Editor’s Corner

Mary Anne Doyle, Editor-in-Chief

We begin this issue commemorating the 10th anniversary of Marie Clay’s death. “My wish is that you continue,” wrote Maya Angelou. Continue to astonish a mean world, to protect the young and defenseless, to enlarge your range, to increase your spirit, and to risk everything for the good thing.

Astonishing the world of researchers and educators, ensuring literacy success for young, struggling learners, supporting Reading Recovery in multiple languages around the world, implementing Reading Recovery and its redevelopments (e.g., Descubriendo la Lectura) with integrity and fidelity: This is Marie Clay’s legacy, an indelible signature of honor and success made ever so meaningful by the realization that millions of lives in multiple settings, cultures, and languages across the globe have been enhanced by her scholarship and leadership. Her quest was to determine what was possible, her discoveries and her contributions were revolutionary, and her commitment and efforts continued to the final weeks of her life.

Marie’s wish was for us to continue, and so we strive to follow her lead. We continue to pursue enlarging our presence in order to serve more children, conducting relevant research and critical inquiry, examining and refining our explanations, problem solving implementation concerns, and fiercely guarding the integrity of Marie Clay’s work to ensure fidelity to her process and procedures and to maintain effectiveness.

Continuing the study of Reading Recovery instruction, its implementation, and related research, as well as continuing the national evaluation of student results, are the foci of the articles in this issue. A recurring theme noted across these articles is reflection.

Leslie McBane, James Schnug, and Cheri Slinger share their interesting examination of children’s writing by exploring and hypothesizing the implications of patterns observed in children’s writing errors. In addition to their descriptions of the children’s writing, they share their discoveries and the lessons they learned about their students and their teaching. Their reflections of each child’s writing behaviors and ‘mistakes’ clarified the child’s control and emerging competencies and informed their instructional decisions. Taking time to complete systematic observations and reflect deeply was key to identifying each child’s strengths and to providing powerful instruction. They detail a process that teachers will want to replicate.

Jennifer Flight offers a rich account of an exploratory, informal research project with her student, an English language learner (ELL). Her instructional approaches, accounting for the child’s oral language development and honoring his cultural knowledge, and her descriptions of his performance and growth over a relative short period of time will be very helpful for Reading Recovery teachers instructing ELLs. One of her important suggestions is to study a child’s oral language closely and reflect. “There is much to learn when we become more observant and reflective with respect to what the learner can do” (p. 33). As noted by our authors looking at children’s writing, Jennifer’s reflections of observed learner strengths are critically important for creating powerful learning opportunities.

Our Implementation section features an article written by Mary Jackson, a retired site coordinator for Reading Recovery/Descubriendo la Lectura in a large, suburban district. She shares her reflections of the processes her team engaged in over time as they implemented these interventions, responded to changes within the district (e.g., a new superintendent), and addressed issues of sustainability. Her discussion is honest and echoes challenges others have experienced. Most helpful are her reflections for improvement as these offer important, proactive efforts to ensure a secure implementation.

Bridie Raban brings current research in neuroscience to our attention for ongoing reflection. She discusses discoveries that relate to literacy acquisition and instruction while cautioning readers of the many unknowns in this relatively new area of science. She links key concepts directly to Marie Clay’s theoretical perspective and Reading Recovery instructional procedures. This reveals how astute Marie Clay was in designing instruction based on a transformational perspective of cognitive development.

IDEC Director Richard Lomax shares exciting results in the annual evaluations of Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura. “In its 32nd year of implementation in 2015–2016, students in the intervention posted amongst the strongest outcomes shown thus far” (p. 53). The data confirm that our teachers are highly effective; they provide outstanding instruction to a diverse range of learners.

With our authors, our commitment to learning through research, reflection, diligent attention to program implementation, and effective teaching will strengthen and sustain Reading Recovery. In so doing, we will continue Marie Clay’s remarkable legacy and her wish for the gift of literacy for all children.