



INTRODUCTION

Reading Recovery is a short-term early literacy intervention designed for first-grade children having difficulty learning to read and write. Children meet individually with a specially trained, highly skilled teacher for 30 minutes daily. The instruction continues for a range of 12-20 weeks. Most children served make faster than average progress in order to catch up with their peers and continue to learn independently in the regular classroom. It also can serve as a pre-referral program for a small number of children who may need specialized longer-term assistance. Data collected on all children provide compelling evidence of this intervention's effectiveness.

...it is hard to imagine why Reading Recovery is not a fixture in every school district in every part of the country. The logic and evidence are overwhelmingly compelling. (Peter Johnston, 2005)

READING RECOVERY FACTS

- **Reading Recovery is based on scientific reading research.** Scientifically based reading research has been conducted on the theoretical base of Reading Recovery, as well as on evidence of its effects and evidence of its replicability. For information on the research support for Reading Recovery visit www.readingrecovery.org and click on "Research." In addition, the National Data Evaluation Center has collected data on every teacher and child in Reading Recovery for two decades.
- **Reading Recovery is a not for profit effort.** Implementation of Reading Recovery is a collaboration of universities, districts, and schools.
- **Reading Recovery teachers train for a full year.** Teachers in training attend a university or college course each semester. The classes meet weekly for the entire school year. Teachers are working with children during the entire training year.
- **Reading Recovery teachers select the lowest performing first grade students.** Reading Recovery teachers, in collaboration with the first grade classroom teachers, select the lowest achieving students based on each student's performance on the tasks of *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2002)

If evidence—scientific research evidence—was the true standard for decisions, then Reading Recovery and other tutoring interventions would be available for every child who could benefit from them. (Richard Allington, 2005)

HISTORY OF READING RECOVERY

The work of developmental psychologist Marie M. Clay yielded a set of research-based procedures found to reverse the failure cycle in most children in a relatively short period of time. Reading Recovery, a national program in New Zealand, expanded to the United States in 1984, when the first university training center in the United States was established at The Ohio State University. Reading Recovery has also expanded to Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Denmark.

Currently in the U.S., there are 21 universities training Reading Recovery teacher leaders and nearly 500 sites training Reading Recovery teachers. More than 2,600 school districts and nearly 14,000 teachers are involved in Reading Recovery. Over 115,000 children are served annually.

PURDUE READING RECOVERY 2004-2005

Network Description

Purdue University Reading Recovery Center supports 36 Teacher Training Sites—all 23 Reading Recovery Sites in Indiana, 12 sites in Iowa, and one site each in Virginia, New York, and Illinois. The trainers at Purdue University Training Center provide yearlong training for teacher leaders who return to districts (sites) to train

teachers. In addition, Purdue Trainers provide ongoing professional development for teacher leaders, technical support to sites, and annual evaluation of program data. During the 2004-2005 school year, Reading Recovery professionals at sites affiliated with Purdue served 11,394 children. This was achieved by 50 teacher leaders and 1,332 teachers at 811 schools in 327 school districts.

Student Demographics

Reading Recovery children in sites affiliated with Purdue University are represented by the following population demographics:

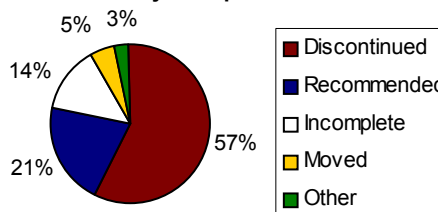
- Gender--58% boys, 42% girls;
- 46% received free or reduced price school lunches;
- Ethnic/Racial groups--74% white, 14% African American, 9% Hispanic/Latino, 1% Asian, and 2% multiethnic; and
- 92% native speakers of English.

Intervention Outcomes

Reading Recovery accounts for all children served, regardless of the number of lessons they receive. Because the goal is successful performance within the average of the classroom, children's programs are discontinued as soon as it can be predicted they can profit from classroom literacy instruction without further individual tutoring. Rigorous discontinuing criteria are applied.

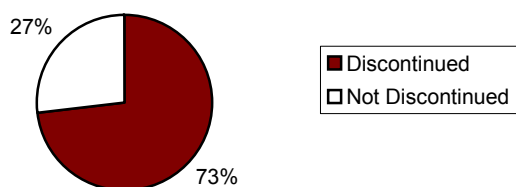
Of all children served, even for a short period of time, 6,504 children or 57% met the stringent criteria for discontinued service in an average of 19 weeks. Another 21% were recommended for further assessment and/or consideration for longer-term instructional support after receiving a full program of at least 20 weeks (also a positive action benefiting both the child and the school). At the end of the school year, 14% percent were still in Reading Recovery with insufficient time to complete their individual programs. Mobility during service was 5%. Due to rare and unusual circumstances, 3% were unable to complete their programs. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1. End-of-Year Status for Reading Recovery Groups for 2004-2005



Looking only at children who had the opportunity for a full program of instruction of at least twenty weeks, the percentage who successfully discontinued service was 73%. This means that these 73% of the lowest readers in the first grade who received a full program reached average levels in reading and writing. They will continue their school careers on equal footing with their average peers as a result of this intensive, short-term intervention. (See Figure 2.)

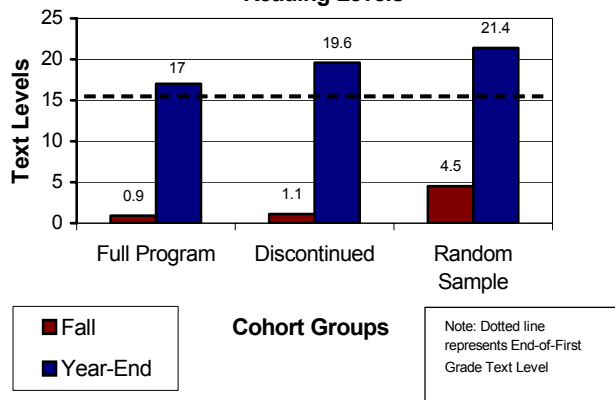
Figure 2. Students Receiving a Full Program



Text Reading Level Gains

The goal of the Reading Recovery intervention is to provide children with the necessary instruction to allow them to benefit from grade-level classroom instruction. This requires accelerated progress on their part since they begin the year as the lowest achieving children in the classroom. A measure of success in reaching this two-part goal (accelerated progress and grade-level reading) is to compare their text reading level in the fall and year-end to that of a group of first graders randomly selected from the entire population of first grade students in participating schools throughout the U.S. Figure 3 illustrates that children who successfully completed the program (discontinued) began the year below the comparison group and finished, as a group, reading at an average of Text Level 19.6, which represents beginning second grade level text reading. Children who successfully completed the intervention (discontinued) gained 18.5 text levels, compared to 16.9 levels gained by the randomly selected comparison group. As a group, the children who had a full program, including even those who did not discontinue, gained an average of 16.1 text levels. These gains provide dramatic evidence of the progress of these initially low-achieving students.

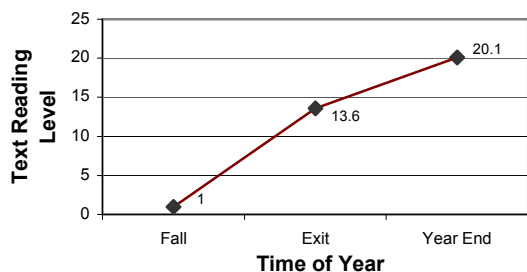
Figure 3. Fall and Spring Text Reading Levels



Continued Progress

Reading Recovery children who successfully complete the intervention continue to make progress after exiting the intervention. Figure 4 indicates the progress first round successful (discontinued) children made while receiving intervention instruction and also from the time of exit to the end of the school year. Their continued progress indicates that these children have developed systems for literacy learning which they will continue to use without further intervention.

Figure 4. Progress of Text Reading by Successfully Discontinued Students



The centerpiece of Reading Recovery is the development of readers who are self-regulated strategy users... (Michael Pressley, 2005)

Reduction in Special Education Placement

Reading Recovery has led the way in leaving no child behind. It dramatically reduces the numbers of children with reading difficulties and the cost of those children to school systems. Although Reading Recovery children were the lowest readers and writers when entering grade one, only 5% of the children receiving a full program were placed in special education services. Only 2% of the full-program children were placed in LD programs for reading, compared to 1% of the randomly selected comparison group. No child whose program was successfully discontinued was placed in LD reading programs.

The 2004 revised Individuals With Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEIA) addresses the need for Early Intervening Services (EIS) and children's Response to Intervention (RTI). The IDEIA provides school districts with the discretion to use up to 15% of their federal special education funds on professional development for teachers and on qualifying EIS. Reading Recovery, as an effective intervention with scientifically-based reading research, is an excellent example of an EIS.

Retention in Grade One

Few Reading Recovery children were retained in grade one; 8% of all children who had a full program, whether discontinued or not, were actually retained. Of those children, only 4% were retained because of reading difficulties. No child whose program was successfully discontinued was retained for reading difficulties.

Reading Placement in Classrooms

Classroom teachers described dramatic changes in reading group placements for Reading Recovery children who successfully completed the program across the year. In the fall, 91% were in the low group; by year-end only 27% were in low group placements.

Reading Recovery, based on a learning-to-read paradigm that has served young struggling readers well, has spared many children the despair, shame, and desperation of being the one who can't read like others in their classes. (Richard Vacca, 2005)

EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Reading Recovery has a strong track record of preventing literacy failure for many first graders. Results support the investment of resources in this prevention effort. Policy makers need to know which programs are successful in improving student outcomes in measurable ways. Reading Recovery meets the cost effectiveness test with student outcome data. It is the goal of the Purdue University Reading Recovery faculty to do all that is possible to assure literacy for all children in Indiana.

When asked, "Don't you think it's too expensive?" we have steadfastly answered, "The evidence shows it works." We also added the overused tagline, "Pay now or pay a great deal later." (James Flood and Diane Lapp, 2005)

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