Richard Knew So Much
But Still Wasn’t Reading:
Using Assessment and
Close Observation to
Find Out Why

Patricia R. Kelly, San Diego State University

The recent What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Intervention Report found that Reading Recovery has positive effects on students’ alphabets skills and general reading achievement outcomes, and potentially positive effects on comprehension and fluency.

Essentially, the report confirmed what Reading Recovery professionals and other educators have known all along: The intervention—as informed by Clay’s complex theory of literacy processing—enables children who are learning to read to find and use multiple sources of information (semantic, syntactic, phonological, visual, orthographic, story information, real-world information, etc.) in ways that allow them to become strategic readers and writers.

The articles by Patricia Kelly and Mary Lose that open this section capture powerfully how Reading Recovery teachers—through sensitive observation and responsive teaching—foster the construction of an effective and efficient literacy processing system which increases in complexity as the learners engage in reading and writing activities over time. The voices of children, teachers, and parents in the rest of the section testify to the joy of teaching and learning that arises from their experiences in Reading Recovery.

It is precisely the individually designed and individually delivered lessons by knowledgeable teachers guided by a complex view of the reading and the writing process that contribute to the positive outcomes across all the areas of literacy learning reported by the WWC. As Clay reminds us in Literacy Lessons, “The goal of teaching is to assist the child to construct effective networks in his brain for linking up all the strategic activity that will be needed to work on texts, not merely to accumulate items of knowledge.”

— Eva Konstantellou, section editor

Reading Recovery students pose some interesting challenges for us. The case study that follows describes the confusions that one student, Richard, had acquired by the time I met him in February of his first-grade year, as well as what helped him on his path to literacy. My tutoring of Richard took place before the publication of Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals (Clay, 2005a, 2005b). Therefore, I did not have the benefit of the new teaching procedures and theoretical understandings now available to Reading Recovery teachers through these books. In the discussion that follows, I include some information from Literacy Lessons, tying what I know now to what I knew then.

Background

Research on emergent literacy and language acquisition has shifted the way we think about the prerequisite understandings children develop before entering first grade and what they need to have in order to learn to read (Adams, 1990; Cambourne, 1988; Chomsky, 1971; Clay, 1991, 1993, 2001, 2005; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Goswami & Bryant, 1990; Sulzby, 1986; Wells, 1986).

The roles of language, knowledge of how the world works, phonemic awareness, the relationship between emergent writing and beginning reading, prior experiences with books, preschool and kindergarten experiences, as well as many other factors affect children’s reading acquisition. Richard had many rich experiences which contributed to his literacy strengths, as well as some experiences that probably fostered his confusions. Richard’s teacher, Kathy, whose students I had tutored in the past, called me in January. She asked me to assess Richard and help her figure out why he was not progressing in reading along with her other first graders.

According to Kathy, Richard had learned a lot about literacy. He had good language skills, understood stories, had strong letter knowledge and phonemic awareness, could read easy books (levels 1-4), and demonstrated an ability to read and write the words on the word wall in her classroom. Richard had been doing well during the beginning of his first-grade year. However, by January, the other children in his class had pulled away from him, and Richard was now the lowest reader in his class. Kathy had first begun to notice that he was not...
progressing well during guided reading lessons. She indicated that he had not been able to move into intermediate-level reading books along with his peers, and she wondered what might be getting in the way.

As I delved into Richard's school history, I discovered that this was his third school: He first attended a year of private kindergarten, then a year of kindergarten in the local parochial school before coming to first grade at this public school in his community.

Finding His Strengths
I met Richard on a warm, sunny day in Southern California at the beginning of February. He was a handsome boy with a big smile. He was a little shy, but happy to work with me. We worked at an outside table in the school courtyard where I administered Clay's (2002) An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement, keeping in mind Clay's words:

> To improve teaching, teachers need to observe children's responses as they learn to read and write and watch for
> - competencies and confusions,
> - strengths and weaknesses,
> - evidence of processing and strategic activities, and
> - evidence of what the child can already control.

(2002, p. 7)

I was very impressed with how much Richard seemed to control in both reading and writing. His initial assessment revealed he had developed many strengths: He had a significant amount of item knowledge (letters, sounds, words); he understood many concepts about print; and he could read simple patterned texts. As displayed in Table 1, his scores and stanine scores were in the average range and quite good compared with the scores of many of the children I had assessed and taught in the past. According to Clay (2002), children in the 4–6 range of stanines should be able to do average tasks in the classroom. The question was: Why was Richard getting “stuck” in his ability to progress as a reader?

While the scores he attained on the Observation Survey provided a rough picture of his current abilities, the more important indicators of his understandings came from a closer analysis of the tasks within the survey. The question was: Why was Richard getting “stuck” in his ability to progress as a reader?

Table 1. Richard’s Initial Scores on the Observation Survey

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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Entry Scores February</th>
<th>Entry Stanines Midyear</th>
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<tr>
<td>Letter Identification (54)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Word Reading (20)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Concepts About Print (24)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Vocabulary</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words (37)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easy (95%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional (90%)</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hard (80%)</td>
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The 11 words he easily read were and, the, has, down, let, am, little, what, one, like, and yes, and he attempted dad for did. He was confident in reading the words he knew, and he knew what he did not know.

His writing uncovered additional strengths including an ability to write 32 high-frequency words, which he wrote in three lists down the page: his name, mom, dad, yes, no, dog, she, red, the, is, he, me, we, and, you, by, I, a, at, on, in, go, cat, sat, mat, can, it, like, see, up, one, and or. One interesting observation during this task was that he wrote and from right to left. His attempts to write other words showed he could hear and record salient sounds: and/an, gud/good, plat/play, fit/för, bol/ball, wer/were, thu/this, tan/ten, and or/your. This was confirmed by the Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words task.

Richard quickly wrote many of the words, especially the high-frequency words: the, is, it, will, to, me, and on. He said other words slowly and wrote what he heard. He controlled beginning and ending sounds in most words, and several medial sounds. One of the most prominent aspects of this writing was his spacing. He put little or no spacing between...
words (Figure 1). This may have been a sign that he was not certain about the concept of a word. Therefore, my next area of close analysis was on the Concepts About Print tasks, where my suspicions were confirmed.

Uncovering His Confusions
Several areas about which Richard seemed to lack clear understandings were uncovered by the Concepts About Print assessment. He controlled most book handling concepts, all directional behaviors except item 10, altered line order, and many specific concepts about print, as well as word-by-word matching and reversible words. However, his understandings about hierarchical concepts and visual scanning were very limited. He was able to locate one and two letters (item 21) but he was unclear about one and two words (item 22), first and last letters of words (item 23), capital letter (item 24), changes in word order within sentences (item 12), and changes in letter order within words (items 13 and 14).

According to Clay, three areas about which children must develop a clear understanding are

- basic concepts such as a letter, a word, sounds, writing, reading and drawing;
- hierarchical concepts such as collections of letters which make up words, and collections of words which make up sentences; and
- terms for position like first and last, beginning or start, and end and next, when they apply within the directional constraint of the printer’s code. (1991, p. 141)

It was evident that Richard had not yet developed these critical understandings.

Strategic Activities on Text Reading
A close examination of Richard’s running records shed light on his patterns of response on easy, instructional, and hard texts, and helped me to see how he was “trying to get the best fit with the limited knowledge” (Clay, 2002, p. 69) he had. His accuracy rates indicated his easy reading at Level 3 and his instructional reading at Level 4 (Table 2).

Evidence of strategic activities was apparent when the books were not too hard. His reading was fluent up through Level 4. On books at his independent level (2 and 3), Richard’s substitutions utilized meaning, structure, and sometimes visual information: looked/looks, thela, and he self-corrected giraffe/boy using meaning and visual information. He monitored his reading well on the instructional level text, The Table on the Porch (Level 4), and he had an excellent self-correction rate, 1:2. His substitutions usually made sense (ladybug/bug) and he tried to work out the new word they. Throughout this book, he maintained meaning and utilized structure.

On the hard books (Levels 5 and 6), Richard continued to try to make sense of the story but he was not able to monitor using visual information. This was apparent in his substitutions: hippo/bird, water/lake, can/did, jump/sit and mountain/rock. Another interesting thing occurred on these

<table>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Self-Correction</th>
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<tr>
<td>Where’s Spot?</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Bird Can Fly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hats</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the Zoo</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>1:4</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Table on the Porch</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>1:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Bird and a Hippo</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave’s Tricks</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>nil</td>
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books; Richard began to insert and omit words.

Level 5

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<td>And</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>did</td>
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Level 6

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<td>Dave</td>
<td>can</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>lots</td>
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<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>can</td>
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In considering Richard’s running records, it seemed that he was able to use meaning, structure, and visual information on easy texts and he employed self-monitoring, searching, and self-correction strategies on instructional texts. However, as the texts got harder, although he was able to use meaning to make sense of the texts, he was not aware of the mismatch between what he read and what was written in the books. Additionally, he was able to use one-to-one matching, but he did not understand that he had to use it all of the time.

As I thought about Richard, I wondered if some of his confusions had been “practiced” during his already 2½ years in school, so that untangling them would take time and ingenuity. His confusions might have gone unchecked for many more months if Kathy had not been an observant teacher. Initially, she was fooled about his progress as a reader because of Richard’s ability to read easy books using meaning and language, and by his ability to read and write high frequency words. It wasn’t until the other children in his class were moving beyond the lowest-leveled books into mid-leveled books that she was alerted to Richard’s problems.

Predictions of Progress

Before beginning lessons, I thought about what Richard would need to learn to be a successful reader and writer, as well as what would likely be getting in his way if I did not address his confusions. The predictions of progress that I wrote after the Observation Survey administration follow.

**At the end of the teaching program Richard will know how to:**
1) consistently self monitor using all sources of information; 2) search for and use visual information as well as meaning and structure; 3) carefully check print to see if it looks right; 4) self-correct using all sources of information in flexible ways; and 5) read with phrasing and fluency.

**In the next few weeks, he will need to know how to:**
1) consistently begin on the left side of words when reading and writing; 2) consistently use spacing between words when writing; and 3) learn to distinguish between letters and words.

**Extra work will be needed on:**
1) developing the word concept; and 2) teaching Richard to scan words from left to right.

Roaming Around the Known

According to Clay,

Note that if a child enters Reading Recovery with higher scores on the Observation Survey tasks that child will still need to spend time roaming around the known. There will be a much wider range of literacy behaviours to explore, more confusions, and also hidden problems. It is imperative that the teacher uncover any unhelpful assumptions or unwanted habits that the child has already learned in school. (2005a, p. 33)
I was interested in learning what else Richard could do and in uncovering other confusions he may have acquired. I knew that 2 weeks of Roaming Around the Known would provide me the opportunity to closely observe Richard and actively engage him in reading and writing.

Being actively engaged and in control is important for Reading Recovery children from the very beginning of lessons. Richard and I read and reread 34 different books during Roaming Around the Known to encourage his engagement in reading and to give him a sense of being in control. We wrote books together, and I chose books that he could read easily from Levels 2, 3 and 4. I was able to use published books because Richard knew so many high-frequency words and he could draw on meaning and text patterns to help himself read. Even on the first day of Roaming Around the Known, I noticed Richard self-monitoring, searching for meaning, and cross-checking in the book, *How’s The Weather* (Level 3), when he figured out the words *sunny* and *rainy*. Richard was able to better control one-to-one matching from my modeling this behavior.

Clay (2005a, p. 35) tells us, “If you have caught the child’s attention he will, of course, notice, learn from, and soon want to engage in, some of the things he sees you do.” I noticed that when I read books modeling phrasing and intonation, he wanted to take over and was able to replicate my reading in both phrasing and expression.

To learn more about Richard’s approach to print during Roaming Around the Known, we engaged in writing every day. Richard, a proud dog owner, wanted to write about dogs. So in his first book, which took 2 days to write, we used sticker pictures of various dogs to prompt the writing. Even in 2 days, it became evident that Richard was able to take on many responsibilities for writing letters and words. Underlines show what Richard wrote independently and spacing is indicated.

**Day 1**

1-like th-i-s dog because it is-a-b-o-x-e.

I like-thi-s dog-b-e-a-u-i-s it is a-bowl dog.

**Day 2**

1-like this dog-b-e-a-u-i-s b-e likes me.

I-like thi-s dog because he is a sch n auzer

Then he wrote the title page: *I like Dogs*

Over the 2 days, Richard became more active in writing the sounds he heard and the words that he was taking on. He also monitored his spacing between words more closely by independently using his finger as a spacer. As the days went on, Richard began to self-monitor spacing between words in most of his writing. Similar patterns of taking on more and more writing were exhibited in the other books and messages we wrote during Roaming Around the Known.

As we worked together, I uncovered another manifestation of his lack of awareness about *first* and *last* when he did not know where the beginning of one of his sentences was. This confusion was also seen when he made known words using magnetic letters. When I gave him the appropriate letters and asked him to make his name, he quickly did so. However, when I asked him to show me the beginning of his name, he quickly pointed to the last letter. I knew this was an area I would have to address soon.

In summing up my notes during 10 days of observations with Richard, some of my initial findings were confirmed and others were extended. Richard could 1) retain easy patterns and read easy texts using meaning and structure and one-to-one matching; 2) monitor his reading using known words and one-to-one matching; 3) flexibly use either hand to match one-to-one; 4) check the pictures to search for meaning and problem solve; 5) initiate some cross-checking of initial visual information with meaning; 6) generate short stories about many things of interest to him; 7) use sound-to-letter knowledge to write words; 8) write numerous easy words fluently; 9) monitor spacing between words some of the time; and 10) use magnetic letters to make many words. Also, some of his confusions which were related to the concepts first and last at the sentence level and at the word level were confirmed.

**Moving Into Instruction**

Early lessons affirmed what I had found during assessment and in Roaming Around the Known and shed light upon further confusions that were not obvious earlier. While Richard consistently matched one-to-one and moved left to right across a line of text while reading, I began to think that he was directing his attention to the end or the middle of a word at times instead of at the beginning letter. During writing, he began to use spacing between words but was still unclear about spacing between letters in a word. He heard the last sound in a word but had difficulty hearing the beginning sound. It appeared that the whole notion of *directionality* at the word level may have been a major obstacle for him. Soon into lessons with Richard, my analysis of his reading and writing led
me to confirm that his confusions about basic concepts of print included the following: 1) concepts about what a letter is and what a word is; 2) where to focus attention within a word; 3) how spaces are used; 4) what is meant by beginning and end, and first and last; and 5) hearing sounds in sequence across words. Making words with magnetic letters and writing were the vehicles I used to help him learn about these concepts.

**Magnetic Letters**

Because directionality was such an issue, I was consistent in working left to right when I showed Richard how to make words with magnetic letters. We began with words that he could already read and write. I had him make his name and showed him the first letter and the last letter. For several weeks we used his name as the first word he made at the white board; it was quite some time before he did not have to think carefully before responding to requests such as, “What is the first letter in your name?” or “Show me the end.” The understandings of the distinctions between letters and words were also developed using magnetic letters (and during writing). He gradually was able to apply his emerging understandings to other known words as we worked to build known words with magnetic letters.

Using magnetic letters, I also helped him begin to learn about left-to-right directionality by showing him how to run his finger from left to right under a word he had made. I used the language provided by Clay (1993, p. 44), “Look at the word. Say it slowly and run your finger under it.”

In retrospect and with *Literacy Lessons* in hand, I realize that I may not have spent enough time untangling confusions and firming up concepts about print. The additional information in this new book—which addresses children’s confusions about directionality, the letter and word concepts, and first and last—would have helped me shape Richard’s understandings earlier in his program. The information about building and breaking up words beginning on pages 42 and 43 provides us with specific ways to address these concepts. Richard was the child that Clay describes:

> Letters make up words. Children may be slow to consolidate this idea. This is not about teaching words or counting letters. It is possible to know many letters, and many words, without being clear how letters go together to construct a word. Teachers must allow for the fact that from time to time there may be a child who does not understand this relationship until late in the lesson series. As writing improves, this distinction becomes clearer. (2005b, p. 43)

**Writing**

In Richard’s case, writing did help him to understand how letters go together to construct a word, as well as many other concepts including where to start and which way to go when writing, how to use spaces within and between words, when to use capital letters and various punctuation, what are first and last concepts at the word and sentence levels, and clarity about the concepts letter and word.

**Composing**

Composing sentences was relatively easy for Richard from the beginning of lessons. This may have been related to his strong oral language, his clear understandings about the way stories work, the writing program in his classroom, and his confidence about his ability to write many words independently.

Many of the operations needed in early reading are practiced in another form in early writing. The teacher’s role is to get the child to compose and write his own stories. Writing is as much about composing as it is about spelling. …It is about shifting from simple sentences at first to complex sentences later, and about using a variety of ways to structure sentences, and packing more interest into the message. (Clay, 2005b, p. 50)

We wrote about his life as a budding baseball player, his family events, his dog (Lucky), his cat, and about some of the books we read. His early lessons included the following sentences:

**Lesson 14** I have a real baseball game today.

**Lesson 15** I played first and third. Then we won.

**Lesson 19** Lucky comes when I call him.

**Lesson 24** I went fishing with my cousins.

**Lesson 25** I liked when it said, “We like kittens.”

As we continued in lessons, Richard often wrote more complex sentences and more than one sentence.

**Lesson 38** I like my baseball team. I don’t know if we’re going to win.

**Lesson 42** He chases mice and he chases lizards and he eats them.
Lesson 43 You have a story about Lucky and you have the book about my dog and who is it by? Do you write books?

In the last example above, after we finished the word Lucky he went on composing and writing on the run without asking for help except on the words, who and write. Since he has a dog named Lucky, the book we had read about a dog with the same name seemed to spur him onto more independent writing. I did not interfere nor did I think it necessary to change the period he had placed initially at the end of the first sentence.

Spacing
As noted earlier, during the initial assessment Richard had a large corpus of easy words he could write, but while writing the dictated sentences he left no spaces between words. The writing section of our lessons provided Richard with opportunities to learn more about the concept of a word and about the importance of leaving spaces between words. Understanding spacing was not easy for Richard. One example of his writing, which he wrote quite independently later in lessons, shows the struggle he had. Here he exaggerated spacing in the first line but did not leave enough spacing between words further on; and, letters within some words were too far apart (Figure 2).

Elkonin boxes
As might be expected early in lessons, Richard named the last letter first when we used Elkonin boxes. Through the use of Elkonin boxes on a daily basis he learned how to listen for and write words from the beginning sound to the final sound. As we transitioned to letter boxes, he learned more about how words look and that not all letters make sounds.

In another example of his writing, we used letter boxes for the word game, and the ea in the word beat was derived from the word team, which he learned in a previous lesson. Additionally, Richard clearly demonstrated better control of spacing both within and between words (Figure 3).

Reading
Right away, I knew that Richard’s considerable knowledge of high-frequency words was a strength for him in many ways, but it turned out also to be part of his problem. First, he thought he should know all the words in a book, so initially when he came to a word he didn’t know, he would simply shut down and not try to problem solve the new word. Additionally, his large bank of known words made it difficult to find an “instructional level” book because he knew so many of the words he encountered in print. His running records were often at or above 95% accuracy. Both his balking at difficulty and the fact that he was not always able to render a fluent reading of texts caused me to not rush him up through the text levels.

Another reason I did not skip over levels had to do with an interesting observation that I made when analyzing Richard’s running records, which confirmed my earlier suspicions about where he directed his visual attention in words. His errors indicated that sometimes he looked at the wrong end of the word while reading. Some examples of this were: they/with, my/I’m, little/will, their/with, and did/tied. This was most likely related to the directionality issues he was still dealing with at the word level. Again, in retrospect, I think early word work had not sufficiently untangled Richard’s confusions so that lapses continued. In Literacy Lessons, we

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now have clear guidance about how to address this issue:

In the first year of learning to read the child is establishing the habit of working left to right through a word. In a sense his eyes are also learning to recognize the identity of each letter when it is approached from the left side. Teachers can help but sorting out these concepts will take time.

• In your own demonstrations of words on the magnetic board, break the letters out on the intact word on the right and move them one by one to the left.

• Have the child on your left. Construct words at the magnetic board letter by letter first to last then read the word (sometimes using a left-to-right sweep with your finger)…

In a very short time the child should have a consistent left-to-right approach to letters in words he sees. Then from time to time check on the concepts of ‘a letter’ and a ‘word’. Is he holding on firmly to the distinction? (Clay, 2005b, p. 42–43)

It was clear that Richard did not consistently approach letters in words in a left-to-right manner during text reading. I think this was particularly true when he came to a new word. One way I addressed this issue was to have him run his finger from left to right under the tricky word saying it slowly. Clay provides us with additional directions about how we can foster eye scanning from left to right across a word:

For a little more help during reading, or rereading after writing, or during work on words in isolation, the teacher might say things like

Say it slowly and move your finger under it, this way. Make a slow check while you move your finger under the word. Now show me how you can do it just with your eyes!

The aim is to establish a fast visual scan that consistently works left to right across words. (2005b, p.13)

As time went on, Richard became more consistent in his ability to scan words from left to right and he became more strategic and flexible in his problem solving. He continued to use meaning and structure as he read, but he also integrated the use of visual information. I noticed on his running records in June that he seldom appealed for help without trying something first. His self-correction rate was usually 1:1, 1:2 or 1:3, and he also began to stop to figure out words without making errors first. For example, while reading The Missing Necklace (Level 14), his successful attempts on the words sandwiches and sheep looked like this:

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<tr>
<td>s-and</td>
<td>s-b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sandwiches</td>
<td>sheep</td>
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I continued to provide orientations to the stories right up to the end of the year so that Richard would be successful with the first reading of each
book. According to Clay (2005b), “The first reading of the new book is not a test; it needs to be a successful reading. Prepare the child for correct responding on the first encounter. Success can be expected if the child has had recent and successful encounters with the language of the book...” (p. 91). This was the case for Richard. By having enough meaning and language he was able to use more and more visual information. The second benefit of supportive book introductions was that he was able to read much of the new book fluently, thus providing his own feed-forward for problem solving unknown words.

Final Assessment
The scores for the final administration of the Observation Survey provide only a glimpse at Richard’s strengths (Table 3). A closer look at the items on the Concepts About Print tasks indicated he had come a long way. He understood the concepts letter, word, first and last, and capital letter (items 21, 22, 23, 24). His visual scanning abilities were better, too; he noticed one change in letter order (item 13). His writing was another indication that he understood these concepts because he left spaces between the words in his sentences.

His instructional text level was 16, well within the expected performance for children at the end of first grade. His running records showed many attempts at words, high self-correction rates, and no indication that he was looking at the wrong end of the words. His attempts at unknown words made sense and almost always began with the same letter as the word in question.

Concluding Thoughts
Reading Recovery proved to be a successful intervention for Richard. He came in with many strengths and some confusions which were getting in the way. I was able to adjust my instruction to build on his strengths and to accommodate his changing understandings. Clay discusses this in Literacy Lessons: “The learning opportunity provided must draw upon the strengths this child has already demonstrated and relate to the new learning needs that have become apparent. Teaching is an immediate consequence of some prior behavior” (2005b, p. 2).

Now we have a new resource in Literacy Lessons. If I had had this book when I worked with Richard, I might have untangled his confusions sooner. However, Reading Recovery procedures then and now make it possible for us to assess, observe, and provide the instruction to untangle confusions and foster strategic activities for problem solving for children like Richard.

I was able to observe Richard in second grade, where he was fortunate to remain with Kathy who had a 1–2 combination class. As a second grader, Richard continued to make progress in reading and writing. When I visited his classroom in November, he was reading second-grade materials and he was very enthusiastic about reading. He saw himself as a reader and a writer. Furthermore, he had taken a leadership role in helping first-grade students with both reading and writing. I lost track of Richard after second grade because he moved. However, I am certain that he has continued to progress well in reading and writing. Reading Recovery does what it says it will do: It brings most of the lowest-achieving children to average levels of achievement. Richard benefited from Reading Recovery in two important ways: He learned how to read, and he developed the ability to persist at difficulty. Both are critical for success in school.

References

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Children’s Books Cited


About the Author

Patricia R. Kelly is a professor and interim associate dean in the College of Education at San Diego State University. She is a Reading Recovery trainer of teacher leaders. Her interests in early literacy began when she worked as an elementary teacher and reading specialist. She has conducted research and published numerous articles on early intervention, reader response, teacher development, effective classroom practices in literacy, and Reading Recovery.

About the Cover

Hannah Adams was a Reading Recovery student at Frank D. Moates Elementary School in DeSoto, Texas. Her Reading Recovery teacher, Vicky Waits, says Hannah loved reading lots of books and wrote stories about princesses and going to her grandma’s house. After a complete series of lessons, Hannah continued to make progress in her classroom. Hannah now attends Smith Elementary School in Mesquite, Texas. Her teacher, Ms. Skellenger, describes her as a very good reader and writer who likes sharing her writing with her classmates. The daughter of David and Amy Adams, Hannah also enjoys gymnastics and playing with her brother, Jacob.