

Learning from Our Teaching

Mary D. Fried, *The Ohio State University*

Editor's note: The following article is based on Mary Fried's keynote address at the 2015 National Reading Recovery and K–6 Literacy Conference.

I was first trained as a teacher leader in the U.S. pilot study of Reading Recovery® in the United States in 1984–85. That year Marie Clay and Barbara Watson came to The Ohio State University to work with Gay Su Pinnell and Charlotte Huck to teach the courses for the first group of Reading Recovery professionals — 13 teachers and 3 teacher leaders from the Columbus City Schools. Gay Su studied to be the first university trainer. There were an additional four graduate students who trained as teacher leaders while they worked on the first pilot research of Reading Recovery. This pilot study was cosponsored by the university and the Ohio Department of Education and was implemented in Columbus, a major school district in central Ohio. At our first meeting of Ohio State faculty and Columbus district personnel Gay Su said, “This will probably be a 2-year pilot study and research project. We are delighted to have the university, the department of education, and the Columbus district working together.” Reading Recovery turned out to be much more than any of us envisioned that first year.

This article is based on the keynote address I was invited to present at the 2015 National Reading Recovery and K–6 Literacy Conference celebrating the 30th anniversary of Reading Recovery's implementation in the United States. My topic then

and the title of this article, “Learning from Our Teaching,” is a retrospective of some key concepts we have learned from working together as Reading Recovery teachers, teacher leaders, site coordinators, administrators, university trainers, and members of the Reading Recovery Council of North America (RRCNA). Together we make a powerful team of early literacy educators and advocates for all beginning readers and writers who are having difficulties in literacy learning. We have built what Peurach and Glaser (2016) define as a *learning system* (p. 3). We are proud of what we have accomplished over these 30-plus years as our goals, our work, our research, and our teaching continues. Our learning continues as we work together in what Bryk (2016) defines as a *networked improvement community* (p. 469), developing practice-based evidence as we strive to fulfill the vision of RRCNA to ensure that children who struggle in learning to read and write gain the skills for a literate and productive future.

In this article I share salient findings from earlier, important research that are still applicable today and voices from educators in Reading Recovery whose messages continue to have resonance for our learning community.

Marie Clay's Monumental Contribution to Early Literacy

Marie Clay has made a monumental contribution to the teaching and professional learning of educators involved in early literacy. In my years as a trainer I have observed the

impact of Clay's theoretical perspective, a literacy processing theory, and her development of Reading Recovery on educators around the world. For example, I think every teacher in the U.S. who has had Reading Recovery training has experienced a steep learning curve and a paradigm shift in their understandings and skills in teaching young children how to read and write. A recent Columbus teacher in training said at the end of graduation ceremony, “I have never worked so hard for one piece of paper in my whole career.” I think we could all identify with Nicki's statement. More recently, a teacher in Detroit who was trained as part of the i3 grant funded opportunity awarded Oakland University was quoted to say, “As a teacher of over 20 years and being part of the Reading Recovery training program, I now see the teaching of reading through a different lens and would hope that all teachers of primary grade children would have the opportunity to do the same” (Lose, 2016, p. 22). These representative statements of teachers in training demonstrate the common perspectives expressed by many teachers over the years about the impact of Marie Clay's work on their learning and teaching of children.

Clay made a major contribution to the professional development of teachers. Her model of observing a lesson through a soundproof glass while simultaneously listening, analyzing, and discussing the interactions between a teacher and a child has brought powerful perspectives into focus for teachers as they share learning conversations. For most teachers

this format was not only a personal challenge—especially when teaching behind-the-glass for colleagues—but it was also a unique learning experience. Discussions of lessons taught behind-the-glass that encourage teachers to reflect on their learning are consistently rated the highest by teachers. This powerful model continues to be employed throughout Reading Recovery classes and ongoing professional development.

Another observable example of the impact of Clay on early literacy teaching and learning is revealed by a quick survey of the many little books for children displayed by publishers at any conference that includes a focus on beginning readers. How different it is now. In the early years of Reading Recovery little books that were leveled and represented a gradient of difficulty were hard to find in the U.S. We ordered books from New Zealand and England to ensure adequate teaching resources, and this caused quite a stir in the treasurer's office of the Columbus district as they had to deal with foreign exchange rates. The availability of books for beginning learners to read seemed to increase overnight. Now teachers and children have masses and masses of books at levels of challenge appropriate for reading at school and at home.

Clay's influence can also be found in such instructional practices as familiar reading, a novel practice for many teachers involved in the first year of training and the pilot study. Thus, when a group of teachers and teacher leaders were debriefing at Charlotte Huck's house, Rose Mary Estice captured our thinking in voicing this insight: "I'm a good classroom teacher. I've taught many first graders to

read. I can't believe I never thought to have children reread a story. Familiar reading is so important! I was just following the basal: "Read a story once and on to the next."

Clay (2005) taught us the value of familiar reading for children just beginning to read and process text fluently in meaningful phrases (pp. 98, 150–152). Over the years many classroom teachers have incorporated familiar reading, silent reading, whisper reading, or independent reading into their kindergarten or first-grade daily schedules. Tubs or baskets of books for individual children or small groups abound.

One issue I have observed when visiting classrooms is that sometimes the books provided for many of the lowest readers in the class do not represent familiar or easy reading. Too often the books are just too hard! This is an opportunity for teachers, literacy coaches, Reading Recovery teachers, and administrators to work together to find and purchase appropriate books for children who need the most practice reading *just right books*. Administrators can encourage and schedule meetings of Reading Recovery teachers and classroom teachers to collaborate and find instructional levels and easy reading books for the children who need many more opportunities for familiar reading and rereading. Center or seat-work activities should include independent reading during each school day. Anyone should be able to pick a random book from a child's basket that he will read with ease and enjoyment. If the book is too hard, teacher collaboration should be the response.

These are a few examples of the wider impact of Marie Clay. Whole books have been written (e.g., Watson &

Askew, 2009) which capture many more of Clay's contributions. In the brief summary above I have tried to capture representative examples of the impact that Clay has had and will continue to have on our ongoing learning as primary or early intervention teachers.

Knowing the History and Research is Part of Our Learning Community

Knowing the history and early research of Reading Recovery is part of our learning community. As time passes some research is considered dated; however, I want to take this opportunity to give an updated review of the original study of Reading Recovery in the United States. The study was published 26 years ago and may be older than many of the teachers currently working in Reading Recovery! *The Study of Instructional Models for the Literacy Education of High Risk First Graders* was completed in 1988–89. The results of the study and the implications for teaching are presented in Lyons, Pinnell, & DeFord (1993). This research was funded by the John D. and Katherine T. MacArthur Foundation and still meets the gold standard of research design. Table 1 summarizes the research procedures applied to this seminal Reading Recovery study.

An additional aspect of the study procedures for measuring reading achievement, the outcome measures, was the use of two subtests from *The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties, 3rd Edition*, Clay's (1985) Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words and Running Records of Text Reading Level.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Research Design

Large Scale	10 school districts in Ohio (6 urban, 2 suburban, 2 rural) 4 schools per district = 40 schools
Control Group	1 control group per school Regular Title I first-grade group
Random Assignment	The lowest-achieving first graders were randomly assigned to one of the four treatment groups or the control group at their school
Long Term	Each student had 70 lessons An observation of change over time
Standardized Measure	Gates-MacGinitie Test of Reading Skills (Pre and Post)

The study involved four treatment groups and a control group. The design of the treatment groups illustrate the collaboration of the university researchers with the teachers and school districts to solve implementation issues. One example is the consideration given the following question: How can research help school districts evaluate options for making wise investments of their scarce funding sources? Thus, two of the treatment groups were planned to address common questions administrators who were considering implementing Reading Recovery posed:

1. Reading Recovery works but why can't we just do it in small groups?
2. Why is the training a full academic year; can't you condense the training?

A separate treatment group was added to address the common belief that any one-to-one, teacher-child instruction would generate higher achievement. This separate treatment became not only a study of another one-to-one instructional design, but the design also incorporated a highly supported belief that teaching phonics and skills would successfully

remediate the majority of current reading problems for children who were lagging behind. The phonics/skills treatment was designed by faculty at another Ohio university. This treatment was called Direct Instruction Skills Plan (DISP). The teachers who taught the DISP were trained and supported by faculty members who designed the treatment. Table 2 summarizes the four treatment groups.

After 70 days of instruction, participating children were assessed on both the standardized reading test and Clay's measures (Hearing and

Recording Sounds in Words and Text Reading Level). The analyses revealed that the children in the Reading Recovery treatment group with the standard 30-minute lessons achieved the highest gains. These findings answer the administrators' questions and confirm that individual instruction by a teacher trained in Reading Recovery over a full academic year are key to accelerating the learning of first-grade children struggling with early literacy.

An intriguing second finding was that the treatment group taught by the traditionally trained Reading Recovery teachers (RWG) instructing small groups (3–4 children) had the next-highest student gains. This finding is very relevant today. The research data quantifies the value and cost effectiveness of Reading Recovery-trained teachers working individually with the lowest first-grade students while also applying new learning and skills for teaching early literacy quite effectively to small groups of students who need support but are not as far behind in literacy achievement as the very lowest readers.

Table 2. Four Treatment Group Procedures

Reading Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Recovery teacher in a one-to-one setting • 30-minute Reading Recovery lesson daily
Reading and Writing Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Recovery teacher in a small group of 3–4 • 30–45-minute lessons daily
Reading Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher in a one-to-one setting • 30-minute Reading Recovery lesson daily • 2-week compressed Reading Recovery training • No behind-the-glass lessons but equivalent hours of class time
Direct Instruction Skills Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher in a one-to-one setting • 30-minute lessons daily • Skills program designed and supported by another university • 3-day intensive in-service training course

Reading Recovery-trained teachers are an asset when working with lower-achieving groups of students in the primary grades. On the average, Reading Recovery teachers who follow the instructional model that combines individual intervention lessons with teaching small groups, or half-day classroom instruction, serve more students in a school year than a regular classroom teacher. Cost effectiveness is apparent as student achievement increases for the primary grades. Prevention and extra support with a highly trained teacher can make an impact on early literacy learning for many students.

Data have been collected for every student who has received Reading Recovery lessons over all years, and the most-recent data demonstrates consistent high outcomes. Formerly struggling, first-grade readers (72%) reach the average achievement of their classes in 12–20 weeks (D’Agostino & Brownfield, 2016, p. 25). What makes the difference for the students in Reading Recovery lessons? One answer is a well-trained teacher, and this directs our attention to training.

Teachers in the Reading Success treatment condition for the MacArthur-funded study were trained to use the Reading Recovery lesson framework, but their training lacked two important elements. First, live lessons simultaneously observed and discussed were not part of their training and second, their training was compressed to an equivalent amount of time delivered over 2 weeks, not the academic year. The data suggests that teachers make changes in their understandings over time but not within 2 weeks. The Reading Success teachers followed the Reading Recovery lesson framework as they taught individual children, but there was not as much

power in their teaching as observed in the teachers trained using the standard Reading Recovery teacher training processes. Using the same framework of literacy activities the questions still remain today: *Why are some teachers more effective than others? What makes a difference?* A review of data across the four treatment groups provides some insight into these questions, but further study is needed.

As the teachers in the study of instructional models taught their lessons, videotapes of complete lessons were made at three points in time. These VHS tapes became the basis of investigating the persistent question of researchers: Why are some teachers more effective than other teachers? There is a great deal to learn from closely analyzing the teaching interactions of high-outcome teachers.

DeFord (Lyons, Pinnell, & DeFord, 1993) led the study to analyze the writing segments of all the video lessons to try to determine any differences in teaching that might inform our understandings of effective, early literacy teachers. The first part of her study was an analysis of the investment in time for writing in each lesson (p. 35), displayed in Table 3.

The first three groups had similar amounts of time devoted to the child

writing during the lesson. Teachers in these three treatment groups provided instruction based on Marie Clay’s theoretical constructs. They learned a basic tenant of Clay’s perspective — reciprocity. Clay (2001) helps teachers understand reciprocity as a flow of knowledge; what children know in writing will help them in reading, and what they know in reading will help them in writing (pp. 11, 32, 216.) This concept was captured by a teacher in training a few years ago when she wrote in response to a survey:

I have been blown away by the connection between reading and writing. It is amazing how strengths in one of those areas can help build a strength in the other area if we, the teachers, take the time to show the child these connections.

Classroom teachers, intervention specialists, and teachers who work with students learning English as a second language could easily incorporate more writing as children are learning to read, respond, and write stories and information reports. Before, during, and after reading, and when reacting to the story, teachers can help readers attend to letters, letter-sounds, spelling patterns, and vocabulary learning embedded in the text

Table 3. Average Percent of Lesson Time Devoted to Writing

Treatment Group	Time on Task	Percent of Lesson Time
Reading Recovery	8 minutes	25.3%
Reading and Writing Group	7 minutes	23.4%
Reading Success	9 minutes	28.8%
Direct Instruction Skills Plan	5 seconds	0.3%
Control Group	1 minutes	3.1%

they are reading or have just read. For example, before the story is read the teacher might ask, “What letter do you expect to see first for the word *river*? Write *river* on your paper.”

By writing, every child in a group responds to every teacher question. In addition the teacher has a quick way to check on each student’s response.

For a higher group preparing to read *Commander Toad in Space* (Yolen, 1996), the teacher can incorporate vocabulary learning into the introduction of the story as the following example illustrates:

Think about the word *porthole*.
Clap *porthole*. It has two parts.
Try to write *porthole*.

Now let’s look on page 14.
Check the picture, then read
the sentence that has the word
porthole.

What do you think a *porthole*
is? Talk to a partner about a
porthole.

The vocabulary to learn is embedded in the context of the story to be read. It is not presented in an unrelated poem, chart, song, or isolated worksheet. The concept of *embedded vocabulary* learning with the support of writing before reading is especially important for students needing more opportunities to talk and make personal connections to the texts and the print they are expected to read.

DeFord’s study of the writing activities of the four different treatment group teachers also revealed characteristics about the quality of the teaching interactions. Using the Reading Recovery framework, which is specific in the sequence of literacy activities but flexible in teaching decisions, interactions, and levels of challenge within the various activities, the

teachers who were the most successful in helping the greatest number of students achieve average first-grade expectations at an accelerated rate

- spent more time on writing in early lessons than in later lessons;
- had more evidence of working with words, letter formation, spelling patterns, and sound to letter analysis on the child’s practice page; and
- had greater variety and complexity of sentences/stories composed and written by the students with teacher support. (Lyons, Pinnell, & DeFord, 1993, p. 71)

These results suggest the high value of connecting writing and reading especially in early lessons with beginning learners. The teachers with the higher outcomes devoted, on average, 44% of the lesson time to writing in early lessons compared to the less-effective teachers who, on average, devoted 29% of the lesson time to writing. Over time, as lessons continued, the higher-outcome teachers shifted to increased lesson time in reading to 61% of the time on average, while less time was spent in writing, 28% on average. The lower-outcome teachers’ average time in writing throughout the series of lessons did not vary as much. In early lessons 29% of the time was in writing on average and in later lessons 31% of the lesson time was spent in writing on average (Lyons, Pinnell, & DeFord, 1993, p. 72).

Now let’s look at the time spent writing for the Direct Instruction Skills Program and the control group. For the DISP treatment group, the average time observed in writing was 5 seconds; for the control group it

was an average of 1 minute per lesson. The teachers in these two groups were teaching with theoretical perspectives different from Clay’s Reading Recovery-based treatment groups.

The results of student achievement gains were the lowest for the DISP treatment group. DISP instruction was not a published program but did center on teaching phonics and skills focusing on words in isolation. I was surprised when as part of a group that analyzed and timed a video of one DISP lesson, I found that 14 minutes were spent having the student try to write different words, dictated by the teacher, in shaving cream spread on the top of the table. The student practiced four or five words in that 14 minutes but then spent a chunk of lesson time cleaning up the shaving cream. Remember, this video was made in 1988–89, and this could now be classified as ineffective practice. I wish that I did not have to mention that in 2014, when I visited my student’s classroom to get him for a Reading Recovery lesson, I saw a whole classroom of first graders up to their elbows in shaving cream, writing words as dictated by their temporary, student teacher. From my point of view all the shaving cream accomplished was cleaning the tops of the desks and the students’ hands.

Many years of evidence and research have shown that a focus on skills in isolation can improve specific skills and or items of knowledge. You can even teach children to decode nonsense words in isolation and teach children to read and mumble over words so fast that nothing makes sense. But concentrated, isolated skill practice and rate of reading has little impact on reading comprehension and writing achievement. (See Allington, 2013.)

In Reading Recovery we understand the importance of the child's attention to letters, letter-sounds, spelling patterns, word recognition, and fluent, phrased reading when learning to read and write. To maximize this learning in Clay's theoretical perspective, most teaching is done while children are reading and writing continuous text. For some teachers, this is a new discovery, and I remember one teacher who, in early training, shared this in class:

If I had not seen it with my own eyes I would never believe a child could read without knowing all their letters and sounds. But she did it. Carlie is my lowest in knowing her letters but she is reading these little books and loves the stories.

Teachers have prior experiences and knowledge of pedagogy when they come into Reading Recovery coursework. It sometimes takes new, personal experiences to break through prior knowledge and change teaching practices. Clay (1998) foreshadows that experience by stating, "An interesting change occurs in teachers who observe closely. They begin to question educational assumptions" (p. 107).

The teaching of letters, letter-sounds, spelling patterns, word recognition, and fluent phrased reading and writing are not incidental in Reading Recovery lessons. There are many procedures outlined by Clay (2005), and titles of complete sections of her book, *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals Part Two*, give attention to *Hearing and recording sounds in words*, *Linking sound sequences to letter sequences*, *Taking words apart while reading*, etc. Teachers use these sections and others to select procedures and customize the teaching based on

the unique needs of each child. Customizing lessons might be impractical for whole-class teaching or even small-group reading instruction, but customizing—which is based on assessed and observed needs—is highly accelerative for a struggling reader. This is a design requirement that helps struggling readers progress to the average of their classrooms with 12–20 weeks of daily, individual instruction.

Quality of Teaching

How do teachers interact with children to support the development of reading and writing?

The above question introduces the last part of the research study that was funded by the MacArthur Foundation in 1988–89. As part of the study, Ohio State faculty offered a summer course to experienced teachers. Many were primary classroom teachers or Title I teachers who were not trained in Reading Recovery, some were recently trained Reading Recovery teachers, and several were trained teacher leaders. All of the participants were trained to observe teaching interactions recorded on videos. The video lessons were from teachers in all four of the treatment groups, and a rating scale was used with the following category headings: Organization/Management, Intensity, Interaction, Feedback/Praise, Engagement, Enthusiasm, and Rapport. I will not go through the details of each category; however, there were definitions for each of the ranking categories and preliminary group practice for establishing reliability. Lyons & Pinnell (2001) developed the scale further and entitled it *General Aspects of Teaching* (p. 113).

In the group practice sessions during that summer class, one category stood out as a controversial area — Intensity. The Reading Recovery teachers and teacher leaders ranked some of the teachers on the video high in Intensity while the classroom teachers and Title I teachers ranked these same teachers low. Why low? The rationale for the rating by the classroom and Title I teachers was that some of the video lesson teachers were too intense. Their explanations for this included comments like, "She wouldn't let it go." "She badgered him." "She kept coming back again and asking, are you right?" "She made her try that again three times. Why didn't she just tell her the word?"

Working for reliability, the group came to this consensus: If you saw a lot of intensity, you had to rank it high if you liked it or not. With that guidance, the Reading Recovery teachers in the video lessons were consistently ranked high on Intensity. Lyons and Pinnell (2001) defined intensity of teaching as "[t]he teacher is actively teaching on some important aspect of learning throughout the lesson and teaches in a persistent and intensive way" (p. 113). Being persistent and teaching intensively on "some important aspect of learning" implies the teacher knows what is important for the child to learn how to do now. This was just one aspect of teaching that Lyons and Pinnell examined; but, because of the clear lines of separation in judgment between the classroom teachers and the Reading Recovery teachers, this one stood out in my memory.

I did my own, one-question survey of teaching and learning across some trainers, teacher leaders, and teachers,



If you are a teacher who understands the importance of monitoring, you are well on your way to fostering strategic actions and making an impact on accelerated progress and student achievement. Highly effective teachers have flexible ways of focusing on monitoring as it changes over time.

including teachers-in-training: What have you learned from teaching children in Reading Recovery that you think has made you a better teacher?

I have already shared some of the responses in the quotes throughout this paper, and I am sure there would be wide diversity and high value in all the responses throughout our learning community. Here is one example to consider. I was talking with my friend, Linda Scott, who was a teacher leader for many years, about teachers that consistently make an impact on their students' learning, and about my one-question survey. She responded, "I can answer both of your questions with one word: Monitoring!" Then she added, "How to recognize monitoring, teach for it, and prompt for it consistently ... am I right?"

I do not think there is any one right answer to identifying the most important attribute of effective teaching, and, of course, what we learn from teaching children who are having difficulties learning to read and write will vary widely for individual teachers. But Linda did identify a powerful aspect of teaching in Reading Recovery lessons that I would like to discuss further.

Clay (2005) succinctly defines *self-monitoring* for teachers as "checking on oneself" (p. 108). Schwartz (1997) has helped many teachers build understandings about the importance of monitoring and the complexity of teaching for this type of strategic action as young children are learning to read and write (pp. 40–48). McGee, Kim, Nelson, and Fried

(2015) defined monitoring as "a mental activity in which students seemed to notice something was not right, which caused them to make a decision to take some further action" (p. 11).

If you are a teacher who understands the importance of monitoring, you are well on your way to fostering strategic actions and making an impact on accelerated progress and student achievement. Highly effective teachers have flexible ways of focusing on monitoring as it changes over time. For example:

- Recognize monitoring and reinforce monitoring in early lessons.
Good you stopped. You must be thinking. What did you notice? What could you try?
- Teach or demonstrate how to monitor in early lessons.
You said cat. What do you expect to see at the beginning? Look at this letter (points). It can't be cat. Check the picture. Read that again and try something else.
- Prompt and expect the child to check or verify their own responses (self-monitoring).
Check to see if you're right? or Does that make sense? or simply Are you right?

In order to foster a child's self-monitoring once he is more secure, Clay (2005) recommends prompting with "Try that again." (p. 108). In using this powerful prompt Clay states, "all you need to say is 'Try that again,'" and adds, "Make sure that your voice carries two messages. You require him to search because you know he can, and you are confident he can solve the problem" (p. 109).

Highly effective teachers are not just teaching items of knowledge; they are teaching children how to think. Monitoring is a cognitive, strategic activity. Self-correction implies self-monitoring. Evidence of self-monitoring is one strategic action we should be looking for as we analyze running records. The analysis of running records is more than computing the scores and circling the MSVs. Self-monitoring, or noticing that something is not quite right, may begin with just stopping and waiting for help, but over time self-monitoring should lead to searching for more information, trying again perhaps resulting in a self-correction, and often triggering a cycle of searching again, trying again, monitoring again, and making another decision.

This cycle results in the construction of a problem-solving unit; what McGee et al. (2015) identified as *flexible, complex action chains* (p. 16). Complex action chains always include evidence of self-monitoring and multiple attempts. Flexible action chains also show evidence of using multiple sources of information, and often, but not always, result in a self-correction. Complex action chains are important *markers* of strengths in a child's developing processing system. Complex action chains are not the ultimate goal of problem solving while reading but are evidence of what Clay (2007) called for — “records of the changes” in processing as children are “en route to perfect performance” (p. 74).

I recommend two questions to ask yourself as you reflect on the impact of your teaching:

1. Are you looking for evidence of self-monitoring when you listen to oral reading or analyze a child's running record or observe a child writing a story?
2. Are you taking teaching actions to teach for monitoring or to prompt for self-monitoring when you don't see it?

Learning from My Own Teaching

I want to close this article the same way I closed the keynote address at the 2015 national conference by sharing my personal learning from my own teaching. In the last 16 years I have been teaching Reading Recovery lessons at a school with many children who are also learning English as a second language. This has given me the opportunity to learn about their languages and cultures such as Shona, Arabic, Bengalese, Spanish, Chinese, and Kurdish. From my teaching I learned the value of oral language as a foundation for literacy learning. I learned very quickly the value of using Clay's (2007) *Record of Oral Language* to inform my teaching. I also shifted the support of my teaching interactions in order to help children extend their oral language as we had fun using small stuffed animals and Beanie Babies to talk, reenact, and write about the stories. We took turns helping Baby Monkey get away from the tiger when we yelled, “Baby Monkey, Come up here! Come up here!” (*Tiger, Tiger*, PM). I learned to be an expert at nonverbal prompts:

a touch of the hand or finger, a gentle tap of the page with a pencil, or a tap on the working page of the writing book for a trial attempt. My prompts to take action became more succinct. For familiar reading I only had to say to Lizzeth, “Eyes only, read fast.” At other times Lizzeth successfully responded to “Try that again” and “Are you right?” Clay (2005) calls this a teacher's “economy of words” (p. 87) and warns us that too much teacher talk can be overwhelming for some children. I think that every time the teacher talks it has the potential to interrupt the child's processing. As my colleague at Ohio State, Jim Schnug, responded so clearly in his survey question response, “I learned to listen more and talk less.”

I hope this rendition of “Learning from Our Teaching” has established more insights from the original study of Reading Recovery teaching in the U.S. and has verified that the understandings from that “oldie-but-goodie” research are still applicable. I know some of the questions the MacArthur-funded study answered are still being asked today. More importantly, I hope you will take the time to reflect on your teaching and learning. What have you learned from teaching children in Reading Recovery that has made you a better teacher? And lastly, keep on contributing to our learning community as we continue to work and learn together.

References

- Allington, R. L. (2013). What really matters when working with struggling readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(7), 520–530.

- Bryk, A. (2016). Accelerating how we learn to improve. *Educational Researcher*, 44(9), 467–477.
- Clay, M. M. (1985). *The early detection of reading difficulties* (3rd ed.). Auckland, New Zealand: Heinemann.
- Clay, M. M. (1998). *By different paths to common outcomes*. York, ME: Stenhouse.
- Clay, M. M. (2001). *Change over time in children's literacy development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Clay, M. M. (2005). *Literacy lessons designed for individuals part two: Teaching procedures*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Clay, M. M. (2007). *Record of oral language: Observing changes in the acquisition of language structures* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- D'Agostino, J., & Brownfield, K. (2016). Annual results confirm strength of Reading Recovery. *The Journal of Reading Recovery*, 15(2), 24–30.
- Lose, M. (2016). Reading Recovery in the Detroit public schools: Voices of the stakeholders. *The Journal of Reading Recovery*, 15(2), 20–23.
- Lyons, C. A., & Pinnell, G. S. (2001). *Systems for change in literacy education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Lyons, C. A., Pinnell, G. S., & DeFord, D. (1993). *Partners in learning: Teachers and children in Reading Recovery*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- McGee, L. M., Kim, H., Nelson, K. S., & Fried, M. D. (2015). Change over time in first graders' strategic use of information at point of difficulty in reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 50(3), 263–291.
- Peurach, D., & Glazer, J. (2016). Reading Recovery as an epistemic community. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 21(1), 1–5.
- Schwartz, R. M. (1997). Self-monitoring in beginning reading. *The Reading Teacher*, 51(1), 40–48.
- Watson, B., & Askew, B. (2009). *Boundless horizons*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Children's books cited

- Randell, B. (1994). *Tiger, Tiger*. Crystal Lake, IL: Rigby PM.
- Yolen, J. (1996). *Commander Toad in space*. London: Puffin Books.

About the Author



Mary Fried is a trainer of teacher leaders in the Reading Recovery Center at The Ohio State University. Trained by Marie Clay and Barbara Watson during the original pilot study of Reading Recovery in the U.S., she has been actively engaged in teaching, presenting, conducting research, and writing about Reading Recovery for more than 30 years.



About the Cover

One of the youngest students in her school's engineering enrichment class, Natalie has always been a hard worker. She loves books and she is always excited to find out what will happen at the end of the story. Once she started her Reading Recovery lessons with teacher Sara Imerman, Natalie quickly gained confidence and began to take more risks in reading and writing both during her lessons and in the classroom setting. Natalie enjoys camping, going to Disney World, and spending time at the beach. And she wants to be an insurance worker with her family's agency.