



The 'Write' To Read!

Looking Back On An Eventful Year

The school year of 2006-2007 will always be remembered by our Reading Recovery™ Teacher Leader Team as the year of change!

We started the year with the opening of the Yorkhill Reading Recovery™ Training site in the West. The staff at Yorkhill have been wonderful in accommodating us at their school and have made this transition a smooth one for our classes and for Janice Van Dyke, our Ontario Trainer, who also works out of the site.

In the new year, we had news that our Newmarket Training Centre and Office would be moved to the Centre for Leadership & Learning, on Harry Walker Parkway. This move brought us "under the wing" of Curriculum & Instructional Services where we belonged. We are very thankful to the construction and maintenance teams headed by Henry Ngan for their devotion to the standards of construction required by the Canadian Institute of Reading Recovery™.



Centre for Leadership & Learning, EC-
Newmarket

We caught our breath from all of this as we moved into the closing months of the school year and our "Data

Days". The computer lab at CEC North was being moved and we found York Region Learning Connections in Richmond Hill to be a fine host for our annual Reading Recovery™ board wide data collection week. The team packed up our gear and moved there for a week in June. We appreciated the assistance of Rikki Varslavans, Susan Watt-Hannah, and Joan Lachhman while we invaded their territory.

At the end of the school year, we were given the go ahead to open another Reading Recovery™ training centre in the East. Ashton Meadows Public School at 230 Calvert Road in Markham was our target location for another bout of construction as was done earlier in the year in Newmarket. Thank you to the construction team who had the facility in place in record time. Thank you also to the staff of Ashton Meadows Public School for their helpful and welcoming nature. We are glad to be able to serve the teachers at a training facility closer to their schools, especially when it is their turn to bring a student for a lesson "behind the glass".

Our inaugural class at Ashton Meadows was September 6, when Linda Hirsch and Fiona Weller held their first teacher training class. Lynne Nicol and Laurie Vaillancourt held their first training class at the Centre for Leadership and Learning on September 5th. Laurie is a welcome addition to our Reading Recovery™ Teacher Leader Team from the Toronto District School Board.

We now look forward to the 2007-2008 school year with anticipation of more success in reading and writing

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Teachers Care. Every Student, Every Day.

Special Point of Interest:

Reading Recovery™ was identified by the What Works Clearinghouse¹ to be the only intervention out of 153 beginning reading programs to have positive effects or potentially positive effects in alphabetics, fluency, comprehension and general reading achievement.

¹ The What Works Clearinghouse is a branch of the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences. Its mission is to provide educators, policymakers, researchers and the public with a central and trusted source of scientific evidence of what works in education.

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for our students in lessons and then in the future as they continue their journey in literacy.



This was also the year that we lost a dear colleague and friend. Janie Moore shared with all of us her passion and commitment to children and to learning. We were all saddened by her untimely passing and miss her deeply. She left us with a legacy of continuing her caring, and with memories of a colleague who made remarkable contri-

butions to the York Region District School Board and to her friends and family around her.

On the tail of this news, we learned of the demise of Marie Clay (founder of Reading Recovery™). She was always an inspiration to us at our training and on-going professional development classes; and team meetings, even without her actual presence in the room. The teacher leaders have had the treasure of having known her personally, which makes her loss all the more striking.



Highlights from the Southeastern Reading Recovery and Early Literacy Conference – January 2007

*Richard Allington, Professor, University of Tennessee, began his keynote with a most compelling statement: "A struggling reader poses an instructional problem. Solving the problem requires an individual solution. Materials themselves are impotent." Children differ; struggling readers differ, so intervention designs must be based on knowledge of these differences, and figuring out how to best teach each struggling reader is the essential task. Effective instruction is the only solution. In Guthrie and Humenick's 2004 research of 2,000 studies, he brought to our attention that the best student outcomes were achieved when there was:

- Access to interesting text and student choice in the classroom.
- Appropriate matching of students to texts in the content areas, too
- reciprocal teaching of reading and writing, with writing providing the best practice for phonological awareness
- a balance of whole group, small group and side-by-side teaching in the classroom
- co-operative learning opportunities which fostered motivation
- expert tutoring, like Reading Recovery, for those who need it

Also, fluency issues can be exacerbated by highly interruptive reading or by the

teacher confirming or denying responses through body language - the external monitoring of the student's responses. Lastly, because vocabulary makes up 50% of comprehension, fastest gains were made when there was independently chosen, appropriate reading for about 40 minutes per school day.

Jann Farmer-Hailey, Reading Recovery™ Trainer from New South Wales, Australia, offered some questions for us to think about in terms of the individual child's processing:

- What does the child control *now*?
- What links is the child making *at this time*?
- Is the child attending to new things in print?
- What is leading the child to make these attempts? / What does s/he need to learn how to do differently to extend or strengthen processing?

And questions to guide our teaching:

- Is this the most powerful praise point, prompt, or teaching opportunity?
- Am I actively supporting the partially correct and building on that?
- Will this lead to change?
- Has there been a shift?
- Where do I need to go next with this child? (constantly making new hy-

potheses)

- Am I scaffolding this child so that they can answer my questions and read this book OR am I scaffolding this child's learning so that they can problem-solve with increasing independence?

New South Wales has discontinuing averages of 15 weeks, 59 lessons, with children reading at level 18, BURT scores of 30 and a writing vocabulary of 53 words. Their carry-over rate is 1% of children who 'hit the ground running' – they are back in and out of lessons *fast*. She attributes their success to the high value that is placed on the child being resilient, tussling and initiating activity to "puzzle it out". That's where we get the biggest payoff.

Linda Hirsch

**Richard Allington will be presenting at this year's YRDSB Quest Conference in November.*

Helpful Hint
Reading Recovery™ Report Card information can be found on the Enterprise Portal. Choose the Board Documents tab, then follow the "R" to Report Card to find "Requirements of the Provincial Report Card and the Kindergarten Reporting Process Fact Sheet" and the Procedure.

“Leap Into Literacy”—Recap of the 2007 Reading Recovery™ Conference

It was my pleasure to have the opportunity to attend the 2007 Regional Reading Recovery/ Early Literacy Conference on Thursday, February 22nd and 23rd at the Hilton Suites in Markham. This year’s conference, **Leap into Literacy**, provided numerous opportunities for more than 750 participants from various boards from across Ontario to gather, listen, discuss and deepen their understanding of literacy learning and teaching. Literacy experts from Canada, the United States and New Zealand presented a variety of informative professional sessions relevant for both Reading Recovery teachers and classroom teachers.

The reception area was abuzz with participants collecting conference material and beginning to settle in for the conference opening. The Director of Education for the York Region Board of Education, Bill Hogarth, officially opened the conference. He spoke passionately about the work being done by both Reading Recovery teachers and all teachers involved in early literacy learning. He proudly shared his commitment to continue to support early literacy intervention and quality professional development.

The first keynote speaker, Dr. Linda Dorn, professor and author, spoke about literate thinking for teachers. She highlighted the importance of teachers talking about literacy. She gave many examples on how schools are implementing professional learning communities into the work day, including literacy team meetings, teacher-to-teacher conferences, book clubs, and professional book studies.

Dr. Dorn also stressed the importance of oral language and the human need to talk. Talking and interacting with others is crucial to effective writing.

Participants were then able to attend breakout sessions of their choice. Sessions on early literacy and Reading Recovery were offered on a wide variety of topics. Members could choose areas of interest such as: teacher talk, speedy processing, book introductions, Roaming Around the Known and achieving acceleration in writing, just to name a few.

Friday began with a welcome address by Dianne Stuart, President of the Canadian Institute of Reading Recovery. This day included sessions for administrators and French Immersion schools. This is truly an exciting time for Canada, as Reading Recovery expands and becomes available to children in French Immersion schools!

Gail Saunders-Smith, writer and staff developer gave her keynote address on writing. Her humorous and light-hearted approach

had everyone totally engaged as she spoke about early writing. Ms. Saunders-Smith gave anecdotes and shared examples of children’s writing as she spoke of and demonstrated examples of the writing stages.

This is my field year and my first Reading Recovery Conference. The excitement of reconnecting with colleagues from my training year, conversing with colleagues from across the province and sharing notes

and experiences were so rewarding. The interaction and dialogue with colleagues were both motivating and illuminating. Even while waiting to pick up lunch or while settling in to listen to speakers, the talk was about literacy. I learned more about reading, writing and being part of a community that is working toward literacy for all children.

JoAnne Ricci,
Bakersfield Public School

**“Continuing the Journey
Reading Recovery
and Beyond”
2008 Canadian National
Reading Recovery™/
Early Literacy Conference—April 3–5**

It was extremely powerful, to hear the same important messages from world experts on literacy, that we as Reading Recovery teachers are familiar with through Marie Clay’s work.

The 2008 Reading Recovery™ Conference is scheduled for April 3, 4 and 5 at the Sheraton Parkway North Conference Centre in Richmond Hill featuring Billie Askew, Sue Burroughs Lange, Mary Fried, Stuart McNaughton and Robert Schwartz. A special tribute banquet and silent auction will be held to benefit the Marie Clay Canadian Memorial Fund.

We have enclosed a Conference Overview and Registration Form as part of this newsletter. Please note that only field year teachers are guaranteed funding by their Area. If in their field year, would like to attend, please pursue alternate avenues for funding and follow the usual procedure for attending a conference using Form P122-01 (Application to Attend A Convention, Conference or Workshop).

Words of Wisdom from our 2006-07 Valedictorian:

Marlene Clare, Coledale Public School, was one of our 33 graduates in the training classes of 2006-07. She was asked to speak at graduation regarding her experiences during her training year. Here are a few excerpts from her speech that are sure to inspire this year's training teachers as well as the rest of us!

...No one will forget their first time "teaching behind the glass". The anticipation leading up to your dreaded date and the nervousness of what will the child do or say. ..Yet, when you get behind the glass, all that fear seems to disappear and the learning/teaching begins. The child's reading and writing begin to unfold and shine. And remember: what goes on behind the glass stays behind the glass even if you have 12 people watching you along with a trustee and a principal or two. In the end, those 12 fellow teachers in training along with the teacher leaders are there to support and encourage you through some of those difficult moments. At every session, I always found "gifts" in those lessons that reflected back to me. It could have been an aha moment or a new direction to take. I was always excited to try them in the next lessons with my students.

...Remember when we sat together last August and they handed us those two books that we didn't realize would become "lifelines". Our guide books. I remember starting to read those books over the Summer and thinking "what in

the world is Marie Clay talking about". But something happened along the way, the words of Clay began to **make sense** and **sound right** and I know her editor made sure they **looked right**. Clay's words of wisdom began to resonate through my daily lessons with my students, discussions at training classes and teacher leader visits. My only goal now is to get to the point where I can quote a page number like the teacher leaders. Maybe next year. I still don't know how they do it.

...One of my student's parents walked up to me and asked to give me a hug. She proceeded to tell me that I must be a very good teacher. I asked her why she thought this. She told me that her son talks about reading all the time now and what he does everyday with me. He can't wait to read those little books he brings home every night. I listened to her for a few moments and thanked her for the positive comments. Finally, I turned to her and said, "You know your son is the one that does all the work. I just showed him what he knows already and how he can help himself when he reads and writes." Isn't this the real essence of what we do everyday as Reading Recovery™ teachers?

...Good luck to everyone in their field year and congratulations to all of us!

A Perspective of a Gr. 3 Student

Last April, Brennan Cruse, a Grade 3 student, from the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic Board was asked to speak about his Reading Recovery™ experience at the Teacher Leader Forum. This is what he wrote about his address to this national assembly of Teacher Leaders.

On Sunday I woke up saying my speech in my head for I was saying it at the Canadian Reading Recovery teacher leaders meeting. There was about one hundred and twenty people there.

...That's when I knew my speech was in one minute. It was time. He (Mr. Beal), said he brought Brennan to talk about his journey of Reading Recovery. Then he invited me up. I clipped the microphone onto my shirt. Then I began. Imagine what it would be like not knowing how to read! When I was done everyone



Brennan—6th International RR Institute program book

clapped. I got a standing ovation! Then I went back to my seat and took a big sip of water. I felt so good!

Brennan Cruse

He said he brought Brennan to talk about his journey of Reading Recovery. Then he invited me up. I clipped the microphone onto my shirt. Then I began. Imagine what it would be like not knowing how to read!

Dates to Remember!

"Top Up" Orders due - Friday, November 9, 2007

National RR Conference April 3, 4, 5, 2008

Teacher Leader Forum - April 6, 7 & 8 (Teacher Leaders will be out of the office)

Reading Recovery™ Info Meeting—February 6, 2008

Data Days (tentative) - June 4—11, 2008

Training Graduation—June 18, 2008