



Reading Recovery Research Brief

Reading Recovery in the United States: What Difference Does It Make to an Age Cohort?

E. H. Heibert. (1994). *Educational Researcher*, 23, 15–25.

Background

The purpose of the Hiebert study was to examine available data on Reading Recovery's effectiveness in American contexts, specifically as it influenced an age cohort. To do this, the author examined three types of data on Reading Recovery:

1. the longitudinal study in Columbus, Ohio (DeFord, Pinnell, Lyons, & Place, 1990)
2. the comparison study of early interventions (Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk, & Seltzer, 1994)
3. Regional trainer center reports from The Ohio State University, University of Illinois, and Texas Woman's University

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. A high percentage of Reading Recovery children can read orally at least first-grade text at the end of Grade 1.
2. Once a program is in place, there is considerable fidelity in the results.
3. Prominent elements of the Reading Recovery program are identified as characteristics of successful beginning reading instruction.
4. Weekly training sessions give teachers an unprecedented amount of guided observation of students.
5. Data reviewed led the author to conclude that the effects of Reading Recovery on an age cohort are unconvincing.
6. When cost figures are calculated on the basis of success levels of remaining students at Grade 4, the cost per successful student is higher.
7. The author recommended studies with more comprehensive tasks that fully define the sample. She also called for exploration of effects in low-income schools and with second-language learners. It was further recommended that the underlying principles of Reading Recovery should be explored with consideration to applicability in student-teacher contexts other than tutoring.

Comments

The author stated that data on many aspects of Reading Recovery implementation are inaccessible or incomplete. She cited limitations of existing data.

A response to Hiebert's review was published in the *Educational Researcher* (Pinnell, Lyons, & Jones, 1996, Volume 25, No. 7, pp. 23–25.). Hiebert's response to the response was printed on pages 26–28 in the same issue.

This abstract appears in B. J. Askew, I. C. Fountas, C. A. Lyons, G. S. Pinnell, & M. C. Schmitt (1998). *Reading Recovery Review: Understandings, Outcomes & Implications*, pp. 22–23. Columbus, OH: The Reading Recovery Council of North America.