The 2006–07 school year marked the 22nd year of Reading Recovery in the United States. The consistent results of the national evaluation continue to demonstrate a truly remarkable level of success in changing the lives of at-risk first grade children.

Summary of Reading Recovery Outcomes
During this school year, 98,187 Reading Recovery children were served by 11,702 Reading Recovery teachers in 6,948 schools located in 2,214 school districts. These teachers were supported by the work of 512 teacher leaders at 416 teacher training sites. Twenty-two university training centers provided professional development and support (Table 1).

As they have each year, Reading Recovery children represented different demographics than the other children in their schools. Reading Recovery children were more likely to be non-White (41% versus 33% of random sample children), receive free or reduced-price lunch (60% versus 45% of the random sample), and to be boys (58% versus 50% of the random sample). Of all the children served in Reading Recovery, 57% reached the average level of performance of their class (discontinued status outcome). Another 21% were recommended for further evaluation, 16% did not receive a complete program, and 4% moved during instruction. Only 3% were classified as none of the above. Of the children who received a complete intervention, 73% reached grade-level expectations in an average of 15.5 weeks.

Table 2 presents the mean Observation Survey scores for children whose lessons were discontinued because they reached average levels of performance, as well as the mean scores of children who were recommended for further evaluation. At the end of their first-grade year, children who successfully completed the intervention (discontinued status) reached a mean text reading level of 19.2, wrote an average of 55.7 words, had a mean score of 36.0 on Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words, read an average of 19.1 words, and knew 20.9 concepts about print. Although not reaching the levels of average performance, children recommended for further evaluation did end the year with considerable progress in reading and writing knowledge (see Table 2). While these children may find typical second-grade instruction challenging, they will bring to the task considerable strengths, especially in their knowledge of print concepts, letters, words, and sounds. Text reading continues to be the most-complex

**Table 2. Comparison of Mean Year-End Scores on the Tasks of the Observation Survey for Discontinued and Recommended Children, United States, 2006–07**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation Survey Task</th>
<th>Discontinued Children</th>
<th>Recommended Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Reading Level</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Vocabulary</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Identification</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Word Test</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts About Print</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
activity, and the most challenging for these hard-to-teach children.

Reading Recovery children who reached grade-level performance (discontinued status) demonstrated a dramatic change in their ranking in the national achievement groups from the beginning to the end of the year. In the fall, 36% of the Reading Recovery children with discontinued status scored in the lowest national achievement group, whereas only 3% scored in that achievement group at the end of the year. Classroom teachers perceived 83% of these children as below average in reading performance in the fall; by year-end, only 14% were considered below average and 87% were considered average or above.

Summary of Descubriendo la Lectura (DLL) Outcomes

During the 2006–07 school year, 1,340 Descubriendo la Lectura (DLL) children were served by 200 teachers (see Table 3). Students in DLL are first graders who are receiving their initial literacy instruction in Spanish. These children were located in 153 schools in 42 school districts in 8 states. The teachers received professional development support from 40 teacher leaders. Of the children who participated in DLL, 61% were boys, and all of the students were Hispanic. Most children (96%) qualified for free or reduced-price lunch.

Of all DLL children served, 53% reached the average levels of their classrooms within an average of 14.9 weeks. Another 22% were recommended for further evaluation, 6% moved, and 16% received incomplete programs.

Reading Recovery Children Compared to Random Sample Children

As a part of the evaluation methodology, outcomes from Reading Recovery children who reached grade-level performance (discontinued status) are compared with two comparison groups in the fall at mid-year, and at year-end. The random sample group is comprised of two students from each Reading Recovery school and represents the national comparison group. In the year 2006–07, 13,183 random sample children were tested fall, mid-year, and spring.

Using a statistical technique called principle component analysis, researchers at the National Data Evaluation Center (NDEC) identified the lowest 20% of the random sample children. These children were called the low comparison group. While the children with the lowest scores in each school are selected for Reading Recovery, children in the low comparison group had average fall scores similar to those of Reading Recovery children. Figure 1 compares text reading level scores for Reading Recovery children (discontinued outcome status) taught in fall and spring with the two comparison groups: the random sample and the low comparison group.

This figure shows that fall-entry and spring-entry Reading Recovery children, and children in the low comparison group began the year with much lower mean scores in text reading (.95, 1.6, and .8, respectively) than did the random sample group (4.75). This represents an achievement gap of approximately three text reading levels at the beginning of the school year.

By mid-year, Reading Recovery children who were taught in the fall had closed the gap with the normal random sample comparison group (with a mean text reading level of 13.8 compared to a mean text reading level of 13.1). However, the children who did not receive Reading Recovery intervention until spring remained below the random sample group at mid-year (mean text reading level 5.9), as did the children in the low comparison group (mean text reading level of 6.6). Therefore, at mid-year the achievement gap between low-achieving first-grade children and their randomly selected peers had widened to almost seven text levels.

At the end of the school year, Reading Recovery children who were taught in the fall had text reading levels similar to those of the random sample children (19.6 compared to 20.4). The Reading Recovery children taught in the spring also closed the achievement gap with the random sample group by year-end (mean text reading level of 19.0 compared to a mean text reading level of 20.4). The low comparison group did not reach the levels of these three groups (a spring mean text reading level of 13.6). These children ended the year with an achievement gap of approxi-
mately six text reading levels when compared to the other three groups in Figure 1.

**Conclusion**

Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura continue to provide the lowest-performing first-grade children with the high-quality intervention instruction they need to close the gap with their peers. Without Reading Recovery, the achievement gap demonstrated at the beginning of the year between the lowest achievers in reading and writing and their randomly distributed peers only gets wider, both at mid-year and at the end of the year.

Reading Recovery children who did not reach grade-level expectations and were recommended for further evaluation demonstrated significant gains in reading and writing performance. While their text reading level remained significantly behind both the random sample children and Reading Recovery children who achieved discontinued status, they demonstrated great gains in their knowledge of letters and sounds and their ability to read and write words. Although these children will face challenges in second grade, they will have many strengths that their teachers can draw upon when planning instruction to meet their needs.

Evaluation data provide support for Reading Recovery’s role as a response to intervention (RTI). Most of the children with complete interventions in 2006–07 reached grade-level expectations, dramatically reducing the number of children having extreme difficulty with literacy learning. For those children who made significant progress but did not reach grade-level standards, Reading Recovery served as an intensive diagnostic period of instruction. Data were then used to make future instructional decisions for these children. Both outcomes were positive for the children and for the schools, ensuring success for children who initially struggle with learning to read and write.

**About the Authors**

Jeff B. Brymer-Bashore received his bachelor of science in mathematics from The Ohio State University. His background is in computer network management and software engineering specializing in the area of data processing related to research. He supports various research initiatives at universities in the United States and the United Kingdom with the help of the NDEC staff.

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