

Study Supports Complementary Effects of Reading Recovery and Small Group

Recently completed data analysis on over 14,000 first grade students served in intervention indicates that when students are provided carefully matched intervention support, most students can be successful.

The study, conducted by Karen James, replicated results of Dorn & Allen (1994) and Harrison (2002) in which students in one-to-one intervention in Reading Recovery outperformed those students placed in less-intensive, small group. Of critical importance in the study, however, is the complementary nature of the two intervention options – small group for less intensive support and one-to-one reserved for the most tangled, or confused, readers. Following one year of supplemental support provided in either Reading Recovery, small group taught by a Reading Recovery teacher or a combination of the two, the average reading level for all students served in any way was over 16, indicating most students were meeting or nearing grade level expectations.

School-based decision making allowed intervention and classroom teachers to determine the intervention needed by individual students based on observational and formal data and assessments. Working in tandem, small group and one-to-one provide a comprehensive response to the growing needs of students requiring reading support at an early age. This result is consistent with the intention of Reading Recovery as stated in *Changing Futures* (2005), “Reading Recovery is designed to be an essential part of a school’s comprehensive literacy plan.” (p 36).

Students who did not make adequate support with small group were later placed in Reading Recovery. Reading Recovery produced a sharp contrast in reading achievement over that of small group alone (Figure 1). At the rate of achievement of students initially served in small group, it was highly unlikely that the students would reach grade level proficiency by the end of the first grade year; Reading Recovery provided a more tailored and efficient manner by which to ensure that first grade students ended the year with the ability to read alongside average peers.