Reading Recovery in Ohio
2006-2007 Executive Summary

Introduction

Reading Recovery® is a professional development project with a two-tier level of curriculum: faculty in universities train and provide professional development to teacher leaders who work at the site level and provide professional development to Reading Recovery teachers. This professional development project for teachers was initiated in the United States by faculty at The Ohio State University in 1984, but it was first implemented in New Zealand as a result of research conducted at the University of Auckland by Dr. Marie Clay. Since its first implementation in the United States, Reading Recovery has served nearly two million children and in the last eight years alone, about 20,000 teachers have been trained.

Reading Recovery

Children in first grade who are having the greatest difficulty learning to read and write are taught by a Reading Recovery teacher who designs individual literacy lessons that are responsive to each child’s strengths and needs. The goal is to accelerate each student’s progress to average levels of reading and writing within 20 weeks. Researchers attribute this faster-than-usual progress to the one-to-one nature of the instruction, the teacher’s professional development and the instructional components of the Reading Recovery lesson.

Notable Successes: Report of the What Works Clearinghouse

Reading Recovery received the highest marks from the What Works Clearinghouse, a division of the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences. Of the 153 beginning reading programs reviewed, only Reading Recovery was found to have positive effects across all four literacy domains and only Reading Recovery received the highest possible rating for general reading achievement.

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) released a 3-year independent review of the experimental research on Reading Recovery in March 2007. This authoritative, independent assessment clearly establishes that Reading Recovery is an effective intervention based on scientific evidence. The WWC found that Reading Recovery has positive effects—the WWC’s highest rating—on students’ alphabets skills and general reading achievement. They found potentially positive effects, their next highest level of evidence, on fluency and comprehension outcomes. See http://www.whatworks.ed.gov/ for details and select Beginning Reading, then Reading Recovery.

Reading Recovery in Ohio, 2006-2007

In 2006-2007, 4,172 students were taught by 502 Reading Recovery teachers. These teachers also taught 24,023 students in the second half of the day when they were not teaching Reading Recovery. Reading Recovery teachers received professional development from 21 literacy coaches who themselves received professional development from faculty at The Ohio State University.

Well over half the students taught (59%) were boys; 53% receiving free or reduced price lunches; 77% were White, 15% Black, 3% Hispanic and 3% multiple or other races; 12% had some disability and 5% spoke a language other than English at home. Reading Recovery was in a wide variety of schools, with 18% urban, 45% suburban or large town and 38% small town or rural; 41% the schools had Title I and another 33% had school-wide Title I; 47% of the school had less than 5% non-White students, 34% had between 5-20% non-White students, 12% of schools had between 20-50% non-White students and 7% had more than 50% non-White students.

Results

4,166 students were enrolled in Reading Recovery lessons in Ohio last year. A full intervention lasts a maximum of 20 weeks (fewer weeks if students reach average levels of reading and writing sooner). Not all students who were enrolled completed a full intervention.

- 735 were enrolled in lessons at year-end without enough time in the school year to complete the intervention. Interventions begin throughout the year as instructional slots become available. Those starting in spring are sometimes not completed due to insufficient time.
- 187 moved during the school year while they were enrolled in Reading Recovery.
- 85 students were removed from the intervention by someone other than the Reading Recovery teacher. (For example, they were placed back in kindergarten at the beginning of the year or withdrawn from Reading Recovery by parents who declined the additional teaching for their children.)

Of the 3,159 remaining students who received a complete intervention 20 weeks or less,

- 2,206 (70%) reached average levels of reading and writing,
- 953 (30%) made progress but not sufficient to reach average levels. They were recommended for consideration of a more intensive intervention.

Figure 1  Outcomes for Children with a Full Series of Lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reached Average Levels - 70%</th>
<th>Made Progress But Did Not Reach Average Levels - 30%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
A Treatment Effect for Reading Recovery

Figure 2 demonstrates a treatment effect for Reading Recovery.

- The top dashed red line displays the Random Sample’s progress on text reading at three points in time. These students represent the general population and start at a higher text level than the other groups in the fall and make progress throughout the year.
- The solid black line shows the progress of Reading Recovery students who were selected in the fall for the intervention. Their text reading level in fall is as low as the Low Random Sample but they begin to make accelerated progress when they start the intervention. They catch up to the Random Sample by midyear around the time their lesson series ended and maintain their progress by year end.
- The solid pink line shows the progress of Mid-Year Reading Recovery students. These students were selected at mid-year for the intervention once teaching slots were vacated by students who were selected first in fall. The Mid-Year Reading Recovery students’ fall text reading level is low, they make some progress between fall and mid-year while waiting for the intervention but they do not begin to make accelerated progress until the intervention begins around mid-year. By year end, students who began the intervention at mid-year have caught up to the Random Sample.
- The dashed blue line on bottom displays progress of the Low Random Sample. These students were low at the beginning of the year but did not receive Reading Recovery. Their progress remains low throughout the school year. This is the kind of progress that can be expected without Reading Recovery.

These findings are in keeping with results from Juel’s (1988) longitudinal research which showed that the students in her study who were struggling in first grade were very likely to still be struggling in fourth grade. Without intensive teaching, it is unlikely that students will become average readers on their own if they are struggling early on.

Figure 2 Treatment Effect of Reading Recovery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Training Site</th>
<th>No. of Teachers</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams County-South Region Site</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron Area</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashland University-Mansfield City Schools</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euclid-CSU</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>274</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest Hills</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>204</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lancaster</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>283</td>
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<tr>
<td>Licking County ESC</td>
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<td>183</td>
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<td>306</td>
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<td>Pickaway County</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>177</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper Arlington-South Western</td>
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<td>497</td>
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<td>Warren City Regional</td>
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<td>359</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood County ESC</td>
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<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright State U</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zanesville</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>506</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,166</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 Reading Recovery Teacher Training Sites in Ohio, 2006-2007

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Reference Cited