

Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery is a school-based, short-term intervention designed for children aged five or six, who are the lowest achieving in literacy after their first year of school. For instance, a child who is unable to read the simplest of books or write their own name, after a year in school, would be appropriate for a referral to a Reading Recovery program. The intervention involves intensive one-to-one lessons for 30 minutes a day with a trained literacy teacher, for between 12 and 20 weeks.

Reading Recovery was developed in the 1970s by New Zealand educator Marie Clay. After lengthy observations of early readers, Clay defined reading as a message-getting, problem-solving activity, and writing as a message-sending, problem-solving activity. Clay suggested that both activities involved linking invisible patterns of oral language with visible symbols.^[1]

1 Description of the program

A combination of teacher judgment and systematic evaluation procedures identify those lowest-achieving children for whom Reading Recovery was designed. The lowest performing children (the bottom 5-20% depending on the context) are identified using the Observation Survey (Clay, 2002), a multi-faceted series of assessment tools covering early reading and writing. The Observation Survey has been standardized in the UK and US to determine its validity and reliability, however coefficients have not been reported. Once a child has been identified and referred to the Reading Recovery program, intervention is developed. The intervention is different for every child, assessing what the child knows and what s/he needs to learn next. The focus of each lesson is to understand and construct “messages”—to understand messages in reading and construct messages in writing—and to learn how to attend to detail without losing focus on meaning.

Daily 30 minute lessons are individually designed and delivered by specially trained teachers. Drawing from their training, Reading Recovery teachers make moment-to-moment decisions to support the child’s learning. During each lesson, children read many little books. These include two to three familiar books, a rereading of the previous day’s new book and the introduction and reading of a new story. Teachers take a running record of the previous day’s new book to analyse the child’s independence and reading behaviour. Children also compose, write and read their own messages or stories. Magnetic alphabet letters are used for sorting, to assist visual discrimination,

and to look closely at how words work. Reading skills, including phonetic skills, are taught in the context of extended reading and writing by Reading Recovery teachers who have completed a year-long inservice education program that focuses on moment-to-moment responses to children’s actions and behaviour.

The intervention goal is to bring children up to the level of their peers and to give them the assistance they need to develop independent reading and writing strategies. Once they are reading and writing at a level equivalent to that of their peers, their series of lessons is discontinued.

The intervention is not intended as an alternative to classroom teaching, but is complementary, to enable children to engage in their classroom program.

2 Professional development for teachers

An essential component of the Reading Recovery program is the training of the teachers who provide the tutorial instruction. Reading Recovery teachers learn to observe, analyse, and interpret the reading and writing behaviours of individual students and to design and implement an individual program to meet each student’s needs. Just as the Reading Recovery children engage in learning through social interaction with the teacher, Reading Recovery teachers engage in learning through social interaction with their colleagues and mentors to construct a view of learning and teaching that supports literacy development. Reading Recovery has one of the best professional development protocols in the field of beginning reading.

3 Reading Recovery programs around the world

“Reading Recovery” has been disseminated around a number of English-speaking countries. The phrase “Reading Recovery” is a registered trademark held by the Marie Clay Trust in New Zealand, with The Ohio State University in the US and the Institute of Education (<http://www.ioe.ac.uk/>) in the UK.

International Reading Recovery Trainers Organization (IRRTO)

The International Reading Recovery Trainers Organization (IRRTO) provides leadership for all entities affili-

ated with the Reading Recovery early literacy intervention founded by Prof. Marie M. Clay. Website: <http://irrto.us/>

Reading Recovery New Zealand

The National Reading Recovery Centre is located at The University of Auckland Faculty of Education, Epsom Campus. Website: <http://www.readingrecovery.ac.nz/>

Reading Recovery Council of North America

The Reading Recovery Council of North America, Inc. is a not-for-profit association of Reading Recovery professionals, advocates, and partners. It is an advocate for Reading Recovery throughout North America. Website: <http://www.readingrecovery.org/>

Institute of Education, University of London

The International Literacy Centre (<http://ilc.ioe.ac.uk/>) is located at the Institute of Education, part of the University of London. Reading Recovery is at the International Literacy Centre's core, with its integrity applied to everything the Centre offers. There are over 60 Reading Recovery centres throughout the UK, Republic of Ireland and in Denmark. Website: <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/>

Canadian Institute of Reading Recovery (CIRR)

The Reading Recovery network in Canada operates under the Canadian Institute of Reading Recovery (CIRR) on three levels: schools, districts, and regional divisions. The CIRR oversees and supports the operations of Reading Recovery, including training and supporting training, and upholding the Standards and Guidelines. Website: http://www.readingrecovery.org/reading_recovery/canada/index.asp

Reading Recovery in Australia

Reading Recovery operates through state and territory departments of education as well as catholic education offices. These comprise:

- New South Wales (<http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/earlyyears/reading/index.htm>)
- Victoria (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/Pages/readrecovery.aspx>)
- South Australia (<http://www.earlyyears.sa.edu.au/pages/Programs>)
- Tasmania (visit http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/earlyyears/reading_recovery/index.htm to be redirected to the appropriate person)
- Western Australia (visit http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/earlyyears/reading_recovery/index.htm to be redirected to the appropriate person)

4 Further reading

Reading Recovery has been widely researched throughout the world. Research has investigated effectiveness, cost benefits, continued progress and self-esteem.

Effectiveness

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Research reviews

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Cost effectiveness

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5 See also

- [List of Phonics Programs](#)

6 References

- [1] Clay, 2005.

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7.1 Text

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