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## ABSTRACT

Suggesting that creating a report for each school involved in the Reading Recovery program can have a powerful impact, this paper shows the current model of campus reports for the Spring Branch Independent School District, Houston, Texas. The report form described in the paper is continually growing and changing through need and collaboration with principals and team members. It discusses including (1) the school's history; (2) the outcomes for every child; (3) sharing student data; (4) longitudinal components; (5) ownership for each child; (6) data on daily lessons; (7) service by teachers; (8) level of implementation; (9) data from questionnaires; and (10) a section on school team considerations. The paper concludes that the reports are worth whatever time and energy they require because data-driven decisions are the most powerful and have the greatest impact. Contains 4 references and 8 figures illustrating what can be included in these reports. (RS)

# School Reports: Creating Common Understandings.

by Sharon Lewis

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# NETWORKING

## School Reports: Creating Common Understandings

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*Forward: The school report format discussed in this article is based on the old scan forms. However, the article provides a rationale for the benefits of generating individual school reports. The new scan forms will allow more opportunities for gaining insights into the Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura program at the school level and for sharing data pertinent to schools in a way that informs their decision making. The more that school personnel learn from their data, the more likely they are to make the necessary decisions.*

Creating a report for each school involved in the Reading Recovery® program can have a powerful impact. A school report can be an effective tool to facilitate the decision making at the campus level and to build common understandings. Clay (1994) said that an "attractive feature of the program is the way in which it feeds back information" (p. 134), which is the goal of a school report.

Building a network of peers is a necessary support system for information sharing and problem-solving (Goodlad, 1977). Clay (1985) reminded us that it is important to have the quality control for schools mounting the intervention to reduce reading failure where teachers of these children serve as members of the school team (p. 4). Clay (1994) commented, "Because an education system is destined to maintain itself and because it does this by existing laws, regulations and other control mechanisms, taking an innovation aboard involves a change process with problem-solving as each new response to the innovation appears in the system" (p. 136). As we started Reading Recovery School Teams, it seemed natural that the teams would need the same type of information that was provided in the site report, if they were going to make effective decisions for Reading Recovery on their campus. As a teacher leader, I found that schools did not independently analyze their Reading Recovery data or even really look into it. Many principals interpreted the fact that the district, as a whole, was doing quite well to mean the same was true of each school; therefore, no further investigation was needed. Since I dealt with the data to write the site report, I knew that was far from being true. We had some campuses that were doing quite well and others that were struggling. I wanted a means for schools to have access to the data from their school to make decisions and a school report seemed to be the best vehicle. According to Clay, "It is helpful if several types of reports are available to satisfy the different readers in the educational and political system. Usually the same report will not serve all audiences." (p.135). This was evident in my district.

Since most of the data are gathered and analyzed over the

summer, my first thought was to disaggregate the data by school and construct school reports as I wrote the site report. These would be shared with the schools when the next school year began. I thought all that needed to be done was to provide each school with their data and they would easily see the areas that needed work and the areas of success. That did not prove to



be the case. Effective Reading Recovery School Teams were really interested in their data because they understood making data-driven decisions. Unfortunately, approximately one-fifth saw little or no value in this information. These schools were accustomed to programs telling them everything to do, which did not require any study on their part and certainly never asked for a decision or understanding of how to look at data. While our Reading Recovery program operates within the Standards and Guidelines of Reading Recovery Council of North America, each school has many decisions to make when planning the future of their program to shape it to meet their needs best. The partnership between Reading Recovery and the school helps Reading Recovery to uniquely serve each school and become a strong program at the campus level as well as the district level.

The goal of school reports is to have each school evaluate their Reading Recovery program using the data from their school to make decisions. These decisions will determine how the implementation in their school would grow to reach full implementation, serving every child who needs it. The data contained in these reports develop a dialog among all the members of the Reading Recovery School Team. In this article I will share the current model of campus reports for my district. I say "current" because they are continually growing and changing through need and collaboration with principals and team members identifying what schools want to know.

### Creating a School Report

Creating a report that is appealing to the eye has a greater chance of being read (see Figure 1). Graphically represented data takes up less space and does not seem as overwhelming as a written report providing the same information. Each school report, like the schools, is slightly different to make it meaningful to that school. Ownership of the Reading Recovery program and its results occurs when you have access to how you have done and can decide the best way to proceed. Reading

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Recovery personnel recognize the value of the annual site report as a tool to discern how things are progressing at the site level: What did we do well? What areas need work? More and more, decisions about instructional issues are being made at the campus level. So, it seems a logical step to provide each school with their specific Reading Recovery data. Just as the site report informs decisions at the site level, the school report informs the campus. The school report provides a basis for decision making and facilitates the team by disaggregating their data and presenting it in a usable format. This is one of the major reasons for writing an annual school report.

Figure 1

## What Information Do I Include?

There are many formats for school reports and many ways to compose these reports. This article will demonstrate one model for reporting school data. Sharing the report with the Reading Recovery School Team is a tool for facilitating questioning by the team members that leads to decision making. To that end, I chose to include a school history in Reading Recovery, as well as the rationale for collecting the data. The reporting on the following is just one approach to school reporting.

## The School's History

Often schools lose sight of their original objectives and inadequately monitor how long they have spent working toward the goal of full implementation. This page allows the school team to look at their history in Reading Recovery and Descubriendo La Lectura. As districts join Reading Recovery, each follows a slightly different path for implementation. In my district, no additional personnel were added to provide Reading Recovery. Principals had to reallocate a teacher's time to include service to Reading Recovery students. For many of the schools, it was difficult to find enough teaching units to serve every child who needs the program, thus reaching full implementation has been impossible. These data help the school to see their program's strengths and weaknesses. In the district, school by school, the implementation of the program varied greatly. The paths for many of the schools to reach a level of coverage to serve every child needing the program was (and for some still is) a long process. It is important for schools to keep their sights on the goal of full implementation by assessing where they started, where they are, and where they want to go.

## What Were the Outcomes for Every Child?

This page of the school report (Figure 2), provides the school team a graphic representation of the outcome for every

Figure 2

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child who entered the Reading Recovery program that year. It is accompanied by a short narrative to explain how service was given. Typical questions the team might generate are: "If there is a high number of students in the program at the end of the year, what can be done to provide enough time for these children to discontinue?" or "How can we organize to provide students with Reading Recovery programs that will give every child the opportunity to discontinue?" Further into the report there are data that feed into these questions, i.e., the data on the number of lessons averaged per week. Once questions are asked, everyone is more alert to integrating the data into problem-solving.

Since these reports are shared with individuals that may or may not have an understanding of the testing, a short explanation is given. It is also important for the readers of the report to understand the rationale for the data that are collected as reported in the Research Documentation section.

## Sharing Student Data

The next two pages of the report shown below (see Figures 3 & 4) include a method of reporting the data in the areas of

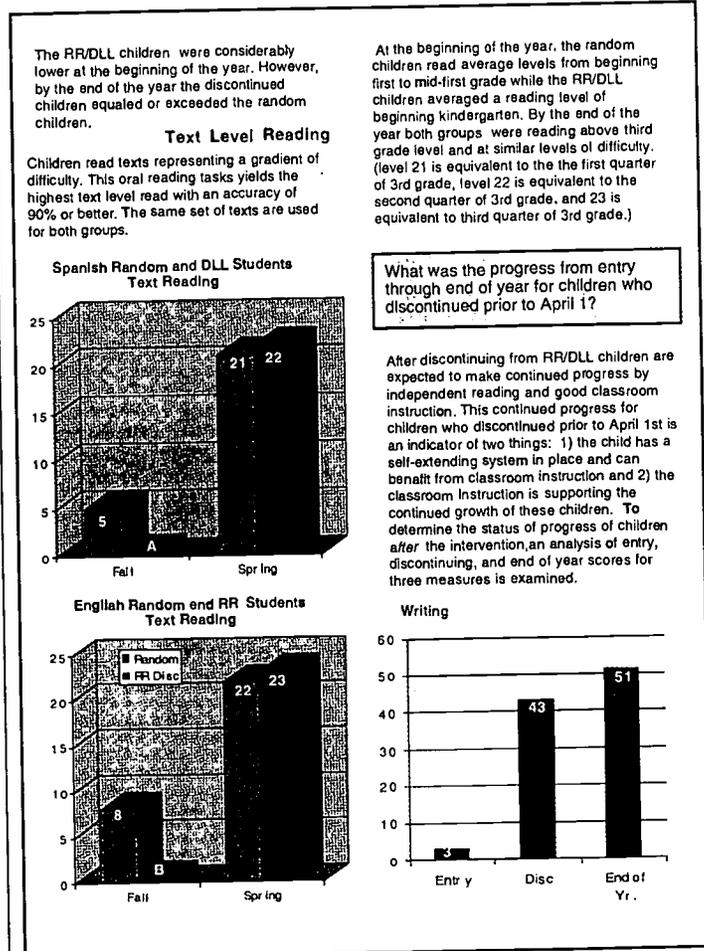


Figure 3

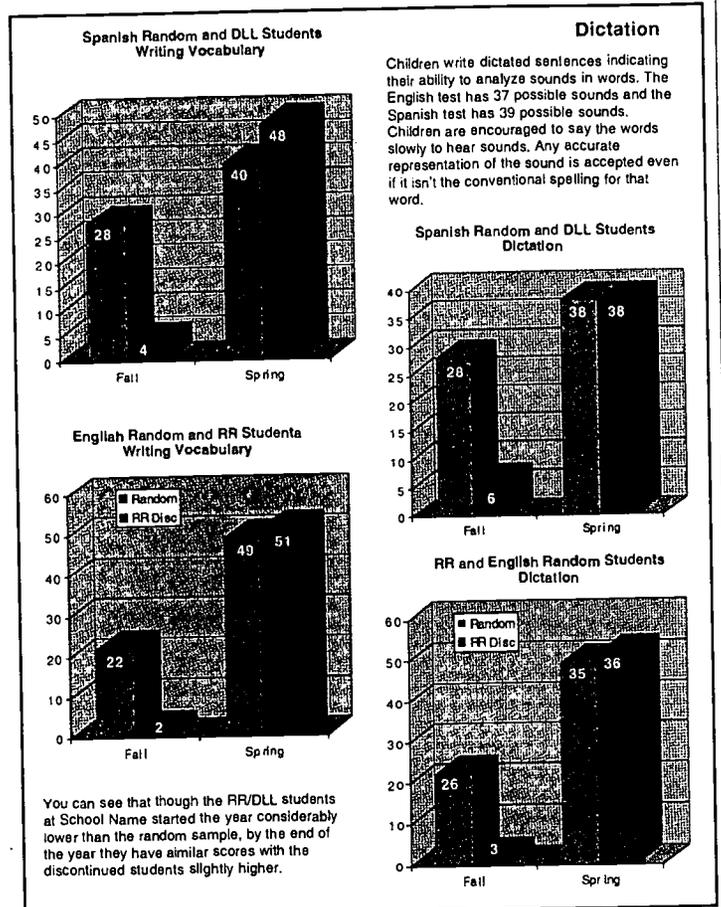


Figure 4

writing vocabulary, dictation, and text reading while providing a breakdown of students served by Reading Recovery or Descubriendo La Lectura to be used as a tool in determining the appropriate actions necessary for the success of each group. We tested the random sample children from English and Spanish populations at the beginning of the year as well as at the end. This made the growth of Reading Recovery children all the more clear and impressive. The mean scores at the beginning and end of the year for both groups are compared here. It is always exciting to see the Reading Recovery/ Descubriendo La Lectura children's end of year performance at a level equivalent to the random sample children but even more powerful when recognizing the difference in the starting points of the two groups.

Shown in Figure 4 and continuing to Figure 5, the next data reported are the growth of children who discontinued before April 1. This allows schools to monitor whether or not these children continue to grow after the support of Reading Recovery is concluded. If this is not happening, the school team has an opportunity to determine measures to correct this. Are Reading Recovery teachers discontinuing the children

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before they are strong enough? Do classrooms need to support these students better? Is there a need for staff development or will awareness generate change?

be identified for each of the children to support them over the next few years by checking on them periodically. In the event anything is noted that requires attention, this advocate would get in contact with the appropriate person to effect resolution. Additionally, in future years, we will analyze the success rate of all three groups. This will aid in determining the most appropriate distribution of school resources.

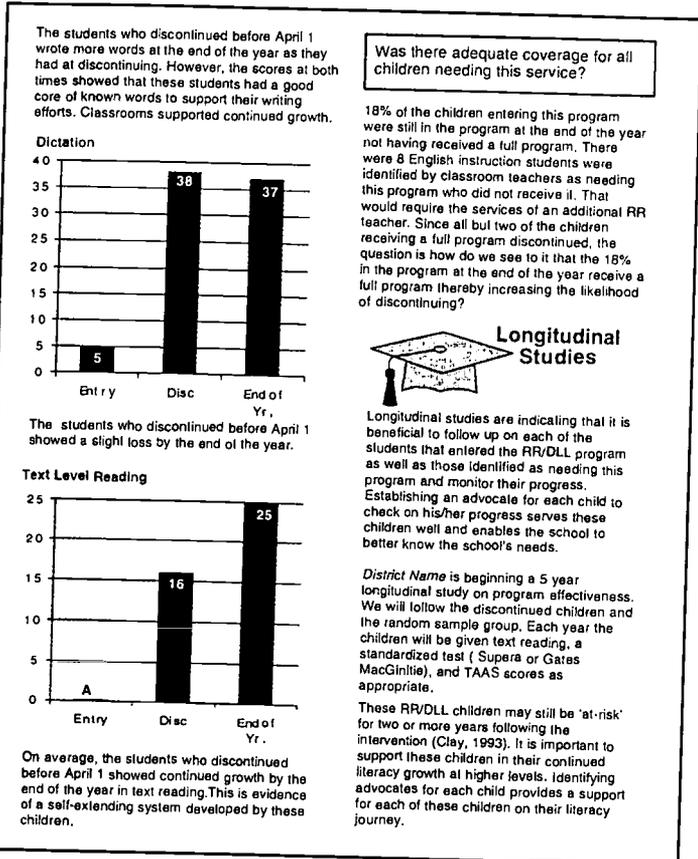


Figure 5  
A Longitudinal Look

Because our district is initiating a five-year longitudinal study, the plans for this study are incorporated in the report. It is important for schools to value this study and to watch its progress. My district has always emphasized program evaluation and this is just one more piece toward that end.

## Ownership for Each Child

It is important for the school team members to know the names and educational needs of each child needing the Reading Recovery program regardless of whether or not they were served. This information is necessary to monitor the current year's progress and develop comparisons in future years. Clay reminds us in *Reading Recovery: A Guidebook for Teachers n Training* that we are to adopt a "watch-dog role for ex-reading Recovery children" for about three years. If the team only deals with numbers, it does not have the same meaning when they look at the child's name. It personalizes the decisions, which is the rationale for providing the names of the children served (see Figure 6). The names were presented in the group that denoted how they finished the year. In our "watch-dog" role, we suggest to school teams that advocates

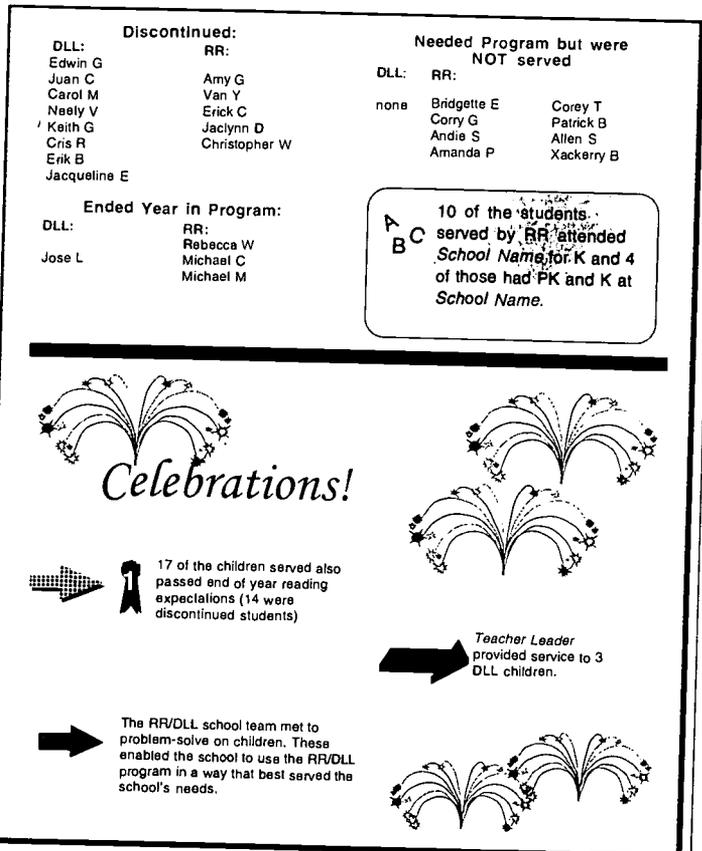


Figure 6

## How Do We Do With Our Own?

Another way of evaluating the use of resources is assessing how many of the children being served in Reading Recovery were on the same campus for kindergarten and /or PreK. These data are presented in the 'ABC' box and provide important information to the school team. It generates the question, "If 50% of the students served by Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura were at our school for Kindergarten, is this the same percentage reflected in our first grade population? If not, what do we need to do to prepare our children better?" This information helps schools think proactively about early instruction and assessment while they plan for the service needed for Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura. As a result of receiving this information, many schools have looked into classroom practices and often sought training in classroom assessment to facilitate

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teacher decision making.

## Celebrations!

We learn a lot from what we are doing well. So, a section of celebrations is included. I look for ways to state things so there can be a celebration of what was done instead of reporting what was not done. Our district has a district-wide assessment in reading. As a part of this section, the success of Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura students on that assessment is reported. It provides schools with additional data of the Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura students' reading abilities. School teams always enjoy hearing what things they have done well.

## Daily Lessons

We know how important it is for Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura children to be seen daily, not only to facilitate the acceleration of the child, but also to reduce program length in order to provide service to more children. To help schools assess if this is taking place on their campus, the average number of lessons per week and number of weeks for an average program are reported. Often schools are making decisions that impact these averages without realizing it. At a recent Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura School Team meeting where the data were shared, a principal asked the teachers, "Why is our average number of lessons per week so low?" Due to the strong atmosphere of trust, the teachers responded, "Remember we had a shortage of subs last year and we were pulled to cover classes." The principal responded, "I had no idea we had pulled you that much. We need to get together and develop a plan for the future so that when we are in an emergency situation we can feel confident that Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura lessons are protected."

## Service by Teacher

Data that show each teacher's service (how many were served, how many got a full program, and how many discontinued) help the school to be sure their program is cost effective (see Figure 7). It also provides teachers a measure of how they are doing. There may be a direct link back to number of lessons averaged per week if a teacher's service is less than expected. That would lead the school team to question what can be done to organize for serving more children. It also keeps the school team focused on the goal of full implementation.

## Level of Implementation

In the six years that Reading Recovery has been in our district, schools have entered the program at different times. The *Level of Implementation Chart* (see Figure 7) allows a school to look at their outcomes across the years they have been in the program. Questions about serving all the populations equally arise and plans can be started to make any necessary

changes in service.

## How Are We Doing?

Every year Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura sends out and collects questionnaires to see how the program is viewed by the various stake holders. The sample comments written here (see Figure 7) represent comments made by parents, classroom teachers, and administrators. Occasionally there are comments that are less favorable and those are reported proportionally. If we fail to look at criticisms, we miss an opportunity to grow and know how Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura are perceived by their clientele. It is especially important to look at how the Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura programs are viewed by the stake holders (see Figure 8) when there are decisions to be made about providing the Reading Recovery program with the same or increased coverage. When schools are deciding about extending or reducing coverage, it is a powerful piece. The questions that this section can generate are, "Have we done a good job of informing the various stakeholders of the role of Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura in a balanced literacy program?" or "Do all the stake holders understand what Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura are designed to do?"

Average number of lessons per week = 3.3			
Average length of program = 13 weeks			
3.3 lessons per week is the lowest in the district. The district average for lessons per week was 4.1.			
	# served	# FP	# Disc.
RR teacher	9	5	3
DLL teacher	10	6	4
DLL Teacher leader	3	3	3

### Level of Implementation 1993-1997

	# of 1st Graders		# Served by RR/DLL		% Served by RR/DLL		# Receiving a Full Prog.		# Disc.	
	English	Spanish	English	Spanish	English	Spanish	English	Spanish	English	Spanish
1997-1998	51	45	9	13	18%	29%	5	13	3	12
1996-1997	38	38	9	5	25%	13%	7	2	7	0
1995-1996	42	65	17	0	26%		13		13	
* 1994-1995	96		17			18%	7		6	
1993-1994										

\* = years not participating in DLL

## Comments!

### Parents:

- "I appreciate you taking my son into the program. He has made great improvements."
- "I am so grateful that RR was available to my son. My heartfelt thanks go to Ms. A and all those who worked to bring this program to School Name Elem."
- "RR gave my child confidence in herself and her ability to attempt work or reading."

### Classroom Teachers:

- RR greatly improved the students self-esteem. Now they enjoy reading their books instead of viewing them as a chore.
- "Great program, just wish there were more RR teachers to service more students."
  - students have a repertoire of strategies Students are more confident in all their tasks
  - They have strategies and help other children.
  - "I see the children using the reading strategies they learned in RR in the regular classroom. There is obvious transfer of skills being taught."

### Administrators:

It has made a difference in the children who have been placed/promoted to second grade. It has helped us to meet our goal of 90-100% students on grade level at 3rd grade.

Figure 7

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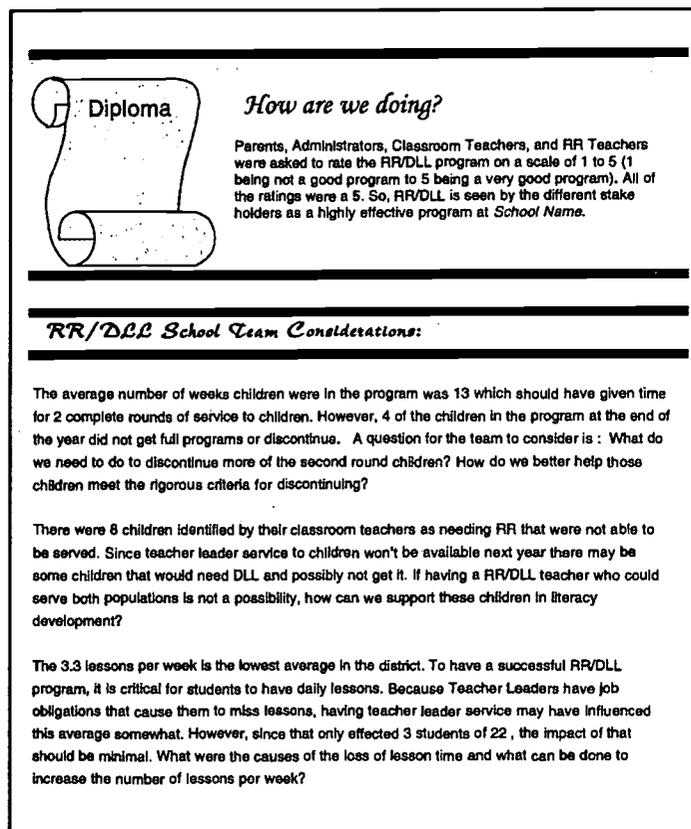


Figure 8

## School Team Considerations

Our Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura School Teams are relatively new on many campuses because we added nine campuses last year. In an effort to provide a guide for thinking about the year, a section for the team considerations is the last part of the report. It models questioning appropriate to the data and can help to initiate a dialog.

## Summary

Districts choose different methods of writing campus reports and this is just one style for sharing campus data. Some turn the writing totally over to the school team to prepare a report that serves them. Other schools leave the report writing up to the Reading Recovery teachers. Still another style is to have the teacher leader prepare the report. Regardless of who generates the report, it is important to share the report with each school's Reading Recovery School Team at the beginning of the next year. It is important for each site to decide why they want campus reporting and find a format that aligns with their rationale. Talking with colleagues, I realize that each way of preparing the school report has benefits and drawbacks and each district or site has to decide what is best for them.

The school reports in our district have evolved and will continue to grow. The first school report consisted of the areas

that I, as the teacher leader, thought powerful. When they were shared at the beginning of the next year, many schools received the information enthusiastically, but several schools saw the information sharing as just one more meeting to attend and had little interest. In an effort to reach all the school teams, I interviewed several principals to determine what would make these reports more 'user friendly'. As a consequence of these talks, the school reports this year have the format of the one you see in this article. What started out as a three page report has expanded to offer more information.

This year the school reports have generated exciting outcomes. *We have been forming and developing school teams for the past three and a half years and sharing campus data for two years. This year we have seen dynamic decision-making based on the campus data. This is partly due to the fact that the teams are maturing and partly due to the new design of the school reports provides more information. As a result of the school report, one school identified a need for staff development at the suggestion from a classroom teacher member. This school has developed and is implementing that staff development. Other meetings where the school report was shared have resulted in principals asking for further data in an effort to look toward future needs for service or the need for helping classroom teachers use assessments to guide instruction. Another campus shared their school report with their campus advisory team (a team made of members from the school, parents, community people and educational partners) and the response was very positive and the team committed to making sure that every child needing the program gets it. At still another school, the principal wanted to be able to republish the report for parents and suggested that the information containing the children's names be placed on an insert. She appreciated the need for the names for the school team but was also aware of maintaining privacy. The inset would allow both goals to be accomplished. The response to the reports has shown an increase in most of the schools' ownership for their Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura programs and has served as a springboard for inquiry and decision making.*

The plans for the school reports next year involve combining input by team members and teacher leader(s) to meet each school's needs. A questionnaire has been developed that will encourage the Reading Recovery School Team to be more involved in the data collection and some synthesis of that information. The items on the questionnaire reflect the information from the new scan sheets and will help Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura teachers to see some patterns as the information is collected. This can lead to goal setting for the Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura teacher, as well as provide insight to the school's data. As a teacher leader, I will still do some of the analysis over the summer and combine the information from the team with that analysis to create next year's reports. It is still a learning process for me. However, the one thing of which I am sure is that these reports are worth whatever time and energy they

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require because data-driven decisions are the most powerful and have the greatest impact. As Clay (1994) tells us, schools need to be informed about "the purpose, procedures, and outcomes" of the Reading Recovery program (p. 134).

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Editor Note School Reports will be a regular feature in The Network News for the purpose of sharing effective School reports with the Reading Recovery teacher leader And site coordinator network. Please submit your school Report(s) on diskette along whit your photograph to the Editor at 3715 West Pine Brook Way, Houston TX 77059.



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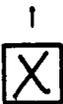
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