

The Development of Concepts About Print (C.A.P.) in Greek

Eufimia Tafa, associate professor, Department of Preschool Education, University of Crete, Greece
Eva Konstantellou, trainer, Lesley University

Marie Clay's influence as a literacy theorist extends to many continents and countries around the world. In addition to many of her works, *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* has been translated into different languages and the various measures have been used to inform instruction in many countries. In 2004, Eufimia Tafa, who at the time was at Rutgers University on a Fulbright grant, contacted Marie and informed her that she had piloted the Concepts About Print (C.A.P.) task in Greece and that she would like to meet with her to discuss the standardization of the task in Greek.

In May 2004, during the 49th International Reading Association (IRA) National Convention in Reno, NV, Marie Clay saw for the first time the results of the C.A.P. pilot project in Greece. She seemed satisfied and was very enthusiastic that one of her assessments would be translated and standardized into yet another language (in addition to Spanish, French, Maori, Portuguese, Danish, German, and Hebrew) and would help Greek educators to observe and discover Greek children's concepts about print. At that time Marie asked Eufimia to contact Eva Konstantellou to discuss the details of the project, the translation of the C.A.P. manual into Greek, and the publication of two special booklets for this observation task. This marked the beginning of a collegial relationship and a

friendship that have enriched us both professionally and personally.

During the entire process of the research project, Marie's advice and comments encouraged and supported us. She was very pleased to see the final results from the administration of C.A.P. to 2,744 Greek children and to find out that the project was a success. In September 2006, during the International Reading Recovery Trainer Organization meeting in Columbus, OH, Eva presented Marie with the completed Greek translation and sought her input into the translation of certain technical terms, the contents of the manual, and the arrangements for publication. During her last communication with Eufimia, Marie gave her final approval for the publication of C.A.P. in Greek. On Feb. 13, 2007, Graham McEwan (chairman of the Marie Clay Literacy Trust) wrote on her behalf: "Everything is approved—Marie is very pleased with your scores."

She had shared with us that she liked Greece, which she had visited a long time ago. She was very excited when she was invited to be the keynote speaker at the international conference to be held in Crete in October 2007 entitled "Emergent Literacy: Research and Applications," and when she was told that the University of Crete following the proposal of the department of preschool education was planning to bestow upon her an honorary doctorate.

She responded, "I am sure that I would enjoy sitting back and hearing what today's researchers are saying at the International Conference you are planning, and seeing as much of your country as I can." However, the health problems she was experiencing at the time made her hesitant to accept the invitation and attempt the long trip. Her words were prophetic: "It would be an honour to have an honorary doctorate conferred by your university but because of my health problems that would be the most risky part of your suggestions. I am just not so sure that I could promise to be there for such an important event."

Even though she will not be at the conference, all participants will have the opportunity to celebrate her contributions to children's literacy worldwide. The conference will be dedicated to her memory and McEwan, Marie's daughter, Jenny, and Mary Anne Doyle will be there to speak about Marie's life and work.

Marie's vision has transcended geographical, cultural, and linguistic boundaries, and has touched the lives of so many children and teachers around the world. We are indebted to her for that.