

# What Works Clearinghouse



## Open Court Reading<sup>®</sup>

**Effectiveness** No studies of *Open Court Reading*<sup>®</sup> that fall within the scope of the Beginning Reading review 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 *Open Court Reading*<sup>®</sup>.

**Program Description<sup>1</sup>**

*Open Court Reading*<sup>®</sup> is an elementary basal reading program for grades K-6 developed by SRA/McGraw-Hill. The program is designed to systematically teach decoding, comprehension, inquiry and investigation, and writing in a logical progression. Part 1 of each unit, Preparing to Read, focuses on phonemic awareness, sounds and letters, phonics, fluency, and word

knowledge. Part 2, Reading and Responding, emphasizes reading for understanding with literature, comprehension, inquiry, and practical reading applications. Part 3, Language Arts, focuses on communication skills such as spelling and vocabulary; writing process strategies; English language conventions such as grammar, speaking, and penmanship; and basic computer skills.

**The WWC identified 30 studies of *Open Court Reading*<sup>®</sup> that were published or released between 1985 and 2007.**

Seven studies are within the scope of the review and have an eligible design, but do not meet WWC evidence standards.

- Two studies do not establish that the comparison group was comparable to the treatment group prior to the start of the intervention.
- Five studies have confounding factors, such as combining with other interventions, which make it impossible to attribute the observed effect solely to *Open Court Reading*<sup>®</sup>.

Fifteen studies are out of the scope of the review because they have an ineligible study design that does not meet WWC evidence standards, such as having no comparison group.

Seven studies are out of the scope of the review, as defined by the Beginning Reading protocol, for reasons other than study design.

- One study does not report disaggregated results for students in grades K-3.
- Six studies are not studies of the effectiveness of *Open Court*<sup>®</sup> or do not measure the impact of *Open Court*<sup>®</sup> in outcomes domains identified in the review protocol.

<sup>1</sup>The descriptive information for this program was obtained from a publicly-available source: the program's website (<https://www.sraonline.com/productsamples.html?show=2&gid=342&tid=1>, downloaded June 2008). Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this program is beyond the scope of this review.

## References

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

Adams, M. J., Bereiter, C., McKeough, A., Case, R., Roit, M., Hirschberg, J., et al. (2002). *Open Court Reading*. Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill. The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine the effectiveness of an intervention.

Carpenter, Z. A. (2005). *Effects of Fast ForWord on reading comprehension for elementary students*. Cheney, WA: Eastern Washington University. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effect cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—the intervention was combined with another intervention.

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.

Haager, D., Dhar, R., Moulton, M., & Varma, S. (2005). *Reading First year 3 evaluation report*. Retrieved from [http://www.eddata.com/resources/publications/RF\\_Evaluation\\_2004-2005.pdf](http://www.eddata.com/resources/publications/RF_Evaluation_2004-2005.pdf). The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effect cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—the intervention was combined with another intervention.

Additional Sources:

Haager, D., Dhar, R., Moulton, M., & McMillan, S. (2006). *Reading First year 4 evaluation report*. Retrieved from [http://www.eddata.com/resources/publications/RF\\_Evaluation\\_2005-2006.pdf](http://www.eddata.com/resources/publications/RF_Evaluation_2005-2006.pdf).

Haager, D., Dhar, R., Moulton, M., & McMillan, S. (2008). *Reading First year 5 evaluation report*. Retrieved from [http://www.eddata.com/resources/publications/RF\\_Evaluation\\_2006-2007.pdf](http://www.eddata.com/resources/publications/RF_Evaluation_2006-2007.pdf).

Jordan, N. L. (2005). Basal readers and reading as socialization: What are children learning? *Language Arts*, 82(3), 204-213. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.

Levin, J., Haertel, E., Kirst, M., & Williams, T. (2006). *Similar students, different results: Why do some schools do better? Additional findings: Elementary school curriculum program and API: A more detailed examination*. Mountain View, CA: EdSource. The study is ineligible for review because it does not disaggregate findings for the age or grade range specified in the protocol.

McGraw-Hill Education. (2002). *Results with Open Court Reading*. New York: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED464189) (Study: Canopy Oaks Elementary, Tallahassee, FL). The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

McGraw-Hill Education. (2002). *Results with Open Court Reading*. New York: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED464189) (Study: Curtis Creek School District, Sonora, CA). The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

McGraw-Hill Education. (2002). *Results with Open Court Reading*. New York: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED464189) (Study: Fort Worth Independent School District, Fort Worth, TX). The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

McGraw-Hill Education. (2002). *Results with Open Court Reading*. New York: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED464189) (Study: Hartsfield Elementary School, Tallahassee, FL). The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

McGraw-Hill Education. (2002). *Results with Open Court Reading*. New York: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED464189) (Study: Kelso Elementary School, Inglewood, CA). The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

McGraw-Hill Education. (2002). *Results with Open Court Reading*. New York: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED464189) (Study: Lemoore Union Elementary School District, Lemoore, CA). The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

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- O'Brien, D. M., & Ware, A. M. (2002, March). Implementing research-based reading programs in the Fort Worth Independent School District. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 7(2), 167-195. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.
- Skindrud, K., & Gersten, R. (2006). An evaluation of two contrasting approaches for improving reading achievement in a large urban district. *Elementary School Journal*, 106(5), 389-407. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.
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- SRA/McGraw-Hill. (2005). *Results with Open Court Reading*. Retrieved from [https://www.sraonline.com/download/OCR/Research/SRA\\_OCR-Results.pdf](https://www.sraonline.com/download/OCR/Research/SRA_OCR-Results.pdf). The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine the effectiveness of an intervention.
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Wiltz, N., & Wilson, G. P. (2006). An inquiry into children's reading in one urban school using SRA Reading Mastery (Direct Instruction). *Journal of Literacy Research, 37*(4), 493-528. The study did not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effect cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—there was only one unit of analysis in one or both conditions.