Parents and Children Reading and Reflecting Together: The Possibilities of Family Retrospective Miscue Analysis

Bobbie Kabuto

Family Retrospective Miscue Analysis provides a venue where teachers and reading specialists can bridge the divide caused by parents’ misconceptions and discourses about reading and encourage parents to see reading as meaning construction.

Carol (all names are pseudonyms), a single working mother, expressed frustration at watching her daughter Christie’s unwillingness to read *Buzz Said the Bee* (Lewison, 1992):

> You are making me so uncomfortable. You are acting so reluctant. This is such a waste of good energy. I have to run away when she acts like this and when I’m bombarded with this horrible energy. She can’t possibly be learning. I know what she needs to accomplish and this is not it.

Christie is a third grader who reads at a preprimer level, based on results from the Qualitative Reading Inventory–4 (QRI–4; 2006). She struggles with reading both in and out of school. Christie’s struggles also become her family’s struggles. Taylor (1993) discussed the burden placed on families when she wrote, “When we evaluate children we get lost in our own abstractions and children fail. When children fail, families are placed in jeopardy. Sometimes families fail” (p. 26).

Carol and Christie were participants in a Family Retrospective Miscue Analysis (Family RMA) study that combined Retrospective Miscue Analysis (RMA) with family literacy. The purpose of the study was to investigate how RMA could be used to help parents and children navigate the reading process, with the goal of helping parents better understand their children’s reading strengths. In this article, I present the study and argue that RMA provided a space for Carol to identify with Christie as a reader, which in turn allowed Carol to better support Christie. I conclude with the implications of this study for reading specialists and classroom teachers.

Reading and Reflecting Through RMA

Family RMA brings parents and children together to discuss reading by requiring parents and their children to participate together in oral readings and RMA discussions. RMA, which is a retro-reflective discussion about a reader’s miscues, is based on the work of miscue analysis (K. Goodman, 2003a).

Miscues are produced responses that differ from expected responses in texts. For example, a reader reads “I went into her house” for the expected sentence “I went into her home.” Miscue analysis views miscues as windows into the reading process (K. Goodman, 2003a). That is, miscues can help us infer what readers are thinking when they read (albeit never perfectly). Miscue analysis has been the cornerstone...
procedure for helping teachers understand the strategies used by readers as they construct meaning from texts (Brown, Goodman, & Marek, 1996).

Research has suggested that readers employ a combination of reading cueing systems in the process of making sense of texts (K. Goodman, 1996; Smith, 1997). In particular, readers will integrate the graphophonic (letter/sound), syntactic (grammar), and semantic (meaning) cueing systems. Research has also suggested that an imbalanced use of these cueing systems can cause readers to struggle with texts (Smith, 1997). For instance, Smith (1997) contended that readers who focus too much on letters and sounds in pronouncing unknown words acquire tunnel vision. According to Smith, this causes readers to overload from processing large amounts of visual information, which distracts them from reading comprehension.

Although there is a strong research base that demonstrates the effectiveness of RMA as an instructional tool with readers in elementary (Moore & Gilles, 2005) and secondary schools (Moore & Aspegren, 2001) as well as adult learners (Paulson, 2001), this study takes a new approach to the study of RMA by using it with families. More specifically, RMA offers a context in which parents and their children can become more aware of their strengths as readers through the process of revaluing (K. Goodman, 2003b). Revaluing readers involves shifting the focus from reading as accurate, oral production to reading as comprehension (Y. Goodman, 1996). With this shift in focus, we help readers to recognize and concentrate on their strengths by valuing what they can do (K. Goodman, 2003b). Therefore, RMA discussions address the merit of high-quality miscues, which are miscues that do not change the meaning of the sentence or story (e.g., substituting sofa for couch). Ultimately, this study aspired to help parents and children to view miscues as part of common reading behaviors.

**Family RMA Inquiry Questions**

Recognizing that little research has been conducted on RMA with family units, I saw the possibilities that Family RMA could offer parents and their children. The questions that framed the investigation of Family RMA with Carol and Christie were as follows:

- How did Family RMA provide Carol and Christie with a space for exploring reading strategies and processes?
- What reading strategies did Carol adopt in working with Christie as a result of their Family RMA sessions?
- How did Carol’s and Christie’s perceptions about themselves and each other as readers evolve as a result of their Family RMA experience?

**A Case Study in Family RMA**

Christie is 8 years old. She is a third grader who has been labeled with a speech and language disability and she receives special services in school. She lives with her mother, Carol, in a middle class suburban area. Carol is a college-educated professional who works from home, and Christie is her only child.

Christie told me that she enjoys participating in extracurricular activities, such as skating, swimming, and dance. However, she was not as positive about school, or about reading in particular. Although Christie said that she likes to read, her other comments created a different picture. When Christie was asked to read during the Family RMA sessions, she provided excuses such as “it makes me tired.” There were other times when I attempted to probe into Christie’s perceptions about reading and she supplied the response, “I don’t want to talk about it.”

As described in the beginning of this article, Carol was frustrated by Christie’s reluctance toward reading. In addition, Carol expressed disappointment with the types of support that Christie was receiving in school, which did not provide Christie with enough reading services despite the fact that she was reading at a preprimer level. Carol felt that the most important thing about reading was comprehension, and she did not feel that Christie was able to understand what she was reading. This compelled Carol to advocate for Christie to receive more instruction that addressed comprehension and less instruction that emphasized letter–sound relationships.

Consequently, Carol volunteered for the Family RMA study with the hope of learning different ways to work with Christie that would focus on comprehension rather than oral production. Initial reading data on Christie painted a picture of a reader with tunnel vision. Not only did Christie say that she sounded out words when she had difficulty, but also she used this
constructing meaning, the discussion of how her mother (who Christie feels is a good reader) makes miscues became critical if Christie was to transform her perceptions about what readers do when they read. Christie was therefore able to make connections between her high-quality miscues and those of her mother.

Second, by asking parents to orally read and then discuss their miscues, parents have the opportunity to reflect critically upon their understandings of reading and upon themselves as readers. Therefore, allowing parents to participate in RMA sessions makes their experiences and their definitions of reading transparent. In this way, parents are also able to view their strengths and use them as a means of interpreting their children’s strengths.

Family RMA Sessions

Family RMA consisted of at least one parent, his or her child, and the researcher (Kabuto, the author), and it took place in the local public library. The 10 total sessions alternated between miscue analyses and RMA discussions for the child and miscue analyses and RMA discussions for the parent (see Table 1). During each RMA session, parents and children participated together in observing the oral readings and discussing high-quality miscues for a twofold reason. First, children had the opportunity to listen to and reflect upon their parents’ miscues. When Christie was asked who was a good reader, for instance, she replied that her mother was. In order for Christie to realize that miscues are the result of her efforts in reading orally, causing her to stretch out words until they were unrecognizable. However, it is interesting that although Christie’s oral reading was laborious, she was nevertheless able to retell the story. Her retellings always consisted of the major characters, details of the setting and plot, and the story problem. Overall, initial reading data suggested that Christie did not have flexible use of cueing systems or other types of word-solving strategies when orally reading.

Family RMA Data

The data collected during the course of the study consisted of the following categories: parent interviews, child interviews, observational and reflective notes, oral readings, and RMA discussions.

Parent Interviews. At the beginning of the study, I interviewed Carol using the Burke Reading Inventory (Y. Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987) about her definition of reading, how she learned to read, her perceptions of the important aspects of reading, and how she felt about herself as a reader. In addition, I gathered information about Carol’s perceptions of Christie’s reading abilities, Christie’s progress in school, how Carol saw the school’s role in providing services to support Christie’s reading and writing, and Carol’s goals for Christie’s literacy progress. Carol was also interviewed using the Burke Reading Inventory at the end of the 10 weekly sessions. Finally, each session included interviews regarding daily home literacy practices and school activities.

Child Interviews. I interviewed Christie at the beginning and the end of the study with the Burke Reading Inventory (Y. Goodman et al., 1987). The reading interview contained the same questions as those given to her mother. I also interviewed Christie regarding daily home literacy practices and school activities.

Observational and Reflective Notes From Participant Observation. This study involved participant observation, which is an ethnographic research design in which a researcher becomes
actively involved in the research process (Agar, 1996). Consequently, documenting how my role and ideologies of reading coconstructed the research is of critical importance. My theoretical framework is important to acknowledge, as it influenced the ways in which I approached this research. It situates reading as a constructive process with meaning at the core. Following the ethnographic tradition, I wrote observational notes at every session. The sessions were also audiotaped and later transcribed. The observational notes provided contextual information and captured spontaneous dialogue that evolved out of our sessions. After I transcribed each session’s audio data, the transcriptions and observational notes were examined together to write reflective notes that discussed my role in the research and the overall themes evolving out of each session.

**Oral Readings and Selection of Miscues.** At the beginning of the study, I assessed Christie using QRI–4 (2006). The initial QRI–4 data provided a benchmark range for selecting books on Christie’s instructional reading level. In order for her to produce high-quality miscues, Christie read books that were one level above her instructional level, which would challenge but not frustrate her. Carol was asked to read articles out of magazines such as *Time* or *Newsweek*. (Table 2 outlines the miscue analysis texts that were used for Carol and Christie.) Although these magazines are generally written on a middle school level, the articles tend to have unconventional grammatical structures and unfamiliar vocabulary, which can cause readers to miscue. In fact, Carol averaged 5 miscues per 100 words over the course of the study when reading this type of material.

### Table 2
**Text With Corresponding High-Quality Miscues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reader</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>High-quality miscues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christie</td>
<td><em>Buzz Said the Bee</em> (Lewison, 1992)</td>
<td>“And sat on a pig” (p. 9).</td>
<td>“And sat on the pig.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“And the pig said, ‘Oink’” (p. 20).</td>
<td>“The...and the pig said, ‘Oink.’”</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Goodnight Moon</em> (Brown, 1947)</td>
<td>“And there were three little bears sitting on chairs” (p. 4).</td>
<td>“And there three little bears who took a seat.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Goodnight kittens and goodnight mittens” (pp. 15–16).</td>
<td>“Goodnight kittens. Goodnight mittens.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Monkey See, Monkey Do</em> (Gave, 1993)</td>
<td>“Monkey out of sight” (p. 6).</td>
<td>“Monkey under the table.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Monkeys go fast” (p. 13).</td>
<td>“Monkeys go free.”</td>
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<td>Carol</td>
<td>“Corporate Activism: Out of Control” (Davidson, 2007)</td>
<td>“Corporate leaders are pouring their shareholders’ money into activist social causes like never before—over $10 billion worth in 2005” (p. 28).</td>
<td>Corporate leaders are pouring their stockholders’ money into activist social causes like never before—over $10 billion worth in 2005.</td>
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<td>“I think Ben &amp; Jerry’s demonstrated that it is possible for a corporation to be quite profitable and to use its power to solve some societal problems at the same time” (p. 28).</td>
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<td>“At the BLT Restaurant in New York City and Washington, chef Laurent Tourneu is serving a $92 rib-eye steak, and he’s pretty sure he’s holding back” (p. 118).</td>
<td>“But the BLT Restaurant in New York City and Washington, chef ‘something French’ is serving a $92 rib-eye steak, and he’s pretty sure he’s holding back.”</td>
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<td>“Conspicuous Consumption” (Stein, 2007)</td>
<td>“The clients tell us we can raise our prices even more,’ he says” (p. 118).</td>
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<td>“At the BLT Restaurant in New York City and Washington, chef Laurent Tourneu is serving a $92 rib-eye steak, and he’s pretty sure he’s holding back” (p. 118).</td>
<td>“But the BLT Restaurant in New York City and Washington, chef ‘something French’ is serving a $92 rib-eye steak, and he’s pretty sure he’s holding back.”</td>
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I administered the miscue analysis through standard reading miscue procedures (Y. Goodman et al., 1987). The oral readings lasted approximately 15 minutes, and story retellings were elicited after the oral readings. Once the session was over, I listened to the audiotape and marked Christie’s and Carol’s miscues on a prepared typescript using conventional miscue codings (Y. Goodman et al., 1987). I analyzed the retellings using procedures developed by Y. Goodman and Marek (1996).

**Retrospective Miscue Analysis.** Once the miscue procedures were completed, the typescript was analyzed for high-quality miscues, which were determined on the basis of the following two main criteria: (1) Does it make sense in the sentence? (2) Is it grammatically acceptable in the sentence? Graphic similarity was not an immediate criterion for two reasons. First, readers can substitute words that are not visually similar but still make sense and are grammatically acceptable, such as reading *couch* for *sofa*. Second, readers may omit words that do not affect either the meaning or the grammar of the sentence, which obviates any discussion of visual similarity. Although high-quality miscues were selected with regard to meaning and syntax, discussions of graphic cues were undertaken when relevant. For instance, when Carol substituted *stockholders* for *shareholders*, discussion of how Carol’s miscue was graphically similar to the expected word was important.

Once the sentences with high-quality miscues were outlined, I selected two for the RMA discussions. When there were more than two sentences with high-quality miscues, miscues that focused on high-quality word substitutions or grammatical rearrangements were primarily selected. Table 2 lists the high-quality miscues that were discussed. The high-quality miscues were transferred to the RMA session organizer (see Figure 1).

During each RMA session, Carol and Christie were asked to orally reread the text to prepare for the discussion. Once they read the text, I played the section of audiotape with the preselected high-quality miscue. The discussion began with me asking Carol or Christie the interpretive question, “Can you tell me what you did here?” This question was followed up with those outlined in Figure 1.

Each RMA session was transcribed and triangulated with observational notes and initial and closing interviews to uncover themes and transformations of behaviors over the course of the sessions. Themes that emerged suggested that Carol and Christie became more empowered in discussing their reading as they began to challenge their misconceptions about reading and themselves as readers. Here I will contend that Family RMA provided a space for exploring reading, encouraged Carol to adopt a variety of reading strategies for Christie, and allowed for Carol’s and Christie’s perceptions about themselves and each other as readers to evolve.

**A Space for Exploration**

In our first RMA session, Carol talked about her experiences with reading. Carol remembered having difficulty with reading as a fourth grader and receiving reading services outside of school. She reminisced about reading Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* and suddenly realizing that she was “getting it” and that she could “understand.” Particularly striking was when she said, “And I know that I was not reading every word but I could understand.” Over the course of our Family RMA sessions, there was some conflict in how Carol talked about her own reading and what she thought reading should be like. Although Carol said that she knew that she did not read every word, she expected Christie to read every word and read accurately.

Although Carol did not argue that the most important thing about reading was comprehension, she was not sure how people reached the point of good comprehension. Initially, Carol felt that Christie needed to read accurately to understand the text. However, after listening to Christie’s oral readings and retellings, Carol was surprised at how much Christie actually comprehended. During the eighth session, Carol commented,

> I didn’t realize that there was comprehension. You remember that wonderful time when she [Christie] commented that the mice wouldn’t share the apple cider or whatever it was because they didn’t help. I didn’t even get that to be honest with you. I was so concentrated on her [oral] reading. I didn’t comprehend.

These conversational asides, or what I call RMA outtakes, were moments that highlighted revelations about reading. RMA outtakes were always related to our RMA sessions but never embedded within them. They were critical spaces where transformed knowledge about reading surfaced. Within these spaces, Carol began to realize that there is a
she must not understand what she was reading. The RMA session encouraged Carol to appreciate that there are different qualities of miscues. Although low-quality miscues can negatively affect Christie’s comprehension, high-quality miscues are the result of her successful attempts to construct meaning.

difference between making sense as you read, what K. Goodman (1996) called *comprehending*, and overall story *comprehension*. While focusing on Christie’s oral reading, Carol was paying attention to Christie’s performance in the act of comprehending. However, Carol assumed that because Christie made miscues,
In the end, this shift in focus allowed Carol to take a deeper look into the types of miscues that Christie made. In the final interview, Carol talked about this shift in focus. She said,

> There has been so much focus on words. What we are doing here is reminding me that it’s a balancing act. It [learning with RMA] is showing how things fall into place. I see that there is comprehension that occurs in that effort of filling in those words.

For Christie, participating in Carol’s RMA sessions created a safe space for exploring reading. In essence, Christie could talk about her reading beliefs outside of the context of her reading performance. Although there were times when she openly avoided reading, as the pressure to perform was emotionally taxing on her, Christie enjoyed listening to and talking about Carol’s oral readings. The Family RMA sessions capitalized on this desire.

During an RMA session with the text “Conspicuous Consumption” (Stein, 2007), we discussed the sentence “At the BLT Restaurant in New York City and Washington, chef Laurent Tournel is serving a $92 rib-eye steak, and he’s pretty sure he’s holding back” (p. 118). Carol substituted but for at and said “something French” for Laurent Tournel. In discussing Carol’s first substitution miscue (but for at), I asked Christie whether Carol’s miscue sounded like language, and she replied, “No.” I asked why, to which Christie replied, “Because it is wrong.” Christie also felt that Carol should have self-corrected because she “did not read what was in the book.” Christie’s view of reading was not based on making sense but was instead based on reading accuracy. Christie allowed herself to believe that the substitution of but for at did not sound like language, when in fact it did.

Although accuracy plays its role in reading, my goal was to encourage Christie to realize that she should not sacrifice making sense for accurate oral production of text. Carol’s miscues and RMA discussions provided a safe space for Christie to focus on meaning rather than accuracy, away from her sometimes laborious oral readings. At the closing interview, I again asked Christie if she would like to be a better reader. This time, she quickly replied, “Yes. Because I want to be a teacher.” Her comment proposed there was a seismic shift in her thoughts about reading.

## Reading Interactions and Strategies

As mentioned earlier, one of Carol’s goals was to find ways to work with Christie that would concentrate on comprehension. By making her own comprehension strategies transparent through RMA discussions, Carol was better able to recognize that the strategies she already possessed also could be used with Christie. The previously described miscue, where Carol said “something French” for Laurent Tournel, is a good example. Christie enjoyed Carol’s use of this strategy. When I asked Christie what Carol did, Christie immediately replied, “She’s good.” Carol added, “Because it kept the flow instead of me stammering and losing the continuity of the meaning of the sentence. It was just something French. Would it matter? Do we know him?” Carol talked extensively about how this strategy compensated for not knowing the pronunciation:

> In other words, I know that’s an area that I would stumble that would break my concentration and make me focus on something that would take me totally away from the story and the information given. So I don’t waste my time with it. Sometimes when I am not reading out loud, I just use the first letter and that’s it. There’s G and F and that’s it and maybe I’ll get Mr. G. I don’t bother wasting my mental powers on that. I’m not wasting my mental strengths on something that I’m not strong at.

In fact, Christie recognized many of Carol’s word-solving strategies that did not disrupt her reading flow or comprehension. After Carol read the passage from “Conspicuous Consumption,” Christie noticed that Carol deliberately substituted a phrase as a placeholder for difficult words. Christie said, “She put in a word when the word is not working.”

Over time, these types of patterns emerged within Christie’s oral reading. At our final RMA session, we discussed the phrase “Monkey out of sight” (Gave, 1993, p. 13). Christie initially read our for out, but changed the sentence to read “Monkey under the table.” During the RMA session, I asked Christie what she did. She replied, “I didn’t know that word so I looked at the picture.” Instead of producing a grammatically unconventional phrase that would not make sense, Christie produced a phrase that showed how she used the story pattern to make a sensible prediction. Her prediction, in turn, reflected her knowledge of grammatical cues, as her produced phrase lacked a verb, as does the sentence on the page. Rather than
overly attending to graphic cues that would cause her to struggle, Christie placed greater importance on creating a parallel text that matched the picture and the grammatical structure of the sentence and made sense (K. Goodman, 1996).

Over the course of the Family RMA sessions, Carol regularly commented on how she changed the ways in which she worked with Christie at home. During the closing interview, Carol articulated the importance of what she learned through participating in RMA:

It [Family RMA] is showing me how to work with Christie more productively. Where to intervene; where not to intervene. To trust that she is learning, even though sometimes I'm afraid that she is not. She's making progress.

When I asked if there were things that Carol now did differently based on our RMA sessions, she replied, “Absolutely. Basically, if she's chosen a proper word even though it's not the exact word, I hold on! Who cares? I'm more patient.”

Carol learned to be a strategic partner in reading with Christie, while Christie learned to be a strategic reader. Returning to Carol's words, reading and working with struggling readers is a “balancing act.” To attend to every detail can cut away at the self-esteem (sometimes little self-esteem) that struggling readers hold. Carol's developing patience was due, at least in part, to a transformation of her perceptions about Christie and herself as readers.

Transforming Perceptions
By critically reexamining her assumptions about reading, Carol was better able to take an essential look at herself as a reader. This process occurred over the course of the RMA sessions. Throughout the study, I have suggested that Carol's participation encouraged her to see both her own reading and her responses to Christie's reading differently. Carol was able to challenge her initial perceptions about the nature of miscues as negative behaviors that need to be corrected. Instead, Carol began to consider miscues as windows into Christie's working models of reading and language development (Owocki & Goodman, 2002). Carol articulated this point at the closing interview when she said, “Her abilities are actually better than I had hoped.”

Just as important, Carol needed to view Christie through her own experiences with reading. At the conclusion of the study, Carol remarked,

I'm a better reader since we started. First of all, I had experiences that discouraged me from reading. I have realized that all of these things I thought were odd were actually very, very good.

The transformation of self-perception was intrinsically linked to the way that Carol and Christie transformed their perceptions of each other. In other words, if Carol had not transformed the way that she viewed herself as a reader, she would not have been able to acknowledge Christie's reading strengths, and vice versa. Carol highlighted this theme when she said,

I give her more credit. And I have found that she can read much more sophisticated books instead of Run Jane Run. I remember in my reading program reading Run Jane Run and thinking that I'm a little bit more sophisticated than that and my comprehension was beyond. My empathy is with her.

Carol viewed Christie's experiences through the window of her own experiences, both past and current. Christie's transformations helped her adopt new reading strategies that focused on meaning. She began producing what Moore and Brantingham (2003) called “smart miscues.” With this substitution strategy, Christie made deliberate, purposeful miscues that did not change the meaning of the text and that acted as placeholders for the unknown word or set of words. With the use of smart miscues, Christie was able to rebalance her focus on meaning, placing more effort in areas that built on her strengths (such as in the example of “Monkey under the table”). The result was an increase in reading flow and agency in implementing reading strategies that worked for her.

The Implications of Family RMA for Schools
This article has taken preliminary steps toward acknowledging the possibilities that RMA has to offer...
parents, children, teachers, and reading specialists. Although more research is needed to assess the benefits of modifying Family RMA to fewer sessions, as teachers and reading specialists within schools cannot necessarily implement Family RMA on the scale to which it was presented here due to time constraints and the responsibility of working with a large number of students, this work has implications for the teaching of reading.

The findings from this case study of Carol and Christie suggest that we should expand the ways in which we develop and implement parental involvement in the teaching of reading. Owocki and Goodman (2002) wrote, “It is important to help children and families understand that errors are really not mistakes” (p. 7). Family RMA, as described in this article, is a way of helping children and families to reconsider the nature of miscues through positioning parents and their children as coparticipants, or co-researchers, in studying the reading process.

Researchers do not dispute the importance of integrating families into the curriculum and creating fruitful partnerships that can enhance learning in the home (Gregory, Long, & Volk, 2004; Owocki & Goodman, 2002; Taylor, 1993). The field of family literacy has highlighted how families are mediators of literacy (Gadsden, 1994; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Taylor, 1983). Families engage their children in different types of literacy practices and events both inside and outside of the home. Although some parents read bedtime stories to their children, other parents take their children to language and religious schools, such as Greek, Japanese, or Hebrew schools.

This Family RMA work adds to the literature on family literacy to emphasize how parents’ beliefs and perceptions of literacy frame the ways in which they interact with their children in the home. The intergenerational nature of literacy learning means that family members relate to one another through recollections of their past experiences around reading with the desire of creating goals for themselves as readers (Gregory, Long, & Volk, 2004).

Because parents, children, teachers, and reading specialists have different definitions of reading and what it means to be a reader, conflicts and tensions can occur. Parents do not always have the same knowledge as teachers and reading specialists. There is no guarantee that the discourses of school personnel will match those of parents. Family RMA provides a venue where teachers and reading specialists can bridge the divide caused by parents’ misconceptions and discourses about reading and encourage parents to see reading as meaning construction. By doing so, teachers can position parents as researchers into the strengths and struggles of their children. In this manner, we create common discourses with family members. Instead of providing decontextualized practice such as flash cards or worksheets, which can be devoid of meaning, Family RMA allows teachers and reading specialists to make learning meaningful and purposeful for parents.

Consequently, Family RMA also creates an emotionally safe space for struggling children. Readers like Christie have the opportunity to talk about reading, away from their own struggles, through their parents’ experiences. Family RMA generates distance but creates a forum through reader responses where readers can make experiential connections to other participants. In their Family RMA process, Carol and Christie were better able to create quality relationships with each other and with reading.

Family RMA encourages readers to make personal connections and to build on their strengths. Readers start to challenge the author’s text to learn that “right” and “wrong” answers do not exist in terms of reading (Rosenblatt, 1992). These important concepts are learned within a community of parents, children, teachers, and reading specialists, who come together to read and reflect as members of that community. Family RMA is another way to develop caring and emotionally supportive partnerships between homes and schools.

References


**Literature Cited**


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