



Reading Recovery®
Council of North America

www.readingrecovery.org

Essential Components of Reading Instruction: The National Reading Panel

In 2000, the National Reading Panel¹ published a list of five essential components of reading instruction which were incorporated into the No Child Left Behind legislation. Reading Recovery incorporates these five elements into daily lessons and adds four elements supported by research literature. The following is based on a more comprehensive table on pages 201–203 in *Changing Futures: The Influence of Reading Recovery in the United States*². (Asterisks indicate the five components cited by the National Reading Panel.)

Phonemic Awareness*

Awareness of and ability to manipulate sounds in words

Reading Recovery addresses phonemic awareness in a number of ways in daily lessons. In her comprehensive review of research on beginning reading instruction, Marilyn Adams (1990) said this about Reading Recovery lessons: “the importance of phonological and linguistic awareness is explicitly recognized.”³

Phonics*

Knowledge of relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language

Reading Recovery encourages purposeful decoding. Reading Recovery teachers recognize that the alphabetic principle and orthographic knowledge are important factors in beginning reading and writing. They guide children to hear sounds in words, associate letters with those sounds, recognize and use spelling patterns, and apply this knowledge in both reading and writing.

Vocabulary*

Recognizing and understanding the meaning of words in reading and writing as well as oral language

In Reading Recovery lessons, children acquire vocabulary in a variety of ways — through conversations with the teacher, reading new and familiar texts, composing and writing messages, and learning how words work.

Fluency*

Ability to read rapidly with phrasing, an important bridge to comprehension

Fluency is explicitly recognized in Reading Recovery lessons. Examples include the daily guided reading of familiar texts and the rereading of the child’s own written texts. Specific teaching procedures are used to promote fluent and phrased reading.

Comprehension*

Using a system of strategic actions, smoothly and in coordination, to get meaning while reading texts

Comprehension is the goal of reading. In Reading Recovery lessons, learners apply what they know when reading continuous texts. Each lesson provides opportunities to reread several familiar texts and to read a new text. Before reading a new text, the teacher offers an individually tailored introduction to the text to foster comprehension. Conversations throughout the lesson encourage attention to meaning when reading and writing.

Writing

Using written language to convey meaning

About one-third of each Reading Recovery lesson is spent composing and writing a message. Writing is a significant contributor to the development of phonemic awareness, phonics, and word solving. Through writing, children learn more about sound analysis and spelling. They also compose increasingly complex messages and increase their personal writing vocabularies. Children benefit from the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing.

Motivation

Deriving meaning and pleasure from reading

The close relationship between the Reading Recovery teacher and student promotes the enjoyment of reading. Texts and tasks are carefully selected to ensure interest and success. Children actively take control of their own learning while the teacher supports in ways that help them become successful, independent literacy learners.

Oral Language

Expanding knowledge of vocabulary and increasingly complex language structures

At the heart of the Reading Recovery lesson is the interaction between teacher and child. Brief conversations throughout the lesson support the development of oral language structures, build vocabulary, foster strategic activities necessary for reading and writing texts, and create motivation for literacy tasks. The emphasis on oral language is especially beneficial to English language learners.

Independence

Becoming a self-initiated and self-managed learner

The goal of Reading Recovery is to help children make accelerated progress in order to become independent readers and writers. Intentional teaching moves in daily lessons are directed toward helping children consider their own actions, learn the strategic activities needed for successful reading and writing, and to assume the responsibility for using what they know to solve problems when reading or writing.

¹ National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

² Schmitt, M. C., Askew, B. J., Fountas, I. C., Lyons, C. A., & Pinnell, G. S. (2005). *Changing futures: The influence of Reading Recovery in the United States*. Worthington, OH: Reading Recovery Council of North America.

³ Adams, M. J. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.