READING RECOVERY®
DESCUBRIENDO LA LECTURA IN ILLINOIS
Executive Summary 2011–2012

Reading Recovery® is a professional development project with a two-tier level of curriculum that is effectively replicated in Illinois, across the United States and internationally. Descubriendo La Lectura is the reconstruction of Reading Recovery® in Spanish.

University faculty prepare teacher leaders who work at local school sites teaching children, providing professional development and coaching Reading Recovery teachers on the job. This professional development model for teachers is a hallmark of Reading Recovery and was first implemented by New Zealand psychologist and researcher Dr. Marie Clay. The model meets the highest standards outlined for professional development and research. Since its first implementation in the United States in 1984, more than 20,000 Reading Recovery teachers have served over two million children.

Children in first grade who are having the greatest difficulty learning to read and write receive a short term series of individually designed lessons prepared by highly qualified teachers. The goal is for each child to experience accelerated progress during a period of 12–20 weeks of daily 30-minute customized lessons. Combining the individualized nature of instructional methods with continuing professional development contributes to faster-than-usual student progress.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

The What Works Clearinghouse (U.S.D.E.) and the Florida Center for Reading Research found Reading Recovery to have positive effects on alphabetics, fluency, comprehension, and general reading achievement according to rigorous standards for scientifically research based interventions.

The National Center for Response to Intervention (NCRTI) has recently given An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement its highest rating as a screening tool. This is a six part assessment tool used to measure the effectiveness of Reading Recovery instruction.

ILLINOIS READING RECOVERY RESULTS

During the 2011–2012 school year, 3,306 lowest achieving children received individually designed lessons from 442 teachers working in 253 schools. Reading Recovery teachers also taught another 13,562 students during the half of the school day when they were not tutoring Reading Recovery students. Each teacher taught an average of 38 total students during the year.

Of the Reading Recovery students, 58% were boys; 58% qualified for free or reduced school meals, 65% were White, 15% African-American, 16% Hispanic. Other than English, home languages reported were: Spanish 77%, Arabic 5% and more than 21 different languages comprise the remaining 18%.

ILLINOIS DESCUBRIENDO LA LECTURA RESULTS

During the 2011–2012 school year, 201 lowest achieving Spanish speaking children received individually designed lessons from 28 teachers working in 22 schools. Descubriendo La Lectura (DLL) teachers also taught another 605 students during the half of the school day when they were not tutoring DLL students. Each teacher taught an average of 29 total students during the year.

Of the Reading Recovery students, 58% were boys; 97% qualified for free or reduced school meals, 100% were Hispanic and spoke Spanish at home.

LOCATION OF READING RECOVERY/DLL SCHOOLS IN ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS ANNUAL PROGRESS TOWARD POSITIVE OUTCOMES

All school districts implementing Reading Recovery/DLL participate in an annual national evaluation design. Documented information about children's reading and writing achievement is collected and analyzed. Analyzing the data of every child served and every registered teacher
ensures accountability. In addition, Reading Recovery sites prepare local annual reports that document students’ response to intervention and academic success in the general education program.

Of the 3,306 children who participated, sixty-one percent completed the series of lessons successfully. Seventeen percent had incomplete interventions due to student mobility and insufficient time at the end of the school year. Eighty-two percent of all participants received a full series of lessons. Of these children, 75% became successful, independent readers and writers who could fully participate and benefit from the core classroom curriculum.

There were two positive outcomes for school systems and children who participated in a full series of Reading Recovery lessons (approximately 40 hours of tutoring). The first positive outcome was that 75% of children reached grade level achievement and maintained their gains, as indicated in the chart below. The second positive outcome was that less than 25% of the lowest achieving children needed continued intervention in addition to classroom instruction. Progress monitoring data collected during Reading Recovery services provided valuable information for school intervention and referral teams. Due to initial low achievement status each Reading Recovery student is a potential candidate for long term special education services. However, only 2% of children who participated in a full series of Reading Recovery lessons were referred and placed in special education LD reading services at the end of first grade.

CLOSING THE LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT GAP
The disaggregated data indicates that Reading Recovery helps all subgroups of students regardless of ethnicity, language, or family income differences make accelerated progress to reach the average reading and writing levels of their peers. As an early responsive intervention, Reading Recovery reduces the over-identification of children who are either culturally, ethnically, or linguistically diverse for special education programs, retention in grade, or other long term intervention services.

SUSTAINING TEXT READING GAINS
An important question to ask about interventions is whether or not upward progress continues after the intervention ends. After Reading Recovery services end most children tend to make progress with good classroom instruction. In order to determine children’s progress after the intervention ends, scores of all children who began in the fall and completed lessons by mid-year were examined. Progress for this group of children indicated that they maintained text reading gains during the second half of their first grade year without individual intervention.

SUMMARY
The results reported here from Illinois school districts corroborate earlier research indicating that Reading Recovery, a scientifically research based general education intervention, has a positive impact on children’s literacy achievement. The results suggest that when fully implemented, greater numbers of low achieving children can become average or better readers and writers, thus increasing the number of children entering second grade working at or above grade level.

NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY
Reading Recovery Teacher and Leader initial courses and continuing professional development are offered through National Louis University.

Dr. Mary Ann Poparad • Illinois Reading Recovery® and Descubriendo La Lectura
850 Warrenville Road, Lisle, IL 60532 • Phone: 630.874.4120 • Fax: 630.874.4120 • www.nl.edu • www.illinoisreadingrecovery.org