

Using Visual Information to Process Texts at Higher Levels



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A Concept of Literacy Processing

I chose to define reading as a message-getting, problem-solving activity, and writing as a message-sending, problem-solving activity.

Both activities involve linking **invisible patterns** of oral language with **visible symbols**.

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1. p.1

A Concept of Literacy Processing

We create networks in the brain linking things we see (print on the page) and things we hear (the language we speak).

In the context of reading and writing this is often called **literacy processing**.

Familiar marks on the page can be linked to familiar language networks in the brain.

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1. p.1

The Processing Challenge: awareness, attention, integration

Children who have many skills and a fair grasp of letters and words may still find it hard to pull information *together* when they are moving across lines of continuous text.

There are two sides to this challenge:

On one hand the child must sort out what to attend to on the page of print and in what order to use which pieces of information (**awareness and attention**)

On the other hand he has to call up things he already knows from different parts of his brain to meet up with the new information in print in the text he is looking at (*the **integration** of difference kinds of information*)

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 2 p. 88

Developing the Brain's Activities on Texts

On new texts, children must engage in extensive problem-solving.

Information comes into the brain through the senses and the brain rapidly activates what it believes is relevant knowledge stored from prior experience.

The Patterning of Complex Behaviour

In psychological terms, reading (or writing) continuous text is a sequential solving process involving a network of interacting systems.

I used to refer to this network of interacting systems as 'the patterning of complex behaviour' (Clay, 1972).

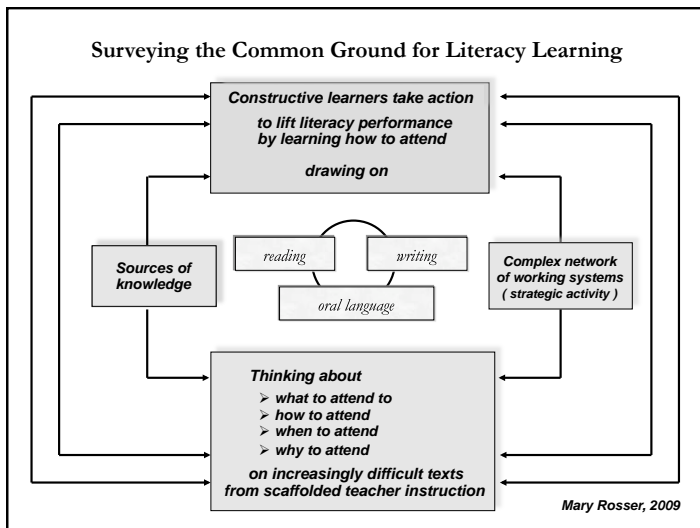
Teaching for Strategic Activity

The goal of teaching is to assist the child to construct effective networks in his brain for linking up all the strategic activity that will be needed to work on texts, not merely to accumulate items of knowledge.

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 pp. 43

Question

What is the tension between teaching for items and teaching for strategic activity?



Strategic Activity

Effective processing means that children use what they know in order to:

- **detect** errors for themselves
- **search** for more information
- **monitor** for errors
- **correct** those errors
- **check** a decision
- **repeat** or reread if necessary
- **confirm** a decision using all sources of information

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 p. 54

Strategic Activity

Independent readers improve their reading and writing every time they read or write. They:

- **monitor** their own reading and writing
- **anticipate** possible syntactic structures
- **search** for different kinds of information in word sequences, in meaning, and in sound-letter sequences
- **discover** new things for themselves
- **cross-check** one source of information with another
- **repeat** as if to confirm during reading and writing
- **self-correct**, taking the initiative for making decisions
- **solve** new words by these means

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 p. 53

Fast Responses

Everything we do in mature reading and writing will rely on **fast accurate perception** of language sounds (captured by the ears) and visual symbols (captured by the eyes) as we read and write.

What you know must be processed fast.

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 pp. 43,44

The importance of the new book

The new book must be carefully selected to challenge the child's processing system but not to 'upset' it.

When the teacher introduces the new book, most of the neural networks the child will need to use when problem-solving text will have already been alerted, activated by the preceding tasks.

Using the new book, the teacher will introduce something novel to his primed processing system

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 2 p. 89

V1

Flexibility

If the child is to move into higher-level texts then the teacher must recognize that the reader will need to have many different ways to approach print.

She must encourage him to be flexible, and try a variety of approaches to solve text problems.

She must pay particular attention to what she thinks would have the greatest payoff.

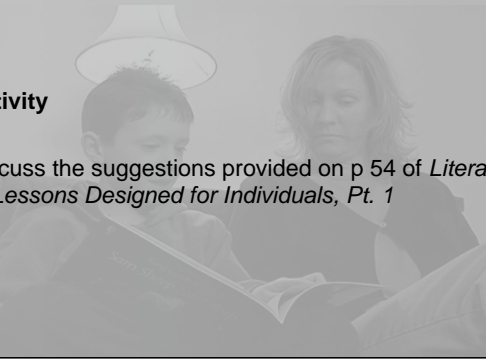
Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 p.42

V2

Teaching for Flexibility

Activity

Discuss the suggestions provided on p 54 of *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals, Pt. 1*

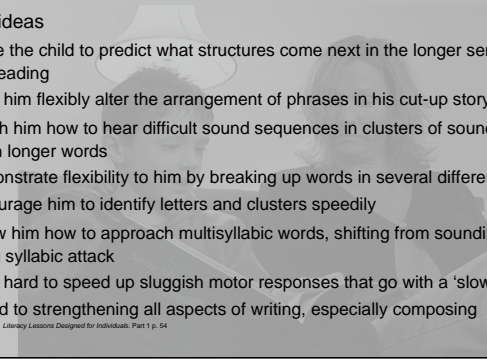


Teaching for Flexibility

Helpful ideas

- Guide the child to predict what structures come next in the longer sentences in his text reading
- Have him flexibly alter the arrangement of phrases in his cut-up story
- Coach him how to hear difficult sound sequences in clusters of sounds, and buried within longer words
- Demonstrate flexibility to him by breaking up words in several different ways
- Encourage him to identify letters and clusters speedily
- Show him how to approach multisyllabic words, shifting from sounding first letters to trying syllabic attack
- Work hard to speed up sluggish motor responses that go with a 'slow decoding pace'
- Attend to strengthening all aspects of writing, especially composing

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals, Part 1* p. 54



Anticipating Texts

Expecting and anticipating

Question
Do we consciously highlight and teach for these elements of processing or are they the poor relations in our teaching?

Think About

- the number, range and variety of ways we "anticipate" or "expect" in everyday life
 - On the road
 - A response - what someone will say
 - Storylines or lines from a movie

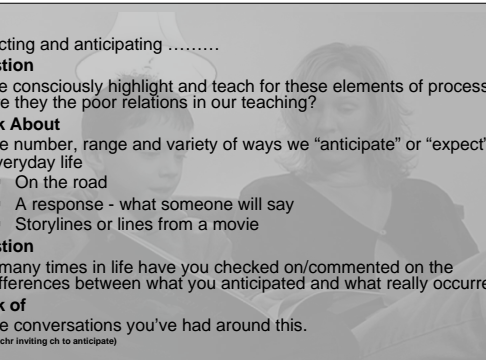
Question
How many times in life have you checked on/commented on the differences between what you anticipated and what really occurred?

Think of

- the conversations you've had around this.

(video of tchr inviting ch to anticipate)

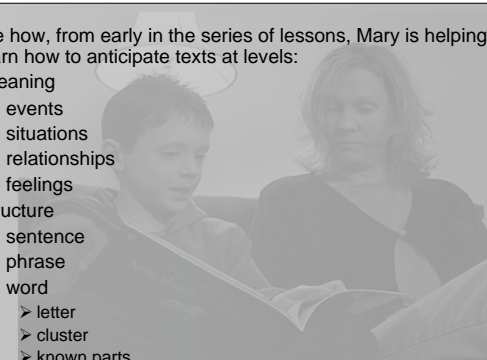
V3



Anticipating Texts

Notice how, from early in the series of lessons, Mary is helping Cynthia learn how to anticipate texts at levels:

- Meaning
 - events
 - situations
 - relationships
 - feelings
- Structure
 - sentence
 - phrase
 - word
 - letter
 - cluster
 - known parts



Risks and Priorities

Reading Recovery sets the highest value on independent responding, and this must involve the risks of being wrong.

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 pp. 44

Activity

Discuss your thoughts on this quote for both reading and writing

Self-correcting

It is necessary to develop self-correcting by allowing room for self-correcting to be initiated by the child.

The important thing about self-corrections is that the child initiates them because he decides that something is wrong and calls up his own resources for working on a solution.

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 pp. 43

Questions

What are the implications of this for our teaching - from the beginning of a child's series of lessons?

V4

Self-monitoring and Self-correcting

Any theoretical position that includes self-monitoring and self-correcting as significant behaviour in reading or in writing implies the existence of near misses, approximations, uncorrected responses and sometimes corrected responses.

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 pp. 43,44

Self-monitoring and Self-correcting

Questions

- How do we foster these responses?
- If we allow near misses, approximations and uncorrected responses, how do we know what to teach for, and when to teach for it? And..... how will we know if the child is learning how to get it right?

Risks and Priorities

What the teacher will do is to set some priorities as to which kind of learning she will attend to - just one or two things - and let the other behaviours that were incorrect go unattended for the moment.

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 pp. 44

Activity

Discuss this in relation to reading and writing

Think About Writing

As the time approaches for a child's lessons to be discontinued his teacher will still be lifting the text difficulty levels in reading and encouraging complexity in his writing.

She will monitor progress closely and check for signs of the behaviours listed in chapter 5 on the higher level texts he is reading

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 p. 53

Think About Writing

Activity

Turn to *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals Pt 1*, pp. 48-51 and discuss

View video segment of writing and discuss

Independence

Independence is not taught.

It is an outcome of an activity when a child controls that bit of processing and the teachers knows she can hold of that emphasis and move to another....

The teacher provides high levels of demonstration and support when necessary, and less support when appropriate.

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 p. 61

Independence

The teacher makes choices about what the learner attends to next and chooses books and words and tasks to be worked on in writing and reading.

(This is a very important part of instruction but is not always seen as such.)

She also has the knowledge and expectation of how well the child has taken over the ownership of using his reading and writing to extend his skills in both these activities.

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 p. 61

V5

Independence

Note how at the higher text levels Mary is teaching Alexxia how to:

- Engage with and respond to stories (comprehend) at the level of meaning, structure and visual information
- Anticipate possible events, emotions and situations within the story
- Attend to compound words
 - ✓ nowhere
 - ✓ hillside
- Identify and use known parts within words
- Break words into component parts
- Break words with eyes
- Use visual information and meaning to anticipate structures at the word level
 - ✓ inside
 - ✓ downstairs
 - ✓ today

Independence

Teachers aim to produce independent readers so that reading and writing improve whenever children read and write

The reader who problem-solves independently (on the run) has continual access to new learning.

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 p. 40

Processing at Higher levels

As the child reaches out to read more complex texts and writes longer and more involved stories these operations are used with **increasing speed and fluency** on

- longer stretches of meaning
- less familiar language
- less predictable texts

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals*. Part 1 p. 41

Processing at Higher Levels

*The proficient reader (and writer)
gets the most meaning
with the least effort
in the fastest time!*

Ken Goodman and Carolyn Burke(1973) quoted in Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals: Part 1* p. 41

*And in the end
it is the individual adaptation
made by the expert teacher
to that child's idiosyncratic competencies
and history of past experiences
that starts him on the upward climb
to effective literacy performances*

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals: Part 1* p. 63