

The Long Term Effects of Two Interventions for Children with Reading Difficulties

J. Hurry & K. Sylva. (1998). *London: Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. QCA/98/165.*

Background

Sylva and Hurry evaluated the effectiveness of two different interventions (Reading Recovery and Phonological Training). Their study included almost 400 children from seven English local authorities. Although the sample was diverse, inner city children were over represented. The schools included 22 Reading Recovery schools, 23 Phonological Intervention schools, and 18 control schools. The measures used included the British Ability Scale Word Reading, Neale Analysis of Reading, Clay's Diagnostic Survey (five tasks), Assessment of Phonological Awareness, British Ability Scale Spelling, and background information on each child.

Findings

During the intervention year, the effect of the phonological intervention was more specific than Reading Recovery, enhancing children's phonological awareness and influencing their letter identification, dictation, and writing vocabulary, but not their text reading skills. Reading Recovery children made significantly more progress than the control groups on every measure of reading. At the end of the second year, the effects of phonological intervention were still evident in enhanced word reading scores, but there was no effect on comprehension. In comparison, the Reading Recovery children were still 6 months ahead of the control children on word and text reading.

In their long-term follow up 4 years later, Hurry and Sylva (1998) concluded that Reading Recovery was still effective because almost 70% of the children who had received Reading Recovery were still within the average band of their class in Grade 6, while only 55% of those who received the phonological intervention were within the average class band. Reading Recovery was particularly effective at helping children who were most socially disadvantaged and who were the weakest readers at age 6. While Reading Recovery was more expensive than the phonological intervention in the year of delivery, over the pupils' whole elementary school career it cost only 10% more than the general remedial support provided in control schools. The authors concluded that time-limited intervention is not so expensive in the longer term.

This abstract first appeared in *What Evidence Says About Reading Recovery*. (2002). Columbus, OH: Reading Recovery Council of North America.