

2008

2007-2008 Executive Summary, Reading Recovery Center of Iowa

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Reading Recovery is a research-based early literacy intervention implemented in schools to provide intensive individual literacy instruction to first grade students having the greatest difficulty learning to read and write. The goal of the intervention is to accelerate students' progress to on-grade level competency in 12 to 20 weeks. Reading Recovery also serves as a response to intervention (RtI) program for a small number of children who may need specialized longer-term assistance.

The University of Northern Iowa is an official University Training Center of the Reading Recovery North American Trainers Group. Salli Forbes, Ph.D. is the director/trainer of the Reading Recovery Center of Iowa at the University of Northern Iowa.

The Reading Recovery Center of Iowa at the University of Northern Iowa supports the following sites:

- | | |
|--|---|
| Area Education Agency 267 | Keystone Area Education Association |
| Council Bluffs Community School District | Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency |
| Des Moines Public School District | Northwest Iowa Area Education Agency |
| Heartland Area Education Agency | Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency |
| Iowa City Community School District/Grant Wood Area Education Agency | Southern Iowa Reading Recovery Consortium |
| | Waterloo Community School District |

Annual results for the state of Iowa are provided by the National Data Evaluation Center, The Ohio State University (2008).

Key Elements of Reading Recovery

1. Intensive year-long training for teachers to learn the research-based theory and procedures.
2. On-going professional development for teachers for as long as they teach Reading Recovery.
3. Intensive daily instruction, individually designed and delivered, which maximizes the learning potential of each student.
4. Research and evaluation to monitor results and to provide data for educational decision making.

Reading Recovery in Iowa

Reading Recovery began in Iowa in 1991-1992 in the Des Moines Public School District with one teacher leader and one class of teachers. Since 1991 Reading Recovery has served 57,068 children in the state of Iowa.

In January 2009, the Reading Recovery Center of Iowa was established in the College of Education at the University of Northern Iowa. The center supports the work of the Reading Recovery network of professionals throughout Iowa, including:

- one university trainer
- 16 teacher leaders
- 11 sites
- 503 teachers in 317 schools in 155 districts
- 4,015 students

Student Demographics

Reading Recovery children in Iowa are represented by the following population demographics: 58 percent were boys; 58 percent received free or reduced priced school lunches; 68 percent were white, 10 percent were Hispanic/Latino, 13 percent were African American, 1 percent were Native American, 1 percent were Asian, 7 percent were multiethnic; and 86 percent were native speakers of English.

Reading Recovery teachers most often work half day in the Reading Recovery role and teach small groups or in classrooms the other half. In Iowa, the most common other roles and average number of students taught in 2007-2008 by role included:

Table 1. Teacher Role by Students Taught

| Role | Average Number of Students Taught Per Teacher |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Reading Recovery/Title I | 48.4 |
| Reading Recovery/ Classroom Teacher | 38.2 |

Scientific Research Supports Reading Recovery

■ What Works Clearinghouse gives highest ratings to Reading Recovery

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), determiner of the "gold standard" in educational research for the U. S. Department of Education, in a review of current beginning reading programs found that Reading Recovery® was the only program with positive or potentially positive effects in all four areas of reading studied. Reading Recovery demonstrated the highest results of all programs studied in general reading achievement and fluency. Reading Recovery had the next highest rating in alphabetic skills and comprehension. (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008)

■ Compelling Meta-analysis by Independent Researchers

D'Agostino & Murphy (2004) published a meta-analysis of 36 studies of Reading Recovery in the research journal *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. The research demonstrated consistently positive results. The authors concluded that, "In sum, the results seem to indicate a lasting program effect at least by the end of second grade, on broad reading skills." (p. 35)

■ Reading Recovery and Response to Intervention (RtI)

The revised Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) allows educators to use response to intervention (RtI) as a method to identify children for special education services as an alternative to the traditional IQ discrepancy (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). There are two possible outcomes for low achieving students in RtI: 1) students respond positively to the intervention and improve their reading and writing performance, so they do not need special education services, or 2) students do not respond adequately to the intervention and they qualify for special education services.

Schools with Reading Recovery have been using a response to intervention system to minimize the number of children who need special education services and to identify those children who do. Reading Recovery teachers select the lowest achieving students in reading and writing in the first grade classroom. A large percentage (71 percent) of these students accelerate their learning and achieve on-grade level performance with only 12-20 weeks of instruction. However, a smaller percentage of the students (29 percent) do not achieve on-grade level performance and are recommended for further assessment at the end of 20 weeks of instruction.

Figure 1. Intervention Status of Reading Recovery Children with Complete Interventions: Iowa, 2007-2008



Reading Recovery fits within a tiered approach to provide students with instruction to meet their needs. Reading Recovery provides intensive instruction in a one-on-one setting with lessons and a program designed for each individual student. Many RtI models which include Reading Recovery have been developed (Dorn & Schubert, 2008; Forbes, Swenson, Person & Reed, 2008; International Reading Association, 2007; Scharer, Pinnell & Bryk, 2008).

In 2007-2008, only 2 percent of the children served by Reading Recovery in Iowa were placed in special education for literacy. Rodgers & Ortega found in a national study that 4 percent of a comparison group were placed in special education (2008). This demonstrates the effectiveness of Reading Recovery as a response to intervention (RtI).

■ Sustained Effects – Longitudinal Results

Reading Recovery students who successfully complete the intervention continue to make excellent progress after exiting the intervention. Figure 4 indicates the progress made by children whose interventions were successfully discontinued mid-year (exit) and from exit to the end of the school year.

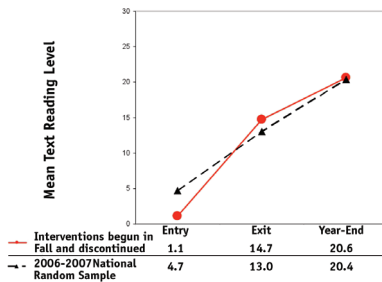


Figure 2. Progress on Text Reading Level of Reading Recovery Children Whose Interventions Started in Fall and Who Successfully Reached On-grade Level Performance: Iowa, 2007-2008

Reading Recovery students continue to make good progress for several years beyond the intervention. Forbes and Szymczuk (2008) found that between 68-75 percent of former Reading Recovery students in Iowa performed within or above the average band of their peers on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills on Reading Comprehension, Reading Vocabulary and Total Reading scores in third, fourth and fifth grade.

Studies of sustained effects at several of the Iowa Reading Recovery sites have found a very high percentage of former Reading Recovery students who are proficient on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in fourth grade. Information on these studies can be obtained by contacting one of the teacher leaders at specific sites (see the directory at www.uni.edu/coe/reading_recovery/).

■ Cost Effectiveness of Reading Recovery

A report from the KPMG Foundation (2006) in the United Kingdom demonstrates the high costs of literacy difficulties. Factors attributed to low literacy rates include:

- extra instructional support in school throughout the grades
- high levels of expulsion and drop-out rates
- unemployment and under-employment
- violent crime
- increased health risks

The KPMG Foundation report adjusted the costs to reflect if Reading Recovery were available for every person who needs it. The projected savings would be at least 1.37 billion pounds (\$2.7 billion dollars) annually. The report estimated that for every pound invested in Reading Recovery the savings would be 14-17 pounds—an extraordinary return on the investment. The projections for long-term savings are based on the many studies which demonstrate that Reading Recovery has a high rate of sustained effects for the students served (Forbes & Szymczuk, 2008; Schmitt & Gregory, 2005; Thornton-Reid & Duncan, 2008).

Several cost-effectiveness studies in the United States have shown that Reading Recovery provides cost savings for school districts by reducing the number of students who need ongoing special education, Title I services, grade-level retention and related services. (Gomez-Bellengé, 2007; Schmitt, Askew, Fountas, Lyons & Pinnell, 2005; Assad & Condon, 1996). Table 2 provides a cost comparison example between Reading Recovery and other educational interventions.

Table 2. Cost Comparison Example Between Reading Recovery and Other Educational Interventions

| | Annual Per-Pupil Cost | Average Time in Program | Per-Pupil Cost Across Time |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Retention | \$9,200 | 1 Year | \$9,200 |
| Title I | \$2,400 | 5 Years | \$12,000 |
| Special Education | \$3,750 | 5 Years | \$18,750 |
| Other (e.g., small group pull-out) | \$2,400 | 3 Years | \$7,200 |
| Reading Recovery | \$3,750 | 12-20 Weeks | \$3,750 |

Note. Calculations for estimated annual per-pupil cost are based on a teacher salary and benefits of \$60,000 annually.

Reading Recovery Center® of Iowa

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