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## Reading Recovery: An early intervention program. An investigation of Chapter 1 coordinators' interests in implementing Reading Recovery

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## Reading Recovery: An early intervention program. An investigation of Chapter 1 coordinators' interests in implementing Reading Recovery

### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the research on Reading Recovery, a program that provides early intervention for first graders having difficulty in learning to read. Reading Recovery has shown a much higher rate of success for improving literacy than other remedial programs such as Chapter 1 or learning disabilities programs. A further purpose of this study was to determine the amount of knowledge of Iowa Chapter 1 coordinators in Reading Recovery. It also examined the degree of interest of Iowa Chapter 1 coordinators in Reading Recovery. In a randomized survey sent to Chapter 1 coordinators in the State of Iowa (n=53), it appeared there was a lack of knowledge about the Reading Recovery program. There were 22 respondents that were familiar with Reading Recovery and 31 that were unfamiliar with the program. The majority of the coordinators who were familiar with Reading Recovery were enthusiastic about it and were interested in implementing it if it were not cost prohibitive.

READING RECOVERY: AN EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM.  
AN INVESTIGATION OF CHAPTER 1 COORDINATORS'  
INTERESTS IN IMPLEMENTING READING RECOVERY

A Research Paper  
Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Masters of Arts in Education

Sandra Kay Davis  
University of Northern Iowa  
July 1992

This Research Paper by: Sandra Kay Davis

Entitled: Reading Recovery: An Early Intervention Program.  
An Investigation of Chapter 1 Coordinators' Interests in  
Implementing Reading Recovery

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for  
the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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A further purpose of this study was to determine the amount of knowledge of Iowa Chapter 1 coordinators in Reading Recovery. It also examined the degree of interest of Iowa Chapter 1 coordinators in Reading Recovery.

In a randomized survey sent to Chapter 1 coordinators in the State of Iowa ( $n=53$ ), it appeared there was a lack of knowledge about the Reading Recovery program. There were 22 respondents that were familiar with Reading Recovery and 31 that were unfamiliar with the program. The majority of the coordinators who were familiar with Reading Recovery were enthusiastic about it and were interested in implementing it if it were not cost prohibitive.



## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

The number of illiterate people in the United States seems to be on the rise as a new decade appears. Consider these statistics compiled by the U.S. Department of Education. One out of every five American adults is functionally illiterate (which means that 20% of the adults in this country cannot read the directions on a can of soup) and that another 34% are only marginally literate (barely able to write the address on an envelope) (Trelease, 1985). In the nation's prisons, 60% of the inmates are illiterate and 85% of juvenile offenders have reading problems (Trelease, 1985). Statistics from the early 1980s suggest that the U.S. illiteracy rate was four times higher than illiteracy in the Soviet Union, and five times higher than illiteracy in Cuba (Kozol, 1983). These statistics have been taken into serious consideration by the federal government.

The government has attempted to alleviate some of the illiteracy problems in the United States by developing grants for preschools for at risk children. In the 1988 fiscal year, the federal government spent \$2.9 billion on early childhood programs and provided child care tax breaks of \$4.0 billion; in the same year states and local governments spent at least 250 million dollars on prekindergarten programs (Trelease, 1985).

At risk children or risk factors are students who would in all probability not graduate from high school (Slavin, 1989). Among these risk factors, Slavin noted low achievement, retention in grade, behavior problems, poor attendance, low socioeconomic status, and attendance at schools with large numbers of poor students. Often, these children come from homes where parents are abusive, alcoholics, drug addicts, single parents, high school drop-outs, or simply neglectful physically or emotionally. These children are in need of intervention at an early age to give them some much needed nurturing. It is the hope of the government to give young at risk children the background they need to walk into a classroom setting where they will be expected to be able to learn to read and write.

Goodman (1986) suggested that the content curriculum should draw on the interest and experiences children have outside of school and, thus, incorporate the full range of oral and written language functions. If an at risk child has not had the literacy experiences necessary to provide a background of information essential to build further literacy on, he/she is missing the basis on which to build new knowledge. Thus, the curriculum provided to at risk preschools are of profound importance to the reading process, supplying the needed background information from which new knowledge is built.

At risk preschools may be a step in the right direction to curb the increasing rate of illiteracy in the United States. They may help in the preparation of children to succeed in the schools. There are fewer tasks, however, that are as challenging and far-reaching as the process of learning to read. If children are developing at a slower rate than most of the students in their class, they often end up in remedial reading classes or are classified as slow learners. Once this classification has occurred, expectations for them are reduced, and they are deluged with worksheets and drills that would stifle any child's "love of learning" (Olson, 1987, p. 12).

Students involved in remedial reading programs (which may include Chapter 1 or learning disability programs) do not appear to be making the necessary progress they should in their ability to read. Most of the remedial reading programs do not help children catch up to their peers, and there is no evidence that these programs have a long-term impact (Carter, 1984; Slavin, 1987). The national evaluations of compensatory education programs indicate that children gain an additional month's growth on standardized tests for every year they participate in remedial services. At this growth rate, however, participating children require an average of 5 to 10 years of remedial services to read as well as their peers. Many of these students drop out of school before this happens (Franzen & Allington, 1991).

Savage (1987) argued that compensatory education programs are inefficient; they segregate slow learners and stigmatize them.

These slow learners need a program that will stimulate rather than stifle their interest in reading. Clay (1987) argued that children classified as learning disabled may have learned to be learning disabled. Learning disabled students seldom advance to the point of not needing extra help. Students who continually need remediation have trouble with almost all other subjects in school, which leads to an incredible loss of self-esteem. Their need for remediation in the schools makes them an expensive liability. If a student leaves the school illiterate, then he or she often becomes a burden on society.

The reading and language skills of young children have been the focus of Dr. Marie Clay's research at the University of Auckland for more than 20 years. In the last 10 years, she has developed her own supplemental reading program that has had an incredible rate of success for at risk students. This relatively new program, called Reading Recovery, is based on the whole language philosophy which is the foundation of the New Zealand reading program.

#### Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to analyze and synthesize the research literature regarding programs designed to assist at risk students by improving their literacy. A

major focus of this study will be on Reading Recovery, which is an early intervention program designed to help at risk first graders. In addition to reviewing research as to the effectiveness of Reading Recovery, this study will also investigate, through a survey, the amount of knowledge about and interest in Reading Recovery in the State of Iowa. The study will address the following questions:

1. Why have students remained disabled even after remediation in Chapter 1 programs.
2. What features of the whole language method of instruction help teachers reduce the chance of reading failure for children in the regular classroom?
3. How does the Reading Recovery Program handle the at risk students inability to begin reading in their first year of reading compared to traditional remedial reading programs?
4. How cost effective is the Reading Recovery Program?
5. What is the amount of knowledge about and degree of interest of Iowa Chapter 1 coordinators in Reading Recovery?

#### Significance of the Study

The Federal government alone spends nearly \$20 billion a year on teaching people how to read (Trelease, 1985). Yet, an estimated 23 million Americans--1 in 5 adults--lack the reading and writing skills to handle the minimal demands of every day living (Wellborn, 1982). The traditional solutions do not adequately address reading difficulties.

The experts admit that the results of the remedial programs are not as successful as they should be.

Administrators, teachers, and parents would agree that the most effective reading program available should be implemented in the schools. If, in fact, the remedial reading programs are not sending the students back into the classroom reading at a level with their peers, maybe it is time to look at other alternatives. Educators must provide the best supplemental reading program available in order to prevent reading failure which contributes to a high drop-out rate and all the problems associated with inadequate education.

This study focuses on a supplementary early intervention program for at risk learners called Reading Recovery. It is a program which was designed for first-grade children who have so much difficulty with reading they need additional intensive help. It intervenes at a young age, provides intensive one-to-one help, focuses on strengths rather than weaknesses, immerses the child in reading and writing, has high expectations of achievement of even the lowest achievers, and provides long-term special training for teachers (Pinnell, 1989).

This paper illustrates the need for implementing an early intervention program. It will also illustrate the potential Reading Recovery has for improving both the reading success of individual children and the increased

promise of today's education. The unique features of this program warrant a closer look for educators as to how it achieves such a high success rate. It may, indeed, be one of the programs which is needed to close the nation's gap between illiteracy and literacy.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Students who are at risk of failure in reading present many difficult problems and challenges for the classroom teacher. Many new strategies have been developed over the years in an effort to reduce students' failures in reading. However, the results are not impressive, and there are questions and concerns by many as to the limited success rate of programs that are currently being implemented.

The following chapter examines the reading difficulties of children in their early years. First, it will examine the present remedial reading programs and discuss problems that accompany them. In addition, this chapter will present information regarding the whole language method of instruction in classrooms and how its holistic way of teaching may reduce the chances of reading failure. Next, the Reading Recovery program is described and the success that it has had in schools in which it has been implemented. Finally, this chapter will examine the cost effectiveness of Reading Recovery.

#### Disabled Even After Remediation

Slavin (1987) examined the most successful supplementary reading programs developed for children with reading problems. One of these was the Chapter 1 program. This is a supplementary program which is designed for children having difficulty in reading. These children are



pulled out of the regular classroom two to three times a week by a teacher that has a reading certification, and are grouped with other low-ability readers. Slavin (1987) found that the Chapter 1 reading programs were helping, but they were not as effective as they should be. He claimed the problem with Chapter 1 programs was in the program itself and not in the amount of funds. He cited these programs as not being adequate for the job they are supposed to do. Slavin wrote to 116 exemplary Chapter 1 programs in the nation and found their gains from fall to spring were significant but seemed to disappear by the following fall.

Clay (1987) was also very interested in the way children learn to read. She wondered why the number of children categorized as mentally deficient was decreasing but the number of children that were categorized as learning disabled were increasing. Clay researched remedial programs and found that the end results were almost always the same. The children made progress while they were in a clinical program, but they did not continue to progress without the remedial teacher. The remedial teachers were not helping children to learn self-improving strategies as the Reading Recovery program has been designed to do (Clay, 1985).

Another weakness that Clay pointed out in remedial programs is lack of early identification. Reading teachers often wait until the child's third or fourth year at school before selecting children for remedial instruction. By then

the child's reading achievement may be 2 years behind that of his/her peers. It seemed to Clay that the longer the child was left to fail, the results were as follows:

1. There was a large deficit to be made up.
2. There were deficits in other areas of education.
3. There were consequences for the child's personality and confidence.

An even greater problem was described by Clay (1985) in the following terms:

the child has not failed to learn in his three years at school, he has tried to do his work, he has practised his primitive skills and he has habituated, daily, the wrong responses. He has learned; and all that learning stands like a block wall between the remedial teacher and the responses that she is trying to get established. A remedial programme must take what has to be unlearned into account. (p. 11)

Lyons (1988) and Clay (1987) have both researched learning disabled children to determine if they had been taught to be disabled by the teacher's methods of remediation. Both Clay and Lyons chose children to participate in the Reading Recovery program who had been diagnosed as learning disabled (had received some instruction from learning disabilities teachers) and those children that were diagnosed as at risk children who had not been in a special program. Both studies showed that the learning disabled children tended to rely on visual information and attempted to sound out every word they did not know. Those not classified as learning disabled tended to rely on meaning and structure to derive

meaning from print. Thus, the learning disabled group of children have learned, too well, some reading habits that may have been harmful to them. The two groups became more alike as the Reading Recovery program was implemented (Clay, 1987; Lyons, 1988).

The findings also suggested that the children labeled as learning disabled were not harder to teach than at risk readers who were not labeled learning disabled. This group actually left the program with fewer lessons (that is, they needed fewer lessons to catch them up to their peer's reading levels) than did the group not labeled learning disabled (Clay, 1987; Lyons, 1988).

Lyons agreed with Clay that children classified as learning disabled may have learned to be learning disabled. This would appear to be so in that the children can alter their learned behavior. The Reading Recovery program offers a means of undoing instructional disability (Lyons, 1989).

#### Whole Language Instruction

Whole language is an approach to teaching that is based on the idea that children are better able to build on their strengths when they are engaged in writing, reading, listening, and speaking (Pinnell, 1989). The learning that takes place in a classroom is whole, meaningful, and relevant to the students. Goodman (1986) believed it is imperative children are taught to read for meaning rather than focus on the basic skills of reading. He has been and

remains instrumental in developing the whole language philosophy. He suggested that the real answer to the problem of reluctance in reading is to reshape the classroom instruction toward a whole language model where the learning is real and natural, whole, sensible, interesting, and has purpose and relevance to the learner. Goodman (1986)

concluded:

When schools break language into bits and pieces, sense becomes nonsense, and it's always hard to make sense out of nonsense. Each abstract bit and piece that is learned is soon forgotten as kids go on to further fractured fragments. In the end, they begin to think of school as a place where nothing ever seems to make sense. (p. 8)

The whole language curriculum that has evolved is rich in opportunities for students to experience and use written language in meaningful ways. This approach offers an important contrast to the kind of bottom-up curriculum that focuses primarily on small language parts such as letters, sounds, and words (Pinnell, 1989). Whole language teachers are more aware of the processes by which language is learned. They have activity-based classrooms in which children are learning to read by reading and learning to write by writing. The children are engaged in integrated, meaningful, language arts activities. Whole language provides a unique and promising framework for developing learner-based rather, than teacher- or text-based classroom instruction (Slaughter, 1988).

Whole language programs are sensible, but they seem strange to people accustomed to traditional programs. Even students may be expecting work organized around workbooks, textbooks, and sequenced exercises. Whole language teachers need to help pupils be aware of how they learn to read and write by providing many opportunities to read and write (Goodman, 1986). The literacy experiences in a whole language class involve challenging and interesting material. The children need continuous classroom literacy experiences and knowledgeable teachers who can help them assess their own progress and to develop self-correcting skills (Pinnell, Fried, & Estice, 1990).

A whole language classroom helps children develop a foundation for life-long interaction with text. They learn to share their feelings about the meaning conveyed by the author. They are encouraged to agree or disagree with the author and to share their feelings about the book. They are encouraged to take risks, and their opinions about the meaning they have gained from the text are valued.

Goodman is one of the backbones of the whole language philosophy. He stated:

If kids are in whole language programs with whole language teachers right from the beginning, there are going to be a lot fewer readers and writers in trouble. Whole language teachers work at developing the full range of language functions in the context of the culture(s) of the learners. They are effective 'kidwatchers' who see quickly when kids are not developing and find alternatives that will turn them on and get them moving. Most important, they believe in kids, and they believe kids have what it takes to

become literate. They won't blame them for their lack of success. Rather, they'll build on their strengths and encourage them to believe in themselves and their ability to become literate. (Goodman, 1986, p. 58)

A whole language philosophy seems to be the approach by which many New Zealand educators have taught for a number of years (although this is a term they do not use to describe what they do). Their philosophy of literacy learning stresses developmentally organized and sequenced direct experiences with print and a set of curricular and instructional practices that achieve a powerful balance between skills and meaning (Goldenberg, 1991). Reading and writing are taught from the first day that the child enters school. The teacher consistently emphasizes gaining meaning from the text which the child is reading. There is very little skill and drill, but an emphasis is placed on real reading and writing (Goldenberg, 1991). Clay has combined this literate and positive approach to learning to read and write in the Reading Recovery program. There are no skills and drills in Reading Recovery but an approach to literacy that is meaning-based and specific to the child's individual needs. This whole language approach to reading and writing in the classroom coincides with Clay's philosophy about reading and writing in the Reading Recovery program.

The regular classroom must consist of a knowledgeable, skilled, and caring person who creates a good learning environment. No program can compensate for poor teaching in a classroom (Clay, 1985). Even in the best whole language

classrooms, some children experience difficulties in reading. For this reason, Clay developed a supplementary program specifically designed for each individual child in his/her early years, with the expectation that the child would learn to read in a short period of time. Clay's faith in children's reading abilities was evident as she developed the program. She was, however, insistent that the importance of the program had to be based on the quality of instruction of the Reading Recovery teacher. Thus, the intense training of the Reading Recovery teacher is the most important factor in its success.

Slavin (1987) remarked, "We know that disadvantaged and low-achieving students can learn. When they fail, it is the system that has failed them" (p. 118). Reading failure is a school problem and a school's responsibility; therefore, it is important that the school take ownership for its own program. Reading Recovery is a team approach and its success depends upon the Reading Recovery teacher being a permanent team member and not someone from outside the school (Smith, 1986).

#### Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery is an early intervention program designed to help young, at risk children become readers. It is an effective program, in that it takes first graders who are experiencing reading difficulties and provides them with an intensive one-on-one program with a trained Reading

Recovery teacher. Reading Recovery is unique in that it is individually designed for the students, based on their own strengths, needs, and interests. It is beneficial to the students because it emphasizes the meaning of the text, rather than focusing on isolated skills. It also is concerned with catching the children up to their classroom peers in ability to read and alleviates them from long-term remediation (DeFord, Pinnell, & Lyons, 1991).

Reading Recovery teachers believe that children can learn to read and set goals to achieve this in a period of 10-20 weeks through daily 30-minute lessons. The program is designed to teach children to develop self-improving reading strategies in order to become self-sufficient readers. Reading Recovery was designed for children in the first grade who have so much difficulty with reading in regular classrooms that they require extra support of an intensive nature (Pinnell, 1989). The early intervention program stresses the need to intervene before children's poor habits become difficult to change and block future learning (Boehnlein, 1987). Pinnell (1989) described how the Reading Recovery program is different from traditional remedial reading program in that:

1. it begins early (first grade) and provides one-to-one instruction rather than group instruction;
2. it immerses the child in reading and writing rather than drilling on skills and items of knowledge;



3. it expects accelerated progress from even the lowest achievers;
4. it is developed specifically around the child's strengths and is adjusted to meet his/her needs;
5. it expects children to learn self-improving strategies in order to become self-sufficient readers in a short period of time.

The major goal of reading Recovery is to reduce reading failure by helping children become independent readers. It accomplishes this by bringing children who are at risk of failure up to the average of their class within a short period of time, so they can gain from regular classroom instruction. They become independent readers by developing their own reading strategies for continued growth in reading (Pinnell, DeFord, & Lyons, 1988). Reading Recovery teachers must complete a 1-year training course equivalent to 9 quarter hours of graduate credit. Classes are held at a school-based training center and a teacher leader is trained especially to work with the Reading Recovery teachers. The teacher leader, thereafter, acts as a liaison between the teaching site and participating school districts (Boehnlein, 1987).

Teachers become skilled at observing and assessing the reading and writing behaviors of children and at interacting with particular learning needs. They are introduced to many new ways of looking at literacy learning for low achievers.

The role of the teacher leader is to analyze his/her own teaching decisions for each of the children he/she teaches (Jongsma, 1990). Three times a year, the Reading Recovery teacher brings a child to a teaching site and teaches a lesson behind a one-way glass in a sound-equipped room. The teacher leader and other trained teachers that also observed have a lively discussion on the Reading Recovery teacher's newly learned skills (Pinnell, Fried, & Estice, 1990).

Research on teachers who have been involved in Reading Recovery indicates that the training program has a powerful impact on those teachers involved. Individuals usually experience a change in their theory from that of a skills-based approach of reading, which focuses on worksheets and a sequential list of skills, toward a holistic view, which suggests that children orchestrate a range of skills and knowledge when they learn to read and write (DeFord, Pinnell, & Lyons, 1991).

Reading Recovery stemmed from Clay's interest in the possibilities of early intervention to prevent reading failure and to avoid long-term remediation. She developed this research program that has been tested and evaluated in three countries and hundreds of different locations (Pinnell, Fried, & Estice, 1990).

Clay's research program started out in 1970 with a team of practitioners who met regularly to analyze and justify teaching decisions, to discuss student and teacher

responses, to assess and improve procedures, and to observe each other teach. This team of practitioners developed a program of specific teaching techniques which became the Reading Recovery Program (Pinnell, Fried, & Estice, 1990). Clay (1985) reported, "A large number of techniques were piloted, observed, discussed, argued over, related to theory, analyzed, written up, modified, and tried out in various ways, and most important, many were discarded" (p. 84). The idea of a lengthy, involved process of instruction for the Reading Recovery teacher emerged from the research program for specific teaching techniques.

The program was refined over a period of 3 years and then the procedures were tested. The Reading Recovery children compared favorably to the high achieving children in the regular classroom who had never needed a special program. Longitudinal studies indicated that the Reading Recovery children continued to make progress comparable to the average students in their class. Positive results were achieved regardless of the ethnic, economic, and language backgrounds of the children in the program (Pinnell, Fried, & Estice, 1990).

The studies done in New Zealand provided evidence that the lowest achievers could learn reading strategies enabling them to read at average levels for their class or school if given the appropriate instruction in an individual setting. Since that time, these findings have been replicated in

Australia, New Zealand, and in many school districts in the United States (Pinnell, Fried, & Estice, 1990). In 1984, Ohio became the first state to implement the Reading Recovery program. Qualitative data obtained from questionnaires and interviews indicated that teachers, administrators, and parents have responded enthusiastically to the program (Pinnell, Fried, & Estice, 1990).

The results of this program were impressive in the first 4 years. The percentage of children who were discontinued from the program because they were reading at average or above average level in their classroom was exciting. During the first year of implementation (1985-86), the rate of discontinued students was above 73% of the 110 students treated statewide. During the 1986-87 school year, a total 82% of the 1130 student participants were discontinued. During the 1987-88 year, 86% of the 2,648 student participants were successfully discontinued (Pinnell, DeFord, & Lyons, 1988).

#### Cost Effectiveness of Reading Recovery

Since Reading Recovery seems to have impressive results, it would warrant extensive investigation to its cost effectiveness. A cost analysis must be done and there are two requirements to consider (Levin, Glass, & Meister, 1986). First, the educational interventions must be able to be implemented into conventional settings, established for a reasonable amount of time, and transferable to other

settings. Reading Recovery has been implemented nationally in New Zealand, at four sites in Australia, and at 23 sites in Ohio. In Ohio, the program has been implemented in hundreds of school districts. The program was so impressive that it was recommended by the National Diffusion Network (NDN). NDN, established in 1974, exists to help educators find innovative solutions to practical problems. NDN's basic goal is to identify exemplary programs and make information about them available to private and public schools, colleges, and other educational institutions. The Reading Recovery program has been replicated many times and has been easily transferred to new settings with minimal difficulties (Pinnell, 1988).

Second, the methods used to evaluate costs and effectiveness must be acceptable (Levin, Glass, & Meister, 1986). A team of outside evaluators, headed by Richard Anderson, Director of the Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois, critically examined the qualitative and quantitative data from the first 4 years of the Ohio operation. This team verified the Reading Recovery evaluation results and agreed that there was potential for helping at risk children. Their evaluation led to further investigation for the cost effectiveness of the program (Anderson, 1988).

In deciding to implement the program, many school districts have estimated their own cost benefits. A

superintendent of a suburban Ohio school district serving approximately 5,000 elementary students reported that by February of the second year of implementation, the program had paid for itself in savings related to reduction of services and retention. A rural school district in Ohio projected in January that 95% of the children selected for Reading Recovery would be retained. In June, only 10% were actually retained (Pinnell, 1988). The savings would appear to be substantial enough to pay for the program.

Since the program is strictly based on the individual child and literature-based reading, it has no expensive gimmicks or curriculum. It actually uses few consumable materials. Teachers use blank writing books and pencils or markers rather than workbooks and worksheets. They also have a set of magnetic letters and magnetic chalkboard. The major materials for the program are the hundreds of little books that the children read. These books can be read and reread by many students (Pinnell, 1988).

A major expense is the intensive training program that teachers attend to becoming Reading Recovery teachers. It is a year-long program, available at Ohio State, that one or two teachers per district must attend in order to be Teacher Leaders. These Teacher Leaders then train other teachers in their district to be Reading Recovery teachers.

Finally, ethical questions may arise. Since the results of intervening with Reading Recovery are so

positive, are the educators in this country obligated to provide the program despite its cost? Hopefully, the longitudinal studies will show that the initial costs are offset by fewer retentions, and intervention proves to be less expensive than long-term remediation (Pinnell, Fried, & Estice, 1990).

Reading Recovery is a relatively new program. It seems to be quite effective in reducing reading difficulties in early readers. The important feature appears to be the intensive training the Reading Recovery teacher undergoes. This may appear to be a large expense initially, but it may be the means to the end of a long battle with illiteracy. Can this country afford to implement such an outstanding supplementary program nationwide? A better question is, can we afford not to do so?

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD AND PROCEDURES

This chapter describes the methods and procedures that were used in the portion of this study which investigated the knowledge about and the degree of interest regarding Reading Recovery among Chapter 1 coordinators in the state of Iowa. It contains, (a) a statement of the purpose, (b) a description of the population studied, (c) a description of the instrument that was used to collect data, (d) an explanation of the procedure that was followed, and, (e) an explanation of the methods that were used to process and analyze the collected data.

#### Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this part of the study was to determine the amount of knowledge of Iowa Chapter 1 coordinators in Reading Recovery. It also examined the degree of interest of Iowa Chapter 1 coordinators in Reading Recovery.

#### Population

Chapter 1 coordinators in the State of Iowa were chosen as the population for this study. A list of all Chapter 1 coordinators was obtained through the Department of Education in Des Moines, Iowa. A random sampling of 75 participants was selected for the study. Since the study was confidential, the gender and race of the population completing the survey is unknown.



### Instrument

A survey questionnaire was used to obtain data for this study. The survey was mailed to the respondents in a wide geographical area in the state of Iowa. This method was chosen for several reasons. First, considering the geographical area involved, the survey was the most practical way to obtain the information. Second, the cost involved in traveling to each site for personal interviews far outweighed the cost of mailing out a survey. Third, a survey would allow for reflection and completion at the respondent's convenience. Fourth, it was hoped that the confidentiality of a survey would invoke more truthful responses than might be obtained through a personal interview.

The survey included a two-page questionnaire containing eight questions (see Appendix A). Six of the eight questions were both close-ended (yes/no) and open-ended (requiring further explanation), one question was specifically close-ended (listing factors), and one question was specifically open-ended (speculative and explanatory). Overall the questions asked participants to highlight their knowledge about and interest in Reading Recovery.

### Procedure

A random sampling was completed from a list of Chapter 1 coordinators in the State of Iowa. This list was obtained through the Department of Education in Des Moines, Iowa.

Upon completion of the random sampling, a cover letter, survey questionnaire, and prestamped, self-addressed, return envelope were sent to each contact person. The surveys took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Confidentiality was maintained in that all surveys were anonymous. The respondents were encouraged to return the surveys and to indicate whether they were interested in having the results of the survey sent to them.

Upon receiving the completed surveys, the recipients' location was plotted on a map of Iowa by the postmarks on the return envelopes. The state was divided into four quadrants of relative size and divisions were created by utilizing highways and/or interstates on the Iowa map (see Figure 1).

The northwest quadrant was the area north of Highway 30 and west of Interstate 35. The northeast quadrant was the area north of Highway 30 and east of Interstate 35. The southwest quadrant was the area south of Highway 30 and west of Interstate 35. The southeast quadrant was the area south of Highway 30 and east of Interstate 35. There were four towns that were located on Highway 30 and were placed in the southern quadrants of the state. The returned surveys were coded by quadrants in the state of Iowa by using the postmarks on the envelopes. The envelopes were then discarded.

Figure 1

Iowa Map Illustrating Four Quadrants

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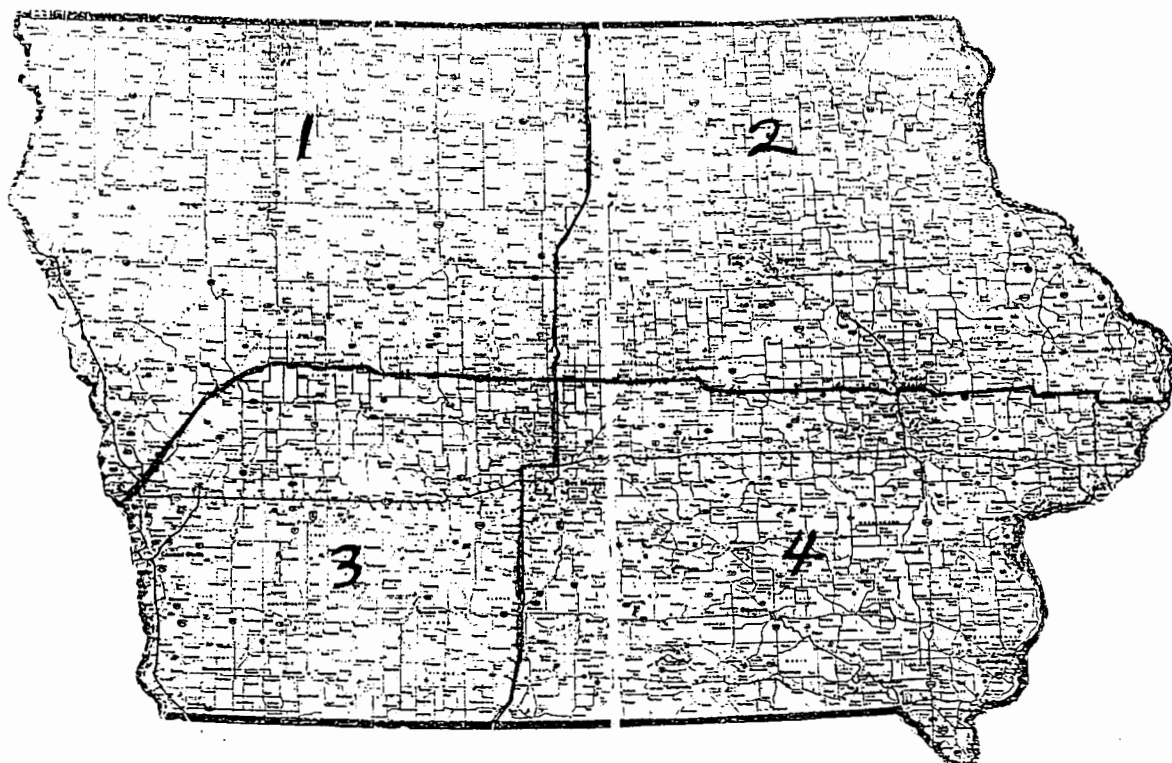
1. Northwest quadrant--north of Highway 30 and west of Interstate 35

2. Northeast quadrant--north of Highway 30 and east of Interstate 35

3. Southwest quadrant--south of Highway 30 and west of Interstate 35

4. Southeast quadrant--south of Highway 30 and east of Interstate 35

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### Analysis of Data

The collected data from the surveys were analyzed by tabulating results of each question. Each specific open-ended question was analyzed separately. Each question was listed with all the accompanying responses. The responses were then read, and similar statements were tallied and the tally total along with the statement (simplified) was typed, creating a separate list of tallied responses for each question. These tallied responses were then analyzed by examining the statements and abstracting key terms. Key terms were marked in the margin. After all key terms were abstracted, generalized statements were constructed. These generalized statements were a combination of key terms having shared characteristics and a common underlying focus or meaning. These statements then became the reported data for the open-ended questions.

## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to ascertain information on the knowledge about and interest regarding the Reading Recovery program. To accomplish this, 75 questionnaires were sent to Chapter 1 coordinators in the state of Iowa. This chapter depicts the results that were obtained from the data gathered from the questionnaires.

Discussion

Fifty-three responses, or 70.66% of the original mailing, were received. There were 21 respondents in the northwest quadrant, 20 respondents in the northeast quadrant, 16 respondents in the southwest quadrant, and 18 respondents in the southeast quadrant (see Table 1).

Table 1

Number of Quadrant Respondents

<u>Quadrants</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1. Northwest	21	39.62%
2. Northeast	20	37.73%
3. Southwest	16	30.18%
4. Southeast	18	33.96%

Note:  $n=53$

Reporting of the results is divided into two sections. The first section addresses the answers to the close-ended questions (Questions #1,2,3,5,7, and 8). Totals of the answers for each close-ended question are summarized within Table 2, with the exception of the fourth and sixth questions. These questions do not contain a yes or no response and need further evaluation in the study.

The second section addresses the responses to the open-ended questions, which have been collapsed into meaningful categories. These results were synthesized according to categories of similarity in opinions.

There were a total of 82 responses to question number 4 which asked, "If you have an interest in Reading Recovery but have not yet implemented it what factors would keep you from implementing it?" Table 3 presents the ranking of these factors by percentages from most predominant to least.

This section includes a written summary of the responses to the open-ended questions (Questions 1,2,3,5,6,7) in the survey. Each question will be stated for a clearer understanding of the summarized responses. Each summary is a synthesis of the respondents' comments. Specifically, these syntheses are constructed from information and categories abstracted from the actual responses.

Table 2

Close-Ended Responses to Survey Questions


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<u>Survey Question</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>
1. Are you familiar with the early intervention program called Reading Recovery developed by Marie Clay?	22	31	
2. Has Reading Recovery been implemented in your district?	0	53	
3. If your district does not currently have the Reading Recovery program are there plans to implement it in the future?	10	39	4
5. If a Reading Recovery site were established in Iowa would your district be interested in sending a person to that site?	17	3	18
7. Are you satisfied with the level of success achieved by your students currently participating in a Chapter 1 reading program?	27	22	4
8. Would you be interested in learning more about Reading Recovery?	34	8	3

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Note:  $n=53$

Table 3

Factors Preventing Implementation of Reading RecoveryPercentage/Rank Order Factor


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1.	30.49%	Cost
2.	21.95%	Training site
3.	15.85%	Lack of knowledge of R.R.
4.	6.10%	Teacher leader
5.	1.22% each	Small faculty size
		Space
		Teacher dedication
		Transportation

---

1. Are you familiar with the early intervention program called Reading Recovery developed by Marie Clay? 22 yes 31 no. If you responded affirmatively briefly explain your familiarity with the Reading Recovery program?

A. 18.86% of the respondents reported they acquired knowledge about Reading Recovery directly through formal information sharing such as workshops, inservices, or conferences.

B. 16.98% of the respondents reported that the quantity of their knowledge about Reading Recovery was limited.



C. 13.2% of the respondents reported they acquired their knowledge directly by reading literature about Reading Recovery.

D. 1.88% of the respondents' knowledge was acquired directly through informal information sharing (daughter who is a Reading Recovery teacher).

E. 1.88% of the respondents reported they had been in an area where it had been implemented, but it was unclear whether the information was directly or indirectly acquired through their work in the district with Reading Recovery.

F. 1.88% of the respondents simply stated a few facts about their knowledge about Reading Recovery.

2. Has Reading Recovery been implemented in your district? 0 yes 53 no. If Reading Recovery has been implemented in your school district how successful do you think the program has been?

A. Even though none of the districts survey indicated they had implemented Reading Recovery 1.88% of the respondents reported that the Chapter 1 teachers have practiced Reading Recovery strategies from reading literature but have not been formally trained.

3. If your district does not currently have the Reading Recovery program are there plans to implement it in the future? 10 yes 39 no 4 not sure. If so, what are the plans?

A. 16.98% of the respondents reported that their districts were considering it but needed to research it further before discussing implementation.

B. 5.66% of the respondents reported that their district could not afford it financially but were very interested.

C. 5.66% of the respondents said that the funding and staff needs are presently being investigated for future implementation.

D. 3.77% of the respondents reported they were in the process of full implementation in the 1992-93 school year.

5. If a Reading Recovery site were established in Iowa would your district be interested in sending a person to that site to be trained? 17 yes 3 no 18 possibly

A. 32.07% of the respondents reported they had an interest in implementing the program but felt they needed more knowledge about it before implementation could occur.

B. 18.86% of the respondents reported that the interest would depend on the cost of the program and the distance of the site.

C. 7.54% of the respondents reported they were in the process of implementation therefore would not require the necessary training.

6. If you are interested in implementing Reading Recovery in your district list the major reasons why you would be interested.

A. 26.41% of the respondents reported they were interested in it because of the success of the program.

B. 20.75% of the respondents reported they were interested in the program because of the philosophy of early intervention as opposed to remediation.

C. 16.98% of the respondents reported they did not possess enough knowledge about Reading Recovery.

D. 5.66% of the respondents were interested because of the lack of labeling for students in addition to the improved self-esteem of the Reading Recovery students.

E. 3.77% of the respondents reported the Reading Recovery program was more cost effective than other programs.

7. Are you satisfied with the level of success achieved by your students currently participating in a Chapter 1 reading program? 27 yes 11 no 4 yes and no. Please explain.

A. 33.96% of the respondents reported they were always interested in improving student achievement.

B. 16.98% of the respondents claimed their remedial programs success rate were very low and the students did not seem to exit the program.

C. 11.32% of the respondents regarded their Chapter 1 programs successful because of changes in their philosophy and methodology that are concurrent with a holistic program.

D. 3.77% of the respondents reported they were satisfied with the success rate of their students as illustrated by post scores.

E. 3.77% of the respondents reported that the problem with their program was that it was a remedial program rather than a preventive program.

F. 1.88% of the respondents claimed that the parents seem too accepting of their child's situation.

8. Would you be interested in learning more about Reading Recovery? 34 yes 8 no 3 possibly. If so, why?

A. 26.41% of the respondents were interested in acquiring more information about Reading Recovery in order to improve current supplementary programs.

B. 16.98% of the respondents said they would like to acquire more knowledge about it for future implementation in their schools.

C. 11.32% of the respondents believe they have acquired enough information about Reading Recovery at this time.

D. 3.77% of the respondents said that they were interested in information about new training sites that will make the program easier and more cost effective to implement.

E. 1.88% of the respondents wanted to acquire more knowledge of how others are implementing Reading Recovery

and how to have double coverage (Chapter 1 & Reading Recovery) for awhile and then just Reading Recovery.

F. 1.88% of the respondents said they would be interested in finding out how successful the Reading Recovery programs have been in the State of Iowa.

#### Summary

The results of the survey seemed to convey a lack of knowledge about the Reading Recovery program in the State of Iowa. 58.49% of Chapter 1 coordinators that responded to the survey had little or no knowledge about the Reading Recovery program. 41.50% of the respondents that had heard of the program indicated they would be interested in knowing more. The majority of the respondents' familiarity with the Reading Recovery program stemmed from knowledge through direct information (e.g., workshops, conferences or inservices) or reading literature.

The Reading Recovery program had not been implemented in any of the districts that responded to the survey. However, 18.86% of the respondents were planning implementation in the future. A few major reasons why districts might not implement the Reading Recovery program even though there was a strong interest in it were cost (30.47%), training site (21.95%), and lack of knowledge about the program (15.85%). If a training site were located in the State of Iowa, 32.07% of the respondents reported they would be interested in sending a person to be trained,

although more information, location of the site, and cost were also factors their districts would have to consider.

There were two major reasons that the respondents were interested in the Reading Recovery program. They were, success of the program (26.41%) and the philosophy of early intervention as opposed to long-term remediation (20.75%).

When the Chapter 1 coordinators were questioned as to the satisfaction with their Chapter 1 reading programs, 50.94% of the respondents reported they were satisfied. However, most of the respondents negated their responses with criticisms in the open-ended section of the question that seemed to illustrate a lack of satisfaction with their current programs. 33.96% of the respondents reported they were always interested in improving student achievement. 16.98% of the respondents claimed their remedial programs' success rates were very low and the students never seemed to exit the program. Finally, 11.32% of the respondents replied positively with their new holistic philosophies that have seemed to make some gains with their students.

Many of the respondents (64.14%) were interested in gaining more knowledge about the Reading Recovery program. The two major reasons they gave for being interested in learning more about Reading Recovery were to improve current supplementary programs (26.41%) and future implementation in their schools (16.98%). There were 15.09% of the respondents that felt they already possessed enough

information about Reading Recovery due to the fact they were beginning implementation of the program.

## CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The early years are a critical time for children's later learning success. Their success in school is directly related to their self-esteem in addition to their success as an adult. The number one priority in education has to be good classroom teachers. Nothing can compensate for poor teaching or unstimulating classrooms. Educators in this country can and should, however, supply the best supplementary programs available for children who are having trouble with reading.

There are several reasons students remain disabled even after remediation. Learning disabled children who are placed in remedial programs tend to rely on visual information and try to phonetically sound out each word. The tendency in remedial reading programs is to drill these students on their skills. The emphasis is placed on reading skills rather than on reading. If skills are emphasized more than meaning, students have a different view of what reading is than children who have read for meaning and experience a real purpose for reading. Since a skills-based program is still widely used in Chapter 1 and learning disability programs, the students are asked to partake in reading activities that make little sense for them. These students make limited progress, have little or no interest



in reading, and develop a low self-esteem because they see themselves as failures.

Whole language appears to be a natural and meaningful way of learning. It tends to be more exciting for teachers and students as they approach learning together creating a student-centered curriculum. Children are empowered to progress at their own rate and are allowed to cultivate their own interests. Whole language makes sense because, it incorporates all of the language functions, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The emphasis is on reading real literature and being allowed to participate in authentic writing experiences. Whole language teachers believe in children and expect them to learn by focusing on the strengths of the child rather than the deficits. Whole language classrooms are full of quality literature that the teachers extend to the children in order to get them excited about reading. If teachers have classrooms that are rich in meaningful reading and writing experiences, children are better able to understand the reading and writing process, thus constructing real bridges to literacy.

Whole language classrooms provide many opportunities for problem solving. Children are encouraged to take risks and learn from their mistakes. Whole language classrooms are rich with language and exploration and children are actively constructing their own hypotheses through experimentation. Since children are active in their own

learning and thinking, they develop a sense of ownership in their classrooms and their learning is centered around authentic activities.

Reading Recovery is a program that has a holistic philosophy similar to that of whole language. It is meaning-based, using real literature, and provides an atmosphere conducive to taking risks and learning problem-solving strategies as they make sense of reading in a whole and meaningful context.

The Reading Recovery program is a powerful tool used to unlock the doors to literacy. It is an effective program that has an impressive success rate for first graders who are experiencing reading difficulties. Reading Recovery is unique in that it is individually designed for the students based on their own strengths, needs, and interests. It is beneficial to the students, because it emphasizes the meaning of the text rather than focusing on isolated skills. It also is concerned with catching the children up to their classroom peers in ability to read and alleviates them from long-term remediation.

Reading Recovery teachers believe that children can learn to read and they set goals to achieve this in a short period of time. The program also differs from other remedial programs by teaching children to develop self-improving reading strategies in order to become self-sufficient readers. Early detection of reading problems in

order to intervene at an early age is another significant advantage of the Reading Recovery program over other supplementary reading programs. The Reading Recovery program has a high success rate for children because of the intense training program for the Reading Recovery teachers.

If, in fact, the Reading Recovery program is such a powerful program, is it worth the cost? It would appear to be an expensive initial commitment, but it would eliminate the cost of expensive, long-term remediation. It would eliminate the feeling of failure for so many children involved in long term-remediation, thus creating a more positive school experience. Changing the educational prospects for at risk children will require enormous resources in the next decade. That investment is necessary to increase the nation's literacy rate, educational level, and quality of life. There has already been much invested in remediation programs, but it is known they do not make the necessary changes to bring the educational system to where it should be.

### Conclusions

The characteristics of the Reading Recovery program should be evaluated and placed under serious consideration. Ethically, the best program available should take priority in today's education. Since it is a relatively new program, further research is needed to insure that the high success rate remains consistent.

Since the Reading Recovery program has such a high success rate for improving literacy, it would appear to be a necessary program to incorporate into all school districts. Many school districts, however, are unfamiliar with the successes of the Reading Recovery program.

In Iowa, it appears that there are a majority of Chapter 1 coordinators who are unfamiliar with this program. Since there has been so much recent attention given to this early intervention program in reading journals, professional books, and workshops it seems that many of these experts are not current on their professional reading or knowledgeable about supplementary programs in reading.

It would also appear that Chapter 1 coordinators are satisfied with their supplementary reading programs by their initial answers of yes on the survey. However, the open-ended responses contradicted their answers, as they showed areas of dissatisfaction in their programs. Specialists in the reading field should not be satisfied with a minimal amount of success achieved in their programs. It is up to them to expect children to be able to read and write as much as mothers and fathers expect their children to be able to learn to talk.

It is not only the children that are failing, it is our educational expectations and endeavors to teach reading and writing that are also failing. We must use the funds available to implement quality reading programs for children

which demonstrate a high success rate. Successful programs, such as Reading Recovery, must be examined and implemented in our schools in order to create an equal chance for all students to be able to learn to read. It is our duty to service all children in order to create literate, productive, self-fulfilled citizens.

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APPENDIX A

Reading Recovery Survey

## READING RECOVERY SURVEY

Please respond to these items by marking yes or no or giving written responses as needed. Space has been provided for your responses, however, if additional space is needed please feel free to add additional paper.

1. Are you familiar with the early intervention program called Reading Recovery developed by Marie Clay?  
yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_. If you responded affirmatively briefly explain your familiarity with the Reading Recovery program?
  
2. Has Reading Recovery been implemented in your district?  
yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_. If Reading Recovery has been implemented in your school district how successful do you think the program has been?
  
3. If your district does not currently have the Reading Recovery program are there plans to implement it in the future? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_. If so, what are the plans?
  
4. If you have an interest in Reading Recovery but have not yet implemented it what factors would keep you from implementing it?

\_\_\_\_\_ cost

\_\_\_\_\_ training site

\_\_\_\_\_ (out of state)

\_\_\_\_\_ prospective  
teacher leader

\_\_\_\_\_ other (what)

5. If a Reading Recovery site were established in Iowa would your district be interested in sending a person to that site to be trained?
  
6. If you are interested in implementing Reading Recovery in your district list the major reasons why you would be interested.
  
7. Are you satisfied with the level of success achieved by your students currently participating in a Chapter 1 reading program? yes\_\_\_\_ no\_\_\_\_. Please explain.
  
8. Would you be interested in learning more about Reading Recovery? If so, why?