

Reading Recovery® at the University of Kentucky School Year 2001-2002

Reading Recovery is a short-termed intervention model of instruction for low progress children. This safety net provides a 12-20 week, daily one-to-one series of lessons for first grade children having extreme difficulty in reading and writing.

The purpose of this report is to examine Reading Recovery outcomes of all students served at the University of Kentucky site. In addition, it compares their performance with a comparison group of students not receiving Reading Recovery services. It also addresses implementation issues which may be either supporting or hindering the success of the intervention.

Reading Recovery Program

Reading Recovery is designed to serve the lowest achievers in the first grade cohort. Children receive daily 30-minute lessons, which are taught by a specially trained teacher, as a supplement to classroom literacy instruction. Positive effects can be documented in any school regardless of the instructional method used in the classroom. Because the goal is successful performance within an average literacy setting in the classroom, children are discontinued as soon as it can be predicted that profit from classroom literacy instruction without further tutorial assistance.

Site History

In 1996, the University of Kentucky assumed responsibility for the Reading Recovery site previously administered through the Central Kentucky Education Cooperative. Currently, Reading Recovery, through the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development, is providing training for 77 Reading Recovery teachers serving 661 children. These children are in 58 elementary schools housed in 23 school systems (see Table 1). During this reporting year, two teacher leaders shared the responsibility of training teachers and providing continuing contact services to trained teachers.

Table 1 Level of Implementation

Year	Districts	Schools	Teachers	Children
2001-2002	23	58	77	661

Research Documentation

Research documentation is based on *An Observation Survey* designed by Marie Clay. It consists of six tasks dealing with the reading and writing processes. Reading Recovery students are asked to complete these tasks at both time of entry and time of discontinuing (when children are able to function independently within the average range of their class).

Further research data are collected on a random-sample population of first graders not receiving Reading Recovery services in order to provide an “average” base across the site. If a random-sample child is taken into the program at any point in the school year, that child’s data are removed from the random sample. Therefore, the performance of the Reading Recovery students is measured against the higher levels of academic achievement of the random sample.

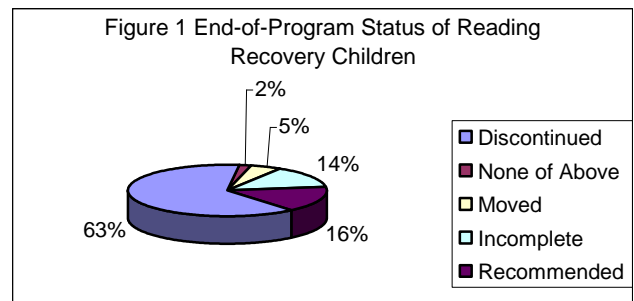
How Successful Are Reading Recovery Children?

Reading Recovery documentation accounts for all children served *even if for only one day*. At the end of a child’s program, a status category is assigned. The five categories are: 1) discontinued; 2) recommended after a full program of 20 weeks; 3) incomplete program at year’s end; 4) moved while being served, 5) none of the above. Table 1 provides numbers and percentages of children in each category. A graphic display of percentages of the total number served is shown in Figure 1. Of all children who received even one day of Reading Recovery service, 66% were discontinued.

Table 2 End-of-Program Status of Reading Recovery Children Served at the University of Kentucky Site

End of Program Status				
Discontinued	Recommended	Incomplete	Moved	None of above
N %	N %	N %	N %	N %
423 (63)	104 (16)	90 (14)	30 (5)	14 (2)

The following graphic shows that of the children receiving Reading Recovery instruction in 2001-2002, 661 (63%) became successful readers and writers enabling them to participate in literacy instruction with



the average first graders in their classrooms.

FIGURE 1

Of the remaining children, 104 (16%) benefitted from this intervention but were unable to reach a level of proficiency needed to successfully discontinue from the program. Because of insufficient time in the school year, 90 (14%) children received incomplete programs while 30 (5%) either moved to another school or left the program for other reasons, such as placement in special education, returning to kindergarten, etc.

Random Sample Population

In addition to collecting data on Reading Recovery children, the University of Kentucky site also collected data on a group of randomly sampled first grade children. This information was then used to set the average reading band for the site. It is important to remember that the Reading Recovery children were the lowest performing children in the first grade. The task of reading stories of multiple episodes with multiple lines of text on a page and numerous words was quite a challenge. Figure 2 represents the gain these children made in reading over the course of the school year as compared to the gain of the random sample population.

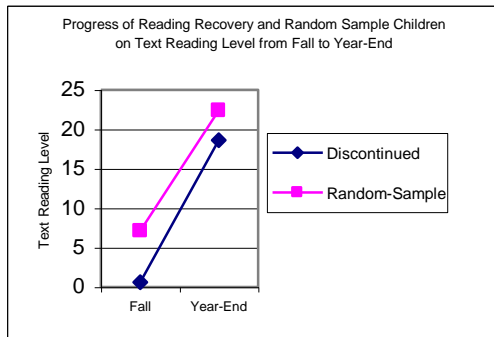


FIGURE 2

In text reading, which demonstrates a child’s control over all aspects of the reading process, discontinued students attained an 18 mean gain compared to the random sample students’ mean gain of 14.8. With this knowledge of the reading process, discontinued children have the ability to read texts containing many episodes, numerous lines of text with various layouts, and approximately 250 words easily matching the reading ability of average readers.

Continued Progress of Discontinued Reading Recovery Children

An important question to ask about the intervention is whether or not progress continues after the intervention is removed. Reading Recovery children are expected to continue to improve their reading achievement with good classroom instruction. In order to support this statement, students are given the tasks of *Observation Survey* at the point of discontinuing as well as again at the year’s end. Figure 3 charts this continued growth, reflective of both a self-extending system and supportive classroom teaching.

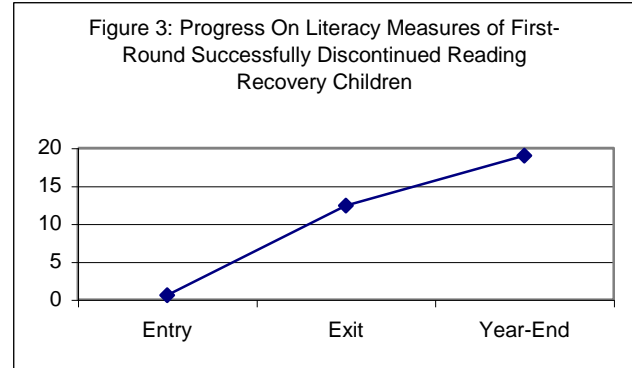


FIGURE 3

Summary and Conclusions

The goal of Reading Recovery is to have the lowest 20-25% of the first grade population in a given school district independently reading and writing with the average of their peers within a 12-16 week period of time. This site report has addressed the success of the program during the 2001-2002 school year. Of the 661 children, 63% with full or partial program were discontinued because they were able to achieve reading levels near the average of their peers. However, 80% of the children with full program discontinued and were reading within the average range of their peers. Many program children who did not discontinue showed significant gains in all areas of the *Observation Survey*.

Reading Recovery students participated in programs that were, on average, 14.5 weeks long, averaging 3.7 sessions per week. A continuing challenge is to effectively teach children within a 12-16 week framework of daily lessons.

The findings here are impressive in that a group of students who were expected to experience failure in learning to read and write are now experiencing success. Reading Recovery continues to grow in this state. In June 2001, the University of Kentucky became the 23rd training site in the United States. Under the leadership of Dr. Judy Embry, 10 teacher leaders were trained preparing them to return to their sites for the 2002-2003 school year and train additional Reading Recovery teachers.

In the words of a Reading Recovery teacher, “Reading is fundamental to educational progress and with the improved teaching of reading in the early grades, the foundation for ‘learning to read’ to ‘reading to learn’ will be established.