

PRINCIPAL INFORMATION SERIES

Research is building a consensus about what high-quality teacher professional development looks like and can do to improve student learning and system-wide school improvement.



Reading Recovery

THE IMPORTANCE OF ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

An expert teacher makes a difference. *An expert teacher has more influence over children's learning than the influences of background, socioeconomic status, or class size and composition (Sanders & Horn, 1994). Students who are assigned several highly effective teachers in a row have significantly higher gains in achievement than those who are assigned to less effective teachers (Barrow & Sander, 2007; Goldhaber & Anthony, 2007; Berliner, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999).*

How do teachers become 'expert'? *Just as any professional (doctor, lawyer, tax preparer, etc.) must continue with ongoing learning beyond their initial preparation, so must teachers. The process of teaching is complex and requires a large knowledge base and a wide repertoire of skills, reflection, and inquiry that only comes with teaching many children over time. Investing in the professional learning of teachers in your school not only provides effective instruction for children but can contribute to the school learning community by raising the expertise of other colleague teachers as well (Hargreaves & Fullen, 2012; Sharratt & Fullen, 2009).*

Reading Recovery provides exemplary professional learning.

Reading Recovery is known for the strong professional development model it provides for teachers during the training year and beyond. Reading Recovery teachers become expert at systematically assessing and analyzing a child's current understandings, closely observing behavior for evidence of progress, self-analyzing teaching behaviors to determine the effect of the child's learning, and tailoring specific planned lessons to extend the child's learning (Schmitt, Askew, Fountas, Lyons, & Pinnell, 2005).

Reading Recovery studies document the powerful effect on teacher learning. Every evaluation of Reading Recovery has revealed the powerful impact that the training and ongoing professional learning has on teachers (Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk, & Stelzer, 1994; Herman & Stringfellow, 1997; May, Sirinides, Gray, & Goldsworthy, 2016).

In the federally funded i3 study report, researchers identified the instructional strength of Reading Recovery teachers. "Qualitative data revealed that respondents consistently identified the quality of individual Reading Recovery teachers' instruction as a critical and variable determinant of student learning" (May et al., p. 88). Researchers found that Reading Recovery teachers demonstrated both deliberativeness (an encompassing commitment to thoughtful practice) and dexterity (the flexible application of deep skill).

Reading Recovery, as part of a comprehensive schoolwide literacy approach, has potential to strengthen literacy teaching within a school.

Research supported, effective professional development principles—on which Reading Recovery is grounded—can also guide the professional learning of other teachers. These principles include:

- a balance between theory and demonstration of specific teaching approaches and the reflection and analysis needed to build a process about teaching
- complexity of ideas experienced, analyzed, and discussed across a variety of learning contexts
- professional learning grounded in the practice of teaching children
- sustained, ongoing, intensive, professional learning supported by coaching, modeling and collaborative problem solving, and reflection on specific problems of practice
- professional learning support by a community that shares a language that can be used to communicate about complex ideas about the acts of teaching
- professional learning connected to other aspects of school change

(Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Lyons, C. A., & Pinnell, G. S., 1999; Gaffney & Askew, 1999; Sharratt & Fullen, 2009)

Resources

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