Children, Teachers, Schools Feel Impact of i3 Scale-Up Grant

In October of 2010, the U.S. Department of Education awarded The Ohio State University a $46 million Investing in Innovation (i3) Scaling Up What Works grant to expand Reading Recovery over a 5-year period. These funds, along with approximately $10 million in additional private sector matching funds, allowed 19 Reading Recovery university training centers to train more than 3,700 Reading Recovery teachers across the 5 years of the grant. As a result, Reading Recovery implementations grew and teachers provided expert one-to-one reading and writing instruction to nearly 400,000 children who might not otherwise have had the opportunity for Reading Recovery.

The Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) conducted an independent evaluation of the Reading Recovery scale up. The CPRE Year Two report revealed that students in Reading Recovery performed better than control group students on each Reading subscale of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (May, et al., 2014). In addition, effect sizes were large for both the Reading Words and Reading Comprehension subscales. “Even when benchmarking the impacts on ITBS scores relative to the full population of first graders in the nation, the standard effect sizes are still large…and represent a growth rate that is 27% greater than the national average for first graders” (May, et al., p. 46).

The positive impact of the i3 grant is evident in schools and districts across the United States, with Reading Recovery changing the lives of children and the educators who teach them. Because of the i3 grant, some schools and districts had the opportunity to implement Reading Recovery for the first time, and others rapidly expanded Reading Recovery to reach full implementation. This article adds faces to the data, celebrating the success of Reading Recovery on the local level and showing the impact Reading Recovery has made in a few of the many schools and sites and in the professional lives of teachers.

i3 Helps Districts Initiate Reading Recovery

Starting up and scaling up in Oklahoma: Broken Arrow Public Schools

Broken Arrow Public Schools are located in northeastern Oklahoma, in a combination of urban-suburban communities. The area is bustling with growing businesses, industrial bases, and agricultural areas. In 2010–11, the district literacy committee began searching for an early literacy intervention to help their struggling students. When they learned of the Reading Recovery university training center at Texas Woman’s University (TWU), and knowing the success of Reading Recovery, they began exploring options to fund its implementation.

With the help of the i3 grant, Broken Arrow implemented and expanded Reading Recovery rather quickly. Jan Grisham trained as a Reading Recovery teacher leader under the i3 grant during 2011–12. The funds allowed Grisham to travel back and forth between Denton, TX, and Broken Arrow for her training. Interested in getting the intervention off to a strong start, Broken Arrow leaders wanted to
train Reading Recovery teachers during the same year. So veteran Texas teacher leader Carol Southerland traveled to Broken Arrow to train 10 Reading Recovery teachers, while Grisham completed her training at TWU.

Broken Arrow had a Reading Recovery teacher class during every year of the grant, training 26 teachers. These teachers play diverse roles in their schools. The majority of the Reading Recovery teachers spend part of their days as Title I interventionists, some teachers work as literacy coaches, and a few teach special education for a portion of the school day. The depth of the Reading Recovery training and the flexibility of Broken Arrow’s implementation model allow teachers to excel in all four roles. As a result, Reading Recovery has helped to significantly reduce the number of students retained at the end of first grade or referred to special education in Broken Arrow Public Schools.

Santa Clara Unified School District becomes a Reading Recovery site
Santa Clara USD in California has had a largely successful scale up of Reading Recovery as a direct result of receiving i3 funding. They were able to establish a training site, train a teacher leader, build a training room with a one-way mirror, and train 41 teachers in three districts over the course of 4 years. The many positive effects of Reading Recovery in the Santa Clara district include

- increased teacher expertise,
- positive student growth,
- school impact beyond first grade,
- professional development for classroom teachers provided by Reading Recovery teachers,
- creation of a collaborative learning community around literacy,
- support for principals in developing multitiered systems of support, and
- attendance at state and national conferences.

Bowers Elementary, as one example, has had full implementation for the past 4 years thanks to i3 funding. This school has decreased the special education population significantly, necessitating a .6 FTE instead of 1.1 FTE. Reading Recovery students’ subsequent performance has been followed each year, and 70% of the children who had lessons the first year (2011–12) scored basic or proficient on state standardized tests in second grade.

Rapid Growth for Vintage Reading Recovery Sites

Cape Cod Site triples Reading Recovery implementation
The Cape Cod site is a vintage site based in the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District, which has been effectively supporting Reading Recovery teachers for over 25 years. In the 2010–11 school year, the site included 17 teachers from eight schools in four districts on Cape Cod and the surrounding area. The Cape Cod site took full advantage of the availability of the 5-year i3 grant, training 30 additional Reading Recovery teachers.

In addition, the site’s territory expanded to include two new school districts from the southeastern coast of Massachusetts: Plymouth and Middleborough.

The Plymouth Public School District includes eight elementary schools that are now fully implemented in Reading Recovery with 18 teachers, all trained through i3 funding. The Middleborough Public Schools currently have two Reading Recovery teachers in each school and are working towards full implementation.

Due to the availability of the i3 funding, the Cape Cod site has expanded almost threefold! They are now 45 teachers strong, from 20 schools in six different districts. Currently 90% of schools in the site are fully implemented, and last year teachers in the site taught 319 first graders to read and write! Massachusetts teachers are grateful to have had the opportunity to expand so much in such a short time and to serve the literacy needs of so many youngsters in the southeastern region of their state.

Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura thrive in San Francisco
Reading Recovery started in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) in 1992. From 1992–99, the district funded Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura (DLL) training classes. After that, teachers or schools had to pay for tuition and teaching materials; a change that significantly reduced the number of teachers receiving Reading Recovery training from 53 in 1999, to only 10 in 2010, in this district of 75 elementary schools.
The i3 grant had an incredible impact on the Reading Recovery program. SFUSD has more than doubled the number of Reading Recovery teachers in the district. Since 2011, 24 Reading Recovery teachers have served 404 of the most-struggling readers in first grade. In addition, 132 Spanish-speaking readers in first grade received DLL lessons during the same time period. Several of the DLL teachers used grant funds to train in Reading Recovery, then bridged to DLL the following year, providing support for first graders in both Spanish and English.

**Full implementation in a large, diverse district: Fort Bend, Texas**

Fort Bend Independent School District is the seventh largest school district in Texas, with more than 72,000 students on 75 campuses, including 46 elementary schools. Fort Bend is recognized as a district that openly embraces the diversity of its student population. Students in Fort Bend speak 90 different languages and dialects, making the district one of the most culturally diverse school systems in the state of Texas and the U.S.

Fort Bend’s teacher leaders, Cynthia Bogle, Cathleen Duvall, and Raquel Gonzales, know firsthand the far-reaching impact of i3 funding. Because of this grant, they were able to train 40 Reading Recovery teachers and 5 DLL teachers in their district, as well as 14 teachers in neighboring districts. Fort Bend initially struggled to fund the tuition for each teacher’s training of 6 graduate-level course hours of education; however, the grant paid the tuition for the teachers and enabled them to attend the Texas Woman’s University Billie J. Askew Reading Recovery and K-6 Literacy Institute for 2 consecutive years. Because of the i3 grant, Fort Bend Independent School District has implemented Reading Recovery on every elementary campus — a major accomplishment.

### Whole-School Benefits Realized in California

**Manzanita Public Charter School**

Manzanita Public Charter School is a small school of 420 students, and over the 5 years of the i3 grant they trained six Reading Recovery teachers. Training teachers in Reading Recovery has given them the opportunity to be a fully implemented site for the past 5 years. Reading Recovery has had positive effects in the school, including increasing teacher expertise in the classroom, collaboration among classroom teachers and Reading Recovery teachers, providing professional development by Reading Recovery-trained teachers, and student growth by the end of first grade.

Because the i3 funding has enabled Manzanita Public Charter School to reach full implementation, teachers have been able to use their knowledge in a variety of ways. The understandings teachers gained from their Reading Recovery training have been helpful in their work with primary-grade classrooms as well. As a result, the whole school has enjoyed the benefits of having Reading Recovery-trained teachers in the school.
San Ramon Valley Unified School District
The scale up of Reading Recovery in San Ramon Valley USD was possible because of the i3 funding received over 4 years. In 2011–12, one i3 teacher leader was trained. From 2012–15, 23 teachers in three districts successfully completed their training year. The positive effects of Reading Recovery in this California district and beyond include measurable student growth, support for principals in developing multiteried systems of support, professional development provided for classroom teachers and site staff by Reading Recovery teachers, collaborative processes around literacy intervention implementation, and improved classroom instruction. Classroom teachers, parents, and administrators have noted the difference Reading Recovery has made in the site, putting Reading Recovery in great demand. San Ramon Valley is exploring ways to reach their goal of full implementation in coming years.

Share Your Stories
These are but a few stories to illustrate the impact that the i3 grant had on the professional learning of teachers resulting in positive outcomes for children. Because of this grant, some schools were able to implement Reading Recovery as a powerful intervention for the first time; others were able to move toward full implementation, ensuring that every child who needed a literacy intervention in first grade received an opportunity to learn from a highly effective teacher. Additionally, sites report the impact teachers trained in Reading Recovery had as they collaborated with teachers to improve classroom instruction. The i3 grant provided tuition and resources to train additional Reading Recovery professionals across the United States, proving that the intervention could be scaled up with fidelity to positive outcomes for teachers and children, as well as provide an impetus of change within schools.

We invite you to share your i3 success stories. Please email your articles and photos to vfox@readingrecovery.org and we will follow up for additional information as we share your news on the Celebrating Literacy Success website and in other print materials.

You can read more about the i3 scale up, including the CPRE Year One and Year Two reports, on the RRCNA website in the Research Section under Effectiveness.

Missouri Teachers Express Appreciation
“Reading Recovery training is the most valuable piece of education and training that I have received since starting my undergraduate degree in teaching,” stated Kim Bihr, a Reading Recovery teacher at Oak Brook School in Parkway School District in St. Louis. Bihr recognizes the high quality of her yearlong Reading Recovery training and the value of the i3 grant. The grant funded Bihr’s graduate level coursework and covered the cost of her travel expenses to and from class. In addition, these funds enabled her to deepen her learning by attending the Missouri Association of Reading Recovery Educators (MARRE) conference and gave her access to many teaching resources. “The i3 grant provided me with a library full of great leveled texts… that provide many learning opportunities for students,” explained Bihr. “I’m so thankful to have received the i3 grant and the many resources that it provided.”

Lou Ann Moore has taught children in Reading Recovery for 2 years in the Francis Howell School District in St. Charles. One of three Reading Recovery teachers at her school, she has noticed the remarkable impact of Reading Recovery at the school level. “The i3 grant has made a positive impact on our school because it allowed for eight more Reading Recovery students to receive services last year and eight more this year,” she explained. “I am thankful for receiving the i3 grant. It allowed me to receive the intense training I needed to better serve the changing population of my school. I truly feel that I am changing children’s lives daily because of the training I received through the i3 grant.”