

GOODMAN RESEARCH GROUP, INC.
Program Evaluation • Consultation • Market Research

ReadingRockets.org
Summative Evaluation
Executive Summary

PREPARED BY

Colleen F. Manning, M.A.
Irene F. Goodman, Ed.D.
Helena Pylvainen, B.A.

SUBMITTED TO

Tina Chovanec
Reading Rockets
WETA-TV

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2010-2011, Goodman Research Group, Inc. (GRG) conducted an evaluation of the *ReadingRockets.org* project – Grant 9, carried out by WETA-TV with funding from the U.S. Department of Education. GRG has been conducting evaluation of *ReadingRockets.org* since 2003. This year’s evaluation updated information from previous years on the utility and impact of the website. In addition, the special foci of this evaluation centered on writing resources recently posted on the site and on obtaining feedback on resources developed specifically for parents.

As in previous years, the evaluation method was an online survey. The *ReadingRockets.org* website posted a link to the survey, which GRG housed on its survey website. Reading Rockets and GRG also shared the link through a special e-mail notice to Reading Rockets’ subscriber lists and via Reading Rockets’ Facebook page. A total of 448 respondents completed the survey.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from the Grant 9 evaluation are consistent with those of our previous evaluations. *ReadingRockets.org* continues to attract the same visitor demographic and visitors continue to learn information and strategies for helping children learn to read. *We recommend that Reading Rockets continue to work on strategies to attract parents and other home-based audiences to the website.*

In addition, there were new lessons learned about ReadingRockets.org in the Grant 9 evaluation:

- The more exposure to ReadingRockets.org, the greater the perceived knowledge gains.
- The *For Parents*, *For Librarians*, and *For Other Professionals* audience sections were comparable to the *For Teachers* page in terms of usefulness.
- One motivation for visiting the website that all audience segments had in common was a desire to keep up to date on the latest reading research.
- There is room for growth both in the proportion of teachers providing resources to parents and in the range of resources they could provide. *We recommend that Reading Rockets encourages teachers to share resources with parents and then to follow through with those parents.*
- *A—Z Topics* comprehension, fluency, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and writing resources were quite helpful, but use of specific strategies was low to moderate. In addition, use of the new *Looking at Writing* tool was very low. *We recommend that Reading Rockets give special attention to promoting use of these resources.*
- Finally, we learned that teachers and parents wanted more resources for middle schoolers. *We recommend that Reading Rockets add more resources for the middle grades and make it easy for visitors looking for this information to find it.*

Goodman Research Group, Inc.

Main Office

955 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 201
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Tel: (617) 491-7033

Fax: (617) 864-2399

info@grginc.com

www.grginc.com

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