

# Read 180 and System 44 Evidence and Efficacy In Response to Pedagogy Non Grata Review

*Read 180* has been the subject of continuous research and validation and is built on over two decades of evidence repeatedly proving its effectiveness at closing gaps and increasing literacy outcomes. *Read 180* has demonstrated improvement in students' performance on standardized assessments, reduction of dropout rates, and improvement in achievement levels with diverse students. *Read 180* has been validated by independent studies published in academic peer-reviewed journals, reports issued by national education organizations, and external evaluation sites.

Recently, Pedagogy Non Grata (PNG) published a meta-analysis of studies on *Read 180* and *System 44* that contains multiple inaccuracies using a flawed methodology:

- *Read 180* and *System 44* are **not** balanced literacy programs.
- The inclusion criteria of the PNG review is not sufficiently stated.
- Based on the unclear methodology used, the results of the PNG review are not reliable.
- The PNG analysis is not peer reviewed, and thus not verified.
- What Works Clearinghouse follows the highest industry standards for educational research, and their independent meta-analysis demonstrated the effectiveness of *Read 180* with adolescents reading below expectations.

For more details, please refer to the table on the next page.

**Conclusion:** The review by Pedagogy Non Grata is limited, relies on flawed methodology, and is not comparable to the body of research and evidence published on *Read 180* and *System 44* over the past two decades.

Reliable and rigorous research publications with higher standards and a research base that includes 60+ *Read 180* studies and 40+ *System 44* studies have shown the effectiveness of the programs for raising reading achievement for diverse students across diverse settings.

*For more information about Read 180's authors, researchers, endorsements, and testimonials directly from students and teachers describing how Read 180 and System 44 impacted their lives, please refer to pages 3-6.*

# HMH Response to Pedagogy Non Grata Findings

Topic	Pedagogy Non Grata	HMH Response
<b>Program Description</b>	"Read 180 is a balanced literacy program offered by HMH that is aimed at helping older struggling readers. System 44, is meant to be a complimentary program offered to students in need of more foundational instruction."	Pedagogy Non Grata incorrectly states that <i>Read 180</i> ® and <i>System 44</i> ® are balanced literacy programs. The foundational skills instruction throughout <i>System 44</i> follows a systematic scope and sequence, with explicit decoding strategies. In addition, <i>System 44</i> includes decodable, highly controlled passages that increase in text complexity. Neither program uses the cueing system, but rather, they explicitly use word attack strategies where students apply their knowledge of letter-sound correspondence, morphology, and syllabication rules.  For further description, please refer to: <a href="https://www.hmhco.com/programs/read-180">https://www.hmhco.com/programs/read-180</a>
<b>Inclusion Criteria</b>	"In total 23 studies were included in the analysis. All experimental studies with control groups and sufficient reporting to find effect sizes were included."	The inclusion criteria of "sufficient reporting" does not clearly define why those 23 studies were included. More detail of the inclusion criteria should be stated, as is the research standard expectation with meta-analyses.
<b>Use of Effect Size</b>	"Cohen's d effect sizes were used for studies with a sample size above 50. Hedge's g was used for studies with a sample size below 50. Studies without sufficient sample size reporting were measured using Cohen's average. Effect sizes were also weighted, according to sample size, by their proportionality to the mean."	A meta-analysis should use one standard effect size, which could be either Cohen's d or Hedge's g. In order to draw statistically valid conclusions, meta-analysis should calculate all effect sizes separately using mean and standard deviations, and not rely solely on those published by others.
<b>Methodology</b>	"That said, not all of these studies had equivalent sample sizes or levels of quality. So the analysis was re-conducted to be weighted according to sample size and a regression analysis was conducted to control for quality. The weighted analysis showed slightly more favorable results with a mean effect size of .15, with 95% confidence intervals of [.03, .26]."	The description of the PNG methodology is unclear. They seem to have run a fixed effects analysis and may have weighted by sample size. Both approaches can be problematic when effect sizes are complex, as in cluster randomized control trials. The report suggests that they ran a simple fixed effects analysis, but it is not possible to confirm if this is the approach.
<b>Results</b>	"However, these results were still negligible."	<i>Read 180</i> has been reviewed by numerous independent researchers across the past 20+ years, demonstrating statistically significant positive outcomes using rigorous study designs of randomized controlled trials, which can reliably claim <b>causality</b> of the effect of <i>Read 180</i> and <i>System 44</i> .  Additionally, federally funded meta-analyses such as the Striving Readers study findings showed that <i>Read 180</i> was the only program out of the ten studied to demonstrate positive effects on reading achievement.
<b>Peer Reviewed</b>	"This analysis was not peer-reviewed."	This PNG analysis was not peer reviewed, nor has the analysis been confirmed by independent statisticians.
<b>What Works Clearinghouse</b>	"However, we believe that both What Works ClearingHouse and Evidence for ESSA overweight the importance of study quality and underweight the importance of study results."	Pedagogy Non Grata mischaracterizes the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) study, as WWC considers impact while upholding the rigor of the research design study quality. The 2016 meta-analysis conducted by WWC confirmed the effectiveness of <i>Read 180</i> with adolescents reading below expectations.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION & AUTHORSHIP

Pedagogy Non Grata (PNG) incorrectly states that *Read 180*® and *System 44*® are balanced literacy programs. As noted in their description from WWC for *Read 180* and our description for *System 44*, *Read 180* and *System 44* are blended learning solutions integrating the best practices of personalized, adaptive technology, evidence-based instructional strategies for whole- and small-group, scaffolded support for independent reading within students' proximal zone of development, data to inform targeted instruction, and professional services and resources to support the implementation. Designed for students in Grades 3 to 12 reading more than one year below grade level, *System 44* has systematic, explicit instruction and practice of foundational literacy skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency, which is contrary to many balanced literacy programs, and *Read 180* provides a comprehensive program to deepen students' comprehension (for those who are past phonics instruction) while providing scaffolds on word analysis, text structure, vocabulary, background knowledge, comprehension strategies, and writing.

By referencing both PNG's description and the WWC/company's program descriptions, PNG displays a lack of understanding of the term balanced literacy and effective literacy instruction. The programs do not use the cueing system but rather teach explicit decoding strategies, do not have an incidental approach to phonics instruction as it follows a systematic scope and sequence, and the foundational skills instruction uses decodable highly controlled passages that increase in text complexity. Those students who need explicit systematic instruction of foundational literacy skills are placed in *System 44*. Once students learn to "crack the code," they progress into the comprehension portion of instruction, which is *Read 180*. Those students benefit from a focus in comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, content knowledge building along with word analysis.

Both *Read 180* and *System 44* were developed by research scientists and thought leaders within the field of literacy, language, and special education encapsulating the best research of those fields.

### ***Read 180* and *System 44* Thought Leaders & Experts**

- Dr. Ted Hasselbring, Professor of Emeritus of Special Education, Vanderbilt University
- Dr. Marilyn Adams, Visiting Professor, Brown University
- Dr. Kate Kinsella, Emeritus Teacher Educator, San Francisco State University
- Lindsey Bird, EL Educator and Advocate
- Dr. Margarita Calderon, Professor Emerita and Senior Research Scientist, Johns Hopkins University
- Dr. Steve Graham, Professor of Educational Leadership, Arizona State University
- Dr. Karen Harris, Professor of Educational Leadership, Arizona State University
- Dr. Luz Yadira Herrera, Assistant Professor of Bilingual Education, California State University, Channel Islands
- Dr. Devin Kearns, Associate Professor of Special Education, University of Connecticut
- Dr. Rick Wagner, Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Research Professor, Florida State University
- Dr. Julie Washington, Professor and Affiliate Faculty, University of California Irvine

## EVIDENCE BASED

*Read 180* has been the subject of continuous research and validation efforts for over two decades, and studies repeatedly prove its effectiveness at closing gaps and increasing literacy outcomes. This thoroughly researched and documented literacy intervention solution has demonstrated to improve students' performance on standardized assessments, reduce dropout rates, and improve achievement levels for a variety of students: students with disabilities, students with dyslexia, English learners, economically disadvantaged students, students with autism, incarcerated students, and students of various ethnicities from across the nation.

*Read 180* has been validated by independent studies published in academic peer-reviewed journals, reports issued by national education organizations, and external evaluation sites.

- **WWC:** What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evaluated *Read 180* and reported that it has positive effects on comprehension and general literacy achievement (WWC, 2016).
- **Striving Readers:** The United States Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) published a report summarizing the federally funded Striving Readers research on the effectiveness of intervention programs on the reading achievement of struggling adolescent students. The authors of the report found that *Read 180* was the only program out of 10 studied as part of the Striving Readers project that had positive effects on reading achievement (Bouley et al., 2015).
- **Evidence for ESSA:** The Center for Research and Reform in Education at Johns Hopkins University, the organization behind Evidence for ESSA, has given *Read 180* a **Strong** evidence rating—the highest ESSA level.
- **Summary of 20 Years of Research on Adolescent Literacy Practices:** Researchers from the Florida Center for Reading Research examined 33 studies of adolescent literacy programs and practices published over the last 20 years, and *Read 180* was found to have potentially positive effects on students' reading outcomes, one of the highest ratings measuring the effectiveness of research studies (Herrera et al., 2016).
- **Best Evidence Encyclopedia (BEE)-Effective Reading Programs for Secondary Students:** Researchers from Johns Hopkins University and the United Kingdom examined the evidence base for reading programs designed to improve middle and high school students and found that two studies from *Read 180* demonstrated significant positive effects (Baye et al., 2016).
- **ISTE:** At the 2019 International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE) Conference, an anonymous panel of judges comprised of the country's most tech-savvy educators awarded *Read 180* with Tech & Learning's ISTE Best of Show, which is given to products and services with the greatest promise for impacting teaching and learning.

*Read 180* research can be found on the HMH Research website at [hnhco.com/read180research](https://hnhco.com/read180research)

The **System 44** research portfolio includes two gold-standard Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) studies demonstrating positive results and qualify the program as demonstrating Strong levels of evidence under the WWC criteria. In addition, there are over 40 studies that show the program's effectiveness with various groups of students, particularly older striving readers and students with disabilities.

- **Strong Levels of Evidence:** In both RCT studies, students in the *System 44* treatment groups exhibited significant positive outcomes on several reading achievement measures in comparison to the control group students. More specifically, in the Saginaw Public Schools RCT study, *System 44* students performed significantly better than control group students on the CTOPP Elision test and TOWRE Sight Word Efficiency test. *System 44* students also demonstrated significant results on the SRI. In the Murrieta Valley School District RCT study, results demonstrated that *System 44* students significantly outperformed control group students in reading fluency. Results from the CST ELA showed a significant increase in the percentage of students who achieved proficiency for both the *System 44* and control group students.
- **CASE Endorsed:** *System 44* and *Read 180* are both endorsed by the Council of Administrators of Special Education.
- **Return on Investment:** *System 44* and *Read 180* have been shown to provide districts with a return on their investment by decreasing special education referrals, expulsions and suspensions, thereby allowing districts to save money and put that money back into teaching and learning. For more information, please visit: <https://www.hmhco.com/research/system-44-read-180-napa-valley-unified-school-district>
- **Students with Dyslexia:** *System 44* has also demonstrated significant findings for students with dyslexia. In a study conducted in San Antonio, results indicated that elementary and middle school students with dyslexia and striving readers demonstrated significant improvements in their foundational literacy skills and reading comprehension. In addition, a study conducted at the Charles Armstrong School, a school focused on educating students with dyslexia, showed that elementary and middle school students with dyslexia enrolled in *System 44* demonstrated statistically positive gains in their oral reading fluency and foundational skills.

*System 44* research can be found on the HMH Research website at [hmhco.com/system44research](https://www.hmhco.com/system44research)

## Implementation Matters

Research suggests that maintaining fidelity of implementation to the prescribed program model is crucial in order to achieve desirable outcomes (Salinger et al., 2010). In other words, evidence-based programs when not implemented with the recommended dosage and usage, that lack the support or resources from the administration, and don't provide teachers with ongoing professional learning may not be as effective.

Research results show that students who have higher usage of the program demonstrate higher gains. In other words, the more students use the program, the higher their literacy outcome. In one study, economically disadvantaged students who completed six or more *Read 180* Student App segments exhibited literacy gains that were equivalent to two years of academic growth during a single academic year. For more information on the study, please visit:

<https://www.hmhco.com/research/read-180-east-high-school-study-20172019>

## TESTIMONIALS

Hear the voices of the schools and students who have used *Read 180* and *System 44* over the years and have seen significant, life-changing results.

- [Charles Armstrong School – System 44 and Read 180 \(Video\)](#)
- [Charles Armstrong School – Read 180 \(Video\)](#)
- [Clovis Unified School District \(Video\)](#)
- [Lilly: Student with Dyslexia Reaching Grade-Level Proficiency \(Web\)](#)
- [Lilly’s Success Story \(Video\)](#)
- [Jamaica Success Story \(Video\)](#)
- [Jaleah Success Story \(Web\)](#)
- [Jaleah Success Story \(Video\)](#)
- [Read 180 Teacher Success Story \(Web\)](#)
- [Read 180 Teacher Success Story \(Video\)](#)

## References

- Baye, A., Lake, C., Inns, A., & Slavin, R. (2016). *Effective reading programs for secondary students*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University School of Education’s Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education.
- Boulay, B., Goodson, B., Frye, M., Blocklin, M., & Price, C. (2015). Summary of research generated by striving readers on the effectiveness of interventions for struggling adolescent readers. NCEE 2016-4001. *National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance*.
- Herrera, S., Truckenmiller, A. J., & Foorman, B. R. (2016). Summary of 20 years of research on the effectiveness of adolescent literacy programs and practices (REL 2016-178). Washington, DC: US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. *National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast*. Retrieved from <http://ied.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.
- Salinger, T., Moorthy, S., Toplitz, M., Jones, W., & Rosenthal, E. (2010). *Implementation matters: Systems for success. A descriptive study of READ 180 in urban middle schools*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.
- What Works Clearinghouse. (2016). *WWC Intervention Report: READ 180*. Washington, DC: Institute for Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance.