



Reading Recovery Research Brief

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

Schwartz, R. M. (2005). *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 97(2), 257-267.

Background

Thirty-seven Reading teachers from different schools in 14 states submitted the names of two at-risk first-grade students to a Web-based program for random assignment to first- or second-round Reading Recovery service, and submitted data on those students across the school year that allowed comparison of at-risk students with and without intervention services. In addition, data was collected on a low-average and a high-average student from the same classroom as the two at-risk students. These students ($n = 148$) were assessed on a variety of literacy measures at the beginning of the school year, at the transition from first- to second-round Reading Recovery service, and at the end of the year.

Measures include six tasks from Clay's *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement*. In addition, at the transition period and at year-end, students were assessed on the Yopp-Singer Phonemic Segmentation task, a sound deletion task, the Degrees of Reading Power Test, and the Slosson Oral Reading Test.

This was an experimental design with random assignment of at-risk students to first- round intervention services or a comparison group that did not receive intervention service until after the transition period testing. The design also controlled for classroom literacy instruction by selecting all participants from the same classroom within each school.

Repeated measures analysis of variance with follow-up main effect or simple effect comparisons were conducted. Analyses among groups at the transition period are of primary importance because this provided a comparison of the learning of randomly assigned groups of at-risk students with and without intervention services and a comparison to the progress of average students from the same classrooms.

Findings

The at-risk students who received Reading Recovery in the first half of the year performed significantly better at the end of their intervention period than at-risk students assigned to receive intervention services later in the year. This is most apparent in the large effect sizes for Text Reading Level ($d = 2.02$), the Ohio Word test ($d = 1.38$), Concepts About Print

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($d = 1.10$), Writing Vocabulary ($d = 0.90$), Hearing and Recording Sounds in Word ($d = 1.06$), and the Slosson Oral Reading Test-Revised ($d = 0.94$). Comparisons of the at-risk intervention group with the high-average and low-average classroom groups at the transition period showed that the at-risk students had closed the achievement gap with their average peers. A further efficiency analysis showed that selection procedures were effective in identifying students in need of early intervention services and that the Reading Recovery intervention could reduce the number of children who appear to need long-term literacy support from 17% to 5% of the first-grade cohort.