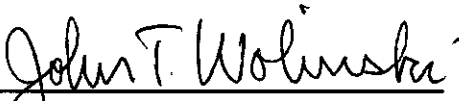


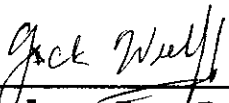
PEER:
A Program for
Reading Recovery in
the Regular Classroom

*A curriculum based on research
of Reading Recovery models*

Kelley S. Carmean

Salisbury State University
Thomas E. Bellevance Honors Program
And
Education Department


Mentor: Dr. John T. Wolinski
Education Department, SSU


Reader: Dr. Jack Wulff
Education Department, SSU

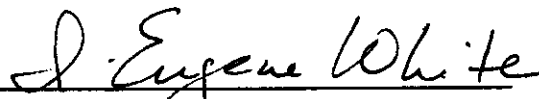

Reader: Dr. I.E. White
Psychology Department, SSU

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction: Reading Recovery	1
II.	Procedures of Reading Recovery	2
III.	Reactions to Reading Recovery	8
IV.	<u>Early Success</u> Program	15
V.	Reading Recovery Programs in Maryland	24
VI.	Case Study Involving Reading Recovery at Beaver Run Elementary School	29
VII.	Case Study Involving Reading Recovery at Delmar Elementary School	35
VIII.	A Classroom Curriculum: PEER	41
IX.	Conclusion	51

Bibliography
Appendix

I. Introduction: Reading Recovery

Many children enter first grade without the background knowledge necessary for success in reading. They are placed in traditional reading programs where they are quickly left behind. Unfortunately, once a student initially falls behind it becomes difficult to catch up as the years progress. Once a student is placed in a special education program he/she rarely ever rejoins the regular curriculum of his/her peers (Spiegel,1995). However, Reading Recovery is an interventional reading program in use today that gives initially low-achieving readers an opportunity to receive the special help and enrichment they need to perform at the level of their peers.

II. Procedures for Reading Recovery

The idea of Reading Recovery is credited to Marie Clay, a New Zealand child psychologist (Pinnell,1990). In this program first grade students work one-on-one with a specially trained Reading Recovery teacher for thirty minutes per day in addition to the regular classroom reading curriculum. During this thirty minutes, the student rereads a familiar book, that is, a book with which the student has already had experience and practice. Then, the student reads a book that was newly introduced the previous day. As the child reads this book, the teacher keeps a running record which indicates any mistakes made in the reading. These records are kept together in the child's file for reference.

The second part of the program is sentence creating. The student is asked to make up any sentence. The sentence does not necessarily have to deal with a book he or she has read. It can be about a personal experience, something coming up in the future, or anything else the child wishes to write about. The student writes this sentence with the teacher's help. The teacher then prints the sentence on a strip of tag board and cuts out each word individually. The child then puts the sentence together and reads it.

At the end of the lesson, a new book is introduced to the child. The teacher first points out the illustrations and key words. Then the student reads the story with any necessary teacher assistance (Pinnell,1990).

Students in the Reading Recovery Program are encouraged to use the graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic cueing systems to decode the words they encounter in reading. The running record serves as a way for teachers to discover which cueing systems a particular student is most inclined to use and which they do not use. The student can then be prompted to use the ignored cue, ensuring the proper blending of all three systems (Pinnell, 1990).

The Reading Recovery program is based on certain principles. One is that only experienced, successful teachers can receive Reading Recovery training (DeFord,et al.,1991). The prerequisite is at least three years of teaching experience. The teachers are trained by specialized teacher leaders who provide them one year of after school inservice, in addition to nine hours of graduate courses. While in training, the teachers work a half day with four students in the Reading Recovery program and half a day working in the regular classroom. After this component of the training is complete, teachers must still attend six yearly

contact sessions with Reading Recovery leaders and are continuously visited by teacher leaders. Teachers are also involved in child-teacher sessions behind a one-way mirror while being observed by other teachers. This gives an opportunity for feedback (DeFord,1991).

Teacher leaders, who are responsible for training the regular Reading Recovery teachers, receive extensive training. To qualify for the training, teachers must have a Masters Degree and primary school teaching experience. Training involves a one year education program consisting of clinical practicum experience, a theoretical seminar, supervision practicum, and district apprenticeship. While training, teachers work daily with four students and take twenty-one hours of graduate coursework. In the past, courses for the program were only available at Ohio State University. Now, courses are offered at a growing number of schools, including Clemson University, New York University, Portland State University, and the University of Illinois (DeFord,1991).

In the early 1980's, three Ohio educators, Charlotte Huck, Martha King, and Gay Su Pinnell, went to New Zealand and observed Clay's program. They were impressed with the results of the program and were interested in bringing it to the United States.

Later, Clay and Barbara Watson, National Director of Reading Recovery in New Zealand, came to Columbus, Ohio, to speak about the program. In 1984 and 1985, a pilot program of Reading Recovery was started at Ohio State University in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Education and the Columbus Public School System (DeFord, et al., 1991).

The Ohio pilot had two purposes: to replicate the New Zealand program in Ohio and to measure the potential benefit to "at risk" Ohio students. The pilot involved fourteen teachers and seven teacher leaders. The children in the study were from six urban schools with high numbers of low-income students. Within each school, one class was designated as the program classroom and another as a control classroom. The lowest students in the program classroom were compared to the lowest students in the control classroom. The children were tested by a diagnostic survey three times in the school year; the beginning of the year, in December, and at the end of the year. The Reading Recovery lessons began in January with an average of 60.7 lessons given to each student during a period of approximately twelve weeks.

The test results show that although the Reading Recovery group was below the control group in all areas, except Concepts About Print in September, the Reading Recovery group surpassed

the control group in all areas except the basal word test after 12 weeks of the program. Reading Recovery students scored below the comparison group in writing vocabulary in September, but by May were ahead. Reading Recovery students also surpassed the control group in letter identification, dictation task, and text reading level (Pinnell, 1989). Overall, the Reading Recovery group showed improvement in reading skills as compared to the control group.

In addition to the pilot test in Ohio, there has been other research on the effectiveness of Reading Recovery and its principles. Samuels (1997) has researched the method of repeated readings, one element of the Reading Recovery program. The definition of a repeated reading is the rereading of a "short, meaningful passage several times until a satisfactory level of fluency is reached (Samuels, p.337)." Once a passage is successfully completed, the procedure is then used for a new passage. In Reading Recovery a short story is used instead of a passage. However, the principle of repeated reading is used much the same way as Samuel describes.

The idea of repeated readings can be compared to sports. The skills necessary to read a story or passage are practiced again and again until success is achieved. Also, just like in

sports, children are excited by the gains they are making and are more likely to develop an interest to read more.

One reason that students often struggle with comprehension is that their attention is focused on decoding. With repeated readings the decoding barrier is gradually lessened and more attention can be focused on comprehension. The words decoded and memorized from the rereading of one story can be passed on and applied to others. Therefore, it is a building process, not merely a memorization for the purpose of one story (Samuels,1997).

The method of repeated reading comes from the theory of automatic information processing in reading (Samuels, 1997). Samuels states that there are three levels in learning to read: the nonaccurate stage, the accuracy stage, and the automatic stage. In the nonaccurate stage, there is difficulty in recognizing words even when given a large amount of time for decoding. In the accuracy stage, the student is able to recognize words with struggle. Oral reading is often slow and word to word. In the automatic stage words are recognized without attention (Samuels,1997). Repeated readings give students the practice they need to achieve the automatic stage. Only then can reading become fluent and comprehension easier to achieve.

III. Reactions to Reading Recovery

Although Reading Recovery has been praised by educators such as Huck, King, and Pinnell, it has also received some criticism. One such critic is Bonnie L. Barnes, a trained reading recovery teacher. Her article, "But Teacher You Went Right on: A Perspective on Reading Recovery" (1996), was written after her year of training and cites several examples of why she believes Reading Recovery is not an effective way to teach low-achieving readers. Her first problem is with the training itself. She claims that everyone is trained alike, with no regard to the diversity of backgrounds and experiences that each person brings to the group. Instead of being encouraged to use priorknowledge, to construct their own meanings, or to learn from their peers, they were taught from a skills-based model with the teacher-leader sharing his or her knowledge to the group. Unlike the shared-learning models that Barnes experienced in university classes, discussion was only led by the teacher leader. In addition, she felt mistrust during peer critique sessions after the one-way mirror lessons. The trainees were seemingly afraid to give negative feedback.

In response to Barnes, five experienced Reading Recovery teachers wrote an article rebutting her claims. In "Teaching and

Learning in Reading Recovery: Response to 'But Teacher You Went Right on'", Ann Browne, Maryellen Fitts, Bennetta McLaughlin, Mary Jane McNamara, and Judy Williams state that their training experiences, although separate, were collectively different from Barnes' (1996). For example, Browne describes her training as a "diagnostic learning atmosphere, an environment safe for taking risks and sharing strengths and weaknesses in teaching practices (p.298)." They claimed that their one-way mirror feedback sessions were helpful and challenging. In fact, McNamara stated that the most noticeable element of those sessions was trust.

Another problem with Reading Recovery that Barnes acknowledged was time restraints. Because the lessons are restricted to thirty minutes, there is a limited amount of time available for student-teacher dialogue, student elaboration on sentence writing, and reflection. The program requires the teacher to work with each Reading Recovery student for thirty minutes every day. However, field trips, assemblies, illnesses, and other interruptions make daily lessons difficult. Missed meeting times are supposed to be made up either before or after school or during lunch time. This is an inconvenience for both teacher and student. Also, even if a student is absent, the parent is asked to bring him or her to school for Reading

Recovery time (Barnes,1996). These arrangements disrupt both the teacher and student's daily schedule.

Another problem with time is fitting every component of the lesson into the restricted time frame. The allotted thirty minutes is often shortened due to factors such as leaving the classroom, finding books, going to the bathroom, as well as the student's attitude toward working on that particular day. Barnes claims that this limit to time practically eliminates teacher-student dialogue. Instead, there is an emphasis on teacher talk, that is, teacher directed dialogue. She states, "...we are told not to open our mouths unless what we are going to say will further children's strategy learning (Barnes,1996,p.289)."

One of Barnes' biggest problems with this time constraint is the limit placed on writing. Students are to write only one sentence per lesson. Often, a child will come to the lesson ready to tell a story about something they feel to be exciting or important. Not only is there no time for them to tell the story, there is also no time for writing it. Instead, the child must limit him or herself to one sentence. Therefore, what could have been an interesting story about an experience a child had on a trip to Florida becomes "I went to Florida in May." Also, invented spelling is discouraged. When a child cannot spell a

word the teacher shows him how. Both of these procedures can cause confusion for a student who is given different expectations in the regular classroom. For example, when given the opportunity to write many sentences about his trip to Florida, the student may become inclined to still only write one sentence. Also, Barnes claims that the students often expect the teacher to always give him or her the correct spelling of a word when asked because that is what the Reading Recovery teacher does. Barnes' suggestion is to give the students a dictated sentence to write. This may help to separate the expectations of a regular classroom writing lesson and a Reading Recovery lesson.

Browne, Fitts, McLaughlin, McNamara, and Williams have a different perspective on the time limit of the lessons. They claim that the goal of Reading Recovery students is the same as that of good readers and writers - to be quick. They focus on reading and writing conversations with their students, not teacher talk. They also state that the time on lessons is short but valuable because one student has the undivided attention of an experienced teacher who knows his or her strengths and how to help in the use of those strengths.

These five teachers also disagree on the value of the writing portion of the lesson. They feel that what is learned

during the Reading Recovery lesson can be used in the regular classroom. The student learns "the inner workings of writing and emphasizes the connections between writing and reading (p.296)." The teacher is there to support the sentence that the student produces by helping to fill in unknown words. They feel that the goal of writing in Reading Recovery, word accuracy, is different from the goal of expression in classroom writing journals. The cut-up sentence strips provide an opportunity to strengthen the ability to analyze words in writing and relate them to reading. As to the problem of time-restrained writing, they suggest having the student split a long sentence or a multi-sentence story into more than one lesson. They could elaborate on the idea each day.

In addition to training and time, Barnes was also bothered by the amount of paperwork required by the program. Reading Recovery teachers are required to keep up with attendance records, written analysis of each student's strengths and weaknesses, and a "Prediction of Progress" report stating long and short-term goals, daily lesson plan analysis, a daily running record or miscue analysis, a weekly update of book-level progress, a weekly update of written vocabulary words, and a list of each introduced book with running record results. Barnes claims that because she does not want to take time away from the

children during the school day, she must spend at least one hour per night doing paperwork.

Browne, Fitts, Bennetta, McLaughlin, McNamara, and Williams state that all teachers are expected to do some nightly preparations and to keep detailed records. They believe that if Barnes is forced to do an abundance of work each night either the school is not allowing her enough time between lessons or she has not learned to work efficiently. Also, these five teachers do not see the record keeping as perfunctory paperwork. Instead, they complete valuable records of information for analysis and commenting on student progress. McNamara states, "I can't think of one piece [of documentation] that I would eliminate (p.297)."

Barnes' (1996) experience with Reading Recovery has led her to believe that "first-grade children who are struggling with reading need more time in a print-rich, whole language classroom before they are ready to focus on the conventions of print (p.303)." Although Reading Recovery research has found that there is an approximately 90% success rate for children in the program, Barnes cites three of her own students whom the program failed to help. Out of the four children she was working with, one eventually read at grade level, two were placed in special education, and one she dropped from the program because he cried

"I hate reading!" when she came to get him for a lesson
(Barnes,1996) .

In addition to Barnes, there have been other arguments about the effectiveness of Reading Recovery. Several studies have disputed Clay's claim of success for Reading Recovery students. In an article by Gail Coulter and Bonnie Grossen of the University of Oregon and Barbara Ruggles of Beacon Hill Elementary in Park Forest, Illinois (1996), it is stated that much of the success that has been measured can be disputed. For example, many students are dropped from the program at level 10, the level at which most reach class average. Level 10 books have a high rate of predictability. Success achieved with these materials does not necessarily lead to success with the authentic text that is used in many regular classrooms. Coulter, et al (1996) state, "The strategies (Reading Recovery students) have learned for reading may not generalize to real reading (p.11).

IV. Early Success Program

Despite some dissatisfactions from those such as Barnes, Coulter, Grossen, and Ruggles, Reading Recovery has received a high amount of acclaim for its success. The program has also spread from the formal model developed by Clay into adaptations at use in schools around the country. Text-book publishing companies are now creating their own programs which reflect many Reading Recovery principles. One such example is the Early Success (1996) program created by the Houghton Mifflin Company. This program, written by J. David Cooper and John J. Pikulski, can be purchased as a complete classroom set, including seven copies of thirty different books, a teacher's manual, a staff development video, story summaries, and letter cards and trays (Cooper, 1996).

The program is intended for use by a small group of students within the regular classroom. Instruction is given by either the regular classroom teacher or by a special reading teacher and lasts for one school year, or until a student has shown that he/she can work independently at grade level. Like Reading Recovery, the group works with the teacher for thirty minutes every day. The program can be used by first graders who have difficulty in tracking print, lack phonemic awareness, and don't

understand what reading and writing are and how they work. It can also be used by second graders who do not have sufficient decoding and spelling strategies. Generally, the lowest reading 20% of the class are involved in the program. Two types of assessment materials, an Observation Checklist and an Emergent Literacy Survey, are provided in the program to help determine which students could likely benefit from the program. School and district assessment tests and procedures can also be used for this purpose. It is recommended that students be removed from the program when they can read comfortably at grade level.

Each week the group works on one particular book. The goal is for students to be able to read the previous week's book with 90% accuracy. If this goal is achieved consistently, it is predicted that the student will be reading independently by the end of the school year. When an accuracy of less than 90% is obtained, special help such as regular checking, individual attention, and individual coaching before lessons is recommended. The authors also support Samuels' theory of repeated readings by suggesting rereadings to a trained adult or peer for extra help.

The Early Success Teacher's Manual (1996) provides a specific lesson plan for every day of the week which can be adapted to each book. Day one begins with rereading for fluency

and running records. The students spend these first five to ten minutes reading a familiar book from a previous week either to themselves or to a partner. During partner readings, effective coaching is encouraged. Students should be taught how to support their partner with hints, not by telling them the words. The teacher should model hints to the students such as "What makes sense?", "What letter sounds do you know?", and "Are there word parts you know?".

While the group is rereading, the teacher should use this time for completing running records. Each child should be checked at least once every two weeks. Running records are usually taken on the previous week's book. Teachers should not coach during this reading so as to record an accurate account of the student's progress. A running record sample from the Early Success program is included in the appendix.

The next ten minutes of day one's lesson involve a book walk and preview, a first reading of the story, and a shared reading. First, the group gathers around the teacher so that everyone can see the pictures in the book. The teacher shows each page, asking questions to spark the interest and excitement of the students. This is the time to introduce new words by leading them into the conversation. Students are shown that much,

although not everything, about the story can be revealed from the pictures.

After the book walk is completed, it is time for the first reading. At the beginning of the year it is advised that the teacher read the story to the students on the first day. As the year progresses and the students become better readers, the teacher can fade out teacher reading and have the students do the initial reading to themselves. By spring, students should be independent in their initial reading.

The shared reading is a time for the teacher and students to read the book together. The teacher's voice is usually in the lead, with the children chiming in as they feel comfortable. As the year progresses, the teacher continually drops back more and more from the lead. Every student should be following along with the text as the teacher reads and points to the words to help with the concept of tracking.

The last ten minutes of day one make up the activity section of the lesson with a choice of two activities; "Making Words" or "Rounding Up the Rhymes". "Making Words" is a hands-on activity with every-pupil response which helps students learn letter combinations that make words and how changes can make new words. Each "Making Words" session involves each student in making six

to nine words, the last word being a word from the story.

The other activity choice is "Rounding Up the Rhymes" which helps children to look for rhyming patterns in words. The main idea of this activity is for the students to learn that rhymes can sometimes, but not always, help them to spell a word. (See appendix for directions to both activities)

Day two of the program begins the same as day one with rereading for fluency and running records. The second section of this lesson is coached reading. In order for this to be successful, students must know how to use word-recognition strategies. This can be modeled and taught by pointing to parts of words or writing on a pad. It is also helpful to discuss what makes sense in different sentence situations and to have students refer to picture clues.

The coaching process itself can be done by a teacher with an individual while the others are coaching in partners, or during a group reading. In the group reading students would take turns reading pages individually while the teacher coaches by giving hints when needed. Other students are encouraged not to call out words.

The third part of day two is writing sentences. There are two different procedures for this activity, depending on the

level at which the students are working. In the beginning, guided writing is used. In this situation, the teacher asks a question about the story and from the responses, the group creates one sentence. The children write the sentence with prompts from the teacher. The sentence is then written so that everyone can see. Students should be encouraged to do as much spelling as possible on their own. All students should have a correctly spelled sentence to take home and share with their families.

As their skill level progresses, the group sentence changes to individual sentences. At first, invented spelling is to be accepted and praised. Eventually, the teacher should point out what was correct in the spelling, but also prompt to identify missing or incorrect letters and sounds.

Day three begins with rereading for fluency and individual coaching. This is a time for teachers to give extra attention to students who scored less than 90% accuracy on their running record of the previous week's book. During this time teachers should prompt the student to self monitor and cross-check with more than one cue and to give other decoding tips. Teachers should also praise and reinforce the student to help build confidence.

The next part of day three is coached reading, followed by "Making Words" or "Rounding Up the Rhymes" activities.

Day four begins the same as day three with rereading for fluency and individual coaching. The next step is independent reading. The developers of the program believe that in order for children to achieve success, they must be reading independently. First, the whole class should read the book to themselves. Then, either individuals can read the story out loud or partners can read to each other. During this time the teacher should be monitoring students' work and providing coaching when needed.

Next, the Take-home Story Summary is introduced. This is a new version of the book of the week which provides additional text for the students to read. Students are to take the summary home to read and share their achievement. Each page of the Story Summary provides a space for the students to illustrate, allowing for a visual retelling. These illustrations also personalize the summary for each child. The conclusion of day four's lesson is spent writing sentences, following the same format as day two.

The last day for the book of the week begins with rereading for fluency and individual coaching. Next is independent reading and reading the Take-home Story Summary. Students should take

home their summaries on this day. These summaries are to be shared with the parents. The parents then sign the last page of the booklet to verify that their child has read it to them and send this page back to school. The children get to keep their summary booklets.

The final activity of the week is the adding of three new words to the Word Wall for high-frequency words. This "wall" can be a bulletin board or large mural near where the Early Success group works. Each letter of the alphabet is posted with a collection of high-frequency words under their corresponding first letter. Each word in a group should be mounted on a different color so that each looks distinct. The Early Success program provides three high-frequency words for each book in the series. These words are then available for reference as the students read and write. The Early Success program has many beneficial elements. For example, the use of partners and peer support builds a sense of community learning in which students learn from each other, not just from the teacher. The books represent a variety of appropriate levels and are interesting and visually attractive. Because each book is incorporated into a week of lessons, there is much opportunity for rereading and overlearning. Students do not just read a story once and move

on. Activities such as picture walking, shared readings, and coaching all enhance and facilitate the reading process. The student's family is involved through the story summaries which are brought home.

However, I believe there are some limitations to Early Success. During the writing sentences section of the lessons, students are not free to write about the topic of their choice. Even for individual sentences the student is given a question from which to create his or her sentence. There is no freedom to simply write about one's particular interests. Also, books for use during the lesson are limited to those in the series. Certain trade books could be just as beneficial when used with the activities in the program. Finally, since the program is designed for use by only the lowest 20% of the class, others who may also need some help do not receive its benefits.

V. Reading Recovery Programs in Maryland

In addition to nationally published programs, many counties in Maryland are adapting variations of the Reading Recovery program into their elementary schools. For example, Harford County Public Schools have implemented the ReAch (reading achievement) Program (ReAch,1994). ReAch is very similar to Reading Recovery in that it is intended for first and second grader who have been identified as in need of special help. These students are included in the Title 1 program established by the Educational Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1980 (McGill-Frazen,1987).

Students selected for the ReAch program stay in the program for a period of twelve to eighteen weeks. During this time they work one-on-one with a trained ReAch instructional assistant for thirty minutes each day. The daily lesson plan is comparable to Reading Recovery: rereading of a familiar book, taking of a running record, strategy instruction, guided writing, and introduction to a new book. However, ReAch adds an optional activity for the beginning of each lesson, a fluent writing review. During this time the student reconstructs the sentence which they created and made into sentence strips the previous day. As with Reading Recovery, the goal of the program is for

each child to become able to achieve success in working in grade level material (ReAch,1994).

ReAch instruction assistants are selected on the basis of their ability to work with students, their effectiveness as a "team player", and their willingness to listen to and implement suggestions. Every school also has reading specialists, similar to Reading Recovery's teacher leaders, who are responsible for overseeing the program and monitoring both the instructional assistants' and students' progress. The instructional assistants and reading specialists receive inservice training during the first week of school and throughout the school year. There are also regularly scheduled meetings for the coordination and evaluating of programs as well as planning and staff development activities led by the reading specialists (ReAch,1994).

Each day the reading specialist works with one instructional assistant to review his or her students' weekly progress. Suggestions for instruction are given at this time. In addition, every Thursday the reading specialist and instructional assistants observe one ReAch lesson given by a team member. Discussion and feedback of the lesson follow (ReAch,1994).

Another important element of the ReAch program is that fifth graders are trained to tutor struggling ReAch students. At the

end of each day, these older students work with selected students on their stories and sentence strips. This extra support is especially given when it is suspected that little support is given at home (ReAch,1994).

Family is also an important element of this program. Each night students take home a book and their sentence strips. The parents are provided with a copy of the completed sentence and are expected to support their children for about ten to fifteen minutes per night by having them reconstruct their sentence and read their book aloud. The parents are then asked to sign the sentence paper to show that they have observed their child's completion of each task. The parents of ReAch students are provided with an explanation of their expectations and suggestions for activities and steps they can follow to help their children (ReAch,1994).

Parent and teacher response to ReAch seems to be mostly positive. They are particularly pleased with the improvement of student attitude. One parent commented, "...Self esteem has been learned by succeeding in this program." Another said, "Our son has made such drastic improvement since he began the ReAch program. He is proud of his accomplishments and proud to be a reader." A classroom teacher commented that "It is beneficial

for those who lack confidence in reading." A second grade classroom teacher said, "It has a positive effect with children who have a bad attitude." Two negative aspects which were addressed by classroom teachers were that it seems to help students who already have a background of skills the most and that some children need more services than others in the program (ReAch,1994).

Another county in Maryland, Wicomico County, has also implemented a program based on Reading Recovery. The RISE program is used in Wicomico County Public Schools by Chapter 1 first and second graders. Although RISE has its own set of procedures and principles, a few variations of the program can be found among the different schools.

Beaver Run Elementary in Salisbury, Maryland follows a version of RISE that is very similar to the traditional Reading Recovery program. Their program consists of twenty-five first and second grade students who are below the 39% national percentile in reading. There are two teachers and four reading assistants involved in the program who were trained by teacher conferences and guest speakers (personal interview,1997).

The RISE program at Beaver Run follows the same lesson plan as ReAch: reconstruction of the previous day's sentence,

rereading of familiar book, taking of a running record on last night's homework book, strategy instruction, writing of a new sentence, and introduction of a new book which will then be sent home to reread. Each RISE student in Wicomico County has a writing journal to record their daily sentences. This serves as a record of progress (personal interview,1997).

VI. Case Study Involving Reading Recovery at Beaver Run

Elementary School

To test the success of RISE, I conducted two case studies by observations, records, and interviews in two different Wicomico County elementary schools. Each study was held over a period of six weeks, with one RISE lesson observed each week.

The first study was of a second grade girl, Ann, who was enrolled in the RISE program at Beaver Run Elementary and had been identified as having difficulties in both word recognition and comprehension. Ann had been working with Linda Truitt, one of the two RISE teachers in the school, since September.

I had the opportunity to work in Ann's regular classroom during October and November of this particular school year. She was obviously behind her classmates in many academic subjects. For example, she was unable to complete the same spelling lists as her classmates. During weekly spelling tests Ann was asked to try her best to spell the words but was not graded on her work. Instead, the teacher had her work on flash cards of familiar words whenever she had the chance. Her classroom teacher did not feel it was fair to continually fail her on tests which were above her instructional level.

In April, when I began to observe Ann's RISE lessons, I went

back to talk to her classroom teacher. The teacher commented that Ann was now more verbal in class and less hesitant to speak out. She believed that Ann had gained confidence in her abilities.

The scores from the Classroom Reading Inventory (Sivaroli, 1997) administered in September indicate that Ann's instructional level was at a preprimer (80%) accuracy rate. She scored 65% at the primer level and 40% at first grade level. She scored at the instructional level of preprimer in word recognition and primer in comprehension.

After approximately three months in the RISE program, the test was readministered in January. Ann's scores improved to show an overall instructional level of between primer (85%) and first (90%). She scored 95% at the preprimer level, 75% at second grade and 35% at third grade. Her word recognition scores showed an instructional level of second grade and comprehension was at an instructional level, between first and second.

My observations of her lessons took place during April and May of 1997. The first observation day took place the day after testing had been completed at the school. Therefore, Ann had missed several lessons. Upon arriving at her RISE station (a table with two chairs surrounded by a poster displaying

attendance records and titles of books read by each of Ms. Truitt's RISE students), Ann placed a sticker over the appropriate date on her attendance record. She then immediately took out a zip-locked sandwich bag which held her cut-up sentence strips and began to reconstruct the sentence she had created during her last lesson, "My dad bought me some bubble stuff." Ms. Truitt then picked out the words "bubble" and "bought" and asked Ann to alphabetize them. Ms. Truitt often enriches this portion of the lesson with alphabetizing or other challenges involving Ann's sentence. When they were finished with the sentence, the strips were put back into the bag and placed in a file folder. At the end of each month the students take home all of the sentences so that they can review and practice them.

Next, Ann picked a familiar book to read. The books used in the RISE program at Beaver Run are trade books based on levels used by the Early Success Program. Ann seemed very comfortable in her reading of this book. Her only miscue was the substitution of "box" for "boxes." However, as soon as Ms. Truitt pointed to the word Ann made a self-correction.

After reading the book, Ms. Truitt worked with Ann on the sound of "sn". Ms. Truitt began by writing the words "snake" and "sneakers" (two words from the story) and then asked Ann to give

her more examples of words with that sound. Ann gave three additional words.

The next step of the lesson was sentence writing. Ann took out her journal and labeled the next line with the date. Since she was unsure of what to write about, Ms. Truitt helped her with prompts such as "What about the test you just took?", and "Do you want to write about your friends?" She kept prompting Ann until she decided on "Tomorrow I am going to come to school." Since she did not know how to spell "tomorrow", Ms. Truitt helped her with the correct spelling. As Ann wrote the sentence in her journal, Ms. Truitt wrote it on the sentence strip and also on the paper to take home to be signed by her parents.

After the sentence was completed it was put away in Ann's RISE bag. Each RISE student is given a small denim bag to carry their RISE material to and from school. Then Ms. Truitt selected a new book. Ann seemed anxious to start; she began to read before Ms. Truitt was ready. Ms. Truitt told her that first they had to look at the pictures. They flipped through the book as Ms. Truitt asked questions such as, "Does an elephant walk on two feet?" and "Is this a real story?" Ann predicted from the pictures that she knew what the characters were going to do in the story.

Ann then read the story with good fluency. When she stumbled, the teacher gave her help. The book was then placed in her bag to take home to read to her parents. Before Ann went back to her classroom, another book was also included in her bag to take home because she had missed a few days of lessons due to testing.

My overall reaction to this first lesson was positive. Even though Ann and Ms. Truitt stayed within the thirty minute time limit, neither teacher nor student seemed rushed. There was time for teacher-student interactions and reflections about the stories. Ann seemed to enjoy her time spent on the RISE lesson.

Each of Ann's lessons that I observed seemed to go smoothly and successfully. Ann often had her sentence reconstructed before the teacher even sat down and began reading before she was asked. She rarely struggled with the books she read. When there was a problem, Ms. Truitt used the incident to teach Ann about language. For example, when Ann substituted "hair" for "air", they chunked the word "air". That is, Ann was asked to write words with the sound and letters "air". (Examples: fair, stair, etc.)

Ann was also very creative in the sentences she wrote. She often chose to write long sentences with challenging words like

"weekend" and "Christmas". Her sentences increased in complexity as her lessons progressed. In November she wrote, "Caterpillars live here." and by March she was writing, "When summertime comes I am going to play outside."

In fact, her assessment in May indicated a significant improvement. She tested at 100% at preprimer, 100% at primer, 100% at first grade, 95% at second grade, and 55% at third grade. She was at the instructional level of third grade in both word recognition and comprehension. Ann was now reading at the level of her classmates.

VII. Case Study Involving Reading Recovery at Delmar

Elementary School

The RISE program at Delmar Elementary in Delmar, Maryland, site of my second case study, is similar to the program at Beaver Run. The study took place during October and November of 1997. At this school I observed two first grade girls, Jamie and Katie, who had been in the program since September 23 of that year. When they were tested in September, both girls tested at an independent level of readiness, an instructional level of readiness to preprimer, and a frustrational level above preprimer. Jamie was noted by RISE teacher Betty Ryall as having limited word attack and phonic skills. Katie seemed to have problems reading new books but significantly improved her surface structure, or mechanics of eye-voice span at sight vocabulary, as the books became familiar.

Prior to my visitations, the lessons were conducted in the same format as Beaver Run. However, at the time of my second visit, the RISE teachers began following a slightly different format. Instead of taking home a book that was just introduced, the homework book would be a familiar book. Thus, the parents would not be responsible for teaching a new book.

Another difference in the program at Delmar is that students

work in pairs with a RISE teacher, not individually. Both Jamie and Katie worked with the same teacher, Ms. Ryall, for thirty minutes each day. The partnership seemed to have both advantages and disadvantages. One benefit was that the girls could learn from each other, not just from the teacher. For example, on several occasions when Jamie could not decode a word, Katie was asked to tell Jamie the word and explain how she knew the word. Also, Katie seemed to keep Jamie motivated. After less two months in the program, Katie passed Jamie in her sight vocabulary. (Jamie scored 50% on words in isolation at preprimer level in September while Jamie scored 35%.) Since Katie was often the first to read a particular book, Jamie became interested in the books after listening to Katie read. Jamie frequently asked if she could read those books as her new material.

In some cases, this overlapping of material was an asset. The teacher would often save time and add variety to the lesson by either having both girls read every other page or doing a choral reading of a book after each had each read it.

However, Jamie's tendency to follow Katie also had disadvantages. During sentences, Jamie often waited to see what Katie was writing and then created a sentence very similar to it.

For example, when Katie wrote, "I am getting two dogs." Jamie wrote, "I would like to have two cats." When Katie wrote, "My sister and I like cats.", Jamie wrote "I like cats and dogs."

When Jamie was not following what Katie was writing, she had a tendency to write about the same thing continuously; love. Her favorite sentence to write was "I love my mom." Her teacher prompted her to think of a different sentence when she suggested this sentence. I was told by her teacher that Jamie was having problems at home which were probably the reason for her sentence.

Another problem caused by the partnership was Jamie's tendency to drift from the lesson. Since only one child could read aloud at a time, the other would have nothing to do. The teacher often suggested that they look over their books when it wasn't their turn to read. However, Jamie liked to rummage through her tray (where her materials were kept) or bang on the table. On the other hand, Katie either read her own book silently or followed along with Jamie when Jamie was reading.

One of Jamie's biggest problems was haste. She rushed through pages and didn't take time to really look at the words. Therefore, she often added words that are not in the text or changes words to what she thought they should be. For example, while reading the book Busy Week (1996) from the Early Success

Program, she omitted "s" from the endings of the days of the week and substituted "Sunday" for "Saturday". Her miscues were mostly substitutions of one word for one similar in configuration, either starting with the same letter or a word with a similar meaning. For example, when she read the Early Success book, Brothers (1996), she had eight miscues including "go" for "ride" and "that" for "then". The teacher prompted her to use her finger to point to each word to guide her in her reading.

Katie seemed to be reading well at her instructional level when I observed her. The day of my first visitation she read Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush (Early Success, 1996) for her running record. Although her fluency was slow, all words were in her sight vocabulary. When she accidentally skipped a page she noticed immediately and went back. This shows that she was familiar with the book and knew when something was missing. She also picked this book several other times as her familiar book of the day.

When Katie did have a miscue, it was usually a substitution of a word that did not change the meaning of the sentence such as "of" for "from". When she did struggle with a word the teacher would prompt her with picture or phonic cues.

My opinion of the program is mixed. I feel that the

partnerships are somewhat helpful and that it is usually better for a child to learn from more than one person. However, I don't think all students receive the optimum help from a Reading Recovery type program while working with a partner. For example, Jamie needs someone to constantly keep her on task. Since it is unrealistic to expect individual direction from her classroom teacher, RISE lessons would be an ideal time for one-on-one help. But in this program Jamie spends almost half of her time waiting for her turn, giving her the rest of the time to be off task.

I also feel that there needs to be more emphasis on phonic skills. Often, when Ms. Ryall asked the girls to give a particular sound for a consonant blend or digraph, neither could do it. Part of the problem for could be the time restraint. Because two students must share the same thirty minutes, there is little time for enrichment activities such as those at Beaver Run. Therefore, the students are unable to use phonics cues due to a lack of background in working with two students. When Katie is unable to give the sound for "th" there is no time to work on the skill. The sound is simply given and they move on.

On the other hand, Katie seems to not only be learning and improving her reading skills, but also enjoying the program as well. On the last day of my visitations Jamie was absent. With

just one child there was time for the reading of two familiar books as well as a new book. Katie finished a little early and the teacher said that she could just go back to class if she wished to do so. Katie said "No". She wanted to stay and read. This proves more than any hard data that the program is working for this child. This tells me the program is working for Katie, in that, she will now read on her own.

VIII. A Classroom Curriculum: PEER

Reading Recovery seems to be a successful way to help low-achieving readers develop better reading skills. Unfortunately, a Reading Recovery program, or one similar to it such as RISE or ReAch, is not possible in all schools. Costs such as the training of teachers and teacher leaders and purchasing packaged book sets force some schools to rule out such a program. Many schools have difficulties paying for the number of teachers needed to teach the regular classrooms.

Since Reading Recovery has proven to be beneficial for low-achieving readers, its program could be implemented with average readers. Extra time spent reading is beneficial for all readers. Therefore, I have created a curriculum based on Reading Recovery for use in the regular classroom. The program, PEER (Partners for Enriching Every Reader), is based on many of the same principles established by Clay's program; one-on-one involvement, running records, familiar books, and skill development, all within a thirty minute time span.

PEER also incorporates partnerships into the program. From my observations of the RISE program at Delmar Elementary, it was clear that some students are enriched by working with both a teacher and a peer. It also became clear that partnerships are

not always appropriate. Time spent waiting for a turn is a waste. Therefore, in Peer partners work simultaneously. They read one book together, then discuss and write. Students are involved in individual work for a majority of the thirty minutes. When they are not, they are directly helping their partner or taking place in a group activity.

The program was developed for a regular first, second, or third grade classroom of approximately 24 students. It is taught by the classroom teacher as a supplement, not a replacement, to their traditional reading lessons. Any teacher can use the program in his/her class, regardless of whether or not others in the school are using it. The thirty minutes required for the program can fit in between subjects, at the beginning or end of the day, or as a substitute for "free time." However, if a majority of teachers within a school are involved in the program, a school wide network can be established. Meetings of PEER teachers can be arranged as a support to discuss lessons, activities, and their perspectives on the program. Instead of the one-way mirror, videotaping can be used for critiques. Also, if the program is school-wide, time can be allotted for PEER just like other subjects.

Materials for the program are inexpensive and readily

available. Because funds are often not available for the purchase of commercial sets such as Early Success, trade books can be used. There is a wide range of quality children's literature available in school libraries which could be borrowed for classroom use. Introducing students to classic and exceptional trade books is an added bonus to the program since many traditional reading programs require the use of basal text books.

In addition to a selection of books, teachers will need a file folder for each student to keep running records and notes on the child's progress. Teachers will also need a collection of reading skill activities and directions such as "Making Words", "Rounding up Rhymes", window sentence strips, and Cloze activities for student use in reviewing and drilling sight words and other vocabulary.

Although preparation of these activities can be time consuming, completion of one or two activities per week will lead to a large class collection. Making one reproducible cloze activity and one reusable set of Making Words cards will take about ten minutes. However, during times in which activities are not available for all partnerships, games such as hangman, which require no preparation, can be played with words from a

particular story.

Teachers will also need to have a folder labeled for each partnership. Prior to Monday's lesson, one book should be put in each folder. Book assignment should be based on the reading levels of both students. Students should alternate between books at their reading level and books at the level just below them. The focus of the program is rereading to enforce skills. Since students are working with a peer and not individually with the teacher, assigned books should be either a review or a slight challenge. Therefore, students should always be matched with someone at their ability level, one level ahead, or one level behind. There should never be more than a one-level difference between partners.

The only material for which the student is responsible for providing is a single-subject, spiral notebook. The notebook will be used to keep a list of new and unfamiliar words and to record created sentences. These notebooks can also be a reference when teachers are concerned or curious about a child's progress.

PEER is designed to be used in the classroom for the entire school year. However, PEER lesson time during the first two or three weeks of school should focus on preparing the students for

the program. For example, the teacher should teach cooperative learning skills and lead activities which allow the students to meet their classmates. One resource which would be beneficial for this task is Tribes: a New Way of Learning and Being Together (1995) by Jeanne Gibbs which describes many ways to teach and facilitate cooperative learning.

Once cooperative learning has been introduced, initial partnerships are established. These partnerships should be flexible, allowing changes to be made every two weeks. Since approximately twelve running records are taken each week (depending on the number of students in the class), two week partnerships allow the teacher to record each student before partners are changed. Changes in partners enable students to learn how to work with a variety of people. Also, every student has his or her own strengths to share with the class. This combination of many different strengths and limitations can be beneficial to everyone. However, the teacher should be sure to remember the one-level difference rule.

The activities and learning techniques which will be used during the lessons must also be covered during this initiation period. For example, students must be taught what it means to do a walk-through of a book and to make predictions based on the

pictures. Decoding strategies should be discussed and practiced. Dictionary skills should be reviewed in second and third grade classrooms, as they may be used to help in sentence writing. Also, students should be given time to practice writing sentences so that the teacher can identify problems and begin correcting them before the program begins. Therefore, for the first two weeks, about fifteen minutes should be spent on cooperative learning skills and about fifteen minutes should be spent on reading and sentence writing skills.

PEER lessons run Monday through Friday with each partnership working with one book per week. Each day of the week has a distinct lesson plan. Prior to Monday's lesson partnerships should be established (if it is a change-up week) and one book should be placed in each folder in addition to any notes or special instructions the teacher has for a partnership.

At the beginning of Monday's lesson students will get their folders and sit with their partners. Time is allowed for organization at this time since often new partnerships are being established. When they are seated and ready, each pair will complete a walk through of their book, looking at the illustrations and parts of the text. After a brief discussion of their impressions, partners will make individual predictions

about the story. Next, each pair will flip through the text, writing down any words which neither partner is familiar with. These lists are turned in to the teacher. The remainder of the time should be spent on a first reading of their book.

Tuesday's lesson begins with a class activity. The teacher should write a class list of each unknown word turned in from Monday's lesson on the board. The teacher will point to each word and ask students to raise their hands if they know the word. The words are then read out loud to the class either by students or by the teacher if no student knows a word. This activity allows students to be introduced to words that are not in their particular books. Also, students are benefiting from the collective knowledge of the class, not just from their partner. As the activity moves along, the students will write each word in their notebooks.

After this activity has been completed, students will break off into partners to read their book. The students can either read the book silently at the same time, do a choral reading, or take turns reading every other page. If the teacher has a preference as to how a partnership reads the book, a note should be placed in their folder prior to the lesson. Otherwise, it will be the students' choice.

During this reading time, students are encouraged to help their partners use decoding strategies. A list of strategies such as context clues, picture clues, and phonic skills should be posted to help remind them of available choices. Students will continue reading until the thirty minutes is over.

On Wednesday, partners reread their books aloud to each other. As one partner is reading, the other should be following along with the text. After each has had a turn, they will take out their notebooks and begin to create a sentence. Partners will support each other by helping to spell unfamiliar words or prompting each other on sentence topics. Dictionaries or class word lists should be available for use when neither student knows a word. A classroom word wall can also be beneficial for student reference. They should also be encouraged to use the lists of new words which they have recorded in their notebooks.

Students are to write a sentence which relates to the story they are reading. Within this topic there are a wide range of possibilities; a comment about a character or the plot, a description of the setting, a comment about his or her opinion about the book, or a comparison of the book to another, as well as many others. It is recommended that a chart be posted in the room identifying these and other choices to help the students in

their sentence creating. It is important that each partner write a unique sentence. This prevents one student from simply copying from the other.

As with all activities, the teacher should be "kidwatching", or walking around the class to monitor student work. This is the time to identify and correct sentence structure and observe student work. Teachers should try to spread their time evenly throughout the week, since many days it will be hard to interact with every student. Be sure to talk with each partnership sometime during the week to check for problems. It may also help the teacher to periodically collect student notebooks to check progress.

During the last fifteen minutes of the class, the teacher should take approximately three running records. Each of these children is taken aside individually while the others finish their sentences, reread their books, or free-write in their notebooks.

On Thursday, the teacher will complete six more running records. Students not working with the teacher will be doing the skill-building activities. Normally, these will be done in partners, but small-group work can occasionally be included. Instructions on how the students will work together should be

given at the beginning of the lesson. Partners will complete at least two different activities. Students will have a choice of which activities to complete unless the teacher has left a note specifying a particular activity in their folder. Also, to make this time less chaotic, the teacher may want to list suggestions on the board.

Friday's lesson begins with a read-aloud. At this time students are given the opportunity to read their book aloud to the class either individually or with their partner. This is only an option, since some students are uncomfortable reading in front of a group of people. The intention is that as the students progress in their reading abilities they will become confident and want to share their talents with the class. No more than three books should be read at this time. If there are fewer than three volunteers, (which may happen at the start of the program) the teacher can read books aloud to the class.

The week is completed by three final running records, during which time the other students are discussing and sharing books among one another. This is a time for students to get excited about other books that are being read in the class.

IX. Conclusion

I believe, that if followed carefully, PEER can be a powerful classroom resource for enriching reading skills. As with most all programs, it can be altered to fit the specific needs of a class. This flexibility in books and activities make it available for any first, second, or third grade class. Low-achieving readers develop skills from their classmates and high-achieving readers develop even more through practice and through helping their peers. Students are not shuffled from one room to another, classroom teachers are given another opportunity to observe and monitor their students' reading skills, and schools do not need to allot great amounts of money to support it. Therefore, the PEER program is beneficial for everyone involved.

Works Cited

- Barnes, Bonnie L. "But Teacher You Went Right On: A Perspective on Reading Recovery." The Reading Teacher, 50 (Dec. 1996/Jan. 1997): 284-292.
- Barnes, Bonnie L. "Response to Browne, Fitts, McLaughlin, McNamara, and Williams." The Reading Teacher, 50 (Dec. 1996/Jan. 1997): 302-303.
- Bradman, Tony. Busy Week. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996.
- Browne, Ann, et al. "Teaching and Learning in Reading Recovery: Response to 'But Teacher You Went Right On.'" The Reading Teacher, 50 (Dec. 1996/Jan. 1997): 294-300.
- Cooper, J. David and John J. Pikulski. Early Success: An Intervention Program Teachers Manual. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996.
- Costigan, Shirleyann. Brothers. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996.
- Coulter, Gail, et al. "Reading Recovery: An Evaluation of Benefits and Costs." Effective School Practices, 15 (Summer 1996): 6-24.
- DeFord, Diane E., et al. Bridges to Literacy: Learning From Reading Recovery. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1991.
- Gibbs, Jeanne. Tribes: A New Way of Learning and Being Together. Sausalito, CA: CenterSource Systems, 1995.
- McGill-Franzen, Anne. "Failure to Learn to Read: Formulating a Policy Problem." Reading Research Quarterly, XXII/4 (Fall 1987): 475-490.
- Pinnell, Gay Su. "Reading Recovery: Helping At-risk Children Learn to Read." The Elementary School Journal, 90 (Nov. 1989): 162-180.
- Pinnell, Gay Su. "Success for Low Achievers Through Reading Recovery." Educational Leadership. Sept. 1990: 17-21.

ReAch: Reading Achievement; Chapter 1, Harford County Public Schools. Towson, Md: 1994.

Rendall, Jenny. Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush. USA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996.

Samuels, S. Jay. "The Method of Repeated Readings." The Reading Teacher, 50 (Feb. 1997): 376-381.

Silvaroli, Nicholas J. Classroom Reading Inventory, Eighth Edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1997.

Spiegel, Dixie Lee. "A Comparison of Traditional Remedial Programs and Reading Recovery: Guidelines for Success for All Programs." The Reading Teacher, Vol.49, No.2 (Oct.1995): 86-96.

Truitt, Linda. Personal Interview, April, 1997.

Appendix

- Running Record
- "Making Words"
- "Rounding Up the Rhymes"

Running Record

Student's Name _____

Book _____ **Date** _____

[illegible]

Total number of words read correctly: = _____ = _____ % (Score)

Number of words in book:

Comments _____

"Making Words"

Directions:

1. Make index cards for six to nine words which use the same set of letters. (Ex: Sam, same, lame, meal, seal, sseam, slam, Samuel) The last word is a word from the story which is made up of each letter used in the other words.
2. Pass out the letter cards to each student, vowels first and then consonants in alphabetical order.
3. Lead the students in the creating of each word on their letter trays by saying the word, giving some type of hint, and using the word in a sentence. (Ex: "Take 3 of your letters and make Sam. I have an Uncle Sam. Everyone say Sam.")
4. The teacher then puts the word together on their letter tray. This pattern continues as each word is changed slightly to create a new word. Before saying the word from the story, have the students predict what the word will be.
5. Check every student's answer for each word.
6. Attention is then focused on the index cards as the students sort the words by letters, rhymes, and spelling patterns.

"Rounding Up the Rhymes"

Directions:

1. Students open their books to a particular page and read it together. They then look for 2 words on the page that rhyme.
2. Teacher writes the given words on index cards and underlines the rhyming spelling patterns.
3. Teacher writes but does not pronounce 2 other words with the same spelling pattern. Students pronounce the words.
4. Students are asked to spell 2 other rhyming pattern words. These are then written on cards.