



Reading Recovery Intervention

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Pinellas County Schools / Reading Recovery Intervention Review

Compiled by Assessment, Accountability and Research

Reading Recovery is a one-on-one reading intervention for students in first grade who are struggling with reading and writing. It is designed as a short-term intervention that typically lasts between 12 and 20 weeks. Tutoring is delivered by trained Reading Recovery teachers in daily 30-minute pull-out sessions. Lessons are discontinued when students demonstrate the ability to consistently read at average for their grade level. Those students who do not meet this threshold after 20 weeks are referred for further evaluation (about 28% of participants who complete intervention are referred to ESE).

The program was developed by Dr. Marie M. Clay at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, in the 1970s. Reading Recovery is one of the most widely used and studied reading interventions in the world. In 2015-16, Reading Recovery impacted more than 42,000 first graders across 1,100 school districts in 43 states.

- The **What Works Clearinghouse (2013)** reviewed 79 studies that investigated the effects of Reading Recovery on reading improvement. Only three of those studies met the WWC evidenced standards without reservations. The intervention was found to have generally positive effects on overall reading achievement and positive but smaller effects on alphabets, reading fluency, and comprehension.
- Additionally, a substantive **meta-analysis of Reading Recovery research (2016) was conducted by J.V. D'Agostino and S.J. Harmey** from Ohio State University. The team collected 203 studies and 97 dissertations. They found 16 that met their stringent inclusion criteria. Their summary results related to the *immediate impact* of the intervention showed generally positive effects for overall literacy growth (.59), especially in the areas of print knowledge (.95) and text reading (.84). Lesser effects were found in letter identification (.33) and decoding (.45). See table below.
- In light of the findings below, it should be noted that some reading researchers have been critical of Reading Recovery in stating that it does not sufficiently address explicit instruction in phonics in meeting the needs of the lowest performing students.
- The seminal scale-up study on Reading Recovery was conducted in 2010 through a \$45 million grant from the US Government. The **Investing in Innovation (i3) four-year study was conducted by the Consortium for Policy Research (CPRE)** at the University of Pennsylvania in partnership with the University of Delaware and Ohio State University. The study included more than 61,000 randomized students and 3,700 teachers across 1,200 schools. The study attempted to determine both the short- and long-term effect on reading achievement among students assigned to Reading Recovery intervention. The findings were similar to other studies in showing some significant improvement among students immediately exiting the program and no conclusive evidence as to the long-term impact.

Table 2. Effects of Reading Recovery on literacy achievement.

Outcome	Effect Size	Number of Effects	Standard Error	95% CI	Comparison Mean	t Value
All combined	.59	101	.09	.41-.77	0	6.61***
Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement	.79	45	.06	.67-.91	.45	5.83***
Literacy domains						
Print knowledge	.95	7	.14	.68-1.22	.57	2.72**
Text reading	.84	12	.12	.61-1.08	.55	2.38*
General literacy	.75	15	.04	.67-.83	.55	5.49***
Encoding	.70	8	.11	.48-.92	.58	1.12
Phonological encoding	.70	8	.08	.54-.86	.57	1.68
Phonological awareness	.58	8	.15	.29-.87	.59	.98
Comprehension	.46	12	.02	.42-.50	.61	-6.35**
Word reading	.45	16	.03	.39-.51	.62	-5.95**
Decoding	.45	6	.19	.08-.82	.59	-.76
Letter identification	.33	7	.13	.08-.58	.61	-2.16*
1 effect only:						
Vocabulary	-.14	1	.16	-.45-.17	.59	-4.53***
Listening comprehension	1.09	1	.17	.59-1.42	.76	3.00***

Note. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Sustainability

- A number of studies have been conducted as it relates to the *sustained reading improvement* of students receiving the Reading Recovery treatment after they leave first grade. These results are mixed and much debated in the literature. In short, a summary of those findings show that about half of the students showed some degree of sustained proficiency at least through 4th grade. These results may not speak to any lack of success of the Reading Recovery intervention as much they speak to the need for strong core instruction and some degree of sustained intervention for these readers.

Motivation

- Some of the more interesting research related to Reading Recovery is around the increased motivation and self-efficacy of students resulting from increased reading ability. Some of the studies have methodological limitations and, as such, generalizations cannot be assumed. Still, some studies show that students exiting the Reading Recovery intervention maintained a strong degree of self-efficacy in comparison to their higher achieving peers (even up to five years after the intervention ended).

Study Design

- The variation in research results around the impact of Reading Recovery is due, in part, to the various study designs that sometimes included students screened for the intervention based upon Clay’s *Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement (OSELA)* assessment system and sometimes did not. The instrument contains six tasks, including letter identification, hearing and recording sounds in words, writing vocabulary, a word test, concepts in print, and text reading level.
- The intervention framework involves re-reading of familiar texts, a running record based upon a text read the previous day, letter and word work, message writing, and the introduction of a new book.

District Considerations:

- Consider OSELA growth as compared to MAP
- Consider comparison group using an alternative intervention
- Consider modified RR to focus on phonics
- Consider cultural components to RR

