

What Works Clearinghouse



Students with Learning Disabilities

July 2010

Herman Method™

Effectiveness¹

No studies of the *Herman Method*™ that fall within the scope of the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol meet What Works Clearinghouse (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 the *Herman Method*™ on students with learning disabilities.

Program Description²

The *Herman Method*™ teaches reading in small groups of up to three students.³ The curriculum provides instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, while also teaching spelling and writing. It contains 20 modules of instruction through a fifth grade level. Each module includes a reading, spelling, and handwriting component. The

curriculum uses direct instruction and drill and practice exercises provided through different media, including flash cards, computer-based software programs, workbook exercises, and guided reading books. The *Herman Method*™ has been used with struggling readers, English language learners, and learning-disabled students.

1. The studies in this report were reviewed using WWC Evidence Standards, Version 2.0 (see the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Chapter III), as described in protocol Version 2.0.
2. The descriptive information for this program was obtained from a publicly available source: the program's website (<http://www.hermanmethod.com>, downloaded October 2009). 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. The literature search reflects documents publicly available by October 2009.
3. The *Herman Method*™ is one of many curricula that are based, in part, on the principles of the sequential, multisensory Orton-Gillingham approach to teaching reading. Other WWC intervention reports related to the multisensory Orton-Gillingham approach include *Barton Reading & Spelling System*®, *Foundations*®, *Alphabetic Phonics*, *Orton-Gillingham-based Strategies (Unbranded)*, *Wilson Reading System*®, *Project Read*®, and *Dyslexia Training Program*.

Program Description

(continued)

The WWC identified four studies of the *Herman Method*™ for students with learning disabilities that were published or released between 1989 and 2009.

None of the four studies meet WWC evidence standards with or without reservations for the WWC review protocol for Students with Learning Disabilities.

One study is within the scope of the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol but uses a quasi-experimental design in which the analytic intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent.

Three studies are out of the scope of the review protocol and are ineligible for review.

- Two studies do not use a comparison group.
- One study does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

References

Studies that fall outside the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol or do not meet evidence standards

Bowman, L. M. (1999). *Curious George meets Herman: The effects of commercially produced phonics software on phonemic awareness*. Unpublished master's thesis, Johnson Bible College, Knoxville, TN. The study is ineligible for review because the WWC could not confirm that at least 50% of the sample was classified as students with learning disabilities.

Herman, R. (1995). Effects of the *Herman Method* on the reading achievement of dyslexic students. In C. McIntyre & J. Pickering (Eds.), *Clinical studies of multisensory language education* (pp. 83–95). Salem, OR: International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

Moore, A. E. (1998). The effects of teaching reading to learning-disabled students using an explicit phonics program combined with the Carbo Recorded Book Method. (Master's thesis, Texas Woman's University, 1998). *Masters Abstracts International*, 37(1). The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because it uses a quasi-experimental design in which the analytic intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent.

Moss, F. B. (1990). *A study to determine the effectiveness of the Herman Method for reversing reading failure and its impact on the reading performance of the dyslexic student*. Unpublished master's thesis, Glassboro State College, NJ. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.