



Dear Phyllis,

As a retired teacher, I know how critical it is for educators to have accurate information when selecting curriculum. Educators use their experience with a product and their understanding of the product's research base to make decisions. Curriculum evaluators may also play a role in this process. However, not all curriculum evaluators can be relied on to provide information accurately, on a consistent basis. They may, for example, post reviews of studies that have not implemented a specific program with fidelity. The good news is that many evaluators do present research studies that consider a program's purpose and implementation. I would like to share with you some important information that will help you navigate through the evaluations of Read Naturally curriculum.

Well-designed studies, which implement Read Naturally with fidelity, consistently demonstrate the effectiveness of the strategy. [Control group studies](#) have proven that students using Read Naturally make greater gains than students in control groups. Recently, the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) gave its highest rating to a study of Read Naturally conducted by Dr. Ted Christ of the University of Minnesota. In this study, students in the Read Naturally group had 39% greater gains in fluency than students in the control group. The NCRTI also posted the Heistad study on its website. In this study, 43% percent of students who received Read Naturally scored at Level 3 or above on the state comprehension test (i.e., met *No Child Left Behind* standards) as compared to 27% of a matched sample. See the [lead story in our Fall 2010 newsletter](#) for more details about the Christ and Heistad studies.

The NCRTI pays attention to study purpose, design, and implementation. In Read Naturally's experience, the NCRTI, as well as the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) and the University of Oregon, produce accurate and helpful reviews of programs. For more information about the criteria used by evaluators of reading programs, please see this [comparison chart](#).

Unfortunately, not all evaluators discern the stated purpose of a study and may post reviews of studies that were not intended to evaluate the program in question. As a result, they provide educators with inaccurate information. What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), which does not consider the purpose or implementation of studies, has posted four evaluations of Read Naturally on its website. Each of the evaluations were based on studies that did not use or assess the Read Naturally strategy properly. **In each case, the study authors clearly state that using their study as an evaluation of Read Naturally would be a misapplication of the data, and that WWC should not post these studies.** To read more about these studies and why WWC's reviews of Read Naturally are inaccurate, please view the links at the end of this email.

Over the past 20 years, educators have sent me hundreds of case studies and thousands of testimonials confirming the Read Naturally strategy's positive results. Just as you help spread the word about Read Naturally's effectiveness, please help spread the word about which evaluators provide accurate information and which ones don't. It is essential that educators have accurate information when selecting

curriculum--the success of our students is at stake.

I invite you to contact me at [info@readnaturally.com](mailto:info@readnaturally.com) with any comments or questions about this matter. Thank you for your work with students and for your continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas M. Ihnot". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'T' and 'I'.

Thomas M. Ihnot

[Hancock Study Author States, "Study Was Not Intended to Evaluate Read Naturally"](#)

[Denton Study Assessment Measures Incongruous With Read Naturally](#)

[WWC's Review of Kemp Study Deceives Educators](#)

[Chenault Study Authors State WWC's Review Is "Misapplication of Data"](#)