



INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE READING RECOVERY TEACHING SESSIONS BEHIND THE GLASS

INTRODUCTION

This document represents a flexible framework for effective teaching sessions behind the one-way glass. The project was initiated by the NATG Research Committee when considering how to compare teaching sessions in traditional Reading Recovery settings with those in which distance learning is involved. The need for a comprehensive look at teaching sessions led to this effort. All NATG members were invited to provide input and to give feedback on multiple drafts. This is now a living document with opportunities for review in the future.

THREE IMPORTANT NOTES

1. Tentative and flexible decision-making when preparing for teaching sessions is essential. There is no one framework or formula that dictates the leaders' decisions. There are, of course, essential priorities which are stressed in this document. The ultimate goal is stretching the teachers in ways that promote acceleration in every child taught.
2. Rather than separating guidance for in-training and trained teachers in this document, leaders will need to consider the expertise and needs of teachers across a continuum of the ideas shared. Clearly, the teaching sessions for trained teachers will need to extend their learning in significant ways. But for all teachers, change over time in teaching sessions is crucial for their ongoing learning.
3. The ideas included in this document represent a menu of options to support teacher leaders as they (a) engage teachers in Reading Recovery teaching sessions and (b) build a framework of expectations for teachers. Teacher leaders can use these indicators to choose actions to take before, during, and after lessons. It's up to the leader to choose optimum actions that best move their teachers forward at any given point in time.



EARLY WORDS FROM MARIE CLAY

“The critical parts of the in-service training were probably the demonstration and discussion sessions . . . allowing for discussion of what the child was doing and why the teacher might have responded as she did. Delayed discussion would not have been as effective. Videotaped replays lost the excitement of the on-task question and commentary. A teacher had to act when a teaching decision was required and these training discussions attended to such decision points as they arose. . . . After two demonstrations . . . the teachers spent a further hour discussing their work.”

(Clay, 1982, pp. 196-197)

“At all times, the in-service sessions aimed to enrich the teachers’ understanding of their children and to sharpen their use of special teaching procedures in order to maximize their effectiveness. The book describing these procedures did not provide a simple set of instructions that could be read and then implemented, but was a reference source and a basis for the discussion and clarification of concepts.” (Clay, 1982, p. 198)

“Topics raised by the teachers in these discussions suggested that their attention to the reading process was shifting from teaching for items of knowledge (letters known, words remembered), and from getting the children to habituate a skill or memorize a new element, to developing in the child the confidence and willingness to use a variety of strategies. Another feature of the shift in teaching was movement away from having the poor reader dependent on the teacher and towards teaching in such a way that the children had many opportunities to teach themselves.”

(Clay, 1982, p. 199)

INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE READING RECOVERY TEACHING SESSIONS BEHIND THE GLASS

PRELIMINARY PREPARATION BY THE TEACHER LEADER

- Schedule two lessons. “Two lessons are considered essential because the idea is not to provide specific feedback to an individual teacher but to draw out important principles of learning from the two observed ‘cases’” (Lyons, Pinnell, & DeFord, 1993, p. 41). Talk with your UTC to explore ideas for providing lessons with small classes.
- Reflect on the progress or trajectory of the group and generate a few (1-3) real questions that would take the group and the leader further. These questions should be real ones that would engage and extend the group. The questions may grow out of a combination of the Guide Sheets, the framework of inservice sessions, further reading, thinking about observations during school visits, etc. These are BIG questions to keep the group thoughtful and tentative, and to deepen the learning.
- Make a decision about whether a prior school visit with the teacher(s) will be helpful. The visit is not to set up the experience as a performance and is not a required practice. Have a reason such as (a) early sessions for in-training teachers, (b) observing current progress and needs of the student(s), (c) observing the current learning needs of the teacher(s), etc. This must be balanced with the opportunity to see and notice significant leaps in progress and new challenges; we don’t want to risk seeing what we expect.
- Determine if any advance assigned readings would be helpful. Less is more, especially with expectations for deep and critical reading. For in-training teachers, readings from *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals* will take priority over outside readings.
- Check the environment for the session: chairs, stools, technology, sound system, place for visitors and children with accompanying adult(s), etc.

REFERENCES

Clay, M. M. (1982). *Observing young readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Lyons, CA. (1994). Constructing chains of reasoning in Reading Recovery demonstration lessons. In C. K. Kinzer & D. J. Leu (Eds.), *Multidimensional aspects of literacy research, theory and practice. Forty-third yearbook of the National Reading Conference* (pp. 276-286). Chicago: National Reading Conference.

Lyons, C. A., Pinnell, G. S., & DeFord, D. E. (1993). *Partners in learning: Teachers and children in Reading Recovery*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Teacher leader resource To accompany Marie Clay’s Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals (2017). Worthington, OH: Reading Recovery Council of North America.

BEFORE THE LESSON

INDICATORS FOR THE TEACHER LEADER ROLE

- Start promptly.
- Provide a brief explanation for parents or other observers of their roles as observers.
- Remind teachers of expectations as needed (emphasis on literacy processing and evidence of strategic activity, focus on child's strengths and areas to be strengthened, conversation about what teachers want to get out of sessions, supportive collegial interactions, etc.).
- Set up the observations with one great question (emphasis). Teachers then can begin observing with a common experience of the emphasis. Experienced teachers may have their own question relative to the emphasis.
- Engage in dialogue about what the group wants to get out of the session.
- Support teachers in learning how to introduce the child. **Introductions should be flexible and changing with their understandings.** Avoid a rigid model that calls for information such as entry data that may not be helpful at a given point in time. **This needs to be very short and relevant to what the teachers can observe and provide feedback about.** When teachers are introducing a child, they may select what's most relevant, such as:
 - Emphasis on strategic processing
 - What the child knows and can do – strengths in reading, writing, and oral language
 - Change over time in lessons (reading, writing, talking)
 - Behaviors the teacher will be looking for as indicators of progress in strategic processing AND how she anticipates extending the trajectory (her teaching goals – could even include specific teaching procedures in LLDI)
 - How the group can help the teacher: What questions does she have? What is she pondering or wondering about her teaching or the child's learning?
 - The child's level of independence in processing
 - Perhaps an interview rather than a summary with teachers posing questions
 - Request for specific feedback from the group after the lesson
- Model an active listening role and ask probing questions; rephrase to uncover hidden assumptions; make notes to prompt talk during the lesson.

INDICATORS FOR THE TEACHER ROLE

- Teachers teaching children:
 - Set up materials in advance.
 - Provide an introduction to the child that invites group involvement and can extend learning for all. (SEE THE INTRODUCTION IDEAS above in “Indicators for the TEACHER LEADER Role.”)
- Teachers in the Group:
 - Listen respectfully to the introduction.
 - Actively engage in the introduction, posing questions about the child to gain deeper insight.

DURING THE LESSON

INDICATORS FOR THE TEACHER LEADER ROLE

Emphasize Close Observation

- Help teachers understand Clay's principle of close observation and how rationales are grounded in evidence gained from observation.
- Encourage teachers to share their observations.
- Encourage debate using observational evidence.
- Allow time for careful observation ('strategic looking').
- Determine when teachers no longer need to describe what they see but can talk in terms of processing.

Facilitate Discussion

- Create a positive environment, building on teacher's strengths while identifying teaching moves.
- Continue with the emphasis established before the lessons; be flexible to switch emphasis if needed.
- Ensure interactive discussion:
 - Questioning and inviting multiple responses; Carol Lyons' "Chains of Reasoning" may be helpful here. ("What do others think?" "Anyone else think it may be something different?")
 - Scaffolding dialogue which changes over time
 - Prompting
 - Calling for more evidence and analysis
 - Synthesizing
 - Challenging
 - Summarizing
 - Demonstrating a tentative and flexible stance
 - Coming in and out of discussion; not dominating
 - Staying with the lesson at hand and as appropriate drawing upon reading assignments to support conversations about the lesson
- Avoid leaving issues unresolved; clear up inappropriate behaviors (may need to be noted and picked up during the discussion after the lessons).

Shape and Extend Understanding of Literacy Processing

- Link procedures to theories.
- Demonstrate how to hypothesize about processing and support with evidence. Call on teachers to do so.
- Ask for multiple hypotheses.
- Attend to the language of the teachers (focus on processing).
- Guide chains of reasoning.
- Pose 'why' questions relating to theory followed by 'how' related to practice.
- Ask questions to dig deeper.
- Get teachers to think about the kinds of "cognitive payoffs" from each lesson activity.

Create a Community of Learners

- Position teachers as a group of collaborative problem solvers.
- Maintain emphasis on what the group is learning from the lessons while providing some suggestions to support continued acceleration for the child's literacy learning.
- Position the leader as a colleague, guiding and lifting rather than as the expert.
- Attend to teachers who dominate or don't participate.

DURING THE LESSON CONTINUED

INDICATORS FOR THE TEACHER ROLE

Observing and listening

- Observe students' reading behaviors and teacher/child interactions closely.
- Learn to describe what is observed (to put thoughts into words).
- Share observations and inferences from observing reading and writing behaviors.
- Listen closely to build on comments of others with no sidebars.

Interactive, Active Engagement

- Learn to freely articulate thinking and take risks.
- Participate (all teachers) in lively discussions of interactions, child responses, teacher decisions, patterns of response.
- Create chains of reasoning among themselves (linking, clarifying, extending, eliciting, instruction, etc.).
- Pose questions, building on the comments of others.
- Learn to question, probe, agree/disagree in constructive ways.
- Create an interactive, collaborative, and constructive learning environment.

Focus on Literacy Processing Theory

- Keep the focus on processing and level of independence.
- Explore a number of hypotheses citing supporting evidence.
- Link to theory – “why” and “how” dialogue.
- Remain tentative and flexible.



AFTER THE LESSON

INDICATORS FOR THE TEACHER LEADER ROLE

General / Logistics

- Briefly acknowledge both teachers with supportive comments.
- Give teachers who taught time to debrief – what they want to share about their lessons.
- Move quickly into discussion.
- Provide equal opportunity for discussing both lessons and making connections between lessons when possible. For trained teachers, time for discussion of individual lessons may be shortened to allow for more time for ‘big idea’ learning.
- Encourage quick, conversational dialogue.
- Help teachers shape talk as focused, short, and intentional.
- Observe how the group talks about lessons, using data, LLDI, etc.
- Have lesson materials and records available.
- Allow appropriate time for in-depth discussion.
- Model the use of LLDI.
- Reflect on participation, clarifications needed, etc.
- Make notes about need for follow-up visits and future sessions.
- Evaluate the session and your role (what went well and what didn’t).
- Give opportunities for the class to reflect on and evaluate the experience.
- End the class on time.

Support Shifts in Teachers’ Understandings of Theory/Rationales/Procedures

- Focus discussion on strategic activities in reading and writing – invite connections.
- Assess group and individual teacher’s participation and current understandings based on your observations. Plan for future sessions or individual support based on this tentative assessment.
- Return to questions raised during the lesson that need attention.
- Clarify theoretical concepts, misunderstandings, and procedural mismatches.
- Use LLDI to support rationales (provide time for teachers to look in LLDI for dialogue to start discussion).
- Extend by connecting to Clay, articles, etc., if appropriate.
- Integrate theory with practical examples from the lesson. Practical examples should be connected to theoretical concepts in ways that support and deepen understandings.
- Help teachers create links between parts of the lessons.
- Discuss how the teaching supported the child.
- Encourage questions and comments from teachers for clarification, extension, etc.
- As needed, consider demonstrations, role playing, partner practice to show key concepts of teaching interactions and new learning.
- Encourage teachers to talk about what they have learned as individuals.
- Discuss what we ALL learned from the experience.
- Lift thinking by asking for implications for teaching their own children.
- Allow time for highlighting strengths and raising issues at the end of the discussion.
- Summarize and emphasize the big ideas about the BTG conversation.

AFTER THE LESSON CONTINUED

INDICATORS FOR THE TEACHER ROLE

General / Logistics

- Express appreciation to the 2 teachers within the discussion.
- Contribute independently to the discussion; build on contributions of others.
- Use lesson resources and writing books to search for patterns and consider alternative solutions.
- Expect to use LLDI for evidence/rationales.
- Ask 'what,' 'why,' 'how' questions.
- Reflectively evaluate the discussion.

Emphasis on Literacy Processing/Strategic Activities

- BTG teachers have an opportunity to ask questions of the group and must leave feeling supported and armed with new ideas for child.
- The group shares BTG observations and poses hypotheses.
- Dig in LLDI to for analysis of reading and writing behaviors and to clarify hypotheses (theory, rationales, procedures). Trained teachers may include discussion of other Clay texts.
- Discuss connections between theory and practice.
- Analyze records to hypothesize on processing behaviors.
- Identify and discuss theoretical constructs and procedural issues.
- Look for evidence of shifts.
- Apply new learning and see implications for one's own teaching.
- Evaluate – What did we learn? How will we use what we learned? What was the meaning of this experience?

AFTER THE DISCUSSION

- Allow time for attention to implementation issues after discussion of lessons.

