



# Reading Recovery® in Michigan

## An Oakland University Executive Summary 2010-2011

### Introduction

Reading Recovery® is a program of professional development for teachers: university faculty train and professionally develop teacher leaders who in turn develop teachers to work with first grade children having extreme difficulty learning to read and write. Since its establishment in the United States, Reading Recovery has served nearly 2 million children. Oakland University is one of only 20 universities in the United States to serve as a Reading Recovery university training center. Since its establishment in Michigan in 1991, Reading Recovery<sup>1</sup> has trained over 1,160 teachers who have served almost 96,940 Michigan first graders.

### Reading Recovery

Internationally renowned developmental psychologist, literacy researcher and educator, Dr. Marie M. Clay, developed Reading Recovery. In addition to the United States, Reading Recovery is implemented in Canada, the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Bermuda, the Caribbean, and in Department of Defense Schools. The not-for-profit collaborative effort among schools and universities trains teachers to work with the lowest-performing first graders. Children are identified for service based on their scores on the six tasks of *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2002) with the lowest children selected for service first. Teachers trained in Reading Recovery use the assessment information and sensitive observation to design individual literacy lessons that are responsive to each child's skills and abilities. Children meet with their Reading Recovery teacher for

30-minute lessons each day for an average of 12-20 weeks. The goal is to accelerate children's progress to within-average levels in reading and writing in a short period of time so that they can benefit from good classroom instruction (Schwartz, 2005). Researchers attribute this accelerative progress to the instructional activities provided in the one-to-one responsive instruction by teachers who have participated in Reading Recovery's professional development. Reading Recovery also serves as a pre-referral option to identify children who need longer-term specialist support (Jones, et al., 2005). Schools that implement Reading Recovery assign teaching staff flexibly to make the intervention available to the children who need its services and to permit teachers to apply their Reading Recovery knowledge in their other instructional roles (Lose, in press).

### Reading Recovery in Michigan, 2010-2011

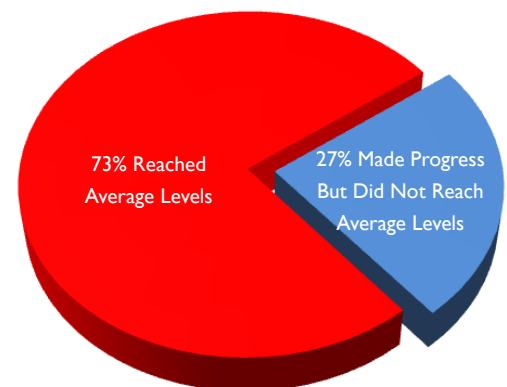
During the 2010-2011 school year, 2,257 students were taught by 259 teachers trained in Reading Recovery (17 of whom were in-training) in 197 schools in 66 school districts. When they were not teaching Reading Recovery, these teachers also taught 11,356 additional students – an average of 42.9 students each day – in their other instructional roles as classroom, special education, Title I reading, and ESL teachers. Teachers trained in Reading Recovery received professional development from 16 teacher leaders who themselves received professional development in a group setting from the Reading Recovery faculty at Oakland University. These teacher leaders also received individualized professional support delivered by Reading Recovery faculty at their

regional Reading Recovery sites throughout the state. Reading Recovery students and the schools they attended represent a full range of diversity as noted in Table 1.

Table 1: Reading Recovery Demographics

Students	
59%	Male
57%	Free and Reduced Lunch
14%	Some Disability
65%	White
20%	Black
7%	Hispanic
2%	Native American
1%	Asian
5%	Other Race/Ethnicity
Languages Spoken in the Home	
91%	Native Speaker of English
4%	Spanish
1%	Arabic
4%	Language other than English
Schools	
24%	20-50 % Minority Enrollment
17%	50% or more Minority Enrollment
28%	Urban
25%	Rural
29%	School-wide Title I
71%	Individual Title I Schools

Figure 1: Outcomes for Children with Complete Reading Recovery Interventions



## Empirical Support for Reading Recovery

An independent review of the experimental research on Reading Recovery by the What Works Clearinghouse, a branch of the United States Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, established that Reading Recovery is an effective intervention based on scientific research. Of the 171 Beginning Reading (kindergarten through grade 3) programs reviewed, 30 had research upon which to base a review of their effectiveness. Only Reading Recovery was found to have positive effects across all four of the literacy domains: alphabets, fluency, reading comprehension, and general reading achievement. See [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/beginning\\_reading/topic/](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/beginning_reading/topic/)

## Results

2,257 students were enrolled in Reading Recovery in Michigan in 2010-2011. A full Reading Recovery intervention lasts up to 20 weeks. Thirty-one percent of students received interventions that lasted between 10-14 weeks, 21% between 15-19 weeks, and 30% of the interventions lasted 20 weeks total. Not all of the students who were enrolled received a full intervention; their interventions were incomplete due to a slot opening up for their lessons late in the year (16%, N=355), because they moved (4%, N=87), and for other reasons (1%, N=33).

Of the 1,782 students who received a complete intervention (about 30-35 hours of instruction total), 73% (N=1,292) reached average performance levels in reading and writing and 490 (27%) made progress but not sufficient enough to reach the average performance levels. These students then were recommended for follow-up support in their classrooms. A small number of these students were recommended for additional intensive intervention. (see Figure 1).

## Effect of Reading Recovery on Reading Achievement

Figure 2 demonstrates the effect of Reading Recovery instruction on the reading achievement of the lowest performing literacy learners in first grade and compares their progress to the Random Sample of their peers and the Low Random Sample of children in schools with Reading Recovery.

**Random Sample Children** – The green line at the top shows the Random Sample’s progress on text reading at three points in time. These students start the year at a higher text reading level and make progress throughout the year.

**Reading Recovery (RR) Children served in the fall semester** – The blue line shows the progress of Reading Recovery children who were selected during the fall semester for Reading Recovery service. Initially the lowest-performing children, they catch up to and even surpass the Random Sample by mid-year when their Reading Recovery lessons end and continue to maintain their progress.

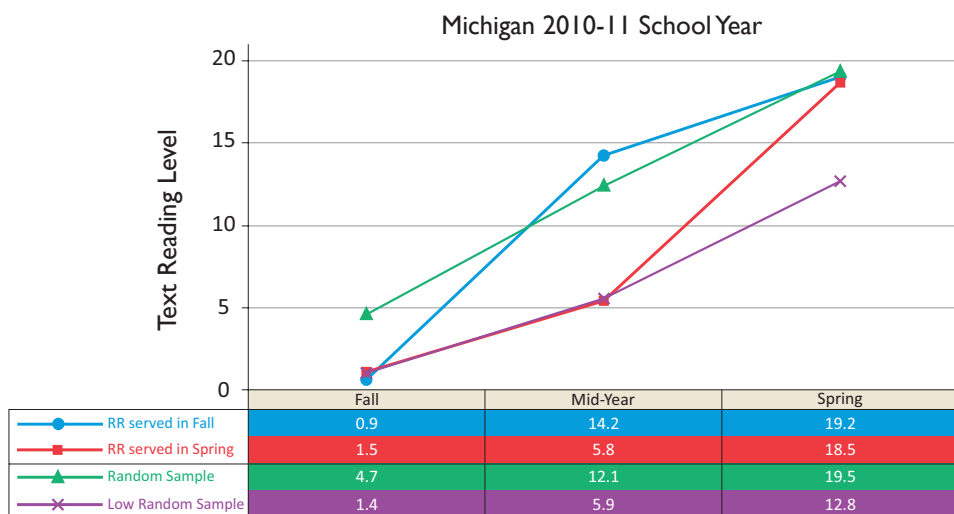
**Reading Recovery (RR) Children served in the spring semester** – The red line shows the progress of Reading Recovery children selected for service at mid-year when slots by Reading Recovery children served in

the fall become available. Although these children made some progress in the fall without Reading Recovery, they are well behind their Random Sample peers at mid-year. Provided with Reading Recovery however, these children make accelerative progress, reduce the gap between themselves and the Random Sample and achieve within-average performance levels by year’s end.

**Low Random Sample Children** – The purple line at the bottom shows the progress of the Low Random Sample. These students who did not receive Reading Recovery were low at the beginning of the school year and remain low throughout the year. While they made some progress throughout the year, it is not enough to reduce the achievement gap. Had they been able to receive Reading Recovery, it is likely they would have achieved accelerative progress and reached within-average performance levels.

These findings confirm Juel’s (1988) research which showed that children who were low-performing in literacy in first grade are very likely to remain low performing in fourth grade. However, provided with contingent, responsive teaching by specially trained and professionally developed teachers, even the lowest-performing children can make accelerative progress, benefit from good classroom instruction, and continue

Figure 2: Gains on Text Reading Level for Reading Recovery Children



## United States Department of Education *Investing in Innovation (i3)* Grant

Oakland University is one of 19 university partners who are collaborating with the Ohio State University to scale up Reading Recovery throughout the United States. Under the i3 Federal Grant, Oakland University will receive \$4M over the course of five years (2010-2015) to provide early literacy intervention training for 250 certified teachers in Michigan schools that have first grade classrooms and meet one of three school priority categories. For information about the i3 Federal Grant and the grant application process visit [www.oakland.edu/readingrecovery](http://www.oakland.edu/readingrecovery)

learning with their peers (McEneaney, Lose, & Schwartz, 2006).

### Response to Intervention and Learning Disabilities

A federal initiative that is derived from the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) offers schools facing increased enrollments of students with learning disabilities (LD) two options for addressing this growing population (Lose et al., 2007; Allington, 2009). The first option is that local education agencies can use as much as 15% of their

for LD services (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). To achieve this goal, the lowest performing children must be identified early so that appropriately intensive interventions and tiers or layers of support can be provided within a comprehensive approach to literacy instruction at the first sign of a child's difficulty.

### Response to Intervention and Teacher-Student Ratio

Some administrators have argued that small group instruction delivered by teachers trained in Reading Recovery

1:5 group conditions. The researchers concluded that a sound approach to RTI would be comprehensive with provision for early preventive 1:1 instruction for the lowest performing learners, effective small group instruction for less struggling older learners, strong classrooms for all, and longer-term intervention for the very few children who continue to need intensive support in later grades.

### Reading Recovery: An Evidence-Based Approach to RTI

In her seminal article, *Learning to be Learning Disabled*, published over 20 years ago, Marie Clay (1987) gave validity to support the idea that many children labeled LD are in fact instructionally challenged through a series of unfortunate experiences either before, or very early, in their formal schooling. However, provided an appropriate early intervention to support their accelerative learning and response to instruction, the number of children identified as LD can be reduced to only 1-1.5 percent.

For over 25 years in the United States, Reading Recovery has operated as an RTI approach. Reading Recovery trained and professionally developed teachers design instruction tailored precisely to the child, delivered daily and one-on-one, in support of the literacy learning of the most at-risk children (Clay, 2005a;

### Response to Intervention

The IDEA attempts to ensure that schools achieve the following (Lose, 2007; 2008):

- Provide early identification and intervention for all children struggling with literacy learning.
- Develop ways to appropriately identify and intervene on behalf of children with LD.
- Provide effective, intensive, evidence-based early intervening services.
- Monitor each child's progress using data-based documentation.
- Accelerate children's reading progress to meet annual yearly progress (AYP) criteria.
- Create a multi-tiered problem-solving team to support comprehensive literacy efforts.
- Provide the highest quality of professional development for teachers of low achievers.

special education funds to pay for early intervening services (EIS) and to support professional development and literacy instruction. The second option offered by the IDEA is Response to Intervention (RTI) that can be used to provide high quality instruction based on children's needs without the requirement of labeling students at risk for school failure as LD (Johnston, 2010). The goal is to limit referrals based on inadequate instruction or limited English proficiency and to reduce the number of children identified

is just as effective as the instruction delivered daily and one-to-one by these same teachers. To address this question Schwartz, Schmitt, & Lose (in press) used a randomized control trial methodology to evaluate the effect of variations in teacher-student ratio on intervention effectiveness delivered by teachers trained in Reading Recovery. Results showed that on the text reading level measure, students in the 1:1 condition scored significantly higher than students in the 1:2, 1:3, and

*Reading Recovery has a strong track record of preventing literacy failure for many first graders. Results support the investment of resources for this prevention effort. Yet, Michigan is still far from providing Reading Recovery to all the children who need it. Many of the participating districts experience the impact of low coverage. Over 9 out of 10 students in Michigan who need Reading Recovery do not have access to the intervention. Ideally, 20% of the state's first graders should have access. Policy makers and all who are concerned about closing the achievement gap to enable children to succeed in school so that they can take full advantage of opportunities in post secondary education and the workforce could achieve greater equity by providing the intervention to the 20,961 first graders that could benefit from Reading Recovery.*

Results of a large-scale study indicated that money spent on improving teacher performance netted greater student achievement gains than did any other use of school resources (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Through its intensive professional development for teachers, Reading Recovery is an ideal response to struggling young literacy learners' requirement for skilled responsive teachers (Lose, 2005).

2005b). While many children respond quite well to whole group and small group instruction, evidence has shown that the lowest performing learners provided with the Reading Recovery intervention are able to make accelerative progress and continue learning with their peers in the classroom without further intervention or placement in special education for literacy difficulties—a considerable cost savings to districts.

## Literacy Lessons® Training for Special Educators and Intervention Specialists

In recognition of the benefits to teachers and students, several Michigan schools have requested that special education teachers and teachers of English language learners have access to Reading Recovery training without the requirement of teaching a full load of students (4 Reading Recovery children each day; a minimum of 8 students taught each year) as required by the *Standards and Guidelines for Reading Recovery in the United States* (2009). This training model, *Literacy Lessons*, allows specialist teachers in a school to participate in the yearlong Reading Recovery training course concurrent with their specialist instructional roles. These teachers are introduced to the complex literacy processing model that informs Reading Recovery in order to support the learning of children who need long-term specialist help (Konstantellou & Lose, 2009).

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## Reading Recovery Regional Training Sites Affiliated with the Reading Recovery Center of Michigan at Oakland University

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|--|----------------------------------|
| Bloomfield Hills Public Schools                      | Oakland University-Grand Rapids  |
| Detroit Public Schools                               | Oakland Regional                 |
| Dowagiac Union (new in 2012-2013)                    | Portage Public Schools           |
| Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District | Port Huron Area School District  |
| Genesee Intermediate School District                 | South Lyon Community Schools     |
| Jackson County Intermediate School District          | Walled Lake Consolidated Schools |
| Kalamazoo Public Schools                             |                                  |

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<sup>1</sup> Beginning in 2006, special education teachers working in Michigan schools that have implemented Reading Recovery participated in training for intervention specialists under the special training model, *Literacy Lessons*®. In 2009, another training model, *Literacy Support*, was added to the university training center's options for classroom teachers and reading specialists in schools that have Reading Recovery. Both of these 8-graduate credit training programs permit teachers to train alongside Reading Recovery teachers thus enabling school districts to optimize teacher expertise in response to the diversity of struggling literacy learners in their schools. Since the 2010-2011 academic year, 47 special education teachers completed the *Literacy Lessons* program and 31 additional teachers participated in the *Literacy Support* program of professional preparation.