

Editor's Corner

Connie Briggs, Editor-in-Chief



In education, we often feel that we do not have enough time to teach what we need to teach or to learn what we need to know. “If only I had another day, another week . . .” is often a phrase I say to myself. Yet think about what is accomplished in just 12 to 20 weeks. Teachers trained in Reading Recovery can literally change the trajectory of a child’s life in an average of just 36 hours of instruction.

We are often asked why Reading Recovery professionals are so committed. Perhaps because we can see a child change right before our eyes in a short period of time — gaining confidence and literacy skill that will be foundational to his or her life. What we do positively impacts individual children, schools, communities, and beyond! Just read the “Where Are They Now?” stories to see real examples of the influence of our work with students.

In this issue, you will read three articles that focus on what some might consider as peripheral to teaching a child to read and write. However, each topic is instrumental in accelerating learning. Betsy Kaye and Mary Lose look at how visual discrimination and fast visual processing with letter work contributes to the development of a literacy processing system. Jim Schnug shares how important the 10 days—just 5 hours—of Roaming Around the Known are to getting a powerful start to accelerated learning. And Paula Bennet has written about how supportive, intentional, and clear instructional conversations are key to effective lessons. These three teaching articles reveal instructional practices—culminating in a just few hours across a series of lessons—that can make a dramatic difference.

In the Implementation section you will find an article about the impact of the Investing in Innovation grant to scale-up Reading Recovery. Upon the completion of the 5-year grant, we are seeing the positive effects on schools, teachers, and children. From California to Massachusetts, examples illustrate how schools and districts had opportunities to expand or to implement Reading Recovery for the first time, resulting in the training of over 3,700 teachers serving over 400,000 children who may not have had an opportunity to learn to read and write in first grade.

Many teachers trained in Reading Recovery work with children who are English language learners, either in one-to-one instruction, small groups, or whole class. Adria Klein shares a valuable resource for these teachers in her review of the book, *Cultivating Knowledge, Building Language: Literacy Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary School*. Authors Nonie K. Lesaux and Julie Russ Harris from the Harvard Graduate School of Education provide strong research and field-based practices for language development and expansion of academic language. They offer detailed ideas for lesson plans and language projects for a variety of grade levels and content areas that not only extend learning for English language learners, but for all elementary students.

As always, our professional organization, the Reading Recovery Council of North America, provides information about advocacy, grant and scholarship opportunities, resources, awards, and conferences to inform membership and provide support and encouragement. Share in our sincere wishes to celebrate Dr. Marsha Studebaker’s 15-year contribution to Reading Recovery by reading a tribute from colleagues. Marsha is also celebrated, along with two other noteworthy recipients, in the Teacher Leader Awards article.

Exciting plans are being finalized for the 9th International Institute to be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, this July. Allyson Matczuk, our Canadian colleague, shares information about this Institute for all Reading Recovery professionals. Keynote and featured speakers from five countries will join international trainers and teacher leaders for 3 days of professional development. I hope you will make plans to attend.

In the big scheme of life, approximately 36 hours over 12 to 20 weeks is a relatively small amount of time. To a child learning to read and write, this may be one of the most-important times of his or her life. Henry Brooks Adams has written, “Teachers affect eternity; no one can tell where their influence stops.” I think this is especially true for teachers who teach Reading Recovery students. Our time is well spent!

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