

Contingent Responding in Early Lessons: Support for the Development of an Effective Literacy Processing System

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Session Description

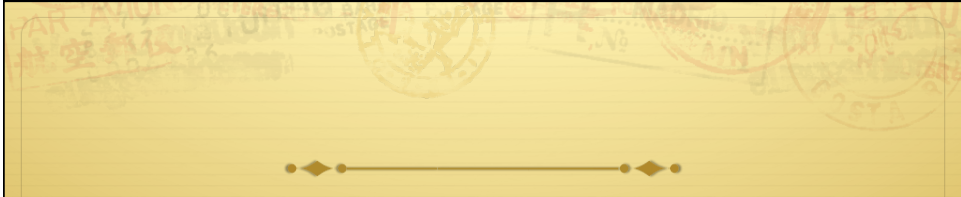
- ✦ Teaching the lowest-performing learners is difficult. Because no two children ever respond quite the same, teachers of the lowest-performing children must be the most tentative, skilled and responsive in their interactions with children” (Lose, 2007). In this session we will explore contingent responding on the part of the teacher in early Reading Recovery lessons, in particular the teacher’s arrangement of opportunities for the child’s learning and her use of language. Lessons transcripts and video recorded examples will help us reflect on the decisions we make in support of the development of a literacy processing system for children.

✦ I haven't taught until they
have learned.

~ Gallimore, R. (2009). Implementation
Stories...

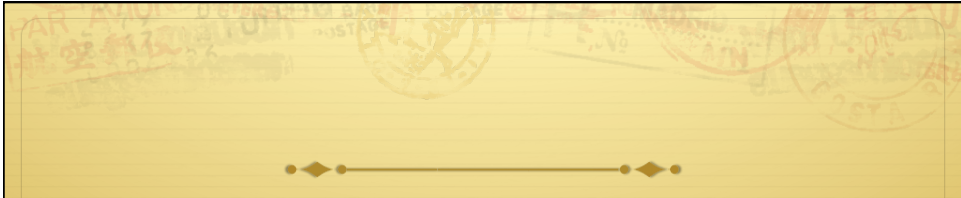
✦ "...One teacher and one child work
together in ways that allow **a myriad of
instructional adjustments** to be made.
From the recommended procedures a
teacher selects those that she requires for
a particular child with a particular
problem at a particular moment in
time..."

✦ Clay (2005b) p. 2



✦ “... *There are no set teaching sequences: there is no prescription to learn this before that.* A highly appropriate recommendation for one child could be an unnecessary one for another child.”

✦ Clay (2005b) p. 2



✦ “...The teacher must select the activities needed by a particular child after working with him, observing his responses, and thinking about what he needs to learn next.”

✦ Clay (2005b) p. 2

✦ “...We do not want to see the child spending time on activities that are not moving him forward or lifting the complexity of what he can do.”

✦ Clay (2005b) p. 2

Fostering Strategic Control and Child Independence

✦ “The challenge for teachers is to make optimum use of lesson time providing the ‘**just right**’ support for a child to increase his strategic control over literacy processing while encouraging his independence and without doing for the child what he can manage for himself.”

✦ Lose (2007), p. 17.

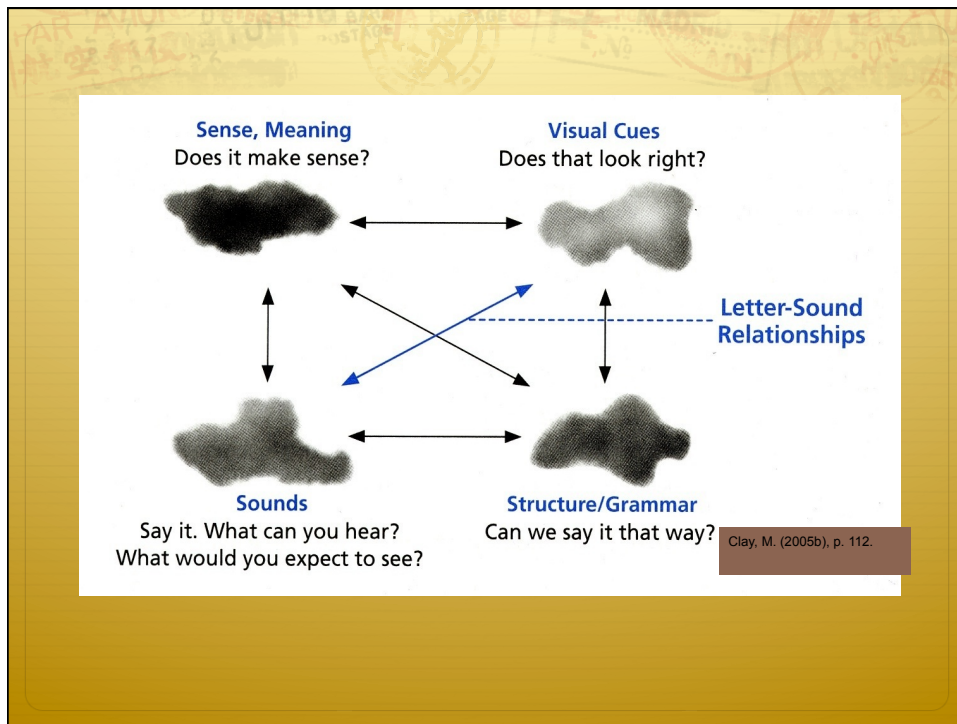
Wood's (2003) Work on Contingent Tutoring

- ✦ Basic human need to **help** when viewing another struggling
- ✦ Key to **survival** of the species
- ✦ An **investment** in the individual to help him adapt to the environment
- ✦ Tutor works appropriately to **ensure learner's success, interacting only minimally** to help learner complete next step in a task successfully

Wood's (2003) Work on Contingent Tutoring, *cont.*

- ✦ Three dimensions of contingent tutoring:
 - ✦ **Instructional** contingency—or how to support activity
 - ✦ **Domain** contingency--what to focus on next
 - ✦ **Temporal** contingency—if and when to intervene

Wood (2003), p. 14



Relationship of Wood's Work to Clay's Work in Reading Recovery

✦ “In Reading Recovery [and Literacy Lessons] instruction, teachers fine tune their understanding of how to support learners, what to teach them, and the timing of their interventions with children as they study Clay's work during their training and professional development experiences.”

✦ Lose (2007), p. 17.

Relationship of Wood's Work to Clay's Work in Reading Recovery, *cont.*

- ✦ “With support from their teacher leader and colleagues they build case knowledge while working one-to-one with students year after year.”

✦ Lose (2007), p. 17.

Relationship of Wood's Work to Clay's Work in Reading Recovery, *cont.*

- ✦ “Although any discussion of tutoring should examine all the contingencies holistically, we will focus our attention primarily on the **instructional contingency** or levels of support for learning outlined by Wood and with application to Reading Recovery [and Literacy Lessons] teaching as informed by Clay's (2005b) teaching procedures.”

✦ Lose (2007). p. 17.

Instructional Contingency: Challenges for the Teacher

- ✦ Knowledge of the task
- ✦ Relating knowledge to performance
- ✦ Perspective taking
- ✦ Self-inhibition: from doing, to guiding, to fading
- ✦ Communicative competence
- ✦ Timing

✦ Wood, 2003, p. 7.

Analyzing Contingent Support for Learning: Refer to your handout (separate document)

- ✦ Table 1. Wood's Levels of Contingent Support...
- ✦ Figure 1. Contingent Teaching: Supporting the Child's Solving of *sat* in the Writing Activity...
- ✦ [*practice sheet*] Figure 2. Contingent Teaching: Supporting the Child's Solving of *take* in the Writing Activity
- ✦ Figure 3. Contingent Teaching: Supporting the Child's Reading During First Reading of New Book...
- ✦ [*practice sheet*] Figure 4. Contingent Teaching: Supporting the Child's Reading After the First Reading of New Book...

Instructional, Domain and Temporal Contingency

✦ “I notice that teachers often do too much ‘supporting’... “make sure that your point has been taken...make your interactions brief and to the point!”

✦ Clay (2005b), p. 136.

Implications for Reading Recovery and Literacy Lessons Teaching

✦ “When considering *what to teach the child (domain)*, the challenge facing the teacher is to decide quickly how best to use the 30-minute lesson time within the approximate 12-20 weeks available for the child’s Reading Recovery intervention.”

✦ Lose (2007), p. 28.

Implications for Reading Recovery and Literacy Lessons Teaching, *cont.*

- ✦ “By considering Wood’s framework of contingent tutoring, and in particular the levels of support for learning, teachers may be able to make better use of the lesson time and modulate the quality and amount of teacher talk to foster efficient and effective learning on the part of the child.”

✦ Lose (2007), p. 28.

Contingent Support for the Child’s Strategic Action: Practice Observing and Analyzing

- ✦ Video: Teacher and Student Lesson
- ✦ Examine the teacher’s contingent support for the child’s learning and strategic action in reading and in writing.

	Opportunities Taken by the teacher	Opportunities Missed by the teacher
writing		
reading		

Recommendations

Video tape lessons.

- ✦ Using Wood's framework, create a transcript of the interactions with at least one child during 1 or 2 lesson activities.
 - ✦ Analyze the teaching interactions in terms of levels of support, timing, or evidence of self-inhibition
 - ✦ Analyze the clarity of the language used in the interactions: 'economy of words' and 'speechless demonstration'
 - ✦ Determine whether the comments and the non-verbal signals of support were or withheld so as not to interfere with the child's processing
 - ✦ Determine whether the teacher's decisions (or actions) were effective.

Recommendations, cont.

Do a time and content analysis of lesson activities.

- ✦ Use of the child's time, pace of interactions within lesson activities
- ✦ If lesson activity runs too long, consider it a signal that the level of support is insufficient or that the tasks (domain) are beyond the child's reach, requiring too many moves on the part of the teacher or too many interruptions of the child's work.
 - ✦ What lesson activities seem to take more time?
 - ✦ Do I know what the learner controls in terms of strategic activity?
 - ✦ Did I gain the child's attention first before demonstration (so as to be effective and so the demonstration will not have to be repeated).

Recommendations, cont.

Observe the child's nonverbal behaviors; note whether clarification/demonstration is needed.

- ✦ What can be shown without words may free up valuable cognitive capacity on the part of the child for processing.

Recommendations, cont.

Always focus on teaching in ways that foster and support, the child's strategic activity.

- ✦ Clay has advised that a **few items and a powerful strategy** are far more effective than attempting to teach the child everything and all at once.
- ✦ Therefore, carefully consider the task domain and ask ourselves: What does the child need to learn *how to do* next *in order to...*
- ✦ There is not enough lesson time to focus on all the possible items that could be learned, rather it is important to **focus on what is generative**.

Summary

- ✦ If the child is encountering difficulty with literacy learning it is quite likely that we have not yet found the best way to teach him (Clay, 1993, 2001, 2005b).

Summary

- ✦ If an interaction is not working for a child, increase the level of support or reconsider the 'domain' or what we are teaching the child.

Summary, cont.

- ✦ Fade support and be prepared to get out of the child's way.
- ✦ Adjust the domain, so that he has only one or two new problems to solve to advance his learning or control over literacy processing.

Summary, cont.

- ✦ Always consider the child's perspective.

Summary, cont.

- ✦ Refrain from asking the child to explain his responses; explanations interfere with the child's reading and writing, confuse the child, and consume cognitive capacity that could be reserved for strategic activity (Clay, 2005a, p. 41).

Summary, cont.

- ✦ Be especially observant and infer from the child's behaviors what specifically he has control over and what he doesn't yet seem to grasp.
- ✦ Consider the teaching climate; for optimum learning there must be shared joy between teacher and child (Holdaway, 1979; Lose, 1991; 1997; 2005; 2008).

Summary, cont.

- ✦ Encourage the child and create the conditions that will always foster his success so that he can strike out on his own and take risks.

Summary, cont.

- ✦ Never give up on a child (Lyons, 2003). If we do, who else is there to support him? If we give up, he may give up on himself.

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

~ Marie Clay (2005a), p. 63

Thank you for all you
do to support children's
literacy learning!