

Reading Recovery (RR) is an intensive psycholinguistic guessing game based on a balanced literacy, multiple cues, context orientated approach to reading instruction. Decades of reading research have shown this approach to be ineffective at best and harmful at worst.

Marie Clay created Reading Recovery in New Zealand. The program has been used in Australia, the UK, the US and other countries over the past 30 years. However, when children's reading achievement was benchmarked against other countries in 2011, the New Zealand and Australian scores were the lowest in the English-speaking world.

According to Marie Clay, 'Teachers may feel that the critical thing for the child to learn is his sounds, and they may provide an elaborate scheme for teaching that overrated aspect of reading known as phonics... Current thinking suggests that we may have to revise our thinking about the value of phonics...' (See Marie Clay, *Becoming Literate*, 1991).

In Clay's Observation Survey assessments, which are conducted by the trained teacher by 'roaming around the known' during the initial two weeks of RR, it is the child's deficiencies, which exclude basic alphabetic coding skills, that are recorded and identified for remedial action. The child is identified as being at fault; and the appropriateness of the instruction the child has received is invariably ignored.

However, according to the Rose Report, 'For most children, high quality, systematic phonic work should start by the age of five taking full account of professional judgments of children's developing abilities and the need to embed this work within a broad and rich curriculum.' (See *The Rose Report*, 2006.)

A five-year \$55 million U.S. Department of Education grant to Ohio State University, with partnerships in 14 other U.S. Universities to "scale up" RR is in its last year. This project is proceeding despite decades of research showing that RR is NOT cost effective, nor does it address the lack of decoding skills that targeted struggling readers in first and second grade need most.

Reading Recovery should be replaced with an alternative intervention based on contemporary theory and research

According to Louisa Moats 'The whole approach [in Reading Recovery] is based on ideas that have not held up to scientific scrutiny. It is indefensible to keep spending money on it. It is not teaching kids to decode, it's teaching them to guess.' (See Dr. Louisa Moats, as quoted in the *Melbourne Age*, March 2015.)

William E. Tunmer and James W. Chapman provide a wealth of evidence that 'little or no progress has been made in closing New Zealand's reading achievement gap.' In a new book to be released in June 2015, *Excellence and Equity in Literacy Education: The Case of New Zealand* they recommend that RR 'should be replaced with an alternative intervention based on contemporary theory and research on reading that is specifically designed to target those struggling readers who need the most help.'

See: <http://www.palgrave.com/page/detail/excellence-and-equity-in-literacy-education-william-e--tunmer/?de&st1=9781137415561>