

# Reading Recovery Guidelines

These Guidelines aim to maximise Reading Recovery effectiveness in Victorian schools and assure the provision of a quality intervention for students. The Guidelines reflect the intent of the Australian National Standards which are based on research and current effective practice.

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## Overview of Reading Recovery

Students are selected for Reading Recovery based on individual measures of assessment and teacher judgment. Their classroom literacy program is then supplemented with daily one-to-one lessons of thirty minutes. The series of lessons runs for 12-20 weeks with a specially trained teacher.

The lessons consist of a variety of experiences designed to help children develop effective reading and writing strategies. Reading Recovery continues until the child can read within or above the class average and has demonstrated the use of independent reading and writing strategies. The student's lesson series is then 'discontinued', providing the opportunity for another student to be selected for Reading Recovery.

The remarkable progress made by children participating in Reading Recovery demonstrates that high percentages of at-risk students can achieve success. The key to success is intervention with specialised teaching that will enable students to improve quickly before they are labelled as failures.

Essential to the success of Reading Recovery is the intensive inservice model.. Experienced early years literacy teachers participate in a year-long inservice program conducted by a trained Reading Recovery Tutor.

The year-long program integrates theory and practice and is characterised by intensive interaction with colleagues. Following this training year, teachers continue their specialised professional development through ongoing interaction with their colleagues, Tutors and Reading Recovery Trainers

Through training Reading Recovery teachers become literacy specialists developing keen observational skills and a repertoire of intervention strategies that can be adapted to meet the individual needs of at-risk students.

The training of Reading Recovery teachers is the responsibility of fully qualified Reading Recovery Tutors. Prior to appointment, Tutors undertake a year long training program that covers both theoretical and practical areas of literacy development.

## Students participating in Reading Recovery

### Identifying students requiring Reading Recovery

*'Reading Recovery is designed for children who are the lowest achievers in the class/age group. What is used is an inclusive definition. It is sometimes argued to exclude this or that category of children or to save places for children who might seem to 'benefit the most' but that is not using the full power of the program. It has been one of the surprises of Reading Recovery that all kinds of children with all kinds of difficulties can be included, can learn and can reach average-band performance of their class in both reading and writing achievement.*

*Exceptions are not made for children of lower intelligence, for second-language children, for children with low language skills, for children with poor motor coordination, for children who seem immature, for children who score poorly on readiness measures, or for children who have...been categorised by someone else as learning disabled.'*

Clay, M. 1991, Reading Recovery Surprises in Bridges to Literacy. Deford, D., Lyons, C. a. & Pinnell, G. S. (Eds.) p. 60

### How are students selected?

At the beginning of each year, children in Year 1 who are having literacy learning difficulties are selected for Reading Recovery. One of the key ways in which students are selected for Reading Recovery is through an *Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay M. M. 2002, 2006). This set of literacy tasks is administered individually to students and assesses their skills in the following areas:

- letter identification
- word knowledge
- print concepts
- phonemic awareness
- writing vocabulary
- text reading level.

In addition to the Observation Survey, the Early Years team which usually includes the early years coordinator, early years teachers and Reading Recovery teachers will identify students based on observation in the classroom

### An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement

The Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement consists of six literacy tasks, which are administered individually to students.

#### Letter identification

The student identifies alphabet symbols

#### Word test

The student reads a list of 15 words used most frequently in early years reading material.

### **Concepts about print**

During a book reading the student is asked to perform a variety of tasks, which check their knowledge and understanding of printed language.

### **Writing vocabulary**

The student writes all the words they know within a set time frame.

### **Hearing and recording sounds in words**

A word-by-word recording of the sounds heard in a sentence that has been read. This task assesses the student's phonemic awareness.

### **Text reading level**

Using a series of stories graded according to difficulty, the student is tested for the highest level they can read with an accuracy of 90 per cent or higher.

In addition to the Observation Survey teachers administer the BURT Word Reading Test which provided a further measure of a student's word recognition.

Clay, M. M. (2002, 2006). *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

## **New students**

The Reading Recovery teacher discusses identification of students with classroom teachers and the early years coordinator. The initial selection list is tentative, and names added or deleted as necessary during the selection process.

Running records are then taken by the Reading Recovery teacher on all students identified as needing additional assistance. The student who is on the lowest text level will be the next student admitted to Reading Recovery.

The Observation Survey Summary and Predictions for Progress are completed after the full Observation Survey is administered to the new student entering Reading Recovery.

## **Transferred students**

Students who have transferred into the school with an incomplete series Reading Recovery of lessons should continue as soon as teaching time becomes available.

## Intervention length

The Reading Recovery intervention runs for 12-20 weeks, depending on the rate of progress made by each student. It continues until the student can read within or above the class average band and has demonstrated the use of independent reading and writing strategies. The student's lesson series is then discontinued, providing the opportunity for another student to be selected for Reading Recovery.

*Twenty weeks is not an end point but rather a time for further review and a time to make decisions about how to proceed in the student's best interests.*

## Discontinuing the Lessons Series for students

Usually students ready for to have their lesson series discontinued will be working at or above text level 16. They are able to write several sentences requiring minimum support from their teacher. Prior to discontinuing the Reading Recovery teacher consults with the classroom teacher, early years coordinator and early years team and observes the student operating in the classroom. If the student is considered to be ready, the independent observer administers the Observation Survey to confirm the decision to discontinue the student. At this point a student may cease the intervention, remain in the intervention or be recommended for further ongoing support.

## Two positive outcomes

Reading Recovery has two positive outcomes. One positive outcome is that the student able to continue progressing in the classroom without the additional support of Reading Recovery. The second positive outcome is that a student who has made progress in Reading Recovery but not caught up to his peers is identified for further help.

## Effective monitoring

Schools need to manage the monitoring of students. It is recommended that students have their progress monitored for at least three years after they have completed the series of Reading Recovery lessons. Regular monitoring will identify students who may need some individual support to ensure they continue to use effective reading and writing strategies

Each student's progress should be monitored fortnightly by the Reading Recovery teacher for one term. Careful long term monitoring of the students then becomes the responsibility of the class teacher who takes regular Running Records of the student's reading.

## Students Referred from Reading Recovery

Students referred from Reading Recovery are those who after twenty weeks are not yet able to participate within the average achievement band of students in their classroom for literacy instruction. Students referred from Reading Recovery are identified as requiring long term, ongoing intervention.

At this time, the Home School Support Group established when the student was identified as requiring additional assistance, should meet to review the student's progress and determine how best to proceed to further support the student's literacy learning.

Action taken should proceed according to the Additional Assistance pathway as outlined in the Victorian Early Years Literacy Program.

### Home School Support Group

This group is responsible for determining appropriate follow-up to the Reading Recovery Lesson series and to set educational goals for home and school for the next ten-week period. The following options may be considered:

- continue with Reading Recovery for a defined number of weeks. This will be determined by both student needs and the Reading Recovery resource provision within the school
- organise assessment to further identify students' learning needs
- provide a focused teaching program.

### Identification

Teachers will have learned much about the student through the Reading Recovery process and can recommend further support for the student. Outside agencies, including Student Support Service Officers may need to be contacted to assist in identifying the student's specific learning needs and can assist in the developing learning plans. Each region has employed or contracted a number of Student Support Services ensuring the provision of psychologists, guidance officers, social workers, speech pathologists, and visiting teachers to further support students' learning.

The Home School Support Group should revise the Individual Learning Improvement Plan for the student considering classroom instruction, welfare and home support issues.

### Teaching Program

The student should continue to participate in small group teaching to address the student's specific learning needs within the classroom literacy program. The classroom teacher prepares the teaching program based on the goals for the student outlined in the Individual Learning Improvement Plan. Teachers document their teaching program for the student using a Literacy Plan to ensure the student is being catered for in the classroom. Individual teaching by a specialist support teacher using strategies identified from assessments given by outside support agencies may be provided.

Teachers will need to consult with the Early Years Coordinator, the Reading Recovery teacher and others as appropriate in the delivery of a teaching program appropriate to the student's needs.



## **Review**

After a period of eight to ten weeks the Home School Support Group meets to Review the students' progress to:

- determine if further assessment is required
- Set new educational goals.

At this time it is not appropriate for the student's Reading Recovery Lesson series to continue. The Home School Support Group will revise the student's Individual Learning Improvement Plan on the basis of classroom assessment and input from home.

## The Reading Recovery Lesson

During the Reading Recovery lesson, students are involved in authentic reading and writing tasks. The Reading Recovery teacher demonstrates and teaches for problem-solving strategies and supports the student to develop effective reading and writing processing.

### Structure of a lesson

A 30-minute Reading Recovery lesson includes six core activities in text reading and writing.

#### **Text reading: Reading familiar books**

Two or more familiar books are read in a phrased and fluent manner at the beginning of the lesson, providing an opportunity for the student to practise good reading behaviour.

#### **Text reading: Taking a running record of yesterday's new book**

The teacher takes a running record of the new book from the previous lesson: first the student reads the text without help, and then the teacher teaches the student. The most powerful teaching points from the book are selected to obtain the quickest progress possible.

#### **Working with words and letters**

A short time is spent using magnetic letters to help the student extend his or her letter knowledge and word understanding.

#### **Text writing: Writing a story**

The student writes one or two sentences about a book or a personal experience. The teacher supports the writing process while teaching flexible writing strategies that will encourage independence.

#### **Text reading: Reconstructing the cut-up story**

The teacher writes the story on a strip of cardboard. It is then cut up and the student searches and checks for information to help them reassemble the story.

#### **Text reading: Reading a new book**

The teacher introduces a new book, providing information about content, how language is structured and some words to help the student use their reading strategies. The student reads the book with appropriate support from the teacher. A culmination of the lesson's reading and writing work is linked to the new book.

## Accelerated progress

The goal of Reading Recovery is accelerated learning. Each student is expected to make faster-than-average progress so that he or she can catch up with other students in the class. Reading Recovery teachers base their instruction on carefully documented daily observations of what each student already knows about reading and writing. This means that accelerated learning is within reach. Instruction begins from the student's strengths thus the teacher doesn't waste time teaching anything that is already known.

## Reading Recovery Implementation

### Effective implementation

The remarkable progress made by students participating in Reading Recovery shows a high percentage of at-risk students can achieve success.

The effectiveness of Reading Recovery in a school requires a team approach. There must be a joint commitment to the running and maintaining the quality of Reading Recovery from teachers, the principal and school council.

Each school needs enough Reading Recovery teaching time to ensure that all Year 1 students in need of additional assistance (10- 20 per cent) have access to the program.

Schools work with parents, discuss the program with them, invite them to see their child working in Reading Recovery lessons and seek their support in helping their child succeed in reading and writing.

### Professional development

The professional training of experienced teachers is essential to the implementation of Reading Recovery. During a year long inservice course teachers are guided in the use of specific Reading Recovery teaching procedures. Reading Recovery Tutors train the teachers and support all aspects of the implementation of Reading Recovery at a Regional level. Tutors undertake intensive training at Master degree level at the University of Melbourne with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Trainers.

### School implementation

Reading Recovery complements the programs that operate every day in Victorian early years classrooms.

- Reading Recovery teachers design an individual reading and writing program to meet the student's particular needs.
- Every day, the student has a one-on-one Reading Recovery session with their teacher in addition to regular classroom lessons in reading and writing.
- The classroom teacher, Reading Recovery teacher and parents work together to support the child.
- Students stay in the program until they can participate in classroom literacy activities with minimal help. The program runs for twelve to twenty weeks, depending on the rate of progress made by each child.
- Students are closely observed in the classroom after they have completed Reading Recovery to ensure that they continue to use effective reading and writing strategies.

### Cost effectiveness

Daily individual teaching that is not interrupted for any reason is essential. This implies that children's absence from school and school-based disruptions must be minimised. The cost-effectiveness of the program is reduced if a student does not participate in daily lessons.

### Data collection

Ongoing evaluation is essential in Reading Recovery's success. Since Reading Recovery was introduced in Victoria in 1984, data has been collected for every

student served in Victorian Government schools.

Reading Recovery teachers enter data on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's secure website. Tutors review the data which is then used to prepare reports on the implementation of Reading Recovery.

### **Expressions of interest**

Expressions of interest for participation in the Reading Recovery program are invited in Term Four each year.

## Parent involvement

Schools need to make contact with parents to explain Reading Recovery as something extra that the school is able to offer their child and to enlist their support. It is especially important for parents to be aware of the need for their child to attend school every day so they can receive daily instruction and that students take books home each night to read to their parents. Many parents respond positively to an invitation to observe lessons and to discuss their child's literacy development.

## Reading Recovery in Small Schools

Implementing Reading Recovery in small schools has different challenges to those in larger schools. Schools with low enrolments may need to explore options such as joining with other schools to form a cluster to provide a Reading Recovery Program. The establishment of a Reading Recovery committee to support the implementation of the Program in a group of small schools is highly recommended. Ideally, the committee would consist of a teacher from each school in the cluster together with the Reading Recovery teacher, a representative from the Reading Recovery Tutor team in the region and parents.

Where possible, schools operating in a cluster arrangement should be located within a reasonable travelling distance, eg. 15-20 minutes and the number of schools sharing should be kept to a minimum eg. 2-3 schools. The Reading Recovery teacher would travel between each school. Travel funding may be required in this instance. The source of this funding would be negotiated with participating schools. An adequate supply of books and equipment for use of the Reading Recovery Teacher also needs to be provided by the participating schools.

In small schools the same procedure for the identification and selection of students is used as in larger schools; however the following variables may need to be considered:

- the number of schools the Reading Recovery teacher can reasonably service over the period of the school year
- the distance between schools and the travel time required
- the number of students requiring Reading Recovery
- the requirement that the training teacher must work with a minimum of four students at any one time.

In schools with a Year one cohort of less than 20, the lowest achieving Year one students enter the program first. Subsequent students may enter from low achievers in Year Two or in the latter part of the year students in Prep who require additional assistance.

## The Reading Recovery Teacher

The primary responsibility of a Reading Recovery teacher is to teach students in the school setting. The teacher also works closely with the school's leadership and early years team as well as effectively communicating with the parents of Reading Recovery students.

### Selection of a Reading Recovery Teacher

The selection of the appropriate teacher is critical to the effectiveness and success of Reading Recovery. The adoption of Reading Recovery represents an investment in the development of teacher expertise. The quality of the one-to-one intervention will be dependent upon the quality and commitment of the teacher selected to train as the Reading Recovery teacher.

### The training year

During the training year, teachers are required to complete the teaching, training and Reading Recovery development activities.

### Teaching

Teachers are required to:

- teach at least four Year 1 students individually for 30-minute sessions each day of the school year
- teach a student 'behind the screen' for colleagues on at least two to three occasions
- keep complete records of each student as a basis for instruction (such as Observation Survey and Summary, predictions for progress, lesson records, running records, and record of writing, vocabulary and book level)
- consult with the Reading Recovery Tutors regarding the selection of students and the discontinuing of a series of lessons.
- demonstrate effective teaching of Reading Recovery students.

### Training

Teachers are required to:

- attend three initial assessment training days at the beginning of the school year • attend fortnightly half day inservice sessions throughout the remainder of the year
- receive at least four school visits from a Reading Recovery Tutor • use Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals: Part One and Part Two to clarify, confirm and extend understandings of Reading Recovery teaching procedures
- maintain a current knowledge of literacy theory
- participate in colleague visits as arranged by the Reading Recovery Tutor.

### Reading Recovery development

Teachers are required to:

- communicate with parents, the early years team and other school personnel on a regular basis
- submit data to the Reading Recovery Tutor as required • contribute to the development and operation of a school team to monitor the progress of students and the implementation of Reading Recovery
- prepare an annual report of the school's Reading Recovery implementation

- complete the online Reading Recovery student data collection process at the end of the year.

The Reading Recovery Tutor will discuss teacher progress with school leadership teams.

At the completion of the training year teachers receive Reading Recovery teacher registration from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. This qualification is internationally recognised.

## Ongoing training

Reading Recovery teachers participate in ongoing training throughout their service. Reading Recovery teachers must complete the following activities each year following the initial training.

### Teaching

Teachers are required to:

- teach Year 1 students according to school needs individually for 30-minute sessions each day throughout the school year
- teach a student 'behind the screen' for their colleagues as scheduled
- keep complete records of each student as a basis for instruction (such as Observation Survey and Summary, predictions for progress, lesson records, running records, and record of writing, vocabulary and book level)
- consult with the Tutor about students not making satisfactory progress and other Reading Recovery issues
- demonstrate effective teaching of Reading Recovery students.

### Training

Teachers are required to:

- attend a minimum of six ongoing training sessions each year
- receive at least one school visit from a Reading Recovery Tutor each year
- make and receive school visits from colleagues annually
- participate in colleague visits to other teachers.

### Reading Recovery development

Teachers are required to:

- communicate with parents, the early years team and other school personnel on a regular basis
- submit data to the Reading Recovery Tutor as required
- contribute to the development and operation of a school team to monitor student progress Reading Recovery's implementation
- prepare an annual report about the school's Reading Recovery implementation
- complete the online Reading Recovery student data collection process at the end of each year.

### Returning after an absence

Teachers returning to Reading Recovery teaching after an absence of more than one year will, if required, be provided with additional professional development support.



## The Reading Recovery Tutor

The primary responsibility of Reading Recovery Tutors is the training of Reading Recovery teachers. The role of a Reading Recovery Tutor includes the teaching of at least two students, monitoring teacher and student progress, conducting initial and ongoing training sessions for teachers and participating in professional development activities.

### Teaching students

During their first year in the field, Reading Recovery Tutors teach four students daily. In subsequent years, Tutors continue to teach a minimum of two Reading Recovery students unless otherwise negotiated with a Reading Recovery Trainer.

### Training teachers

#### Initial training

Reading Recovery Tutors conduct Reading Recovery inservice sessions as training for teachers. They visit teachers-in-training at least four times during the year to provide support, guidance and instructional assistance. They also monitor the selection and progress of students using teacher records.

#### Ongoing training

Reading Recovery Tutors provide trained Reading Recovery teachers with at least six ongoing training sessions annually. They visit Reading Recovery teachers at least once a year to ensure quality control of the intervention. Additional visits are based on need or request.

## Program implementation

### Reading Recovery Tutors:

- provide information sessions for principals, teachers and the wider school community
- support the collection of online end-of-year data for all students on Reading Recovery
- prepare an annual Reading Recovery report
- work with the regional personnel to ensure quality implementation of Reading Recovery at a region and school level.

### Professional development

Reading Recovery Tutors:

- participate in professional development opportunities provided by Reading Recovery Trainers within the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- receive a minimum of two visits from a Reading Recovery Trainer during the first year in the field
- receive an annual visit from a Reading Recovery Trainer and subsequent visits upon request
- conduct and receive at least one collegial visit with other Tutors annually.

Reading Recovery Tutors are registered with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. This qualification is internationally recognised.

### **Returning after an absence**

Tutors returning to Reading Recovery tutoring after an absence of more than one year will, if required, be provided with additional professional Learning support.

## The Reading Recovery Trainer

The primary responsibility of Reading Recovery Trainers is the initial training and ongoing provision of professional development for Reading Recovery Tutors.

### Training Tutors

Reading Recovery Trainers participate in the selection process of teachers for the Reading Recovery Tutor Training Course. They coordinate the course in collaboration with The University of Melbourne.

### Reading Recovery implementation

Reading Recovery Trainers:

- provide ongoing professional learning to trained Reading Recovery Tutors
- coordinate the collection of the end-of-year data
- review current research and theories relevant to reading and writing acquisition, reading difficulties and other related areas.

### Professional development

Reading Recovery Trainers:

- receive at least one visit from the Reading Recovery Trainer of Trainers during the first year in the field
- receive visits from the Trainer of Trainers, as needed or by request
- participate in international Reading Recovery institutes
- attend and participate in the annual Australian and New Zealand Reading Recovery Trainer Forum
- actively participate in the International Reading Recovery Trainers Organization.

### Teaching students

Reading Recovery Trainers

- teach Reading Recovery students as regularly as possible.

Reading Recovery Trainers are registered with the New Zealand Department of Education. This qualification is internationally recognised.

### Returning after an absence

Trainers returning to Reading Recovery after an absence of more than one year will, if required, be provided with additional professional development support.

## Establishing a Reading Recovery Inservice Centre

Central to the Reading Recovery teachers' training are the demonstrations and discussion sessions held each fortnight. The inservice course makes extensive use of a one-way screen between two rooms. Students are taught in one room while teachers are in the other room observing and discussing the demonstration session while it is in progress. Visitors are also invited to observe the Program.

The one-way screen is an essential part of the inservice session as it allows for observation and discussion of what the child is doing and teacher responses.

Teachers attending the course need access to the centre each fortnight and this would need to be taken into consideration when selecting site/s. Continuing contact teachers also require access to the Inservice Centre.

### Important guidelines for the establishment of an Inservice Centre

- the area selected should be away from general traffic because of the need for uninterrupted discussion while the demonstration lessons are in progress
- the area selected would need to have effective soundproofing in both walls and ceilings
- the soundproofing of the selected venue should be designed and checked by a person with expertise in this area.

### Specification guidelines

#### Screen

- minimum width – 2.5 metres
- minimum height – 2 metres
- single panelled mirrored one-way glass on the teaching room side of the screen
- the screen should be double panelled with a 15cm gap moisture buffer.

#### Room

The following should be provided:

- an area for discussion which comfortably accommodates 25 teachers
- a waiting area for parents which is separate to the teaching and discussion areas
- effective blackout curtains and/or screens in the observation area
- a well lit teaching area to maximise viewing
- ventilation systems that are silent.

#### Sound system

- a directional microphone placed in the teaching room to pick up teacher and student conversation
- speakers placed each side of the viewing screen in the observation room with amplifier with volume control. The ideal location for speakers is parallel above the viewing space.

## References

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