

Literacy Learning of At-Risk
First Grade Students in the
Reading Recovery Early Intervention

Robert M. Schwartz
Oakland University
Rochester, Michigan
rschwart@oakland.edu

Journal of Educational Psychology, in press





Purpose

This study investigated four questions central to judging the effectiveness and efficiency of early intervention programs. At-risk students were randomly assigned to receive the Reading Recovery® early intervention during the first or second half of the school year. High-average and low-average students from the same classrooms provided additional comparisons.





Participants

The sample consisted of 37 pairs of students that had been identified for RR service in the fall of first grade and whose names had been submitted to a web-based program for random assignment to first or second round RR service. The teachers also submitted data on a low-average and high-average student from the same classroom as the first and second round Reading Recovery students for a total sample of 148 first grade students.

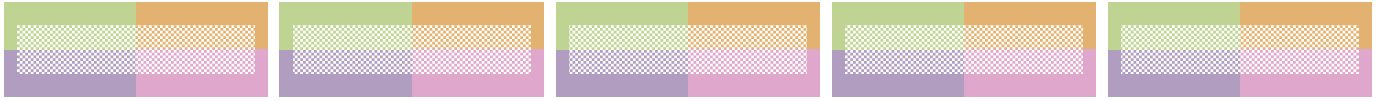




Measures

All four students from each classroom were assessed at the beginning of the year, at the transition from first to second round service for the RR students, and at the end of the school year on the six measures from Clay's (1993a) Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement. In addition, at the transition period and the end of the year, all four students were assessed on the Yopp-Singer phoneme segmentation task, a sound deletion task, the Slosson Oral Reading Test (revised) and the Degrees of Reading Power test (Form JO & KO).





Research Question #1

Effectiveness

Did the intervention increase the literacy achievement of low performing students compared to similar students participating in classroom-based instruction?





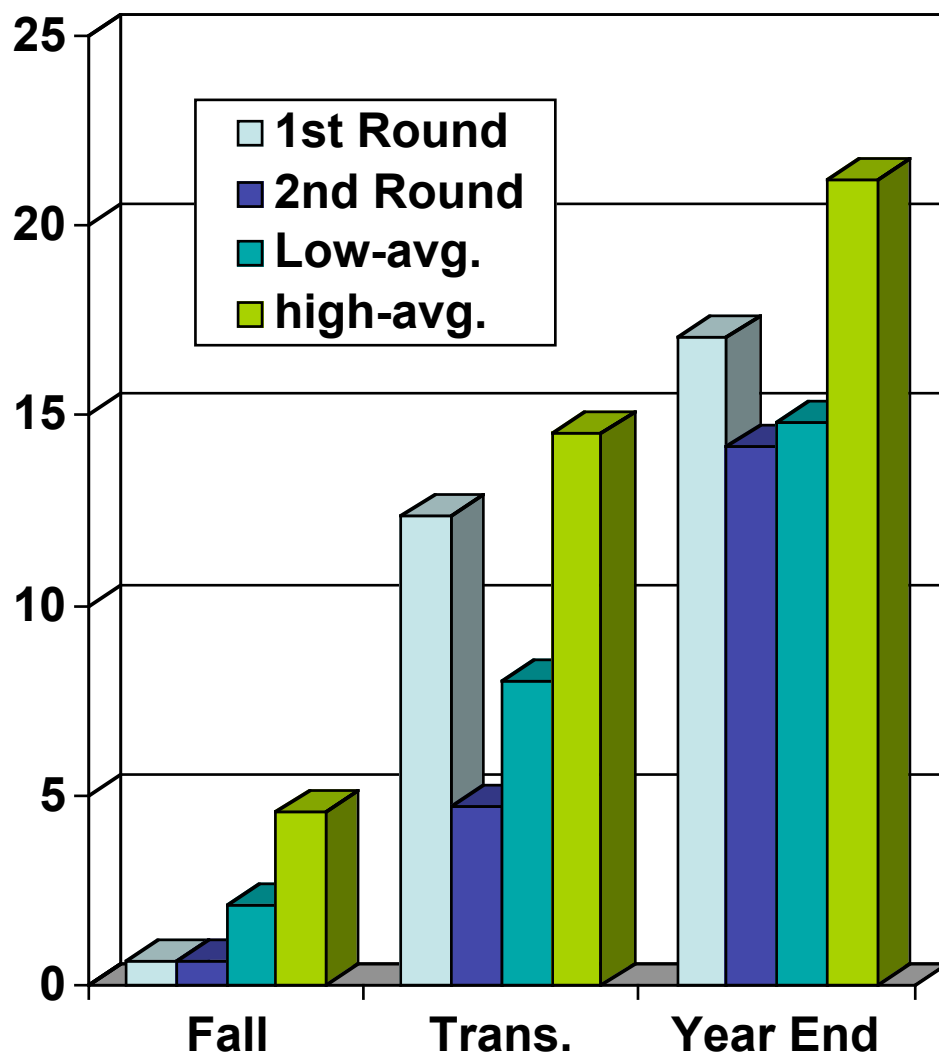
Research Question #2

Effectiveness

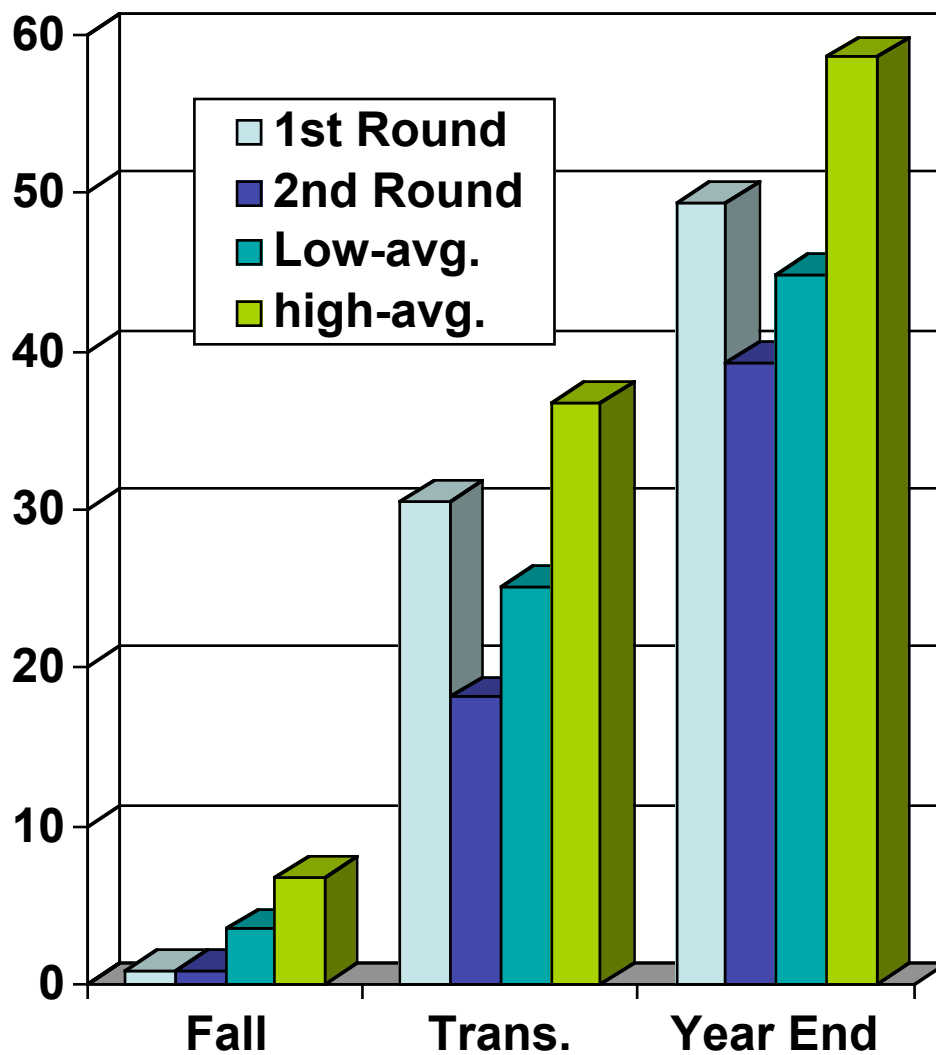
Did the intervention help low performing students to close the achievement gap with their average peers in first grade classrooms?



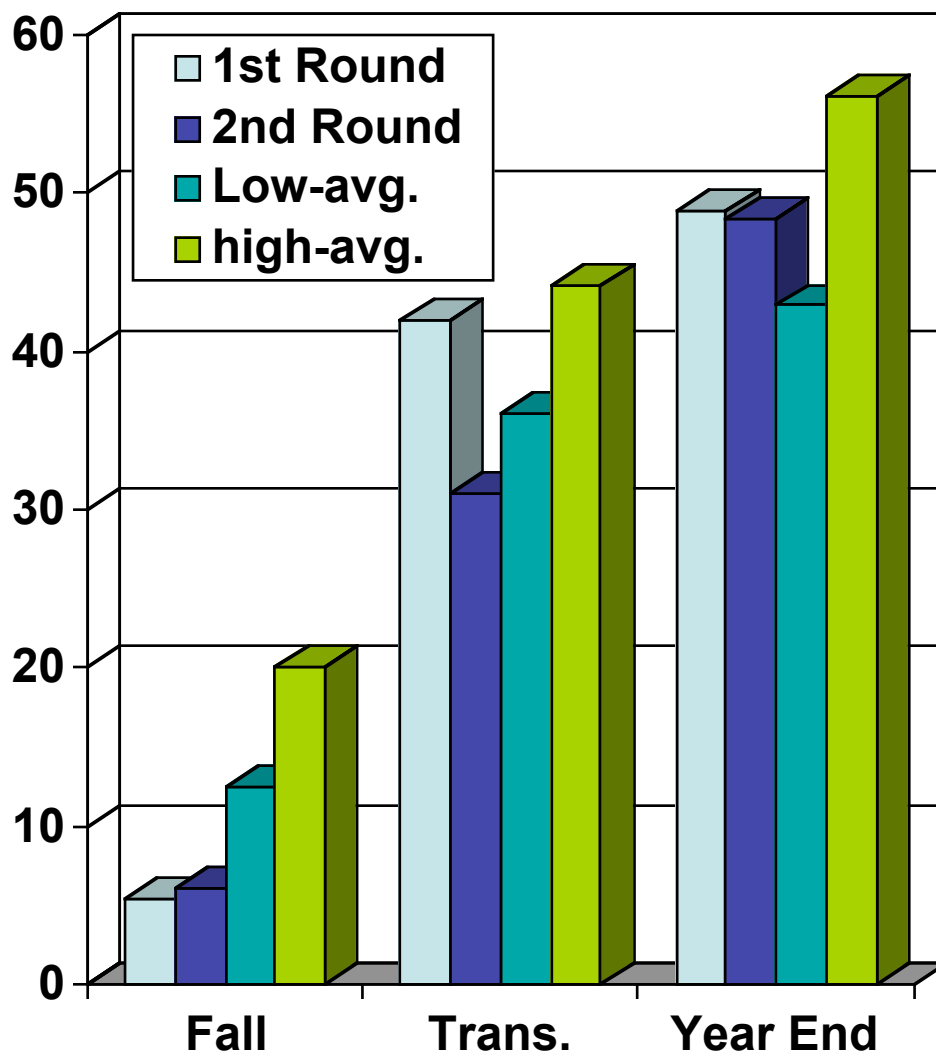
Effectiveness: Text Reading Level



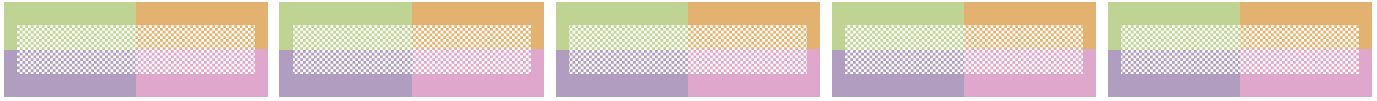
Effectiveness: Word Reading



Effectiveness: Writing Vocabulary



Schwartz, 2004



Research Question #3 Efficiency

What percent of students identified for intervention appeared to make adequate literacy gains without an intervention program?



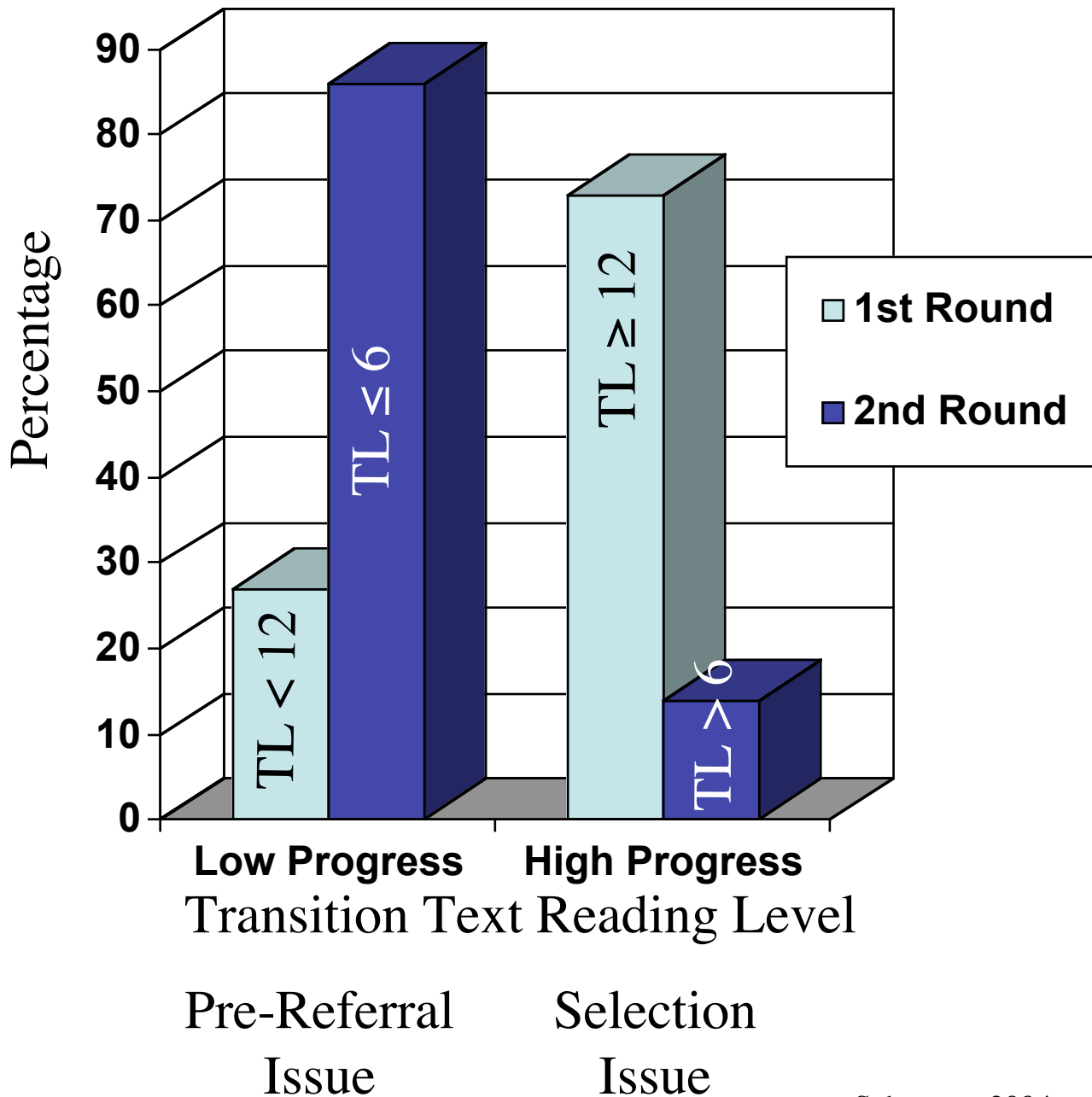


Research Question #4 Efficiency

What percent of students appeared to need long-term literacy support after receiving an intervention program?



Efficiency





Summary

Early intervention reduces the gap between at-risk and average students by raising at-risk students' literacy levels to the point where they can benefit from classroom instruction. Without intervention, at-risk students make slow progress in the normal classroom instructional setting.

The potential cost of providing intervention programs for at-risk students who might make adequate progress in the classroom setting is offset by the identification of the small set of students who truly need continuing long-term literacy support. Compared to settings where effective, individual, early intervention is not available, such programs substantially reduce the number of students who need long-term literacy support.

