

## The Real Cost of Literacy Failure

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Sylva C., and Hurry, J., 1995, Early intervention in children with Reading Difficulties, Schools Curriculum & Assessment Authority, London

- The cost of RR was substantially more in the short term, but then so was the progress.
- Much of the ongoing expense associated with RR at LEA level is probably an essential aspect of any well run special needs section
- ...it would be mistaken to assume that children eligible to receive RR are otherwise inexpensive to educate. These children, in the bottom 20% of readers, are usually offered other forms of specialised help in the absence of RR.

### The monetary cost

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, Reading Recovery in Nashville, 1998-99

Intervention	Annual Cost	Average Years in programme	Total Programme Time	Total cost per student
Retention	\$5,336	1 year	1,260 hours	\$5,336
Special Education	\$4,232**	6 years	1,512 hours*	\$25,392*
Reading Recovery	\$2,438	20 weeks	50 hours	\$2,438

\* Average years in programme and total programme time not calculated by the Special Education Department in Nashville Public Schools at this time. Data cited is from P.C. Dyer, 1992, 'Reading Recovery: A Cost Effectiveness and Educational-Outcomes Analysis' ERS Spectrum, Vol 10, No. 1,

\*\* Expenditure per pupil calculated by the Special Educational Department, Metro Nashville Public Schools 1997-98

See also page 223, Schmitt et al, 2005, Changing Futures, RRCNA

Massachusetts State Legislature: 'Every \$3 invested in Reading Recovery saved \$5 in other costs'. (Moriarty. 1997)

Cunningham, P., and Allington, R., 1994, Classrooms that Work, New York, Harper Collins

'The criticism most often made of Reading Recovery is that it is too expensive and that it requires too much teacher training. However, getting these results with the hardest to teach children leads us to conclude that the teacher training is providing the teacher with extraordinary insight and skills. It does cost money to hire and train Reading Recovery teachers but it also costs money to employ transitional-grade teachers (e.g., pre-first classes), resource room teachers, and remedial teachers too. It costs money to retain children.....When you compare the success rate of Reading Recovery with other programmes that keep children for years and never get them reading on grade level, Reading Recovery is a bargain!'

### The human cost

Bynner, J., and Parsons, S., 1997, It Doesn't get any Better, The Basic Skills Agency, London

	Men	Women
<b>Very low literacy</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Low literacy</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Average literacy</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Good literacy</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1%</b>

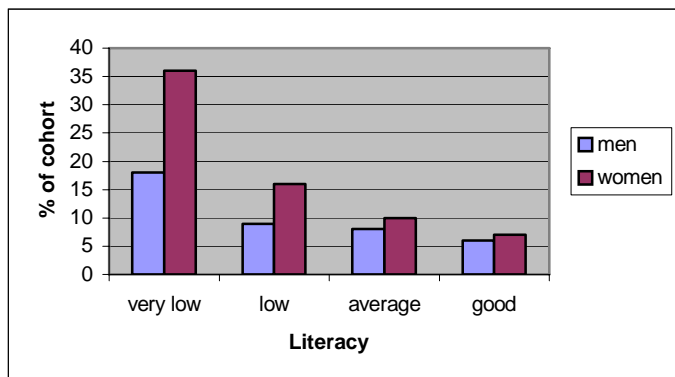
Table 1: Proportion of the cohort with no qualifications

<b>Very Low literacy</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Low literacy</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Average literacy</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Good literacy</b>	<b>4%</b>

Table 2: Proportion of men long-term unemployed/ sick

	Men (<£200)	Women (<£150)
<b>Very low &amp; low literacy</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>53%</b>
<b>Average literacy</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>Good literacy</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>39%</b>

Table 3: Proportion of cohort on low wages



**Fig 1: Proportion of cohort recorded as 'depressed' on the malaise inventory.**

	Very low	Low	Avge	Good
<b>Satisfied with life so far</b>	50%	76%	75%	78%
<b>Never get what want from life</b>	41%	24%	24%	18%
<b>No control over events in life</b>	23%	18%	11%	8%
<b>Have to be careful who to trust</b>	45%	38%	31%	23%

**Table 4: Views and Outlook (men)**

The social costs

Parsons, S., 2002, Basic Skills and Crime, The Basic Skills Agency, London

'After controlling for measures of social disadvantage, poverty, disruptive family environment, poor education experiences and early signs of emotional and behaviour problems that were significantly related to our measure of police contact and offending we found that... poor literacy scores kept a statistically significant relationship with the number of times a 30 year old man (in the 1970 cohort study) had been 'stopped and questioned' or 'been arrested' and with the number of times a 42 year old man (in the 1958 cohort study) had been arrested'.

Leon Feinstein, 1999, Quantitative Estimates of the Social benefits of learning, 1: Crime published by The Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits Of Learning, Institute of Education, University of London

- A 10% rise in the average pay of those on low pay in an area reduces the overall area property crime by between 0.7 and 1.0 percentage points, estimated benefit between £1.3 and £1.8 billion in an average year over the period. (Executive summary page iii)
- A 1 percentage point increase in the proportion of the working age area population with O level or equivalent qualifications, would give a predicted benefit (on property crime) between £10million and £320 million. (Executive summary page iv)
- "Effects of increases below O level are trivial but it is estimated that a 5 percentage point increase in the population of the area with O level or equivalent qualifications will produce a reduction in crime with a benefit of up to £1.6 billion per year" Page 24
- Education can have an affect on crime through changes in behaviour or preferences and resulting changes in opportunity, particularly through income.
- UK Home Office research found that 12-16 year old boys who did not like school were 3 times more likely to offend than those who liked school. (Page 28)

Ananiadou, Jenkins and Wolf, 2003, The benefits to employers of raising workforce basic skill levels: a review of the literature, University of London Institute of Education. Reports a study by ALBSU, which assessed the cost to businesses employing 51 or more people, from errors arising from poor literacy. Losses occurring (e.g. from customer orders cancelled, dispatched incorrectly, and from additional staff required to check the work of others) amounted to £165,530.

**“If we ensure that America’s children succeed in life, they will ensure that America succeeds in the world.”**

President George Bush, 31st January 2006