

The Journey of a Lifetime

Beth Egmon, Reading Recovery Teacher, Fort Bend ISD, Sugar Land, Texas



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Three years ago, I embarked on the journey of a lifetime: a career in Reading Recovery. As a doctoral student set to pursue a career as a college professor in children's literature, I thought my life was mapped out. And then the teachings of this woman named Marie Clay entered my life. I began to learn how to teach the hard-to-teach children and appreciate the finer nuances of reading instruction.

My training group was a close-knit group, and my teacher leader, Rosetta Ford, was extraordinary. Everything I knew about how children learn to read, up to this point, was all book knowledge. Reading Recovery allowed

me to "get my hands dirty" and really dig in to this field we know as primary-grade literacy. Rosetta, rather than being the sage on the stage was the guide on the side, carefully guiding us through our training year and parceling out the knowledge as we could handle it.

My students taught me the most, however. As with all students, they didn't care how much I knew until they knew how much I cared. It was the ability to bond with them in the one-to-one situations that made everything so worthwhile—that and being their cheerleader to celebrate their successes and picking them up and dusting them off when I wasn't helping them to be as successful as they could be. One student in particular would jump up, squeeze my cheeks, and plant a kiss on me every time he had a good lesson. (Which was frequently!) Imagine the look of surprise on my teacher leader's face when she witnessed that for the first time!

My knowledge about how children learn continues to evolve with each child I teach. They each have their

own unique set of challenges, and as a professional I get the privilege of helping them face those challenges. I guess my favorite story is of the child I'm currently teaching who once, at point of difficulty on his running record, knew he could not continue to appeal to me. He knew he needed to use his strategies but had no clue which one to use. So with the grace of a gentleman slipping money to a maitre d' for a better table, he reached into his pocket, flashed me a smile, and handed me a \$1 bill. Truly a unique strategy for trying to get help!

My 3 years in Reading Recovery have taught me that I have much more to learn about children and how they read. Reading Recovery is an ongoing quest; I simply cannot get enough. Oh, and that life plan I had mapped out 3 years ago? I'm happy to say that I still intend to graduate with my doctorate in May 2006. Reading Recovery is truly in my heart and in my soul!

Happy anniversary, Reading Recovery!

Seeing What Children Can Do

Angie Picken, Reading Recovery Teacher, Meadowlark Elementary, Gillette, Wyoming

When I started Reading Recovery training, I was so unsure of myself that I barely slept the Sunday night before starting Roaming Around the Known with my first Reading Recovery children. After the first session, though, I was at ease and just

enjoyed the children and the whole process. After seeing Kallie light up and Donniesha take a few risks, I was hooked. At first, I was afraid Reading Recovery might not be the love of my teaching life, but that fear is gone now that I see the value in our program. I

am also grateful for the shift Reading Recovery puts on how you view students; it helps me not only assess students, but also my 4-year-old, Weston. Now I see what he knows and can do instead of what he can't do.