears to me that the What Works Clearinghouse is misrepresenting this study in the summary of the review. Citing data that on the surface and out of context supports structured English immersion suggests a bias in favor of structured English immersion and against bilingual education.

I look forward to a response to these comments.

Beth LaDuca

From: What Works [<mailto:whatworks@mathematica-mpr.com>]
Sent: Monday, January 31, 2011 8:39 AM
To: LADUCA Beth
Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (QR2010017)

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What Works Clearinghouse **WWC**

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

September 11, 2013

Ms. Beth LaDuca
NAEP State Coordinator
Oregon Department of Education
beth.laduca@state.or.us

Reference: QR2012015

Dear Ms. LaDuca:

Thank you for your email concerning the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) quick review of “Reading and Language Outcomes of a Five-Year Randomized Evaluation of Transitional Bilingual Education” (released February 2011). In response to your October 30, 2012, correspondence, we conducted an independent quality review. The WWC quality review team responds to concerns raised by study authors, curriculum developers, or other relevant parties about WWC reviews published on our website. When a quality review is conducted, a reviewer who was not involved in the initial review undertakes an independent assessment of the study in question. The reviewer also examines the procedures followed and decisions made during the original review of the study.

In your October 30, 2012 email, you expressed concern that the WWC quick review summary did not provide sufficient context for discussion of results for kindergarten and first grade; failed to mention any of the outcomes for fourth graders and, therefore, ignored the study’s main research question about longer-term effects; and appeared to misrepresent the study by seemingly supporting the structured English immersion program over transitional bilingual education. We carefully examined the issues you raised, revisited our review of the study, and came to the following conclusions.

Insufficient context for discussion of results for kindergarten and first grade

The WWC properly described the two types of instruction under the section “What Two Types of Instruction Were Contrasted?” and provided necessary context for discussion of results at the end of kindergarten and first grade, as follows:

“Students in the transitional bilingual education group were taught to read exclusively in Spanish during kindergarten. Starting in first grade, they were gradually taught to read in English; by third grade, they read only in English. Students in structured English immersion were taught to read exclusively in English starting in kindergarten.” (p.1)

Failure to mention fourth grade outcomes, ignoring longer-term effects

Although the current format of the quick review does not support detailed description of outcomes, the quick review did describe the long-term effects reported in the study, as follows:

“When the students reached fourth grade, they only received English instruction. At this time, differences in English reading and language skills between the groups were all statistically insignificant.

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Two of the four outcomes, though, showed large enough differences favoring English immersion that the WWC considered them substantively important: the effect sizes were roughly equivalent to the skill difference between the 50th and 61st percentiles of English reading and language achievement. The findings suggest that structured English immersion had a qualified positive effect on these English outcomes, but the study sample for fourth grade outcomes was not large enough to test effectiveness.” (p.2)

Misrepresentation of study findings

The WWC highlights findings that may be meaningful to educators by characterizing findings with an effect size of 0.25 standard deviations or larger as substantively important, regardless of statistical significance (for more information about WWC effectiveness ratings, please refer to the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, version 2.1, pages 96-97). The quality review team verified that the effect size for PPVT was 0.29 and for English Letter/Word ID was 0.31 for fourth-grade students.

As we mentioned in our last correspondence (dated January 31, 2011), the WWC reporting of the findings is different from the reporting by the authors because of the WWC’s standards for reporting on substantively important effects. The authors concluded that the (statistically insignificant) findings suggest that students learn to read in English “equally well” under the two approaches. The WWC concluded that the size of the effect of structured English immersion is large enough to be considered substantively important. The difference in conclusions comes from the WWC’s standards for reporting substantively important effects even if they are not statistically significant.

Though the WWC followed its procedures in the review and reporting on this study, the quality review team proposed revising the text for clarity, as follows:

By fourth grade, no differences in English reading and language skills between the groups were statistically significant according to the study authors. However, two of the four outcomes showed large enough differences favoring English immersion that the WWC considered them substantively important (that is, an effect size of at least 0.25 standard deviations). These effects were roughly equivalent to the skill difference between the 50th and 61st percentiles of English reading and language achievement.

Based on the findings of this quality review, we will be revising the quick review as recommended. 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