

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY READING RECOVERY TRAINING CENTER (CUTC)

Summary

Reading Recovery is a highly effective short-term, one-to-one early intervention. The goal of Reading Recovery is to dramatically reduce the number of first-grade students who have extreme difficulty learning to read and write and to reduce the cost of these learners to educational systems. Students served in Reading Recovery meet individually with a specially trained teacher for 30 minutes each day for a period of 12-20 weeks. The goal is to accelerate learning through an individually designed and delivered lesson series that closes the achievement gap so children benefit from regular classroom instruction.

Reading Recovery identifies first graders who score in the bottom 20% in reading ability, and works with all students in that bottom 20% regardless of whether students exhibit low intelligence, low language skills, poor motor coordination, score poorly on readiness measures, are second-language learners, or have already been categorized as learning disabled. Clemson University is the training site for Reading Recovery in South Carolina and works in collaboration with the SC Department of Education to continue effective statewide implementation of the program.

For all Reading Recovery professionals, a full academic year of coursework is followed in subsequent years by ongoing training sessions. This comprehensive professional development model ensures the quality of teaching and implementation in schools and systems. No packaged program can substitute for an informed teacher's design and delivery of reading intervention. In Reading Recovery, the teacher analyzes students' strengths and needs, selects procedures and makes teaching decisions, and assesses the results to inform her next teaching moves. This process takes skill that results from ongoing study as well as collaboration and support from colleagues.

The CUTC is currently implementing and researching the use of virtual professional development as a means to deliver more cost-effective and timely training for Reading Recovery teachers. This includes using the National Guard's facilities to deliver synchronous sessions on topics related to struggling readers and writers; virtual coaching of teachers to support best practices; the development of a website that houses video examples of exemplary teaching and serves as a virtual professional learning community; and the use of iPads to enhance reflective practice.

Demographics

- *Target Settings:* Elementary schools
- *Target Groups Served:* all first graders who score in the bottom 20% in reading ability
- *Districts Served:* Aiken, Anderson 5, Charleston, Florence 1, Hampton, Horry, Greenville, Greenwood 50, Laurens, Lancaster, Lexington 5, Oconee, Pickens, Richland 1, Richland 2, Spartanburg 1, Sumter, York

Research and Evaluation

*What national or other research was considered during the development of this program/initiative?
Describe the evidence that shows the program/initiative works.*

The annual program evaluation, which uses a two-group, quasi-experimental research pre-post comparison design, continues to establish the replicability and fidelity of the intervention. In 2010-11, 243 teachers in 24 school systems in South Carolina taught 2,434 students in Reading Recovery. Sixty-four percent of all children served (this includes children who move during the intervention and also those who do not receive a

complete intervention before the end of the school year) successfully completed the intervention and were on or above grade level in reading. For children receiving a complete series of lessons, 78% successfully finished the intervention on or above grade level.

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) a branch of the United States Department of Education (USDE) and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), released an updated report of research in December 2008. WWC's authoritative and independent assessment confirmed that Reading Recovery is an effective intervention based on scientific evidence. At the end of this second-round review, Reading Recovery is still the only beginning reading program to receive high ratings across all four domains evaluated: alphabets, fluency, comprehension, and general reading achievement. Reading Recovery ranks number one in general reading achievement. 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.

The report includes an improvement index to reflect the strength of the Reading Recovery intervention. Scores on this index can range from -50 to +50. The improvement index scores for Reading Recovery students show large and impressive effect sizes. (See also: www.readingrecovery.org/research/research_intro/index.asp)

The National Center on Response to Intervention gave An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement, the screening tool central to Reading Recovery's evaluation and instruction, the highest possible ratings for scientific rigor. The ratings and descriptions are intended to inform and assist educators as they select screening tools that are valid, reliable, and evidence-based.

The Observation Survey is an exemplar for formative assessment that not only measures children's knowledge, but guides instructional planning in the beginning stages of reading. The survey incorporates six tasks: Letter Identification, Word Reading, Concepts About Print, Writing Vocabulary, Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words, and Text Reading. (See also: www.rti4success.org/screeningTools)

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading featured Reading Recovery as a "Bright Spot" program in the Quality Teaching category. The national campaign, spearheaded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a collaborative effort by dozens of funders across the nation to draw attention to proven programs with strong evidence of effectiveness and rigorous data collection. (See also: www.gradelevelreading.net/bright-spots/)

Resources

- *Annual Cost:* Teacher salary for 2.5 hours/day
- *Funding Sources:* Clemson's Reading Recovery Training Center is an official partner with 14 other institutions of higher learning and lead applicant The Ohio State University for a grant — i3: Investing in Innovation Fund, Reading Recovery: Scaling Up What Works. The total grant is worth \$54.7 million and includes \$45.6 million from the USDE and \$9.1 million in private funds. Clemson's sub-award amount is \$2,177,964. As an official partner, Clemson will train 50 new Reading Recovery teachers each year for the five-year life of the grant and will continue expanding its use of technology to support teachers in the field. The Clemson University Reading Recovery Training Center is also supported by a grant from the South Carolina Department of Education.
- *Staffing Needs:* N/A
- *Infrastructure/Equipment Needs:* leveled book collection
- *Partner Organizations:* State Department of Education, participating school districts in South Carolina, Clemson University Training Center for Reading Recovery in South Carolina, The Ohio State University, Reading Recovery Council of North America, International Data Evaluation Center, North America Reading Recovery Trainers' Group

Contact Information

C.C. Bates, Ph.D., Director, celestb@clemson.edu, 864-656-4506

Kathleen Grant, Program Coordinator, grant5@clemson.edu, 864-656-6149

