

Renaissance myON Reader Meets the “Evidence-Based” Requirements of ESSA

To meet the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), educators must select activities, strategies, or interventions that are evidence-based. This document explains those standards, and how Renaissance myON Reader™ meets them.

What is an “evidence-based” intervention?

Section 8101(21)(A) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by ESSA¹, defines “evidence-based” as follows:

“(21) EVIDENCE-BASED.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the term ‘evidence-based’, when used with respect to a State, local educational agency, or school activity, means an activity, strategy, or intervention that—

“(i) demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on—

“(I) strong evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented experimental study;

“(II) moderate evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study; or

“(III) promising evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or

“(ii)(I) demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes; and

“(II) includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention.

Department of Education Guidance on Using Evidence

In September 2016, the Department of Education issued a guidance document² to provide state and local education agencies (SEAs and LEAs) with *non-regulatory recommendations* (i.e. non-binding or legally enforced) for selecting and using evidence-based interventions (used generally to mean any practices, activities, etc., not just those aimed at struggling students). The guidance is split into two sections:

Part I includes 5 steps that form a framework to guide an SEA’s or LEA’s choice of intervention and to strengthen its effectiveness once implemented:

- Step 1: Identify local needs
- Step 2: Select relevant, evidence-based interventions – Part II of the document is designed to help guide this step.

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/114/plaws/publ95/PLAW-114publ95.pdf>

² <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/guidanceusesinvestment.pdf>

- Step 3: Plan for implementation
- Step 4: Implement – This step acknowledges the importance of program implementation on an intervention's success. There is an emphasis on collecting implementation data and using it to monitor and adjust the program.
- Step 5: Examine and reflect – Suggests the use of performance monitoring to track progress toward program objectives and the use of evaluations of effectiveness that yield *strong* or *moderate evidence* to determine if desired outcomes were achieved. A free tool called "RCT Yes"³ is suggested as a resource to aid in intervention-data analysis.

These steps, framed as a cycle to promote continuous improvement, present a straightforward guide for SEA and LEA stakeholders to follow in their efforts to choose an evidence-based intervention that will meet their needs, insure it is implemented well, and evaluate whether it attains the desired goals.

Part II of the document provides guidance to help stakeholders understand the meaning and depth of what constitutes an "evidence-based" intervention, with the goal of allowing them to choose a well-supported intervention to implement (Part 1, Step 2), as well as help them to design a sufficiently rigorous evaluation of their chosen intervention once it is put into place (Part 1, Step 5).

The definition of what qualifies as an evidence-based intervention, and the levels of evidence described in Part II of the guidance document are defined in Section 8101 (21) (A) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which was amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. To summarize, the ESEA defines an **evidence-based intervention** as one that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on student outcomes through at least one study showing *strong*, *moderate*, or *promising* evidence, or the ability to *demonstrate a rationale*. It further defines strong, moderate, and promising evidence as being derived from well-designed and well-implemented experimental (strong) or quasi-experimental (moderate) studies, or from correlational studies that employed statistical controls for selection bias (promising evidence). The ESSA also considers interventions that demonstrate a rationale as evidence-based, meaning the intervention is backed by a well-defined logic model informed by research and there is an effort to study its effect on a relevant outcome planned or underway.

The guidance document makes it clear that the Department of Education allows a wide range of research study types in support of its requirement that interventions be evidence-based. It grants a significant degree of autonomy to SEAs and LEAs in choosing an intervention that, while may have varying degrees of rigor of evidence, will best suit the specific needs of its students and stakeholders. For instance, the guidance document emphasizes allowing SEAs and LEAs to choose an intervention that "will best serve their needs" (page 4) and suggests that stakeholders "consider the entire body of relevant evidence" (pp. 4 & 8) when examining the types of evidence supporting an intervention, while prioritizing more rigorous studies.

What does this mean for myOn Reader?

myON Reader is supported by evidence of effectiveness. Below are lists of studies that meet the standards of ESEA/ESSA and qualify myON Reader as an evidence-based intervention.

- 1 study provides Promising Evidence for the effectiveness of myON Reader
- 2 independent dissertations and 3 White Papers demonstrate the rationale behind the effectiveness of myON Reader.

³ <https://www.rct-yes.com/>

Promising Evidence

Ortlieb, E., Sargent, S., & Moreland, M. (2014). Evaluating the efficacy of using a digital reading environment to improve reading comprehension within a reading clinic. *Reading Psychology*, 35(5), 397–421.
<https://doc.renlearn.com/KMNet/R63036.pdf>

Ortlieb et al. randomly assigned three classrooms of 4th grade students (58 total) to one of three treatment conditions implemented during an after school reading clinic. One group of students were tutored using print-based text, the second group used myON Reader, and the third group used both myON Reader and printed materials. Students in the myON Reader group had posttest scores significantly higher than the print-only group on one of the two measures employed. Although this was a quasi-experimental study, its small sample size causes it to fall short of the *moderate evidence* benchmarks.

Demonstrates a Rationale

Additionally there are number of reports and studies that demonstrate how myON Reader is rooted in evidence-based best practices and can effectively and positively contribute to relevant student outcomes in both student engagement and general reading achievement.

Kuykendall, T. G. (2015). *The myON Reader program and reading proficiency among high school students* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Walden University). <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/414>

In this single-group, correlational study, 39 students who used myON Reader over the course of one school year experienced statistically significant gains on a measure of reading achievement. The author also determined that there was a significant positive correlation between quantity of reading using myON Reader and student growth on the reading assessment.

O’Conner, W. L. (2017). *Sociocultural early literacy practices in the school and home context: The role of a digital library* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, San Diego).
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1j95c5k2>

The author explores how myON Reader can help support literacy learning both at home and school and the factors that contribute to variations in the amount of use.

Brekhus, T. (2011). *Building proficiency through personalized reading: Capstone Digital’s myON Reader*. Capstone.
<https://doc.renlearn.com/KMNet/R63034.pdf>

This report outlines the research supporting technology-enhanced personalized reading as a critical component of an effective reading curriculum. Personalized reading considers a learner’s interests, ability, and learning style, all of which are all linked to greater engagement, motivation, and proficiency in reading. A technology-based personalized reading platform such as myON Reader can help teachers efficiently address the literacy needs and interests of their students while also assisting with classroom management and monitoring.

Rasinski, T. (2013). *Supportive fluency instruction: The key to reading success (especially for students who struggle)*. myON. <https://doc.renlearn.com/KMNet/R63033.pdf>

Research suggests that reading fluently is a key factor of overall reading proficiency and is often a source of struggle for students who fall short of reading standards. This report offers a variety of research-backed methods to support fluency development, such as modeled, assisted, wide, and deep reading. myON Reader offers students a customized, wide, and diverse library of literature that incorporates these elements.

Sanford-Moore, E. E. (2013). *The Lexile framework and myON Reader*. Bloomington, MN: myON. Retrieved from: <https://doc.renlearn.com/KMNet/R63032.pdf>

In this report, targeted reading is established as a research-proven method to increase reading comprehension. myON Reader utilizes the Lexile Framework for Reading to assemble a selection of literature choices specific to each student's individual needs using a placement exam, book quizzes, and periodic benchmark tests. The report also discusses the importance of text complexity in relation to Common Core State Standards and how a scale such as Lexile can be used to track student development throughout his or her academic career.