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The Reading Recovery Training Year: A Most Rewarding Year



LETTER TO THE EDITOR FROM **HAZEL COX**

When I read Tom Tobias' cartoon about Reading Recovery training in the Summer, 1995, issue I thought that readers might like to know how teachers feel about their intense, training year. One might say that it's the rest of the story.

Last year I trained thirteen teachers from eight school districts. Each teacher completed a survey form, sharing their thoughts about the training. Let me share a thought from each one of them.

"This has been the most difficult course of study I have ever taken during my teaching career. It is, however, better than all the others I have taken put together. There is a great sense of personal satisfaction involved in seeing the children make such wonderful progress and become so independent. My only wish is to become much better at it."

"This is by far the best instruction in the teaching of reading I have ever received. Having the experience of teaching children while taking the classes has been extremely valuable in applying what you learn. The behind-the-glass sessions and dialogue were so helpful in evaluating the processes — I was always evaluating myself and my teaching as I observed others. The training always kept you on the growing-edge, and yet you had the support of the Teacher Leader along the way."

"This has truly been one of the most demanding years of teaching in my career, but the very most worthwhile, enjoyable year, as well. I have learned a great deal but will have more to learn

each year. This is a great beginning! My regrets are that I had not gotten this training long ago."

"There are no words to express the feeling of personal growth that I feel I have experienced this year. It certainly has opened my eyes to the most efficient way of teaching reading that I have seen."

"It has reminded me that these at-risk students can learn and become very competent."

"It has made me so much more conscious of the experiences children need to have to prepare them for learning to read. My whole outlook has changed, or at least broadened as to the experiences I want my children to have in the classroom. It also has influenced the way I talk to my parents. I try to emphasize, even more than before, how important it is that they expose their children to books and reading at an early age and continue to do so."

"I really see kids in a more individual way. I see their growth instead of their failures."

"It has been a great year. Looking forward to next — being better prepared and able to focus even more on ways to observe and identify ways to help them accelerate their learning. Strategies and procedures invaluable."

"I understand the reading process a whole lot more — for all students. I understand there is no sequence a child must go through, the benefits of word

chunks (not letters), the need for a high-frequency reading and writing vocabulary, and the reciprocity of reading and writing."

"I have a new respect for the reading process as a whole, I see the value of early intervention as opposed to waiting until they are 'ready' or they 'mature.'

"It has helped my approach to reading in the classroom and how children can learn phonics as they write.

"I feel as if I've come from a little knowledge to a lot of knowledge, yet I still have more to learn."

"I can now see how the teaching of reading is much more involved and that it is an ongoing learning process."

"In many many ways I've learned to

be a more careful observer of children. I've learned the importance of a child being able to check on oneself and know when they are right. I've learned the importance of fostering independence and my expertise in teaching reading has increased tremendously.

"Thank you for helping me to be a better reading teacher. The satisfaction of helping these young children become literate is a precious gift."

"Reading Recovery has given me a renewed enthusiasm for the teaching of reading."

Hazel Cox is a Reading Recovery Teacher Leader at the Durand Area Schools Site. She received her Teacher Leader Training at Western Michigan University.

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