# EARLY INTERVENTION: A SECOND CHANCE TO LEARN WHAT?

# FOR WHOM?

# NARRATIVES OF LEARNING, DISCIPLINE AND ENCULTURATION

(WOO01295)

**Annette Woods**

**(University of Queensland, Brisbane)**

a.woods@mailbox.uq.edu.au

**Robyn Henderson**

**(James Cook University, Townsville)**

Robyn.Henderson@jcu.edu.au

**Paper presented at the AARE Conference, Fremantle, Australia 2-6 December, 2001**

**Crossing Borders: New Frontiers for Educational Research**

## Abstract

*Current understandings about literacy have moved away from the belief that literacy is simply a process that individuals do in their heads. However, in many cases our response to early intervention in literacy is firmly based in theories which seem out of step with current literacy research and consequent evidence that literacy is socially and culturally constructed. One example of such a response is the Reading Recovery program based in Clay's theory of literacy acquisition. Clay (1992) describes the program as a second chance to learn. However, others have suggested that programs like Reading Recovery may in fact work toward the marginalisation of particular groups, thereby helping to maintain the status quo along class, gender and ethnic lines. Dudley-Marling and Murphy (1997) suggest that Reading Recovery may in fact act as a gatekeeper to protect the institution of schooling by privileging the skills and experiences of middle- and upper-middle class students.*

*This paper allows two professionals, who unwittingly found themselves involved within the institution of Reading Recovery, to bring their insider's knowledge to an analysis of the construction of the program. The paper interweaves this analysis with the personal narratives of the researchers as they negotiated the borders between different understandings and beliefs about literacy and literacy pedagogy.*

## INTRODUCTION

Despite current understandings that literacy is a social practice, traditional and more conventional beliefs – in particular that literacy is simply a process that individuals do in their heads – continue to inform school practices. Whilst Luke (1992) suggested that the move away from psychological views towards "more contextual explanations of literacy as social practice" was not as evident in classrooms as in the research literature, pedagogical theory and teacher education (p.107), it now seems that the deployment of programs that draw on traditional discursive positions is an enduring response of education systems and schools to perceived low levels of literacy. One example of such a response is the Reading Recovery program, a systemic early intervention program that is currently used in several Australian states.

Whilst the use of more conventional discursive positions is not in inself problematic, it has been argued that programs like Reading Recovery may work towards the marginalisation of particular groups of children by priviliging the skills and experiences of middle- and upper-class children (Dudley-Marling & Murphy, 1997) and may also limit the development of richer conceptions and practices of literacy (Lankshear & Knobel, 1998). The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to problematise school intervention practices, drawing on Reading Recovery as an example. The paper does not set out to critique the trainers, tutors or teachers working within the institution of Reading Recovery. Instead, it plans to demonstrate how the regulating practices of such an institution constrain the repertoire of possibilities available to them in their work. In this way, we aim to show more generally how pedagogical practices of schooling, particularly those aimed at providing intervention for low achievers, can operate to "shape and train" bodies in particular ways (Wright, 2000, p.153) and construct children as particular types of literate subjects. Our concern is that a program that has been called "a second chance to learn literacy" (Clay, 1992, p.69) might in fact be a second chance to fail, by actively preventing literacy's conceptualisation as multiple social practice.

For the most part, evaluations of the effectiveness of the Reading Recovery program have drawn on quantitative investigations of children's scores on reading and writing tests. At best, these tests assess children's ability to compose or comprehend the print conventions of text, thus providing little to enrich discussion about children's literacy. In contrast, we examine Reading Recovery as a social practice. We begin with a short discussion of the program and our involvement in it, provide a detailed analysis of a Reading Recovery lesson based on Foucauldian notions of power, and consider the implications of the regulation and constraint that were identified by the analysis.

## ONE INTERVENTION PROGRAM: Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery is based on the belief that the development of an effective cognitive processing system will allow children, who are experiencing difficulties in literacy learning, to develop strategic control of reading and writing processes. Reading Recovery operates as a systemic early literacy program, providing thirty minutes of daily individual instruction for the lowest literacy achievers in a Year 2 cohort, as determined by students' scores on Clay's (1993a) observation survey. Clay (1991) argues that the program will bring about "subsequent independent literacy learning" (p.1) once students have a self-extending system – "a set of operations just adequate for reading a slightly more difficult text for the precise words and meaning of the author" (Clay, 1993b, p.39).

Set within a cognitive acquisition model of literacy, the underlying theory of the Reading Recovery program portrays reading and writing as processes that construct meaning within the cognitive space of individuals (Clay, 1991). This implies that reading, writing and their associated pedagogical and curriculum environments are neutral and transportable – an approach that helps to reinforce the view that literacy practices can be packaged as a set of standard skills that are attainable by all children through hard work – and that it is possible to reduce reading and writing to a simple process of cracking the code.

Our choice to focus on Reading Recovery as an example of early literacy intervention programs has been a deliberate one, as we, the authors of this paper, unwittingly found ourselves involved in the institution of Reading Recovery. We trained – and for a short time worked – as tutors, training Reading Recovery

teachers across a number of school districts. Therefore, we bring insiders' knowledge to this paper. Whilst there seems to be lack of agreement about whether an insider's standpoint has an advantage over that of an outsider (Naples & Sachs, 2000), we would argue that our experiences have enabled us to bring a rare perspective to our critique, as few of those who have worked within the institution are willing – or perhaps able – to do.

## THE STUDY: Two interwoven narratives

In this paper, we weave our personal experiences of Reading Recovery into an analysis of a Reading Recovery lesson. Our analysis, therefore, investigates several layers of the program: teacher-child interactions as well as the experiences of teachers and tutors. In attempting a multilayered discussion, we have had to limit our in-depth examination of Reading Recovery to a single lesson, focusing on the interactions that occurred between one teacher and one student. This lesson focuses on Sam, who is in Year 2, and his Reading Recovery teacher. Sam attends a small metropolitan school, and although he is involved in Reading Recovery, he is described as an average literacy achiever by his classroom teacher. He was placed in the program because there were no other eligible students in his cohort. The lesson was video recorded as part of a larger study which is investigating constructions of literacy failure and success in the early years of school.

In telling the story of our personal experiences of Reading Recovery, we draw on the methodology of autoethnography (e.g. see Bochner, 1997; Ellingson, 1998; Ellis & Bochner, 2000, 1996). Ellis and Bochner (2000) argue that the experiences of researchers are valid topics of investigation and that autobiographical stories can help to connect "the personal to the cultural" (p.740). For Bochner (1997), the social practice of telling a story allows contact and conversation between the personal and academic selves, thus enabling dialogue about important issues without the concerns of theory and representation. However, in our case, our beliefs and our understandings about literacy theory underpinned our experiences and the subjective approach that we have taken implicates a particular representation of ourselves and our lived experiences.

In narrating the complexities of our lived experiences, we acknowledge that our subjectivities and emotional responses play a vital role (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) and we have drawn on feminist understandings that our beliefs, understandings and values are inextricably implicated in our research (Blair, 1995; Devault, 1990; Lather, 1992). Although we have chosen to use autoethnography, what we present as our narrative is a metaphorical retelling of events and implications. We do not report this narrative as a personal story as such, but rather as a foregrounding of the experiences that made us feel regulated and constrained.

*BEGINNING OUR STORY: Crossing the border*

*Our experience of Reading Recovery was like crossing the border between two countries. In entering the new country, we were confronted by different beliefs, different laws and different ways of doing things and we were expected to become citizens and to forget about all that we had known previously. Our journey across that border was not an easy one, and indeed was never completed in the sense that was required by the law-makers of the new country. We regularly scuttled back across that border whenever we had the chance. Although we became expert at looking like citizens of the new world, of being, doing and speaking as required, we never handed over our passports and found ways to strategically resist.*

This autoethnographic approach to the telling of our own stories is set beside a close analysis of a Reading Recovery lesson. In this way, we investigate the Discourses of regulation evident within the institution of Reading Recovery and structure our analysis around three overlapping themes: regulation of bodies, regulation of time and regulation of knowledge.

We do not attempt to portray ourselves as victims who did not willingly apply for and accept these positions as Reading Recovery tutors. Within the system in which we worked, the role of tutor had status and offered employment in the literacy field, at a time when other advisory and off-class literacy jobs were disappearing. We had both been involved in such positions previously and wished to remain so for personal and career considerations. However, when we accepted the Reading Recovery role, we were not

privy to the requirement for enculturation. By the time we did realise how difficult that process would be, we felt committed to the school districts that had supported our appointments and were awaiting our return as trained tutors.

*Getting a visa:*

*Our training as Reading Recovery tutors required a full year of training in the theory and practices of the program. Initially in applying for the job, we had to go through the procedures of writing an application, being short-listed and fronting for an interview. The process was competitive – 300 applicants for ten available positions. The interviewers told us that no prior knowledge about Reading Recovery would be assumed and that we would be taught everything we needed to know. What we weren't told was that we would have to forget all that we ever knew about literacy theory and that we would be expected to take on new beliefs without questioning their foundations. In hindsight, it seems ironic that we were chosen by a process that valued extensive knowledge about literacy to enter an institution that appeared to disparage the same.*

Our role within Reading Recovery required us to "give up" many of the understandings and beliefs we had about literacy and to replace them with a new set of beliefs and values. Like Bonnie Barnes (1997), a teacher who reflected on and revealed publicly her uneasiness with her training as a Reading Recovery teacher, we were frustrated by the way we felt pressured to take on the sayings, doings and believings (Gee, 1996) of the institutution of Reading Recovery. It seemed that the regimes of truth within this institution and their day-to-day actualisation as social practices were not available for critique within the world of Reading Recovery. Although this caused us much grief, it also allowed us to be strong in our resolve to construct ourselves as literacy educators rather than Reading Recovery educators.

As a result of our training and our experiences, we bring insiders' knowledge to an analysis of the construction of Reading Recovery. Our interweaving of the two narratives – that of a Reading Recovery lesson along with our own experiences – allows us to examine how the Reading Recovery program operates in relation to tutors, teachers and children. Such an approach provides opportunities to move beyond the usual research question of whether the program improves children's literacy levels. Instead of simply comparing the efficacy of Reading Recovery and other intervention programs (e.g. Pikulski, 1994; Ross, Smith, Casey, & Slavin, 1995; Smith, 1994), or comparing children's pre-program and post-program literacy levels (e.g. Clay, 1993b; Rowe, 1997; Trethowan, Harvey, & Fraser, 1996), we attempt to deconstruct the way that the program works to enculturate tutors, teachers and children into particular literate practices. Even though there is a body of research that identifies the program's success at providing children with the opportunity to develop literacy strategies (e.g. Clay, 1993b; Pikulski, 1994; Pinnell, Lyons, De Ford, Bryk, & Seltzer, 1994), there has been little attempt to critically analyse the program's conceptualisation of literacy.

We argue that the instruction provided by Reading Recovery lessons could train students to be literate in such a particular way that it constrains demonstrations of other literate practices. In this way, instead of preparing students for their futures as literate individuals, the program may well fail to prepare students for other literate events, perhaps even for the classroom literacy events with which they are expected to engage on a daily basis. Our contention is that the program is also constraining for teachers and tutors.

## AN APPROACH TO ANALYSIS: The location of power

Our analysis calls on notions of power founded in a Foucauldian persective. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) links the advent of disciplining power with the institutionalisation of practices in society. Mass education as an example of such an institution demands that participants are involved in self-discipline and that they regulate their own behaviour as much as it is regulated by others. Foucault's concept of disciplinary power allows for a shift in the analysis of macro structures to the micro structures of how power is visible through its existence in actions at the level of the body (Gore, 1998, p.233). By making power visible in this way, we attempt to move beyond a negative construction of power towards an investigation of how power relations, across sites within the institution of Reading Recovery, function at the micro level of social practice.

Based on a close reading of Foucault, Gore (1998) identifies specific practices involved in the functioning of power relations as they are enacted within modern disciplinary power. These include:

- **surveillance** defined as the supervising, closely observing, watching, threatening to watch, avoiding be watched,
- **normalisation** defined as invoking, requiring, setting or conforming to a standard, defining the normal,
- **exclusion** defined as tracing the limits that will define difference, boundary, zone, defining the pathological
- **distribution** defined as dividing into parts, arranging and ranking bodies in space,
- **classification** defined as differentiating individuals and/or groups from one another,
- **individualisation** defined as giving individual character to or specifying the individual,
- **totalisation** defined as giving collective character to, specifying a collectivity/total or a will to conform,
- **regulation** defined as controlling by rule, subject to restrictions, adapting to requirements, invoking rules including through sanction, reward or punishment.

(Gore
1995,
p.103)

Gore also discusses the regulation of **space, time** and **knowledge** within the mechanisms of schooling. We have categorised Gore's first eight coding categories as relating to the regulation of body, and see this and the regulation of time and knowledge as important categories for an investigation of the institution of Reading Recovery.

Within this paper we choose to look closely at the role played by language, particularly interaction. Such an approach was used by Wright (2000) in her analysis of a physical education lesson. By focusing on linguistic realisations of Gore's categories, Wright was able to show how students were constructed according to dominant discourses and how particular "ways of thinking about the body and moving the body" (p.169) were accepted as normal whilst others remained hidden.

## DISCOURSES OF REGULATION

Reading Recovery teachers are trained through a regime of regular professional development sessions, visits and critique by tutors. This training involves inculcation into the program's theories, values and beliefs, and teachers are expected to demonstrate their enculturation through their talk and behaviours, through the appropriation of words and phrases from Clay's work, and through regular discussion of Reading Recovery texts with peers, tutors and trainers.

*The written law: The guidebook*

*The major normalising practice of Reading Recovery is the use of Reading Recovery: A guidebook for teachers in training (Clay, 1993b) and all Reading Recovery personnel, whether trainers, tutors or teachers, use this text. At teacher and tutor training sessions, colleague visits and conferences, the guidebook is mandatory reading and the place to look for answers to questions and to determine whether teaching decisions have been made according to the Clay's theory. Knowledge is regulated by the use of this single text. It is also part of the way in which Reading Recovery personnel are constructed as a collective who have a common knowledge and a common tool to enhance this knowledge.*

At all levels, Reading Recovery training sessions are conducted with participants sitting in a circle configuration, except when they observe two half-hour lessons from behind a one-way screen. "The circle" – the place where the majority of discussion and learning about the program takes place – plays a particular role within the institution of Reading Recovery, by allowing participants to be visible at all times and making it impossible to resist the enculturation processes without overt and active opposition.

**Regulation of body**

Schooling has been described as a set of practices specifically designed to train the body and to shape it in particular normalising ways (Wright, 2000). The body and how it becomes visible are central to many areas of schooling. How teacher talk is implicated in this regulation has been the subject of work in physical education lessons by Wright (2000). She believes that physical education, as a site specifically focussed on the body, provides a rewarding space to account for the place of teachers' talk and the practices it expects in the construction and constitution of body.

We believe that Reading Recovery is also such a site. We choose to investigate the power relations evident, through talk and action, that:

> may have a hold over other's bodies, not so that they may do what one wishes but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed, and the efficiency that one determines.

(Foucault, 1977, p.138)

Reading Recovery is a particular site within schooling because it is one of the few sites where a teacher and an individual student are found working together and alone. The teacher has only one student to instruct, sits in close proximity to that student, and is therefore able to direct the student's body in different ways from those generally possible in a regular classroom. This allows opportunities for detailed attention to the regulation of the student's body in the form of discipline and the production of embodied subjectivities.

The teacher-directed approach of Reading Recovery lessons also indicates the potential for regulation within each lesson. Teacher directedness is visible in the large number of directives, informatives and questions issued by the teacher in the lesson transcript, thus allowing her to obligate the only other participant present to produce a similarly large number of responses. The teacher's control does not only stem from the frequency of these issues, but also from the fact that she already knows the answers to her questions and sets appropriate standards for the student's responses. These initiate-reply-evaluate (IRE) sequences are well documented in the literature as characteristic of instructional settings (Atkinson, 1981; McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975).

Through these talk sequences, and through physical movement, the Reading Recovery teacher in the lesson being investigated here is able to determine when and where the student will move, what he will do and how he will do it. Not that we suggest that the student is powerless in this context, as we choose to construct the child as a competent actor within the resources available to him in the context in which he finds himself (Danby & Baker, 1998; Hutchby & Moran-Ellis, 1998; James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998; Prout & James, 1997). Part of our analysis will suggest that, while the teacher is involved in self-disciplining and making choices about how she will act, these choices are regulated by Discourses of regulation evident within the institution of Reading Recovery.

It is possible to find Discourses of regulation of body throughout the transcript and the social practices of the lesson procedures. These Discourses become visible in both the actions and language choices of the teacher. The teacher can be seen to watch the student closely as he reacts to her commands and indeed, she often sits with her body turned towards him and with her arm around his chair. Her surveillance is particularly obvious through the lesson, as she records her observations and interpretations of the student's responses. During the student's reading of *Griffin the School Cat* she records his oral reading as a running record.

Linguistically, these Discourses are evident throughout the complete lesson. However, we will limit our analysis to a short section of the lesson, which comes after the teacher has interrupted Sam's reading of the new book from the previous day's lesson. She proceeds to return to sections of the book and to describe her interpretations of what Sam did and said while reading, as shown in the transcript that follows.

85 T: okay and when we kept going didn't we and the kids in room?

86 S: six

87 T: six gave him an? a a[pple

88 S: [apple

89 T: and the teachers in the staff room? s[aid? you need some?

90 S: [said you need some ex[ercise

91 T: [exercise and whata they say to him here?

92 S: jump Griffin jump

93 T: yeah I wonder what we would what you would do if you were down running with Mrs Jinova and you saw a cat running with you (.5) would you wonder what he was doing there?

94 S: er

95 T: look at him with all the kids doing the exercises maybe we could bring some cats to school I like the way here (teacher turns pages of book back) you said you need some yogurt and then you looked at it and you thought mmm hang on (1) something's not right? What did you change it to

96 S: it was a didn't start with U

97 T: no:o=

98 S: Y

99 T: =yogurt starts with y doesn't it and that starts with?

100 S: ori:ng

101 T: and also you would've run out of? (.5) words cause if you need some yogurt? what wouldya've done with that word

102: S: a:h made it in another word

103: T: (laughs) no cause you can't make another word can you unless you said yogurt juice would that make sense? no and I like the way you started saying oh you poor cat said the chil:dr:en in room two but that doesn't look quiet right does it? if it was children what would it start with

104 S: (1) C H

105: T: y:es and this one is?

106 S: K I D S

107 T: what's it spell

108 S:kids

109 T: yes you changed that and you realised you started to say? oh you poor cat said the ch and then you looked you must have looked at it and thought oh hang on that's not right did you do that? nyer you changed it to children good boy well I don't know about you but my cat wouldn't be able to do that exercise (4) come over here and have a look we made member you were talking about you went to the bike track

110 S: yeah

The social practice of surveillance is apparent throughout the lesson in the repeated commands to "see" or "have a look at" what will happen as in turn 109. These words are used as commands to move the lesson

on, to move the student to the next section of required reading or writing, to discipline the student's gaze and to influence or control what the teacher and student's collective experience of the book or activity will be. Surveillance is also evident in the practice demonstrated in this section of the lesson as the teacher returns to sections of the book already read by the student. In turns 95, 103 and 109 the teacher demonstrates the surveillance that has occurred by relaying to Sam what he said and did. Because she often refers to her notes, it is clear that this student is not only being closely watched but that the observations are being recorded for later reference.

As the teacher tells Sam that she "likes the way" he has said certain things or read particular sections (e.g. turns 95 and 103), she is classifying what it means to be a reader and writer, thereby normalising these complex social practices into skills that can be performed in specific ways. Sam is being directed to believe that reading is a set of skills that can be mastered by following the rules. In turn 103 the teacher clearly sets out a rule when she ignores Sam's suggestion that he would "ma(k)e it another word," to solve the problem of having too many words on a page and instead says "no cause you can't make another word can you". Her laughter at this turn reinforces the notion that this is a rule and that it would be comical to suggest otherwise. She also praises Sam on several occasions for recognising that he had performed actions that could not be "normal" in the process of reading and correcting this behaviour. This occurs in turn 109 when Sam is told he is a good boy for thinking "hang on that's not right" and in turn 95 when he is told that the teacher likes the way he thought "hang on, something's not right" and proceeded to change his response.

By normalising these practices of reading and writing, the teacher is also involved in pathologising all other ways of reading and writing. Sam is told that the words he chooses to say when reading must look right (as in turns 103 and 109), and more occasionally that they must make sense (turn 103), and that he must be thinking about this as he reads. It is evident that it is normal to engage in this type of thinking and questioning during reading. This fits well with the theory behind the program which suggests that learning to read is about learning to problem-solve and to use strategies. While not evident in this small section of the lesson, the teacher often chooses to not hear Sam's responses or, more particularly, his initiations that do not conform to this accepted way of reading. For example, in turn 32 Sam attempts to display his competence as a reader by explaining his knowledge of the details in one of the pictures. This is a practice that he is encouraged to do as part of introductory reading within his class reading lessons, but within the context of Reading Recovery lessons his attempts are ignored.

32 S: it's a grid iron ball ((pointing to the picture on the page))

33 T: oh and what did Mum say

34 S: *poor Tom said mum so mum went snip snip snip sew sew sew she shortened the trousers and put them back. on the. bed*

As discussed above, the particular context of the Reading Recovery lesson allows for students' bodies to be distributed in ways that might not be available to teachers in other contexts. The close proximity of teacher to child allows bodies to be physically moved for instance and for facial expressions and bodily movements to be readily used and recognised as communication. The student leaves his own classroom, desk and materials to visit this Reading Recovery room for lessons, so the materials and resources used are generally under the control of the teacher. She moves books in and out of the instruction space, offers writing materials, magnetic letters and other resources to the student for use and determines when and in what sequence activities will be begun and completed. This control of resources affects the teacher's ability to regulate the distribution of Sam. There is also evidence of this regulation of distribution in the linguistic choices of the teacher who regularly uses terms like "come over here" or "look at this" as in turn 109.

While there is evidence throughout the lesson of both a focus on individualisation through the use of "you" and totalisation or the creation of a collective identity through the use of "we," there are also several interesting linguistic choices made by the teacher that combine these two social practices. In turn 93, for instance, the teacher begins to specify a collective, but without pausing continues the turn by singling out Sam's supposed behaviour as individual.

> 93 T: yeah I wonder what we would what you would do if you were down running with Mrs
> Jinova and you saw a cat running with you (.5) would you wonder what he was doing there?

This change from discussing what "we" would do or think to what Sam as an individual ("you") would do or think also occurs in turn 109 when the teacher switches from discussing what "we" made to what "you" (Sam) were talking about. This might be explained by the fact that, within the doctrine of Reading Recovery, teachers are encouraged to construct children as 'independent', and yet our analysis would suggest that they are also encouraged to control so much of what is occurring within the lesson. The teacher is balancing control of Sam's actions and encouraging him to become independent, and this balancing is reflected in her confusion of whether it is Sam or Sam and herself 'doing' the reading.

It would seem, then, that the teacher is involved in regulating the body of Sam through various social practices and this is evident in linguistic choice and general lesson procedure. We wish to suggest, though, that the teacher is also having her behaviour regulated by the very Discourses of regulation that we discussed earlier. As we investigate more closely the teacher's part in the surveillance of Sam and his body, we begin to understand that the teacher's choices are actually displays of teaching competence. The guidebook (Clay, 1993b) used in training refers to how the teacher "must be a careful observer," helping to explain the close surveillance she directs toward Sam (Clay, 1993b, p.48). Clay also emphasises the importance of the "observing process" (p.3) to effective teaching:

> To be able to detect how different the path has to be for some children we will have to observe a little more closely than we have in the past what the five-to six-year-old is doing and what he is capable of. . . .
>
> If there is no magical moment at which a child is "ready" what we can look for in the first year that indicates progress or lack of it? I look for movement or change in the child's behaviour. My criterion for progress during the first year of school would be that he moves from those responses he can give when he comes to school toward some other goals that I see as appropriate for him. I am looking for *movement in appropriate directions* and only careful monitoring will assure me that the child is not practicing inappropriate behaviours.

> (Clay, 1993b, p.3)

Clay also instructs teachers to control what the child is surveying because "it is necessary to be alert at all times to what the children are directing their attention to" (p.24). In fact, teachers are called to be alert to many and various student actions and talk through out the book.

It is also possible to find direct reference to the action of returning to material after it has been read to ensure the child has a clear understanding of the surveillance that is part of this lesson and is made conscious of his/her own behaviours. One example of this from the guidebook (Clay, 1993b) is:

> So after the reading the teacher could turn back to the page involved and say things like
>
> o  I liked the way you solved that puzzle on this page…
> o  Look at this word. You said…
> o  Let's take a look at what …

> (Clay, 1993b,
> p.38)

Using Foucault's notions of self-disciplining, it is possible to explain how this teacher – who was trained "in circles" to say these words; was required to read the guidebook until able to demonstrate her knowledge of it by locating short passages or phases at her tutor's command, and was regularly subjected to the gaze of tutors and peers through "behind the screen" teaching, and colleague and tutor visits – is regulated by this Discourse without the requirement for constant surveillance upon herself.

*Into a militarised zone:*

*During our training year we felt that we were constantly under surveillance. To us, some of the surveillance techniques, whether they were directed at individuals or at the group as a collective, seemed quite sinister. For example, we were told that "there wasn't a day that went by when somebody out in the field didn't ring to report something," implying that we were always being watched, regardless of whether the trainers were with us or not. When our trainers came to watch our teaching or tutoring, they took notes and kept copies for our files. Although we recognised that this was a fairly usual thing to do as part of training, we were suspicious.*

*Our fear of being under constant surveillance surfaced in what now seem like silly ways. We often spoke loudly when left alone in the training room, pretending to be caught on hidden microphones. We even said things to tutors in the field and enjoyed the fact that information later became the basis of a training session. But what now seem to be ridiculous and exaggerated responses were not based on unfounded fears. In Reading Recovery, children are watched and listened to from behind a one-way screen without their knowledge. Why not us? We knew of many occasions when we had been asked to comment upon tutors and their work in the field after observation sessions at their centres, and later found that that same information had been presented back to those tutors in a disciplinary manner. It seemed to us that Reading Recovery was very much about people watching and listening to others – often covertly and very often with an unspecified purpose.*

### Regulation of time

There are several indications that the issue of time is important in this particular lesson. Temporal phrases such as "off you go," "keep going" and "let's go" reoccur throughout the interaction and are used to keep the lesson moving towards its end point. The teacher regularly watches her watch and seems concerned when Sam moves slowly or spends time working something out. There are also references to running out of time, as in the following extract:

135 T: yep you've done tha:t? so what are you going to do what were you gunna

> do what were you gonna say today you told me you were gunna say something else about it and we didn't have time did we cause you wrote such a lo:ng sentence but we said oh? we'll do the second sentence today what was it

We maintain, then, that the teacher controls the rights to pace the interaction, raising the question of why she is so preoccupied with time. It has been argued that concern with time can be a result of systemic constraints on an institution (Silverman & Gubrium, 1994) and, in the case of Reading Recovery, there are two intertextual influences that might affect time and pace. One is a philosophical obsession with accelerative learning. Clay (1992) states that the program is "close to the edge of cost effectiveness" (p.74) and must move children quickly in order to justify its existence. The other is an economic and political constraint that is enacted by administrative personnel concerned with keeping the purse strings of education accountable.

The texts used in training Reading Recovery teachers make many references to keeping an intense pace during lessons. In describing the program as "a second chance to learn," Clay (1992) hazards against teachers wasting time. Under the heading, *An economy of learning time*, she states:

> If children are to catch up with their classmates no time can be wasted. The teacher must guard against trivial pursuits and she must make judgements every lesson about what will accelerate the child's learning.

(Clay, 1992, p.75)

Further, the text specifically used for training Reading Recovery teachers (1993b) makes continued reference to timing and pace of lessons. One example is:

The principals of an intensive program allow the close supervision of the shifts in the child's

responding. Short lessons held often are important for success. This allows the learning to be carried over from one day to the next.

(Clay, 1993b, p.9)

The local enactment of this call for short, intensive lessons can be seen in schools, where Reading Recovery teachers and children work to timers. Similarly, classroom teachers are under pressure to remember to send the next Reading Recovery student early, so that they will be ready for lesson change over, and students sit reading to the call of

19 T: quick off you go

This philosophical call for intensive, fast paced lessons is supported by the systemic constraints impacting on teachers' work at a local level. Below is an extract from the Reading Recovery information booklet issued to all schools in the system within which this lesson occurred.

Reading Recovery trainee = 0.5 teaching load (min.)

FORTNIGHTLY = 25 hours on duty

Teaching (four individual children, daily, 30 minutes) = 20 hours

Recess (6x15 minutes) = 1.5 hours*

Inservice (one afternoon per fortnight) = 1.5 hours**

Non-Contact Time = 2 hours

= 25 hours

* the 0.5 RR allocation provides for 6 of the 10 recesses over the fortnight

** time needed to replace teacher on class: sessions are approximately 2&1/2 hours

Figure 1: Systemic directions regarding the organization of time (Extract from *Reading Recovery Information Booklet for Schools*).

Teachers' 25 hours of duty over a fortnight are segmented into as little as fifteen minute time slots, as a way of justifying the time allocation given for teachers to teach four children individually on a daily basis. Notice that the teacher is allowed exactly twenty hours over ten days to conduct four 30 minute lessons daily. This means that there is no time allocated for change-over between children and certainly no time for any lesson to run longer than the prescribed 30 minutes.

Added to this, there is a top-down surveillance of teachers' use of time – from the systemic centre of the education authority, through district personnel, to school principals and ultimately to teachers – through such means as memos. The following extract provides an example:

8. Section 4 (Organising Time) in the Reading Recovery *Information for Schools Booklet* breaks down the 0.5 allocation per fortnight and demonstrates how two hours non-contact time is provided within the allocation. It also informs of the need to negotiate with other schools when a Reading Recovery teacher is shared across campuses to enable the accumulation and provision of non-contact time (figure 1)

9. The same section includes information for the need for a school to "save-up" the 1&1/2 hours for the training session by requiring trainee Reading Recovery teachers to work slightly less than the funded 0.5 allocation per day for a fortnight (i.e. 9 minutes per day). In this way the 0.5 funded allocation is sufficient for 10 teaching sessions and the training session.

(Memo from Director, Teaching & Learning Branch, 19.05.99)

The intertextual nature of the construction of temporal importance helps to explain why the teacher seems obsessed with fast-pacing the lesson. She has to teach four half-hour lessons to four individual children, with not a spare minute, then moves on to teach a class for the rest of her working day. However, somehow, she must "save-up" nine minutes each day so that she can be released for a fortnightly professional development session. At these sessions, she is required to read and discuss texts that encourage her to accelerate her students and to guard against wasting time on trivial pursuits.

The irony of this situation is that, while Sam is granted time to work at words in order to develop "independence" (Clay, 1993b, p.43) and problem-solving abilities, the time constraints placed on the teacher's work lead to the construction of the interaction in such a way that the teacher maintains complete control of the pace of the lesson.

**Regulation of knowledge**

Knowledge is carefully regulated by many of the social practices of Reading Recovery. Again this is evident in the linguistic choices of Sam's teacher during the lesson, especially when she tells Sam what he has thought:

> 95 T: look at him with all the kids doing the exercises maybe we could bring some cats to school
> I like the way here (1) you said (1) you need some yogurt and then you looked at it and you
> thought mmm hang on (1) something's not right? what did you change it to

Such practice is not uncommon in Reading Recovery lessons. Similarly, teachers often instruct children to "remember" particular responses or skills. In setting out to teach children how to use a particular set of cognitive processing strategies, teachers draw on a limited set of questions and statements which are drawn directly from their guidebook (Clay, 1993b). Teachers are encouraged to use the questions and statements as they have been written and this was evident in the lesson, especially when the teacher commented on Sam's reading:

19 T: . . . I love the way you said that

29 T: . . . I like the way you said that night

39. T: I like the way you said and put them back on the bed as if to say oh not again . . .

Throughout the lesson, the teacher regulates the knowledge that is read, written and spoken about. In Reading Recovery lessons, children are able to read only texts that have been selected by their teacher. Although each child is offered a selection of texts for the familiar reading section of the lesson, the teacher selected these books. Although Reading Recovery teachers would argue that texts are selected with a particular child in mind, an underlying assumption of the program is that low achievers in reading should move through a finely graded or levelled set of texts with the gradient of difficulty being decided upon by the teacher.

Even though the books selected by the teacher may be of any type, as long as they fit the program's levelling requirements – and many teachers and tutors are attempting to include a variety of text types – storybooks are still over represented in most Reading Recovery sets. Research (e.g. Heath, 1982, 1983) has shown that such practice tends to advantage those children who have had previous experience with that type of literature and these children are often not within the most at-risk group. So children, whose home reading practices do not include storybooks or reading practices similar to those validated by Reading Recovery, may be disadvantaged.

*Facing new rules and regulations:*

*One of the frustrations of our year of tutor training was that we were given the material that we were expected to read. We were neither expected nor encouraged to use the university library, with our course based around "set" readings. In fact, we understood that "other" readings were not welcome and the sheer quantity of reading supplied to us made reading other material almost impossible.*

*First and foremost, our reading diet consisted of three books by Clay (1991, 1993a, 1993b). Later we were given additional articles written by Clay and/or her supporters, along with articles that underpinned the cognitive approach of Clay's work. One measure of our enculturation into Reading Recovery was the extent to which we could locate information in the guidebook (Clay, 1993b). We had to practise locating information and repeating Clay's words from the text, thereby demonstrating our skill at answering the question, "What does Marie say about that?"*

*When we brought along articles that critiqued and criticised Reading Recovery (e.g. Barnes, 1997; Dudley-Marling & Murphy, 1997; Tancock, 1997), we were quickly given articles that countered those arguments and discussion about perceived "flaws" in Clay's work was quickly silenced. On one occasion, the trainers "read" a critique as praise of the program. On another, one of us was told that we should stop "causing trouble" because the word would get out and ripples would run through the Reading Recovery world causing difficulties for everyone and the program.*

*Similarly, teachers' reading is also regulated. As a tutor, one of us was visited by a trainer and told that she was not serving her training teachers well by allowing them to read additional material and that the guidebook was enough. "In a training year teachers don't need anything else to read – there is enough to learn from Marie's words. Why offer them anything else?"*

Within the lesson being investigated here there is also evidence that the teacher is regulating what will be acceptable writing material. The following section of the lesson occurs during the "genuine conversation" before writing (Clay 1993, p.29):

119 T: <u>tracking</u> good boy and off you go (2) over here (1) and there you go (1) and we were talking about? (1) here (3) read what you did on that one

120 S: oh you (1) oh the on the weekend I went to the (3) uh

121 T: that's right remember you went with there's that word we used wasn't it I went to the?

122 S: race tracks and came

123 T: and <u>I</u> [came

124 S: [and I came [third

125 T: [third (2) yes you did (1) okay and you were gunna tell me something more about that today weren't you (2) what were you gonna tell me (3)

126 S: mm

127 T: member we were talking about (1) um who you were talking about it at the board as well (2) who came who was in your race re[member that?

128 S: [Lincoln and Kurt

129 T: yeah Lincoln and Kurt and and how did where did they come

130 S: um they came fro:m (2) um (2)

131 T: so what was the sentence remember we were talking about what you did at the race track (3) what were you gonna say remember when you were talking about it yesterday can you remember that?

132 S: u:m

133 T: yep what did you want to say

134 S: I said on the weekend I went to the race tracks and I came third

135 T: yep you've done tha:t? so what are you gunna do what were you gonna say today you told me you were gunna say something else about it we didn't get time did we cause you wrote such a lo:ng sentence but we said <u>oh</u>? we'll do the second sentence today what was it

136 S: my uncles ca:me second and fourth

137 T: wow that's right (2) off you go (3) were they in the same race as you?

138 S: yep

139 T: wow

140 S: I I bate Lincoln

141 T: okay what are we going to start our sentence with?

This short section of the lesson is indicative of the lesson as a whole in relation to the regulation of knowledge. The teacher begins by telling the Sam about what he wrote yesterday, then questions him until he has remembered what she believes he said in the previous lesson. Once this response is finally received in turn 136, the teacher moves the lesson on, again ignoring Sam's attempt to initiate a topic in turn 140. Instead, she initiates her own question and this positions Sam as responder to the teacher's questions.

*Surviving in hostile territory:*

*As time progressed, it became more and more difficult for us to accept the theoretical position that we were expected to take up. We began to feel that we were in a survival mode. However, we were helped in our endeavours by a bevy of friends, some of whom had crossed the border with us and others who knew that this was one country that would never be on their travel itinerary. Friends who were academics listened with empathy, but never really understood why we had crossed the border in the first place. Yet it was our discussions with them that helped to keep what we thought was some normality in our lives and made us decide that we could never become citizens in this new country. On many occasions, we considered the possibility of defection. However, at the same time, we recognised that we had willingly accepted to do the training and that we had a responsibility to the districts that were expecting us to return fully trained.*

*Strangely enough, it was an assessment task set by our trainers that finally allowed us to head out into the field with more confidence that we could do the job required. The task was a critique of an aspect of Reading Recovery. "Of course," said one of the trainers, "it will be a positive critique." For us, that seemed like the final straw, yet we proceeded as we had been offered the challenge to address some of the issues that had been bothering us for so long.*

*Our critiques tackled some of the theoretical elements of Reading Recovery that had never fitted with our beliefs. We carried out the task in an academic manner, drawing on a part of the literacy field that our training had never acknowledged. In doing that assessment task, we were able to place our views within the much larger literacy field, identifying how the Reading Recovery program in fact works well in assisting children to break the code of reading and writing. Thus we could conceptualise the program as serving a necessary, but not sufficient, role in literacy education (Freebody & Luke, 1990).*

*We agonised over every word. We knew that we would soon have to begin training Reading Recovery teachers ourselves. What had become our public dissonance was going to make this a difficult task in many ways. So we began the task with a somewhat naïve belief that this was our chance to let the field know what the basis for our resistance had been − that if we could present our views in a measured, academic fashion, both ourselves and the law makers could move beyond the emotional responses that*

*had come to characterise our relationships, and instead come to value each other's academic positions. The feedback we received only reinforced the gap between these theoretical positions. We were told that what we had attempted to do was admirable and yet not possible – how could one compare two such disparate things as literacy acquisition and broader social notions of literacy practice?*

## MOVING ON – Towards a new ending

What we have attempted to present in this paper is a multilayered analysis of one intervention program. Our finding that many of the regulatory processes in child-teacher interactions are just as evident in the training processes used with teachers and tutors awakens us to the fact that it is the institution of Reading Recovery which regulates the bodies, time and knowledges of participants. In this way, our critique is not about the teachers, tutors and trainers within Reading Recovery, but is instead about the social practices of such an institution.

Our choice to interweave our own narratives with an analysis of a child-teacher interaction has opened us to an uncomfortable sense of vulnerability. We have been caught between the desire to present an interesting story that provides a perspective not available to many and the disturbing realisation that we may be betraying those acquaintances and even friends from another world that we inhabited as insiders for such a short time.

Whilst the contemporary Australian literacy context seems in so many ways to be valuing basic early literacy training, we are concerned about the risk of constraining whole groups of children to the acquisition of normalised and narrow literacy practices, as identified by our discussion of Reading Recovery. However, we acknowledge that programs such as Reading Recovery will work for some children on some occasions – and indeed, for many children who have never "cracked the code" of reading and writing in the regular classroom, this program is often the only answer on offer to the type of intervention that is needed.

Nevertheless, there is a false sense that "the literacy problem" will be solved by ensuring that all students have basic, functional literacy by the end of Year 3. In fact, this false promise allows the understandings of literacy as a social practice, as a rich and complex set of social practices, to be ignored. Systems working towards the "basic literacy by the end of Year 3" objective seem to be calling on intervention programs such as Reading Recovery to be answers to the perceived failure of some children to move along the literacy developmental continuum at an accepted pace. Those making these decisions would suggest that these programs help students achieve basic literacy, and that this allows a broader more contemporary conception of literacy to be constructed in classroom literacy events.

However, we would argue that narrowing and segmenting the practices necessary for today's literate student may in fact marginalise students from particular social groups – firstly, by not providing access to a broader range of literate practices, and secondly, through Discourses of regulation, which actually constrain the development of competencies in literacy as social practice by enabling narrow responses to becoming literate.

## REFERENCES

Atkinson, P. (1981). Inspecting classroom talk. In C. Adelman (Ed.), *Uttering muttering: Collecting, using and reporting talk for social and educational research* (pp. 98-113). London: Grant McIntyre.

Barnes, B. L. (1997). But teacher you went right on: A perspective on Reading Recovery. *The Reading Teacher, 50*(4), 284-292.

Blair, M. (1995). "Race", class and gender in school research. In J. Holland & M. Blair & S. Sheldon (Eds.), *Debates and issues in feminist research and pedagogy* (pp. 248-261). Clevedon: The Open University.

Bochner, A. P. (1997). It's about time: Narrative and the divided self. *Qualitative Inquiry, 3* (4), 418-438.

Clay, M. M. (1991). *Becoming literate: The construction of inner control*. Auckland: Heinemann Educational Books.

Clay, M. M. (1992). A second chance to learn literacy: By different routes to common outcomes (The Reading Recovery programme). In T. Cline (Ed.), *The assessment of special education needs: International perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Clay, M. M. (1993a). *An observation survey of early literacy achievement*. Auckland: Heinemann.

Clay, M. M. (1993b). *Reading Recovery: A guidebook for teachers in training*. Auckland: Heinemann Education.

Danby, S. J., & Baker, C. D. (1998). "What's the problem?" - Restoring social order in the preschool classroom. In I. Hutchby & J. Moran-Ellis (Eds.), *Children and social competence: Arenas of action* (pp. 157-186). London: Falmer Press.

Devault, M. L. (1990). Talking and listening from women's standpoint: Feminist strategies for interviewing and analysis. *Social Problems, 37*(1), 96-116.

Dudley-Marling, C., & Murphy, S. (1997). A political critique of remedial reading programs: The example of Reading Recovery. *The Reading Teacher, 50*(6), 460-468.

Ellingson, L. L. (1998). "Then you know how I feel": Empathy, identification, and reflexivity in fieldwork. *Qualitative Inquiry, 4*(4), 492-514.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 733-768). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (Eds.). (1996). *Composing ethnography: Alternative forms of qualitative writing*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). London: Allen Lane.

Freebody, P., & Luke, A. (1990). 'Literacies' programs: Debates and demands in cultural context. *Prospect, 5*(3), 7-16.

Gee, J. P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses* (2nd ed.). London: Falmer Press.

Gore, J. (1995). Foucault's posstructuralism and observational education research: A study of power relations. In R. Smith & P. Wexler (Eds.), *After postmodernism: Education, politics and identity* (pp. 98-111). London: The Falmer Press.

Gore, J. (1998). Disciplining bodies: On the continuity of power relations in pedagogy. In T. S. Popkewitz & M. Brennan (Eds.), *Foucault's challenge: Discourse, knowledge, and power in education* (pp. 231-251). New York: Teachers College Press.

Heath, S. B. (1982). What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and school. *Language in Society, 11*, 49-76.

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and*

*classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hutchby, I., & Moran-Ellis, J. (1998). Situating children's social competence. In I. Hutchby & J. Moran-Ellis (Eds.), *Children and social competence: Arenas of action* (pp. 7-26). London: Falmer Press.

James, A., Jenks, C., & Prout, A. (1998). *Theorizing childhood*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (1998). New times! Old ways? In F. Christie & R. Misson (Eds.), *Literacy and schooling* (pp. 155-177). London: Routledge.

Lather, P. (1992). Critical frames in educational research: Feminist and post-structural perspectives. *Theory into Practice, 31*(2), 87-99.

Luke, A. (1992). The body literate: Discourse and inscription in early literacy training. *Linguistics and Education, 4*, 107-129.

McHoul, A. (1978). The organisation of turns at formal talk in the classroom. *Language and Society, 7*, 183-213.

Mehan, H. (1979). *Learning lessons*. Cambridge: Harvard Press.

Naples, N. A., & Sachs, C. (2000). Standpoint epistemology and the uses of self-reflection in feminist ethnography: Lessons for rural sociology. *Rural Sociology, 65*(2), 194-214.

Pikulski, J. J. (1994). Preventing reading failure: A review of five effective programs. *The Reading Teacher, 48*(1), 30-39.

Pinnell, G. S., Lyons, C. A., De Ford, D. E., Bryk, A. S., & Seltzer, M. (1994). Comparing instructional models for the literacy education of high-risk first graders. *Reading Research Quarterly, 29*(1), 9-38.

Prout, A., & James, A. (1997). A new paradigm for the sociology of childhood? Provenance, promise and problems. In A. James & A. Prout (Eds.), *Constructing and reconstructing childhood* (pp. 7-33). London: Falmer Press.

Ross, S. M., Smith, L. J., Casey, J., & Slavin, R. E. (1995). Increasing the academic success of disadvantaged children: An examination of alternative early intervention programs. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(4), 773-800.

Rowe, K. (1997). Factors affecting students' progress in reading: Key findings from a longitudinal study. In S. L. Swartz & A. F. Klein (Eds.), *Research in Reading Recovery* (pp. 53-101). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Silverman, D., & Gubrium, J., F. (1994). Competing strategies for analyzing the contexts of social interaction. *Sociological Inquiry, 64*(2), 179-198.

Sinclair, J.M., & Coulthard, M. (1975). *Towards an analysis of discourse: The English used by teachers and pupils*. London: Oxford University Press.

Smith, P. E. (1994). Reading Recovery and children with English as a second language. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, 29*(2), 141-155.

Tancock, S. M. (1997). Catie: A case study of one first grader's reading status. *Reading Research and Instruction, 36*(2), 89-110.

Trethowan, V., Harvey, D., & Fraser, C. (1996). Reading Recovery: Comparison between its efficacy and normal classroom instruction. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 19*(1), 29-37.

Wright, J. (2000). Disciplining the body: Power, knowledge and subjectivity in a physical education lesson. In A. Lee & C. Poynton (Eds.), *Culture & Text: Discourse and methodology in social research and cultural studies* (pp. 152-169). St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.