Speaker 1 (00:00:05):

Welcome to Demystifying Literacy Processing Theory for Leaders. I'm Stephanie Smyka and I am the Reading Recovery teacher leader and site coordinator for Monroe two Orleans BOCES just outside of Rochester, New York. I want to thank you for coming today. If you're here, it means you're probably curious about what's happening with those reading recovery teachers and those students in your building. What exactly is happening that's causing some of that progress that we're seeing? Or maybe you're interested in learning more about reading recovery. Maybe you already know the basics of what happens in the classroom, but you're interested in extending and deepening your knowledge. Whatever your reason, I'm glad you're here.

(00:00:54):

We hope to demystify this literacy processing theory for you. So our goals today are to go through some of the principles of literacy processing theory and some of the instructional assumptions connected to that theory. We're going to help you understand the lesson framework maybe at a deeper level, talk about the role that agency and ownership play in literacy processing theory. We're going to think about decision-making and interactions and how that contributes to literacy learning, and then you'll have some opportunities for application and reflection, literacy processing theory and instructional assumptions. It's important to start here. This is the why behind all of the decisions that teachers make and what we do every day. Marie Clay really believed that if children were unable to learn, we should assume that we have not as yet found the right way to teach them, and we know that when teachers say he's not ready for school yet, he's not ready for reading or writing, there should be something that kind of triggers in our brain that makes us think a little bit more about what does the teacher mean by that?

(00:02:10):

Marie Clay really believed that there's probably another root by which the child could learn, and it's not by a specific sequenced instructional program designed by some publisher who doesn't know the child. There's another way that the child can learn and that's where the instruction should start, not where the teacher is, not where the publisher decides, but where the child is. All too often the rigidness of prescribed learning sequences are the things that actually contribute to some of our less flexible students falling behind. Before we go any deeper, pause this recording for a minute and jot down your own definition of reading after you have a second to jot it down. Go ahead and press play again. This is what Marie Clay thought about when she really considered literacy learning. She engaged in deep study of proficient readers to try to help us better understand the kinds of things that are less proficient readers needed to have under control.

(00:03:14):

But before she could understand what proficient readers did, she needed to understand what reading was all about. And so her definition is that reading is a message. Getting problem solving activity, which increases in power and flexibility the more that it's practiced, and there's a whole bunch of reasons that it's complex. Children need to learn how to interact with books and some adults need to learn how to interact with books and written English, and they need to learn things like how to turn pages, knowing that in written English print goes from left to right. They need to recognize that there's diverse sources of information just there within the text, and that those sources of information available to them might be even the language that the author chooses to use, which in some ways might be way more complex than the oral language that children are familiar with.

(00:04:12):

They have to be become familiar with the graph pH system of English with all of its patterns and irregularities, and children have to decide which of those sources of information are appropriate for their attention, and then search for analyze and crosscheck those different sources to monitor their decisions and correct errors. Essentially what Clay is saying is that when children read and write, they pick up and use information from a variety of sources and they work on it. Make a decision and evaluate that response in a continual cycle of learning. Readers and writers take the initiative to solve problems as they acquire and practice those in the head strategies. This is a much more nuanced view of reading than a theory that places most of its value on the development of item knowledge. How many sounds do they know? How many letters do they know? How many words do they know?

(00:05:08):

Because it recognizes that the children need to consider more than just that, and they need to think about how to put all of that together in a way that makes sense and helps them to elicit that meaning. But why do we need to know about theory? Why can't just we get into those teaching practices and procedures? Well, the link between theory and behavior is the central reason that knowledge of theories is essential for optimal classroom instruction. So Diane Trace and Leslie Mandel, Morrow tell us that theories provide frameworks for thinking about interrelated constructs, and they often become the lenses through which people view the world. So it's important for teachers to know their own theories of learning so that they can better support their decision-making and advocacy in service of students. Then they also think about instructional decisions and how that weighs up against the theory that they have held close to their heart.

(00:06:05):

The theory and assumptions of reading recovery can be considered as core to good literacy instruction for all students, and it's not just important for our teachers to be aware of their theories around literacy instruction so that they can make informed decisions, but as leaders, you need to be aware of your own theories and how they impact the decisions that you make in your own school or your own district. So let's dig a little bit deeper and take a closer look at the principals and instructional assumptions tied to literacy processing theory so we can connect them to the work that teachers do and the work that we do as instructional leaders.

(00:06:46):

First and foremost, we believe that accelerative learning is critical to success for those who are falling behind. Acceleration is a key goal of reading recovery, meaning that children receiving reading recovery are expected to progress faster than the average first grader in order to catch up with other children in the classroom and to be able to profit from ongoing literacy programs. In reading recovery, we monitor those progress lines on a weekly basis because we know that each of those lines represents a life full of potential and an opportunity to change a path for a child. Now, this student, not even midway through the intervention, has already noticed the growth that she's made. The book on the left represents what she was able to control through careful problem solving when she entered the program, and the book on the right represents the growth that she's made to that point in her lesson series.

(00:07:43):

Now, when this child recognized her own growth and the change in the amount of print on a page, the number of words in a sentence, the number of lines on the page, she looked at it and she said, I've evolved. And even though she's not all the way through, she definitely has, but how do we achieve acceleration? What's behind that? Well, strength-based instruction, we know that building on a child's strengths makes learning easier. Many of these children who start with us in reading recovery have already become aware that their progress as a literacy learner is different than their peers. Many of

them have already put up ways of covering for themselves. When they're asked to reveal what they know about literacy learning, they might tell us they can't remember because their eyes are tired or they didn't get a lot of sleep that night or their stomach hurts a lot of avoidance tasks.

(00:08:40):

So it's important to us that we know every child's strengths so that we can work with their existing competencies and make maximum use of each child's literacy repertoire to support their accelerated learning. When this started lessons, she had just a small set of words, and our job as teachers is to support and build on what she knows. We want to expect her to build automaticity with that little bit that she has, so she only has a few words. We want her to get them down fast and recognize them quickly so she doesn't have to think about them and she can pay attention to learning new things. So when she's writing, we expect her to write the things that she can control, like that word my and the word is. And then we ask her to take the things that she's got strong and begin to transfer them to new settings so she knows that letter M at the beginning of the word my, and we help her understand she can use that at the beginning of the word molar, but we don't stretch her beyond her competency, and so the teacher gets in there and writes the rest of that word for her.

(00:09:49):

We also work to make partially knowns more secure, so she partially knows how to form that lowercase N. So we're going to work with her on making it faster and making it smoother and get that lowercase N quick and smooth, and we're going to celebrate everything that that child does, even if it's recognizing the straightest line that they were able to form for that lowercase N. Knowing these strengths and being able to capitalize them is critical, and our teachers are trained to find these strengths through the process of systematic observation. Sensitive and systematic observation begins during the screening process for reading recovery. Teachers administer a series of six tasks and then analyze the results and the behaviors displayed to develop a summary of the child that synthesizes the useful knowledge and behaviors that they display, as well as anything problematic that we may want to prevent or extinguish.

(00:10:47):

Now, the sensitive observation doesn't end there. It continues during each and every lesson as the teacher records key observations about how the child worked on a text at difficulty, how they're taking on new things, any behaviors that need to be supported or scaffolded differently or any behaviors that need to be redirected, and any snippets of oral language that can inform choices for us like book selection or help us think about how we can use them during writing. These observations are quickly synthesized and used to inform the lesson on the very next day. We also recognize that what children can do when entering school is closely related to their prior opportunities to learn. So they come to literacy with varying knowledge, and it's our job to tease that out. It's inevitable that differences not deficits will exist in children's literacy experiences and their knowledge, and it's the responsibility of teachers to be knowledgeable about these differences and to be able to carefully plan literacy that foster the continued construction of that literacy knowledge.

(00:11:58):

Now these samples represent two children. One, you can see the same child with the orange arrows, and then the child with the blue arrows. You can see her two writing samples. Now, these two children actually tested at similar levels in reading and in a classroom they might end up in a similar reading group, but take a close look at their writing samples and think about how they reveal distinct insights about what these children know about how to use language to record a sentence that was dictated to them, which is the sample on the top, or to be able to record all the words they know which are the samples on the bottom. As teachers, we synthesize that information provided and we recognize the

learning differences as we work with students in order to capitalize on that and continue to grow their reading process. We also know that children construct their own understandings through the support of an expert other.

(00:12:58):

Now they work on printed messages using all of their current abilities while a teacher supports them, and as a result, they develop new strategic behaviors that merge their old knowledge with newly constructed ways of problem solving. Now, if you look at these two samples, the sample on the top left shows that the child understands that reading is about meaning and stories have to make sense and sound right. So she was perfectly content to read this story and ignore some of the errors that she made that didn't look like they matched what the author had in place. She read it is Spring for Spring is here, and she read Hedgehog for Porcupine. She was content to keep going because it made sense and it sounded right to her. Now, the sample on the bottom is the same child. Just a few lessons later where after working with a teacher and receiving the right kind of support, the child began to notice mismatch and do something about the mismatches.

(00:14:02):

She would reread the text to search for additional information and then she would make self corrections. And down a few pages on page six, you can see the child actually making multiple attempts working at difficulty trying to problem solve before receiving support from the teacher. Her understanding of what it means to read has definitely shifted in just a few lessons. In literacy processing theory. We believe that reading and writing are reciprocal and interrelated processes that we need to help dig a ditch between the two sources so that the child can see how one supports the other. That complex theory of literacy learning acknowledges that writers have to know how to do certain things that overlap with things that readers have to know how to do and their concurrent sources of information that contribute to one another. So here on the bottom, you can see that the child responded to the story that she recently read through writing by writing something that she believed Mom said to Carl, she's using the features of the printed text that she read the story, had a lot of dialogue, and she decided that she could use that in her own writing.

(00:15:18):

Well, you get no cake said, mom. So she's understanding that I can read dialogue and I can write dialogue. I can use punctuation to help me see where the talking began and ended, and I can use punctuation when I'm a writer to help the reader know where the talking starts and ends. She also knows she can use commas for a pause or a hesitation, and she also knows that the same way that she works at Words in Text by looking across them from left to right can support her. When she's trying to figure out how to solve words in writing, she can use things like boxes to help her think about words slowly and move across those from left to right as well. We know that learning to read involves a continuous process of change over time. So it's really important that teachers are sufficiently familiar and knowledgeable about the literacy development process so that they can enable their own close observation and interpretation of the child's attempts against what they know and they need to be able to provide appropriate learning supports and experiences with appropriately challenging materials tailored to the needs of each learner.

(00:16:30):

So the photo on the top is something that you may see in classrooms around your building. It's a series of books that are leveled according to some of the challenges and features of the text, but teachers don't just go in and say, I need a book at this level. The next day they go within the box and they search across those texts to find one that precisely matches the needs of the reader on this day. And those

books are not the same for every child. So one child's record of books may be completely different from another child even if they entered at similar levels. Additionally, the word work that children engage in shifts according to the child's growing needs as a word solver, and likewise, their writing will change as well from maybe what begins as very short, choppy, controlled sentences to multiple sentences on a page making up a more complex story and more complex language within those stories as the child feels more comfortable taking risks.

(00:17:31):

We know that children take different paths to literacy learnings, and so no literacy program or set of instructional activities defined by some outsider can always meet the needs of every child. So instead of relying on published programs, our teachers recognize that it's their knowledge, their knowledge of theory, their knowledge of the literacy development process and their guidance that helps best address children's needs. This is supported by their ongoing participation in professional development where they learn about literacy theory and they learn about the instructional decisions that they make. So we watch each other teach lessons, and as our colleague is teaching, we are talking about what decisions are being made and how the child is responding to those decisions, not as a critique or an evaluation, but as a process of inquiry to help us better understand how to work with the children in front of us each day.

(00:18:29):

We get our students into continuous text right away, even though they may have been considered a non-reader or a non-writer because the theory of reading continuous text can't come from a theory of word reading and isolation. It involves problem solving and integrating is not studied in a theory about analyzing words. So by the end of their first 10 days with us, because we get these children into continuous text and help them see that they can become problem solvers by building on their strengths and by us making those teaching decisions based on what we know that they've already brought to the table by the end of the 10 days, we've already developed a rich bank of texts that these children can successfully engage in. We've already shifted their self-concept to I am a person who can read and write, and I am a person who does read and write.

(00:19:22):

And additionally, because we privilege meaning-making throughout the lesson, continuous text enables readers to have an experience with each text and to elicit a reaction. As we move into the lesson framework, we're going to take a closer look at how those principles and instructional assumptions are present, but each of the components also has its own purpose and they're all grounded in continuous text. Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory posit that both the reader and the text play important roles in the construction of meaning. Continuous text is the heart of the lesson, and Clay tells us we know that reading is that problem solving activity, and as expert others, we need to support our reader in eliciting the message from those texts. We want to see our students interacting with the texts and recognizing that they can have reactions. Understanding is an expected outcome of the reading process and the emotional component is also an important aspect.

(00:20:22):

So we want to enjoy those books together and respond as appropriate. So you'll see in these lesson components, all of them are grounded in continuous text because that's where kids practice those skills is in continuous text, not in isolation. We start by rereading familiar books with children and we try to have them read two to three familiar books at the beginning of each lesson. That provides for a large amount of reading practice and speeded recognition and acquaintance with a wide range of text fiction

and nonfiction and themes, the understandings of stories and the orchestration of processing. We also say that the familiar read helps 'em to prime the pump.

(00:21:09):

Next children engage in a rereading of yesterday's new book. While the child reads this, the teacher takes a behavior record of this new book, which is now being read for the second time with no teacher input. The teacher child is showing the range of strategic activities that the child is employing and the teacher's recording those so that she can get a sense of what the child is doing to problem solve while reading that text. And again, that informs the teaching decisions for later in that lesson and for the next day, we always go back after reading, and the first thing we do is talk about something meaningful from that book, something that made us laugh or a deeper understanding.

(00:21:54):

Then you may see the teacher engage in some quick letter identification with students or breaking words into parts. Now the child learns to discriminate all of their letters and does it with fast recognition so that they can use that information in continuous text. They learn about how letters and letter clusters make up words, and they're able to use this knowledge to take words apart in flexible ways on the run and on his own. Now this part of the lesson is the shortest part of the lesson, maybe one to two minutes. And sometimes you might see this part of the lesson actually brought into other parts of the lesson so that children can understand how to solve those words on the run in text and not just up at the whiteboard. Then we move into composing and writing a story. The child composes a message because we know that writing is a message sending problem solving activity.

(00:22:49):

They learn about how to compose a message orally by engaging in some short conversation with the teacher. That's truly a conversation, not as an interrogation of the child, but truly a conversation. And they may build on something that they talked about walking down the hall, or the child may be excited to tell about something that's happening in their classroom that day. So they build on that conversation and then they find a piece of that story to record. While the child is thinking about recording it, they're employing all those rules of directionality and spacing, and they're trying to hear and record the sounds in words, and they're thinking about orthography. How do words look? Then the story is written by a teacher on a sentence strip and cut into various levels of language. You might see the teacher cut the story into phrase levels or individual words or maybe some words into some word parts. And then the child works to reconstruct the message by attending to the visual information, the order of words and links to his own language. Finally, the teacher shares an introduction to a new book that he or she would've selected just for this child. They carefully selected this book to challenge the child's processing system but not upset it. The teacher helps to orient the child to the text by discussing plot and vocabulary and maybe rehearsing some language structures that might be unusual or unfamiliar to the child.

(00:24:24):

So were you able to think about how the principles of literacy processing theory and instructional assumptions are reflected in the lesson framework? Pause for just a second. Come back after you've got some ideas down. What's so essential about this lesson framework isn't the individual lesson activities or the way they've been ordered. It's the impact that the theory has when the child is at the center agency and ownership is a central part of this. Another goal and outcome of literacy processing theory is the notion that students are also agents of change and that they can take ownership of their learning. Now, students may enter reading recovery as passive learners who turn to the teacher for rescue attempts, but they quickly become aware through reading recovery that they have it within themselves

to become literacy problem solvers. Constructive learning is a hallmark of literacy processing theory. We engage them in meaningful problem solving activities that enable them to construct concepts and raise questions and develop their own strategies to problem solve.

(00:25:33):

And a critical factor in this is the competence of adults to be able to scaffold their thinking. And we have to think of this right from the beginning. We have to think, what do we want of children at the end of their lesson series? Well, the end point of instruction is a self extending processing system, which we also sometimes call a self-improving system, where children are learning more about reading every time that they read independent of instruction. They start to teach themselves how to monitor that that didn't make sense, that maybe they need to go back and try something else. They use that set of mental operations that are adequate for the more difficult bits of the text. They're the ones engaging in the reading work, the deliberate efforts to solve new problems with familiar information and procedures, and they adjust their own theories as they engage in their reading and writing activities.

(00:26:27):

There's no one particular test level or score that can guarantee the success. It's what the children are doing at the time that helps to guarantee their success. But in order for them to develop that system, they're the ones who have to be active in the process. Learning is a complex constructive process, and constructive learners engage in many different kinds of self-initiated and self-directed activities, and children are affected by what happens after they act. They learn how to make a response and get feedback. And out of this interconnection, they become constructive learners. They develop some intrinsic motivation and they become independent. Independence is not something that the teacher can teach. Instead, she has to set up fail safe situations, situations in which the child can initiate successful activity. Now, children learn that this is expected very quickly, but it's often the teacher who finds it difficult to let the child be independent. The teacher sometimes finds it difficult to be asked not to teach.

(00:27:40):

So teachers have to think about their decision-making and their interactions. The instructional strength of reading recovery and literacy processing theory comes from the teacher's knowledge and their ability to employ keen decision-making practices in the moment. While the teacher may have goals for each session, she can't predict every move that the child will make, and she will need to respond in a way that continues to support agency ownership and active constructive learning. She needs to engage in what we call deliberate and dextrous teaching. Deliberateness is defined as an encompassing commitment to thoughtful practice. And in literacy processing theory, instructional dexterity is that flexible application of deep skill. So the goal of the teacher is to assist the child to construct those effective networks in the brain to link up all of that strategic activity that they need to work on texts. It's not about accuracy. It's not about whether the child gets every word right.

(00:28:42):

Instead, it's about analyzing what the child does at difficulty and thinking about how we can better help the child learn how he can help himself. We actually have to provide space for the child to notice his own errors and not jump in. All instructional moves and decisions within the lesson frame are at the discretion of the individual teacher, and they needed to be directed toward helping the child learn how to help himself. So we're going to take a quick look at a lesson, and you're going to take some notes down and think about everything that we have been talking about so far. To what degree is the child in this video example, demonstrating agency and ownership of the learning process, and also how is the teacher's decision-making contributing to the learning process. So get your pencil ready.

Speaker 2 (00:29:38):

Come here. There it is, mom.

Speaker 3 (00:29:44):

We are going for a ride in the car. Said, mom, I like to ride in the car. Said, Gus, I do not like to ride in the car, in the car, said the kitchen here, here off. Here we go. Said Mom, this is fun. Said Gus. This is not fun. Said kitten. We are going to the vet, said, mom. Oh, no. Sad guys.

Speaker 4 (00:30:40):

Oh

Speaker 3 (00:30:40):

No.

Speaker 4 (00:30:41):

And kitten is speechless. Kitten really doesn't know what to say at all. How did you do? Making it sound good and just using your eyes.

Speaker 3 (00:30:52):

Good.

Speaker 4 (00:30:52):

You did read this one again, and I like how you read all the way to here and then all the way to the comma. Give that a try again.

Speaker 3 (00:31:01):

I do not like to ride in the car said the kitchen.

Speaker 4 (00:31:07):

Yeah, we can say that whole bit all the way up to that comma where we take a little pause. That's awesome.

Speaker 3 (00:31:15):

Find

Speaker 4 (00:31:15):

And frame the word this. Find that word This? Yeah. Can you frame it with your two fingers?

Speaker 3 (00:31:22):

Good.

Speaker 4 (00:31:22):

Can you show yourself the part that says the, and where's the part that says is. There you go. What's that word again?

Speaker 3 ([00:31:30](00:31:30)):

This

Speaker 4 ([00:31:31](00:31:31)):

Awesome. Find them. Frame the word kitten. Can you clap it?

Speaker 3 ([00:31:36](00:31:36)):

Kitten?

Speaker 4 ([00:31:37](00:31:37)):

Can you show yourself the parts? What's the first part that you said,

Speaker 3 ([00:31:45](00:31:45)):

Kit?

Speaker 4 ([00:31:47](00:31:47)):

Good. Did you show yourself the parts? Yeah. Awesome. All right. One more going. There it is. Show yourself the parts. Go. And what's that part?

Speaker 3 ([00:32:02](00:32:02)):

Ing?

Speaker 4 ([00:32:03](00:32:03)):

Ing? Awesome job. And when you put it together, it's

Speaker 3 ([00:32:06](00:32:06)):

Going,

Speaker 4 ([00:32:07](00:32:07)):

Going good work. Okay, let's choose one more. Jolly rod or the pirate. Sunny or cloudy, or where are the sunhats? Sunny or cloudy? Ooh, we haven't read that one in a while. Those arguing Frogs

Speaker 3 ([00:32:38](00:32:38)):

Today is going to be sunny said the little frog. No, said the big frog today is going to be cloudy. Today is not going to be cloudy. Said the little frog today is going to be sunny. Oh no. Said. Oh no, it is not going. Oh, no. It is not said. The big frog. Oh, yes, it is said the little frog.

Speaker 4 ([00:33:29](00:33:29)):

So remember these punctuation marks help us to know how much to read.

Speaker 3 (00:33:34):

Yeah.

Speaker 4 (00:33:35):

Yeah. So let's try this like this. Oh no. It is not said the big frog. See how I read all of these together in a group?

Speaker 3 (00:33:45):

Yeah.

Speaker 4 (00:33:45):

Okay. Now you try it on this one.

Speaker 3 (00:33:49):

Oh, yes. Oh yes, it is said the little frog.

Speaker 4 (00:33:55):

Doesn't that sound good like they're arguing? Yeah. Do it again. Do it on this one.

Speaker 3 (00:34:00):

Oh no, it's not said. The big frog today is not going to be cloudy. Said the little frog today is going to be sunny said the little said the big frog.

Speaker 4 (00:34:17):

Nice job. Reading to the punctuation

Speaker 3 (00:34:20):

Today is going to be rainy.

Speaker 4 (00:34:31):

Get your finger in there to help you. Don't push it away. Show yourself the first part.

Speaker 3 (00:34:35):

Yes, said

Speaker 4 (00:34:40):

So. Let's look at the first part. Let me show you how you can break it using this, or you could break it with your finger that way.

Speaker 3 (00:34:46):

Do you see

Speaker 4 (00:34:46):

That first part? What does that first part say? Can I show you another place where you read it? Let's see. Was it in this one? I think it was right in there we go. You read that word in this story right here. You read this word. What word is this?

Speaker 3 (00:35:21):

Here we go. Said the set. Here we go. Said Mom, this.

Speaker 4 (00:35:30):

That's the word This. What is the first part of that word?

Speaker 3 (00:35:33):

T H.

Speaker 4 (00:35:34):

And what sound does it make

Speaker 3 (00:35:35):

This?

Speaker 4 (00:35:36):

Take a look at it. And this part says is is all together this. Now we have that same part right here, the same this. It says, there you go. Today is going to be rainy. They said, they said, awesome job, rainy with.

Speaker 1 (00:36:03):

So hopefully in that example, you were able to find some specific example of how that child helped herself to construct meaning and to employ actions that supported her ability to solve problems on her own. And hopefully you saw me as the teacher trying to leave space for the child to engage in that problem solving, helping the child to learn that it's a process that she can make decisions, try them out and decide to accept or reject those efforts and try again. And when the child does need support, then I help her understand how to use information from the text that can help her rather than giving her the answer. Now, there's no perfect lesson. These are all in the moment decisions. And so after this lesson, I reflect on those decisions and consider what I may need to support differently during the next lesson. And that's what you should see when you're working with your own teachers and helping them reflect on their own deliberate and dexterous teaching.

(00:37:07):

So pause again and ask yourself, how can your new understanding support you in having growth producing conversations with your teachers in your role as an instructional leader, you're probably visiting classrooms. You might be doing some walkthroughs. You might just be popping in to show students that you care about what they're doing. You might have some formal opportunities to observe teachers and some informal opportunities to sit in. And you might be wondering, what are some things you can look for? Well, is meaning privileged during the lesson? Are they really thinking about the story? Are there opportunities for the child to employ and extend their oral language? Or is the teacher doing all of the talking when the child's engaging in the reading work or the writing work? Who's actually doing most of the work? Does the lesson feel easy or attainable, or is it feeling a little hard?

([00:38:04](https://...)):

Is the lesson grounded in continuous text? Is the focus on accuracy or problem solving? Is the word work short and primarily intended to support students in becoming word solvers? Are there stretches of fast independent writing during the writing section and who's composing the message of the story? And when you're having discussions with the teachers, you might want to think about asking, what are the child's strengths? How does the child view himself as a reader or a writer? What are you noticing about how the child problem solves a difficulty? Where in the lesson is the child more active or less active? Where in the lesson is the child more independent or less independent? Why did you select this book for today's lesson? What contributed to your decisions for your teaching points today? Where are you going to go next? And what are your goals for the child for the next few weeks? I just want to take a minute to thank you. I really want to extend a sincere thanks to all of you for attending this session. A thank you from the teachers who you have supported in deepening their own understanding about the literacy process. They really appreciate your efforts here to extend your own understanding and to be an advocate and a support, but most of all, thank you from the students in your schools by providing them opportunities to significantly change their own learning trajectories and ultimately changing their lives.

([00:39:36](https://...)):

Welcome everybody. So as Megan said, I'm Stephanie Sika. I am the site coordinator and teacher leader for my site just outside of Rochester, New York. And I want to share with you a little bit about why I chose to do this session. So reading recovery, and I have had a long interesting relationship and background. So when I got out of college and started teaching, I just kept thinking about how important it was to really be able to help kids learn to read and how I felt like I never got enough information about that. So I went back and got my master's degree in reading and still felt like I didn't know what to do to be able to help these children. And every year before school started, I would wake up in a panic feeling like, I can't do this. I'm responsible for all these little people.

([00:40:30](https://...)):

And so I was flipping through the college course catalog and I saw this course description for reading recovery, and I thought, I have to get into this somehow and was told I couldn't at the time because the school district that I was working in wasn't a part of reading recovery. And so I tried to figure out ways to make that happen. Eventually my career changed. I went from being a classroom teacher to a mentor teacher and a literacy coach for my district, which led to me getting my certification in administration. I served as an assistant principal for a couple of years and had the good fortune at that time of being able to supervise our reading recovery teachers in our building. But what was tricky is even though I loved reading recovery, I would go to the behind the glass session. I still felt like there was something missing.

([00:41:19](https://...)):

I was missing some sort of connection between what was really happening. I could go to those classrooms and I could watch the teachers and I could go through the procedures, but I needed to take more of a granular view. In some ways I needed to get a little bit more micro. And then I became the coordinator of the entire elementary English language arts program. So then I supervised all of our reading recovery teachers, and I really made an effort to try to figure out more what is going on with this literacy processing theory? What does this mean? And it occurred to me that it's just so powerful when we can all speak the same language. So when we're here to think about demystifying literacy processing theory, it's so that we can form partnerships with one another. We can have deeper conversations, those learning conversations with our teachers, with our colleagues, we can form those relationships and move it from that little program in that classroom down the hallway to something

that's a little bit more systemic and just woven into the fabric of the literacy instruction in the building. So I wanted to make sure that I had an opportunity. I felt it was really important to provide a session for leaders, and by leaders I mean reading recovery teachers, your leaders. You could be literacy coaches, you could be district admin to really think about what are some of the important pieces that we need to know about literacy processing so that we can start to have some of those deeper conversations.

(00:42:52):

Alright, so that's the basic behind those literacy principles and instructional practices that we need to be thinking about the overview of the lesson. But as I said, it's not so much that there's something magical about the lesson components, right? It's not that if every teacher starts doing a cut up sentence, then they're going to have the same results as our reading recovery teacher. So let's take cut up sentences and apply that to the classroom, or let's take familiar reading and apply that to the classroom. But it's the idea of what's happening within the lesson. That is the magic. That's where the magic happens. Clay talks about wanting children to develop a self extending system. That means that that literacy processing system that they're developing and that matures over time. They've got something in place that enables them to keep learning about reading and writing every time they engage in that reading and writing process.

(00:43:52):

But in order for that to happen, we need to develop a sense of agency and ownership with the children. They have to know that they're the ones who can do it, that they are the ones doing the work. And if you haven't had a chance to see Brian Camborne and Deb Crouch, there's a lot that they've had to share. We were just in that session talking about that idea that the language that we use also helps to send a message to children about their role in the learning process and who they're doing the work for. We want them to be active, constructive learners because to develop that self extending system, the brain work is happening in their heads. So we can't just tell them, we can't just show them. We have to find ways to engage them and get them to take that on. And that happens as a result of the instructional decision making that reading recovery teachers do each and every day.

(00:44:47):

We talked about that very careful observation that reading recovery teachers engage in right from the very beginning, from that initial assessment to every single lesson, reading, recovery, teachers engage in that instructional decision making. And they have to think about, I'm going to do some really deliberate teaching and I've got to engage in some very dextrous teaching. Because while we might have some goals in mind for our particular lesson, something else may pop up that we need to attend to. So we have to be flexible and dextrous and responsive to make sure that we're getting the most powerful interactions with children that we can.

(00:45:29):

So we're going to take a few minutes and take a look at the video clip that I shared in the on-demand session. And while we're doing that, I want you to be thinking about, this is a familiar read for my friend, CC here, and I want you to be thinking about these questions. And you can note them down. You can drop them in the chat as we go. You can jot them on a piece of paper and we can talk about them later. But I want you to think about to what degree is the child demonstrating agency and ownership of the learning process? How is the teacher's making contributing to the learning process? And what connections can you make to the literacy principles and assumptions? And remember, no lesson is perfect. There is no lesson that's perfect. We're always trying to respond to what we see happening in that particular moment.

Speaker 3 (00:46:23):

Remember, our goal is to try to read it smoothly with just our eyes. Come here, Gus, come here. Kit said, mom, we are going for a ride in the car. Said, mom, I like to ride in the car. Said, Gus, I do not like to ride in the car, in the car, said the kitchen here, here off. Here we go. Said Mom, this is fun. Said Gus. This is not fun. Said kitten. We are going to the vet, said, mom. Oh no. Said guys.

Speaker 4 (00:47:37):

Oh no. And kitten is speechless. Kitten really doesn't know what to say at all. How did you do? Making it sound good and just using your eyes.

Speaker 3 (00:47:48):

Good.

Speaker 4 (00:47:48):

You did read this one again, and I like how you read all the way to here and then all the way to the comma. Give that a try again.

Speaker 3 (00:47:58):

I do not like to ride in the car said the kitchen.

Speaker 4 (00:48:03):

Yeah, we can say that whole bit all the way up to that comma where we take a little pause. That's awesome.

Speaker 3 (00:48:11):

Find

Speaker 4 (00:48:11):

And frame the word this. Find that word This? Yeah. Can you frame it with your two fingers? Yeah. Good. Can you show yourself the part that says the And where's the part that says is There you go. What's that word again?

Speaker 3 (00:48:27):

This

Speaker 4 (00:48:28):

Awesome. Find them. Frame the word kitten. Can you clap it?

Speaker 3 (00:48:33):

Kitten?

Speaker 4 (00:48:34):

Can you show yourself the parts? What's the first part that you said,

Speaker 3 ([00:48:41](#)):

Kit?

Speaker 4 ([00:48:43](#)):

Good. Did you show yourself the parts? Yeah. Awesome. All right, one more going. There it is. Show yourself the parts. Go. And what's that part?

Speaker 3 ([00:48:59](#)):

Ding.

Speaker 4 ([00:48:59](#)):

Awesome job. And when you put it together, Ed's

Speaker 3 ([00:49:03](#)):

Going,

Speaker 4 ([00:49:03](#)):

Going Good Work. Okay, let's choose one more. Jolly rod or the pirate. Sunny or cloudy, or where are the sunhats? Sunny or cloudy? Ooh, we haven't read that one in a while. Those arguing. Frogs

Speaker 3 ([00:49:34](#)):

Two day is going to be sunny said the little frog. No, said the big frog today is going to be cloudy. Today is not going to be cloudy. Said the little frog today is going to be sunny. Oh no. Said. Oh no, it is not going. Oh no. It is not said. The big frog. Oh yes it is said the little frog.

Speaker 4 ([00:50:26](#)):

So remember these punctuation marks help us to know how much to read.

Speaker 3 ([00:50:31](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 4 ([00:50:31](#)):

Yeah. So let's try this like this. Oh no. It is not said the big frog. See how I read all of these together in a group?

Speaker 3 ([00:50:41](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 4 ([00:50:42](#)):

Okay, now you try it on this one.

Speaker 3 ([00:50:45](#)):

Oh yes. Oh yes, it is said the little frog.

Speaker 4 ([00:50:52](#)):

Doesn't that sound good like they're arguing? Yeah. Do it again. Do it on this one.

Speaker 3 ([00:50:56](#)):

Oh no, it's not said. The big frog today is not going to be cloudy. Said the little frog today is going to be sunny said little said the big frog.

Speaker 4 ([00:51:13](#)):

Nice job. Reading to the punctuation.

Speaker 3 ([00:51:17](#)):

Today is going to be rainy.

Speaker 4 ([00:51:28](#)):

Get your finger in there to help you. Don't push it away. Show yourself the first part.

Speaker 3 ([00:51:32](#)):

Yes, said

Speaker 4 ([00:51:37](#)):

So. Let's look at the first part. Let me show you how you can break it using this, or you could break it with your finger that way. Do you see that first part? Yes. What does that first part say? Can I show you another place where you read it? Let's see. Was it in this one? I think it was right in. Here we go. You read that word in this story right here. You read this word. What word is this?

Speaker 3 ([00:52:17](#)):

Here we go, said the Here we go. Said Mom this.

Speaker 4 ([00:52:26](#)):

That's the word This. What is the first part of that word?

Speaker 3 ([00:52:29](#)):

T H.

Speaker 4 ([00:52:30](#)):

And what sound does it make

Speaker 3 ([00:52:31](#)):

This

Speaker 4 ([00:52:33](#)):

Take a look at it. And this part says

Speaker 3 ([00:52:36](#)):

Is

Speaker 4 ([00:52:36](#)):

Is altogether this. We have that same part right here. The

Speaker 3 ([00:52:43](#)):

Same this.

Speaker 4 ([00:52:44](#)):

It says,

Speaker 3 ([00:52:48](#)):

There

Speaker 4 ([00:52:48](#)):

You go.

Speaker 3 ([00:52:50](#)):

Today is going to be rainy.

Speaker 1 ([00:52:56](#)):

Alright. All right. What are some of the noticings that you had during that little interaction? What did you notice about cc's? Sense of agency or sense of ownership? Did you have any noticings about the instructional decisions that I made? Connections to literacy processing theory. She definitely showed agency with

Speaker 5 ([00:53:25](#)):

Both picking the book. She had ownership there. She picked the book also. Most of the time when she did the solving, she would look at you either after she was done, but you decided not to give her anything. And so she knew it was her job to go back and do the solving on her own.

Speaker 1 ([00:53:43](#)):

Yeah. We've been in the process of breaking. You could see her first strategy was at the end of that story, push the book away. Just I noticed you're not looking at me, so I'm going to put this in front of you so that you can see that I need help. Then we moved to poke me on the arm and point to the book. So what we've been really trying to work with her on is that idea of taking on some of that independence and helping her to see that she does have that power within herself to start to solve some of those problems. But she does love that she gets a chance to choose, which helps her with that familiar read, that idea that I can choose a book that I feel comfortable with today, or I can choose a book that I want to challenge myself with a little bit. Because I remember that there was some processing that she doesn't have that language, but sometimes she knows that she still has some reading work to do. And so that book choice gives her that opportunity to make those independent decisions about how much reading work she wants to take on that day as well.

(00:54:55):

Any other noticings?

Speaker 6 (00:54:57):

We do have a couple of noticings in the chat. Your modeling helped her to take on the new learning. And then a comment about the book choice, which you just talked about, allowed herself to see she's able to do things for herself.

Speaker 1 (00:55:10):

Yeah, that sunnier Cloudy book was one of the first places where we've seen that changing dialogue without a lot of dialogue tags. So it doesn't start with the little frog said, the Big Frog said they're just having a conversation. And so that was a tough thing, a little bit of complexity with that book, trying to help her keep in mind who's talking now. And so going in and supporting her with that fluency and helping her with some of those visual cues were some of the things that I was trying to help her with so that she could keep that meaning going. She was starting to lose meaning because she wasn't thinking about, she wasn't able to carry through what's really happening. Who's talking? I'm not quite getting it. She wasn't getting that. That's where the arguing was starting. So modeling, reading, using that visual punctuation, those conventions helped to preserve that meaning, which helped her to think a little bit more deeply.

Speaker 6 (00:56:07):

One thing I noticed was because you had brought up Brian's dev session right before this and talking about the discourse, your language was show yourself as she was success after she successfully finished that first book, she was able to do some breaking. And then that was a nice link to when she did need to problem solve. In that final book, you were able to build right on what she controlled in the previous book and then help her. And your language was consistent, but it was about her taking the ownership and supporting herself.

Speaker 1 (00:56:40):

And sometimes through those examples, trying to help her link to, here's another place that you read that helps us to see, Ooh, we still don't have this solid. So I grabbed that book thinking that she would be able to use what she knew about that word this, but then you probably heard her having to go back and reread in order to say that word. That's information that you would see me record on my lesson plan to be able to think about in future lessons, supporting her with something that isn't fully known yet.

Speaker 6 (00:57:09):

And I was going to say that your decision-making at the end of that first book to focus on this, right, was possibly setting her up for the second book when you knew that was going to be a little tricky part for her and to see if she would take that on.

Speaker 1 (00:57:29):

Yep. Alright. I'm going to take us back into the presentation and I have another example to show. We're going to take a look now at yesterday's new book. So this is Cece. A couple of weeks later, she's got a new book. So we've moved from the familiar read to rereading the book that she read the day before

and the taking of the behavior record. And so now I want you to be thinking about that. If you were having this conversation, if you were watching this lesson, if you went in and watched this lesson or a part of this lesson and you wanted to have a conversation with the teacher about what you saw, I also want you to be thinking about what are some of the things that you might talk to the teacher about after seeing this. So you can continue to think about where do we see agency? Where do we see ownership? Where do we see instructional decision-making? And then start to synthesize by and how would you have a conversation with a teacher

Speaker 3 (00:58:38):
About the lion and the rabbit lion and the lion. The lion and the rabbit. I am hungry, said the lion. I'll get go and get a rabbit to eat. The lion got a rabbit. The lion looked up. My finger's beeping.

Speaker 4 (00:59:32):
It's okay. Go ahead. Start again if you need to.

Speaker 3 (00:59:35):
The lion looked up, here comes a big deer. He said, all get all go and get a deer. This rabbit, this rabbit is two little, and he let the rabbit go away. Went the deer away went the lions. The deer ran and ran and the lion ran after it. The deer ran far, far and it got away. The hungry lion came back to eat the rabbit. My rabbit has gone away. Is that right?

Speaker 4 (01:01:13):
You check it.

Speaker 3 (01:01:14):
Gone. It has gone. Said the lion and he act had to stay hungry.

Speaker 4 (01:01:40):
How do you think he's feeling now?

Speaker 3 (01:01:42):
Hungry. I actually feel sad for the lion. He didn't get anything to eat.

Speaker 4 (01:01:48):
Yeah, you know what? You're right. That is how they eat, right? By getting animals.

Speaker 3 (01:01:53):
Yeah. Yeah. But that's not fair to the lion. He wants something to eat.

Speaker 4 (01:01:57):
But did he learn his lesson, do you think? Uhuh? No. You think he's going to try for the bigger animals? Let me show you something. Do you notice anything on this page?
(01:02:07):

And you take a close look. What do you notice? Oh, you're looking at something tricky. Look at the picture first. Do you notice anything interesting on this page? If you take a close look, what do you see? The bunny, the rabbit. So if he turned around, do you think he'd catch the rabbit again? Oh my gosh. Oh, so you were showing me a tricky spot that was tricky for you. Did you think Spot what? I sound it out. You did. You broke it with your voice, didn't you? How did you break it? Add had. And I like how when you broke it, you kept this a big part. Add, add, and then you put it right back together. And then there was a spot here where you weren't sure if you were.

Speaker 1 ([01:02:52](#)):

I'm going to skip forward just a little bit.

Speaker 4 ([01:02:54](#)):

And the farther, farther makes sense in the story. So you're saying faster, but do I see an R at the end? Uhuh. All right, so let's check fast. Try that, read that and see if that makes sense. And sounds right. The deer ran faster. Fast. The deer ran fast and it got away. Does that make sense to sound right? And it looks right too, doesn't it? Yeah.

Speaker 1 ([01:03:22](#)):

Okay. Did you notice that little shift? Did you notice at the end she wanted to point out that place where she did some problem solving on her own? And did you see the little body language where she's doing the celebratory thing there? Right? Because that was a goal for her, is to start thinking about how to see things in bigger parts. She's been reverting to phoning by phone analysis when she's trying to solve words. And so we've been talking about that. And you can see she just like, I did it and I know I did it. I did it really well. And her comprehension of that story, her deep, deep meaning of the story. If we had time, I'd love to show you the next section where we transition into writing. Because she takes that and she starts talking about, her story was the lion should go to the river and get a drink of water because she was so connected to that idea that the poor lion didn't get anything to eat after all that.

([01:04:19](#)):

She just thought it was too bad how he eats. It's pretty sad that he didn't get anything. So he should at least go to the river and try to get himself a little drink of water here. So I thought that that was great. Now, if you were going to have a conversation with your teacher, if you're a literacy leader and you're trying to make a little bit of sense of what is going on in that lesson, or you want to have a deeper understanding of what is happening in that particular lesson, there might be some look fors as you're watching lessons, and those are in some of the handouts that I've shared with you.

([01:04:57](#)):

But I also wanted to share with you, you might ask some of those questions about literacy processing instructional assumptions. Where did you notice it easy for the child? Where did you notice that it was challenging for the child? What are you noticing about her individual path for literacy? You want to be thinking about as you're watching some of those lessons, how much of it is the work that the child is doing and how much of it is the work that the teacher is doing in order to get to that independence and develop that self extending system? And then we want to extend our thinking just a little bit by thinking about, so how do we make that systemic? If you're in a building that has reading recovery, you're likely to be in a building where literacy processing theory is the underlying theory for a lot of the decisions that happen in your classrooms.

([01:05:49](#)):

You might start to think, how do we make that transfer from? Okay, if these are the things that are key and central to reading recovery, what would I expect to see and hear in instructional context where practices are grounded in literacy processing theory? So what might this look like in a guided reading lesson? What might this look like in an interactive read aloud? How could I look for some of these similar things? What can you see and hear in your building that is evidence that literacy processing theory is really connected to practice? And that's something that you can do regardless of your role. You might be the reading recovery teacher and you want to learn a little bit more about that transfer for children, how to make that transfer. So what are the instructional context like in the classrooms that you go in? If you're an administrator and you're doing classroom visits or learning walks, you might want to be thinking about some of these things as you move together. And we've shared in the first session that it's really important for you to know your theory because being grounded in your theory is what enables us to make decisions that are the best interests of students. So a final question. What actions do you feel empowered to take now in service of your teachers and your students? Now that we've thought about literacy processing theory and talked about some of that in action?

Speaker 6 (01:07:15):

I'm not sure that this directly answers your question, Stephanie, but Kathleen had posted in the chat. Thank you so much for the look forwards and the questions to consider, and I think others of us appreciate that as well too. As you said, it wouldn't just necessarily be specific to reading recovery, but just good practice in developing that agency and that ownership. So that's one comment. Oh, we have a couple more in the chat stuff. I utilize sideline coaching when I take administration administrators observation or learning walks. Having to look for document will be helpful. So that's a great application for that as well. Jeff commented that it helps us stay focused on the theory as a basis for all we see in here.

Speaker 1 (01:07:56):

Yeah, and that's really it. When we're thinking about decision-making, how is it connected to that theory? How can we lift it and connect it back to that theory again so that it's not just, well, here comes the admin and they said they want me to do this, so I guess I'm going to do this. Right. We don't want to just be an active compliance, but having a deeper understanding of that theory helps us to understand why that idea that we know that emotions really help to encode memory when we know it's so important to build on their strengths when we know that it's so important that children are the ones who are thinking about the story and coming up with their own understandings. I mean, that was cece's work. That was her thinking about what was happening in that story, that was her own language that helped then translate to a gorgeous story that we could write about later on. Yeah, we've got to know the why I'm so big on theory when I do professional learning, because we have to know the why for what we're doing all the time. And if we do that, then I think change becomes an easier thing to swallow. Making shifts in our practice becomes easier because we understand why we're doing it and it's not just because the powers that be told us. So

Speaker 6 (01:09:16):

I think that there was another comment that said if we don't understand the why, the practice is not sustainable. And I'm thinking to something, and I wrote it down in the beginning that you had said about just viewing the components or just viewing the lesson. There's nothing magical about the components themselves. It doesn't mean that every teacher should be doing a cut up sentence every second like you had said. And I think that linking that, the why and that instructional decision making to what's best and

what makes sense in that moment for that child is so key that such a key understanding to understanding, really understand that literacy processing theory.

Speaker 1 ([01:09:50](#)):

And I think you can use those look fors and the questions if your building isn't already doing so. I think it would be a great practice to get moving in your buildings where classroom teachers observe the child in the reading recovery setting, especially if reading recovery is newer in your building, or if you have newer teachers who've come on board and then having a conversation after the lesson about some of the look fors. Because when you just go watch the lesson and you see those experiences from the lesson framework, teachers often think I do that. I do book introductions with my kids, we do familiar reads, we write together. So I don't know necessarily what I'm learning here, but if you have something as a guide piece for the conversation after, and it's great if as a leader you're even able to help support some of those conversations. I think that even helps our classroom teachers have a deeper understanding of the practice, especially that idea of the instructional decision-making, the dexterity and that agency, that active constructive learner there.

Speaker 6 ([01:11:02](#)):

It is just about our time. But Theresa had one comment back to what you had said earlier in the session. She said, I love that you said the child is our curriculum. Having a strong theory helps keep us focused. I mean, that couldn't be the better takeaway than all of this that you've given us to think about today.

Speaker 1 ([01:11:20](#)):

Well, a heartfelt thank you to all of you for coming today, for sticking it out right till the end. You had a lot of choices, so thank you for coming today. I appreciate it.