Editor’s Corner

Connie Briggs, Editor-in-Chief

I love it when serendipitously the stars align and a great plan comes together. In his blog on designing for collaboration, Jacob Morgan (2012) says that a good strategy incorporates a dose of serendipity. This edition of the journal is one of those occasions in which just the right manuscripts came in at just the right time to take readers on a journey to learn more about language and learning from at least three different lenses and three different continents.

Readers are beneficiaries of the International Institute that was held in Sydney, Australia, this past summer. Dr. Bridie Raban, professor at the Australian Council for Education Research, shares a beautifully written article on the importance of language to early literacy acquisition. She draws upon key research findings and then provides specific instructional recommendations to help us support children’s developing language and subsequent learning. Readers are then able to look specifically at how language is supported in a Reading Recovery lesson as Megan Dixon, a teacher leader from the United Kingdom, shares a case analysis of one child’s journey towards independent language use taught by a thoughtful, observant teacher.

Looking through an even finer lens, Dr. Mary Lose provides a review of teaching procedures from section 7, Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words, in Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals Part Two. Dr. Mary Anne Doyle has provided us with another beautifully written article to acknowledge the background and importance of Clay’s series of texts written for parents, caregivers, and teachers of preschool and kindergarten children. All of Clay’s texts on preschool literacy focus on the complexity of the acquisition of reading and writing and the strong emphasis on oral language acquisition that continues to be developed simultaneously. These four articles together provide a solid background of theory and practical application that will help readers reflect on the role of teaching to extend language that will become both a resource and benefit to becoming literate.

Susan Fullerton and Salli Forbes offer a research article that will support the anecdotal differences we see every day in children who become engaged, motivated readers through individual opportunities to learn beside a highly skilled teacher. While the article calls for more studies to look at the motivation of children who receive Reading Recovery instruction, this study found significant positive changes in students’ motivation during their series of Reading Recovery lessons. The IDEC evaluation report, written by Jerome D’Agostino and Sinéad Harney, also documents the continued positive impact Reading Recovery teachers have on students and schools across the nation. Through sophisticated research methods, the authors report that what the teacher does during the lesson likely has more influence on the growth rates of both Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura students than demographic variables.

The information from this journal can be useful to all literacy professionals who are planning for the success of primary-age students, whether in a Reading Recovery intervention or a classroom. A very helpful resource has been written to help schools plan a comprehensive approach to literacy learning supported by Reading Recovery-trained professionals in a learning community. This guide—Promising Literacy for Every Child: Reading Recovery and a Comprehensive Literacy System—can be used as a template for schools to design a comprehensive literacy plan that will serve all learners within a school or district. Learn the background story and tips for how to use the new guide in an article by Dr. Patricia Scharer.

And finally, we are making big plans for the 30th anniversary of Reading Recovery in North America. Working with the “Reading Recovery Works: 30 Years of Excellence” theme, numerous committees are developing ideas for a special website section, resources to help you plan local celebrations, sessions and events to make the 2015 National Conference a very special experience, and more. And the editors of this journal are planning (serendipitously of course) two issues that will highlight Clay’s contributions to our understanding of literacy acquisition and the teaching of children who struggle to become literate. Stay tuned for an exciting year ahead!