

A Study of the Effectiveness of the Townsend Press *Ten Steps* Reading Series

Background and Purpose

In 2013, SEG Measurement conducted a national, multi-site study to evaluate the effectiveness of Townsend Press' *Ten Steps* Reading textbooks. This controlled study examined the impact of the *Ten Steps* Reading Series on students' reading skills in higher education developmental reading courses. The study compared the growth in reading skills between students using *Ten Steps to Improving College Reading Skills* or *Ten Steps to Advancing College Reading Skills* and students using other leading developmental reading textbooks. The study also gathered important feedback from teachers and students about their experiences with the *Ten Steps* books.

Students using the Ten Steps Reading Series achieved significantly greater growth in reading comprehension than students using other leading developmental reading textbooks.

Study Design

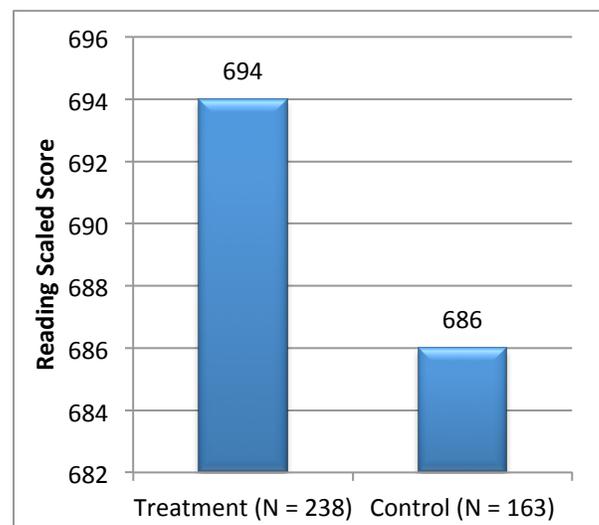
To evaluate the effectiveness of the *Ten Steps* textbooks, SEG Measurement, an independent research company, conducted a semester-long quasi-experimental study. The growth in reading skills of students using *Ten Steps* textbooks (treatment) was compared to the growth of a comparable group of students who used other leading developmental reading textbooks (*control*). The reading skills of both the treatment and control groups were assessed at the beginning of the study (pretest) and again at the end of the study (posttest).

The level of reading growth was assessed using a nationally-recognized, standardized reading assessment. The growth was compared statistically using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). This method compares the growth in reading skills achieved by treatment and control group students over the course of the study. In addition to the statistical comparisons, the study collected teacher and student feedback about the *Ten Steps* textbooks.

Results

Students in classes using the *Ten Steps* Reading Series achieved higher reading comprehension posttest scores (Mean=694) than did students in classes that adopted other reading texts (Mean=686). *Ten Steps* users showed more than a quarter of a standard deviation (Effect Size=.26) in growth than those who used other books.

Figure 1:
Ten Steps Users Improve Reading Skills Significantly More Than Students Who Use Other Books



About Townsend Press

Townsend Press is an independent publisher of acclaimed educational materials for students in grade school through college.

Townsend's *Ten Steps* offering has been widely adopted in high schools and colleges across the country. Each book presents ten key skills that help students become more effective readers. Distinctive

features of the Reading Series include abundant practice, a clear and friendly tone, high-interest readings, helpful visuals, PowerPoint presentations, and online exercises and tests. The books can be used as part of a sequential reading program, or any single book can be used independently of the others.

Ten Steps was found to be highly effective in improving students' reading comprehension skills.

Instructors using the *Ten Steps* Reading Series books strongly endorsed the series, indicating that the books were effective in improving their students' reading skills. Nearly all the instructors confirmed that they would recommend the books to their colleagues.

"The Ten Steps textbook provides students insight into important reading concepts and, along with the TP online activities, helps them develop their reading skills. Most importantly, it helps them develop the reading habit."

– Program Coordinator, Developmental Reading

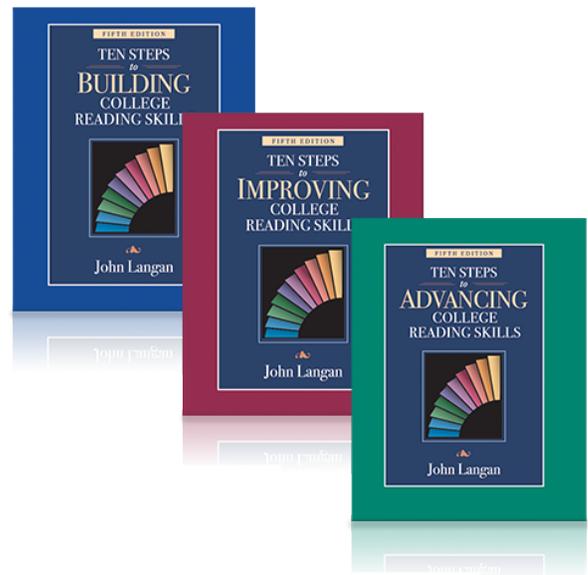
"I think the textbook is a great book. It explains everything in detail and provides various practice exercises for each skill students are learning. Students understand the textbook and it is easy to follow."

– Developmental Reading Instructor

"I have used the Ten Steps books for a number of years and enjoy the books tremendously. I like that there are so many exercises available for the students. Both the students and I enjoy the content of the reading selections used in the exercises."

– Professor of English, School of Humanities and Communication

For more information, please contact Townsend Press: 800.772.6410 or www.townsendpress.com



This study was conducted by SEG Measurement, supported by a grant from Townsend Press. SEG is an independent research firm, providing research services to educational publishers, technology providers, and government agencies, since 1979.