Responding with the Truth

RRCNA Executive Director Jady Johnson

One of RRCNA’s key functions is to assure that the educational context in which you work is well-informed about Reading Recovery and the important work you do. We know that Reading Recovery is specialized, complex, and not easily communicated in our soundbite culture. Under the best of circumstances, it is challenging to explain Reading Recovery to school decision makers, teacher colleagues, community leaders, and parents. When erroneous and misleading charges against Reading Recovery are publicized, our jobs—as well as your jobs—become more difficult.

In August this year, an article appeared in *Learning Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal* by authors Cook, Rodes, and Lipsitz titled, “The Reading Wars and Reading Recovery: What Educators, Families, and Taxpayers Should Know.” The sole purpose of the article was to attack Reading Recovery. The Learning Disabilities Association of America chose to publish the article, which contains half-truths, misinformation, and gross inaccuracies. It is an affront to researchers, scholars, educators, and others who know the facts and a disservice to parents of children with reading difficulties.

While attacks like this are not new for us, the claims in this article are so numerous and egregious that we were compelled to act to protect the integrity of Reading Recovery. Our response, “The Truth About Reading Recovery,” provides accurate, current, and evidence-based information about Reading Recovery. This response and other related resources were posted on a new webpage in September, and I encourage you to share them with colleagues and school decision makers.

I’d like to share a portion of the introduction:

“The rhetoric of the Cook, Rodes, & Lipsitz article continues to conflate ideology with student outcomes. The truth is that the authors’ notions that Reading Recovery does not use contemporary scientific research or that contemporary scientific research does not show Reading Recovery as successful are false on both counts. The challenges aimed at Reading Recovery in this article have been repeated over several decades in similar fashion — always lacking detail and data to support such claims and always with misconceptions. Ironically, what is actually dated and out of sync are the authors’ own arguments. Until these and other critics put their ideology into practice and validate their instructional theory through rigorous methodology under scientifically controlled conditions, it is time to stop criticizing an intervention that has demonstrated effectiveness in multiple countries, and thousands of districts and schools under the conditions required to address the literacy concerns of parents, taxpayers, educators, and the children who need this early intervention support.”

“The Truth About Reading Recovery” addresses the most-damaging claims made by the authors:

- Misrepresentations of decision-making evidence
- Attempt to reject The Observation Survey
- Misleading conclusions about sustained gains and the i3 report
- Confusions about the selection of students for Reading Recovery
• Failure to recognize distinctions of Reading Recovery, Literacy Lessons, and the Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals text

• Erroneous challenges to the focus of Reading Recovery instruction

We know that Reading Recovery professionals are devoted to struggling students, sensitive to the concerns of their parents, and deliberate in their advocacy for truly effective literacy instruction. RRCNA is here to assist you with your work.

Just click What’s New in the menu bar on the RRCNA website to find this page and other updates.

https://readingrecovery.org/news/

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