



Reading Recovery® in Michigan

An Oakland University Executive Summary 2009-2010

Introduction

Reading Recovery® is a program of professional development for teachers: university faculty train and professionally develop teacher leaders who in turn develop teachers to work with first grade children having extreme difficulty learning to read and write. Since its establishment in the United States, Reading Recovery has served nearly 2 million children. Oakland University is one of only 22 universities in the United States to serve as a Reading Recovery university training center. Since its establishment in Michigan in 1991, Reading Recovery¹ has trained over 1,145 teachers who have served almost 94,680 Michigan first graders.

Reading Recovery

Internationally renowned developmental psychologist and literacy researcher, Dr. Marie M. Clay, developed Reading Recovery. In addition to the United States, Reading Recovery is implemented in Canada, the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Bermuda, the Caribbean, and in Department of Defense Schools. The not-for-profit collaborative effort among schools and universities trains teachers to work with the lowest-performing first graders. Children are identified for service based on their scores on the six tasks of *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2002) with the lowest children selected without exception for service first (Lose & Konstantellou, 2005).

Reading Recovery teachers use the assessment information and sensitive observation to design individual literacy lessons that are responsive to each child's skills and abilities. Children meet with their Reading Recovery teacher for 30-minute lessons each day for an average of 12-20 weeks. The goal is to accelerate children's progress to within-average levels in reading and writing in a short period of time so that they can benefit from good classroom instruction (Schwartz, 2005). Researchers attribute this accelerative progress to the instructional activities provided in the one-to-one responsive instruction by teachers who have participated in Reading Recovery's professional development. Reading Recovery also serves as a pre-referral option to identify children who need longer-term specialist support (Jones, et al., 2005).

Reading Recovery in Michigan, 2009-2010

During the 2009-2010 school year, 3,189 students were taught by 392 Reading Recovery teachers (48 of whom were in-training) in 276 schools in 86 districts. When they were not teaching Reading Recovery, these teachers also taught 22,775 additional students – an average of 58.1 students – in their other half-day roles as classroom, special education, Title I reading, and ESL teachers. Reading Recovery teachers received professional development from 19 teacher leaders who themselves received professional development from the Oakland Reading Recovery faculty both at the university training center and at their regional Reading Recovery sites throughout the state.

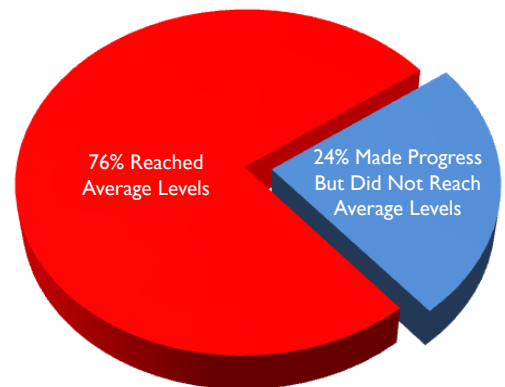
Reading Recovery Demographics

Reading Recovery children in Michigan represented a diverse population: 60% were male; 59% received a free or reduced lunch; 12% had some disability; 65% were White, 19% Black, 8% Hispanic, 1% Asian, 1% Native American, and 6% other races. In terms of language spoken in the home, 92% were native speakers of English with 1% Arabic, 4% Spanish, and 3% speakers of a language other than English. Twenty-eight percent of Reading Recovery schools had between 20-50% minority student enrollment and 15% had more than 50% minority student enrollment.

Results

3,189 students were enrolled in Reading Recovery in Michigan in 2009-2010. A full Reading Recovery intervention lasts up to 20 weeks. Thirty-one percent of students received interventions that lasted

Figure 1: Outcomes for Children with Complete Reading Recovery Interventions



Results of a large-scale study indicated that money spent on improving teacher performance netted greater student achievement gains than did any other use of school resources (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Through its intensive professional development for teachers, Reading Recovery is an ideal response to struggling young literacy learners' requirement for skilled responsive teachers (Lose, 2005).

Empirical Support for Reading Recovery

An independent review of the experimental research on Reading Recovery by the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), a branch of the United States Department of Education (USDE) Institute of Education Sciences (IES), established that Reading Recovery is an effective intervention based on scientific research. Of the 171 Beginning Reading programs reviewed (kindergarten through grade 3), 30 had research upon which to base a review of their effectiveness. Only Reading Recovery was found to have positive effects across all four of the literacy domains: alphabets, fluency, reading comprehension, and general reading achievement. See <http://www.ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

between 10-14 weeks, 25% between 15-19 weeks, and 28% of the interventions lasted 20 weeks total. Not all of the students who were enrolled received a full intervention; their interventions were incomplete due to a slot opening up for their lessons late in the year (15%, N=466), because they moved (3%, N=97), and for other reasons (2%, N=65).

Of the 2,560 students who received a complete intervention (about 30-35 hours of instruction total), 76% reached average performance levels in reading and writing and 616 (24%) made progress but not sufficient enough to reach average performance levels. These students were recommended for follow-up support in the classroom, while a small number of these students were recommended for additional intensive intervention. (see Figure 1).

Effect of Reading Recovery on Reading Achievement

Figure 2 demonstrates the effect of Reading Recovery instruction on the reading achievement of the lowest performing literacy learners in first grade and compares their progress to the Random Sample of their peers and the Low Random Sample of children in schools with Reading Recovery.

Random Sample (RS) Children – The green line at the top shows the Random Sample's progress on text reading at three points in time. These students start the year at a higher text reading level and make progress throughout the year.

Reading Recovery (RR) Children served in the fall semester – The blue line shows the progress of Reading Recovery children who were selected during the fall semester for Reading Recovery service. Initially the lowest-performing children, they catch up to and even surpass the Random Sample by mid-year when their Reading Recovery lessons end and continue to maintain their progress.

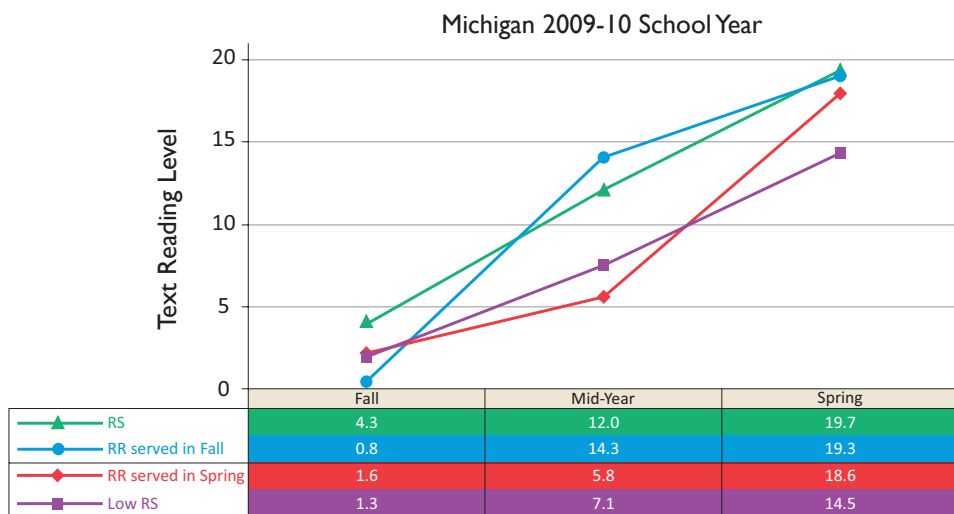
Reading Recovery (RR) Children served in the spring semester (at mid-year) – The red line shows the progress of Reading Recovery children selected for service at mid-year when slots used by Reading Recovery children served in the fall become available. Although these children made some progress in the fall without Reading Recovery, they are well behind their Random Sample peers at mid-year. Provided with Reading Recovery however, these children make ac-

celerative progress, reduce the gap between themselves and the Random Sample and achieve within-average performance levels by year's end.

Low Random Sample (RS) Children – The purple line at the bottom shows the progress of the Low Random Sample. These students who did not receive Reading Recovery were low at the beginning of the school year and remain low throughout the year. While they made some progress throughout the year, it is not enough to reduce the achievement gap. Had they been able to receive Reading Recovery, it is likely they would have achieved accelerative progress and reached within-average performance levels.

These findings confirm Juel's (1988) research which showed that children who were low-performing in literacy in first grade are very likely to remain low performing in fourth grade. However, provided with contingent, responsive teaching by specially trained and professionally developed teachers, even the lowest-performing children can make accelerative progress, benefit from good classroom instruction, and continue learning with their peers (McEneaney, Lose, & Schwartz, 2006).

Figure 2: Gains on Text Reading Level for Reading Recovery Children



Reading Recovery has a strong track record of preventing literacy failure for many first graders. Results support the investment of resources for this prevention effort. Yet, Michigan is still far from providing Reading Recovery to all the children who need it. Many of the participating districts experience the impact of low coverage. Almost six out of seven students in Michigan who need Reading Recovery do not have access to the intervention. Ideally, 20% of the state's first graders should have access. Policy makers and all who are concerned about closing the achievement gap, and enabling children to succeed in school and take full advantage of opportunities in post secondary education and the workforce, could achieve greater equity by providing the intervention to the 23,105 first graders that could benefit from Reading Recovery.

Response to Intervention and Learning Disabilities

A federal initiative that is derived from the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) offers schools facing increased enrollments of students with learning disabilities (LD) two options for addressing this growing population (Allington, 2009; Lose et al., 2007). The first option is that local education agencies can use as much as 15% of their special education funds to pay for early intervening services (EIS) and to support professional development and literacy instruction. The second

Response to Intervention and Teacher-Student Ratio

Some administrators have argued that small group instruction delivered by Reading Recovery teachers is just as effective as the instruction delivered daily and one-to-one by these same teachers. To address this question Schwartz, Schmitt, & Lose (in press) used a randomized control trial methodology to evaluate the effect of variations in teacher-student ratio on intervention effectiveness delivered by Reading Re-

Reading Recovery: An Evidence-Based Approach to RtI

In her seminal article, *Learning to be Learning Disabled*, published over 20 years ago, Marie Clay (1987) gave validity to support the idea that many children labeled LD are in fact instructionally challenged through a series of unfortunate experiences either before, or very early, in their formal schooling. However, provided an appropriate early intervention to support their accelerative learning and response to instruction, the number of children identified as LD can be reduced to only 1-1.5 percent.

For over 25 years in the United States, Reading Recovery has operated as an RtI approach. Professionally trained and developed Reading Recovery teachers design instruction tailored precisely to the child, delivered daily and one-on-one, in support of the literacy learning of the most at-risk children (Clay, 2005a; 2005b). While many children respond quite well to whole group and small group instruction, evidence has shown that the lowest performing learners provided with the Reading Recovery intervention are able to make accelerative progress and continue learning with their peers in the classroom without further intervention or placement in special education for literacy difficulties—a considerable cost savings to districts.

Because teaching the most struggling learners is very challenging, schools that implement Reading Recovery not only respond to their lowest performing young learners' literacy learning needs, but also to the professional development needs of their teachers. Reading Recovery teachers receive

Response to Intervention

The IDEA attempts to ensure that schools achieve the following (Lose, 2007; 2008):

- Provide early identification and intervention for all children struggling with literacy learning.
- Develop ways to appropriately identify and intervene on behalf of children with LD.
- Provide effective, intensive, evidence-based early intervening services.
- Monitor each child's progress using data-based documentation.
- Accelerate children's reading progress to meet annual yearly progress (AYP) criteria.
- Create a multi-tiered problem-solving team to support comprehensive literacy efforts.
- Provide the highest quality of professional development for teachers of low achievers.

option offered by the IDEA is Response to Intervention (RtI) that can be used to provide high quality instruction based on children's needs without the requirement of labeling students at risk for school failure as LD (Johnston, 2010). The goal is to limit referrals based on inadequate instruction or limited English proficiency and to reduce the number of children identified for LD services (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). To achieve this goal, the lowest performing children must be identified early so that appropriately intensive interventions and tiers or layers of support can be provided within a comprehensive approach to literacy instruction at the first sign of a child's difficulty.

covery teachers. Results showed that on the text reading level measure, students in the 1:1 condition scored significantly higher than students in the 1:2, 1:3, and 1:5 group conditions. The researchers concluded that a sound approach to RtI should be comprehensive with provision for early preventive 1:1 instruction for the lowest performing learners, effective small group instruction for less struggling older learners, strong classrooms for all children, and longer-term intervention for the very few children who continue to need intensive support in later grades.

Reading Recovery Regional Training Sites Affiliated with the Reading Recovery Center of Michigan at Oakland University, 2010-2011

Bloomfield Hills Public Schools
Detroit Public Schools
Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District
Genesee Intermediate School District
Holt Public Schools
Jackson County Intermediate School District

Kalamazoo Public Schools
Oakland University-Grand Rapids
Portage Public Schools
Port Huron Area School District
South Lyon Community Schools
Walled Lake Consolidated Schools

intensive initial training in literacy assessment, theory, and instruction that they apply immediately in their work with children selected for the intervention and continue to apply as they further their learning through the professional development opportunities provided at their regional Reading Recovery site. This continuous professional learning support not only informs their work with identified Reading Recovery children but also benefits their instruction of the other struggling learners that they serve in their additional instructional roles throughout the school day.

Literacy Lessons® Training for Special Educators and Intervention Specialists

In recognition of the benefits to teachers and students, several Michigan schools have requested that special education teachers and teachers of English language learners have access to Reading Recovery training without the requirement of teaching a full load of students (4 slots of Reading Recovery children; minimum of 8 students each year) as required by the *Standards and Guidelines for Reading Recovery in the United States* (2008). This training model, Literacy Lessons, allows specialist teachers in a school to participate in the yearlong Reading Recovery training course concurrent with their specialist instructional roles. These teachers are introduced to the complex literacy processing model that informs Reading Recovery in order to

support the learning of children who need long-term specialist help (Konstantellou & Lose, 2009). School districts interested in providing Literacy Lessons training to specialist teachers are invited to contact the Reading Recovery Center at Oakland University.

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¹ Beginning in 2006, special education teachers working in Michigan schools that have implemented Reading Recovery participated in training for intervention specialists under the special training model, Literacy Lessons®. In 2009, another training model, Literacy Support, was added to the university training center's options for classroom teachers and reading specialists in schools that have Reading Recovery. Both the Literacy Lessons and Literacy Support training models permit teachers to train alongside Reading Recovery teachers enabling school districts to optimize teacher expertise in response to a range of struggling literacy learners in their schools. In 2009-2010, seventeen special education teachers participated in Literacy Lessons training, a total of 45 special education teachers trained since 2006. In 2009-2010, twenty additional teachers participated in the Literacy Support training launched in 2009. Districts that are interested in learning more about these training programs are invited to contact the Reading Recovery Center of Michigan.