

The Ohio State University

Reading Recovery: Scaling Up What Works

WHAT IS THE IMMEDIATE IMPACT OF READING RECOVERY ON THE READING ACHIEVEMENT OF STRUGGLING 1ST-GRADE READERS, AS COMPARED WITH BUSINESS-AS-USUAL LITERACY INSTRUCTION?

Project Overview

THE PROBLEM: What Challenge Did the Program Try to Address?

The Reading Recovery literacy intervention¹ targets struggling 1st-grade students. The model is designed with the goal of early intervention to avoid reading difficulties becoming life-long struggles. The scale-up study was designed to target the lowest-level readers with supplemental, pull-out reading. The goals of Reading Recovery include promoting literacy skills, reducing the number of students who are struggling to read, and preventing long-term reading difficulties.

THE PROJECT: What Strategies Did the Program Employ?

The Ohio State University received the i3 funding to scale up the Reading Recovery intervention nationally from 2010-2015; the program was developed by Marie Clay of University of Auckland in the 1970s and 80s and first implemented in the United States in 1984. The objective of the intervention is aiding students in developing a set of self-regulated literacy strategies that govern the use of meaning, structure, letter-sound relationships, and visual cues in reading and writing. The intervention consists of regular one-to-one Reading Recovery lessons for students. All teachers administering the intervention must be trained through the Reading Recovery teacher training course. The program was evaluated by a randomized controlled trial (RCT) where schools were randomly assigned to either a program or non-program group. To select students to participate in the RCT, 1st grade students were identified by school staff as struggling readers. The eight students with the lowest Observation Survey of Early Literacy Assessment (OS) scores in a given school were then selected to participate in the RCT.

¹ The Ohio State University received an i3 scale-up grant supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation program through Grant Number U396A100027. Scale-up grants provide funding to support expansion of projects supported by strong evidence of effectiveness to the national level. All i3 grantees are required to conduct rigorous evaluations of their projects. The quality of evidence required to demonstrate a project's effectiveness depends on a project's level of scale or grant type.

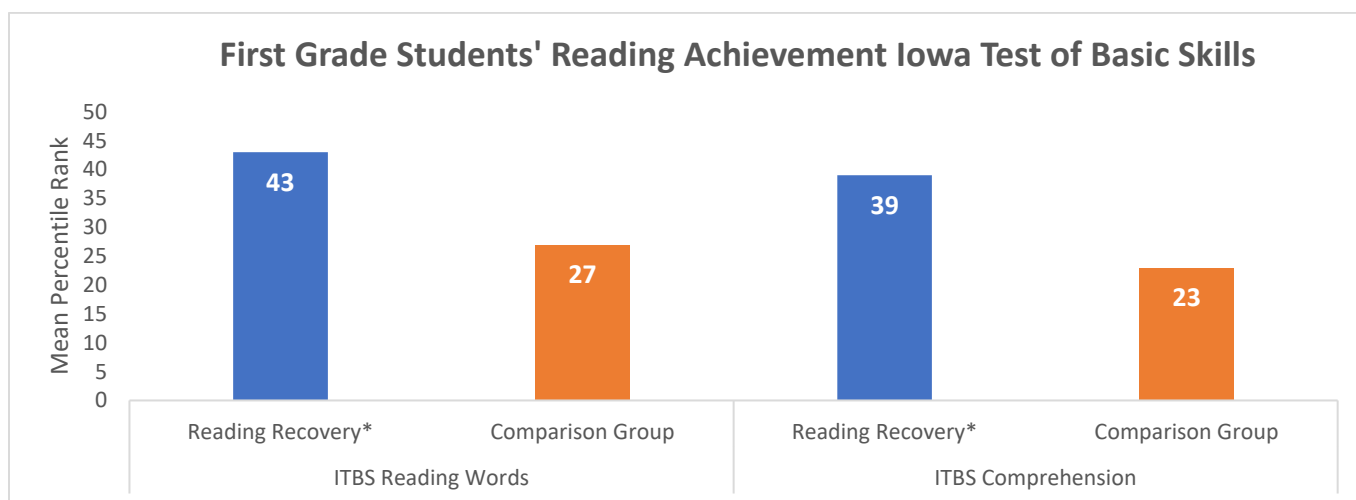
THE READING RECOVERY MODEL

- **ONE-TO-ONE READING RECOVERY LESSONS.** Reading Recovery lessons were administered to students daily in 30-minute increments for 12-20 weeks as a supplement to regular classroom literacy instruction. They used a one-to-one approach. The lessons were administered by teachers trained in Reading Recovery implementation.
- **TEACHER TRAINING COURSE.** The Reading Recovery training is a year-long intensive graduate-level course. The course is designed for teachers to develop expertise at analyzing students' literacy behaviors, identifying learning needs, and delivering responsive instruction. Teachers also received coaching and technical assistance (TA) throughout the year. The training and coaching are delivered by a literacy coach known as a teacher leader.

Summary of Results

WHAT IS THE IMMEDIATE IMPACT OF READING RECOVERY ON THE READING ACHIEVEMENT OF STRUGGLING 1ST-GRADE READERS?

NETWORK students showed some improvements in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and postsecondary enrollment, but not relative to the comparison group.



The Reading Recovery Scale-Up students outperformed non-Reading Recovery students across all reading measures. All differences between Reading Recovery and Comparison students are statistically significant.

- **IOWA TEST OF BASIC SKILLS (ITBS) TEST SCORES IN COMPREHENSION, READING WORDS, AND OVERALL.** First-grade students in the Reading Recovery group scored higher on both ITBS Reading Words and Comprehension. The effect size of the difference between Reading Recovery students' and comparison students' ITBS Total Reading Battery scores was 0.37, a medium effect (effect sizes have to be 0.2 or greater in order to be meaningful).
- **OBSERVATION SURVEY OF EARLY READERS (OS).** There was also a statistically significant difference between the mean OS score of Reading Recovery 1st graders and that in the comparison group. The effect size of this difference is 0.99.

SECONDARY FINDINGS

- **IMPACTS ON SUBGROUPS OF INTEREST.** The short-term impacts of Reading Recovery on two subgroups of interest, English Language Learners and students in rural schools, were, like those of the overall study, statistically significant with medium effect sizes.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Reading Recovery study conducted an implementation study as well as in-depth case studies. It compiled a variety of practitioner and implementor takeaways, both with the scale-up and with the fidelity. Findings of the implementation study and key takeaways are presented here.

- **SCALE UP IMPLEMENTATION.** Reading Recovery's growth had exceeded the evaluation's threshold of 80% of the scale-up goals in all four areas: train 3,675 new reading recovery teachers, provide one-on-one Reading Recovery lessons to an additional 67,264 students, provide other instruction, generally classrooms or small-group instruction provided by trained Reading Recovery teachers to 302,688 students, and to train 15 new teacher leaders. In the number of students served with one-to-one Reading Recovery lessons provided by teachers trained with i3 funds, the project achieved 92% of its goal.
- **COMMUNICATION.** The Reading Recovery teachers were in regular communication with 1st-grade teachers. Many reported wishing that communication was more routinized and structured, as they had a lot to share with teachers.
- **READING RECOVERY TEACHER TRAINING.** The trained and training Reading Recovery teachers reported that their training year was rigorous and transformative. Teachers reported positively that they felt prepared for implementing the program and working with the high-needs students in the program. Additionally, they highly valued the support of teacher leaders in the program and received feedback from others on their teaching.
- **CAPACITY FOR SCALE-UP.** University Training Center (UTC) Directors and teacher leaders reported feeling limited by time and workforce availability for recruitment. Many felt challenged by the new role of administering the grants in addition to their primary roles.

- **THE ROLE OF READING RECOVERY TEACHERS.** Per the guidelines of the Reading Recovery program, Reading Recovery teachers are to teach no more and no less than four Reading Recovery lessons per day. For this reason, many of the Reading Recovery take on a dual role at the school and spend the other part of the day as instructional coaches, classroom teachers or aids, or coaches. This presented numerous challenges for lesson planning and meetings with other staff. Teachers reported feeling as though they had inadequate time to balance their roles.
- **SUSTAINABLE SCALE-UP** UTC Directors reported concerns from school districts who were wary of assuming responsibility for funding the program. UTC required districts to sign Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) to document their commitment to the program; however, even with the MOA, school districts often pull out if there is not enough “buy in” from the central office. In addition, many are interested in the free training and professional development, but do not have a plan to continue funding the program or pull the teachers who are trained for other needed posts within the district.

For More Information

Evaluation Reports

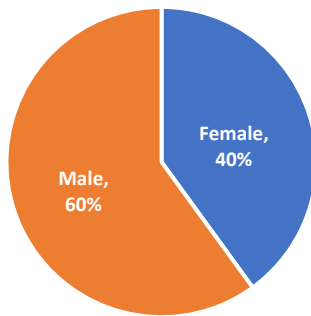
[Final Evaluation Report \(2016\) \(PDF\)](#) (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania & Center for Research in Education and Social Policy, University of Delaware, March 2016)²

² The information and data for this result summary was collected from the most recent report as of 01/22/2020: Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE). (2016). *Reading Recovery: An Evaluation of the Four-Year i3 Scale-Up*. Retrieved from <https://www.cpre.org/reading-recovery-evaluation-four-year-i3-scale>

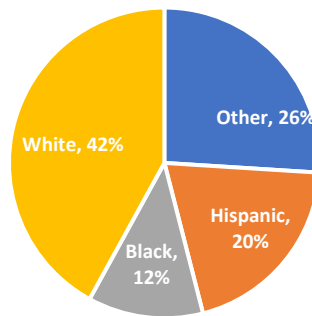
Appendix A: Students Served by the Project³

GRADE(S)													
PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

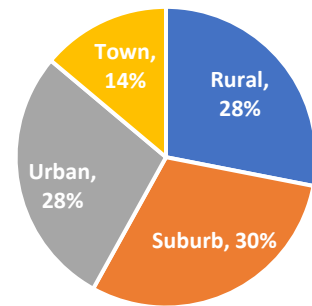
GENDER



RACE/ETHNICITY



COMMUNITY



HIGH-NEED STUDENTSⁱ

Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	English Learner	Students with Disabilities
Not Reported/Not Applicable	19%	Not Reported/Not Applicable

³These data reflect the entire student population served by the intervention, not just the evaluation sample used in the impact study.

Appendix B: Impact Evaluation Methodology⁴

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Design:	Randomized Controlled Trial
Approach:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools that participated in the i3 Scale-Up of Reading Recovery were considered eligible for the RCT study. Schools, 1,254, were randomly selected and included in the trial. Students at the schools were identified by teachers as struggling readers. The eight students with the lowest OS scores were then selected to participate in the RCT. The students were then matched and randomly assigned to control or treatment groups. After dropping pairs where one or both students were missing assessment data, the final analytic sample included 6,888 students (3,444 matched pairs) from 1,122 schools.
Study Length:	Three years –2011-12 school year through 2014-15 school year

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Study Setting:	1,122 schools nationally
Final Sample Sizes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Intervention:</i> 3,444 1st-grade struggling readers <i>Comparison:</i> 3,444 1st-grade struggling readers
Intervention Group Characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Intervention Percent:</i> Male: 60%, ELL: 19%, Black: 12%, Hispanic: 20%, White: 42%, Other: 26%
Comparison Group Characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Comparison Percent:</i> Male: 61%, ELL: 19%, Black: 13%, Hispanic: 19%, White: 44%, Other: 24%
Data Sources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) Reading Total assessment ITBS Reading Comprehension and Reading Words subtests Observation Survey of Early Literacy Assessment (OS)
Key Measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved Total Reading Scores (ITBS) Improved Reading Words and Reading Comprehension scores (ITBS) Improved OS scores

⁴ These data reflect only the evaluation sample in the impact study, not the entire population served.

Appendix C: Quality of the Evidence

Although an evaluation may not have been reviewed by the time of publication for this summary, it is possible that the study will be reviewed at a later date. Please visit the websites found in the footnotes on this page to check for updates.

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW⁵

STUDY	RATING
Reading Recovery: An Evaluation of the Four-Year i3 Scale-Up. Final Evaluation Report https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/study/32027	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Study meets WWC standards without reservationsAt least one statistically significant positive finding

EVIDENCE FOR ESSA REVIEW⁶

STUDY	RATING
Reading Recovery. An Evaluation of the Four-Year i3 Scale-Up. https://www.evidenceforessa.org/programs/reading/elementary/reading-recovery#	Strong

NATIONAL CENTER ON INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS REVIEW⁷

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 01/22/2020	N/A

⁵ <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW>

⁶ <https://www.evidenceforessa.org/>

⁷ <https://intensiveintervention.org/>

Investing in Innovation (i3) Grantee Results Summary

Scale-up, 2010-2015

The [*Investing in Innovation Fund \(i3\)*](#), established under section 14007 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, is a Federal discretionary grant program at the U.S. Department of Education within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). i3 grants help schools and local education agencies work in partnership with the private sector and the philanthropic community to develop and expand innovative practices that improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, and/or increase college enrollment and completion rates for high-need students.

This summary was prepared by the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Program Dissemination Project. The project is conducted by the [*Manhattan Strategy Group*](#), in partnership with [*Westat*](#) and [*EdScale*](#), with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, [*Office of Elementary and Secondary Education*](#), under Contract No. ED-ESE-15-A-0012/0004. The evaluation results presented herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

ⁱ “High-need student” refers to a student at risk of academic failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, attend high-minority schools, are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, in foster care, have been incarcerated, have disabilities, or who are English learners. For more information see: [*Applications for New Awards; Investing in Innovation Fund-Development Grants, 81 FR 24070 \(April 25, 2016\)*](#).