Purposeful Practice: Formative Assessment in Reading Recovery
Jeffery L. Williams

Taking Reflection to a Higher Level: A Study of Teacher Engagement in Intellectual Practice
Lori L. Taylor

Continue Sailing in a New Direction: Reading Recovery Teachers as Literacy Leaders
Jamie Lipp

Reading Recovery and Complex Adaptive Systems: Widening Circles for Sustainable Implementation
Marla K. Robertson
Leslie Patterson
Connie Briggs
Anne Simpson

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This new series draws on the second edition of *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals* and will include sessions on developing independence in writing and other important messages from Marie Clay. Read, view video clips, discuss with colleagues, and strengthen your understandings in both training classes and ongoing professional development sessions.

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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 reflective 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 brings more than 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 identity, 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.

How to Submit Articles

Write for The Journal of Reading Recovery

Every Reading Recovery teacher, teacher leader, administrator, site coordinator, and parent has a good story to tell. Please consider sharing your Reading Recovery experiences, ideas, and surprises by writing for The Journal of Reading Recovery (JRR). We need to hear from you because readers have told us they want to hear more about people like themselves—especially those on the front lines working with children.

Blind Peer Review Process
The Journal of Reading Recovery is a peer-reviewed and refereed publication issued twice annually to members of the Reading Recovery Council of North America. All submitted manuscripts will be read by the editors to determine suitability for publication. Authors will receive an acknowledgement when the submission is received and will be notified via email of the editors’ decisions.

JRR uses a blind review process allowing only editors and editorial staff to know the names of the authors. The article will be sent to the appropriate section editor who will monitor a peer review process by a team of reviewers. Editors will send authors feedback from reviewers and, if necessary, specific suggestions for revision.

Guidelines for Authors
1. Select a topic of interest to our Reading Recovery audience.
2. Write clearly, concisely, and use an active voice.
3. Be sure the message is clear and has a consistent focus throughout.
4. Include dialogue or samples of children’s work when possible.
5. Articles will be edited to fit space and style requirements; published length ranges from short anecdotes to longer, more technical articles.
6. RRCNA publications follow the style designated by the most-recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.
7. The online RRCNA Style Manual provides additional guidance for authors.

Submitting Articles for Publication
All manuscripts, feature items, photos, and original artwork must be submitted electronically (see website for photo and artwork requirements) via email to vfox@readingrecovery.org.

For original manuscripts, please follow the most-recent APA style guidelines. Manuscripts must be double-spaced and should be no more than 30 pages (excluding reference list, tables, and figures). No identification of the author(s) and affiliations should appear anywhere in the manuscript, including running headers and footers. A cover page identifying corresponding and contributing authors, affiliations, and email contacts should accompany the manuscript.

For questions about or help with the submission process, contact Vicki Fox, director of communications, at vfox@readingrecovery.org or call 614-310-7332.

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Purposeful Practice: Formative Assessment in Reading Recovery

Jeffery L. Williams, Solon City Schools, Solon, Ohio

Introduction
Fittingly, the word assessment comes from the Latin assidere which means “to sit with.” Every day, Reading Recovery® teachers sit with children in one-to-one lessons to observe children’s reading and writing of continuous text closely in order to accelerate literacy development. Each day running records and recorded teacher observations are analyzed to design a series of unique lessons for individual children having difficulty learning to read or write. These lessons are a working example of the power of the formative assessment process, a well-documented process lauded by educational reformers across the globe (Williams, 2015). This article explores the definitions and research behind formative assessment and then demonstrates how typical Reading Recovery lessons utilize the principles of formative assessment as purposeful practice.

Assessment Types
Because of limitations of existing assessments used to measure ability or achievement available at the time, Clay (2013) designed An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement, a set of six literacy tasks that is used to inform instruction as well as measure achievement over time.

The Observation Survey, itself a formative assessment tool, has been reviewed and rated by both the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII, 2018) and the former National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI). Both independent government agencies gave the highest ratings on the tasks of the Observation Survey in terms of classification accuracy, generalizability, reliability, and validity — making this particular assessment tool helpful to literacy, classroom, and special education teachers and to school psychologists who need to use evidence-based screening tools to identify at-risk students.

Importantly, the effective use of Clay’s observation tasks requires specific training. Before formal Reading Recovery training classes begin, new teachers complete “a minimum of 24 hours of assessment training” (Standards and Guidelines of Reading Recovery in the United States, 2017, p. 20) to learn about the six specific observation tasks, their administration, scoring, and interpretation. The goal of this training is to ensure that “the information produced by systematic observation reduces our uncertainties and improves our instruction” (Clay, 2013, p. 3).

Clay presents her rationale for an alternative to standardized assessment tools as follows:

I have come to regard normative, standardized tests as having a place in education, but only as an indirect way for teachers...
to obtain information about students’ learning. When compared with the observation of learners at work, test scores are mere approximations or estimates that do not provide good guidance to the teacher of how to teach a particular child. At times those scores present results stripped of the very information that is required for designing or evaluating sound instruction for individual learners. Standardized tests need to be supplemented at the classroom level with systematic observations of children who are in the act of responding to instruction, observations that are reliable enough to compare one child with another, or one child on two different occasions. (2013, p. 2)

Beyond the Observation Survey, Clay also argued that the close observation of students, occurring on a daily basis as they read and write continuous texts, is paramount to good instruction in Reading Recovery and in classroom settings. Elements of Clay’s other views on assessment, which are outlined in the Observation Survey, detail three broad categories—assessment that measures outcomes, assessment that measures ability, and assessment that guides our teaching (2013, pp. 4–7). In fact, this type of assessment—the kind that guides teaching based on systematic, detailed observations—is also known as formative assessment.

Formative Assessment as a Process

With the 1998 publication of “Inside the Black Box,” Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam thrust the term formative assessment into the vernacular of American education experts, administrators, and teachers. Though the concept itself was not new, Black and Wiliam illuminated the power of formative assessment reflected in educational research. According to their now famous meta-analysis, formative assessment practices yielded student results that showed impressive effect sizes between 0.4 and 0.7 on standardized tests, effects larger than most educational practices or interventions. These effect sizes of 0.4 and 0.7 are substantial and are equated to mean gains of between 1 and 2 years of school (Black & Wiliam, p. 3). Furthermore, their research illuminated the fact that formative assessment had the greatest impact for students who struggled, thus offering a real potential for narrowing achievement gaps. Because formative assessment involves a process conducted during the learning of new content (to modify teaching and learning), it appears to have greater potential to improve student learning and performance. (For definitions of formative assessment that appear in the current literature, see Table 1.)

Since the publication of Black and Wiliam’s article, more research has confirmed the positive effects applying the practices of formative assessment on student achievement (Hatie, 2009; Zimmerman, 2008; Hatie & Timperley, 2007; Dweck, 2006; Costa & Kallick, 2004; Assessment Reform Group, 2002). The implications of these and other findings caused the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to assemble the Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (FAST SCASS). This group of nationally recognized assessment experts and interested parties was organized to develop resources for American educators to be able to learn about and employ formative assessment practices in educational settings, though many American

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Definitions of Formative Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence to determine where learners are, where they need to go, and how to get there. (Assessment Reform Group, 2002, pp. 1–2)</td>
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<td>• Assessment for learning involves teachers using an assessment process to advance, rather than just check on, student learning. (Stiggins, 2002, p. 5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Formative assessment is defined as assessment carried out during the instructional process for the purpose of improving teaching or learning. (Shepard et al., 2005, p. 75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Formative assessment is a planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of students’ status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures or by students to adjust their current learning tactics. (Popham, 2008, p. 6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A misunderstanding is to think formative assessment as a one-time event, rather than a process. It is an ongoing, day-to-day classroom-assessment process to give teachers and their students the information needed to understand what comes next in the learning. (Stiggins, 2015, pp. 4–5)</td>
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Effective formative assessment is a process that involves teachers collecting in-the-moment data to make adjustments to teaching in order to give students feedback about how to improve.

- eliciting and analyzing evidence of student thinking,
- providing actionable feedback,
- engaging students in self-assessment and peer feedback, and
- using evidence to move learning forward by adjusting learning strategies, goals, or next instructional steps.

(2018, pp. 2–3)

We will now examine these five elements as they pertain to Reading Recovery practices and lessons.

Clarify learning goals and success criteria within a broader progression of learning

The terms learning targets and success criteria from formative assessment researchers are not used directly by Reading Recovery professionals or by Marie Clay in her writings. Yet, many parallels exist. Although Clay rejected the idea of stages of development in literacy learning because her research concluded that children come to literacy in a variety of ways, her studies of proficient readers and writers influenced her to describe the attributes of successful readers and writers. In essence, these descriptions serve for Reading Recovery professionals as learning targets — where we aim to be with children. Furthermore, Clay’s frequent descriptions of self-extending systems—a processing system sufficiently sophisticated enough to continue to grow on its own without the need for specialized intervention—also serve as success criteria. Clay was careful, however, to delineate how such progressions should be used:

If there is any description of progressions in literacy learning it belongs not in the activities, not in a curriculum sequence, but in the heads of teachers, and it guides their every interaction with a learner or a group of learners. Whether the activity helps or hinders children’s learning depends on the tentative judgments and reflective practice of teachers who know how to open doors to learning, and are able to recognize when a door is beginning to close for a particular child. (2016, p. 44)

Rather than marching through a curriculum or program that is designed on a particular progression, a concept popular among many other interventions, Reading Recovery teachers are more formative in their thinking. Guided by current theoretical perspectives on literacy development, the learning progressions of reading and writing development, and by classroom and school expectations, Reading Recovery professionals employ the concept of learning targets to know where they want children to end up. Teachers are clear in their minds about targets and work appropriately to ensure that students are likewise aware of where they are headed in daily lessons. Predictions of progress
are one example of the use of learning targets for children in Reading Recovery. Teachers set very specific learning targets both based upon what will be expected at the end of a series of lessons, but also across the next few weeks using Clay’s suggested format (2016, pp. 28–29) illustrated in Table 2.

In this way, teachers outline possible progressions of learning based upon their extensive knowledge of literacy development, assessment data, daily observations and running records, and knowledge of a child’s strengths and needs which serve as learning targets for their instruction. Such targets are often shared with children informally when teachers give rationales for their work in statements such as, “We leave spaces so that others can read our messages” or “It is important to notice when it doesn’t make sense and try something” or “You tried to help yourself on that part by…” Such statements can be heard frequently in Reading Recovery lessons which indicate the direction of the current work with which a student is engaged.

**Eliciting and analyzing evidence of student thinking**

Eliciting evidence of student thinking happens daily across lesson components in various ways. One important example of this is the call from Clay to engage in brief conversations about books read after familiar reading, running records, and the new book, as a way to elicit information and to develop comprehension — the purpose of reading:

Attend to the meaning of the story. A brief conversation after the reading can achieve a variety of things. You might ask what the child thinks about a character or event in the book or invite him to make links to his own experience. Authentic questions give the message that the whole story was the point of the reading activity. The child’s responses let the teacher know what he has attended to and understood. An open-ended question can reveal a wealth of understanding and can also reveal misunderstanding or confusion. Meanings can be negotiated in a brief but helpful conversation. (Clay, 2016, p. 119; see also p. 113, p. 121)

At other times, during reading or writing, teachers might elicit information from students about their problem solving. Occasionally a teacher might check on accurate word solving by asking, “How did you know?” or “Were you right? or “How did you know it was…”?’ Questions like these invite “…the child to examine his own behaviors after he has successfully carried out some operation” (Clay, 2016, p. 141). But, these types of questions are used sparingly only when teachers need more information to understand what is happening so as to not interrupt reading and writing (Clay, p. 141).

Such interactions and other teacher observations are recorded as notes on lesson records both to document learning and to record insights of possible needs to explore. These informal notes are recorded across all lessons and are an important source for analysis in designing individual lessons. Similarly, classroom teachers also use questions and take anecdotal notes to record student responses, behaviors, and progress.

Another, more formal means to elicit student thinking (i.e., strategic activity) used by both classroom and Reading Recovery teachers is a daily running record. This formative tool captures reading behaviors—what students do—as they happen, i.e., evidence of strategic processing on the run. They are used in-the-moment to identify needs that will be addressed in teaching points or feedback given immediately after the reading has ended. Adept teachers are able to do this based upon the progressions that exist within the teacher’s head and a quick analysis of the most powerful examples related to current learning targets for students. Beyond this, the running record is further analyzed to discover and document what sources of information students were using or neglecting, how accurate the reading is, how fluent the reader sounded, and to see what evidence of self-monitoring and

<table>
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<th>Table 2. Predictions of Progress for Gregory</th>
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<tr>
<td>• At the end of the lesson series he will need to know how to…use visual information in a variety of ways in order to solve unknown words effectively and efficiently in reading.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In the next few weeks he will need to know how to look sequentially at letters and clusters of letters to make an attempt at a word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extra work will be needed to check visual information against other sources “Does that word look like _____? And is that what they are doing in the picture?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I will need to pay special attention to opportunities in both writing and reading to reinforce effective letter/cluster solving.</td>
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self-correcting can be found. In fact, Clay directly confirms the formative nature of running records by saying, “this record will be carefully analyzed before the next lesson with this child to guide your teaching” (Clay, 2016, p. 121).

**Providing actionable feedback**

Lev Vygotsky (1978) argued that children develop self-regulation largely from external and social interactions with a “more knowledgeable other” who engages the child in cooperative and collaborative dialogue. In effect, this dialogue provides the language which forms the basis of what demonstrations, teacher examples, or prompts that happen before, during, and after reading or writing. Feedforward includes Clay’s concept of anticipating unwanted behaviors, particularly around confusions, and ‘discretely blocking’ them before they can happen (Clay, 2016, p. 52). About the writing portion of the lesson, Clay states, “One way to approach writing and spelling errors is to anticipate a child's difficulty and offer help before errors occur” (Clay, p. 84). Likewise in reading, feedforward is utilized in the form of the book introduction. Teachers anticipate which concepts, language structures, unfamiliar

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**Feedback does not just happen after something is completed; it is often more powerful when it comes during a task or even before in the form of feedforward.**

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the child will internalize and use to guide and regulate her own performance. Therefore, the language of feedback interactions between teacher and student must be clear and purposeful. And, for the student to be able to act on the feedback, it must happen with immediacy. But, feedback does not just happen after something is completed; it is often more powerful when it comes during a task or even before in the form of feedforward. Feedforward is little more than feedback given before needed and is based on the idea that people develop best when they focus energy and attention on what they can change, not on something that is already done (Hirsh, 2017, p. 6).

In Reading Recovery, feedforward and feedback take shape in demonstrations, teacher examples, or prompts that happen before, during, and after reading or writing. Feedforward includes Clay’s concept of anticipating unwanted behaviors, particularly around confusions, and ‘discretely blocking’ them before they can happen (Clay, 2016, p. 52). About the writing portion of the lesson, Clay states, “One way to approach writing and spelling errors is to anticipate a child’s difficulty and offer help before errors occur” (Clay, p. 84). Likewise in reading, feedforward is utilized in the form of the book introduction. Teachers anticipate which concepts, language structures, unfamiliar

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engage in ‘productive struggle’ to foster problem-solving development. Equally, teachers across settings are challenged to judge the level of support given in prompting that will be most helpful to the learner — not too little; not too much. And, even when the teacher has correctly measured and matched the support level needed, she must be ready to lessen the current level of support over time in order to foster independence.

Reading Recovery teachers are likewise challenged with these factors and use some of the following as guidance from Clay (2016):

- The teacher needs to be very clear about her reason for selecting a particular prompt. What type of information does she want the child to use, and what kind of processing is being fostered? (p. 140)

- A prompt is a call to action to do something within the child’s control. When he must attend to something, or pull several things together in his reading or writing, the teacher’s prompts should be short, clear and direct. Too much teacher talk interferes with the child’s solving of a problem; short prompts give the child a maximum of information using the fewest words. (p. 36)

- Each change in the child’s control calls for an adjustment in the teacher’s level of support. (p. 84)

- Give thoughtful attention to the level of help the child needs and decide when you are prompting for processing or when you should be sup-
plying information which the learner does not have.
(p. 118)

- The teacher helps the child to get information from print to facilitate the reading of the story in several different ways. She must be tentative: she can never be certain what kind of support is needed.
(p. 118)

Providing appropriate feedback is a tricky business. By anticipating a need beforehand or by closely observing in-the-moment for opportunities to support, teachers attempt to select the precise example, prompt, or demonstration that could have the most impact to move learning forward.

This is responsive teaching: the ability to provide direct, explicit teaching actions around the most-helpful moves for the learner to make in order to construct a strategic processing system (Anderson & Kaye, 2016, p. 545). It is not for the faint of heart!

Engaging in self-assessment and peer feedback

(Author’s Note: Because Reading Recovery is a one-to-one setting, for the purposes of this article I will only focus on how engaging in self-assessment is fostered and carried out across Reading Recovery lessons.)

The term self-assessment may seem unstimulating to many teachers who might be inclined to interpret this as simply asking students to tell whether or not they did something because this would not be likely to have impact on learning per se. Asking a student, “Did you remember to look for parts?” would likely get a cursory ‘yes’ or ‘no’ without inspiring much thinking. However, if we thoughtfully ask for self-evaluation—judging one’s own performance against a standard or criterion—more learning is likely. Questions such as, “How did your reading sound?” or “Did your reading sound like you were talking?” requires the child to go beyond a simple answer because more is being asked of the learner. He must first recall all or some aspects of what the standard is (reading smoothly, making adjustments, reading in phrases with intonation like a conversation) and then weigh how his reading sounded in relation to this standard. This carries a substantially heavier cognitive load.

But there is even more behind the deceptively unassuming concept of self-assessment. In the words of leading formative assessment expert, Margaret Heritage (2010), “the skills of monitoring and assessing one’s own learning are essential to self-regulation which…is a hallmark of an effective learner” (pp. 93–94). There are two metacognitive activities of self-assessment which support self-regulated learning: (a) self-monitoring one’s own thinking and (b) deciding on the appropriate strategic behavior to use to make progress.

Heritage’s thinking about self-regulation as a hallmark of effective learners is important because it implies that without self-assessment—the ability to evaluate how well one is doing in terms of expectations—self-regulation may not develop. Additionally, because self-assessment is predicated on the metacognitive actions

In Reading Recovery, we work hard to foster self-assessment in the form of self-corrections (and in a myriad of other ways, too) because we recognize self-evaluation as a foundational element for producing self-extending and self-regulating literacy learners.
self-assessment in the form of self-corrections (and in a myriad of other ways, too) because we recognize self-evaluation as a foundational element for producing self-extending and self-regulating literacy learners. (See Table 3 for examples of prompts from Literacy Lessons that support self-assessment.)

Adjusting instructional strategies or next instructional steps
Adjusting instructional strategies, goals, and instructional steps is paramount to ensuring learning and student growth. This final element in the view of formative assessment as a process was recently illustrated in an independent research study entitled Reading Recovery: An Evaluation of the Four-Year i3 Scale-Up (May, Sirinides, Gray, & Goldsworthy, 2016). Originally designed to determine the effectiveness of Reading Recovery (see later discussion), the researchers noted that nearly all Reading Recovery students outperformed control students, while some students seemed to make especially large gains which led the researchers to further examine why this might be (May et al., p. 83). The researchers recorded interviews, met with various stakeholders, and observed and coded lessons and records and they concluded, not surprisingly, that “…teachers’ instructional strength ultimately rose above all other findings…as the most important issue in the effectiveness of lessons” (p. 90). They went on to categorize their findings about the most effective teachers in terms of deliberateness and instructional dexterity where “deliberateness is understood as an encompassing commitment to thoughtful practice; instructional dexterity is defined as the flexible application of deep skill” (p. 91). These findings mirror the research on formative assessment in that deliberateness involved eliciting and analyzing evidence from records and observations to plan instruction while dexterity involved making in-the-moment decisions that draw upon prior understandings and real-time observations to adjust instructional steps. The researchers also noted that “the extent to which a teacher exhibits the flexibility to make on-the-run adjustments in response to subtle observations depends both on her level of experience and on the depth of her knowledge about her students, about literacy learning, and about the instructional strategies at her disposal” (p. 98).

In summation, the deliberate and dexterous Reading Recovery teachers used all facets of formative assessment aforementioned because they

- analyzed evidence of student thinking,
- utilized learning goals about students and about literacy development from prior knowledge,
- provided actionable feedback and feedback,
- adjusted instructional steps and goals in-the-moment based on student performance, and
- simultaneously engaged the student in self-assessment in order to produce self-regulating and self-extending learners.

The routine and deliberate use of formative assessment principles in Reading Recovery also explain its unique and well-documented success among all other early reading interventions, most recently highlighted in 2016 in two important ways: an international meta-analysis of Reading Recovery and the groundbreaking study of Reading Recovery conducted by the Center for Policy in Research and Education (CPRE).

In their 2016 meta-analysis, D’Agostino and Harmey related that there are over 200 primary studies of Reading Recovery and at least four other quantitative syntheses conducted to ascertain the impact of Reading Recovery on student literacy achievement, making it one of the most researched early literacy interventions. “The four prior quantitative analyses have yielded overall effect sizes of .39, .40, .66, and .70.” (p. 30), while D’Agostino and Harmey’s meta-anal-

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Table 3. Feedback Prompts for Self-Assessment

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<th>Prompt</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Were you right?</td>
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<td>• How did you know it was …?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Was that okay?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Why did you stop?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What did you notice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This word could be ___ or ___. Which one is it? How do you know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How did you know it was right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• You solved the tricky part. How did you do that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Which is it? What do you think?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How did you know you were right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Did your reading sound good?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What could you check?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Which do you need here, a capital or lowercase?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How should we start?</td>
</tr>
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<td>• What could we write about that?</td>
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ysis estimated an equally impressive effect size of .59. The authors further indicated that for U.S. studies alone, the estimated effect size would be .61, a fact which would place Reading Recovery at the 91st percentile of all early literacy interventions reviewed by the What Works Clearinghouse (p. 40). Recalling Black and William's conclusions about interpreting effect sizes for formative assessment, there seems to be credence to viewing Reading Recovery as both highly effective because it produced similar effect sizes in all five analyses and to viewing Reading Recovery as one example of formative assessment processes in motion.

Further support for this conclusion about the effectiveness of Reading Recovery was demonstrated under the original intent of the 4-year i3 scale-up study. The authors concluded that Reading Recovery’s effects were 2.8 times greater than the reading outcomes of other instructional interventions and that Reading Recovery had effect sizes that were 3.5 times larger than average effects of Title I programs reviewed (May et al., 2016, p. 43). This study also documented impressive effect sizes commensurate with those of formative assessment but more importantly, these effect sizes were replicated four times in each successive year of the study, an accomplishment that makes the findings even more substantial.

Conclusion

Reading Recovery is based, at its core, on formative assessment processes; it is not a lock-step or scripted program, but rather, a framework designed around current research that is adjusted to fit the needs of individuals in order to accelerate their literacy learning.

David Wood, who calls the type of work teachers do contingent teaching reflects that this “...is a description of an ideal that is almost impossible to achieve in practice because the complexities and the intellectual demands on the [teacher] are immense” (2003, p. 18). He further notes, however, that in Reading Recovery lessons these things happen routinely:

In Reading Recovery, of course, ...you adapt and adjust the demands of reading and writing tasks to fit your records and knowledge of each child. You don’t work children through a single program or expose all to the same learning sequence. You adjust and adapt the demands you place on the learner in an effort to achieve a level of challenge that is appropriate to each: you are contingent, or you strive to be. (Wood, 2003, p. 29)

Tantamount to the accelerated learning demonstrated by Reading Recovery students and the success of Reading Recovery teachers is formative assessment. Clay understood the power of formative assessment conducted by teachers as learners engage in literacy tasks, coupled with ongoing, close observations, and the engagement of learners in self-evaluation as powerful supports of effective interventions. The practices designed by Clay and provided daily by Reading Recovery teachers exemplify the current calls for extended use of formative assessment.

References


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**About the Author**

Jeff Williams is a K-12 literacy coach, as well as a Reading Recovery/Literacy Lessons teacher leader for Solon City Schools in Ohio. He currently is president of the Reading Recovery Council of North America.

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**About the Cover**

Talie Daniels’ contagious smile shows her love for her teachers, classmates, and school. In first grade, she worked hard in Reading Recovery and made great gains, especially as a writer. Now in second grade, she continues to have a love of reading and writing. When writing, she shows much creativity and her illustrations add many details. Talie says that when she grows up, she would like to be a veterinarian.
Benny Foster was a dedicated student from the start of his education at Anderson County Schools in rural east Tennessee. He was eager to learn and had excellent support at home. But he struggled with reading.

“I guess I was your typical 6- and 7-year-old boy,” Benny remembers. “I loved playing football, and that was about the time my grandparents got me the interested in antiques. I spent most of my weekends playing football, then going to my grandparents to go to estate sales and the flea market. I have always enjoyed school and learning. My mom says she never had trouble with me doing my homework; I always came straight home and did it. My biggest struggle I guess was my reading.”

Anderson County Schools has served more than 4,000 Reading Recovery students since implementing the intervention in 1995. Kris Leach was the first teacher leader and was trained that year by Sue Duncan and Clifford Johnson at Georgia State University (who are both still at Georgia State). When Kris retired in June 2006, a scholarship was established in her honor to recognize former Reading Recovery students who have overcome, in some instances, many obstacles to pursue their dreams. And this year, Benny is the recipient of that scholarship — presented annually to a graduating senior who is pursuing postsecondary education and who has demonstrated financial need.

An all-state academic football scholar and member of the Elite 100 in high school, Benny is attending the University of Tennessee and majoring in civil engineering. He completed Middle College and received his Associate degree even before graduating from high school with a 3.7 GPA. He scored a 32 on his ACT in reading.
“It has been my privilege to have been his Reading Recovery teacher,” said Robin Lindsay. “With support at home and from his first-grade teacher, Benny easily discontinued his Reading Recovery lessons. His eagerness to learn is evident in the successes he has had throughout his educational milestones. I look forward to watching him continue to achieve new goals and be successful as he continues with higher education.”

And Benny is thankful for the opportunity.

“I owe a big thanks to Ms. Lindsay and my teachers at Briceville Elementary,” Benny said. “Without their help, I don’t know where I would be now. I am so grateful that they took the time and cared about me enough to teach me and encourage me to be my best. Who would have guessed that I would be attending the University of Tennessee for my civil engineering degree?”

We are so proud to give Benny Foster our Reading Recovery Scholarship as we celebrate our 22nd year of helping struggling learners. He is a true testament to how Reading Recovery can not only teach students to read, but can sustain that success over time.

top right: Robin Lindsay has followed Benny’s progress from Reading Recovery through high school.

right: Benny is all smiles with mom and dad, Angie and Benny, at graduation ceremonies.
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Taking Reflection to a Higher Level: A Study of Teacher Engagement in Intellectual Practice

Lori L. Taylor, University of Maine

Introduction
The independent evaluators of the i3 grant used the label deliberateness to describe the thoughtful practice of lesson analysis and reflection on teaching that exemplifies the instructional strength of Reading Recovery® teachers (May, Sirinides, Gray, & Goldsworthy, 2016). Schön (1983) defined two levels of reflection as in-action (conscious on-the-run decisions) and on-action (thinking back on decisions and actions and considering how those actions contributed to observed outcomes). In their instructional contexts, these levels of reflection are observed as Reading Recovery teachers strive to reflect both in-the-moment and over time (Clay, 2001, 2015).

Clay calls for “individual adaptation made by the expert teacher to that child’s idiosyncratic competencies and history of past experiences that starts him on the upward climb to effective literacy performances” (Clay, 2016, p. 195). Reading Recovery teachers make critical instructional decisions throughout each lesson considering patterns of student reading and writing behavior and monitoring change over time in student responses. Effective teachers engage in decision-making processes before, during, and after lessons, and reflect on the effects of their decisions.

What happens when teachers intentionally add more-extensive written reflections to their established reflective practice? In this article, I describe a case study (Taylor, 2016) that explored teachers’ self-reported perceptions of and effects of engaging in systematic written reflections of teaching and learning. The following discussion presents details of the case study including a brief review of the literature, the procedures of the study, and discussion of the findings. Recommendations of this study, including a reflection protocol, are presented with suggestions for use by any Reading Recovery teacher.

A Case Study
Continuous improvement of teaching requires deliberate reflective practice (Bryk, 2009; Gallimore & Emerling, 2012; May et al., 2016; Schön, 1983). This study provided an exploration of what occurred when teachers added prompted weekly written reflections to their existing practice. The study focused on three research questions:

1. What is revealed about teaching and learning in systematic, structured, written reflections of Reading Recovery teachers?
2. What are teacher perceptions of engaging in systematic, structured, written reflections of Reading Recovery lessons?
3. What are the self-reported effects of engaging in systematic, structured, written reflections of Reading Recovery lessons on teacher thought and practice?

To answer these questions, three Reading Recovery teachers, nominated by their teacher leaders, were invited to participate. Informative data was qualitative. Over a 6-week period, the teachers submitted weekly written responses to questions posed on a Reflection Protocol and engaged in three interviews conducted individually. As the researcher, I maintained field notes of observations made during these activities.

Background
Research confirms that an effective teacher is key to student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997), and that reflective practice is a critical aspect of effectiveness. Further, writing is a suggested tool for enhancing reflection (Billings & Kowalski, 2006; Grieman & Covington, 2007; Purcell, 2013). Following is a brief summary of the relevant research.

The effective teacher. Effective early literacy intervention teachers observe student problem-solving behaviors, make contingent instructional decisions, and monitor student progress over time (Allington, 2002; Clay, ...
In Reading Recovery, teachers are accustomed to collegial reflection through dialogue (Lyons, Pinnell, & DeFord, 1993; Moore, 1998; Rodgers, 2000; Schwartz, 2006). Thus, while such collaboration was an established practice for the teachers in this study, engagement in writing to prompt deeper self-reflection was the focus of inquiry.

Writing to improve practice. Studies of professional development across many fields support the notion that writing improves learning and professional practice (Billings & Kowalski, 2006; Calderhead, 1991; Cohen-Sayag & Fischl, 2012; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Kent, 2011; Purcell, 2013). Researchers generally agree that the act of writing helps to organize ideas and knowledge (Britton, 1970; Emig, 1977; Langer & Applebee, 1987; Murray, 2004).

The literature on teacher writing as a method of reflection centers on journal writing. Many researchers examining the use of writing as a tool for teacher reflection report benefits to teacher practice, including increased work engagement (Makinen, 2013), heightened levels of reflection (Sung, Chang, Yu, & Chang, 2009), increased self-awareness (Farrell, 2013), and improved results of professional development (Moss, Springer, & Dehr, 2008; Sung et al., 2009). Chi (2010, 2013) described benefits to teaching practice through journal writing as promoting self-awareness and enhancing critical thinking by aiding teachers in dealing with uncertainties and problems.

Understandings gleaned from the literature informed the procedures applied in the current study.

Procedures of the Study

Participants
Three experienced Reading Recovery teachers volunteered to participate in this study. They had been teaching Reading Recovery for 4–10 years and were located at three different sites at substantial distances from one another within the same state. They completed all data collection procedures independently and did not collaborate during this study.

Data Collection
Multiple data sources were established and included weekly written responses to four prompts on a reflective protocol, transcripts from a series of interviews conducted over the 6 weeks of the study by the researcher in individual settings, and my field notes. While student records were also submitted weekly, the current discussion focuses only on the teachers’ responses.

Written reflections. The following four prompts comprised the written Reflection Protocol. The teachers focused on the performance of one student to respond weekly:

- What literacy processing behaviors in reading and writing did you observe?
- What did your student need to learn next?
- How did you teach for strategic activity in response to the student’s needs?
- What changes in student processing did you observe as a result of your teaching?

Participants entered their weekly responses to these questions (data) into an existing, unique, locally developed electronic database.
Interviews. Three formal interviews of the teachers were conducted over the course of the 6 weeks. Initial interviews focused on gathering information about each participant and her report of past practice reflecting on Reading Recovery lessons. The second interview sought their reactions to the experience of writing reflections of lessons weekly, including feelings about the use of prompts, their process for using them, and any effects of doing so. The third interview also focused on perceptions of both the experience and effects of writing reflections systematically during the 6-week study, including feelings about their use of the prompts, their process for using them, and any effects of doing so.

Field notes and observations. I reviewed teachers’ written reflections on an ongoing basis and recorded my observations and impressions. I also maintained notes during each interview. As a neutral observer, I did not engage in communication about their responses. My field notes, containing observations and impressions, informed my analyses of the teachers and the effects of the study procedures.

Data Analyses

Data resulting from the written submissions were analyzed separately using a constant comparative approach (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The data were analyzed as received (i.e., written reflections were analyzed weekly); and therefore, I revisited each step of data analysis systematically throughout the study.

A narrative analysis approach was applied to the interview data as the transcribed comments represented each teacher’s personal perceptions and reactions. This involved identifying units of data for coding and assigning inductive subcodes to further explain the data.

Written reflections. I analyzed each teacher’s written responses to questions on the reflective protocol individually each week. This involved identifying meaningful chunks of information (phrases or sentences) and then assigning each to a specific subcode within one of two broad categories, teaching or learning. The subcodes for teaching were observation, demonstration, prompt, and sharing the task. The subcodes for learning were response to task and response to instruction. This ongoing coding over time led to the emergence of additional subcodes that included strategic processing behavior, sources of information used or neglected, student disposition, and general comments. To check the reliability of the coding, two raters familiar with Reading Recovery instruction also analyzed and coded the data. This process revealed acceptable inter-rater reliability.

Interviews. The interviews were transcribed and coded in the initial categories of process, perception, and effect — the foci of interview questions. Data coded as process were further assigned to subcodes gleaned from the teachers’ reports of what impacted their experience. These were labeled systematic, structured, writing, and electronic. Subcodes identified inductively for perception included reflection, time and effort, planning, level of concern, and instructional moves. Subcodes assigned to effects were lesson records, identification of student needs, instructional language, and contingent instruction. Check-coding of the inductive codes by two external raters resulted in strong inter-rater reliability.

Field notes. My journal notes contained observations recorded during all study activities across all 6 weeks of the study. As the written and transcribed data were analyzed, I reviewed these notes to glean insights regarding the teachers, their teaching, their written reflections, and their interview comments.

Findings of the Study

Discussion of Question 1: What is revealed about teaching and learning in systematic, structured written reflections by Reading Recovery teachers?

This question was most directly answered by considering the teachers’ written reflections. Analyses revealed that the teachers’ responses described complex reading and writing behaviors. For example, in one entry Karen wrote:

Jayden always reads for meaning and errors do not usually interfere with comp. [comprehension]. Although Jayden uses initial visual to solve, he sometimes neglects medial and final [visual information]. He reads fluently and with expression. Once engaged in literacy work, he shows pride and effort in his accomplishment.

Within this one entry, Karen commented on her observation of the reader’s processing and attention to sources of information in text, her analysis of errors in the reading, patterns of attention to visual information in text, his reading fluency, and his emotional response to his literacy
work. The focus on processing behaviors in reading and writing was consistent across the reflections of the three teachers. This confirms that the specific question used in the reflective protocol is helpful in prompting thinking about teaching and learning. (See Appendix A for further examples.)

While similar, corresponding patterns emerged among the responses of these teachers, there were also differences in both what was discussed and the format of the responses. The reflection protocol accommodates individual approaches and thinking.

**Discussion of Question 2:**
*What are teacher perceptions of engaging in systematic, structured, written reflections of Reading Recovery lessons?*

Over the 6 weeks of the study, each teacher reported developing and refining a routine for writing to the prompts that fit her needs. While each took a unique approach to using the prompts, all three teachers reported that they found themselves reflecting upon the writing prompts within and beyond their lessons. They also reported feelings of increased efficacy and improvement of practice as described below.

**Discussion of Question 3:**
*What are the self-reported effects of engaging in systematic written reflections of Reading Recovery lessons on teacher thought and practice?*

Interview responses revealed that the teachers experienced multiple benefits from the process of engaging in writing weekly reflections. They described feeling they had enhanced abilities to reflect on their lessons, devoted more time and effort to both plan lessons and reflect on their teaching, had increased concern for their teaching, and had improved in their abilities to respond effectively to learners during lessons. Additionally, the teachers reported that they had refined their use of lessons records, felt more insightful in identifying specific student needs, and more successful in responding contingently to learners. (See Appendix B for interview excerpts.)

**A Model to Demonstrate the Findings**

As I analyzed interview transcripts, examined the written reflections, and considered my field notes, I realized that while the written reflections answered the prompted questions, the writing in itself did not represent a comprehensive reflective process. It became evident to me that the opportunity for the teachers to discuss engagement in the weekly written reflections provided a meta-cognitive construct for the teachers to further reflect upon and describe the evolving process. It appears that the opportunity to engage in discussion lifted teacher thought and practice to the heightened level they described. For purposes of this study, I label this phenomenon intellectual practice. The term intellectual practice represents active engagement and use of critical inquiry, thought and layered reflection to increase understandings and influence action, or instruction. Figure 1 represents the study findings.

**Self-reflection.** Reading Recovery teachers are accustomed to reflecting on their instruction, their students’ behaviors, emerging competencies, instructional needs, and their students’ progress over time. Reflecting and thinking about interactions between teacher, learner, and text inform teacher’s instructional decisions and are referred to here as self-reflection. In Figure 1, the components of self-reflection—already established by these teachers—include reflective inner thought and monitoring of teaching and learning. They are presented in this model at the base of the figure as foundational, the first level of reflective practice for the teachers.

Teachers in the study described monitoring of teaching and learning, reflective thought about practice, and engagement in reflective writing during interviews. While the interviews were not dialogue per se, there was an opportunity for the teachers to formulate and articulate their ideas for a listener, me, the researcher. The talk served as a mediator for refined thought and practice. The invitation to talk about engagement in writing about lessons provided an additional layer of reflection for the teachers, reflective discourse. This block represents the added layer of reflection that emerged as influential in the responses offered by the participating teachers. The blocks representing writing and discourse, tasks added during the study, are lighter in color to indicate that a perceived or present other is involved in these levels of reflection.

**Teacher perceptions.** During the series of interviews, the teachers were invited to share feelings and understandings about their engagement in the structured, written reflections. Over the 6 weeks of the study, each teacher reported developing and refining a routine for writing to the prompts that fit her needs. While each took a unique approach to using the prompts, all three teachers reported that they found themselves reflecting upon the writing prompts within
and beyond their lessons. The teachers also shared some perceived challenges, such as added time and effort, along with some level of uncertainty. However, they perceived these challenges as ultimately beneficial to increased levels of self-efficacy.

In this model, the arrows depict factors identified by the teachers as leading to feelings of increased abilities, or self-efficacy. The upward direction of these arrows illustrates raised levels of each factor, as opposed to new perceptions. Common perceptions among the three teachers include increased sense of efficacy regarding reflection, planning for instruction, and instructional moves. Perceived challenges of additional time and effort, as well as a raised level of concern resulting from engagement in the systematic, structured, written reflections also were seen by the teachers as contributing to their increased capability. Each factor is described briefly here.

Time and effort. Although the teachers remarked on the added time and effort demanded by deeper reflection and engagement with the written descriptions of lessons, each also pointed out that analyzing more broadly, reflecting more deeply, and dedicating the extra time and effort resulted in improved thought and practice.

Level of concern. Teachers described a level of concern in what to attend to, how to articulate their understandings or inquiry, and in scrutinizing their own teaching decisions. Over time, however, the level of concern for the added layer of reflection began to normalize, according to study participants. In other words, the weekly written reflections became part of the routine.

Reflection. Findings corroborate many other studies about the use of writing as a method of reflection (Chi,
They described closer attention to student needs, or more contingent (Lose, 2007; Wood, 2003) and more precise in matching instructional language such as prompt - ing for student problem solving. In addition, they believed they were more mindful of both student learning and of their own teaching decisions, for the focal student as well as in their overall practice. In reflecting and writing about a single focal student, all contended that the way they thought about teaching and learning was impacted by the act of writing to the reflective prompts for one student. In other words, it became a habit of mind to reflect in a similar way for their work with each student.

**Instructional moves.** Teachers expressed noted change in views of themselves as practitioners. Each described increased use of lesson data including notetaking during instruction, broader consideration of lesson records in planning instruction, and more comprehensive monitoring of change over time in student learning, which led to feelings of professional growth and improved ability in teaching. Teachers recognized feelings of intentionality, especially with the language of instruction such as prompting for student problem solving. In addition, they believed they were more precise in matching instruction to student needs, or more contingent (Lose, 2007; Wood, 2003). One teacher, for example, shared that she felt her teaching was "stronger and more focused." Another noted that she felt she could "more easily see where I want to go with her [the student] and prompt for that and help her [the student] in that way." The third described feeling more “intentional” in her teaching and used this in reflecting on her practice.

**Teacher reported effects.** Overall, the three teachers reported refined practice related to broader analysis of lesson data and use of lesson records, more-accurate identification of student understanding and needs for next learning steps, more-precise instructional language, and overall contingency of instruction. The prompts provided a structure for teachers in this study. While other prompts or questions reflecting a cycle of teaching and learning could be employed, the teachers reported that the consistent structure provided a way to attend to the teaching and learning cycle not only as they reflected in writing, but during instruction and in thinking about teaching and learning.

Four categories represent the areas of refined practice noted by the teachers: lesson record analysis, identification of student needs, instructional language, and contingent teaching. The effects are placed in an arc at the top of the model to illustrate themes reported by teachers in the study. In reality, perceptions (arrows) and effects (arc) are not clearly defined. Rather, complexities of thought, perception, and practice are intricately woven and inextricably linked. For purposes of demonstration, the visual model simplifies the connections, with reported effects placed at the top as if they were a clear outcome. A synopsis of each of the four reported effects is presented here.

**Lesson record analysis.** Each teacher reported finding herself attending to lesson notes and records differently as a result of engaging in the writing about lessons. They described increased awareness of their level of thought about lessons and changes in the ways in which they recorded and reviewed lesson records. Teachers reported use of lesson records to look for more patterns of learning and of teaching. They described closer attention to analysis of running records and observations within lesson records during instruction as well as increased checking between records of reading and records of writing in search of patterns in student processing behaviors.

**Identification of student needs.** Two teachers noted a change in their reflective practice from considering student learning on a day-to-
day basis, to identifying patterns of behavior across several lessons as well as more in-depth analysis across lesson components. The other teacher described the complexity as focusing on smaller bits of lesson data than usual, identifying more precisely student needs and next teaching moves. Whether narrowing or widening the focus, each described constructive change in use of lesson data to inform instructional decisions based on student need.

Instructional language. During interviews, each teacher highlighted improved use of language within her lessons. They reported that instructional language, mostly referred to as “prompting” in collected study data, became more precisely matched to student needs, calling for exactly what the student needed to attend to or do. Instructional language was described as more clear, precise, and targeted.

Contingent instruction. Teachers reported increased analysis of lesson records and observations of student literacy behaviors resulting in a better idea of next steps in child learning, and therefore in teaching. Specifically, teachers reported clarification of the most effective lesson focus, using patterns of behavior in reflecting in lessons over time. They noted that consistent consideration of multiple records and types of data assisted their monitoring of change over time in both the child’s literacy behavior and patterns of teaching behavior.

Conclusion

Results of the study demonstrate that multiple layers of reflection combining inner thought, reflective writing, and discourse are conducive to the critical reflection necessary for impact on teaching practice (Cohen-Sayag & Fischl, 2012; Christie, 2007; Jung, 2012; Parsons, 2012; Spiro et al., 2013; Wold, 2003). The model (Figure 1) represents layers of reflective practice, combining self-reflection with co-constructed reflection, along with resulting perceptions and effects on practice, as reported by the teachers in this study. It is a practical example of adaptive expertise, or advanced knowledge acquisition, described in the literature (Hayden, Rundell, & Smyntek-Gworek, 2013; Lin, Schwartz, & Bransford, 2007; Spiro et al., 2013; Yoon, Koehler-Yom, Anderson, Lin, & Klopfer, 2015). Teachers reported that systematic, structured written responses about observed student literacy behaviors, responsive teaching, and resulting student learning resulted in increased feelings of efficacy and improvements in teaching practice. Furthermore, it was noted by this researcher that the opportunity for reflective discourse provided by the interviews added yet another layer of reflection and influenced the outcomes reported by the teachers. While the figure does not specifically suggest a cycle or process, readers should presume a spiral process of ongoing reflection that would occur in a responsive and contingent teaching and learning cycle (Gibson, 2010; Jones, 2000; Lose, 2007; Wood, 2003).

What mattered in this study were the perceived and reported shifts in the level of reflection on teaching and learning that resulted in increased feelings of efficacy and improvements in teaching practice. The writing of reflections in response to four prompts about teaching and learning provided a tool for organizing and recording inner thought about practice (Bazerman et al., 2005; Britton, 1970; Emig, 1977; Langer & Applebee, 1987; Murray, 2004). The opportunity to then talk about engagement in the writing provided synthesis of inner thought (Cole, John-Steiner, Scribner, & Souberman, 1978; Hanfmann, Vakar, & Kozulin, 2012). Layered reflection including reflective inner thought, writing, and discourse allowed teachers to identify strengths and challenges in teaching and learning and make adaptations to their instruction in an intellectual manner (Hayden, Rundell, & Smyntek-Gworek, 2013; Spiro et al., 2013; Wold, 2003; Yoon et al., 2015), perceiving a change in their practice in just 6 weeks.

Limitations and Further Research

Given the complex nature of the human instruments involved in this study (both researcher and participant), it is of course impossible to fully understand the motivation behind discussion of perceptions and self-reported effects of the teachers, and this is a limitation of this study. Additional limitations include the relatively short duration of the study and lack of a control group. Finally, findings presented in this study may or may not apply to settings outside the described literacy intervention or to teachers who have not had similar opportunities.

Further research investigating the premise that layers of reflection including monitoring of teaching and learning, reflective thought, writing, and discourse lead to a heightened level of intellectual practice resulting in adaptation of practice is warranted. Specifically, the additional reflection seemingly mediated by talk about the
Prompts used reflect early literacy learning, they also represent a teaching and learning cycle (Gibson, 2010; Jones, 2000) in a problem-solving, responsive teaching model that can be applied to any level of instruction. Specific wording could be altered to address various content or instructional goals, but the use of guiding questions can provide a scaffold for effective reflection, as shown in this study and others (Hansen, 2006; Lai & Calandra, 2010). The supportive context and opportunity for multiple layers of reflection was critical to the results of the current study. Suggested by findings in this study and others in the literature, it appears that teachers benefit when provided with the time, space, and context for reflection that results in adaptation of practice (Hayden, Rundell, & Smyntek-Gworek, 2013; Yoon et al., 2015).

Feedback from teachers in the study regarding use of the electronic database for entering written reflections was mixed. While somewhat convenient and perhaps supportive in offering a scaffold for establishing a new routine, teachers did not feel the electronic system to be invaluable nor vital to the added reflection.

The last column of the lesson record could serve as a medium for systematic written reflections of teaching and learning. Clay (2005, 2016) guides us to use the column labeled “Comments on any Part of the Lesson” to evaluate teaching decisions as we reflect after the lesson. This study confirms the importance of addressing the teaching and learning cycles as we record reflections daily and systematically in the last column of our lesson records.

The act of writing weekly to prompts representing a teaching and learning cycle seemed, for teachers in this study, to be the mediator to deeper reflection of their practice. While it is likely that the writing about teaching and learning did in fact serve in this capacity, and may have been a key factor in perceived effects on practice, comprehensive analysis of the study data suggests a more complex conclusion. We cannot dismiss the fact that talking about the process may have supported change in the teachers’ metacognitive stance (Lyons, Pinnell, & DeFord, 1993) and level of understanding about their own practice. For the three teachers in this study, who were already experienced and effective Reading Recovery teachers, adding multiple layers of reflection empowered new ways of thinking and being, moving their practice to an intellectual level.

The combination of in-the-moment responsive teaching and thoughtful analysis of responses over time for planned contingent teaching is critical.
resulted in a level of intellectual practice. Teachers gained an increased sense of efficacy and refined, or adaptive, practice. Specifically, teachers reported deeper reflection, broader analysis of lesson records, and more precise responses to student literacy behaviors. Given that a reflective and responsive teacher matters to student achievement, the concept presented here may inspire researchers as well as practitioners in seeking ways to support heightened levels of reflection for teachers engaging in intellectual practice.

References


An Invitation

This case study resulted in a tool for others to consider and apply in their own work. The reflection protocol summarizes the layers of reflective practice used by teachers in the research study.

Reflection Protocol

1. Monitoring of Teaching and Learning
   Review records of the past five lessons.

2. Reflective Inner Thought
   Analyze and reflect upon teaching and learning interactions.

3. Written Responses to Reflective Prompts
   What literacy processing behaviors in reading and writing did you observe?
   What did the student need to learn next?
   How did you teach for strategic activity in response to the student’s needs?
   What changes in student processing did you observe as a result of your teaching?
   What will be the next emphasis in your teaching?

4. Reflective Discourse
   What have you learned about the student?
   What have you learned about your teaching?

5. Repeat Systematically

It is important to note that teachers involved in the study recommended a fifth question be added to the list of reflective prompts. As they engaged in systematic reflective writing, each indicated the need for an additional question asking about next steps for instruction. Having reflected deeply about the teaching and learning from the previous week, teachers considered the feed forward to the next lessons. Thus, in the protocol shared here, five questions are included. The reflection protocol could be used as a separate document, placed in a notebook or other journal, to ensure that teachers reflect deeply on an ongoing basis. In becoming more deliberate about our practice, it may matter less how we add layers of reflection to our practice than that we do.


Christie, E. N. (2007). Notes from the field: Teachers using reflection to transform classroom practice and themselves as practitioners. Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives, 8(4), 483–495. doi: 10.1080/14623940701649172


(see Appendices on Pages 28 and 29)
## Appendix A
### Examples of Written Responses, Excerpts from Week 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflective Prompt</th>
<th>Teacher 1</th>
<th>Teacher 2</th>
<th>Teacher 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What literacy processing behaviors in reading and writing did you observe?</td>
<td>Jayden is noticing and problem solving on the run. He can search, s/m and s/c using all sources of information.</td>
<td>Using analogy to solve words in writing, attempting to break words using partial visual information, monitoring with visual primarily.</td>
<td>Liam is cross-checking to solve and self-correct. He uses text features (italicized and bold print words; punctuation) to guide intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did your student need to learn next?</td>
<td>Become an active problem solver. Integrate meaning and structure with initial, medial, and final visual. Use analogy to solve.</td>
<td>Search further visual info, monitor for structure, integrate sources while solving.</td>
<td>His reading on higher level texts is sounding a little choppy so we have been working on phrasing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you teach for strategic activity in response to the student’s needs?</td>
<td>Use explicit prompts for solving: TTA and think about what they are doing while you make the sounds you see. TTA and look here. Give that word a slow check and see if you are right.</td>
<td>Read it and check if it looks right and sounds right (in writing), did that sound right? Try that again and think what will sound right and look right. You read _____, does that sound right? You know a part of that word.</td>
<td>I had Liam read familiar stories with the intent to practice reading sentences in longer phrases. He also reread some of the stories he had composed. I cut his sentence strips into phrases for him to reconstruct and practice reading in phrases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What changes in student processing did you observe as a result of your teaching?</td>
<td>He is noticing, searching, s/m, s/c and actively solving. His self-extending system is taking shape. He no longer avoids the new book but instead, grabs it with confidence.</td>
<td>Attempting to solve words using analogy in reading, some rereading to solve without prompt, stopping when what she read did not make sense or sound right.</td>
<td>Liam’s phrasing and fluency did improve somewhat throughout the week. He is more aware of what he ‘sounds like’ while reading and has reread a sentence on his own to fix his phrasing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B
Excerpts of Teacher Interviews Describing Engagement in Systematic Reflective Writing

**Teacher 1.** Karen described the process of writing about her instruction as powerful, sharing, “Any time you stop and reflect...especially to write...it helps me to synthesize.” Karen described what she meant by synthesis as she spoke of writing reflections about a week of lessons, stating, “That’s the part of the writing that’s powerful, because you’re not taking one lesson, you’re kinda looking at a week’s worth and really synthesizing where do I go next.” Karen explained that writing about her lessons helped her in pulling together more factors than she had considered in the past, to identify what the student needed to learn next. She provided an example of the impact she felt her new process had on the child’s progress, showing the text level graph. She shared, “This is where we started [beginning of lessons], when I started writing [near the end of lessons], and this is where I saw that great big shift [during participation in the study], and I have no idea whether that was going to happen anyway or whether it was part of the process and that my teaching became stronger and more focused because I had done my homework.” Karen spoke of her metacognitive processes in writing reflective responses about her lessons. Describing how she considered the four related questions, Karen shared, “Writing in each of these sections I could see myself going back and adding a little bit more (to other responses).” She felt that this made the process of writing valuable for her practice. Karen also explained how the expectation of writing reflective responses impacted her work throughout the week, sharing, “Knowing I would be writing at the end of the week, I probably spent more time doing this (notes on lesson records) each day...it certainly has value for my notes.” Lastly, Karen noted that writing about lessons for an audience other than herself was helpful, describing that she was “taking my thinking and I’m synthesizing it and trying to write it for somebody else to understand.”

**Teacher 2.** Melissa explained, “When I write to the questions, I not only have my notes but what’s in my brain.” She reported that the writing of reflections about lessons, integrating notes from lesson records with observations made during teaching and learning interactions helped her to make precise teaching decisions. Sharing an example, Melissa said, “When I was typing up the prompts that I had used in the past week, I thought...that (prompting) was not so streamlined,” that by recognizing this in her writing, she was able to plan for prompting more specifically suited to the student’s needs. Sharing her connection to brain research on learning, Melissa described how the act of writing, for her, improved her decision-making for teaching. She stated, “The motor plan helps you to kind of solidify things in your brain and makes it easier to make decisions and kind of just solidify my thinking about...what I’m doing with the student. I always have a general plan but then that kind of makes it more concrete.”

**Teacher 3.** Sandra found that writing reflections about lessons helped to articulate observations of learning and teaching, and she saw that in turn this made her “more intentional about what [I needed] to teach next.” She explained that writing about her student and her teaching helped to “condense what I need to do” and determine how to “organize what they need to learn next.” Sandra found that the act of writing about lessons helped her to focus on “the most critical” piece. Sandra discussed that what was “hard for me in the beginning was articulating what I wanted to say,” but that “it got easier.” She shared that she enjoyed the challenge, and for people who want to think more about their practice, she saw it as valuable. She reported, “It makes me more aware of why I am doing it...in words.”
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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.
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-
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.

Inviting past or present students to share their stories is powerful, like this note received 8 years after lessons.

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
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...
Implementation

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.](image)
(p. 65). 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 staying 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


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**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.
Reading Recovery and Complex Adaptive Systems: Widening Circles for Sustainable Implementation

Marla K. Robertson, Utah State University
Leslie Patterson, Human Systems Dynamics Institute
Connie Briggs, Texas Woman’s University
Anne Simpson, Texas Woman’s University

Introduction
Just as a child’s series of lessons requires attention to the unique patterns of an individual child’s learning, successful and sustainable implementations in schools invite us to learn more about the unique complexities of systems within schools (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005; Kaye, 2013). This study sought to investigate what contributes to successful Reading Recovery® implementation by using a theoretical frame from complexity science — complex adaptive systems (CAS). Dooley (1996) defines CAS as a “collection of agents (people, groups, and ideas) that interact so that system-wide patterns emerge, and those patterns subsequently act on and influence the interactions among the agents” (p. 2). That definition clearly can be applied to schools in general, and to Reading Recovery schools specifically. This definition also implies that leaders in such a system can observe those emerging patterns and make appropriate decisions as they adapt to changing patterns in the system. When leaders both understand the dynamics of the CAS and respond to changing conditions to influence the individual and collective development or learning, they are said to have adaptive capacity (Eoyang & Holladay, 2013). For this study, CAS provided a lens to examine whether and how people, patterns, and actions within the system reflect adaptive capacity as they work to make a positive difference in the outcomes for children served in Reading Recovery.

This multiple case study research included four Reading Recovery sites across four states. For this research, a site is defined as all the schools where Reading Recovery teachers are working that are the assigned responsibility of the teacher leader. In some cases, all of these schools are in one district, but in other cases these schools can be spread across districts. Teacher leaders from these four sites participated in a self-study. Teacher leaders from three of the four sites chose two schools to focus on within their site based on at least 3 years of successful implementation (met or exceeded the national average for successfully completing a series of lessons), and the teacher leader from one site chose one focus school with strong initial year data. These teacher leaders gathered survey data from their focus schools and discussed findings with colleagues and researchers involved in the study through a series of four virtual meetings. As part of the self-study, teacher leaders and researchers together explored how adaptive capacity (responsive flexibility) builds by seeing, understanding, and influencing patterns of interaction and decision making. What follows describes how an understanding of CAS can help leaders understand the differences that make a difference in successful implementations.

Theoretical Framework
Marie Clay understood that human learning is complex and unpredictable. Through her extensive research, Clay discovered that literacy learning (and teaching) involves the reciprocal relationships among reading and writing, and oral language, and the complex, adaptive teaching and learning of self-extending systems (Watson & Askew, 2009). She also understood that this learning requires adaptive problem solving at the individual level that cannot be micromanaged. For that reason, the design of Reading Recovery systems acknowledges individual diversity to facilitate adaptation to the unpredictable. Further, Clay (2013) described Reading Recovery professionals’ ability to solve problems from the systemic view of “three concentric circles: implementing, teaching, and learning” (p. 230), understanding that specialization in these areas of problem solving were important for the intervention to be
These features of complex learning systems (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Ricca, 2012; Patterson, Holladay, & Eoyang, 2013) reflect the characteristics of Reading Recovery implementations. Reading Recovery sites are open to information and influence; diverse in terms of learners and contexts, connected and interdependent; with particular responses of individual teachers and students essentially unique and unpredictable. In this article, we draw heavily on the emerging field of human systems dynamics (Eoyang, 2002; Eoyang & Holladay, 2013), a particular set of methods and models relevant to human systems. Briefly, the goal of human systems dynamics (HSD) is to help people see the patterns in the complex systems where they live, work, and play; make sense of those patterns; and take action that will be responsive, adaptive, and generative—actions that will sustain the system into the future. In a constantly moving system, the only way to navigate and, perhaps, to influence the path of the system is to observe the emerging patterns, to take action to shift those patterns, and to watch closely to see what happens next.

This approach resonates with Reading Recovery implementation, where leaders strive to be observant and responsive so that they might adapt appropriately to changing realities in the local context. Questions remain, however, about what to observe and specifically how to adapt in ways that can ensure sustainability. The Year 2 i3 scale-up report affirms this difficulty:

Because Reading Recovery’s implementation requires the involvement of multiple players performing a range of nuanced tasks—some quite removed from the program priorities of lesson delivery and teacher training—there are important aspects of implementation that are not easily codified as Standards and are not captured by our measures of fidelity. (May et al., 2014, p. 14)

The final evaluation report of the i3 scale-up (May, Sirinides, Gray, & Goldsworthy, 2016) analyzed 23 schools through case studies to examine school-level implementation of Reading Recovery, focusing primarily on agents in each school such as Reading Recovery teachers, classroom teachers, and administrators. The teacher leader responsible for the school was also included to gain their perspective of the school’s implementation, however their role in the research was integrated with the agents within the school, so was not the primary focus of the research. In our study, in order to examine these multiple players and their diverse and nuanced tasks, we need to “zoom out” to include the teacher leader, to think of these individual actors and actions as a complex and adaptive system of interdependent parts. We can then see that the whole is significantly different from the sum of its parts. It is useful to think of Reading Recovery schools and districts as complex ecosystems (particular examples of CAS), ever-evolving networks of relationships through which people, materials, and environment interact in nonlinear and unpredictable ways (Patterson, Holladay, & Eoyang, 2013).

Patterns of behavior and discourse emerge from these ecosystems. We argue that noticing and naming these patterns are essential to successful and sustainable implementa-
Reading Recovery leaders clearly notice and name patterns as they make decisions. For example, after watching a school at work, they may say that the Reading Recovery teachers collaborate with classroom teachers on a daily basis to make decisions about individual students. Or they may say that everyone at the school keeps their decisions private because they are afraid of being “in trouble” for not complying with expectations. Patterns like these become entrenched over time (Stewart, 2016; Stewart & Patterson, 2016). These entrenched patterns constrain future interactions. In other words, we tend to continue acting in familiar ways—even when we are dissatisfied with our results. Figure 1 represents this dynamic process through which system patterns emerge.

As these patterns of thought, behavior, and communication emerge and become stronger over time, they begin to constrain the subsequent interactions in a recursive cycle (Patterson, Holladay, & Eoyang, 2013). This perspective suggests that the role of the leader is to watch the learning ecosystem closely, interpret observations to identify patterns, and take action to support learners at particular moments. What is the learner ready to do next? What moves will provide ‘just enough’ support? In other words, what is the next wise action? That is true for the Reading Recovery teacher; it is also true for leaders at the school, district, and site levels. Responsive leadership is, in fact, an ongoing cycle of inquiry, reflection, and action that might be called adaptive action (Eoyang & Holladay, 2013; see Figure 2).

In a complex learning ecosystem, the leader (as a part of that system) is responsible for zeroing in on the patterns that make the most difference to the dynamics of the system.

Eoyang (2002) conducted a qualitative analysis of research on CAS in many diverse disciplines, and her findings and subsequent work across many contexts suggest four patterns that seem to be directly related to the underlying dynamics in learning ecologies:

1. **Shared Identity**—In this system, who are we as teachers and/or learners?

![Figure 1. Patterns Emerging in a Complex Adaptive System](source: Adapted with permission from HSD models, www.hsdinstitute.org)

![Figure 2. Adaptive Action to Guide Teaching and Leadership Decisions](source: Adapted with permission from HSD models, www.hsdinstitute.org)
2. **Shared Focus**—What is our shared focus at this time?

3. **Significant Issues**—What matters most to our work?

4. **Shared Practices**—In this system, how do we work together to facilitate inquiry, reflection, and adaptation?

   We used these four patterns to guide our study of successful Reading Recovery implementations and also used Figure 3 to help us analyze and understand the dynamic process through which Reading Recovery system implementation patterns emerge.

### Statement of the Problem and Research Question

There are similarities and differences across Reading Recovery sites and schools — even successful ones. If successful Reading Recovery implementation is an example of a healthy learning ecology (or CAS) at work, then what are the underlying conditions? In order to understand what contributes to successful school implementations from the perspective of the teacher leader, this was our overarching research question: What patterns do we see in the reports of teacher leaders about schools within their site with successful implementations (defined by measures of student progress)? To address this inquiry, we asked ourselves four big questions:

1. What patterns relate to shared identity among teachers and administrators in the school?
2. What patterns relate to individual and collective or shared foci for Reading Recovery work?
3. What are patterns in the issues that these teacher leaders see as significant (differences that make a difference)?
4. What shared practices do teacher leaders report, or how do the teacher leaders describe how the teachers, administrators, and others in the school work together?

### Methods

The four-person research team consisted of two researchers familiar with Reading Recovery; one researcher familiar with complexity and HSD principles; and one researcher familiar with complexity, HSD principles, and Reading Recovery. This team met with teacher leaders from the four participating sites for four weekly online meetings. One of the four sites had two teacher leaders, so there were five teacher leaders as part of the study. One teacher leader’s site responsibilities included schools within her own district and schools outside of her district. She chose one focus school from within her district and one from outside her district. The other teacher leaders chose focus schools within their district. Our initial meeting consisted of brief background readings as a refresher from a previous teacher leader training (e.g., complexsystemsandreadingrecovery.wordpress.com) and discussion about CAS as a rationale for future conversations and surveys. The teacher leaders subsequently facilitated completion of a variety of surveys between meetings and read additional readings on complex systems related to the topic of the week. Each online meeting focused on sharing insights from the readings and the completed surveys. Table 1 shows the timeline for the study.

The research team also met before each of the four online meetings to discuss specific concepts included in the background readings for the week, to finalize the details of the survey(s), and to address any other topics for the agenda. This team
also met between each online meeting and three additional times across the 6 weeks following the online meetings to analyze the data. During these discussions, we created a list of questions to ask each teacher leader during our follow-up interview to provide us with a context for each school. These questions asked how long the school had Reading Recovery and how long each Reading Recovery teacher had been a part of that school. Additional questions asked about the current principal and how many principals the school had in the past 5 years as well as how many classroom teachers were in the school and how many classes per grade level. Lastly, we wanted to know about the teacher leader’s roles at the school and/or in the district and approximately how many times they were at that school each month. Our data consisted of the completed surveys, researcher notes from each online discussion, and any informational documents created for each online meeting including reading assignments. We also gathered researcher notes from follow-up interviews with each teacher leader and notes from all research team meetings. Between each research team meeting we individually coded the data from the previous meeting, beginning with Survey 1 (Appendix A) and notes from the online meeting about the survey, using inductive analysis (Creswell, 2013). This analysis was designed to identify themes and patterns of themes within schools and then within the four sites. We then came together and discussed what codes each saw in these surveys and in the discussion notes that helped us answer the research question for the particular survey in order to come to a consensus. For example, based on responses from administrators and classroom teachers in each school from Survey 1, we created a map (Figure 4) showing the process of our mapping of effective Reading Recovery schools. This was part of our process as we discussed these codes and identified common themes across schools and sites for this set of surveys identifying shared identity and shared focus. We then coded Survey 1 responses from the teacher leaders, looked for patterns that emerged, created a table of possible patterns, and added quotes from the surveys. This process guided our discussion of the teacher leader perspective of shared identity and shared focus. We repeated a similar process with Survey 2 (Appendix B) isolating each question for discussion based on codes noticed for that question across all schools. For example, Question 1 asks about the principal’s leadership, so we created a table with codes from this question with quotes that fit the pattern noting which survey this quote came from. Using this initial analysis, we then looked over all of the Survey 2 data looking for differences that made a difference in these schools for each question. For Survey 3 (Appendix C), we analyzed these surveys by school, coding for shared practices at each of these schools and then looked at them as a whole. In subsequent meetings, we continued our inductive analysis using all data sources until we identified themes and supporting evidence across the data.

Findings

From our analysis of these schools and sites, we discovered four themes: (a) similarities and differences, (b) collaborative learning, (c) adaptive action (responsive and disciplined inquiry-to-action), and (d) deep theory-to-practice connections.

Similarities and Differences

In our analysis of these complex school systems, we noted similarities and differences across and within each school and site. Even though the schools in these four sites all met sites for this set of surveys identifying shared identity and shared focus. We then coded Survey 1 responses from the teacher leaders, looked for patterns that emerged, created a table of possible patterns, and added quotes from the surveys. This process guided our discussion of the teacher leader perspective of shared identity and shared focus. We repeated a similar process with Survey 2 (Appendix B) isolating each question for discussion based on codes noticed for that question across all schools. For example, Question 1 asks about the principal’s leadership, so we created a table with codes from this question with quotes that fit the pattern noting which survey this quote came from. Using this initial analysis, we then looked over all of the Survey 2 data looking for differences that made a difference in these schools for each question. For Survey 3 (Appendix C), we analyzed these surveys by school, coding for shared practices at each of these schools and then looked at them as a whole. In subsequent meetings, we continued our inductive analysis using all data sources until we identified themes and supporting evidence across the data.

**Table 1. Timeline for the Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting with Teacher Leaders</th>
<th>Focus/Topic: Completed Survey</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Who Completed the Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 19 Online</td>
<td>Introduction to Study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 26 Online</td>
<td>Shared Identity &amp; Focus:</td>
<td>1&amp;2</td>
<td>Teacher leaders: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey 1 (Appendix A)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1 per school)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Administrators: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>School teachers: 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3 Online</td>
<td>Shared Content (Differences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teacher leaders: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that make a difference):</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1 per school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey 2 (Appendix B)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 10 Online</td>
<td>Shared Practices:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teacher leaders: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey 3 (Appendix C)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1 per school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RR teachers: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Individual Follow-up</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Teacher leaders: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(1 per school)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
the criteria for participation in the study, they varied widely in their contexts, constraints, and approaches. Our data, however, indicated that elements of site history, in particular, and some school and site contextual factors matter in these successful Reading Recovery implementations.

Site history. As an example of site history, all teacher leaders in this study had some previous experience in their district or schools — either as a leader or teacher. For example, one teacher leader worked alongside the classroom teachers or as a Reading Recovery teacher previously.

I trained for Reading Recovery in 1995–96 and the first 2 RR teachers trained (here), trained with me. I maintained a relationship with one of those teachers through the years and remained aware of what was going on in that district. . . . I trained the 2 current teachers . . . . I have been able to observe the changes in the school’s approach to balanced literacy and attitude towards RR. (TL Survey #1)

Another teacher leader worked with teachers previously as the Title I coordinator for the district. Another taught K–2 literacy professional development in the district. After their teacher leader training, each had a different role that provided them visibility and credibility within the district(s). So, even though none of these teacher leaders worked in this role very long, this previous experience within their district or with the schools in their site seemed to help each one understand the context of the school district(s) where they worked, including knowledge of the teachers, administration, and/or common pedagogical practices, etc. We also learned that even though these teacher leaders did not have an official decision-making role in their district, they did have influence with decision makers in the district through their roles as district leaders, and they seemed to be respected within their districts for their literacy

Figure 4. Map Created Before Online Meeting 2
School and site contextual factors. There were similarities and differences across contexts of these successful schools; however, some contextual differences seemed to matter and some did not. Some differences that did not seem to matter include the demographics of the schools. These schools ranged from Title I schools with high needs students to non-Title I schools. The length of Reading Recovery implementation varied from new schools in their initial year to schools that had 20-plus years of implementation. The role of the principal varied, but in all cases, the principal supported Reading Recovery and he/she “protect[ed] time in the schedule” for students to receive lessons. The size of schools varied from small to large. All teacher leaders served in additional roles in their districts. These roles ranged from facilitating staff development and training for the district in K–12 reading/writing instruction to overseeing small-group literacy instruction for Grades K–5, in addition to their teacher leadership responsibilities. The Reading Recovery teachers years in this position varied from new teachers to those who had been teaching Reading Recovery for 10-plus years, and the teacher leaders’ experience with Reading Recovery varied. In some cases, the teacher leader had no experience with Reading Recovery before their teacher leader training, and others trained in Reading Recovery prior to their leadership training. There was also wide variation in external influences at the state level for each school. For example, two of the states involved were in the middle of policy changes regarding literacy standards and practices in the state. Even with these differences, the schools included in this study met the criteria as successful in their Reading Recovery implementation.

There were, however, contextual factors among these schools and sites that seemed to matter. In six of the seven schools, either a Reading Recovery teacher had been a classroom teacher at the school previously or the teacher leader had taught in the school previously as a Reading Recovery teacher or classroom teacher. Teacher leaders for these schools stated that this indicated a level of respect in the school for either themselves or the Reading Recovery teacher. In the seven successful implementation schools, school faculty that responded to our surveys seemed to value the relationship with Reading Recovery in the school. For example, all schools had more than one Reading Recovery teacher. There were indications that the Reading Recovery teacher and classrooms teachers worked at building relationships, to varying degrees. Classroom teachers remarked that Reading Recovery teachers “work together in tandem” with them, “value collaboration and teamwork,” and that teachers consider themselves in a “partnership” with their Reading Recovery teacher. “We work together to make sure our students are getting what they need. We discuss what we see our students doing and not doing. Then we make a plan to help.” The teacher leaders and Reading Recovery teachers also seemed to work at their relationships, and these relationships seemed to matter. However, this relationship-building looked different with each teacher leader and ranged from monthly to weekly meetings face-to-face to emails with questions, with a different goal or focus, depending on the teacher leader. Relationships at all levels seemed to matter (past and present) and the teacher leader’s work at relationship-building also made a difference in these sites and schools.

Collaborative Learning
Relationships also played into another theme we noticed across these schools regarding the importance of collaboration. Data show that the teacher leader and one or more key people learned with and from one another in a range of contexts across the site. According to one principal, “The relationship between Reading Recovery teachers and classroom teachers is very important on my campus.” Teacher leaders seemed to learn with and from one another, and also from administrators, classroom teachers, and Reading Recovery teachers. For example, one teacher leader stated, “I think I have a close relationship with the classroom teachers and administration and knowing the curriculum
that they teach and the expectations that are required from both teachers and students is important to Reading Recovery on my campus.” In some cases, the relationship focused on the curriculum components, and in others the relationship focused on human relationships on behalf of students. As one classroom teacher stated, “I have the pleasure of collaborating with the RR team to ensure my students are getting exactly what they need.”

These relationships were developed and maintained using collaboration for a variety of purposes. For example, classroom teachers, Reading Recovery teachers, and teacher leaders commented on the opportunity to collaborate in monitoring student data. One classroom teacher stated, “It is important we work together as a team to monitor student progress. We all work together to the student’s benefit in maintaining their reading levels.” One principal also mentioned data monitoring: “I see that Reading Recovery helps give us the additional data that supports the data we gather in our comprehensive literacy plan.” Classroom teachers and Reading Recovery teachers noted this collaborative effort to assist students through monitoring of Reading Recovery data as well as assistance with other types of data monitoring for all students.

We also noticed patterns of collaborative learning around problem solving and aligning practice. For example, one classroom teacher stated, “The Reading Recovery teachers communicate their strategies with teachers so that we can reinforce what the students have been taught in Reading Recovery. The Reading Recovery teachers have helped me tremendously as a first year (new to Grade 1) teacher to implement strategies and answer questions as I have them.”

Another classroom teacher noted, “Our Reading Recovery teachers also support our classroom teachers by helping new teachers understand balanced literacy and supporting seasoned teachers by answering questions or giving ideas to try when students are not being successful in the classroom environment.”

Although each school had its own literacy focus, the teacher leaders and Reading Recovery teachers in these schools seemed to work within that framework to try to provide cohesiveness in the school between Reading Recovery and the schools’ curriculum and practices.

Many other Survey 1 responses from school teachers noted this type of collaboration between Reading Recovery teachers and other teachers in their schools. One Reading Recovery teacher stated, “This program would not be successful in our school without the support and cooperation of our administrators, teachers, assistants, parents, and school board. We bring ideas from the literacy conference we attend each year and use them to help teachers target areas we can all improve in order to advance student achievement. Many of the ideas are presented by us [Reading Recovery teachers] in PLCs to all teachers on our campus.”

Classroom teachers mentioned collaborating on a variety of topics such as which students might benefit from small-group literacy instruction; coordinating scheduling, homework, parent communication and conferences; writing; RTI; and reading and comprehension. Although each school had its own literacy focus, the teacher leaders and Reading Recovery teachers in these schools seemed to work within that framework to try to provide cohesiveness in the school between Reading Recovery and the schools’ curriculum and practices. Also, a particular focus for some of the teacher leaders at these schools seemed to be to help the Reading Recovery teachers become leaders within their schools and to promote independent problem solving at the Reading Recovery teacher level.

Adaptive Action Focused on Student Learning

Relationships and collaboration both integrate with a pattern of disciplined inquiry-to-action cycles we call adaptive action: What is happening? So what does that mean? Now what shall we do next? (Eoyang & Hollanday, 2013). Responses to the surveys and interviews clearly indicate that these Reading Recovery teachers and leaders are constantly engaging in individual and collective cycles of inquiry, reflection, and action:

• Reading Recovery teachers systematically examine student data to look for patterns to inform their decisions about what students need to learn next and what texts would be most supportive of each individual.
Teacher leaders observe lessons and talk with Reading Recovery teachers to look for patterns in what kinds of support individual teachers need in their work with students, or what kinds of support they can offer groups of classroom teachers. The ultimate focus, however, is on evidence of students’ learning (not on data about the school, district, or teachers).

For example, one classroom teacher stated, “Our coaches [Reading Recovery teachers] have really helped me learn how to interpret and analyze the data while observing our students reading. We all work together to support our literacy development of our students.” A teacher leader indicated that “[c]onversation[s] focused on close observation of [the] child and not family life, obstacles, or other issue[s] not controlled by the teacher. Data are used to guide all conversations and an inquiry stance is taken.”

Even at the Reading Recovery teacher level, we found comments showing this type of interaction, stating that “[t]he weekly meetings allow us to collaborate as a team with support from our teacher leader. These meetings help ensure the reliability of testing or other procedures. Meetings that focus on student needs help us address those needs so that students may progress.” These are just a few examples of excerpts from our surveys that support our finding that student learning was at the heart of adaptive actions at all levels in these schools.

This type of adaptive action is the way Reading Recovery teachers train to teach lessons to children. However, looking at this from a CAS perspective, teacher leaders also follow the same adaptive action cycle with the Reading Recovery teachers and schools in their site.

Our data show, however, that in successful implementations, the focus of inquiry varies by teacher leader and by Reading Recovery teacher. Shared practices in each school vary based on priorities determined between the teacher leader and the Reading Recovery teacher and based on each individual’s interpretation of patterns they see in their school or site.

Shared practices in each school vary based on priorities determined between the teacher leader and the Reading Recovery teacher and based on each individual’s interpretation of patterns they see in their school or site.

For example, one teacher leader identified a focus on attendance in one Reading Recovery teacher and school in this study with the ultimate goal of student learning (see Figure 5). In other words, in these successful implementations, decisions at all levels (school and site) focus on the support of student literacy learning.

Theory-to-Practice Connections

A fourth pattern noticed in our analysis of the data was a theory-to-practice connection. We noted coherence in each school’s commitment to Reading Recovery practices, but similarities and differences in their connections to theory. An overall pattern found noted that Reading Recovery teachers focused on student progress with some indication of theories, and teacher leaders focused on student progress and on theoretical rationales. Reading Recovery teacher comments such as daily lessons, reflection, share strategies, align practices, monitor growth, flexible problem solving, and monitor data showed up across the data sources. These comments aligned with student progress highlighting principles such as acceleration, lift, challenge, and independence. Classroom teachers seemed to focus on the individual lessons or instructional practices shown with...
comments such as daily lessons, word work, writing, interpret and analyze data, daily reading — wide variety of literature, believe you can, and catch up. Teacher leaders, however, seemed to focus more heavily on individual practices and the theory underpinning those practices noted through comments such as understand concepts related to growth in literacy, reading is complex, expand oral language, deeper understanding of learning theory, self-extending system, and not isolated skills. Ultimately, teachers in these successful schools focused on positive outcomes for students even in the face of conditions that were sometimes not coherent with Reading Recovery. The teacher leader and one or more key people demonstrated both deep knowledge of literacy processing and the commitment to take action in support of student learning. Teacher leaders in particular were confident and committed to a theoretical perspective consistent with Reading Recovery philosophies.

Discussion
Ultimately, our study shows that patterns found in schools with successful implementations from the perspective of the teacher leader responsible for the school include collaboration, adaptive action, and theory-to-practice connections. Similar to May et al. (2016), we found that each school we studied had similarities and differences, and that some of those characteristics seemed to affect how Reading Recovery was implemented in the school, while others did not. May et al. also found that frequent communication between Reading Recovery teachers and classroom teachers was a factor. In our study, we include the collaboration with the teacher leader in that category. Similar to our theme of adaptive action, May et al. found that active problem solving to ensure fidelity contributed to successful school implementations. Using complexity theories and HSD, our analysis shows that Reading Recovery systems are designed to acknowledge the individual diversity of sites and schools (as well as student learners). Teacher leaders are given enough flexibility to deal with schools within their site in ways that support each schools’ needs, often providing varying degrees of support that look different across schools. The guidelines for implementation of Reading Recovery provide enough structure for coherence to the standards and guidelines of Reading Recovery without strict requirements for consistency across sites and schools.

Our findings show that agents in these successful schools (classroom teachers, Reading Recovery teachers, teacher leaders) use inquiry and then follow up with adaptive actions at all levels (school and site) that are purposefully designed to improve student learning. Similarities and differences across schools are the expectation, and guidelines are in place to build responsiveness in the interactions within the schools and with the teacher leader in order to be able to adapt to the individual needs of the school. Our research, similar to May et al. (2016), shows that dialogue between agents in the implementation of Reading Recovery in a school matters, especially as a way to build relationships that work for the benefit of students. We also found that theory is present in the discussion between agents in the system, at least through the Reading Recovery teacher and the teacher leader. Our inquiry was similar to recommendations made by Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, and LeMahlieu (2015), in that we analyzed our learning ecosystems to learn what works in successful implementations of Reading Recovery in order to be able to improve what works at those sites and schools as well as share what we learned in order to improve similar implementations.
Implications
Ultimately, we found that the teacher leaders in this study all had past experience in the district where they served and that this seemed to make a difference in their effectiveness in implementing Reading Recovery in their sites. Similar to Fullan and Quinn (2016) and May et al. (2016), our data show the decision about who fills the role of teacher leader matters. This is also consistent with Marie Clay’s insight into the teacher leader’s role in a “redirecting system” where the implementation of Reading Recovery has a complex relationship with existing or established educational practices in schools or districts (Clay, 2013, p. 240). Our findings may indicate that sites choose a teacher leader who has an established reputation, is respected and trusted, and already has experience with the district or assigned schools prior to their position as teacher leader. Their familiarity with the people, groups, and ideas (Dooley, 1996) within the existing district and/or schools in their site seems to be an important factor.

Also, we found that collaboration seems to be important in these successful implementations. Not just dialogue, but purposeful relationship building, targeted conversations based on school and student needs, and in the case of teacher leaders and Reading Recovery teachers, based on relevant learning theories. Each of the teacher leaders in the study seemed to understand how to look for patterns in the interactions with these successful schools, make theory-based decisions, engage in some type of adaptive action to address the pattern, and stand ready to address what happened next, always ready to step in and make the next wise adaptive action.

This study shows that in effective implementations we see patterns of collaboration, adaptive action focused on student learning, and theory-to-practice connections within the system. Some differences matter and some don’t. When thinking of complex systems, differences are what drive change in the system. Similar to May et al. (2016), we found differences among these successful implementation schools and sites. However, the differences that seemed to matter in these implementations revolved around the past experience the teacher leader had with the school, the partnership relationships between Reading Recovery teachers and classroom teachers at the school, the focus on relationships between the teacher leader and the Reading Recovery teacher(s), and the teacher leader’s influence in the school.

If other sites and schools are interested in learning more about how their system is working around shared identity, shared focus, significant issues, and shared practices, the appendices can help agents in the system engage in inquiry about how the system is currently working and possibly identify changes to improve the Reading Recovery implementation within the system. Patterns are not inherently good or bad; patterns are what is seen. How we as teachers and leaders respond to the patterns we see in our systems and what decisions we make to change the patterns to be more productive and to align with our goals or standards is how we shift the patterns. Looking at successful Reading Recovery implementations through a CAS lens helped us examine whether and how people, patterns, and actions within the system reflect adaptive capacity. Our findings confirm that agents in these sites and schools (classroom teachers, Reading Recovery teachers, and teacher leaders) develop adaptive capacity as they work to make a positive difference in the outcomes for children served in Reading Recovery.

References


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**About the Authors**

Dr. Marla Robertson is an assistant professor in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services at Utah State University. Her focus is in elementary education and literacy. She taught elementary grades in Texas and Utah before becoming a teacher educator. She is certified as a Human Systems Dynamics Professional and has a Literacy Lessons certification in Reading Recovery. She also worked on the Investing in Innovation (i3) scale-up grant while working on her doctorate at Texas Woman’s University.

Dr. Connie Briggs is a professor and chair of the Department of Reading Education at Texas Woman’s University. She has served in many leadership roles for the Council as well as the North American Trainers Group (NATG) and International Reading Recovery Trainers Organization. Since 2013, she has also served as chair of the NATG Literacy Lessons data collection task force.

Dr. Leslie Patterson taught English and language arts in Texas middle and high schools for 10 years before becoming a teacher educator. She integrates her work on literacy learning and professional development networks with systems-based school reform. Recent publications, including *Radical Rules for Schools: Adaptive Action for Complex Change*, combine her interests in writing instruction, support for multilingual students, professional learning, and school reform. She is now a co-director of the North Star of Texas Writing Project, affiliated with the National Writing Project site, and an associate with the Human Systems Dynamics Institute.

Dr. Anne Simpson is a professor in the Department of Reading Education and director of the university training center at Texas Woman’s University. She co-authored *A Site Coordinator’s Guide to the Effective Implementation of Reading Recovery*. She has taught Grades 4–8 and served as a district language arts coordinator for K–12 in the public schools.
Appendix A

Reading Recovery Teacher Leader Survey #1
Shared Identity and Shared Focus

1. Describe your role with the RR work on this campus.
2. What do you see as your contributions over time?
3. What is your history with the campus?
4. How do you interact with the teachers, administrators, and other staff there?
5. What values or commitments do you notice on that campus?
6. What cultural practices on that campus may have contributed to how RR works there?
7. What cultural practices may have been influenced as by RR work on that campus?
8. Considering the “map” of a CAS, think of one of your target campuses. Who are the people or groups of people who work together to make RR successful on that campus?
9. Considering the responses to the RR survey from your campus, do you see evidence that the answers to the previous questions contribute to the campus’s “shared identity” as a RR campus? Explain.
10. What else have you noticed about the campus faculty’s “shared identity/focus” relevant to RR?
11. Do you see evidence that this campuses identity/focus influences how they work together as a RR campus? Explain.
12. Repeat this process with your other target campus.

Campus Faculty/Staff Survey (link to online survey)

1. What is your role on campus? (administrator, staff, teacher, grade level)
2. What is your role or your involvement with RR on your campus? (open-ended)
3. What do you see as important to Reading Recovery on your campus? (open-ended)
4. What do you see as the relationship between RR and other elements of your comprehensive literacy plan? (open-ended)
Appendix B

"Differences that Make a Difference"
Teacher Leader Survey #2

Your name:  
Campus:  

The answers to the following questions can be based on your knowledge of the campus, and you may want to invite the perspectives of one or more of your colleagues. If you talk to others to answer these questions, please tell us who and what their campus role is.

I. Which of the characteristics or issues below might be relevant to the success of RR on this campus? For each one you mark as relevant, please answer two questions: 1) Describe this issue/characteristic on this campus and 2) Explain how this characteristic supports or hinders RR success on this campus.

Questions 1-10 have the following options:

A. Is this significant?     Yes    or     No
B. If yes, describe the details on this campus.
C. If yes, explain how or why it supports or hinders RR success on this campus.

1. Principal’s leadership (with RR and beyond RR)
2. Teacher leader’s leadership (with RR and beyond RR)
3. RR teacher’s roles/attitudes/contributions
4. Classroom teacher’s roles/attitudes/contributions
5. Similarities & Differences between RR and classroom instruction (theory, practice, assessments, instructional materials, etc.)
6. District’s role/attitudes/contributions to RR
7. RR relationship with special programs (special education, bilingual/ESL, etc.)
8. Teacher & staff attitudes toward students
9. Community culture/attitudes toward students
10. Student characteristics, demographics, etc.
11. Others?  
   a. What else is significant? (List, describe, and explain as many as you notice.)
   b. Describe the details on this campus.
   c. Explain how or why it supports or hinders RR success on this campus.

II. We know that the differences between these issues or characteristics and the differences within each one hold the energy that drives system-wide implementation. We are curious about how the integration of these “differences” make a difference for the implementation on this campus.

Please take a few minutes to synthesize your insights from the previous questions and write a response to this question: In your view, how do these different characteristics or issues work together on this particular campus system in relation to the implementation of Reading Recovery?
Appendix C

Shared Practices Survey
Teacher Leader Survey #3

Name:
Role: Reading Recovery Teacher/Teacher Leader  (circle one)
Campus/District:

Thank you for helping us with this investigation of successful RR campuses to inform our implementation efforts here and elsewhere. We are interested in the shared practices among teachers and staff on these campuses--practices that may be directly or indirectly related to all students’ literacy success across the whole campus. Using the table below, please list and briefly describe shared practices on this campus. By “practices,” we mean the following:

- Actions, meetings, procedures, processes, messages, etc.;
- Which are repeated at least monthly; and
- Which you judge to be influential or significant to student literacy success on this campus.

One hypothetical example is provided below as an illustration. We have provided 2-3 rows for each set of participants under “Who is involved.” You may leave some rows blank, and you may want to add additional rows for the sets of people who have a great deal of interaction.

NOTE: The complete table in the original survey has been modified for purposes of this illustration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is involved</th>
<th>What are they doing</th>
<th>How often</th>
<th>For what purpose</th>
<th>With what effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR Teachers</td>
<td>Debriefing—collaboratively reviewing student data and sharing observations and hypotheses</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>To interpret data related to each child’s progress and next steps</td>
<td>RR teachers come to know all the students and build shared understandings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other sets of participants:**
- Teacher leader(s) & Reading Recovery teachers
- Reading Recovery teachers with each other
- Reading Recovery teachers with first-grade classroom teachers
- Reading Recovery teachers with other classroom teachers
- Teacher leader(s) and classroom teachers
- Other individuals or groups
Highlights

- Sessions focused on coaching before, during, and after behind-the-glass lessons; technology; and more

- IDEC update

- Session for DLL teacher leaders

- Session for new teacher leaders

Tuesday-Friday
June 11-14
Embassy Suites Greenville Conference Center Hotel, Greenville, SC

2019 Reading Recovery Teacher Leader Institute

REQUIRED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR READING RECOVERY TEACHER LEADERS

— Registration information available in late December —
Questions? Email conferenceinfo@readingrecovery.org
President’s Message

Sustaining and Growing Our Work Requires A New Lens

RRCNA President Jeffery Williams

As the Reading Recovery and Literacy Lessons teacher leader of a large site in northeastern Ohio, I have had the privilege and honor to see the important work of a variety of Reading Recovery teachers — urban, suburban, and rural teachers in high- and low-socioeconomic districts; teachers with years of experience and brand-new teachers in their first year. Teachers who only teach Reading Recovery during their day and others who serve children as special education teachers, small-group instructors, ELL teachers, literacy coaches, and even classroom teachers. Across these settings, the work I see is transformative: for children, for teachers, for schools. It is profound and meaningful work. The work I see is going on in settings all across Canada and the United States. This humbles and energizes me.

But this work also troubles me. I wonder why some districts or schools choose to function without Reading Recovery. I wonder why state departments of education choose to showcase and support programs other than Reading Recovery. I wonder why critics choose to spend time writing articles or producing websites to attack our work. I wonder why we are in fewer schools today than at any time in the last 20 years. And, if truth be told, I sometimes even wonder if we can survive the problems before us.

As with many puzzles, I turn to reflection on the work of Marie Clay. Clay always said that you cannot bring a simple theory to that which is complex. Reading Recovery is complex. We work in complex settings, have complex relationships, engage in complex thinking and do complex work with children and teachers and schools and universities. These complexities need to be lifted up, examined, refined, and made more elegant, less expensive, more far-reaching, less variable. To accomplish this, we need the help of a new network, a new way of thinking.

For some, this might feel uncomfortable and that’s expected. Clay also felt unsure when she set out to solve the problems she saw before her. At first, she was puzzled by why some children have difficulty learning to read and write and challenged herself to look “with an unusual lens.” This led her to create the Observation Survey and ultimately, Reading Recovery. Once Reading Recovery was established in New Zealand, she puzzled over how to take this beyond her native setting to scale-up across other countries like Australia, Britain, the United States, and Canada. She then puzzled over how to help children learning other languages and developed versions of Reading Recovery for Spanish and French. Later, she looked again at contemporary problems for children with learning disabilities and those learning English as a second language which set Literacy Lessons in motion. Each puzzle was different. Each puzzle required a new lens. Each took resolve, time, resources. And lots of problem solving. Marie Clay showed us the way, and now it is our turn to create a new lens to solve the puzzles we face today.

The puzzle of how to sustain and grow our work is before us and requires yet another, unusual lens. Together WE can do this. WE know Reading Recovery is transformative. WE have had impact on schools, districts, systems. On universities, research, and on society. WE have more data—and better data—than any early literacy intervention on the planet. WE get replicability in research results. Educational studies don’t usually work that way. The collective 2.4 million children taught in the last 30 years who come largely from marginalized groups—economically challenged or who represent racial and linguistic diversity—have been transformed. WE brought them to literacy. To opportunity. To freedom. WE must not let our work end. Thank you for the time and resources I know you will commit to help improve what we know and love — our transformative model of teaching and learning.
Executive Director’s Message

Partnering to Share Our Deeper Understandings

RRCNA Executive Director Jady Johnson

As you are aware, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed in December 2015, moves substantial parts of decision making and implementation of the federal law to the state level. It calls for state departments of education to develop initiatives and provide technical support to schools and districts that is quite different from the “compliance and assurance” work they did during the No Child Left Behind era.

Since 2016, RRCNA has participated in meetings with state education agency staff tasked with implementing ESSA’s requirements. We share best practices, lessons learned, and strategies to address specific issue areas including evidence-based practices and interventions.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head state departments of elementary and secondary education in the states.

CCSSO provides opportunities three times a year for states and partner organizations to collaborate and focus on specific topic areas. Currently, RRCNA sends representatives to four special interest groups during these 2-day meetings: English Language Arts, English Learners, Assessing Special Education Students, and School and District Improvement. As partner representatives, we participate in the learning, join in discussions and problem solving, and help facilitate and lead the work. We have the opportunity to share information about literacy processing theory, effective strategies with English learners, comprehensive literacy instruction, high-quality teacher professional development, and data-based instruction, as well as information about Reading Recovery, Descubriendo la Lectura, and Literacy Lessons. When misinformation supporting simple theories of assessment and reading instruction are put forth, we are able to counter with current research and our deeper understandings of literacy instruction.

RRCNA will continue to seek opportunities to connect and engage with state leaders and education officials.

Current RRCNA leadership sharing expertise with CCSSO special interest groups are Jeff Williams, president; Jady Johnson, executive director; Amy Smith, vice president; and Lindy Harmon, past president and treasurer.
New Name, Level Funding for Comprehensive Literacy State Grants

One of RRCNA’s key advocacy efforts is to support federal budget and appropriations legislation which will benefit public education, teacher professional development, and comprehensive literacy efforts. In October, Congress passed the FY 2019 federal budget totaling $4.407 trillion. With estimated revenue of $3.422 trillion, the resulting deficit is $985 billion. Mandatory spending accounts for $2.739 trillion devoted to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid (62%). Discretionary spending (which includes education) is $1.305 trillion.

Funds targeted for education total $71.5 billion, which reflects an increase of $581 million. Both Title I and IDEA received small increases. The only funding specifically for literacy instruction is the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grants, previously called Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grants. We were pleasantly surprised that this initiative is level-funded at $190 million, because it had been eliminated from the President’s budget and the House budget. These competitive grants are made to states, which then fund districts’ efforts to improve literacy instruction in high-need schools and early education programs for children from birth through Grade 12.

In 2017, RRCNA provided written resources for members to use in communicating with state education agencies and their districts to assist in the development of comprehensive literacy plan language that would include Reading Recovery. When the U.S. Department of Education announces the next state competitive grant cycle, we will update and share similar information with you.

Join the conversation with #rrchat and the Reading Recovery Connections Blog

Explore the Dynamics of Purposeful Talk
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16
7PM, EST

Special Guest
Maria Nichols

#rrchat
National Conference Featured Speaker
@rrcna_org

Reading Recovery Connections
A blog for Reading Recovery and early literacy professionals

30
Oct 2018
Teaching and Literacy for Elementary Educators | Categories: Classroom Teaching, Kindergarten, Literacy, Reading Recovery, Teaching Struggling Readers, and Teaching Writing

10
Oct 2018
Cultural Literacy Blog | Categories: Culture, Literacy, and Multicultural Education

Miss a chat?
Read all #rrchat conversations in Member Resources
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Partners in Excellence: Our Associate Members

RRCNA offers a special associate membership level to companies that provide top-quality goods and services to the Reading Recovery community. Our associate members support Reading Recovery through generous sponsorships, grants, donations, and by exhibiting at Reading Recovery conferences throughout North America. When you visit their booths at the next conference, be sure to say “thank you for all you do for Reading Recovery!”
Scholarships Help Train Six New Teacher Leaders

Generous Reading Recovery donors and advocates contributed a total of $90,000 to help train new teacher leaders for the 2018-2019 school year. Teacher Leader Scholarships are granted to school districts that have demonstrated a commitment to Reading Recovery and selected a suitable teacher leader candidate. Hameray Publishing Group/Yuen Family Foundation and a Private Donor each contributed $30,000. Pioneer Valley Books and MaryRuth Books each donated $15,000.

Pioneer Valley Books

Pioneer Valley Books is dedicated to producing the highest-quality books for early literacy learners. Their books have been carefully written to support students in gaining control over early reading behaviors and in becoming strategic in their approach to print. Books have highly supportive pictures, carefully selected reading vocabulary, and easy sentence structure, and they are specifically designed to help children gain fluency and independence in their reading.

Hillsborough County Public Schools, Tampa, FL

Mary Vreeman is training at National Louis University. Mary brings 26 years of teaching experience to her training and earned a master’s degree in educational leadership from National Louis University. She has collaborated with both colleagues and administrators and makes communication and professional development the cornerstone of her career. Her approach for advocating and capturing stakeholder attention is to share real results. Hillsborough County is economically, ethnically, and linguistically diverse, with 27.5% of families speaking a language other than English and 64% of students receiving free and reduced lunch.

MaryRuth Books

MaryRuth Books, Inc. is a publishing company committed to helping children become happy, successful readers. Every element in their “not as simple as they look” books is designed to maximize success for beginning readers and encourage their emerging reading skills. Leveled titles help teachers and parents choose books that offer the right amount of support and challenge to enable young readers to continually progress. Loved by children and endorsed by educators worldwide, the titles are staples in reading libraries, used by Reading Recovery, and favorites of elementary school classroom teachers.

Effingham County Schools, Springfield, GA

Mallory Turner is training at Georgia State University. Mallory brings 9 years of teaching experience to her training and received her master’s in special education from Georgia Southern University. She looks forward to sharing her learned knowledge and building a network of strong, driven, and motivated Reading Recovery teachers. She plans to advocate for Reading Recovery by inviting school leadership to behind-the-glass lessons, as well as keeping testimonials throughout the year from parents, students, and teachers to share with leaders in the state capital. Effingham County Schools has served over 5,000 students in Reading Recovery over the past 21 years. Free or reduced lunch is served to 37% of the student population.
Hameray Publishing Group and the Yuen Family Foundation

The Hameray Publishing Group/Yuen Family Foundation has supported the training of 20 Reading Recovery teacher leaders through this scholarship program. The Hameray Publishing Group is dedicated to publishing innovative literacy materials for today's educators. Combining a sound research-based approach with cutting-edge classroom solutions, Hameray has developed literacy materials for struggling readers as well as those reading at grade level. The Yuen Family Foundation is a private charitable organization.

Sarasota County Schools, Sarasota, FL

Rachel Chappell is training at National Louis University. Rachel brings 19 years of teaching experience to her training along with a master’s degree in K-12 reading from the University of South Florida. She will strive to maintain the fidelity of Reading Recovery and will have an open-door policy for teachers, principals, district personnel, and media to see the program in action. Sarasota County Schools has been a site for 3 years and has 34 Reading Recovery teachers in 24 elementary schools. Currently 50% of the students in the district receive free and reduced lunch.

Lexington School District One, Lexington, SC

Peggy Phillips is training at Clemson University. Peggy brings 23 years of teaching experience to her training along with a master’s degree in early childhood special education from The University of South Carolina. She is an active advocate for Reading Recovery and believes the best way to empower students is to build a strong literacy foundation early in their education. Lexington School District One will be expanding Reading Recovery after 3 years of implementation. The district has 1,850 English language learners who speak 44 different languages.

Private Donor

Branson School District, Branson, MO

Michelle Brown is training at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Michelle brings 17 years of teaching experience to her training and has a master's degree in elementary education from Southwest Baptist University. She is eager to share her learning experiences with colleagues and students and would like the district to reach full implementation of Reading Recovery. Branson School District has implemented Reading Recovery for 16 years. The district has two elementary schools in Taney County, which has a poverty rate of 22%; and 66% of the students receive free and reduced lunch.

Chesterfield County School District, Chesterfield, SC

Katherine Herring is training at Clemson University. Katherine brings 14 years of teaching experience to her training and has a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from Francis Marion University. She will strive to spread the culture and beliefs of Reading Recovery to all stakeholders in the county and embrace collaboration and feedback to teachers to help students develop to their greatest potential. Chesterfield County School District has a poverty rate above 80% and provides free breakfast and lunch for all students.
A new platform designed to offer you customized professional development online is now available exclusively for Council members — and it’s free! Here’s what the new RRCNA e-Learning Center video library offers you:

• **Free webcasts and videos.** Most of the webcasts previously offered for sale are now free to members.

• **Professional development credit.** Most completed sessions earn 1.5 “RRCNA Contact Hours” (subject to your local professional development committees).

• **Printable certificates.** After viewing a video and completing a brief quiz, you can print a certificate of completion.

• **Keep track of all the sessions you complete.** Your personal Learning Profile is always available.

Future additions will include short 20–30 minute “mini sessions” on various Reading Recovery and classroom literacy topics. We’re excited to offer this new service for our members and hope you’ll find it useful. Let us know!
Resources for Reading Owners Closing Doors

Diane Zingale and Eric Black, owners of Resources for Reading, have announced their retirement and plan to close the business after serving the Reading Recovery and early literacy community for nearly 25 years.

Resources for Reading began as a garage operation in 1994 when Eric—then a software engineer—learned of the difficulty that Reading Recovery teachers had in finding the unique supplies used in their lessons, such as sentence strips and lowercase magnetic letters with straight tails and curved “D’Nealian” tails. In response to the demand, Eric worked with manufacturers across the globe to custom-design and produce dozens of highly specialized educational materials, and the company quickly became a primary source for many of the supplies that teachers used in lessons and classrooms.

Several years later, Diane joined Eric in the business, and for many years they traveled the Reading Recovery and literacy conference circuits together. As their business grew to 10 employees, that garage warehouse was replaced with a 20,000-foot facility stocked with hundreds of products that Reading Recovery and classroom teachers have depended on for over two decades.

Beyond filling a much-needed retail niche, however, Diane and Eric have generously given back to the Reading Recovery community and RRCNA through donations, conference sponsorships, teacher training scholarships, and Associate Membership since the program’s inception in 2005. RRCNA thanks Diane and Eric for their dedication and service, and we wish them the best in all their future adventures.

Shop Amazon? Use Smile and Help Support the Council!

Visit smile.amazon.com, sign in to your regular Amazon account, and designate RRCNA as the charitable organization you’d like to support. Every time you shop, The Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases.

Go to www.smile.amazon.com and start shopping!
2018 Teacher Leader Institute

Polishing Facets of the Role

Teacher leaders and trainers gathered for deep learning at the June 12–15, 2018 Teacher Leader Institute held in Louisville, KY. Polishing the Diamond: Refining the Tools in Your Teacher Leader Toolkit was the theme chosen by co-chairs Janet Bufalino, Lisa Pinkerton, and Lori Taylor.

Gay Su Pinnell led the opening general session, “Cultivating Self-Extending Teachers: Coaching for Agency and Independence.” Working sessions with videos followed, strengthening understanding as teacher leaders collaborated with colleagues on the coaching of teachers.

The coaching emphasis continued with Nancy Anderson’s Thursday morning general session, “Co-constructing Expertise Through Purposeful Coaching Conversations.” Billie Askew and a panel of teacher leaders explored teacher leadership in Thursday’s afternoon general session.

Linda Dorn, Adria Klein, and Deb Rich shared the new Reading Recovery technology standards during Friday’s general session, with teacher leaders demonstrating ways to incorporate the new standards.

The Institute provided a valuable learning experience through collaboration with colleagues, examining theoretical understandings, and polishing the many and various facets of the teacher leader role.

Special thanks to our sponsors
SongLake Books, lead
Hameray Publishing Group, bronze
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Pioneer Valley Books, in-kind

Above: Small-group sessions provided opportunities to delve more deeply into topics and share what’s working around the country.
Below: New trainers and teacher leaders, including those shown here, were introduced at the welcome reception Tuesday evening.
Get Ready for February in Columbus!

Annual Membership Meeting
The annual RRCNA membership meeting is a great opportunity for you to meet RRCNA staff, committee chairs, and elected representatives and offer feedback on member benefits and services. Dozens of door prizes will be awarded, and everyone leaves with a free gift. If you plan to be in Columbus for the National Conference, we hope to see you there on Monday, February 11, at 4:45 pm in the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Special Emeritus Registration
All retired members are invited to attend a special day of learning and networking on Sunday, February 10, during the conference. For only $50, retired members may attend the morning keynote session, enjoy a boxed lunch, attend two afternoon sessions, and browse the exhibit hall. Registration for this special event is separate from regular conference registration, and materials will be emailed to all current retired members in early December. For more information, email jreeves@readingrecovery.org.

Grants Help Offset Costs
This year, generous donors have contributed 34 grants of $1,000 each to help offset the cost of registration, travel, meals, and hotel for the National Conference. Grants will be awarded to Reading Recovery teachers, teachers-in-training, teacher leaders, university trainers, or administrators who support the implementation of Reading Recovery. Applicants must be current members of RRCNA to qualify. This funding is available through the generosity of Tenyo Foundation (10 grants), Private Donor (10 grants), Pioneer Valley Books (4 grants), Private Donor (2 grants), Teacher Leader Scholarship Fund, Minnesota Literacy Scholarship Fund, Debby Wood Professional Development Grant, RR Books, SongLake Books, Blueberry Hill Books, Rose Mary Estice Memorial Fund, and KEEP BOOKS. Award announcements will be posted on the website.

Six Geri Stone Memorial Fund grants will also be awarded to help offset the cost of attendance at other professional development conferences, books, and more.

Don’t miss the donation challenge for the annual fund at the 2019 National Reading Recovery & K–6 Literacy Conference. Hear an update on funds raised before each keynote address, and stop by the fund booth to make your donation.

Your gift to the Reading Recovery Fund supports RRCNA’s mission, including advocacy for federal reading policy and adequate school funding, teacher professional development, and early literacy resources.

The impact of the Reading Recovery community has been felt across North America, with more than 2.5 million children in the United States and Canada receiving daily one-to-one lessons since 1984. No other intervention matches the effectiveness of Reading Recovery for students, and the ongoing professional development unites teachers, teacher leaders, and trainers as they strive to meet the individual needs of struggling first graders.

Annual Fund Challenge
Your generosity will be matched up to $15,000 from the Trika Smith-Burke bequest fund.
National Reading Recovery & K-6 Literacy Conference
February 9-12, 2019 in Columbus, Ohio

Powerful Professional Development for Reading Recovery-Trained Professionals | Classroom & ELL Teachers | Interventionists
Literacy Coaches & Specialists | Title I Teachers & Coordinators | Curriculum & Language Arts Specialists | Building & District Administrators

Learn with these and other outstanding speakers

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

SUNDAY
C.C. Bates
Reading Recovery trainer, Clemson University
Clemson, SC
Intentional Teaching and Learning

MONDAY
Lucy Calkins
Author, educator & founding director, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University, New York, NY
Holding Fast to What Matters Most

TUESDAY
Gail Carson Levine
Children’s author, New York, NY
Dragons and Fairies and Elves, Oh My!

FEATURED AND INSTITUTE SPEAKERS
FEATURED SESSIONS

READING RECOVERY
Mary Fried
Promoting Flexibility and Independence in Writing

Mary Lose
What to Teach? Focusing on Domain Contingency During Text Reading

James Schnug
He Who Hesitates Might Be Noticing

CLASSROOM LITERACY
Nell Duke
Project-Based Instruction for Literacy and Social Studies

Jan Richardson
Making Decisions in a Guided Reading Lesson

Maria Nichols
Talk Matters! Supporting English Learners in the Dialogic Classroom

INSTITUTES

READING RECOVERY
Mary Fried, Lisa Pinkerton, Kim Reynolds, & Jennifer Layne
Problem Solving Together: Learning from Children Who Challenge Our Teaching

Sue Duncan
Becoming an Efficient User of Visual Information Before Discontinuing: What Does It Take?

CLASSROOM LITERACY
Gay Su Pinnell & Irene Fountas
Guided Reading: Responsive Teaching Across the Grades K–5

Adria Klein
Oral Language, Reading, and Writing: Scaffolding Connections for All Learners Including a Focus on English Language Learners

LEADERSHIP - Bring your team
Cathy Toll
Administrators and Coaches: Partnerships for Effective Literacy Instruction

Flexible Registration Options
give you the ability to register for a Saturday Institute, the entire Conference, and/or a partial Conference on a weekday or weekend.

Register by December 15 and SAVE!
www.rrcna.org/conferences
TO REGISTER AND FOR MORE INFORMATION

Your Administrator Could Attend For FREE!

Building and district administrators qualify.
All you need is 5 or more paid Sunday–Tuesday Full Conference registrations from the same district.
(limit one free administrator per district)

— SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS —
Turkey Tales

The day before Thanksgiving break, I was introducing *The Mouse and the Elephant* to a former Reading Recovery student. On the cover it said, ‘A traditional tale from Turkey.’ When I asked if he knew there was a country named Turkey, he said, “No...but I bet they go CRAZY on Thanksgiving.”

*Amy Harrison*
*Columbus, Ohio*

Trading Spaces

Teacher: Where are your spaces?
Student: They’re in retirement!!!

Moving On

While administering the Observation Survey, Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words …
   Teacher: *The bus is coming.*
   Student (jumping up): OK see ya tomorrow!

*Anonymous*
*Arlington, Virginia*

Self-Correction

Ethan reread a sentence and corrected his error, so I said, “Good fixing.” “Hey,” he said, “don’t flatter me.”

Good Observation

The day after my teacher leader came to observe my lesson with Michael, he came in for his lesson and said, “And where’s your little friend?”

Messy Situation

After Anna read *Along Comes Jake*, about a toddler who messes up everything around the house, I said to her, “He messes everything up, doesn’t he? They shouldn’t let him go near those things.” She responded, “They should just throw him out of the house!”

*Joyce Romano*
*San Francisco, California*
CHOICE IS AT THE HEART of what it means to become a confident reader. Authentic student choice builds agency.

— Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell
Give a gift that makes a difference!

This holiday season, consider giving your friends and colleagues a gift that makes a difference—membership in the Reading Recovery Council of North America!

Each new member brings RRCNA closer to ensuring that children who struggle in learning to read and write gain the skills for a literate and productive future.

Recipients of gift memberships receive a full year of annual membership benefits including:

- 2 print issues of *The Journal of Reading Recovery*
- Online services and resources exclusively for members
- Discounts on RRCNA products, publications, and conferences
- Membership certificate and ID card
- Personalized gift card

Share the joy of the season and make a difference with gift memberships in RRCNA.

Visit the website now and start gifting!