

Reading Recovery in New York City Schools

2007—2008

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Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development

Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery Rated Highest by What Works Clearinghouse

In December 2008 the United States Department of Education 'What Works Clearinghouse' published an up-dated report on early literacy interventions. This second report confirmed the 2007 finding that Reading Recovery is the only early reading program that demonstrates positive effects across all four content domains, alphabets, fluency, comprehension, and general reading achievement.



Literacy Lessons™ is a new professional development initiative that has been developed and piloted by university faculty and school districts in various sites across the United States over the past two years.

Literacy Lessons builds on the strong theoretical base and well-researched protocols of Reading Recovery and extends the benefits of these to a wider population of teachers and students.

In 2009-2010 Literacy Lessons training will be available for ELL, Special Education and other teachers in NYC Reading Recovery schools.

Literacy Lessons™ offers Reading Recovery training and expertise to a wider group of teachers and to the special needs populations they teach.

Moving Forward

Reading Recovery® is an effective early literacy intervention that has been implemented in New York City schools since 1986. Reading Recovery operates as a partnership between the Reading Recovery Project at NYU and schools across the city. Despite major administrative changes and tight budget constraints many New York City schools have continued to offer this high quality intervention for children who are lagging behind in literacy learning after their first year at school. One hundred and twenty-eight city schools belonging to a variety of School/Learning Support Organizations (LSOs) implemented Reading Recovery in 2007-2008—including Integrated Curriculum and Instruction (ICI), Empowerment, Community Learning, Knowledge Network and New Vision schools along with one charter and one private school. Supported by experienced Reading Recovery teacher leaders employed by ICI LSO, and the Brooklyn-Staten Island Empowerment Network, teachers in these schools replicated the high rates of student progress that have come to be expected for Reading Recovery. This report presents: firstly, a summary of the extensive data collected and analysed by the National Data and Evaluation Centre (NDEC) on Reading Recovery in New York City schools, and secondly, information about new developments and research.

New Times: Educational priorities identified by the new federal administration include: assistance for students with disabilities, success for English language learners, support for innovations that accelerate student learning, and attention to teacher quality. Reading Recovery has a proven track record in relation to every one of these priorities, and the Reading Recovery project at NYU is working to ensure these benefits are available to many more schools and students. As well as providing graduate-level training courses for Reading Recovery teachers and teacher leaders, NYU is introducing a new professional development initiative aimed at providing research-based literacy instruction to a wider group of students. (See adjacent information on Literacy Lessons™)

Ann Ballantyne

Director
New York University
Reading Recovery Project
34 Stuyvesant Street, 5th floor
New York, N.Y. 10003
Ph: (212) 998-9028
Ann.ballantyne@nyu.edu

Reading Recovery - a perfect fit for Response to Intervention

The purpose of RTI is to provide high quality intervention for students who are struggling with early literacy learning so that these students will not need special education placement and services. The 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) allows—and in some cases requires—local school districts to allocate up to 15% of their special education funding to provide expert intervention and prevention services for the general education population. Individually designed instruction from a qualified Reading Recovery teacher or Literacy Lessons specialist is an appropriate and effective use of this resource.

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How Reading Recovery Intervenes to Prevent Literacy Failure

Reading Recovery provides a second chance for students who do not get off to a good start in literacy learning. It is a short-term intervention designed to accelerate progress and lift achievement levels for the lowest performing first grade students. 'Recovery' means getting back onto a successful learning path after a slow or difficult start. Students receive 30 minutes of daily, one-on-one instruction from a highly-trained Reading Recovery teacher for 12 to 20 weeks. Working in conjunction with good classroom instruction, Reading Recovery significantly reduces the number of children requiring additional services by assisting students who initially struggle with early literacy learning to reach grade-level performance in reading and writing. Teacher leaders provide initial Reading Recovery training, on-going professional development, consultancy and technical services for Reading Recovery teachers and schools.

Comprehensive data is collected on every student who receives Reading Recovery instruction - at the beginning of the school year, at entry and completion of the intervention, and at year-end. The data, which is entered by teachers and processed by the National Data Evaluation Center (NDEC) at the Ohio State University, provide schools and regions with concrete and specific evidence of student achievement and enables Reading Recovery professionals and district personnel to compare local and national data.

Comprehensive Data Collection Documents Student Success

During the 2007-08 school year a total of 1,834 New York City students received Reading Recovery services from 212 teachers. Across the year teachers taught an average of 8.5 students during their Reading Recovery teaching time. Of these students 1,481 received a full series of lessons. Figure 1 shows that 79% of these students who were initially struggling with literacy learning caught up with their average progress classmates in reading and writing within a twenty-week timeframe. Many of the remaining 21% of students improved markedly in reading and writing skills during the lesson series although they did not reach average levels of achievement in the available time. Some had gained sufficient grounding to make continued progress and 'catch-up' with their classmates later in the year.

Figure 2 shows that when the results for of all the NYC students who entered Reading Recovery in 2007-2008 are considered, that is including students whose series of lessons was incomplete at the end of the school year, 64% were able to reach grade level targets. Only 16% of the total group of lowest achieving grade-one students in Reading Recovery schools were recommended for further assessment and/or additional services.

Reading Recovery collects comprehensive data on every student.

Figure 1: Children with Complete Interventions

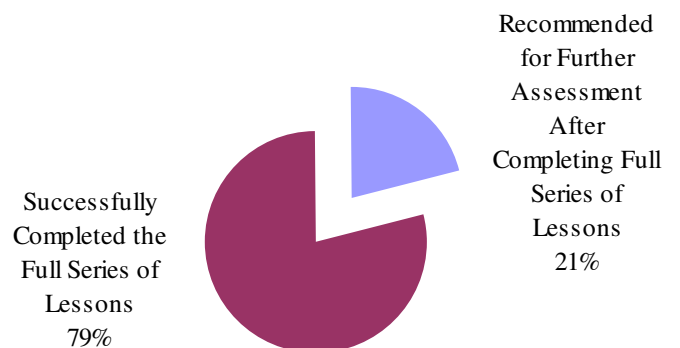
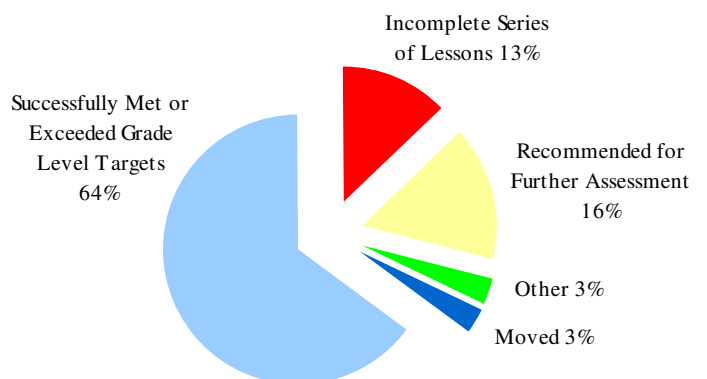


Figure 2: Intervention Status of All Children Served



A cost effective educational strategy

Reading Recovery reduces costs to schools and education systems by providing individually tailored instruction for diverse learners, accelerated language learning for children from non-English speaking backgrounds and a second wave of instruction that reduces the number of students retained or referred to special education for literacy related difficulties. Research and on-going monitoring in New York City schools highlights the benefits of continuous implementation in terms of teacher experience, progress monitoring and teamwork. Schools that focus on long-term goals despite immediate obstacles and constraints are able to retain teacher expertise and gain greater pay-off from the intervention over the longer term.

Serving diverse learners

The Reading Recovery data for New York City reflect the diverse population of students in NYC schools. Reading Recovery teachers become expert at designing instruction to meet the particular needs of each student as identified by entry assessments and daily records of the students' responses to reading and writing tasks. New York City students receiving Reading Recovery instruction in 2007-2008 came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds: 41% Hispanic, 22% Black, 13% Asian, 17% White, and 6% from other groups. Students' home languages included English (50%), Spanish (27%), Chinese/Cantonese/Mandarin (10%), and 18 other languages. Socio-economic diversity was also evident in the Reading Recovery student population: the vast majority of students (92%) were categorized as receiving free or reduced lunch a category that indicates some degree of economic hardship. Reading Recovery data for NYC show that the intervention is making a difference for all these groups of students.

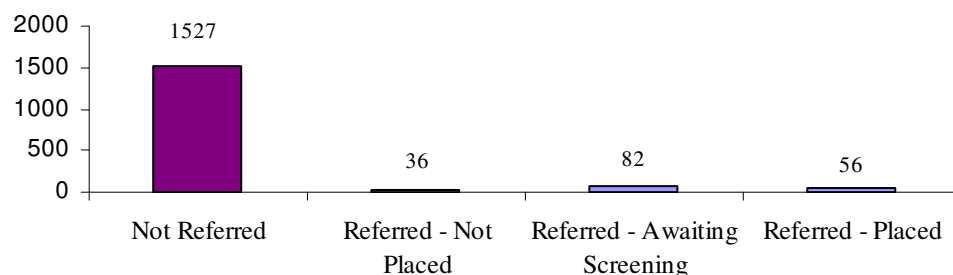
An Effective Intervention for English Language Learners

Decades of Reading Recovery research in different countries and education systems demonstrates that the intervention is highly effective for children with limited English proficiency. About 50% of the students entering Reading Recovery in New York City had a home language other than English; some had very limited control of English vocabulary and sentence structures at the start of their lesson series, but nearly all learned to read and write effectively in their second language within a short period of intensive individual instruction.

Lowering the Referral and Placement Rate for Special Education

Reading Recovery helps reduce the number of students referred to and placed in special education programs. Of the 1,701 Reading Recovery students who were available for assessment at the end of the 2007–2008 school year only 56 (3%) were placed in special education. Thirty-six students (2%) were referred but not placed, and 82 students (5%) awaited screening. The majority of students who were placed in special education were identified as needing Speech and Language support (27 in total). Only 6 students were placed for literacy related learning disabilities in reading. The remaining students received special placement in areas other than literacy. When one considers these students were all identified as being the most at-risk of reading failure at the beginning of the year, it is clear that effective early intervention makes a difference.

Figure 3: New York City All Reading Recovery Students, Not Referred, Referred-Not Placed, Referred-Awaiting Screening & Referred-Placed in Special Education Services, 2007-2008



Reading Recovery Professional Development: a key ingredient for improving student outcomes and the learning environment in schools

Generations of school improvement researchers have identified the quality of teaching, and of teachers’ professional learning as key priorities for education. In Reading Recovery quality teaching and learning are not left to chance. The design of the intervention provides for in-depth year-long professional preparation courses for all Reading Recovery educators.

Teacher Training and Professional Development

Teacher training in New York is provided by a network of highly-trained teacher leaders. In 2007- 2008 New York teacher leaders provided (1) initial training and accreditation for 32 new Reading Recovery teachers and (2) on-going professional development sessions and school visits for 190 experienced Reading Recovery teachers.

The course of initial training for Reading Recovery covered the theory and practice of observation and assessment, teaching for accelerated progress in reading and writing, interactive peer observation, reflection and coaching. Teachers began to work individually with four children a day from the first weeks of their training year - teaching a minimum of eight Reading Recovery children across the year. Teacher training and professional development sessions were conducted in schools located in different parts of the city. The viewing screen enabled teachers to observe and discuss children’s reading and writing behaviour and on-the-run teaching decisions during live lessons.

As well as providing a second wave of teaching effort for individual grade one students Reading Recovery teachers impact on the learning of up to fifty students across the course of their day through small group and / or classroom teaching. Their knowledge about literacy teaching, assessment and coaching also provides a valuable resource for the school community.

Teacher Leader Professional Development

Training and support for Reading Recovery in New York City schools are provided by a network of teacher leaders who have undertaken a year of full-time post-graduate study at New York University. In 2007-2008 the NYU team trained a new teacher leader for the NYC team and provided on-going professional development and technical assistance for the trained teacher leaders. Teacher leaders and university trainers also worked with individual students in order to remain close to the real challenges of teaching children who find literacy learning difficult.

New York City Teacher Leader Team			
LSO ICI:			
Jacqueline Voulgaris	Barbara Rando	Ann Marie Reddington	Site Coordinator
Jane Montgomery	Sue Stevenson	Connie Moy (in training)	Ada Cordova (718) 391-8388
Empowerment Network:			Site Coordinator:
	Terry Fazzolari		Chris Ogno (718) 236 4205
New York University Team			
Director	Ann Ballantyne	Teacher Leader Specialist	Mia Fernandes
Project Manager	Debra Diana	Principle Investigator	Kathleen Stahl
For more information about the Reading Recovery Project at New York University: Phone: (212) 998-5210			