

From: robertst@csus.edu
Sent: Thursday, January 10, 2008 11:25 PM
To: What Works
Subject: IES Website: Roberts & Neal (2004)

What Works Clearinghouse, This email was automatically sent through the Contact link on the WWC website.

From: robertst@csus.edu Last Page:
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/tech_assistance/helpdesk.asp

Message: I have examined your conclusions on a study that I conducted and published (Roberts & Neal, 2004). You concluded that the study met criteria with reservations because of what you determined to be attrition problems. I have looked through all the website text on the study and related appendices and information on your technical criteria and could not find an explanation for how you made this determination. The attrition rate for the study was 5/38 children over the course of a 10 month period in preschool. I am surprised to see that this was considered a high attrition rate and would like to request information on what criteria you used in determining that the loss of 5/38 children over a 10 month period of time in a preschool program serving low income children represented an attrition problem. Perhaps the information is available in your materials, but I could not locate it.

Thank-you,

Theresa Roberts, study author

From: Sakari Morvey
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2009 2:00 PM
To: What Works; Cassandra Pickens
Subject: RE: IES Website: Contact Us: Other, Reference ID Number: 167448027

Hi Leah,

I will actually log this as a Quality Review Team issue under the Quality Review Team site.

Thanks,

Sakari

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

From: What Works
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2009 1:59 PM
To: Sakari Morvey; Cassandra Pickens
Subject: FW: IES Website: Contact Us: Other, Reference ID Number: 167448027

The email below was sent to the WWC inbox. Should I create an issue for this, and if so who should it be assigned to?

Thanks,
Leah

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

From: mdynarski@mathematica-mpr.com [mailto:mdynarski@mathematica-mpr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2009 9:22 AM
To: info@whatworks.ed.gov
Subject: IES Website: Contact Us: Other, Reference ID Number: 167448027

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

From: mdynarski@mathematica-mpr.com

Message: I am forwarding this thread with Theresa Roberts for handling by the quality review team:

Thank you for bringing this to my attention and I will work with the team to ensure the appropriate web site correction is made.

Regards,
Mark Dynarski
Director, What Works Clearinghouse

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

From: Roberts, Theresa [mailto:robertst@csus.edu]

Sent: Monday, August 10, 2009 8:57 PM

To: Mark Dynarski

Subject: RE: Roberts and Neal (2004) Study

Hello mark,

I found your response to my concerns satisfactory and that you were to correct the statement that there was high overall attrition in Roberts & Neal (2004). However, I recently read a report authored by Farver and Lonigan that noted an issue with overall attrition in that study. I then checked the Clearinghouse web site and found that the correction stated in your letter to me has not been made. This is copied today from the website:

Three studies reviewed by the WWC investigated the effects of
Phonological Awareness Training plus Letter Knowledge Training
practices in center-based settings. One study (Gettinger, 1986)
was a randomized controlled trial that met WWC evidence
standards. One study (Roberts & Neal, 2004) was a randomized
controlled trial that met WWC evidence standards with reservations
because of high overall and differential attrition

The authors apparently took the issues stated on the website, including overall attrition which your letter notes should and would be corrected, and published this as a concern in their study.

Needless to say I find it disconcerting that the correction to the website has not been made and that authors have taken the uncorrected information and published it, apparently on the merits of what the Clearinghouse had published, although they did not cite the clearinghouse in their report.

Please advise.

Theresa Roberts

From: Cassandra Pickens [CPickens@mathematica-mpr.com] On Behalf Of Mark Dynarski

[MDynarski@mathematica-mpr.com]

Sent: Thursday, May 29, 2008 12:07 PM

To: Roberts, Theresa

Cc: Jill Constantine; Scott Cody

Subject: Roberts and Neal (2004) Study

Dear Dr. Roberts:

I am attaching the findings from our review of the issue raised regarding the Roberts and Neal (2004) study.

Thank you for bringing this concern to our attention.

Mark Dynarski

Director,

What Works Clearinghouse

From: What Works
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2009 1:38 PM
To: Sakari Morvey
Subject: FW: Phonological Awareness Plus Letter Knowledge Intervention Report

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

From: Roberts, Theresa [mailto:robertst@csus.edu]
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2009 8:26 PM
To: What Works
Subject: RE: Phonological Awareness Plus Letter Knowledge Intervention Report

Thank-you for your prompt correction of this mistake and the courteousness of your response.

Regards,
Theresa Roberts

From: What Works [whatworks@mathematica-mpr.com]
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2009 11:21 AM
To: Roberts, Theresa
Subject: Phonological Awareness Plus Letter Knowledge Intervention Report

Dear Dr. Roberts,

This is in response to your August 12 message to Dr. Dynarski regarding the Phonological Awareness Plus Letter Knowledge intervention report. The report has now been revised to reflect that the Roberts and Neal (2004) study met standards with reservations because of high differential attrition. You may view the revised report at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/early_ed/phono_awareplus/research.asp.

We apologize for the delay in modifying this report and appreciate your bringing this to our attention.

Please feel free to contact us again should you have additional questions or concerns.

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/>.

From: What Works
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2009 2:21 PM
To: 'robertst@csus.edu'
Subject: Phonological Awareness Plus Letter Knowledge Intervention Report

Dear Dr. Roberts,

This is in response to your August 12 message to Dr. Dynarski regarding the Phonological Awareness Plus Letter Knowledge intervention report. The report has now been revised to reflect that the Roberts and Neal (2004) study met standards with reservations because of high differential attrition. You may view the revised report at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/early_ed/phono_awareplus/research.asp.

We apologize for the delay in modifying this report and appreciate your bringing this to our attention.

Please feel free to contact us again should you have additional questions or concerns.

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/>.

Mark Dynarski
Project Director
What Works Clearinghouse

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WWC-55

May 27, 2008

Theresa Roberts
California State University, Sacramento
6000 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95819

Reference: A2008001

Dear Dr. Roberts:

In response to your January 10, 2008 e-mail concerning the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) review of the Roberts and Neal (2004) study, we conducted a Quality Review of the original rating of that study. The WWC Quality Review Team responds to concerns raised by study authors, curriculum developers or other relevant parties about WWC ratings of studies. In the Phonological Awareness Plus Letter Knowledge intervention report, the WWC indicated that the Roberts and Neal (2004) study met standards with reservations because of both high overall and high differential attrition. The findings of our review, discussed in detail below, are that the study did not experience high overall attrition but did experience high differential attrition. The fact that the study experienced high differential attrition means that the rating of the study as meeting standards with reservations will remain unchanged. However, we will revise the intervention report to reflect the fact that it is only the differential attrition that leads to reservations.

Your January 10 e-mail questioned why the attrition rate observed in the study was classified as severe. The protocol developed for reviewing studies of early childhood education interventions (available at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/WWC/PDF/ECE_protocol.pdf) establishes that overall attrition greater than 20 percent and/or differential attrition greater than 7 percent would be considered severe. In conducting an independent review of the study, our audit team computed overall attrition based on the 38 non-English speaking children in the study (because the study blocked children by language ability prior to random assignment, we did not include the 5 English-only in computations of attrition). Thus, overall attrition was computed as the 5 non-English speaking students who had no posttest data out of the original 38 non-English speaking students, or 13 percent. This falls within the threshold established by the protocol.

LETTER TO: Theresa Roberts
FROM: Mark Dynarski
DATE: May 27, 2008
PAGE: 2

We then calculated the differential attrition rate. High rates of differential attrition can call into question the results of studies, even if they are random control trials. The difference in the attrition rate for non-English speakers in the letter-rhyme group (4 out of 18, or 22 percent) and the attrition rate for non-English speakers in the comprehension group (1 out of 20, or 5 percent) yields a differential attrition rate of 17 percent. This exceeds the threshold established the protocol.

These computations differ from those used in the original review of the study. In computing overall and differential attrition, the original review treated as attrition the 5 English-only children that were excluded from the analysis. Thus, overall attrition was computed as 10 children out of 43, or 23 percent. We have concluded that, given the design of the study, this calculation was incorrect.

Because the differential attrition rate of 17 percent exceeds the 7 percent threshold established in the protocol, we conclude that the Roberts and Neal (2004) study met WWC standards with reservations. Because this review determined that the study did not experience severe overall attrition, we will revise the intervention report published on the WWC website to indicate that the Roberts and Neal (2004) study met standards with reservations because of high differential attrition.

I hope this has answered your questions.

Sincerely,



cc:

(b)(6)

From: Cassandra Pickens on behalf of Mark Dynarski
Sent: Thursday, May 29, 2008 3:07 PM
To: 'robertst@csus.edu'
Cc: Jill Constantine; Scott Cody
Subject: Roberts and Neal (2004) Study
Attachments: 2008001 Findings Letter.doc

Dear Dr. Roberts:

I am attaching the findings from our review of the issue raised regarding the Roberts and Neal (2004) study.

Thank you for bringing this concern to our attention.

Mark Dynarski
Director,
What Works Clearinghouse