



Reading Recovery and Common Core State Standards

Background

Across the U.S., most states are adopting the Common Core State Standards so that teachers and parents have a common understanding of what students are expected to learn regardless of where they live. The Standards spell out knowledge and skills students should have in their K–12 academic years so that all students are college and career ready at the end of high school. This document details how Reading Recovery helps schools meet these new Standards. Page numbers in parentheses refer to pages in the Standards document.

Download a copy of the Common Core State Standards
<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>

See which states have adopted Common Core State Standards
<http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>

Reading Recovery can play a vital role in ensuring that students are able to meet the goals of the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* (the Standards). Because the Standards were created to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy by the end of high school, **early literacy intervention must be available for first graders who are already struggling with literacy learning.**

Early intervention has the potential to prevent literacy difficulties for many students, including English language learners, by quickly catching them up with their peers by the end of Grade 1, and thus providing the opportunity to benefit from instruction at every subsequent grade level. Reading Recovery is a research- and evidence-based intervention that brings 75% of the students with a full intervention to the average performance of their grade level.¹ A review by the USDE's What Works Clearinghouse provided high ratings for the intervention across four domains central to the Common Core State Standards: alphabetics, fluency, comprehension, and general reading achievement.²

Standards in the early grades provide foundational support for the College and Career Readiness Standards. While the Standards “do not define the intervention methods or materials necessary to support students who are well below or well above grade-level expectations” (page 6), this document demonstrates how Reading Recovery helps first graders with extreme literacy difficulties reach grade-level expectations that will promote the achievement of the seemingly distant aims of the Standards.

General Comments

The Introduction to the Standards document (pages 3–8) provides general information about the Standards. Some ways in which Reading Recovery supports the intent of the Standards are briefly summarized below.

Grade-specific standards

In Reading Recovery schools, at-risk first graders are assessed on tasks that address many of the grade-specific standards, particularly foundational skills needed to ensure literacy success. *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement*³ comprises six literacy tasks that assess control of foundational skills essential for early reading and writing: letter identification, reading vocabulary, writing vocabulary, concepts about print, letter-sound correspondence, and reading of increasingly complex, continuous texts.

A focus on results rather than means

Reading Recovery teachers are highly skilled in differentiating instruction to meet the unique and changing needs of each individual child. Teachers engage in a year-long training concurrent with their work with children and continue to participate in ongoing professional development in subsequent years. Their teaching focuses on accelerated learning for each child, using their “professional judgment and experience” to identify the means to achieve this goal (page 4). The Standards do not speak to specific interventions; they are intended to offer “clear signposts along the way” (page 6, number 4). Differentiating instruction related to these signposts calls for the expertise of intervention teachers.

An integrated model of literacy

Reading Recovery views reading, writing, and oral language as reciprocal processes for early literacy learning. The one-to-one nature of Reading Recovery teaching provides a natural integration of the Standards’ literacy strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language (page 4).

Shared responsibility for students’ literacy development

Reading Recovery works within a comprehensive literacy plan in schools; individual lessons are supplemental to high-quality classroom instruction. Teams of professionals within schools work collaboratively on behalf of literacy development for all students, creating “a shared responsibility within the school” (page 4).

Effectiveness with English language learners

Literacy outcomes for English language learners who receive Reading Recovery services match the large gains shown by native English speakers.⁴ These students “have the opportunity to learn and meet the same high standards” as their peers (page 6); strong evidence documents that Reading Recovery makes this possible.

An effective response to intervention (RTI)

Reading Recovery meets the RTI goals of early intervention, early identification, and progress monitoring to ensure that students reach grade-level expectations.⁵

Emphasis on student independence and comprehension

From the very first lesson in Reading Recovery, the teacher passes control to the student for any part of the task the child is able to control. The goal is for students to become self-regulated learners to ensure ongoing independent learning. Emphasis is placed on comprehension of texts. Since foundational skills are primarily taught in the context of reading and writing continuous text, teachers can work on word recognition strategies as students construct meaning.

Increasing text complexity/difficulty

The Standards call for “a staircase of increasing text complexity” (page 8). In a short series of daily lessons, Reading Recovery students move up a steep gradient of text difficulty, moving up to more- complex and challenging texts. They also read books that represent a range of styles and genres, including informational text.

Standards for Kindergarten and Grade 1

A brief discussion of ways in which Reading Recovery lessons support a child’s acquisition of grade-specific standards follows. Because students identified for Reading Recovery are the lowest literacy achievers in Grade 1, both kindergarten and Grade 1 grade-specific standards were examined for each major category of the Standards.

Reading Recovery supplements good classroom teaching for students with extreme literacy difficulties. Without a successful short-term and supplementary early literacy intervention, the lowest achievers in Grade 1 will likely face challenges in meeting core state standards throughout the grades. Early foundations for reading and writing are crucial, and the Standards framework recognizes that intervention methods will be necessary to support students who are well below grade-level expectations.

Four features of the Reading Recovery intervention offer compelling evidence of an integrated model of literacy with documented outcomes:

1. Daily 30-minute lessons⁶ include the reading of familiar texts, the reading of yesterday’s new text while the teacher monitors the child’s progress with a running record of text reading, letter and word work, composing and writing a message, and reading a new book. Processes of communication (reading, writing, listening, speaking, and language)

are closely interconnected within each lesson. Conversations build connections between language, ideas, and text details; recorded observations serve as a check on a student's understandings.

2. The daily one-to-one interactions between the student and the highly qualified teacher ensure that each lesson meets the daily unique and constantly changing needs of each child.
3. Reading Recovery teachers are experienced professionals who receive an additional year of intensive university-based training while working with students in one-to-one settings.⁷ These teachers continue to study and learn through required professional development sessions as long as they work in Reading Recovery.
4. Data are collected to evaluate outcomes for every Reading Recovery student.⁸ Within 12 to 20 weeks, national data document that about 75% of the children who have a full intervention meet grade-level expectations and are able to learn in their classrooms without the intervention. Children who make progress but do not meet grade-level standards are identified early and assessed for future support, also a positive outcome.

Reading Recovery acts as a pre-referral intervention and provides a diagnostic period of teaching to identify a small residual group of children who still need extra help and probably further specialist guidance. Reading Recovery enables an education system to deliver those two outcomes.⁹

Reading Standards for Literature, K–1

(page 11 in the Standards document)

- Reading Recovery students read a range of increasingly complex texts. A list of leveled texts along a gradient of difficulty is a guide for teachers. The Reading Recovery Book List includes most of the titles listed as K–1 text exemplars for stories in Appendix B of the Standards as well as many informational texts by the authors listed in Appendix B.
- Students read four to six books in every lesson, selected by the teacher for each child to include a range of familiarity, complexity, text type, and style.
- Reading Recovery teachers prepare children for reading literature by teaching them (over time) how to orient themselves to a new text.

- In the daily one-to-one teaching setting, Reading Recovery teachers and students have many opportunities to talk about key ideas, characters, settings, events, and structures. This occurs when introducing new texts, during the first reading of the text, during subsequent readings of the text, and when writing about texts. Successful reading of texts of increasing complexity is a key measure of progress in Reading Recovery.
- Reading Recovery students learn to use illustrations to support meaning of the text. Teachers call attention to comparisons and contrasts across books and characters during conversations about texts.

Reading Standards for Informational Text, K–1

(page 13 in the Standards document)

- Reading Recovery teachers include informational texts that are appropriately complex for Grade 1. The Reading Recovery Book List includes many informational texts, including several by authors of exemplars listed in Appendix B of the Standards.
- Reading Recovery teachers prepare children for reading informational text by teaching them (over time) how to orient themselves to a new text.
- In the one-to-one teaching setting, Reading Recovery teachers and students have many opportunities to talk about key ideas and details, word meanings, text features, and illustrations. This occurs when introducing new texts, during the first reading, and during subsequent readings of the text. Students are encouraged to notice, comment, and ask questions about the language and meaning of texts.
- As appropriate, Reading Recovery teachers may select more than one book on a topic for a child to read, providing an opportunity for the teacher and student to talk about how the texts are similar and different.

Reading Standards for Foundational Skills, K–1

(pages 15–16 in the Standards document)

- Foundational skills (labeled in the Standards as print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency) are essential for progress in early literacy learning. In Reading

Recovery, students build foundational skills within continuous text, with massive opportunities for reading, writing, and learning how words work.

- Reading Recovery teachers assess foundational skills using *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement*.¹⁰ The tasks of the Survey include assessment of standards related to print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency. Reading Recovery supports the statement, “The point is to teach students what they need to learn and not what they already know – to discern when particular children or activities warrant more or less attention” (page 15).
- *Print concepts*. As needed for a particular child, Reading Recovery teachers scaffold a child’s book orientation skills, directionality, letter and word concepts, letter knowledge, and advanced print concepts such as capitalization, punctuation, word order, etc.
- *Phonological awareness*. In the daily writing component of the Reading Recovery lesson, students learn to hear and record sounds in words. They learn to articulate slowly in order to hear sounds within each word. They also learn to break words into a variety of units that support word recognition and spelling.
- *Phonics and word recognition*. In Reading Recovery lessons, attention is given to building a core of known words when reading and when writing (a reading vocabulary and a writing vocabulary). Teachers record known words to monitor the progress in this area. During writing, children learn about sound-spelling correspondence to write new or unknown words, and they learn to solve new words through analogy with what they already know. During reading, children are encouraged to use that knowledge to segment words into parts to solve new words (take words apart) as needed. They learn about solving words at the syllable level and how to use inflectional endings. They also learn that there are exceptions to the English system of orthography and discover such features as ‘silent e’ at the end of some words. Teachers also monitor students’ word recognition during oral reading, analyze their strategic activity based on these attempts, and plan instruction to increase each child’s word recognition efficiency.

- *Fluency*. In Reading Recovery, emphasis is placed on phrased and fluent reading. Texts are selected at an appropriate level to support fast and effective use of visual and phonological information and reading for understanding. Daily rereading of familiar texts allows opportunities for accurate, phrased, fluent, and expressive reading. Teachers place emphasis on the child’s use of strategic activity (in-the-head activity) to confirm, problem solve, and self-correct as needed while reading for meaning.

Writing Standards, K–1

(page 19 in the Standards document)

- In Reading Recovery lessons, students compose and write a new message every day. They learn that they can go from ideas in their heads to spoken words to printed messages. After a brief conversation with their teachers, they compose a message about a topic of their choice, often about a book they have read or an experience they have had or will have. Their compositions include a variety of message types including narrative, informative/explanatory, and opinion.
- Reading Recovery teachers encourage students to monitor the composition and coherence of their messages, to add details as needed, and to clarify, expand, or extend their message.
- The writing component supports a student’s language use — both vocabulary and syntax.
- Students move up a steep gradient of complexity in message writing — from simple one-line messages to writing two or three sentences with increased complexity, using varied syntax and vocabulary by the end of the Reading Recovery intervention.

Speaking and Listening Standards, K–1

(page 23 in the Standards document)

- Reading Recovery’s 30-minute lessons build language foundations by ensuring rich and structured conversations between a child and an expert user of language. The child has opportunities to speak and to process conversation. Daily lessons provide the social context for learning which strengthens a child’s capacity for listening and speaking around a shared task.

- Teachers and students engage in conversations about books, problem solving while reading texts, and experiences that lead to written messages. Teachers invite students to talk more and ask questions to clarify details and clear up confusions. They look for ways to extend vocabulary and syntactical knowledge. Text comprehension is enhanced through the dialogue.
- Writing in Reading Recovery encourages language to describe and to express ideas and feelings clearly.

Language Standards, K–1

(pages 26–27 in the *Standards document*)

- The one-to-one conversations and interactions within the Reading Recovery lesson support and expand a child’s command of standard grammar and usage as well as words and phrases used when writing or speaking.
- During writing, attention is given to capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- Students also learn to produce and expand simple sentences with support from the teacher, and to search for ways to write new words drawing on their phonological and orthographic knowledge.
- In reading, Reading Recovery teachers foster each child’s use of strategic activities to solve unknown and multiple-meaning words through context and word analysis.
- English language learners benefit from the rich conversations with the Reading Recovery teacher in the one-to-one instructional setting.

Application of Common Core State Standards for English Language Learners

Reading Recovery is available for English language learners (ELLs) who are the lowest literacy achievers in Grade 1 and who can comprehend the tasks and directions in *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement*. Reading Recovery outcomes for ELLs are compelling and increase the possibilities for these children to achieve standards in Grade 1 and beyond.¹¹

Reading Recovery provides access to the following criteria cited in the Standards to help ELLs meet high academic standards in language arts:

- a highly qualified teacher who can take advantage of the many strengths and skills that ELLs bring to school
- a teacher who is an excellent user of the English language who can provide models and support
- a literacy-rich environment that includes massive opportunities for reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- instruction that develops foundational skills in English
- opportunities for discourse and interaction to enable ELLs to develop communicative strengths in language arts
- ongoing assessment and feedback to guide learning

Application of Common Core State Standards for Students with Disabilities

Language related to response to intervention (RTI) was written into law with the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). RTI was conceived as a means of early identification and determination of special education eligibility. RTI further provides a support system to promote achievement of all students by monitoring their response to instruction and adjusting instruction based on student progress.

Administrators call Reading Recovery an ideal fit within an RTI framework — identifying students whose academic achievement needs monitoring and providing an effective intervention for those who need it.¹² Highly qualified teachers provide individually designed instruction, document each child’s response to intervention, and work collaboratively with other teachers to develop comprehensive services for children.

Reading Recovery is about *prevention* — identifying problems early and providing high-quality literacy intervention. Approximately 75% of the students with complete Reading Recovery interventions meet grade-level standards and continue to learn without supplemental support. Those who make progress but do not reach grade-level expectations are evaluated to determine what future support may be needed, which may involve special education services. Both outcomes of Reading Recovery are positive for the child.

Endnotes

- ¹ national data
http://rrcna.org/reading_recovery/accountability/factsandfigures/index.asp
- ² What Works Clearinghouse review
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/beginning_reading/reading_recovery/
- ³ Clay, M. M. (2002, 2006). *An observation survey of early literacy achievement* (2nd ed., rev. 2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

information about the Observation Survey
http://rrcna.org/reading_recovery/accountability/observation/index.asp
- ⁴ effectiveness with English language learners
http://rrcna.org/pdf/reading_recovery/ELL_Brief-07.pdf
- ⁵ response to intervention support
<http://fdf.readingrecovery.org/index.php/response-to-intervention>
- ⁶ parts of the lesson
http://rrcna.org/reading_recovery/lessons/index.asp
- ⁷ professional development
<http://rrcna.org/development/development/teachers.asp>
- ⁸ data collection
<https://www.idecweb.us/>
- ⁹ Clay, M. M. (2005). *Literacy lessons designed for individuals part one: Why? when? and how?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- ¹⁰ Clay, M. M. (2002, 2006). *An observation survey of early literacy achievement* (2nd ed., rev. 2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

information about the Observation Survey
http://rrcna.org/reading_recovery/accountability/observation/index.asp
- ¹¹ effectiveness with English language learners
http://rrcna.org/pdf/reading_recovery/ELL_Brief-07.pdf
- ¹² *Response to Intervention in Grade One: Reading Recovery*
http://fdf.readingrecovery.org/documents/RTI_and_Reading_Recovery.pdf

Summary Report
http://fdf.readingrecovery.org/documents/RTI_Summary_Report.pdf

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a joint effort by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) in partnership with Achieve, ACT, and the College Board.



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