Editor’s Corner

Mary Anne Doyle, Editor-in-Chief

Reading Recovery teachers, we salute you! This celebratory message reflects a vibrant theme appearing in multiple articles of this issue, echoing the excellence of well-prepared Reading Recovery teachers and their influence on literacy education.

Our authors reaffirm that the power and success of the Reading Recovery intervention rests on the expertise and abilities of Reading Recovery teachers. This acknowledgement is both well established in the literature and reconfirmed by the comprehensive evaluation of Reading Recovery completed by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education in 2016.

Teaching is an intellectual act; it involves cognitive problem solving that requires both knowledge and skills. Reading Recovery teacher preparation seeks to extend each teacher’s higher order cognitive processes to “guide intelligent, purposeful action and interaction” with students (Lyons, Pinnell, & DeFord, 1993, p. 167). These goals differ dramatically from so many current, narrowly focused training programs that support a teacher’s acquisition of methods for teaching a specific program but are narrow in scope. Such training delimits the importance of teacher judgement and lacks opportunities for the development of professional knowledge and the enhanced expertise that creates excellence.

The theory of learning and instruction reflected in Reading Recovery teacher preparation demands a high standard of teacher performance. Teacher leaders assist their teachers to achieve high standards by providing professional development that is both powerful and ongoing. Graduate courses incorporate sound theories of learning, literacy, and literacy development. They create opportunities for teachers to co-construct new understandings, develop reflective practices, and collaborate with colleagues to problem solve. Teacher learning is continuous and is supported by annual, ongoing professional development following the initial training year. Our authors anchor their observations and insights in these understandings as they share their research and recommendations.

Jeff Williams highlights the expertise of Reading Recovery teachers in relation to assessment practices. He reviews the current call for applications of formative assessments and details how the assessment techniques of Reading Recovery teachers, formative assessment practices, predate this recent call. Effective assessment practices are established in professional development, and Reading Recovery teachers gain proficiencies in both analyses and interpretation.

The power of teachers’ ongoing commitment to enhancing their effectiveness through study and reflection is the focus of Lori Taylor’s case study. Observing and reporting on applications of a reflexive protocol, she identifies elements of teachers’ intellectual practices, defined as the use of critical inquiry and reflection that result in increased understandings of teaching and learning. Teacher examples depict new knowledge acquisition, a form of adaptive expertise. Clearly, these Reading Recovery teachers exemplify the professionalism of lifelong learners and expert teachers.

In her recognition of Reading Recovery teachers’ knowledge and skills, Jamie Lipp asserts that a school’s investment in Reading Recovery teacher training benefits not only the children they instruct but also their colleagues across the school context. Reading Recovery teachers are often considered the most knowledgeable literacy experts in their buildings and as a result, they are advocates of best practices and the leaders of change. Lipp offers important reinforcement of Reading Recovery teachers and explains how a leadership role emerges. She identifies the benefits of teacher leadership observed by teacher leaders and offers sensible, powerful suggestions for the enhancement of any Reading Recovery teacher’s leadership potential.

Marla Robertson, Leslie Patterson, Connie Briggs, and Anne Simpson discuss their case study of what contributes to successful Reading Recovery implementation and explore findings in relation to complex adaptive systems. The impact of Reading Recovery teachers, teacher leaders, and classroom teachers engaged in individual and collective cycles of inquiry, reflection, and action stand out as key components. The authors also reflect on the observed impact of shared identify, shared focus, and shared practices in relation to Reading Recovery implementations within school systems and offer specific tools for our use in evaluating our contexts.

The influences of Reading Recovery teachers include both instructional and assessment practices. It is our honor to recognize and applaud the accomplishments of our Reading Recovery teachers for their students and their schools.


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