

The Eyes Have to Have It!

Jake's Engagement with Print in Early Lessons

Maryann McBride, Clemson University

"E.O.T. Eyes Off Text!" I would write it each time Jake was presented with print. It was as if he had no idea that those black marks meant something. Yet, he had an oral language resource beyond any I had ever seen in my 13 years as a Reading Recovery teacher leader. I knew that Jake suffered from "wandering eyes" (Clay, 2001), and he needed to learn to look at print! Initially, Jake explored print much like one would look at a picture: "Each of us would choose our own starting point and scan the forms along our own pathway, pausing and shifting idiosyncratically" (Clay, 2001, p. 151). When reading, Jake's eyes often left the print and looked at some small detail in the picture which he would comment on, or he looked at me, or he gazed up at the ceiling.

My goal for Jake during early lessons was to direct his attention to print. I took Clay's advice to heart: "Teachers have to be sure that wandering eyes become disciplined and notice the features of letters and the detail of print" (Clay, 2001, p. 146). This article documents Jake's first steps in learning to look at print.

What Did Assessments Show?

Jake began his Reading Recovery lessons with a limited literacy repertoire but with many strengths. This discovery was made by analyzing his performance on the six tasks of *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2002), given prior to our instructional sessions. A review of the assessment results taken from my summary comments on the Observation Survey Summary follows.

Jake read the Level 2 text, *Hats* (Scott, Foresman and Company) with instructional-level proficiency (91% accuracy with no self-corrections). He read the Level 1 text, *A Bird Can Fly* (Scott, Foresman and Company) with below 50% accuracy, and the Level 3 text, *At the Zoo* (Scott, Foresman and Company) with 50% accuracy indicating that these levels were too difficult for him (hard levels). While he had no self-corrections on Levels 2 and 3, he did have a self-correction



Concepts About Print, one of the six tasks of the Observation Survey, is used to determine what the child has learned about the way spoken language is represented in print.



Reading Recovery analyses of text reading levels provide descriptive data of behavior on a scale of relative difficulty, and they provide data about change over time.

rate of 1:4 on Level 1. I determined his easy level by having him read a familiar text that he had seen before, *Mom* (Randell, 1966, Level 1), and he read this with 100% accuracy.

I noted that he studied the pictures during his reading and often looked at me. He did not demonstrate a strong left-to-right directional movement across a single line of text and was not consistent in matching one to one. While he gave little attention to visual detail, he appeared to have a strong sense of story. This awareness and his good oral language were strengths observed in his reading at the easy and instructional levels. He relied on the introduced text structure and the pictures to re-create the texts. On the hard levels, he invented text. However, his reading of *A Bird Can Fly*, with the self-correction rate of 1:4, was interesting to analyze further and gave me some

clue as to what Jake was noticing in print. His reading was as follows:

Page 1	Child:	I	could	run			
	Text:	So	can	I			
Page 2	Child:	I	could	dig			
	Text:	So	can	I			
Page 3	Child:	I	could	swing	SC*		
	Text:	So	can	I			
Page 4	Child:	I	SC	can	SC	√	√
	Text:	A		bird		can	fly
Page 5	Child:	√	√	√			
	Text:	So	can	I			

*Jake's comment : "That's I at the end."

On the third page, Jake noticed *I* at the end of the line, commented on his awareness of this word, and was able to self-correct. He also moni-

tored his reading at the beginning of page 4 and this resulted in additional self-corrections. I considered his monitoring and identification of *I* an indication of some visual attention to text.

On the Letter Identification task, his score was 19 (stanine 1). He identified *O, o, J, j, C, X, x, P, I,* and *i* correctly. Additionally, he gave the /s/ for *s* and talked about the "snake sound." He named *A* correctly but he also called both *B* and *T, A*. I therefore questioned his control of this letter. Likewise, he named *K* correctly, but he also called *L, K*. He repeated such confusions with lowercase *a* and *b* and *k* and *l*. He had 36 sets of letter confusions. Some of his confusions showed visual similarities, but others appeared to be random guesses with a repetition of *G* and *E* for many uppercase letters and *p* for multiple lowercase letters.

On the Ohio Word reading task he scored 0 (stanine 1). He kept going down the list saying he knew *cat* would be there somewhere. It wasn't, and he was disappointed.

On the Concepts About Print (CAP) task, Jake's score was 13 (stanine 4), and it became obvious that Jake had been read to, knew how books worked, and really appreciated stories. He regarded the questions, many of which he answered correctly, as interruptions and told me so. At the end of the story *No Shoes* (Clay, CAP), he knew the boy had left his shoes, and he thought the bird should have told him because that was what "little birdies do." Jake demonstrated proficient book handling skills and knowledge of punctuation, even the quotation marks. He also demonstrated awareness of the difference between letters and words. However, he was unable to maintain one-to-one

matching. He had a vague idea about the starting point and ending point of a line of text; but, everything in between, well, he just took his eyes off the print and aimed for the edge of the page. When asked to point to the words while I read, he slid his finger across both the page with the print and the page with the picture. On this task, the only evidence of his visual attention to the book was his looking at the pictures, revealed by his talk about pictured details throughout the story.

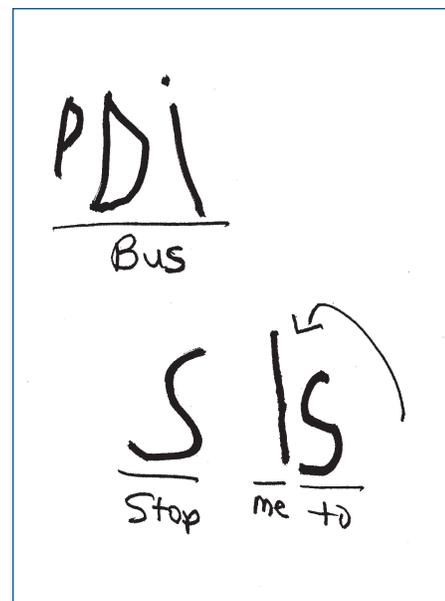
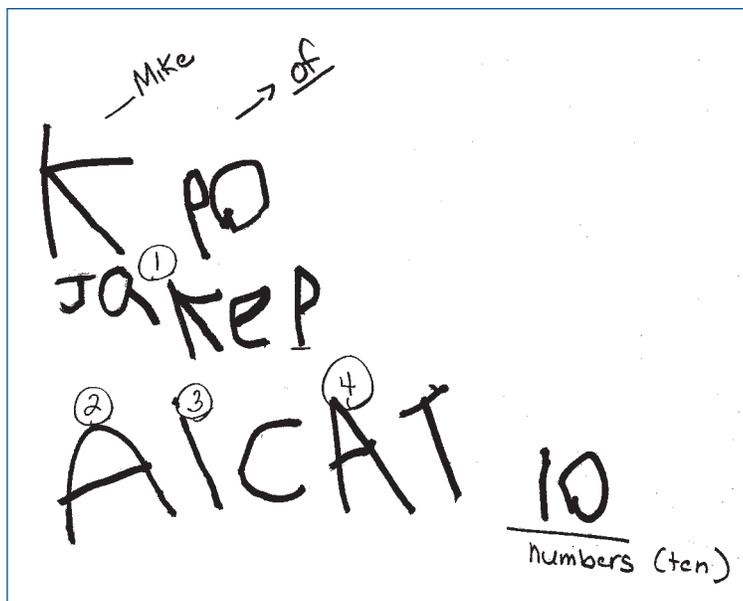
On the Writing Vocabulary task, Jake's score was 4 (stanine 3), and he showed lack of attention to order. He wrote all over the page. He wrote his name, *A, i*, and his favorite word, *CAT* correctly. It is interesting to note that he wrote a *K* for his father's name, Mark, and was impressed with it. However, he had no idea that *K* was also in his name. He wrote what

looked like a poorly formed *po*, but told me it was *of*; and *of* was on the word wall in the classroom. What appeared to me as the letter *p* was really a poorly formed *f*. Jake was aware of the word *of*; however, he had written this word with an incorrect sequence of letters.

On the Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words (HRSIW) task, Jake's score was 1 (stanine 1). He was sure this snake-like thing made /s/ in *stop*. He did not know the letter name; but, he was sure of it being used for /s/. This was a comment he had also made during the Letter Identification task and indicated a consistency in his awareness of /s/. During the rest of the task, he made letter-like marks quite randomly. Jake's writing on both the Writing Vocabulary and HRSIW tasks did not start at the top. He began his writing at the bottom right-hand corner of

the page, and he did not move left to right across lines. His letter formation was also inconsistent. Most letters were formed from bottom to top.

In summary, Jake's performance on the Observation Survey indicated that his strong sense of story, his oral language proficiency, and his awareness of how books work, especially the link between pictures and text, were strengths that I could use to select texts for Jake to read. He knew several letters and a small number of words in detail. His performance, across tasks, indicated that visual attention to print was limited. I also observed many indications of his limited control of early behaviors for reading (e.g., appropriate directional movement, one-to-one matching, locating known words and letters in text). Jake would need careful, specific instruction in learning to look at print when his lessons started.



Jake began his Reading Recovery lessons with a limited literacy repertoire. His score on the Writing Vocabulary task (above left) was a 4, and he showed lack of attention to order. On the Hearing and Recording Sounds In Words task (right) Jake scored a 1/37. On both tasks, Jake began his writing at the bottom right-hand corner of the page and did not move left to right across lines.

It is critical for Reading Recovery professionals to use the Observation Survey information to begin to design a program for an individual child. In the past we learned to deliver an individual program, but Clay's *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals Part One and Part Two* (Clay, 2005a, 2005b) is calling on us not just to deliver individual lessons, but to *design* individual lessons. I had to think about how I would use what I knew about Jake to assist him in learning how to look at print. How would I use his limited repertoire to capture his attention and help him gain control of his wandering eyes?

Judging from my observations of Jake on the Observation Survey, I knew that teaching him would require great effort on my part and that I would have to bring all I understood about literacy learning, all I knew about him, and all the resources available to me to bear on the challenge. These three pieces would play a critical role in teaching Jake to read. Clay tells us that "Hard to teach children do not follow predictable paths of progress so teachers will design a lesson sequence that is different for each child" (Clay, 2005b, p. 2).

Where My Eyes Searched and What I Learned

So here was the first step in my plan of attack. To examine theory, I reviewed sections in *Becoming Literate: The Construction of Inner Control*, especially the part, "The Eye Signals Error" (Clay, 1991, pp. 168–169), and *Change Over Time in Children's Literacy Development* with particular attention to chapter 4, "Adjusting the visual working system for literacy: learning to look at print" (Clay, 2001, pp. 143–179). I also consulted Carol Lyons' *Teaching*

Struggling Readers: How to Use Brain-Based Research to Maximize Learning (Lyons, 2003).

From these readings, I developed a great sense of urgency about helping Jake to gain control of his wandering eyes. Clay notes that "when visual perception is poorly organized, the child's classroom learning is massively muddled" (Clay, 2001, p. 145).

Indeed, Jake was experiencing great difficulties in the classroom. He would often try to copy words from

There would need to be a delicate balance between Jake's learning of letters, words, and the visual detail of print, and his building a processing system through the integration of multiple sources of information. The only way to keep that balance was to involve Jake in continuous, meaningful texts in both reading and writing.

the word wall, but he could not identify what he had copied (neither could I), and everything was a massive muddle.

Clay goes on to say: "The order of inspection is critical. The coordination of body, hand and eye movements is involved when children are learning to pay visual attention to print" (Clay, 2001 p. 146). Here was a clue for me. I would need to help Jake use his hand, body, and eye

movements in a coordinated way. "The three ways of remembering" (Clay, 2005b, p. 24) would be an important part of my instruction in identifying and forming new letters. The letter *s* might provide a glimmer of recognition needed to get this going for Jake. He associated the snake like movement of *s* with the /s/ and that got his attention.

I concluded that many aspects of each lesson activity required my careful attention in early lessons with Jake. I would have to be aware of where he was looking and in what order in reading and writing texts. I would need to use big spaces between words to direct his attention to print. Any work with letters and words had to be done on a clear board. These words and letters had to be carefully chosen and linked to his known repertoire. They had to come from the texts he was reading and writing, worked on, and then linked back to text. A real challenge for me was the realization that verbal instruction would get in the way. I had to keep my language limited because my talk drew Jake away from the print and would eventually get in the way of fast visual responding (Clay, 2001). There would need to be a delicate balance between Jake's learning of letters, words, and the visual detail of print, and his building a processing system through the integration of multiple sources of information. The only way to keep that balance was to involve Jake in continuous, meaningful texts in both reading and writing.

Using the Known: How Jake's Eyes Learned to Look

After reading and reflecting on the "big ideas" from Clay's texts, I had to use them to frame what I knew about Jake. When asked to describe a child,

many Reading Recovery teachers will talk about the *bits and pieces*, or the items, a child knows. This is not really what knowing a child is about because the accumulation of items of knowledge does not make a reader and a writer. It is far more complex than that.

Roaming Around the Known

I asked myself over and over why in the text reading task of the Observation Survey Jake had noticed *I* at the end of a line. I came to realize that he often directed his attention to the end of the line or the last letter of a word. (Remember his writing *of?*) So even though he had demonstrated a vague understanding of where to start reading on the Concepts About Print task, this knowledge was not firm. Jake needed to become consistent in the correct movement patterns for reading and writing.

One thing I knew about Jake was that he was very motivated by a strong sense of story. This was evident in everything we did together across his sequence of lessons. For example, after reading *Wake Up, Dad* (Randell, 1996, Level 3), he knew right away that there were more stories about Nick, Kate, and James. He had to have a reason for why the children and mom wanted dad to wake up, and he just knew it would be in the next book. He was thrilled when he read *The Merry-go-round* (Randell, 1996, Level 3) and *The Bumper Cars* (Randell, 1997, Level 4) because he found his answer. Realizing his strong sense of story made making his early books in Roaming Around the Known sessions both tricky and fun for Jake and for me.

During Roaming Around the Known, he read more than 40 simple texts



One-to-one instruction allows Reading Recovery teachers to help children improve the coordination of body, hand, and eye movements necessary when learning to pay visual attention to print.

that I wrote, or Jake and I wrote together. Each was based on his known, as determined on the Observation Survey. As he noticed new things during our sessions, I was able to include these words and concepts as well.

Since known words, like his name and *I* and *A*, caught his attention, I began construction of his earliest books with those words in the upper-

left hand corner of the page. In his early books, print always appeared on the left page in that upper corner. Since expectancy often drives the direction of attention, I would often point out those words to him as I oriented him to the books I made for him. Sometimes I would ask him to find *I* or *A* or *Jake*; but, I did not do this before we had explored what the story was about.

The first book I constructed for Jake resembled a labeling book in that I used one word per page, his name. However, it was much more to Jake. The illustrations were photos of the children in his class and his teacher calling him in from outside. Jake was up in the playground fort and did not want to come in, so the children in his class took turns calling him. On page 11 the picture showed his teacher calling, and of course she would call him by his first and last name. At least according to Jake, that is the way it would be. The final picture was of Jake jumping up and heading into school. With pictures on each odd-numbered page and on page 12, the text was as follows:

Page 2/text Jake
 Page 3 picture
 Page 4/text Jake Jake Jake
 Page 5 picture
 Page 6/text Jake Jake
 Page 7 picture
 Page 8/text Jake
 Page 9 picture
 Page 10/text Jake Paulson
 Page 11 picture
 Page 12 picture

Through his reading of this text, he began to attend to print and locate a known word, his name. This did not come easily for Jake; his sense of story and oral language gave him lots of choice for what to say. One time he read, "Jake, you had better come in here," while another time he said, "Jake, we are going to art now, so come in!" Following my many demonstrations, he began to keep his eyes on the text and to read correctly, reading only the word on the page.

From the Observation Survey, I learned that Jake understood punctuation marks. This seemed unusual to me, but that was Jake's known, the path he was on. I used this knowledge to construct additional books on the theme of people looking for Jake. I put the print in a consistent place, left lots of space, and began each line of text with a known word. Most importantly, I put these things into the context of a story.

As I constructed texts for Jake, I kept in mind what Clay says, and what I had learned from my readings:

Beginning readers are often helped if the word spacing and line spacing are increased until they have gained control over the directional rules of printed language and have developed reliable eye movements for attending to print.
 (Clay, 2005b, p. 19)

As Reading Recovery professionals we have to realize that commercially prepared materials are not always going to be able to do this for children like Jake who are having difficulty with learning to look at print.

From the Observation Survey, I learned that Jake understood punctuation marks. This seemed unusual to me, but that was Jake's known, the path he was on. I used this knowledge to construct additional books on the theme of people looking for Jake. The following story is an example. I used what he knew about /s/ and about the talking marks. Again, I put the print in a consistent place, left lots of space, and began each line of text with a known word. Most importantly, I put these things into

the context of a story. In this book, Jake's mom and dad come to pick him up at school to take him out for a surprise. He is not expecting them so he is in the corner of the class reading his Reading Recovery books. Here is the text of the story. I am sure you can figure out the illustrations.

Jake's Surprise

"Jake," said a girl.
 "Jake," said a boy.
 "Jake," said a teacher.

"Jake," said mom.
 "Jake," said dad.
 Jake is reading a book.

Jake used his known words, *Jake, a*, and his understanding of quotation marks and /s/ to access this text. We celebrated when he got to the page that said, "Jake," said mom."

He had read, "Jake said a" and then said "a is not there." He went back, reread, and used the picture to self-correct. On the final page of the text Jake read, "Jake likes to read a book;" but, immediately he reread and self-corrected. I did not know if his growing control of one-to-one matching signaled the error or if once again he noticed the known word *a*, and was beginning to use visual informa-

tion of a gross nature to monitor and self-correct his reading. I was pleased to observe that a processing system for literacy was under construction.

In the expanded section on learning to look at print in *Literacy Lessons*, Clay reminds us that “a glimmer of recognition in either reading or writing is the vague beginning out of which further knowledge of the word can emerge through many contacts in different settings” (Clay, 2005b, p. 39). With this in mind, I set out to make use of Jake’s snake-like *s* for the sound /s/ and the fact that he was interested in reading about real things. This was a child who wanted to write about his family, *Star Wars*, dinosaurs, and real things. I had to figure out ways to capitalize on those interests. I knew from his reading of *Hats* during the Observation Survey that he knew his colors and that he once asked me about rainbows. So I wrote the following simple text.

How to Make a Rainbow

I see red.
I see orange.
I see yellow.
I see green.
I see blue.
I see violet.
I see a rainbow.

Right away Jake recognized that the colors were in the correct order and that I had left out indigo. Every time he read this book, which he referred to as his “first science book,” he reminded me. Nothing I said appeased him, and finally, he wrote the missing page himself.

After reading this text and several others written in the same format, Jake told me about the two *es* in *see*. He did not know the name of the letter, but he was fascinated with the

double letters and began to want to use the word *see* when he wrote his own stories. Thus Jake began “digging the ditch” between reading and writing, as Diane DeFord had described to me. (See Mary Fried’s article, “Reciprocity: Promoting the Flow of Knowledge for Learning to Read and Write,” in the spring 2006 issue of *The Journal of Reading Recovery* for more detailed discussion of DeFord’s concept.) The reciprocity between reading and writing would help Jake in many ways.

Jake’s favorite book was *Balloons at the Zoo*, a teacher-made book. Each animal had to have a balloon for a special reason. The monkey had a yellow balloon because monkeys love yellow bananas. The giraffe had to have a green balloon because giraffes eat green leaves. The crocodile had to have a red balloon because that was going to be the big finish to the book. Red, Jake reasoned, should have signaled stop, but crocodiles just can’t help themselves. They are meat eaters and the crocodile would pop the red balloon. So the final pages of this book were “I see a red balloon” and “Pop!” Jake enjoyed this story and having others guess why each animal had a different color balloon. He also noticed that *Pop* began like his last name, *Paulson*. He could hear it and see it.

Moving into instruction

I wish I could report that the books I used in *Roaming Around the Known* were enough to get Jake’s wandering eyes firmly fixed on print. It was not that easy. As we moved into instruction he continued to invent text, especially when rereading familiar books. You could almost hear him saying to himself, “I’ve got this one” and then his eyes would be off

the text, and he would invent. I needed to continue fostering Jake’s attention to print, and I worried about the fast visual recognition that would be needed. I knew the early behaviors for text reading were not yet under control. Directional movement across print, one-to-one matching, locating known words or letters in continuous text, locating unknown words, and developing ways to remember words were challenges. I knew that until he could apply these early behaviors with little attention, monitoring, cross-checking, searching, and self-corrections would not be possible. I had to keep my “eyes on the prize” and his eyes on the print. In addition, I had to build his meager knowledge of letters and expand his meager knowledge of words.

Jake’s command of oral language was both a resource and a strong skill that sometimes interfered with his learning. I always had to be prepared for Jake’s desire to improve upon the author’s words! For example, when Jake was reading *Plop!* (Melser, 1998, Level 2), he read the following:

Child:	√	see	a	gigantic	flamingo	—
Text:	I	can	see	the	big	bird.

Because he tended to give a fast response based on his oral language, I gave specific attention to helping him learn to match one to one consistently.

To support the child’s ability to locate what to attend to in print in sequence, Clay (2005b) encourages us to make sure children can point to a line of objects in sequence. Since Jake had such difficulty with locating what to attend to in print and matching one to one successfully, I followed her advice and checked whether Jake

could control pointing to objects in sequence (Clay, 2005b, p. 15). First I had him point to each object in a row of objects from left to right. Then I asked him to point to each word in one line of large print. At first this perplexed Jake. He wanted to talk about each object, and he wanted to invent a story to go with the line of print. He soon understood what he needed to do; but, it took a firm “don’t do that” said in a “charmingly” negative way (as Clay put it on page 171 of *Literacy Lessons Part Two*) and a clear demonstration of pointing from left to right in order for him to understand the task. I kept my language to a minimum.

In text reading, I found that Jake needed more specific support to use the spaces between words as signals. I would often ask him to use two-finger pointing. In addition, following the procedures in *Literacy Lessons*, page 17 (Advanced Learning), I had sentence strips ready so that I could write any line of text causing difficulty on the strip exaggerating the spaces. Using these procedures helped Jake maintain appropriate locating responses for text reading. Gradually, he learned to direct his eyes to attend to print in helpful rather than problematic ways. (See Clay, 2005b, p. 105.)

In all his early books, I wanted Jake to have many opportunities to “see something he recognises.” In the learning to look at print section of *Literacy Lessons*, Clay states, “as quickly as possible the learner should also be expanding a meager knowledge of print so that there are many opportunities for him to find letters and words he knows in the print he is trying to read” (Clay, 2005b, p. 21).



The process of putting a message back together requires the child to search for particular words in sequence—searching for and using visual information and noticing the detail of words. Using sentence strips helped Jake maintain appropriate locating responses for text reading. Gradually, he learned to direct his eyes to attend to print in helpful rather than problematic ways.

To help Jake locate known words in text quickly, I used a sliding, masking card. If Jake misread a word I felt he knew I would frame the problem word and say, “Read this word,” and then I would have him reread the line or page. I would also do this “masking and asking” with known words read correctly. To prevent him from getting off track and his eyes off print, I would also mask and ask Jake for known words before he read a text. After he read a complete text with errors on only one or two words, I would ask him to locate those items in the text and then have him reread. I might quickly point to the first letter and ask, “Can you hear this letter?” much like he had done with *pop* and *Paulson* in his early books (Clay, 2005b, p. 106).

I found that it was also helpful to support Jake to link what he knew in writing to reading, and I built on the awareness he displayed in *Roaming Around the Known*. Being able to write a word helped Jake to find that word in text. I would often ask him to look at a page of print and find a word he could write. He would locate the word, write it on the blackboard, and then say it aloud. This procedure also helped him develop an expectation that he could find known words in the texts he was reading. Building on that expectation helped him to learn to look for and locate known words and then use those known words to monitor his reading and writing. As his understanding and awareness of the reciprocity between reading and writing developed, I was

able to prompt him during text reading by saying, “Write ...” then, “Can you find that word on this page?” To shift responsibility for this to Jake, I would say, “Did you see a word you know on this page?” or “Show me a word you know how to write.”

If I had to tell Jake a word, I would make him check it by asking a question like, “Do you think it looks like ...?” (Clay, 2005b, p. 106). Because he needed to pay special attention to attending left to right across a word, it was necessary for Jake to do “a slow check” (Clay, 2005b, p. 12). Clay cautions that if this procedure is overused it can get in the way of fast recognition of words, so I was careful when I used it. When he controlled the left-to-right searching, I moved away from it.

As much as possible, I took the words we worked on from continuous text and put them back into continuous text. I knew this would be important for Jake because “locating what you know is a precursor of the independent searching he will engage in later. At this time what you are asking for is more like ‘Find the hidden object in a page of scribble’” (Clay, 2005b, p. 107).

I also used the procedure found on page 107 of *Literacy Lessons Part Two* to support Jake’s attention to the print. His eyes would follow his fingers as I reread the text with fluent phrasing up to the known word read incorrectly. I would then stop and wait for him to read the word. If I thought he needed more help, I would articulate the first sound for him. When I would make the first sound of the word, he would direct his attention there and then, gradually, he took this task on himself.

Jake could do amazing and creative things with letters in words. Sequential order did not matter to him. He would flip letters or flip the order of letters in words to make interesting patterns. He was very good with patterns, but they were idiosyncratic to him. Once he saw *bake* in a book and told me it was like his name. I was impressed and seized the opportunity to use this association. He also told me that *make* was like his name.

I also used the procedure found on page 107 of *Literacy Lessons Part Two* to support Jake’s attention to the print. His eyes would follow his fingers as I reread the text with fluent phrasing up to the known word read incorrectly. I would then stop and wait for him to read the word. If I thought he needed more help, I would articulate the first sound for him.

The “I Can Take Words Apart” section in *Literacy Lessons* was important for laying a foundation for left-to-right searching needed in solving words. It was important to Jake that I provided clear, consistent, and persistent demonstration of directional concepts. I had to work from left to right when helping him build words on the magnetic board,

and I had to keep him on my left so the letters came into his field of vision in the proper order. The procedures in this section take a little practice on the part of the teacher (Clay, 2005b, p. 42–46). The most important things to keep in mind, especially with children like Jake, are these:

- Provide demonstration.
- Be consistent yourself, always work from left to right.
- Do less talking about it.

It was helpful to Jake that this demonstration of how to take words apart starts with a link to how words are written. The teacher says, “If we were going to write this word, we would have to make it letter by letter.” Jake came to realize that he had to pay attention to words from left to right, and it helped to prevent him from guessing at such words as *went*, *want*, *will*, or *with*. All movements must proceed from left to right.

By working with words this way at the magnetic board, I helped Jake to understand how to break words apart letter by letter, how to add or remove an inflection, how to break words into two parts, and most importantly, how to respect the left-to-right sequence of English orthography.

The More Eyes, The Better

The first part of my plan for Jake’s intervention caused me to reflect on my own knowledge of the reading and writing process. I revisited Clay’s theory with particular questions. Then I worked on knowing Jake and using what he knew to assist him. The next step was to explore the procedures for learning to look at print in *Literacy Lessons*. I hope I have shown you a picture of a “tangled”



As Clay advises, colleagues offer an invaluable resource for Reading Recovery teachers. It took many eyes to get Jake's eyes on print, and McBride consulted and worked closely with her colleagues at Clemson and across South Carolina. Also instrumental in helping lead Jake along his journey were Diane DeFord (L) and Carol Lyons (R), shown here with Gay Su Pinnell in a discussion at The Ohio State University.

child desperately trying to make sense of print. Like all children in Reading Recovery, Jake had his strengths, and figuring out what would work best with him had to grow out of those strengths.

I gathered all the human resources I could to “see” Jake. After all, the more eyes, the better. Clay advises us all to consult and work closely with our colleagues, even in the first weeks of instruction. She writes:

You are likely to have some blind spots...and the opinions of colleagues could be most useful... It has been one of

the values of the professional development training sessions that teachers have been able to pool their collective wisdom on their most puzzling students. (Clay, 2005b, p. 182)

And so I called on my colleagues at Clemson University, Susan Fullerton and Georgia Nemeth. Both challenged me to remember that while I had slowed down Jake's oral language to help him learn to look at print, there would come a day when that might interfere with the fast visual processing that is needed by the proficient reader. Keeping the balance was made easier by keeping Jake in

continuous text in both reading and writing and not taking too many detours for the sake of item knowledge. Carol Lyons reviewed tapes of Jake periodically across his series of lessons, and we engaged in lengthy conversations that forced me to think and rethink, to read and reflect, and to put into practice those things that would help Jake. It is my good fortune to have been and to continue to be Carol Lyons' student. Her wisdom is inspiring, and she helped me to not give up on Jake. She, too, emphasized the need for fast visual processing and figuring out ways to use his oral language as a resource.

Diane DeFord traveled across South Carolina to watch Jake, and she reminded me of the power of writing to support reading, and she helped me to figure out ways to link known to new for Jake. All of the teacher leaders in South Carolina watched and followed Jake's journey, but Jean Ridley had to put up with my questions on a daily basis and often provided the insights that led to the next leap in Jake's learning. It took many eyes to get Jake's eyes on print.

Jake's story does not end here. There were many other challenges across his series of lessons, but learning to look made the journey possible. In May, Jake was the guest reader at my training class graduation. When he stood to read, all eyes were on him, but his eyes were on the print of *The Little Red Hen* (Literacy 2000 Rigby, Level 15). He read with expression, using different voices for the different animals, to the delight of his audience. When he finished and raised his eyes from the print, his were the only dry eyes in the place.

References

- Clay, M. M. (1991). *Becoming literate: The construction of inner control*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann
- Clay, M. M. (2001). *Change over time in children's literacy development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann
- Clay, M. M. (2002). *An observation survey of early literacy achievement*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann
- Clay, M. M. (2005a). *Literacy lessons designed for individuals part one: Why? when? and how?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann
- Clay, M. M. (2005b). *Literacy lessons designed for individuals part two: Teaching procedures*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann
- Fried, Mary (2006). Reciprocity: Promoting the flow of knowledge for learning to read and write. *The Journal of Reading Recovery*, 5(2), 5-14.
- Lyons, C. A. (2003). *Teaching struggling readers: how to use brain-based research to maximize learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

Children's Books Cited

- A Bird Can Fly*. (1979). Scott, Foresman and Company.
- At the Zoo*. (1979). Scott, Foresman and Company.
- Clay, M. M (2000). *No Shoes*. Heinemann Education.
- Hats*. (1979). Scott, Foresman and Company.
- Melser, J. (1998). *Plop!* Wright Group Story Box.
- Parkes, B. & Smith, J. (retold). *The Little Red Hen*. (1984). Literacy 2000, Rigby.
- Randell, B (1996). *The Merry-go-round*. Rigby PM Collection.
- Randell, B. (1996). *Mom*. Rigby PM Collection.
- Randell, B. (1996). *Wake Up, Dad*. Rigby PM Collection.
- Randell, B. (1997). *The Bumper Cars*. Rigby PM Collection.

About the Author



Maryann McBride joined the Reading Recovery team at Clemson University after serving as a Reading Recovery teacher leader in Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland, for more than 10 years. She was trained as a teacher leader at The Ohio State University. She may be contacted at mcbri2@clemson.edu.