As the chairperson of the Book List Subcommittee, I am frequently asked to explain the purpose and development of the book lists available to both Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura teachers. The intent of this article is to share responses to general questions that teachers pose in order to clarify the purpose and functions of the Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura book lists.

What is The North American Reading Recovery Book List?
The Reading Recovery Book List is intended to be a helpful resource for Reading Recovery educators in North America. It supports instruction as it provides a list of carefully evaluated texts arranged in a gradient of increasing difficulty toward our common purpose: enabling children to construct the inner control necessary to become self-extending readers and writers. This is accomplished by knowledgeable teachers who choose texts selectively and judiciously.

The book list is an internal training document for Reading Recovery professionals and is compiled by trainers, teacher leaders, and teachers. At this time, thousands of book titles comprise the list. A numeric system of levels from 1 to 20 indicates increasingly complex text, with Level 1 being most supportive of emergent readers and Level 20 representing more sophisticated texts.

Each level of the book list serves as a signpost that signals progress. In Reading Recovery, our signposts are much closer than the signposts classroom teachers need to use. Differences are finely discrete. For example, the difference between one and two lines of text may be critical for a Reading Recovery child, but this difference may not be as important for the majority of children in classroom programs. Although the books are numbered according to discrete differences, the levels do not dictate a progression for teachers to follow as they design children's programs. Rather, the levels guide decisions about selecting texts that maximize students' efforts as they construct new understandings related to literacy learning.

Even though the book list is arranged by levels, not all children begin at Level 1 and progress sequentially, level by level, through their program. Because beginning points differ and leaps occur as learning accelerates, individual children's needs determine the types of texts that support learning, not a list. Accordingly, teachers may decide to use any book they think provides powerful opportunities for children to construct an efficient processing system.

Reading Recovery teachers become skilled at thinking about texts and assessing appropriate gradients of difficulty through their interactions with children. Teachers can use these understandings to approximate and level texts not on the list—and they are encouraged to do so. Any book, whether on the book list or not, may be perfectly suitable for one child's competencies, yet not meet the learning needs of another. Reading Recovery teachers ultimately make informed teaching decisions using the book list as a resource when considering specific text choices.

Why Do We Need a Book List?
We need a North American book list for two basic reasons: to promote the integrity of Reading Recovery across North America and to train teachers in ways of thinking about text selection.

For the 18,000 Reading Recovery teachers in North America, the
The cycle for considering new books for either book list begins when the chair receives recommended titles for consideration from Reading Recovery professionals and publishing companies. The steps to be applied in the current cycle are being finalized by the subcommittee but will include the following process.

New books for evaluation are distributed by the subcommittee chair to the regional teams who assist with the process of leveling and field testing the books. A regional team leader is designated to coordinate the communication between team members and the chair. The regional teams assess each book using guidelines from the subcommittee and assign it an estimated level. If the regional team decides that a book is not appropriate for inclusion on the book list on the basis of their initial review, the book is then returned to the chair. In addition to leveling the book, the regional team evaluates whether each book supports the development of strategic processing, contains text features that work together appropriately for a particular level rather than creating undue challenges for readers because of widely disparate features of text difficulty (language, concepts, special features), has a sufficient amount of text with which the child can engage in problem solving and practice fluent reading, represents ethnic, cultural, and language diversity in a way that values all persons, has a storyline that is of interest to children.

How Is the Book List Updated?
The Reading Recovery Book List is the responsibility of the Book List Subcommittee of the North American Trainers Group in conjunction with the Reading Recovery Council of North America. Every three years, the subcommittee initiates a revision process by evaluating new titles and reassessing the current list. To implement the evaluation of new titles, the subcommittee works with invited review teams of trainers, teacher leaders, and teachers from across the United States. The next revision cycle, described below, is to be concluded in 2004 when the next revised book list will be printed.

Just as Reading Recovery has evolved over time, so have the processes involved in the construction of the book list. Initially, The Ohio State University Reading Recovery team constructed the list because quality texts were not as prevalent as they are now. Lesley University assumed the responsibility in the early 1990s; currently, Texas Woman’s University is conducting the next revision.

Similar processes are used for updating and revising the Descubriendo la Lectura Book List. The Descubriendo la Lectura Book List Subcommittee is chaired by Annette Elias, teacher leader at Texas Woman’s University. There are six Descubriendo la Lectura regional teams across the United States, each comprised of one trainer, three teacher leaders, and nine teachers—a total of 78 participants.

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• has good-quality illustrations
• is constructed using good-quality materials

To evaluate and confirm their initial assessment and assigned level, the teams field test each book by using it instructionally with Reading Recovery children. Results of these field tests, including the teachers’ written observations about text level and appropriateness for Reading Recovery instruction, are communicated to the regional team leader and sent to the chair.

The chair then compiles the results and submits this information to the subcommittee. Decisions regarding adding new titles to the book list and assigning levels are finalized. This process involves careful review of information and ongoing dialogue by the subcommittee. This is to ensure that the final book list represents thoughtful, informed decisions.

The updated, revised book list is then submitted to the North American Trainers Group who review and approve it before it goes into production. The final step is to print and distribute the list, and this process is completed through the office of the Reading Recovery Council of North America.

The Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura Book Lists are ongoing projects supported by the dedicated professionals involved in Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura. The abundance of texts published that support the developing reader-writer has grown exponentially since the first list was created at The Ohio State University. The careful, comprehensive process of revising the book lists reflects the ongoing, dynamic nature of Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura as they continue to evolve to better serve individual children.

If you have questions or wish to share input regarding the Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura Book Lists, please contact me at Texas Woman’s University at nanderson@twu.edu.

A Passion for Silence
*Glenn C. Coats, Reading Recovery Teacher, Riegelsville, Pennsylvania*

I know a few things about Millie.
I know her grandmother lives in California.
There are photographs of Mexico:
the skeleton of a cow buried in the sand,
a skinny black dog who could use a meal.
I know there are kittens yet to open their eyes.
A few chickens peck close to the highway.
I know that Millie plays school with her sister,
they share a seat on the bus.
When it is raining Millie runs ahead
of Amanda who is holding the umbrella.
I know she can spell Angelica her mother, Perez, and Louis her cousin.
Her father likes to cook pizza.
She likes her mother to tie red ribbons in her hair.
The ribbons will last almost through recess.
Other children will pluck them out like weeds in the garden.
I know Millie will say little to her classroom teacher, will say little to the students who sit beside her.
I know this child who has a passion for silence wants to write these things down.
That is what I know.