Editor’s Corner

Connie Briggs, Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to the spring issue of The Journal of Reading Recovery. This is the time of the year when we celebrate accomplishments and plan for the next school year. For Reading Recovery professionals at all levels, this should mean reflecting on teaching, learning, and implementation.

At the heart of Reading Recovery is the teaching of students and training of teachers. Achieving positive results for children, though, depends not only on instruction but also on quality implementation. Even the best teaching will only yield moderate results over time unless we are committed to focusing on the complex issues of implementation — shared ownership, level of coverage, informed administration, continuous improvement, quality teaching and training, using data as a problem-solving tool, and others.

Participant involvement at every level is required to achieve optimal results for children within a system, including active advocacy for a proven, successful practice that makes a difference in the lives of children and ultimately to our society. In this issue, Betsy Kaye provides examples from teachers and teacher leaders who are actively involved in ensuring that stakeholders value the benefits of Reading Recovery. These examples may be useful for you to use in planning for next year’s improvement in your own district.

Reading Recovery professionals in states that are implementing the Common Core State Standards initiatives will be interested in Jeffery Williams’ article about how these standards will influence classroom instruction and how Reading Recovery fits into this context.

Hargreaves and Fullen (2012) write that the most-important factor in school improvement is the professional teacher, who needs commitment and teaching expertise in equal intensity. (Their book, Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School, is reviewed in this issue by Annie Opat and Roger Caswell.) An article by Noel Jones focuses on that expertise and will help teachers reflect on the important role of observation from various perspectives; in concert with continued study about theory, literacy development, and teaching procedures. And C.C. Bates’ article provides a look at how teacher leaders might navigate issues of distance by using web-based technology to support teachers’ expertise beyond the standard requirements of training and professional development.

Through the i3 scale-up grant for Reading Recovery, many schools and districts have been supported to sustain or implement high-quality professional learning and intervention for students most in need. Garreth Zalud documents one story of the difference this grant opportunity has made to rural districts in South Dakota. Emily Rodgers and Jerry D’Agostino report on the complex challenges of scaling up implementation and share insights about factors that support or threaten sustainability within a system.

Despite the challenges to implementation, Reading Recovery continues to show strong results for both Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura students. In the annual International Data Evaluation Center report, Jerry D’Agostino and Sinéad Harmey explain how changes to the evaluation design more accurately reflect the substantial closing of the literacy gaps at the end of the year.

The elegant design of Reading Recovery includes a focus on the development of professional expertise as well as a system for implementing, sustaining, and expanding intervention in schools and systems. A quote from Professional Capital helps us understand that this doesn’t happen by chance. Hargreaves and Fullen write, “Whole system change, we have learned, is not a kind of magic. It involves and absolutely requires individual and collective acts of investment in an inspirational vision and a coherent set of actions that build everyone’s capability and keep everyone learning as they continue to move forward” (p. xviii).

This issue of the journal includes many opportunities for readers to reflect on how planning, collaboration, and personal action impacts systems—but more importantly—teaching and learning. It continues to take a village!