

Individualizing instruction for every child, every day.

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Research question

In what ways do Reading Recovery teachers individualize instruction from lesson to lesson, every day, with each of their Reading Recovery students?

We know that part of the success of Reading Recovery is that every child receives individualized tuition, every day (Askew & Simpson 2004). Although individualized instruction is one of the central tenets of Reading Recovery (Clay 1993, p. 9) there has been limited research examining what teachers do within a Reading Recovery lesson to respond to children's individual learning needs. This presentation explores the ways five teachers altered what they did and said over the course of one morning of teaching, as they taught each of their three or four students. It is a snapshot which examines how Reading Recovery teachers adjust their teaching responses to design and deliver individualized lessons for every child, every day.

Ways the teachers altered the materials and tasks they used with each child

(Adapted from Clay, M 2003, *Change over time*, Heinemann, Auckland, p. 249.)

- Pace of lesson is managed by the teacher to adjust to the learner.
- Particular books are chosen for a child, considering gender, interests, cultural experiences as well as progress to date.
- Time on hearing sounds in words, on letter work, on phonemic awareness, on word work and the cut-up story is increased or decreased according to learner needs.
- Progression up a gradient of difficulty in books differs: some children move through levels rapidly while others read different books on one level for several lessons, and this is varied at different times in a lesson series.
- Close additional attention is paid to having weak areas of individual responding linked in association with strong responses.
- Amount of conversation is varied to meet oral language needs.

Teacher / student interaction codes

(Adapted from Wong, S Groth & L O’Flahavan, J 1994, *Characterizing teacher-student interaction in Reading Recovery lessons, Reading Research Report No. 17*, National Reading Research Centre, ERIC.)

Coding categories	Examples of teacher interaction
<p>Prompting The teacher directs the student to act. Focuses the student’s attention on processing or oral reading performance.</p>	<p>Student miscues – faster/father T: ‘Try that again and think what would make sense and look like that word.’</p>
<p>Coaching Teacher comments designed to give reader perspective taking student outside the reading act. Comments focus on how the student performed or responded. Includes specific praise for student’s attention to reading processing or oral reading performance.</p>	<p><i>As the student reads –</i> T: ‘Oh, that sounded like you’re asking a question.’ T: ‘Mmm, I’m glad you noticed that. Now it makes sense and sounds right.’ <i>After the student reads –</i> T: Refers back to a page in the book – ‘This was clever, you noticed that your reading didn’t make sense. Well done, you corrected that really quickly.’</p>
<p>Telling Comments that provide the reader with the word or an explanation.</p>	<p>T: ‘That word is hid. Hide doesn’t sound right, does it?’</p>
<p>Modeling Explicit sharing of the act with the intention of getting the student to employ behaviours.</p>	<p>T: ‘Let’s read this part together, so I can show you how to put the words into groups.’</p>
<p>Discussing Talk about the text before, during or after the story is read.</p>	<p>T: ‘Remember when we read this the other day, father bear was a little bit selfish. Do you remember what he wanted?’</p>

Where to next?

Collect information about the way you individualize your teaching.

- Check whether the ‘Predictions of progress’ are very different for each child. Perhaps these are best handwritten in pencil.
- Tape record sections of your lessons. What are the differences in the way you interact with each child?
- Invite a colleague or teacher leader to observe two lessons. Ask your colleague to note examples of how you altered the materials, tasks and your interaction with each child.
- Bring your Observation Surveys for all students to a professional development session. Identify the differences and the implications for your teaching?