



U.S. Exit Status Categories
for
Reading Recovery
and
Descubriendo la Lectura Students

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Introduction

This document identifies six exit status categories to be applied by Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura (DLL) teachers to indicate their decisions regarding the literacy performance of individual students at the end of their series of Reading Recovery or DLL lessons. These six exit status categories are effective beginning with participating students in the 2020-2021 academic year.

The adoption of these exit status categories by the U.S. Trainers (March 2020) resulted from comprehensive efforts to develop, study, and recommend alternatives by a designated Task Force. Surveys and pilot studies conducted with Reading Recovery and DLL trainers, teacher leaders, and teachers during the 2019-2020 academic year confirmed the efficacy and benefits of these exit categories for communicating student performance as instruction ends. The Task Force members included: Billie Askew, Mary Anne Doyle, Salli Forbes, Mary Lose, Debra Rich, Jim Schnug, Journey Swafford, and Annette Torres Elias.

To begin, the Task Force emphasizes that all Reading Recovery students are entitled to a full series of lessons. A full series of lessons is 20 weeks of instruction. For children whose lessons begin at second or third entry points, the resulting time for lessons may be fewer than 20 weeks as the academic year will end without sufficient time for 20 weeks of instruction.

We are proposing the new categories displayed in the table on page 3. The category ‘Accelerated Progress: Achieved Intervention Goal’ is assigned to those students who accelerate to a level of proficiency commensurate with their age cohort, and this may occur at any point within the series of lessons (i.e., with 20 weeks of instruction or with fewer than 20 weeks of instruction).

The second positive outcome designations (‘Progressed: Monitoring and Supplementary Support are Essential for Ongoing Literacy Progress’ and ‘Recommended: Additional Evaluation and Ongoing Intervention are Essential for Ongoing Literacy Progress’) are assigned at the end of the student’s access to Reading Recovery instruction, and that is after 20 weeks of instruction. If the school year ends before a child has received 20 weeks of instruction, and he has not achieved ‘Accelerated Progress: Achieved Intervention Goal,’ the category of ‘Incomplete’ is assigned.

The ‘None of the Above’ category is used for a student who was removed from lessons under unusual circumstances with fewer than 20 weeks of instruction. The decision to remove a student is made by someone other than the Reading Recovery teacher, e.g., reassigning the child to kindergarten. ‘Moved’ is the category used for those students who move away from the school before receiving a full series of lessons (20 weeks of instruction).

Exit Status Categories

New Status Categories	Prior Status Categories
Accelerated Progress: Achieved Intervention Goal	“Discontinued”
Progressed: Monitoring and Support are Essential for Ongoing Literacy Progress	New Category
Recommended: Additional Evaluation and Ongoing Intervention are Essential for Ongoing Literacy Progress	“Recommended”
Moved	“Moved” (no change)
Incomplete	“Incomplete” (no change)
None of the Above	“None of the Above” (no change)

Making Exit Decisions

This document does not replace Chapter 7 in *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*, 2nd edition (Clay, 2016). Although it is hoped that it will support that chapter as teachers make decisions about exit status categories, a careful reading of Chapter 7 should precede all exit decisions.

It is important to remember that Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura yield **two positive outcomes**:

- children who “are able to catch up with their classmates in a short-term intervention” (Clay, 2016, p. 19);
- a few children who “do not make enough progress to ensure they will survive in their classrooms without continuing support” and plans are made to support each child that can be “tailored to his current educational needs.” (See Clay, 2016, p. 19)

Emphasis on Literacy Processing

Marie Clay tells us that “In the Observation Survey an emphasis will be placed on the operations or strategic activities that are used in reading and writing rather than test scores or disabilities” (Clay, 2013, p. 34). “The term literacy processing is used for mental activities initiated by the child to problem-solve the puzzle of getting the messages from a text, or putting messages into texts” (Clay, 2019, p. 34).

This especially applies to ‘Taking Records of Reading Continuous Texts – Running Records.’ Running Records call for analysis at three levels: (1) the kinds of information used when processing the information in the text; (2) the kinds of information neglected when processing the information in the text; and (3) statements about how the reading sounded. (See Clay, 2013, p. 128; 2019, p. 129)

“Young constructive readers and writers work at problem-solving sentences and messages, choose between alternatives, read and write sentences, work on word after word, with the flexibility to change responses rapidly at any point. As they attend to several different kinds of knowledge, they are searching, selecting, rejecting, self-monitoring, and self-correcting” (Clay, 2016, p. 7).

Literacy processing is the cornerstone of *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Selected pages with lists of strategic activities within that processing system include pages 43, 141, and 187. Also see page 22 in *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2013; 2019) for a description of an independent learner in a literacy processing perspective.

Use of Stanines

Marie Clay explains that stanines redistribute raw scores according to a normal curve in nine groups, from a low of 1 to a high of 9. They allow a comparison between a child who was assessed and a large random sample of their grade-level peers. Clay also argues that stanines are ‘temporary progress categories’ that can change over time. The following chart displays suggested stanine ranges presented as a guide for each of the three Exit Status Categories.

Stanine Range	
5 – 6 range	Child should be able to participate in the average classroom activities.
7 – 9 range	Child is probably eager to reach out to more complex or challenging tasks.
3 – 4 range	Child is already struggling with average tasks in the class and needs extra teacher attention if this is to be changed.
1 – 2 range	Child is unlikely to ‘catch up’ without immediate, intensive, expert teaching.

Clay further argues that stanines should not be summed or averaged.

“Stanines are particularly useful for quite a different reason. It makes no sense to compare the raw scores of a child across the survey tasks because each task has a different total score. Stanines can be used to compare a pupil’s scores across the various tasks because all the scores are placed on the same measuring scale, from 1 to 9. A pupil’s scores can be compared on several quite different types of observations, and knowing the highs and lows of a pupil’s performance profile can help with the planning of instruction.” (Clay, 2013, p. 126 or See Clay, 2019, p. 126)

In the following discussion of evidence, the use of stanines is presented for five of the Survey tasks; text reading is considered separately in a description of each proposed status category.

ACCELERATED PROGRESS: ACHIEVED INTERVENTION GOAL

Important Note Regarding Decision Making:

This status category represents children who were able to catch up with their classmates in a short-term Reading Recovery or Descubriendo la Lectura intervention. This is the **first positive outcome** of the intervention. When making this decision, **teachers should use the guidance in Chapter 7 of *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals***.

Important considerations as lessons end are:

“Children who successfully complete early interventions such as Reading Recovery should operate in ways that put them on track to become competent readers and writers, with self-extending processing systems in literacy learning, during their next two years in school” (Clay, 2016, p. 186).

“The essence of success with discontinuing judgments is whether the Reading Recovery teacher can be confident that the child discovers new things for himself, works out some possibilities, extends his own processing in both reading and writing, and enjoys the challenge of these activities” (Clay, 2016, p. 195).

Ongoing Monitoring of Progress

Even after reaching this Accelerated status, “It is very important for the school to arrange to monitor progress in some regular way” (Clay, 2016, p. 192). “The transition to only classroom support must be made in such a manner that progress continues” (Clay, 2016, p. 186).

Clay (2016, pp. 126-127) suggests that the school leadership, the classroom teacher, and the Reading Recovery teacher monitor the child’s transition to the classroom program and ongoing evidence of the child’s progress in reading and writing. Reading Recovery teachers and/or classroom teachers may need to provide a little extra help in reading and/or writing to ensure the learner continues to progress well.

This status category is heavily reliant on evidence of “Literacy Processing Behaviors and Related Student Actions” shown in the table below.

ACCELERATED PROGRESS: ACHIEVED INTERVENTION GOAL EVIDENCE

Literacy Processing Behaviors and Related Student Actions	Observation Survey Scores	Classroom Setting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors consistently when reading • Searches for and uses different kinds of information needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Phonological or Orthographic o Syntactic/Structure o Semantic or ‘sense of story’ • Anticipates a possible syntactic structure • Checks one source of information with other available information • Self-corrects taking the initiative • Uses all sources of information together on first attempts • Solves new words in a variety of ways when reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Reads known words quickly o Uses phonological analysis effectively o Demonstrates increasing awareness of regular orthographic features o Uses known words to identify new words • Discovers new things while reading • Demonstrates phrasing in fluent reading • Processes information smoothly with increasing speed • Monitors when writing messages 	<p>TASKS: LID, CAP, OWT, WV, HRSIW</p> <p>The end goal is to reach stanine 5 or higher on most if not all of these tasks.</p> <p>TASK: TEXT READING</p> <p>In addition to text reading levels, emphasis will be placed on literacy processing, the operations or strategic activities that are used in reading and writing.</p> <p><u>Important Notes Regarding Decisions About Text Reading:</u></p> <p>“Towards the end of his lesson series the child should be working at or above Level 16 of an approved and field-tested list of leveled text. In some schools and school systems the child must be able to read well above Level 20 to fully participate in classroom literacy activities with children making average progress.</p>	<p>The classroom teacher ensures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An available, appropriate group setting (around middle of class) with which to work <p>The classroom teacher observes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s ability to progress easily in the classroom without additional support beyond the class teacher • The student’s ability to continue making progress in his class with classroom teacher attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Reading increasingly difficult material at 90% accuracy or above o Engaging in massive opportunities to read and write o Expanding writing vocabulary o Expanding reading vocabulary o Building independence

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ACCELERATED PROGRESS: ACHIEVED INTERVENTION GOAL EVIDENCE *continued*

Literacy Processing Behaviors and Related Student Actions	Observation Survey Scores	Classroom Setting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solves new words in a variety of ways when writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Writes known words quickly o Uses phonological analysis effectively o Demonstrates increasing awareness of regular orthographic features o Uses known words to construct new words • Discovers new things while writing • Processes fluently and smoothly while writing <p style="text-align: center;">- READING RECOVERY SETTING -</p> <p>Related Student Actions/Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes initiative, makes links, and works at difficulties when solving problems • Reads longer and increasingly difficult text at 90% accuracy or above consistently • Orients self to many aspects of a new text • Composes messages that are increasingly longer, more varied, and more complex • Continues to expand reading vocabulary • Continues to expand writing vocabulary • Shows increasing independence in reading and writing tasks • Knows when help is needed and how to get it • Learns from the reading-writing reciprocity and demonstrates that reading and writing are equally strong in building an effective literacy system (Clay, 2001, p. 33) • Demonstrates fast and efficient ways of working with all sources of language knowledge in both reading and writing (Clay, 2014) 	<p>The exit level will need to be matched to the rising levels of proficient readers as the school year progresses. Slightly lower exit levels are sometimes expected for children who have made rapid progress to acceptable levels for their age and/or class.</p> <p>However, <i>Reading Recovery children who exit at low levels face a high risk of not maintaining good progress</i>. If a child's lessons series is discontinued at or below Level 12 one cannot be confident about his subsequent progress" (Clay, 2016, p. 189).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of the 'Related Student Actions/Behaviors' listed in column one.

PROGRESSED: MONITORING AND SUPPORT ARE ESSENTIAL FOR ONGOING LITERACY PROGRESS

Important Notes Regarding Decision Making:

This status indicates that the child has made impressive gains in Reading Recovery or Descubriendo la Lectura but has not reached the rigorous standards for 'Accelerated Progress' following a full series of lessons, i.e., 20 weeks of instruction. This is a second positive outcome of the intervention. Although these children have a literacy processing system under construction, they still need support to continue making gains. These children will need close monitoring and support from the classroom teacher. For some, additional support beyond the classroom may be needed to ensure ongoing progress.

Ongoing Monitoring of Progress:

Clay (2016) tells us that children who exit Reading Recovery at lower levels are at higher risk of making ongoing, good progress. It is therefore very important for the school team to monitor progress in some planned way, and this plan may detail the kind of support that will be needed from the classroom teacher as well as identify the occasional additional help that may be needed. It will be important for classroom teachers to provide daily instruction based on the learner's literacy behaviors and progress in reading and writing. Reading Recovery teachers may provide support for the teacher by assisting with evaluations of progress and confirming instructional needs.

In the chart below, use the ‘Literacy Processing Behaviors and Related Student Actions’ in addition to ‘Observation Survey Scores’ when making this decision.

PROCESSED: MONITORING AND SUPPLEMENTAL HELP ARE ESSENTIAL FOR ONGOING LITERACY PROGRESS EVIDENCE

Literacy Processing Behaviors and Related Student Actions	Observation Survey Scores	Classroom Setting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy processing system is UNDER CONSTRUCTION – some evidence of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Monitors reading and writing o Searches for and uses different kinds of information (phonological, structure/syntax, and meaning/semantics) o Discovers new things for self o Self-corrects, taking the initiative o Solves new words in a variety of ways o Demonstrates phrasing and fluent reading o Hears and records sequences of sounds o Uses known words to read and write new words - READING RECOVERY SETTING - Related Student Actions/Behaviors Some evidence of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes initiative, makes links, and works at difficulties when solving problems • Reads longer and increasingly difficult text at 90% accuracy or above consistently • Composes increasingly longer and more complex messages • Expands reading vocabulary • Expands writing vocabulary • Shows increasing independence in reading and writing tasks • Shows some strengths in both reading and writing • Increases speed in reading and writing 	<p>TASKS: LID, CAP, OWT, WV, HRSIW</p> <p>Stanine scores of 3-4 observed on most tasks; stanine scores may be higher or lower on some tasks.</p> <p>TASK: TEXT READING OS Text Reading Levels:</p> <p>Levels 8 or higher, with insufficient evidence of literacy processing behaviors required for Accelerated Progress (see the first column for evidence of a processing system under construction)</p> <p>“The exit level will need to be matched to the rising levels of proficient readers as the school year progresses” (Clay, 2016, p. 189).</p>	<p>The classroom teacher ensures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appropriate group at this level (approaching middle of class) with which to work <p>The classroom teacher observes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student’s ability to continue making progress in the classroom with the teacher’s attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Reading increasingly difficult material at 90% accuracy or above o Engaging in massive opportunities to read and write o Expanding writing vocabulary o Expanding reading vocabulary o Building independence • Evidence of growing proficiency in student actions and behaviors as those listed in column one, ‘Related Student Actions/Behaviors’

RECOMMENDED: ADDITIONAL EVALUATION AND ONGOING INTERVENTION ARE ESSENTIAL FOR ONGOING LITERACY PROGRESS

Important Notes Regarding Decision Making:

“Early identification of a small group of children who need extended help is also a second positive outcome of Reading Recovery” (Clay, 2016, p. 19). These are children who do not make enough progress following a full series of lessons, i.e. 20 weeks of instruction, to ensure success in classrooms without specialist support. We are talking about the few children whose learning did not accelerate in spite of the wide range of opportunities with a highly trained Reading Recovery or Descubriendo la Lectura teacher who provided adjustments for particular difficulties.

“It is important to explain that identification for longer-term support is a positive outcome for the child and to stress the urgency of providing further assistance” (Clay, 2016, p. 192). This “help should be made available immediately to ensure that what has been learned so far will not be forgotten” (Clay, 2016, p. 19). Clay also argues that the more effective a system is at delivering an early intervention, the fewer children will need to be referred for additional intensive help (see Clay, 2016, p. 19). The school team should be involved in making decisions about these children.

Ongoing Monitoring of Progress:

The children who exit the intervention ‘recommended’ for specialist support deserve immediate consideration. It will be very important for the school team, the classroom teachers, and the specialists to monitor their progress and continue to base instructional recommendations on evaluations of reading and writing behaviors. Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura teachers may offer diagnostic information based on their records of 20 weeks of instruction and may provide assistance with ongoing evaluations of literacy processing in reading and writing.

In the chart below, use the ‘Literacy Processing Behaviors and Related Student Actions’ in addition to ‘Observation Survey Scores’ when making this decision.

RECOMMENDED: ADDITIONAL EVALUATION AND ONGOING INTERVENTION ARE ESSENTIAL FOR ONGOING LITERACY PROGRESS

Literacy Processing Behaviors and Related Student Actions	Observation Survey Scores	Classroom Setting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to develop some, or all, early behaviors described as ‘level I’ on pages 44-47 in Literacy Lessons • The learner’s literacy processing reveals LIMITED OR INCONSISTENT AWARENESS and/or application of any of the following processing behaviors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Self-monitoring of reading and/or writing o Searching for different kinds of information o Discovering new things for self o Self-correcting, taking the initiative o Solving new words o Demonstrating phrasing and fluent reading o Increasing speed in processing behaviors o Composing longer and more varied and complex stories o Hearing and recording sequences of sounds o Using known words to read and write new words <p style="text-align: center;">- READING RECOVERY SETTING -</p> <p>Related Student Actions/Behaviors LIMITED EVIDENCE of the following suggesting the need for ongoing instructional support with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building reading and writing vocabulary • Becoming independent in reading and writing tasks • Increasing pace in reading and writing • Reading longer and more complex texts • Composing longer, varied, more complex messages 	<p>Tasks: LID, CAP, OWT, WV, HRSIW</p> <p>Stanine scores of 1 -2 observed on several tasks; higher stanine scores may be observed on some tasks.</p> <p>TASK: TEXT READING</p> <p>OS Text Reading:</p> <p>Levels 0-7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires intensive intervention beyond the classroom to enable the child to continue making progress in literacy • School team action needed for determining the type of intervention needed • School team assistance needed to support classroom instructional needs

Final Note:

With questions, contact your teacher leader or the trainer at the University Training Center with which your site is affiliated.

References

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