

President's Message

Change Challenges Us to Rechart Our Direction

RRCNA President Craig Dougherty



Reading Recovery is one of the most effective models for creating paradigm shifts in teachers. It is also the most researched and critiqued program in the world! Reading Recovery places the child at the epicenter; it is not a curriculum, not a textbook series, and certainly not a quick fix. The child is the focus. It has been proven beyond a doubt that an effective Reading Recovery teacher provides an opportunity for children to become self-extended learners, charting their own paths towards excellence by learning to read and write proficiently.

While Reading Recovery teachers in the U.S. and Canada have taught more than 2.2 million children in the past 30 years, we find ourselves at a crossroads. Our numbers, both in terms of students served and the number of Reading Recovery teachers and teacher leaders, have declined significantly since 2001. I believe we need to chart a brave new course to extend our reach beyond one-to-one intervention. We all know that many Reading Recovery teachers work with 8–10 Reading Recovery students across a school year, and four times as many other children benefit from their expertise each day. We know that they are among the best-trained staff in the school. Yet, school decision makers often underestimate the importance of addressing the needs of the lowest literacy learners at the onset of their learning to read and write.

They also underestimate the power of Reading Recovery teachers and teacher leaders as change agents within a school or district. Despite Reading Recovery's outstanding data across a variety of demographics, the intervention is implemented less often or it is dropped as a reading intervention.

Change is never easy and, quite frankly, sometimes scary. We must never lose sight of what Reading Recovery is and the vision of Marie Clay,

in a comprehensive literacy model is promising. In addition, pilots of Literacy Lessons—training special education and ESL-certified teachers in Reading Recovery—are showing great promise. When all teachers in the school share the same theory base and understanding of literacy processing, significant progress can be made.

Principals and superintendents are looking for models that impact the whole school, increasing student

We must never lose sight of what Reading Recovery is and the vision of Marie Clay, who created this beautiful way to teach high-risk children how to read. Yet, we must adapt to new realities and the business of educating children today.

who created this beautiful way to teach high-risk children how to read. Yet, we must adapt to new realities and the business of educating children today.

In terms of real education reform, approaches have literally been all over the map. No one model has risen to an acceptable level of replicability and effectiveness. However, there are visionaries within our ranks, and to that end we must look for guidance and answers. Some initial work in embedding Reading Recovery

proficiency in reading and writing. Reading Recovery needs to be at the forefront of schoolwide impact. Implementing Reading Recovery as part of a whole-school comprehensive literacy model must be pursued with the same rigor, passion, and excellence that scaled up Reading Recovery from 1984–2001, when 150,000 children were served annually. I urge all Reading Recovery stakeholders to take on this challenge and create new life for Reading Recovery!