

# Reading Recovery® at the University of Kentucky School Year 2002-2003

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 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 continuing contact for 38 Reading Recovery teachers serving 307 children. These children are in 24 elementary schools housed in 12 school systems (see Table 1). During this reporting year, continuing contact services were provided for trained teachers.

**Table 1 Level of Implementation**

Year	Districts	Schools	Teachers	Children
2002-2003	12	24	38	307

## 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).

## How Successful Are Reading Recovery Children?

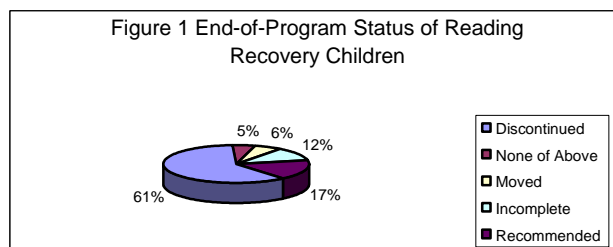
Reading Recovery documentation accounts for all children served *even if for only one day*. At the end of a child's program, a status category is assigned. The five categories are: 1) discontinued; 2) recommended after a full program of 20 weeks; 3) incomplete program at year's end; 4) moved while being served, 5) none of the

above. Table 2 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, 61% 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 %
187 (61)	51 (17)	38 (12)	17 (6)	14 (5)

The following graphic shows that of the children receiving Reading Recovery instruction in 2002-2003, 187 (61%) 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, 51 (17%) benefited 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, 38 (12%) children received incomplete programs while 17 (6%) moved to another school. While the category, none of above, classifies 14 students (5%), the high percentage was due to two teachers on medical leave. Therefore, 8 of the 14 students were not able to complete their program. The remaining 6 students were unable to complete sessions due to medical reasons, returned to kindergarten or were placed in special education.

## Random Sample Population

In addition to collecting data on Reading Recovery children, the University of Kentucky Training Center 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 state. 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.

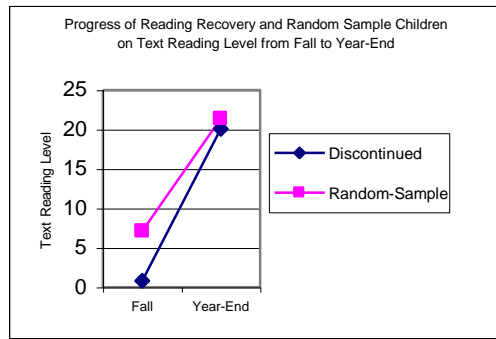


FIGURE 2

In text reading, which demonstrates a child’s control over all aspects of the reading process, discontinued students attained a 20 mean gain compared to the state random sample students’ mean gain of 13.8. 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. First round children at the University of Kentucky site who met the stringent criteria for discontinuing from Reading Recovery appear to have developed a self-extending system as evidenced by their progress in text reading. These children continue to make noticeable progress after the intervention ended. Figure 3 charts this continued growth.

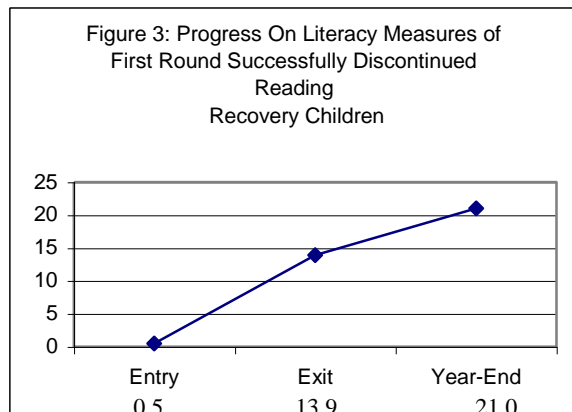


FIGURE 3

Summary and Conclusions

The goal of Reading Recovery is to have the lowest 15-20% of the first grade population in a given school district independently reading and writing with the average of their peers within a 12-20 week period of time. This site report has addressed the success of the program during the 2002-2003 school year. Of the 307 children, 61% 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, 14.8 weeks long, averaging 3.8 sessions per week. A continuing challenge is to effectively teach children within a 12-20 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.

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.