Marie Clay once summarized her visionary career by relating it to a title inspired by a poem from 1945: “Simply by sailing in a new direction you could enlarge the world” (Clay, 2004). Here, Clay talks about her academic and professional journey, from rethinking how we study early literacy intervention to the various times in which she “sailed” in unknown and different directions to learn, discover, and advocate for early literacy learning. Clay encouraged us all to sail from the known to the unknown. In the case of Reading Recovery® teachers as literacy leaders, it is important to remember these ideas from Clay, to find new directions to sail, and to ask (like she often did), “what else is possible?”

Reading Recovery professionals understand the power of the learning acquired throughout their training year and beyond. Highly qualified teachers are the foundation of the success of Reading Recovery (A Principal’s Guide to Reading Recovery, 2012, p. iii). In a period of education marked with heightened investments in prepackaged programs, it is important to address that the best use of funds are not spent on teacher resource manuals, computer programs, scripted lessons or student workbooks. Darling-Hammond (1996) confirms the greatest return on funds, above any other use of school resources, results from investing in improving teacher performance. Knowing this, investing in expert teachers to serve as literacy leaders is a logical expenditure.

While Reading Recovery-trained professionals do an excellent job of promoting the power and promise of the positive impact Reading Recovery has on student achievement, we may be falling short in our efforts to share and advocate for Reading Recovery teachers as literacy leaders. Reading Recovery teachers are not only an investment in the success of the students they serve, but an investment in building the overall literacy understandings and teaching practices within their building and districts. Reading Recovery teachers can build literacy expertise within their schools and buildings in a variety of ways. Positioning themselves as literacy leaders within their schools can strongly support the ways in which Reading Recovery is valued, grown, advocated for, and understood.

Kat Kayne, a Reading Recovery teacher in the District of Columbia Public Schools, engages in a “chat ‘n chew” session with first-grade teachers and her assistant principal. The focus is looking closely at student errors on running records to devise next steps in teaching.
Making the Case for Reading Recovery Teachers as Literacy Leaders

Throughout this section I will discuss, in detail, the notion of an expert teacher and highlight the ways in which Reading Recovery teachers align with expert teachers in characteristics and competencies (Lyons, 2003), instructional strength (May, Sirinides, Gray, & Goldsworthy, 2016) and professional development experiences (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Gardner, & Espinoza, 2017). Moving forward, I will identify the ways in which expert teachers and literacy leaders are connected. Finally, I will explore recent research surrounding common factors among effective Reading Recovery schools as to emphasize the importance of Reading Recovery teachers extending their roles as literacy leaders.

Expert Teachers

Being a literacy leader begins with a strong foundational understanding of teaching students. This is often referred to as being an expert teacher. In the book, *Teaching Struggling Readers*, Lyons (2003) pairs an ongoing research base with her extensive work with Reading Recovery teachers (considered expert teachers) to support the development of several key characteristics and competencies of expert teachers. Characteristically speaking, expert teachers hold high expectations of student learning. They believe they make a difference in their students’ lives and remain positive while building and maintaining trusting relationships. Further, expert teachers show a genuine interest in children; provide feedback that is constructive, targeted and positive; maintain consistent support; and continually value their own personal learning.

In addition to possessing specific character traits, expert teachers also exhibit specific competencies. Lyons (2003) describes expert teachers as those who are able to integrate new knowledge into existing knowledge to make sound judgements about student needs. In addition, expert teachers ask themselves questions that focus on student learning and base their teaching decisions around these questions. They accurately assess children’s progress and identify roadblocks to learning, address individual learning needs, continue to make the child’s experience positive and rewarding, and understand how to provide a dynamic, flexible scaffold to assist children in mastering new competencies. Lyons pairs the importance of social and emotional dimensions of learning with the quality and context of experiences, leading to the ability to make the most impactful teaching decisions at the most-appropriate times through ongoing reflection, discussion, analysis, and evaluation.

Likewise, Lyons (2003) shares that expert teachers do not rely on finding a specific method, program, or set of materials to teach children. Expert teachers focus on acquiring the knowledge and skills—through experiences and careful reflection—to find the most impactful teaching moments. These decisions scaffold student learning and maximize their opportunities. Expert teachers are a critical component to student learning. Again, Darling-Hammond (1996) confirms that a competent teacher, or expert teacher as characterized by Lyons, matters most overall in student learning. Expert teachers believe, advocate, and convey the message that even the most low-achieving children can and will learn, and that they will find a way to teach them. Just as the Reading Recovery professionals referenced by Lyons, Reading Recovery teachers, through ongoing training and experience, match both the characteristics and competencies of expert teachers.

Instructional Strength

In recent research from the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, May et al. (2016) identify the instructional strength of Reading Recovery teachers as the most important factor in lesson effectiveness. Instructional strength refers to the extent to which the teacher instructs for maximum learning in every lesson (p. 90). This research confirms the attitudes and dispositions (openness to change, strong work ethic, excellent interpersonal skills, and the belief that all students can learn) of Reading Recovery teachers that allow them to demonstrate deliberateness (an encompassing commitment to thoughtful practice) and instructional dexterity (the flexible application of deep skill). The authors note deliberateness primarily occurs before and after the one-to-one lessons, where dexterity can be seen within and throughout the lesson itself. Just as the attitudes and dispositions contributing to instructional strength are similar to the characteristics of expert teachers (Lyons, 2003), instructional dexterity and deliberateness align with Lyons’ competencies of expert teachers. Instructional strength is dependent on all of these factors and cannot exist in isolation. Once again, a clear link is made between expert teacher and Reading Recovery teacher.
Effective Professional Development in Relation to Reading Recovery Teachers

Building expert teacher characteristics and competencies, as well as instructional strength, starts with effective professional development practices. According to the 2017 Research Brief from the Learning Policy Institute entitled *Effective Teacher Professional Development*, Darling-Hammond and her colleagues describe specific elements of effective professional development:

1. Content focused
2. Incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory
3. Supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts
4. Uses models and modeling of effective practice
5. Provides coaching and expert support
6. Offers opportunities for feedback and reflection
7. Is of sustained duration (p. 1)

Effective professional development is key to ensuring the growth of expert teachers and to developing instructional strength. Reading Recovery recognizes professional development as a 3-tiered system of support (Figure 1). Each layer of support is in place to ensure the continual growth and development of expert teachers who reflect upon and refine their teaching in an ongoing manner. Cox & Hopkins (2006) describe the clearly defined roles and responsibilities within the 3-tiered system stating, “University trainers train and support teacher leaders at university training centers, district- or site-level teacher leaders train and support teachers at school-based teacher training sites, and school-based teachers work daily with the hardest-to-teach children in schools” (p. 256).

Reading Recovery training consists of many different experiences including teaching students, completing graduate-level coursework, teaching and observing behind-the glass demonstration lessons, coaching visits, and networking (Jones, 1991). Ongoing professional development continues to utilize the reflective, collaborative practices of behind-the glass lessons, school coaching visits, and a continual commitment of deepening understandings of theory and practice. Reading Recovery training and beyond has been cited as “an example of one program that possesses all seven elements and has been found to generate positive student gains” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, pp. 4–5).

**Effective Reading Recovery Schools**
The most common schema of implementation uncovered in the i3 scale-up final report is that entitled integration, or that of high understanding/high commitment. Not surprisingly, schools exhibiting integration schemas had the most successful implementations. There are many characteristics of an integration schema. May et al. (2016) report, “A key hallmark of schools demonstrating integration was a clear commitment to using Reading Recovery to “build capacity” across the school (p. 131). Other common factors important to note in relation to this article are that integration schemas include a schoolwide shared understanding of Reading Recovery, frequent Reading Recovery teacher/classroom teacher communication, classroom instruction that is generally supportive of Reading Recovery instruction, and the Reading Recovery teacher being positioned as a literacy leader or resource in the building. Simply put, integration schema can be linked to the shared understanding that “Reading Recovery is part of the way we do things here” (May et al., p. 131). These findings further support the need for Reading Recovery teachers to extend their reach beyond the students they serve, to also supporting the overall literacy understandings in their buildings and districts. There are uncharted waters of teacher leadership waiting to be explored.

**Effective Leaders**
As with expert teachers, there are many different (but similar) versions of the identifying elements of effective leaders. Among these versions, there are many similar characteristics and competencies of expert teachers shared with those of effective leaders. Danielson (2007) identifies persuasiveness, open-mindedness, flexibility, confidence, collaboration, and expertise in their field as examples of this overlap. Professor Emerita Billie Askew informed attendees at the 2018 Teacher Leader Institute (TLI) that being a literacy leader calls for organizational, communication, and
collaboration skills. Teachers who are leaders are also open-minded, patient, supportive, confident, and passionate. They demonstrate attributes of ongoing self-assessment, reflection, and learning. Askew referred to the work of Warren G. Bennis (2009) when relating to some basic qualities central to leadership:

- adaptive capacity (the ability to embrace and persevere through change and pressure),
- ability to engage others,
- distinctive voice and, above all else,
- unshakeable integrity.

Similarly, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) compiled a list of 21 leadership behaviors characterized as those most effective in improving classroom instructional practices. Among these, many are similar to those characteristics and competencies of expert teachers who demonstrate instructional strength. Those behaviors most aligned include

- being a change agent;
- having strong communication skills;
- being directly involved with curriculum, instruction and assessment;
- being flexible;
- maintaining focus;
- maintaining strong ideals and beliefs about student learning;
- serving as a resource to teachers; and
- remaining visible through quality contact and interactions with teachers and students.

It is true, however, that working with adults can prove somewhat different in process than working with students. Therefore, teachers who are leaders may also need increased understanding of curriculum, assessment, and data analysis. Danielson (2007) recognizes active listening, meeting facilitation, keeping a group discussion on track, deciding on a course of action, and monitoring progress as other abilities that effective teacher leaders may need to develop. Nonetheless, the characteristics and competencies of expert teachers demonstrating instructional strength serve as both a foundation and a catalyst for effective literacy leadership.

**Putting it All Together**
Research has confirmed that reading specialists have been juggling multiple roles within their positions for well over a decade (Bean, Swan, & Knaub, 2003; Bean & Swan Degan, 2012; Bean et al., 2015; Helf & Cooke, 2011; Kern, 2011; Lipp, 2017). The International Literacy Association (ILA) recognizes the growing number of roles for today’s reading/literacy specialist. Standard 6. Professional Learning and Leadership in the recently updated *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017* (ILA, 2018) includes four distinct elements highlighting the importance of reading/literacy specialists to be reflective in their practice, work collaboratively with colleagues, demonstrate leadership and facilitation skills, and advocate for effective literacy practices and policies. The 2015 ILA research brief, *The Multiple Roles of School-Based Specialized Literacy Professionals*, notes that the primary responsibility of reading/literacy specialists is to work with students who are experiencing difficulties in reading and writing. In order to most effectively fulfill their instructional role, these reading/literacy specialists must be able to improve general classroom literacy instruction (p. 7). Reading Recovery teachers embracing the multiple roles of reading/literacy specialists, particularly literacy leadership, can make an impact beyond the students served in Reading Recovery lessons.

Reading Recovery teachers engage in impactful, reflective opportunities for learning throughout their train-

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**Figure 2. Common Ground Among Expert Teacher, Effective Leader, and Integration Schema of Implementation**

![Figure 2](image)
ing year and beyond. This learning supports them to develop as expert teachers (see Figure 2). The qualities of expert teachers support effective leadership. In turn, the most successful schema of implementation (integration) occurs, in part, when Reading Recovery teachers are viewed as literacy leaders within their schools (May et al., 2016). Danielson (2007) asserts, “Teacher leadership is an idea whose time has come. The unprecedented demands being placed on schools today require leadership at every level” (p. 19). Reading Recovery teachers have much to offer as valuable literacy leaders within their schools.

Various Roles of Leadership for Reading Recovery Teachers

There are many ways in which Reading Recovery teachers can extend themselves as literacy leaders. Having a solid understanding of a variety of ways to serve in a literacy leadership position may allow Reading Recovery teachers to feel more confident to move forward with these ideas and actions. Further, teacher leaders can support, encourage, and mentor Reading Recovery teachers to take on various leadership roles. As with any job, being a Reading Recovery teacher comes with specific duties. Some are non-negotiable, as per the Standards and Guidelines of Reading Recovery in the United States (2017), and others allow for variation and discrepancy based on the teacher, building, district, and beyond.

Teaching Students

First and foremost in importance are the students that a Reading Recovery teacher must serve each day. As per the standards and guidelines, Reading Recovery teachers must teach four students daily in Reading Recovery lessons. This teaching is a powerful tool to accelerate the reading and writing achievement of children who face the most difficulty. The numbers simply do not lie. Reading Recovery showcases over 30 years of documented success and over 2.4 million students served. This level of success highlights the effective teaching of Reading Recovery teachers nationwide.

Often times, this teaching occurs in a very isolated setting, with the Reading Recovery teacher and student being the only ones to bear witness to the powerful interactions and in-the-moment decision making that supports such rapid acceleration. One way to combat this is to simply invite other professionals into our classrooms to view lessons being taught. Specifically, the classroom teacher of each student served in Reading Recovery should have the opportunity to view that child in a Reading Recovery lesson. Opening this door to allow transparency into ‘what we do’ in Reading Recovery can be a simple way to help classroom teachers ‘speak the same language’ in terms of the ways in which they prompt students at difficulty and praise students for effective strategic activity and processing. Likewise, the overall high expectations that Reading Recovery teachers have of their students can be visibly seen and felt throughout the lessons they teach. These expectations can be contagious, and simply helping classroom teachers to hold their students to such high expectations can make a difference in the students’ overall gains in literacy.

Literacy Liaison

It is helpful for Reading Recovery teachers to work closely with building principals to ensure the success of the program. Part of this work is to serve as a literacy liaison, maintaining a solid working relationship with the principal to understand the literacy issues that may exist within the school building and the planning and instruction of Reading Recovery. Reading Recovery teachers have a unique lens into the inner happenings of literacy instruction within their buildings, as well as the areas of instruction that may need support to best meet the needs of all students.

When Reading Recovery teachers work closely with classroom teachers and principals, the Reading Recovery teacher can help both sides work together to ensure that the school—as a team—stands on the same ground, sharing the same vision and voice for literacy instruction, assessment, and intervention. This communication is critical. At times, classroom teachers (or others) may not feel comfortable voicing their concerns or suggestions in the presence of their colleagues, principals, or district leaders. The Reading Recovery teacher, when serving as the literacy leader and representative for the building, has the ability to support these teachers and communicate with the necessary parties to ensure all voices are heard.

It is also important that the schedules and planning of Reading Recovery instruction are those that need considered and protected when viewing the school schedule as a whole. The Reading Recovery teacher can work with the principal and classroom teachers to ensure specific times are safeguarded for all parties. Likewise, the Reading Recovery teacher can
help all parties understand why it is so important for Reading Recovery teachers to be able to meet with their students daily. This may help to ensure that Reading Recovery teachers are not being pulled for various circumstances that take them away from this instruction, frequently or infrequently.

Advocate

Reading Recovery teachers must continually advocate for both the power and promise of Reading Recovery as an integral part of the comprehensive literacy plan for the school and district. Advocacy happens whenever and wherever we allow it to happen. It can be as informal as sharing personal student success at staff meetings and through school newsletters or formally presenting national, state, or district success at school board meetings, school/community gatherings or for local newspapers. Reading Recovery teachers can advocate by putting faces (permission required) with names of these success stories. It is important for all stakeholders to see how Reading Recovery is changing lives, not just hear about it. Inviting past or present students to share their own experiences is powerful. The “Where Are They Now” features in The Journal of Reading Recovery are consistently well-received. It is easily imaginable that each Reading Recovery teacher has students whose progress they couldn’t wait to sing from the rooftops. I received the personal note shown here in 2016 from a Reading Recovery student I had in 2008. It is of great importance to continue sharing these stories.

Seeking Solutions for Primary Students Through Collaboration and Data Sharing

It is important for Reading Recovery teachers to be part of the school’s comprehensive literacy team. By doing so, Reading Recovery teachers play a vital role in the school’s approach to response to intervention. Reading Recovery teachers can collaborate with classroom teachers to seek solutions for students experiencing reading difficulties. To start, Reading Recovery teachers must make themselves available for these collaborative conversations to occur. Reading Recovery teachers can help other teachers and the school team better understand how to teach for strategic processing, and can support designing interventions and goals that focus on specific teaching for the teacher and short-term goals for the students.

Jeffery Williams, a teacher leader in Solon, OH, works directly with Reading Recovery teachers and school teams to support both the intervention process and classroom teachers. In his setting, Reading Recovery teachers engage in coaching cycles with classroom teachers, where student data is shared and analyzed with the outcome of creating specific, short-term goals, similar to predictions of progress (see Figure 3). The students may or may not be Reading Recovery students. By collaboratively analyzing student running records, the Reading Recovery teacher and classroom teacher identify specifically what the most-pressing area of focus is for the student and devise a plan to teach accordingly. These goals and conversations are recorded in a district database that both documents the work done with students and serves two other important functions. Firstly, all district coaches, including administrators and those without expertise in reading, have access to powerful and specific language that may help them in their respective settings and work with other teachers. Secondly, the efficacy of the intervention is recorded in the database, showing all on the building team exactly how well and quickly the students in Reading Recovery are progressing. After goals are set and entered, Reading Recovery and classroom teachers continue to monitor students and their goals, meeting every few weeks to flexibly make adjustments or set new goals. This collaboration is a valuable team effort and displays quite directly that in a school building with a strong approach to literacy, students are not ‘yours’ or ‘mine’ but rather, ‘ours.’
Similarly, it is helpful for Reading Recovery teachers to be viewed as transparent in both their efforts with students and the overall theory and purpose of Reading Recovery instruction. Reading Recovery teachers should share with classroom teachers the ongoing data regarding the progress and needs of their current Reading Recovery students. If Reading Recovery students return to classrooms in which poor literacy practices exist, or to teachers who do not yet understand how to best support them in their current competencies, the students may not progress as expected. This lack of alignment in theory and practice understandably has a negative impact on the students who are not being presently served in Reading Recovery but whose progress is dependent upon the instruction they receive, as they may become candidates. Data sharing helps to open doors of communication about expectations, growing skills, and further areas of instruction between Reading Recovery and classroom teachers. Valuable information may be shared through oral communication, informal conversations, or in a more formal, scheduled setting.

Linda Randall, a teacher leader in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), introduced and established an expectation that Reading Recovery teachers share progress with classroom teachers and other members of the Reading Recovery school team who monitor student progress weekly via email. Linda also receives these updates and uses the data to monitor progress and to target those who need additional support. However, Linda finds this practice helps to reduce the need for support. Linda views these ‘reports’ as extremely valuable in sharing the specific needs for that particular Reading Recovery student and has found that classroom teachers can use the information given in terms of ways in which to support other students in the class who could benefit from similar teaching. This results in a win-win scenario; the Reading Recovery students and other students benefit when the classroom teacher, ultimately responsible for their progress, is working from a strong literacy processing theory and whose instruction is similarly based. When classroom teachers and Reading Recovery teachers engage in teaching for accelerated progress and processing, all students are more likely to succeed in learning to read and write; as well, if there are challenges, their common language helps facilitate addressing those challenges through sharing of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Original Goal Date</th>
<th>Level During Meeting</th>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Meeting Notes After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12/20/15</td>
<td>Reading Recovery</td>
<td>Processing strategies</td>
<td>If we teach X to take more than one action at difficulty (reread, look for parts, and check on yourself) then s/he will be able to problem-solve and read level 10 DRA with greater than 90% accuracy in 4 weeks.</td>
<td>1/19/16 Child met Level 10 and showed evidence of processing with more than one action. Errors showed need to take words apart more efficiently. See new goal below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>01/19/16</td>
<td>Reading Recovery</td>
<td>Processing strategies</td>
<td>If we teach X to look for parts of words and to use analogy, then s/he will be able to accurately solve words with 95% accuracy at Level 12 as measured by running record in 4 weeks.</td>
<td>2/20/16 Surpassed goal and read Level 14 at 94%. However, child did a lot of rereading and needs to search multiple sources in a more integrated way. See new goal below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>02/20/16</td>
<td>Reading Recovery</td>
<td>Processing strategies</td>
<td>If we teach X to flexibly search multiple sources at difficulty, then in 4 weeks s/he will be able to read a level 16 at independent level on DRA.</td>
<td>3/20/16 Child met goal of independent 16! Continue same goal of searching multiple sources and set success criteria to independent 18 for end of year benchmark.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Jeffery Williams, teacher leader, Solon, OH

Figure 3. Reading Recovery Teachers Collaborating with Classroom Teachers for Goal-Setting Purposes
running records, lesson observations in both settings, and conversations centered around the child and what might be making learning hard. Administrators and teachers often comment how helpful these updates are in developing shared understandings and strengthening classroom and small-group instruction. When disparities exist between Reading Recovery and the classroom performance of a particular student, the relationship between the Reading Recovery and classroom teachers should already be established, making for improved problem solving centered around what they each might do differently to align instruction. The power in this type of collaboration is clearly demonstrated (see Figure 4).

**Professional Development to Deepen Literacy Understandings of Classroom Teachers**

Providing the appropriate professional development to support the literacy needs of a building is critical. Who better to be involved in professional development opportunities than Reading Recovery teachers grounded in literacy processing theory and armed with extensive experiences teaching for accelerated learning? To ensure the professional development in the school building is cohesive and ongoing, staff meetings are favorable opportunities to engage with the school team regarding literacy related issues specific to that school. Likewise, when district professional development opportunities arise, Reading Recovery teachers should be involved in literacy-related session planning. Many districts assert that early literacy intervention is of primary importance in their overall initiatives, however the professional development does not always align or can tend to resemble a “pebble in the pond” approach, where a topic is addressed once and then never revisited. Reading Recovery teachers can help to provide a comprehensive approach to a year-long (or more) professional development series specifically designed to support teachers to grow their understandings of assessment, instruction, reflection, and responsive teaching.

**Small-Group Professional Development and Coaching**

Reading Recovery teachers may also work with small groups of teachers to focus professional development to their specific needs. For example, a group of first-grade teachers in the building may want to work on specific ways of prompting to support various student needs while in a guided reading lesson. The Reading Recovery teacher may have a different focus for professional development with a group of kindergarten or second-grade teachers. Meetings may occur during shared planning times or before or after school.

Linda Randall has also worked to support her DCPS Reading Recovery teachers to provide small group, ongoing, mini-professional development sessions. Reading Recovery teachers meet weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly with groups of primary teachers to focus on specific areas of teaching to improve student learning. DCPS refers to these sessions as “chat ‘n chew,” as they typically occur before or after school or during the lunch break. Throughout the 2017–2018 school year, Reading Recovery teachers worked with classroom teachers on topics including deep analysis of running records, prompting to promote fluency, book introductions, and more. Reading Recovery teachers indicated these professional development sessions
have strongly supported their collaboration with classroom teachers. Classroom teachers are encouraged to suggest topics of interest for upcoming sessions and/or given options from which to choose.

Kat Kayne, a DCPS Reading Recovery teacher at Watkins Elementary noted, “Our (classroom teachers and Reading Recovery teachers) conversations have evolved from being basic to now having a focus. Even in passing, our conversations are stronger and designed to collaboratively affect student growth.” Classroom teachers involved in the “chat ‘n chew” sessions also expressed beliefs that this in-house professional development is both effective and supportive. An end of year classroom teacher survey inquiring about the helpfulness of “chat ‘n chew” sessions revealed an average score of 4.5 out of 5, where 5 indicated these sessions were ‘extremely helpful.’ DCPS kindergarten teacher Deanna Wright at Boone Elementary noted, “When the Reading Recovery teacher works with students, that is great, but when she works with us (classroom teachers), that impact is 50–100 students right away!” Reading Recovery teachers who influence and provide ongoing professional development—no matter how large or small the scale—can help extend the reach of Reading Recovery beyond the students served.

**Demonstration Lessons**

Beyond small-group professional development sessions, Reading Recovery teachers can support classroom teachers in a variety of ways. Facilitating large-group sessions for district professional development days allow Reading Recovery teachers to reach a large audience in one setting. Reading Recovery teachers may also work with classroom teachers in a coaching role, brainstorming possible learning paths for emerging readers or demonstrating lessons in the classroom. It is valuable for Reading Recovery teachers to enter classrooms to teach or co-teach guided reading lessons. It is valuable for both the Reading Recovery teacher and classroom teacher to understand how a Reading Recovery student performs within a small-group setting among their peers. It is also important for the Reading Recovery teacher to be able to demonstrate how Reading Recovery training can carry over to support small-group reading instruction. Again, simply the language, prompting, and ways of responding to the students in the group—beyond any Reading Recovery students—may help to shape the classroom teacher’s understandings of how to most effectively engage in small group reading instruction. Another example, demonstration lessons in which Reading Recovery teachers teach flexible word solving in writing could strengthen classroom writing instruction. The possibilities for professional learning in collaboration with classroom teachers are limitless and depend solely on the needs of both the students and staff in each particular building and district.

**Behind-the-Glass Opportunities**

Behind-the-glass teaching demonstrations are often characterized as a hallmark of the professional learning that supports exemplary teaching in Reading Recovery. Opat & Caswell (2013) note, “Practice—as well as teaching—must be shared, reflective, and thoughtful in order to drive improvement. Reading Recovery provides this shared and reflective practice through observation and decision making during behind-the-glass-improvement through reflection and action.”

*Samantha Fell, a Reading Recovery teacher in Worthington (Ohio) City Schools, demonstrates a guided reading lesson focusing on supportive book introductions to first-grade teacher, Andrea Garland.*
However, these experiences may be underutilized as professional learning opportunities for classroom teachers. While behind-the-glass sessions are often shared for advocacy and understanding of Reading Recovery itself, inviting and encouraging classroom teachers, support staff and principals to view such high-level teacher learning in action may support their ability to think critically about their specific teaching philosophies, understandings, and practices. Kaye (2013) shares great success with welcoming classroom teachers and administrators to view behind-the-glass sessions such as better understandings of analyzing students’ reading, fostering independence, and stronger conversations between Reading Recovery and classroom teachers. Reading Recovery teachers should work to include classroom teachers and school staff in behind-the-glass sessions whenever possible.

Implications

Literacy leadership has varying implications for school leaders, Reading Recovery teacher leaders, and Reading Recovery teachers themselves. For those district and school leaders who employ Reading Recovery teachers, reflecting on the importance of the integration schema and how this may affect implementation is critical. If school leaders are less informed about Reading Recovery than they want to be — ask questions. Reach out to Reading Recovery teachers and teacher leaders to learn more about the theory and practice of Reading Recovery and help the entire school team to better understand the power and purpose. Attend behind-the-glass sessions when available and invite Reading Recovery teachers to be part of the school literacy team. Even further, value Reading Recovery teachers as literacy experts by involving them in discussions about literacy achievement, beliefs, and practices within the school. Provide time for Reading Recovery teachers to facilitate professional development and support them in their efforts to model and demonstrate lessons within classrooms. Of equal importance, as Reading Recovery positions become available, administrators should seek out candidates who are not only exceptional literacy teachers, but who demonstrate the ability and desire to support literacy leadership.

Reading Recovery teacher leaders play a vital role in supporting and growing Reading Recovery teachers as literacy leaders. While literacy leadership roles may happen somewhat naturally for those in teacher leader positions, Reading Recovery teachers may need support to engage in these roles and to extend themselves as literacy leaders in schools. Tammy Fangman, a teacher leader in Dumas, TX, believes teacher leaders can assist in this process by “teaching teachers how to communicate and capitalizing on their strengths.” Just as Reading Recovery teacher leaders enter coaching visits with an open mind and an invitation to collaborate through reflective thinking conversations, it is important for Reading Recovery teachers to be able to do the same with their colleagues.

Likewise, inviting Reading Recovery teachers to opportunities where literacy leadership occurs can help them better understand this role. Identifying the strengths of Reading Recovery teachers and inviting them to participate alongside you in leadership opportunities can further support their willingness and ability to engage in these roles independently. If, for example, a Reading Recovery teacher leader is presenting to the school board on the effectiveness of Reading Recovery in their district, inviting several Reading Recovery teachers to both plan and implement this presentation could be a worthwhile endeavor. Beginning as early as the training year, Reading Recovery teacher leaders can discuss and model the importance of literacy leadership with Reading Recovery teachers, and encourage teachers to take on these varying roles within their school buildings.

Reading Recovery teachers themselves should believe in their literacy leadership abilities and embrace roles extending beyond their work with students. Reading Recovery teachers
should ask themselves if they believe they exhibit any/all of the leadership qualities and characteristics described throughout this article. If uncertain, inquire as to how the teacher leader could help to develop these qualities. In addition, one roadblock to literacy leadership may be the notion that leadership is a grand endeavor. Start small by engaging in one or two leadership activities that feel both natural and comfortable and build on the momentum of these. Make your interest in supporting classroom teachers and the school team known to both the teacher leader and the principal/district administration.

Reading Recovery teachers should seek opportunities for literacy leadership while positioning themselves as a solution seeker, rather than an expert. Two ways that support Reading Recovery in problem solving are standing grounded in theory and focusing on individual student progress. Drawing on their effective training and ongoing professional development opportunities, Reading Recovery teachers are more than prepared to take on literacy leadership roles of all sizes.

Closing Remarks
The notion of Reading Recovery teachers as literacy leaders is an ongoing topic of interest among the Reading Recovery community. Leadership was a large focus at the 2018 Teacher Leader Institute. Teacher leaders nationwide shared data related to the many ways in which they see literacy leadership happening within their districts and schools and how they work to support this leadership. This data will serve as part of the ongoing work of Reading Recovery trainers to consider how to identify and promote leadership activities. Over a decade ago, Pressley & Roehrig (2005) encouraged us to continue to investigate:

Reading Recovery advocates owe it to themselves and the children of the world to find out just how much stretch there is to their instructional expertise and how much achievement their approach can produce in the larger world of the primary classroom. (p. 15)

This statement remains true as our work and research in these areas have only just begun.

All in all, Reading Recovery works. It works with students and it continues to positively change and shape lives. Clay's literacy processing theory is alive and well and vibrantly visible through the yearly reports from the International Data and Evaluation Center that gleam with high rates of student acceleration. Concomitantly, Reading Recovery works in other ways, too. Reading Recovery teachers are an investment to the overall literacy effectiveness within the schools. Reading Recovery teachers possess experiences, skills, and characteristics that enable them to effectively support building the literacy capacity of those teachers around them. Lyons, Pinnell, and DeFord (1993) say it best when they note, "Investing in our children and our teachers is investing in our future. Failure to do so is not their failure but ours" (p. 206). Reading Recovery teachers serving as literacy leaders are an investment to our students, our teachers, our schools, and our future.

There are unlimited directions to sail as we continue Clay's journey of discovery. The Reading Recovery teacher as literacy leader is fairly new water being navigated in the Reading Recovery community. Sailing into new waters of literacy leadership opens up endless possibilities for our schools, our teachers, and our children.

References
About the Author

Dr. Jamie Lipp is a Reading Recovery trainer at The Ohio State University. She has previously served as a classroom teacher, Reading Recovery teacher, English language arts curriculum specialist, literacy consultant, and university instructor for both undergraduate and graduate literacy courses. Her research interests include the various and changing roles of reading specialists, teacher professional development to support best practice literacy instruction, and literacy leadership in relation to the school improvement process.