

What Works Clearinghouse



Beginning Reading

December 2008

Houghton Mifflin: Invitations to Literacy

Effectiveness

No studies of *Houghton Mifflin: Invitations to Literacy* that fall within the scope of the Beginning Reading protocol meet WWC evidence standards. The lack of studies meeting WWC evidence standards means that, at this time, the WWC is unable to draw any conclusions based on research about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of *Houghton Mifflin: Invitations to Literacy*.

Program Description¹

Houghton Mifflin: Invitations to Literacy, developed by the Houghton Mifflin Company, is an integrated K–8² reading and language arts program. The philosophy behind the program is that literacy instruction should stimulate, teach, and extend the communication and thinking skills that will allow students to become effective readers, writers, communicators, and lifelong

learners. The program is structured around themes. It includes hands-on activities that allow students to collaborate or share information on a theme-related project with other classrooms around the world (for example, participating in a collaborative poem-writing exercise) and virtual field trips to Internet sites that have content, activities, and projects related to the theme.

The WWC identified 4 studies of *Houghton Mifflin: Invitations to Literacy* that were published or released between 1983 and 2008.

Two studies are within the scope of the protocol and have an eligible design, but they do not meet WWC evidence standards because they do not establish that the comparison groups were comparable to the treatment groups prior to the start of the intervention.

One study is out of the scope of the protocol because it has an ineligible study design that does not meet WWC evidence standards; it does not use a comparison group.

One study is out of the scope of the protocol as defined by the Beginning Reading protocol. Although some of the schools in the study used *Houghton Mifflin: Invitations to Literacy*, the study examined the impact of teacher practices on student literacy rather than the effectiveness of the intervention.

1. The descriptive information for this program was obtained from a publicly-available source: the program's website (<http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/itl/intro/>, downloaded October 2008). The WWC requests developers to review the program description sections for accuracy from their perspective. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this program is beyond the scope of this review.
2. This review refers to studies of *Houghton Mifflin: Invitations to Literacy* in grades K-3. Studies of *Houghton Mifflin: Invitations to Literacy* in grades 4-8 were out of the scope of the Beginning Reading protocol.

References Studies that fall outside the Beginning Reading protocol or do not meet evidence standards

- Farrell, D., & Reed, D. (1999). "Invitations to Literacy: Results of the first-year implementation survey." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the California Educational Research Association, Monterey, CA, November 17–19, 1999. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Foorman, B. R., Schatschneider, C., Eakin, M. N., Fletcher, J. M., Moats, L. C., & Francis, D. J. (2006). The impact of instructional practices in grades 1 and 2 on reading and spelling achievement in high poverty schools. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 31(1), 1–29. The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine the effectiveness of an intervention. This study evaluates the impact of teaching/instructional practices on literacy skills.

- Menon, S., & Hiebert, E. H. (2005). A comparison of first graders' reading with little books or literature-based basal anthologies. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 40(1), 12–38. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.
- Moustafa, M., & Land, R. E. (2002). The reading achievement of economically disadvantaged children in urban schools using *Open Court* vs. comparably disadvantaged children in urban schools using non-scripted reading programs. Retrieved from http://instructional1.calstatela.edu/mmoustafa/The_Reading_Achievement_of_Economically_Disadvantaged_Children_in_Urban_Schools_Using_Open_Court.pdf. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.