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A Focus on Writing: End of the Neglected R Era

Editor: Nora A. Vines, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Editor: Stergios Botzakis, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Editorial Assistant: Amanda Rigell, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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In 2020, crises have risen that challenge us as literacy educators and researchers; natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the social injustice protests incited by police violence resulting in the deaths of Black Americans. Addressing these challenges requires that each person responsibly engage as citizens to navigate through a new way of living. School closings presented problems for teachers, students, and parents; business closings created economic hardships; and all citizens were asked to stay home, limit time in public, wear masks, and maintain social distance. Despite the potential risks of the pandemic, millions of citizens were compelled to speak out against racism and police brutality through demonstrations in every state. Crises have made evident the importance of literacy, as the public has been inundated by massive amounts of printed and digital information, requiring them to recognize bias and misrepresentations, and to read and think critically.

As members of the board of the American Reading Forum, we believe that times of unrest and uncertainty provide opportunities to reflect on our values and the manner in which they align with our lives. Our organizational commitment is to the open exchange of ideas related to literacy instruction. Guided by the concept of a forum, we aim to collectively participate in conversations that critically examine what we value in literacy education, question the institutional forces that impact literacy instruction, and re-orient educational practices toward equity and advocacy for those whose voices are small or silenced. As a forum, we are committed to engaging in rigorous and comprehensive discussions about research and teaching that are both anti-biased and anti-racist and thus puts critical literacy at the forefront.

At its heart, literacy is the ability to read, write, listen, speak, and think critically in order to understand and communicate knowledge. We acknowledge that literacy is more than reading a passage and answering questions provided by a teacher; students deserve opportunities to practice employing these abilities safely and flexibly across academic subjects and cultural contexts. When institutions define literacy as a series of discrete skills rather than harnessing student knowledge of discrete skills to become critically literate citizens, we are not preparing our children to dismantle the systemic racism that is inherent in our educational system. We view democracy, citizenship, schooling and literacy as inextricably bound, and believe that through instruction, educators should create a culture of literacy learning that is informed and responsive to students' needs inside and outside of the classroom. Democracy must be experienced to be understood, and we believe that classrooms and schools are the ideal setting for learning the critical literacy skills necessary for developing a participatory citizenry.

Literacy is a gatekeeper not only to academic opportunities, but also to personal and professional opportunities. Because literacy is a vital component to life and liberty, the board members of the American Reading Forum view both literacy and equitable literacy instruction as a civil right that we must provide to all students regardless of race, class, language, gender, or however they identify. Our goal is to create an environment that promotes a healthy discussion of research to practice connections designed to improve literate thinking for all students so that they are poised to become an active part of our democratic citizenry.

In solidarity,

ARF Leadership

Advocating for Pre-K Writing: A Position Statement on supporting Preschool Teachers

Pedagogical Practices

Oluwaseun Aina

Clemson University

Abstract

This position statement paper is focused on providing evidence on why it is imperative that preschool teachers need to be supported in their pedagogical practices as it relates to supporting preschoolers' writing development. The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) identified that early writing experiences have immense positive values for reading and writing that will take place in the future. Despite this, research reveals that teachers allocate less time on writing instruction for preschoolers and many do not have clear guidelines on how to provide effective writing support for these children. The author provides a statement of position and recommended policies that can help move this burning conversation forward.

Key words: writing; pre-kindergarten; preschool; teachers

Statement of the Issue

From observation and research studies reviewed (e.g. Thomas et al., 2020; Diamond, Gerde & Powell, 2008), there already exists a gap in children's early writing skills in preschool. This suggests that some children are likely arriving in kindergarten without the skills needed to participate in writing activities. However, it is important to note that the building blocks of writing for a child often begin prior to the start of formal schooling in kindergarten (Cunningham, Zilbusky, & Callahan, 2009; Maadadi & Ihmeideh, 2016).

In kindergarten, children already exhibit diverse levels of capabilities due to their backgrounds and experiences (Diamond et al,2008; Saracho, 2016). Additionally, children who are not yet reading and writing often exhibit behavioral issues, low self-esteem, and lack of confidence (e.g. Karin & Freppen, 1995).

When children enter kindergarten with basic literacy skills, teachers can more readily build upon that foundation. However, research (e.g. Diamond et al, 2008; Zhang & Quinn, 2017; Thomas et al, 2020) shows that children who attend pre-school are not getting enough writing practice that will help them succeed in kindergarten. Therefore, my position is pre-school teachers need support in their pedagogical writing practices for young children.

Early Writing Instruction

Early writing is defined as the use of symbols, letters, written representations that are based on an awareness of writing conventions, implements, and emerging skills to communicate ideas and attitudes (Hall, Simpson, Guo & Wang, 2015). According to Gentry & Gillet's (1993) writing scale, young children often start out by representing messages with scribbles, marks, and drawings. They then progress to the pre-communicative stage where letter writing does not represent sounds; to the semi-phonetic stage where letters represent words but phonemic representation is still

forming; and the phonetic stage where letters represent all of the sounds in the word. At the transitional stage, they use invented spelling, and in the final stage of development, there is a consistent use of conventional spelling in writing.

The Benefits of Early Writing Instruction

The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) identified that early writing experiences have immense positive values for reading and writing that will take place in the future. In a systematic review of literature examining the effects of preschool writing instruction, Hall et al. (2015) found children had better early literacy outcomes. Researchers have also identified a "relationship between early literacy learning and later academic success" (Cunningham, et al., 2009, p. 488). For children who do not have a strong foundation in literacy, research reveals that there is an achievement gap in the classroom when these children begin formal schooling (Cunningham et al., 2009). In a position statement released by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the International Reading Association (IRA), authors highlight that failure to invest in children's early literacy experiences could hinder their levels of achievement in writing and reading later in life.

The Formative Writing Years

There are rich possibilities for language development in the preschool years. Adequate investments in these first five years offer a "foundation for continued literacy learning" (Cunningham et al., 2009, p. 488). Researchers have found that young children explore writing from a very early age (Saracho, 2004; Bradford & Wyse, 2010/2013; Maadadi & Ihmeideh, 2016). In fact, in a study conducted by Saracho (2004) which investigated policy and practice in early childhood literacy from different continents, she identified that "many young children learn to read and write before they attend formal school" (p. 306). Saracho (2016) found that children "between

the latter part of two years or starting at the age of three begin to make reading-like and drawing-like scribbles and identifiable letters or letter-like shapes" (p. 306). Additionally, in a study conducted by Rowe & Neitzel (2010), researchers found that as early as 2 years 1 month, the personal interests of children influenced the kind of writing activities they chose to participate in.

The Invaluable Role of an Adult in the Process

Writing is not an automatic process for children. The process of acquiring literacy concepts happens when there are interactions with writers and readers, and children attempt to emulate them. Saracho (2004) notes that "the extent, strength, and nature of the children's interest with text determine their literacy learning" (p. 305), which most often depends on the influence of adults (Hall et al., 2015). Research indicates that when children are provided with support and opportunities to participate in early writing, their writing develops (Bingham, Quinn, & Gerde, 2017; Gerde, Bingham, Pendergast, 2015; Hall et al., 2015).

The Reading and Writing Connection

Writing cannot be isolated from reading and vice versa. As children become familiar with the conventions of reading "from observing print in books" (Saracho, 2016, p. 205), in labels, and signs in the environment (Cunningham et al., 2009; Clay, 1991), they become familiar with the concept of letters forming words and the fact that these words have meaning. They also begin to mimic writing in scribbles, marks, letters, and invented spelling, which represent messages (Clay, 1991).With exposure to print, a rich literacy environment (Hall et al., 2015), and scaffolding writing within a child's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978; Hall et al., 2015), children can form letters and words that are easily identifiable earlier than those children who do not have this same exposure (Debaryshe, Buell & Binder, 1996; Aram & Levin, 2001; Neumann et al., 2009; Neumann & Neumann, 2010). Children who have had opportunities in reading and

writing will become more familiar with the convention, mechanism, concept and composition of writing than their peers (Neumann et al., 2009; Neumann & Neumann, 2010).

<div align="center">

Theoretical Framework

</div>

This section covers the theoretical framework which serves as a lens through which I look at teachers' support of preschoolers' writing development.

Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky (1978) defines Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as the "distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). The actual development level signifies what children can do on their own without any support from anyone. For children of the same age, some may be scribbling while others are writing letters. An adult needs to have an idea of what children are ready to learn to reach their potential level. Leong (1998) describes what that child is ready to learn as skills on the "edge of emergence" (p. 2).

With adult guidance, a child who is scribbling might be able to write a letter or two. According to Sulzby (1983) progression of writing development scale, those letters will not represent sounds. After some practice and problem solving, writing of letters will become that child's actual developmental level and there will be a need to move him up to his next potential level. At any given time, there will still be tasks that lie outside of the child's ZPD, "such that no amount of assistance will facilitate learning" (Leong, 1998, p. 3). In the above example, writing an entire story is clearly outside this particular child's ZPD.

Scaffolding

Wood, Bruner & Ross (1976) define scaffolding as a "process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts" (p. 90). When children participate in literacy activities, they need a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) to help them make sense of what they are learning and extend their knowledge within their ZPD (Leong, 1998). An adult is also needed in order to help vary instruction and offer support to ensure that the child is not frustrated. That adult needs to know what will be the next level of instruction when the child succeeds or fails (Wood et al., 1976).

Learning to write should not be frustrating which can negatively impact the experience for a child. Wood et al. (1976) described how a tutor adeptly varied the assistance of children between ages 3 to 5 as they were building a pyramid from blocks of different shapes and sizes. This made it possible for learners to function at the advanced level of their ZPD. The tutor allowed each child to do as much as he could do for himself while trying to build blocks. The tutor only intervened directly when the child failed to follow an oral instruction. "The child's success or failure at any point in time thus determined the tutor's next level of instruction" (Wood et al., 1976, p. 92).

Teachers' Beliefs About Early Writing

Although research shows that many preschool classrooms have necessary materials that could promote literacy practices (Gerde et al., 2015), instruction and activities pertaining to writing are irregular and limited (Gerde et al., 2015; Bingham et al., 2017; Gerde, Wright, & Bingham, 2019). Some pre-k teachers believe it is the job of kindergarten teachers to teach writing (Lopes & Fernandes, 2009). This stems from a belief that pre-schoolers are not prepared for writing. In the study conducted by Gerde et al. (2019), teachers considered pre-schoolers' young ages and poor motor skills as obstacles to participating in writing.

Teachers' Practice Related to Early Writing

Preschool teachers allocate little time that allow children to engage in writing (Pelatti et al., 2014; Zhang and Quinn, 2017). In the study conducted by Gerde et al. (2019), they found that preschool teachers "used a limited number of pedagogical approaches for enacting early writing instruction" (p. 15). This was despite the fact that teachers recognized that children found writing interesting. This study revealed that teachers did not have clear guidelines on how to approach writing, and only had "limited supports in their adopted curricular materials" to follow in teaching writing to pre-schoolers (Gerde et al., 2019, p. 16).

<div align="center">**Recommendations**</div>

Preschool teachers should be provided with regular professional development opportunities. This should be an engaging and on-going discourse on best practices and programs so that they can "build the fundamental skills and knowledge" in teaching writing, and build confidence in this terrain (Cunningham, et al., 2009, p. 488). This will make them successful in preparing pre-schoolers for kindergarten and beyond.

There should be a forum for preschool and kindergarten teachers to interact so that the work they do is intended to support the ultimate progress of the children they serve.

Preschool children should be encouraged to write for meaningful and purposeful reasons. Writing for meaning can be expressed in scribbles and drawings. Writing for meaning is also an opportunity for children to express their love for stories. These opportunities can be used as tools during shared writing, dictation, and for mechanics of writing.

Pre-schoolers need to be taught the blending of sounds through play, music, and other helpful tools. The practice of focusing on an alphabet per month is detrimental because children

do not see letters as sounds that make words from an early age. It becomes more confusing for some children as they get older.

Children should be encouraged to write during play. However, it is still important for writing to be scaffolded and provided through direct instruction. Writing should not be limited to the writing center. Purposeful and meaningful writing must be integrated throughout every center and during different activities of the day.

Preschool teachers need to interact with parents to know what literacy activities children are participating in at home so that their teachers can build upon students' funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992). Teachers could also work with parents to determine how they can support parents as they work to support their child's literacy at home. Teachers also need to be open about what children are learning in school and find an effective communication channel that can be used on a regular basis to communicate with parents so that they can also build upon this at home.

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Effects of Self-Regulated Strategy Instruction in an Accelerated Developmental English

Course: A Quasi-Experimental Study

Eric Nefferdorf
Delaware Technical Community College

Abstract

This paper reports on the experimental effort of faculty at a Community College on the East Coast to examine the effects of a curriculum based on self-regulated strategy instruction in an accelerated developmental education (DE) English course. The 2-credit-accelerated course met four days a week for four weeks at the beginning of the semester, leaving time for an 11-week first year composition (FYC) course in the same semester. A quasi-experimental study compared the experimental curriculum to business-as-usual teaching methods. The curriculum sought to improve overall quality of writing. Results of the intervention showed statistically significant differences in favor of the treatment group for an argument essay written with sources (ES = .96). This result shows the potential of strategy instruction for improving writing in accelerated courses.

Keywords: self-regulated strategy instruction; community college; adult learners

Community colleges play an important role in the American higher education system. Their diverse missions, open admissions policies, and low-cost tuition provide opportunity for higher education for many people who otherwise might not have access to it. However, increased access to higher education has also posed challenges for community colleges across the country. Despite the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which calls for college and career readiness (National Governors Association, 2010), research shows that many students still enter community college without the requisite skills to place into college-level courses in English and mathematics and as a result are required to enroll in (DE) courses (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010).

The goal of DE English courses is to help students reach required proficiency for FYC courses. Despite those efforts, students in DE English courses often have high attrition rates and low graduation rates (Perin, 2013). These results are even more prominent with low-income and minority students who often have lower numbers for degree completion and higher numbers of attrition (Cox, 2009). The high costs associated with DE and low graduation rates have raised concerns and increased scrutiny from policymakers (Crisp & Delgado, 2014).

Reading and writing skills are a prerequisite for success in most aspects of life, thus the development of these skills is an imperative. If community colleges are to honor their mission of educating diverse populations, then addressing the needs of their most vulnerable population and making efforts to offer equitable education for all students is part of that mission. The question of how to effectively help students in DE courses is one of the most difficult issues that community colleges face across the country (Crisp & Delgado, 2014).

So far, many community colleges have implemented structural solutions, such as accelerated or corequisite courses, with the intention of helping underprepared students

matriculate into college-level courses at a faster rate (Jaggars, Hodara, Cho, & Xu, 2014). Accelerated DE English courses may be a sufficient policy solution; however, questions about the effectiveness of accelerated English courses remain, and little empirical research on the instructional methods used in DE English courses exists (MacArthur, Philippakos, & Ianetta, 2015). Typical curricula in DE courses often focuses on helping students build requisite skills necessary for reading and writing through practices in textbooks and real-life readings (Perin, 2013). While this curricula may seem like a logical progression toward competency, some have hypothesized that curricula focused on subskills such as grammar can be de-motivating because it does not seem relevant to college-level work, consequently decreasing student motivation and possibly contributing to student attrition (Jaggars et al., 2014). The challenge for any DE English program is to implement a curriculum that is relevant to the work students will encounter in college-level courses, motivates students, and has long-term literacy benefits. In this study, curriculum in both the treatment and control classes emphasized writing essays with sources, a needed skill in many college courses.

Current Study

Five years ago, this community college adopted an approach to acceleration that included a 4-week DE English course and 11-week FYC course. The primary course goal was for students to write an effective argument essays with sources. The purpose of this study is to test an instructional solution based on self-regulated strategy instruction within this context by comparing it to the business-as-usual practices. The compressed curriculum for the treatment group is based on the *Supporting Strategic Writers* curriculum (SSW), a self-regulated strategy instruction curriculum developed by MacArthur and Philippakos (See MacArthur, Philippakos, & Ianetta, 2015 for details). The core principal behind strategy instruction is that the cognitive

process used by proficient learners can be taught to other learners (MacArthur, 2011). The SSW curriculum is based on multiple sources, including Harris and Graham's (2009) work on self-regulated strategy development (SRSD), and Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, and Stevens' (1991) work on text-structure strategies for reading and writing. The SSW curriculum explicitly teaches literacy strategies and self-regulation strategies to struggling learners to help them complete challenging tasks independently. Specifically, the compressed curriculum is comprised of two sets of strategies—a set of reading strategies and a set of writing strategies—that work together to increase students' metacognitive awareness of underlying text structures to improve critical reading skills, writing, and increase self-regulation.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to learn how the self-regulated strategy instruction curriculum influences student writing. To answer this question, two specific subquestions were posed.

Question 1. Is there a difference in overall quality of argument essays written with sources by students in the treatment and control groups?

Question 2. Is there a difference between treatment and control groups' passing rate of the subsequent FYC course?

Methods

A quasi-experimental design was used to evaluate the efficacy of the intervention, comparing the self-regulated strategy instruction curriculum to the business-as-usual instructional methods. Non-random selection was necessary because faculty members in the treatment group had to agree to participate in professional development (PD) in the summer of 2018.

Setting

The study was conducted at a community college in the east coast of the United States. Since 2015, this site has offered an accelerated DE English course that meets for 1.5 hours a day, four days a week for the first four weeks of the semester. The college uses the ACCUPLACER *Reading Comprehension* test (CPT-R) and *Online Sentence Skills* test (CPT-W) for student placement. Students scoring one to twelve points below the cutoff scores for placement into the FYC course could register for this 4-week accelerated DE English course rather than a full semester DE English course. This accelerated format allowed students to complete remediation and then enroll in an 11-week FYC course. The site primarily serves students who have just graduated from high school.

Participants

Five instructors participated with two in the treatment group and three in a business-as-usual control group. All students registered for accelerated course were invited to participate. A total of 93 students were invited to participate (T = 44; C = 49). Sixty-three students agreed to participate; 30 students were in the treatment group and 33 students in the control group. On average, most sections of the accelerated 4-week class had approximately 14 students, but one section, in the control group, had only four students. Of the 66 students, 57% were female, 41% were White, 38% were Black, 19% were Latino, and 1% were Asian. Fifteen percent were older than age 24.

Research Design and Procedures

The study applied a quasi-experimental design as it was not possible to randomly assign students and instructors to conditions. All sections of the accelerated DE English course completed the same measures. In the 4-week semester, students were required to write a

minimum of two summaries and two essays, the final essay had to incorporate two sources. This

study reports on changes in writing quality when writing arguments with sources.

Measures

The primary measure was the argument essay written from sources collected from both

groups at posttest. Additionally, passing rates in the subsequent FYC course were also collected.

Essays

Students in both groups were asked to complete a final essay on the last day of class. The

final essay required students to read two articles they had not seen before and write an argument

essay incorporating both sources in class. Students received two editorials with different

viewpoints on the same topic from the *USA Today* newspaper. Students were given the entire last

class to complete the task, approximately 110 minutes.

Students' argumentative essays written with sources were scored by independent raters

for overall quality. A 7-point holistic scale was used to evaluate the final essays. The interrater

reliability was acceptable with 52% exact agreement and 93% agreement within one point; the

correlation was .67.

First Year Composition Grades

Grades from the FYC course, the 11-week course that immediately followed the

accelerated course, were collected to learn if students successfully completed the course.

Results

Results of the intervention showed a statistically significant differences in favor of the

treatment group for an argument essay written with sources. Table 1 compares baseline essays

and final essay means for treatment and control groups. Table 2 compares treatment and control

groups' grades in the subsequent FYC course.

Final Essays

ANCOVA was used for the overall writing quality (See Table 1). Baseline essays were

used as a covariate with the final essays.

Table 1
Pretest and Posttest Means for Treatment and Control on Baseline and Final Essays

	Treatment Mean (SD) n =22	Control Mean (SD) n =24	Total Mean (SD) n =46
Writing Quality			
Baseline Essays	2.74 (0.75)	2.54 (0.66)	2.64 (0.70.)
Final Essays	3.61 (0.80)	2.83 (0.73)	3.21 (0.85)
Adjusted Final Essay	3.57*	2.87	

Note: Writing quality for baseline essays was rated on a 7-point scale. Writing quality for final
essays was rated on the same 7-point scale used to evaluate the baseline essays except for the
additional category of source integration.
*$p = .002$

The final argument essays written from sources was the primary method of evaluation. A

statistically significant difference was found on the final essay ($F(1, 43) = 10.59$, $p = .002$; ES

(Cohen's d) = 0.96). Adjusted means for students in the treatment group were .70 higher on the

7-point quality scale than the control group.

First Year Composition Grades

Table 2 shows the numbers by grade for treatment and control groups in the 11-week

FYC course that followed the accelerated course.

Table 2
Grades in FYC

	n	F or W or U	C	B	A	Grade Point (SD)
Control	23	6	3	12	2	2.17 (1.40)
Treatment	24	11	1	8	4	1.75 (1.70)
Total	47	17	4	20	6	1.96 (1.56)

Forty-seven students (C = 23; T = 24) enrolled in FYC. The difference in GPA was not

statistically significant ($F(1, 45) = 0.85$, $p > .3$). In addition, a chi-square test on the distribution

of grades did not find a significant relationship between condition and grade ($X_2 = 3.91$, p =

.270).

Discussion

Self-regulated strategy instruction was effective in the context of an accelerated course in

improving students' essays with sources, which requires both critical reading and writing. All

instructors want their students to acquire reading and writing strategies and self-regulated strategy

instruction helps achieve that goal. Treatment students wrote better essays than control students

in the accelerated developmental course, but it apparently did not help them in FYC, suggesting

that the transition between DE and college-level English course needs work.

One direction for future research in the field of developmental education is to learn how to

explicitly prepare students for FYC courses and how to remind students in these courses to use the

strategies they have learned in the accelerated DE English courses. Results of this study highlight

the challenge of learning transfer and are not limited to English courses. Exploring how self-regulating strategies can transfer to content-area courses also needs to be researched.

In my personal experience as an instructor, I have had many students come to me for help with college-level classes. Often times, students struggle with how to start a paper, especially if the directions they received were not explicit. I have had to remind several students of the strategies they learned in DE English courses, strategies such as setting a goal and generating ideas. Exploring how self-regulating strategy instruction can be used in content-area courses could shed light on the challenge of learning transfer. Harris and Graham (2009) recommend that instructors consistently look for opportunities to reinforce strategy use by identifying when and how students can use them and modify them to suit their needs.

Implications for Practice

In addition to designing, implementing, and assessing new interventions focused on learning transfer, there are two immediate changes that could be implemented in the curriculum to possibly improve learning transfer results. Journaling and collaborative writing could be added to the compressed curriculum. Journaling can provide the opportunity for students to reflect on their strategy use and monitor their progress. If students write more about their strategy usage, then they might internalize them and recognize their transferability. The additional use of collaborative writing might also benefit learning transfer. Harris, Graham, and Mason (2006) found that adolescents made greater gains in writing, specifically strategy maintenance and generalization to other writing assignments, when collaborative writing was included with SRSD. Graham and Perin (2007) noted that peers working together has a positive impact on student writing. The compressed curriculum has time constraints, so collaborative writing experience might have to take place online. Student could possibly work on collaborative assignments outside of class using Google

docs or other collaborative platforms. Adding these two features of the original SSW curriculum may produce stronger results.

Research Implications

Considering the positive results of this current intervention, replicating the intervention in a randomized controlled-group design could be beneficial. There are several benefits to scaling up. One benefit is that there would be more data on the effectiveness of the condensed curriculum. Another benefit is that if this intervention was implemented at other sites of this multiple-campus community college, then faculty at the regional campuses could have the opportunity to learn self-regulatory strategy instruction methods.

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"High Schoolers Want to Be Challenged": Helping Latinx Students Excel in Advanced

Classes through Design-Based Research on Writing Effective Warrants

Ryan McCarty

National Louis University (Chicago, IL)

Abstract

Though Advanced Placement (AP) classes positively impact a student's academic future (Bowen, Chingos & McPherson, 2009; Jackson, 2010), Latinx students have less access to these courses (da Silva, Huguley, Kakli, & Rao, 2007). Using design-based research (Reinking & Bradley, 2008), a research team including a high school AP English teacher, an Assistant Principal, and a university partner designed and tested an intervention for writing evidence-based arguments warranted with original reasoning (Toulmin, 1958; Warren, 2010), an essential skill for college and civic engagement (Graff & Birkenstein, 2007). The intervention emphasized dialogic teaching (Bakhtin, 1981; Reznitskaya, 2013), offering students agentive roles while discussing controversial topics. Through iterative design cycles, the approach was refined to include explicit instruction and feedback on substantive warrants, while assessment tools captured developmental changes in writing. This paper shares enhancing and inhibiting factors and pedagogical assertions to help Latinx students write warranted arguments and excel in advanced coursework.

Keywords:

argument writing, adolescent literacy, design-based research, dialogic teaching, high school

Though Advanced Placement (AP) classes positively impact a student's academic future (Bowen, Chingos & McPherson, 2009; Jackson, 2010), Latinx students have less access to these courses (da Silva, Huguley, Kakli, & Rao, 2007). Using design-based research (Reinking & Bradley, 2008), a research team including a high school AP English teacher, an Assistant Principal, and a university partner designed and tested an intervention for writing evidence-based arguments warranted with original reasoning (Toulmin, 1958; Warren, 2010), an essential skill for college and civic engagement (Graff & Birkenstein, 2007). The intervention emphasized dialogic teaching (Bakhtin, 1981; Reznitskaya, 2013), offering students agentive roles while discussing controversial topics. Through iterative design cycles, the approach was refined to include explicit instruction and feedback on substantive warrants, while assessment tools captured developmental changes in writing. This paper shares enhancing and inhibiting factors and pedagogical assertions to help Latinx students write warranted arguments and excel in advanced coursework.

Our research-practice partnership (Coburn & Penuel, 2016) began when two school leaders (an English Department Chair and an Assistant Principal for Social Services) contacted the university partner (the author) to help them increase the enrollment and success of Latinx students in Advanced Placement (AP) classes. When our collaboration began, though 40% of students at this high school were Latinx, they comprised only 17% of the AP population. Latinx students in many communities face "opportunity gaps"; limited access to rigorous instruction and advanced coursework (da Silva, Huguley, Kakli, & Rao, 2007). Achievement in such courses is strongly related to later college success (Adelman, 2006), and just taking an AP class can positively impact a student's academic future (Bowen, Chingos & McPherson, 2009; Jackson, 2010).

While AP "opportunity gaps" for Latinx students have shrunk in recent years (College Board, 2014), barriers still exist. For example, in 2013, Latinx students comprised nearly 20 percent of those taking AP tests, but only 16% of students earning a three or higher on a five-point scale (College Board, 2014). Since a three is often the minimal required score to earn college credit, the new "opportunity gap" is not only the opportunity to enroll in AP classes, but the opportunity to excel in them.

There are many reasons why Advanced Placement classes may not appeal to Latinx students. Traditional AP courses are criticized as overly test-driven, emphasizing content coverage over inquiry (Schneider, 2009). Some of our Latinx students have said "AP is for white kids", since students in most of these classes were predominantly white. Many teachers nationwide fail to recognize and value the linguistic and cultural knowledge of Latinx students and may see their bilingualism as a hindrance, rather than the asset it is (Paris and Alim, 2017). In addition, traditional AP English curricula privileges canonical texts written by white male authors (Applebee, 1989), meaning Black and Brown students may be less likely to feel welcome in these spaces (Dyches, 2017).

Knowing the shortcomings of traditional AP classrooms, we set out to design instruction to promote the agency of culturally and linguistically diverse youth (Fang & Park, 2020). We used design-based research (Reinking & Bradley, 2008) to test and refine our instruction in actual classrooms through iterative design cycles (Gravemeijer & Cobb, 2006; Reinking & Bradley, 2008). Our DBR unfolded over three phases covering two years, as summarized in Table 1. Phase One helped us understand causes of the opportunity gap, identify structural barriers (Conchas, 2001) such as test score requirements for AP eligibility, and encourage Latinx

students to enroll in AP. Insights from Phase One then helped us design and refine interventions in one Junior-level AP Language and Composition classroom in Phases Two and Three.

This paper zooms in on Phases Two and Three, where our pedagogical goal was to improve mastery of writing evidence-based arguments warranted by original reasoning. Argumentative writing is a critical skill for AP, college, career, and civic engagement (Graff & Birkenstein, 2007). Warrants (explanations of how evidence supports the claim) are a challenge for even college-aged writers, and are rarely taught effectively (Crammond, 1998; Warren, 2010).

Our research team included two experienced, school-based educators: A white male English department chair, and a Latinx female Assistant Principal with a long career as a school counselor. I (author) am the university partner. I have has previously served as a literacy coordinator, instructional coach, and teacher in urban and suburban high schools. We (English department chair, AP, and university partner) co-designed and co-led Latinx student groups in Phase One. The English department chair taught the AP class in Phases Two and Three and I was a participant-observer. Though our diverse, multilingual team provided insight into student learning, I acknowledge that my own privileged social position as a white male and my rudimentary knowledge of Spanish may limit my understanding of certain nuanced classroom interactions.

Overview of Research Phases

In Phase One, we formed an extracurricular Latinx student group named Ascend. This group was intended to encourage Latinx students who were not previously viewed as candidates for AP to enroll in these classes. Students participated in 12 biweekly, hour-long workshops, emphasizing growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) and academic self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). They

took up agentive roles as researchers and consultants to the Principal on barriers to AP

enrollment and how to remove them. They also collaboratively completed AP-style

argumentative writing tasks in a discussion-based format and interviewed panels of current AP

students and successful Latinx alums. Ascend students helped design and host a *Familias en*

Educación night where Latinx parents learned about AP, paying for college, and immigrant

rights. At the end of Phase One, 54% of Ascend students enrolled in AP (McCarty et al., 2018).

In Phases Two and Three, we applied insights from Phase One within one AP Language

and Composition classroom. This culturally and linguistically diverse class was nearly 50%

Latinx, and included four Ascend students from Phase One. Though many of these Latinx

students had parents who emigrated from Mexico, most were born in the United States

themselves. They were bilingual in Spanish and English. Many spoke Spanish at home and with

friends and had participated in English as a Second Language programs in elementary school.

Many were apprehensive about the academic demands of AP coursework.

Phases Two and Three each included one central instructional unit and subsequent

iterations (Gravemeijer & Cobb, 2006). The approaches to fostering student agency and dialogic

teaching were directly informed by Phase One results. Interventions had three essential

elements: (1) writing warranted arguments (e.g., Toulmin, 1958; Warren, 2010); (2) dialogic

teaching (e.g., Bakhtin, 1981; Reznitskaya, 2012); and (3) academic self-efficacy (e.g., Bandura,

1997; Pajares, Johnson & Usher, 2007). This paper expands upon previously published research

(McCarty et al., 2018) by emphasizing warrant-centered instruction and including Phase Three

data and our ensuing retrospective analysis.

Table One

Study Overview

Phase of Research	Essential Elements *(for all phases)*	Context	Focus	Data Sources
Phase One *(2016-17 School Year)*	a. Writing warranted arguments	Extracurricular group (Ascend); 24 students	Academic self-concept; self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Parajes, Johnson, & Usher, 2007)	Surveys; interviews; field notes
Phase Two *(Semester 1 of 2017-18 School Year)*	b. Dialogic teaching	AP Language & Composition class; 30 students/ 4 focal students	Structured Academic Controversy discussions and role play (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Reznitskaya, 2012)	Writing Self-Efficacy Scale, interviews, field notes, pre and post essays
Phase Three *(Semester 2 of 2017-18 School Year)*	c. Academic self-efficacy	AP Language & Composition class; 30 students/4 focal students	Explicitly teaching substantive warrants through modeling and peer feedback (Brockriede & Ehninger, 1960; Imbrenda, 2018)	Writing Self-Efficacy Scale, interviews field notes, pre and post essays

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

In Design-Based Research, researchers use prior research and theory to justify the essential components of their initial intervention. They often begin with a "grand theory" such as dialogic teaching. These grand theories are refined as researchers implement their intervention, analyze data, make adjustments, and trace emergent enhancing and inhibiting factors across design cycles. Researchers then complete a retrospective analysis (Gravemeijer &

Cobb, 2006), looking across cycles to uncover trends. By study's end, they have moved from a grand theory to a "local theory" to inform this and similar contexts, meaning DBR is both guided by theory and also generates new theory (Howell, Butler & Reinking, 2017; Reinking & Bradley, 2008).

Argumentative Writing

Though argumentation is cognitive and social (Newell et al., 2011), arguments are often taught as a checklist of structural elements (e.g. Applebee & Langer, 2006). As a result, students often lack an epistemological understanding of arguments as part of an ongoing dialogue (VanDerHeide, Juzwik & Dunn, 2016). Examining developmental dimensions of writing helps teachers better instruct culturally and linguistically diverse students (e.g. Imbrenda, 2018a, 2018b). For example, students whose arguments demonstrate reciprocity anticipate an audience and their needs, promoting uptake of ideas by establishing a clear purpose and making arguable claims (Imbrenda, 2018a, Nystrand, 1986). Students whose arguments demonstrate indexicality use established and appropriate forms of academic reasoning, such as making evidence-based inferences from multiple sources and hedging their claims (Chafe, 1986). Semantic differential scales for these dimensions (Imbrenda, 2018a, 2018b) provide teachers with a nuanced view of student strengths and areas for support. A semantic differential scale for reciprocity is included in Table 3.

An emphasis on warrants. Philosopher Stephen Toulmin (1958) identified three central elements of arguments: 1) a claim or assertion, 2) based on data or evidence, and 3) a warrant. Warrants are explicitly stated or implied explanations of how evidence supports the claim. Written arguments are rooted in oral discourse (Toulmin, 1958; Vygotsky, 1978) and warrants occur naturally in conversation when a listener challenges a speaker's claim or evidence

(Freeman, 2011). However, novices often lack an epistemological understanding of written arguments as ongoing conversations (Newell & Bloome, 2017). As a result, they use far fewer warrants in their writing (e.g., Connor, 1990; Crammond, 1998), seeing little need to explain their thinking (Newell & Bloome, 2017).

Many scholars have created schemes for classifying reasoning within warrants (e.g. Walton, Reed & Macagno, 2008). Brockriede and Ehninger (1960) created a warrant typology that expanded Toulmin's framework based upon Aristotle's modes of persuasion (i.e. ethos, logos, and pathos). For example, they identified substantive warrants (e.g. cause and effect, comparison, sign, generalization and analogy) that are grounded in ethos or logic. These warrants emphasize the reliability of evidence and the relationship between ideas, such as one event causing another or being a sign of a larger phenomenon (Brockriede & Ehninger, 1960).

Helping minoritized adolescents interrogate written warrants can empower them to critically examine the cultural assumptions and unequal power relationships that underlie disciplinary texts and media messages (McCarty, 2016; Peters, 2017). However, warrants are rarely taught effectively (Warren, 2011) and writing instruction is often highly formulaic (Applebee & Langer, 2011). Rubrics from high-stakes writing assessments often treat warrants as structural elements, emphasizing their presence or absence rather than the quality of reasoning they reflect.

Dialogic teaching. In dialogic classrooms, students and teachers co-construct meaning by discussing challenging texts and ideas (Bakhtin, 1981; Reznitskaya, 2012). Dialogic teaching is appropriate for warrant-focused instruction because warrants occur naturally when listeners question a speaker's claim (Freeman, 2011; Toulmin, 1958). Within Phase Two, dialogic teaching featured Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) discussions (Johnson & Johnson,

2009), an approach where student dyads argue opposing sides of a controversial issue before

conceding points of agreement and reaching consensus (Table 2). In our approach, students also

engaged in role play, taking on agentive roles to help them develop rhetorical skills and

anticipate audience needs (Felton & Herko, 2004; Pappageorge, 2013).

Academic self-efficacy. Students with greater belief in their writing ability may be more

resilient in the face of difficulty (Dweck, Walton, & Cohen, 2014). They also have clearer

writing-related goals and value writing more highly (Pajeres, Schunk, & Walton, 2007). There

are several steps teachers can take to boost academic self-efficacy (ASE). Gradually releasing

responsibility (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) through tasks of increasing cognitive complexity

(Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) promotes positive mastery experiences, the greatest source of

self-efficacy beliefs (Pajares, Johnson & Usher, 2007). Collaboratively revising arguments

creates social supports and vicarious experiences with effective writing, which also contribute to

ASE (Pajares, Johnson & Usher, 2007).

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Methods

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Because this paper examines Phases Two and Three of our DBR, the methods section

will address the instruction within each Phase in turn.

Phase Two: Structured Academic Controversy

SAC discussions (Johnson & Johnson, 2009) build critical thinking skills by encouraging

active listening and making evidence-based arguments supported by clear reasoning (Table 2).

Our first SAC discussion considered whether Illinois should permit fracking. Students played

agentive roles, such as a lawmaker with concerned constituents, or an environmental scientist

whose research is funded by an oil company. After analyzing data from the first SAC

discussion, we refined the intervention to offer students greater agency and choice. Students

selected the topic of gun control for the second SAC discussion following America's deadliest

mass shooting in Las Vegas. The teacher initiated a whole-class inquiry dialogue (Resnitskaya

& Gregory, 2013), discussing articles and presenting test cases such as gun show loopholes and

mandatory gun buybacks. Students negotiated ground rules to ensure civil, evidence-based

conversations (McCarty et al., 2018) ensuring their claims were "sufficiently new so as to be

potentially troublesome and require clarification" (Nystrand, 1986, p. 65).

Table Two

Phase Two Modified Structured Academic Controversy Format

Structured Academic Controversy Format (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Pappageorge, 2013)	
Preparation	• Teacher leads a whole-class inquiry dialogue introducing the controversy (Rezintskaya, 2012). • Students examine test cases, articles, videos, and online sources, determining sides of the issue and gathering evidence for both sides
Opening Statement	• Students are assigned a side, take on a role, and work in pairs, using digital argument templates (Graff & Birkenstein, 2007) to clarify positions and craft opening statements. • Students form a group of four with a pair arguing the opposite side and deliver opening statements
Student-moderated discussion	• Students share respective claims, evidence and warrants, listening actively to each other's positions, requesting clarification, and generating counter-arguments • Students have time to revise arguments and receive teacher feedback
Concession speeches	• Students acknowledge strengths of the other side's arguments and determine points of mutual agreement
Group Deliberation	• Each group of four reaches consensus on a real-world solution to their problem
Reflection	• Students write a written reflection the SAC discussion, including argument strengths, areas for improvement, collaboration with peers, and how thinking has now changed

Argumentative Essay	● Students write argumentative essays on this or similar topics, building upon ideas encountered in their SAC discussions

Phase Three: Explicitly Teaching Substantive Warrants

Phase Two essays indicated that warrant attempts were increasing, but many students' warrants lacked evidence of original reasoning. In response, our Phase Three intervention added explicit instruction in four types of substantive warrants (Table 3) within a unit organized around the essential question **"*To what extent is language a limited (or limitless) tool for achieving the purposes to which writers and speakers typically put it?*"**. Students read over a dozen contemporary and canonical texts including Ta-Nehisi Coates' work <u>Between the World and Me</u> (2015), Orwell's dystopian novel <u>1984 </u>(1948/2017), and articles on how emoticons affect language use. They crafted thesis statements about ideas including the effectiveness of slang for communication, the role of politeness in modern society, and the metaphors that guide, and sometimes obscure, our thinking.

Activities gradually increased in cognitive complexity (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), emphasizing teacher modeling and think alouds, mentor texts, and peer feedback. The teacher wrote a mentor text that presented a metaphorical discussion of language as a sledgehammer; a force both powerful and destructive, incorporating examples from the Black Lives Matter movement, the #MeToo movement, and the Arab Spring uprising. He modeled writing potential substantive warrants (Table 3), asking students to help rate the quality of his reasoning and strengthen his writing. Afterward, students wrote their own substantive warrants for additional body paragraphs for this mentor text for and their own essays.

Table 3

Types of Substantive Warrants (Brockriede & Ehninger, 1960)

Type of Warrant	Description
Sign	One argues how evidence indicates a trend. For example, a student shares that enacting gun control amendments is a sign of governmental overreach.
Cause and Effect	One comments on the intended, unintended, direct (near) or eventual (far) result of evidence being explored. For example, a student might share the environmental impacts of fracking or the societal consequences of failing to enact gun control laws.
Comparison	One compares a situation to another or argues that what works in one setting should apply in another. For example, a student might argue that since literary canon decisions were left open-ended in Canada, they should remain open-ended in the U.S.
Analogy	One compares a challenging or ambiguous idea to a concrete or understood one. For example, a student might state that free speech is like water, essential to a thriving societal ecosystem.

Data and Analyses

Phase Two and Three data included participant-observer field notes, pre and post student essays, interviews, and Writing Self-Efficacy Scale data (Pajares, Johnson & Usher, 2007). Interviews with focal students were coded using a stage model of qualitative content analysis (Berg, 2004), including applying a priori codes from Phase One followed by open coding for themes. Phase One coding began with analytic categories from a meta-analysis of effective adolescent writing instruction (Graham & Perin, 2007). Representative final codes included "doing real AP work" and "success attributed to effort". Interviews were independently coded, reaching 90% interrater reliability.   Essays were divided into idea units (Mayer, 1985) and parsed into claims, evidence, warrant attempts, or rebuttals. Though essays were initially scored using the AP Language and Composition rubric, we designed an additional four-point rubric to

analyze original reasoning within warrant attempts, reaching 90% agreement (McCarty et al.,

2018).

At the end of Phase Three, we engaged in a retrospective analysis, a process where

researchers revisit coding and themes across design cycles to generate pedagogical assertions

(Gravemeijer & Cobb, 2006). After consulting with literacy researcher Jay Imbrenda, we re-

scored focal writing samples using five-point semantic differential scales and Dedoose software,

coding for dimensions of indexicality and reciprocity. Deconstructing writing and determining

qualitative patterns such as code co-occurrence provided greater insight into writing

development. Table Four shares the semantic differential scale for reciprocity. Representative

quotes from our retrospective analysis of Phase Two post-essays (about whether or not college is

worth the cost) are included to demonstrate the range from lowest (1) to the highest (5) levels of

reciprocity.

Table 4

Reciprocity Scale*

*Reciprocity Scale modified slightly from Imbrenda, J.P., 2018. Developing academic literacy:
Breakthroughs and barriers in a college-access intervention. *Research in the Teaching of
English, Volume 52, Number 3 p. 317-341.*

Reciprocity Scale (Imbrenda, 2018) Degree to which a written utterance allows for a mutual exchange of ideas *Examples drawn from Phase 2 post essay responses*	
1	perfunctorily by mimicking language from prompts or texts; citing irrelevant examples; restating claims or data tautologically; moving arbitrarily to conclusions *Once again this is one of the reasons why college is worth paying for.*
2	perfunctorily by making claims too generalized to be debatable; supplying hortatory data; making or supporting claims redundantly; overgeneralizing defensibility of claims or relevance of data *One of the reasons (college graduates) have a happier life is because they don't have to worry about losing their job.*

3	procedurally by creating a broad framework through which a position can be established; supplying data that does not address audience needs; summarizing data without an explicit purpose; substituting warrants for claims *Along with getting a better job with your college degree, comes the money.*
4	reciprocally by presenting claims that are consequential to a general audience; citing or inventing relevant examples; making relevant generalizations *The reason for that is because those who made the decision to go to college are earning significantly more than those who decided it wasn't worth it.*
5	reciprocally by presenting claims consequential to a specialized audience; supplying data that addresses audience needs; highlighting key differences across multiple sources; evaluating based on careful comparisons *These reasons mentioned show that even though unemployment rates might be rising, students (who earn a college degree) will still have a greater possibility to earn more income*

Results

While qualitative research results may be organized in a number of ways, DBR results are often organized around enhancing and inhibiting factors (Reinking & Bradley, 2007). Identifying these factors helps the researcher determine which design features are essential to achieve the pedagogical goal. These factors also help the author refine the grand theories that shaped the initial intervention design into local theories to incorporate insights from later design cycles (Howell, Butler & Reinking, 2017). For clarity's sake, I will report the enhancing factors chronologically. I will then share inhibiting factors, revisit progress we made toward the goal of writing warranted arguments, and make two pedagogical assertions to guide instruction in similar contexts.

Enhancing Factor: Posing Compelling Problems

One theme from Phase Two data was the importance of framing instruction around "compelling problems" (McCann, 2014; Williams, 2004); issues worth arguing about that

students find personally meaningful. Compelling problems are directly related to reciprocity, the dimension of writing that includes establishing a clear purpose and making arguable claims (Imbrenda, 2018a, Nystrand, 1986). Compelling problems are a precondition for effective argumentation because arguments low in reciprocity present claims that are so tautological they make elaboration upon reasoning unnecessary (Imbrenda, 2018a), thereby limiting indexicality as well. Consider the following warrant attempt from a Phase Two essay about the value of a college education: "(College) can help people learn from experiences and allows them to grow as a person". This warrant was scored as a level two the reciprocity scale (Figure 3). It is so self-evident that it fails to engage the reader or require further elaboration.

In the second cycle of Phase Two, students took on agentive roles within gun control discussions. Each small group agreed upon their own problem statements, such as *Should all schools be provided with an armed police officer, paid for by federal funds*? At the end of Phase Two, reciprocity seemed to improve. Students wrote longer warrants (65.75 more words written on warrant attempts) with more idea units (m = 2.75 pre versus m = 7.5 post) per warrant attempt, indicating an awareness of the need to explain ones' thinking to the reader (McCarty et al., 2018). However, academic reasoning within warrant attempts did not increase. Less effective reasoning was often highly speculative or deductive in nature.

The following essay excerpt (addressing whether all students should be required to read certain books) is illustrative of this pattern of students posing relatively stronger claims (reciprocity), yet employing relatively little academic reasoning: "If we aren't being taught how one's culture really is, are we even learning anything from those specific texts?". This provocative statement received a four on the reciprocity scale (Table 3) by presenting a consequential claim and attempting to generalize the implications of reading only canonical

texts. However, the level of indexicality was only procedural as reasoning was largely deductive and over-generalized.

Analysis of code co-occurrence was undertaken using Dedoose software and the five-point semantic differential scales for reciprocity and indexicality. This analysis revealed that when students score low (a 1 or a 2) on one dimension, they are likely to score low on the other. Though we initially hypothesized controversial topics and agentive roles within SAC discussions would be sufficient to encourage students to warrant arguments with original reasoning. However, while these appeared to support increased warrant length and use, they did not increase academic reasoning.

Enhancing Factor: Explicitly Teaching Reasoning

In response to this pattern, in Phase Three we modified our intervention to incorporate explicit instruction in reasoning, with an emphasis on substantive warrants (Table 3). Students then applied their substantive warrants within their own essays, explaining the logical implications of their claims and evidence using sentence frames with signal words (e.g. "similarly" or "likewise" to indicate comparison). In examining cause and effect warrants, students analyzed both 'near' and 'far' effects. For example, using insider slang or memes in online discussions may result in greater initial engagement (near effect), yet may limit ones' audience to those with insider knowledge, causing followers to eventually disengage (far effect).

According to analysis of focal student writing using semantic differential scales, one half demonstrated increased indexicality. This Phase Three quote includes hedging a claim and markers of cause and effect reasoning: "If a student is assigned to read a specific piece of text and has no say in it, they might feel less compelled to completed (sic) the task". Another focal student provided explicit warrants and a precise evidential relationship while making a

sophisticated, two-part argument: "With this information, we can presume that reading culturally diverse literature can advance the learning process... and also gives students the opportunity to learn about other cultures and their customs". However, the remaining focal students did not indicate increased indexicality. For example, one student asserted, "High schoolers want to be challenged. They want to keep learning rather than going on the same as everyone else". However, he went on to argue "no one really learned anything" from required common texts. While the initial claim was engaging, claiming that no one learned anything from common texts was overly deductive and misrepresented the source material.

Enhancing Factor: Expanding Feedback.

In response to student data, we altered our design to emphasize feedback on reasoning in the latter stages of Phase Three. Culturally and linguistically diverse students often receive feedback on grammar and surface features of writing (e.g. Ferris, 1997), but not on specialized forms of reasoning and language use within disciplines (Fang & Park, 2020). While earlier design cycles included feedback within inquiry dialogues, SAC discussions, and small groups of students with similar needs, substantive warrants (Table 3) provided a metalanguage (Reznitskaya, 2012), or a tool for talking about reasoning. This metalanguage was incorporated within "peer critique dialogues", peer writing conferences that students recorded and shared with the teacher using voice comments within Google Docs. The following field notes artifact reflects the process we designed that was not part of our initial methods, but emerged as a response to student data:

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Possibilities and Pitfalls of Language Essay
Partner Peer Critique Dialogues -- *Be kind, be specific, be helpful*

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Directions: Use peer feedback to extend the conversation in your essay and develop your use of evidence and reasoning.

1. Share essay with partner via Google or pass them your Chromebook
2. Read your partner's essay silently and take notes.
3. Audio-record a 5-min conversation
   a. Discuss one (1) sub-topic.
      i. How could the writer make it more compelling?
      ii. Talk to them about why it mattered to you and also any ideas you have to make it more interesting and/or problematic.
   b. Rate the current reasoning. On a scale of 0-3, what level of reasoning do you think the writer is currently showing across the paper? Explain why, referring to the types of substantive warrants to support your position.
   c. Respond. Now that you have gotten feedback, state what you will do as you revise.
4. Submit audio file to Google Classroom. I will listen and score quality of feedback as a formative grade.
5. Thank your partner!

(Field Notes, Phase Three)

An examination of these student recordings revealed many types of peer-to-peer feedback, including pointing out unexplored sub-topics and naming compelling examples. One student Mario noted that his partner accurately summarized the source material, but needed additional examples of how language had bettered the world. Students also used the metalanguage of substantive warrants, encouraging peers to make more comparisons, or praising the use of similes ("cursing like a sailor") and analogies in an essay about swearing. The following audio excerpt addresses the language of protest, namely kneeling for the national anthem:

The first thing I noticed right off the bat is how you related it to an actual example that applies to you as a soccer player. You said, you know, you're sitting down under the lights (before your game), a normal kid enjoying the night, and out comes this controversial topic of kneeling for the national anthem and it really hits (the reader) hard because it's a nationwide discussion and now it's hitting you just as a high schooler, as a kid on the soccer field. The topic itself has become that personal now.

These examples indicated that students have taken up a metalanguage to describe their rhetorical moves to give one another precise feedback on writing warranted arguments.

Inhibiting Factor: Texts and Tasks that Discourage Original Reasoning.

Many AP prompts (including our pre and post assessments) frame the issue for students rather than have them craft their own compelling problem statements. AP tasks also include text sets with individual texts that already contain arguments. This makes it more challenging to warrant claims with original reasoning because students have a tendency to repeat the arguments within these texts rather than risk "getting it wrong" by offering their own perspectives. This ironically limits their writing's effectiveness. If prompts are not personally meaningful, the power and purpose of writing to communicate ones' ideas is obscured. While skilled writers may generate passable evidence-based arguments without being personally invested in the topic, this is a tall order for students new to the genre.

In Phase Three, the "possibilities and pitfalls of language" unit included over a dozen suggested texts, and students chose additional outside sources. Students' essays-in-progress indicated increased levels indexicality and substantive warrants. However, the pre and post essays analyzed for this study were AP synthesis essay prompts. This limitation may help explain why original reasoning remained relatively low, since students could not pose their own problems or select additional texts. Future research should analyze writing from tasks that give students greater agency within their writing.

Unanticipated Consequences: New Tools for Examining Student Writing.

Since the holistic AP Synthesis rubric provided little insight into warrants, we developed a rubric in Phase Two to measure the amount of original reasoning. However, measuring the amount of reasoning did not illuminate how students *actually* reasoned within their warrant

attempts. Semantic differential scales (Imbrenda, 2018a) helped capture developmental

dimensions of writing such as reciprocity and indexicality, enhancing our understanding of

student strengths. The reciprocity scale revealed emerging strengths in making clear and

arguable claims, while the indexicality scale helped us target areas for instruction such as finding

varied and appropriate sources of evidence, explicitly stating warrants, and defining the

relationships between pieces of evidence. Such assets and opportunities for growth go

unrecognized when assessment tools are not sensitive to nuanced and evolving changes in

student writing.

Mixed Progress Toward the Pedagogical Goal

At the start of Phase Two, students completed a Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (Pajares,

Johnson and Usher, 2007), rating their confidence in writing skills on a 100-point scale. At the

end of Phase Three, focal Ascend students had increased by just over 10 points from 71.28 to

81.50, while the rest of the class increased over 5 points from 80.39 to 86.04, a promising trend

considering the correlation between writing self-efficacy and writing achievement (McCarty et

al., 2018). Focal students wrote longer warrants and made more warrant attempts, and

interviews revealed that students found SAC discussions and teacher and peer feedback

particularly beneficial.

Retrospective analysis following Phase Three indicated that reciprocity was an area of

relative strength in student writing. Students gave one another precise feedback their reasoning

and warrant use. Focal Latinx students successfully completed the AP Language and

Composition class, averaging a B grade. While half of the focal students showed increased

indexicality including using explicit warrants and working inductively from sources, overall data

is mixed, indicating further design cycles are needed. These cycles should emphasize writing

instruction and tasks that encourage students to leverage their cultural and linguistic knowledge (Paris & Alim, 2017), and should include inquiry in online environments (Hoch et al., 2019).

Discussion

Our results are limited by several factors, including comparing writing performance across topics and a small number of focal students. The teacher in our study was highly skilled, and the interaction between Ascend group participation and AP class performance is unknown. While causal claims cannot be made, the schoolwide percentage of Latinx students in AP has increased from 17% to nearly 26% over the course of our partnership. The Ascend group, which began with less than 30 sophomores, now serves over 100 students in grades 9-12. Based upon our retrospective analysis across data cycles, we make two pedagogical assertions to inform design work in similar contexts.

Assertion: Dialogic writing instruction should be done alongside explicit instruction in argumentation. When we began our DBR, we thought that engaging in SAC discussions alone would increase the quality of original reasoning within written warrants. While warrant attempts increased in Phase Two, they did not necessarily reflect original reasoning. To maximize student learning, explicitly teaching substantive warrants through gradual release of responsibility including modeling, mentor texts, and peer feedback (Phase Three) should be used simultaneously with the dialogic, discussion-centric, inquiry-based approaches of Phase Two. This hybrid approach offers students agentive roles and engaging purposes for argumentation while offering targeted support for warranting claims about meaningful issues.

Assertion: Teachers should use tools that provide fine-grained feedback on student reasoning and involve students in the assessment process. In Phase Two, the researcher-created warrant scale helped the researchers determine the degree of original reasoning, but did not

provide information about strengths or leading edges of growth. In Phase Three, the teacher

created a mentor essay, modeling his own writing process and giving students guided practice in

evaluating and writing substantive warrants. Students used the warrant writing scale alongside

examples of substantive warrants within peer critique dialogues. These tools help equip students

with a metalanguage to explain and extend their reasoning. In our retrospective analysis,

semantic differential scales (Imbrenda, 2018a) allowed the research team to identify student

assets that were previously overlooked, such as relatively higher levels of reciprocity. Future

research should include teachers using these scales as teaching tools and sharing them with

students for self-reflection and peer feedback.

Conclusion

Too many Latinx students languish in remedial classes dominated by lower-level

questions, teacher-selected prompts, and simplistic texts (Johnson et al., 2003). However, by

modeling instruction after AP assessments and heavily emphasizing test prep, many AP classes

serving minoritized students merely "expose" them to advanced content while leaving them

woefully unprepared for college (Duncheon, 2018). In addition, schools rarely teach advanced

literacy skills such as ways to warrant arguments. Limiting inquiry and discussion to a narrow

range of topics and texts also limits opportunities for students to leverage their own cultural and

linguistic knowledge (Paris & Alim, 2017). Our research demonstrates that Latinx students

previously overlooked for AP can excel in advanced coursework when teachers provide

opportunities to investigate and discuss controversial problems while using tools for making

warranted arguments.

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Meeting the Demands of Close Reading Performance Tasks: Unpacking Complex Texts

with Cohesion Analysis

Brittany Adams, SUNY Cortland

Zhihui Fang, University of Florida

Abstract

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) require students to use evidence from texts to present analysis and interpretation. Teachers can help students develop this critical reading skill by using cohesion analysis, a linguistically informed tool that examines how language choices weave the meaning of a text in a way that makes sense to the reader. In this article, we illustrate how cohesion analysis can be applied in reading a text exemplar recommended by the CCSS for fourth and fifth grade students. We suggest that cohesion analysis is a potent tool for helping students generate linguistic evidence from text in ways that respond to the requirements of the literacy performance tasks recommended by the CCSS.

Key Words: Common Core State Standards, functional language analysis, cohesion analysis, close reading, critical reading, literary reading

Introduction

Primary school years (K-3) are a period of particularly active growth in children's literacy. The period is characterized by robust development in basic reading skills such as phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, and sight vocabulary. These skills are considered foundational and critical to children's later success in school. However, they are often inadequate for meeting the new demands of more advanced schooling (Grades 4-12), where children are expected to engage regularly and critically with richly complex texts. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (http://www.corestandards.org), for example, call for regular practice with complex texts; using evidence from texts to present careful analyses, well-defended claims, and clear information; and building knowledge about the natural and social worlds.

One reading skill underscored by the CCSS is the ability to read complex texts carefully and grasp information, arguments, ideas, and details based on evidence in the text. Students are expected to be able to answer a range of text-dependent questions, whose answers require inferences based on careful attention to the text. This emphasis on using evidence from text to support analysis, inference, and interpretation presents a new challenge for teachers, many of whom have been used to the familiar classroom practices of asking questions that students answer by drawing from prior knowledge or personal experience (Snow & O'Connor, 2013). They need effective strategies for engaging students in close, attentive reading that develops their awareness and understanding of how language choices construct meaning, infuse perspective, and structure discourse in the text.

In this article, we describe an approach to meeting the new demands placed on teachers by the CCSS. The approach, called functional language analysis (FLA) (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008; 2010), provides teachers with tools for engaging students in close reading and analysis of

text. Grounded in systemic functional linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), a theory of meaning that explicates how language choices reflect and shape the context in which meaning is being made, FLA promotes a new way of talking about language and text that helps students make sense of what they are reading and at the same time gain insights into how the text means what it means. It directs students to the lexical and grammatical patterns in the text and engages them in discussion about how these language patterns simultaneously present information, embed ideology, and structure discourse in genre- and discipline-specific ways. As such, FLA dovetails with close reading, a pedagogical practice recommended by the CCSS that promotes deep and precise understanding of text through thoughtful, critical analysis of significant details or patterns in the text (Fang, 2016).

FLA sees language as a complex network of interlocking lexical and grammatical systems that enables its users to make choices based on what they are doing, their interpersonal relationships, and the rhetorical modes they are adopting. It offers a set of analytical tools for systematically exploring the content, organization, and style within a text. One of these tools is cohesion analysis. Cohesion refers to the way elements within a text stitch together to form a unified whole. It is created through the use of references such as pronouns and demonstratives, conjunctions, and lexical items (i.e., open class items -- or content words -- such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) that are semantically related. As semantic links are created through the use of these cohesive resources, the text continuously recalibrates its context, making both continuity and change the defining characteristics of text (Eggins, 2004). Analysis of references enables us to make sense of a text by keeping track of who or what is being talked about and their relative importance. Analysis of conjunctions enables us to understand how a text is connected and patterns of logical reasoning. Analysis of semantically-related lexical items,

called lexical strings, enables us to identify how the author weaves the thematic field of a text. Taken together, cohesion analysis can reveal not only a text's texture but also its main (or minor) semantic preoccupations (Eggins, 2004).

Cohesion Analysis and Literary Reading

Although cohesion analysis has been widely used as a tool for discourse analysis in language and literacy research (e.g., Cox & Sulzby, 1984; He, 2014), it is rarely used in classroom reading instruction. In this article, we demonstrate how cohesion analysis can be a pedagogical tool for helping students meet the demands of the CCSS. Specifically, we illustrate how analysis of lexical strings, a subset of cohesion analysis, can be applied in performing the literacy tasks recommended by the CCSS. The specific literacy performance task involved here relates to a text exemplar (see Figure 1) recommended by the CCSS for fourth and fifth grade students (http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/4/). It reads:

> Students read Natalie Babbitt's *Tuck Everlasting* and *describe in depth* the idyllic *setting* of the story, *drawing on specific details in the text*, from the color of the sky to the sounds of the pond, to describe the scene. [RL.4.3]

This task exemplifies the sort of work fourth or fifth graders must be able to do in order to meet the CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3 standard, which states "Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions) (Reading: Literature > Grade 4)".

Figure 1. Excerpt from Natalie Babbitt's *Tuck Everlasting*

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(1) The sky was a ragged blaze of red and pink and orange, and its double trembled on the surface of the pond like color spilled from a paintbox. (2) The sun was dropping fast now, a

soft red sliding egg yolk, and already to the east there was a darkening to purple. (3) Winnie, newly brave with her thoughts of being rescued, climbed boldly into the rowboat. (4) The hard heels of her buttoned boots made a hollow banging sound against its wet boards, loud in the warm and breathless quiet. (5) Across the pond a bullfrog spoke a deep note of warning. (6) Tuck climbed in, too, pushing off, and, settling the oars into their locks, dipped them into the silty bottom in one strong pull. (7) The rowboat slipped from the bank then, silently, and glided out, tall water grasses whispering away from its sides, releasing it.

(8) Here and there the still surface of the water dimpled, and bright rings spread noiselessly and vanished. (9) "Feeding time," said Tuck softly. (10) And Winnie, looking down, saw hosts of tiny insects skittering and skating on the surface. (11) "Best time of all for fishing," he said, "when they come up to feed."

(12) He dragged on the oars. (13) The rowboat slowed and began to drift gently toward the farthest end of the pond. (14) It was so quiet that Winnie almost jumped when the bullfrog spoke again. (15) And then, from the tall pines and birches that ringed the pond, a wood thrush caroled. (16) The silver notes were pure and clear and lovely.

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* from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf
* Sentences are numbered for ease of reference

In this task, students are asked to support their description of the "idyllic" scene with evidence from the text. Such evidence can be generated through the analysis of lexical strings. A lexical string is a list of all the lexical items that occur sequentially in a text that can be related to an immediately prior word or to a head word, either taxonomically or through an expectancy relation. Words are related taxonomically through class-subclass (e.g., *rodent-mouse*), co-hyponomy (e.g., *pigeon-pelican*), contrast (e.g., *wet-dry*), synonym (e.g., *meeting-assembly*),

repetition (e.g., *bird-bird, criticize-criticism*), or part-whole (e.g., *arm-body*) relations. Words are also related where there is a predictable relation between two entities (e.g., *doctor-patient*, *work-office*) or between a process and either the doer of the process or the one affected by it (e.g., *mouse-squeak*, *nibble-cheese*).

Analysis of lexical strings has been shown to be a powerful tool for revealing meaning and substantiating initial impressions. Eggins (2004) provided an example analysis of Kate Chopin's (1894) *The Story of an Hour*, showing how analyzing lexical strings in a text can add significant depth to patterns that are detected in a surface reading and reveal undetected linguistic encoding, such as in how the setting is described. She uncovered many metaphorical patterns that are not immediately obvious when the text is taken at face value until all the related words are strung together. Eggins (2004) argued that the use of lexical strings can help readers unpack dense webs of lexical links in a text to better understand the meaning being made. Similarly, Lukin (in Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008) demonstrated how tracking chains of related words such as synonyms, antonyms, and part-whole relations help reveal the dominant motif of an untitled sonnet by the great American poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. The analysis interestingly revealed that the true focus of the poem is the *I*, or the speaker, in the poem, rather than the *you* at whom the poem is directed, as well as other dominant themes that might not be immediately obvious to a student in a surface reading. Taken together, these examples demonstrate how a linguistic approach to literary interpretation can help students "overcome the purely private nature of literature as a school subject, where the pupil is left guessing as to what reaction to a particular work the teacher expects of him" (Halliday, 1982, p. 12).

The first step in performing analysis of lexical strings is to read the text a couple of times to form an initial impression of the text, including who/what is involved, what is going on, and

when/where/how something happens. This initial impression should help in the next step, which is to identify a set of head words, or umbrella terms, that relate to the main or minor participants, concepts, or themes in the text. For each head word, a search is then conducted, sentence-by-sentence, to locate words or phrases that relate to it through one of the many semantic relations mentioned earlier (e.g., class-subclass, co-hyponomy, contrast, synonym, repetition, and part-whole). Each head word and words that are semantically-related to it form a lexical string. These strings can be revised by clustering, collapsing, expanding, or refining the head words depending on the purpose of the analysis and the requirements of the task at hand. Once lexical strings are established, readers can then determine which participants, concepts, or themes are dominant or minor by examining the length of each lexical string. Generally, an extended lexical string means that the participant, concept, or theme encoded in the head word is dominant and thus significant to the meaning of the text. A short lexical string means that the participant, concept, or theme encoded in the head word is minor and thus of marginal significance to the meaning of the text.

To perform the CCSS-specified task with respect to the excerpt from Babbitt's *Tuck Everlasting*, we focus on identifying linguistic terms and patterns related to setting and idyllic tone. By definition, *idyllic* can be understood to mean pleasing or picturesque in natural simplicity. When used as a literary device, it is the act of describing a rustic or natural scene in order to connote peace, tranquility, and happiness. The excerpt is an example of this practice. After an initial coding of content words, we chose to break up all references to nature and setting into smaller categories to further explore how the idyllic tone weaves throughout the excerpt (see Table 1).

Table 1: Analysis of Lexical Strings in *Tuck Everlasting*					
Sentence	**Lexical Strings**				
	Sky	**Pond**	**Rowboat**	**Plants**	**Animals**	**Tranquility**
1	sky ragged blaze red and pink and orange its double trembled color spilled from a paintbox	surface of the pond				
2	sun dropping fast soft red sliding egg yolk a darkening purple					soft
3			rowboat			
4			wet boards			warm and breathless quiet
5		pond				
6		silty bottom	oars locks them		bullfrog spoke	
7		the bank	rowboat slipped glided out its sides it	tall water grasses whispering releasing		silently
8		surface of the water				noiselessly
9						softly
10		surface			tiny insects skittering and skating	
11					fishing they	
12			the oars			
13		the pond	rowboat slowed drift gently			slowed drift gently
14		the pond		tall pines birches	bullfrog spoke wood thrush caroled	so quiet
15					silver notes pure and clear and lovely	pure and clear and lovely

As can be seen in Table 1, the "color of the sky", while picturesque, does not play a

significant role in communicating the peaceful or tranquil nature of the scene. In fact, the

language used to describe the sky is surprisingly aggressive compared to the rest of the excerpt;

terms like *blaze* and *ragged* and *spilled* carry aggressive, even violent, connotations. Similarly,

the sun is described as *dropping*, *sliding*, and *darkening*, a depiction that could potentially

foreshadow the quietness of the evening or serve as a continuation of the powerful language used to describe the sky. Regardless, the first two sentences alone do little to support a perception of tranquility. We would instead argue that they serve as a juxtaposition against all the text that follows, to further emphasize the peaceful events occurring below the violent sunset. The pond, the animals, and movement of the rowboat carry much more weight in communicating the ideals of nature and the tranquility of the setting. However, the "sounds of the pond" specifically do not appear to be key in setting the idyllic scene; it is rather the absence of sound that is emphasized through most of the excerpt; so much so that Winnie is disturbed when the bullfrog croaks, breaking the silence. The *warm and breathless quiet*, the water dimpling *noiselessly*, and the rowboat gliding *silently* repeatedly underscore the serene quiet of the scene. It is not until the very end, when the silence is broken by a wood thrush that the "sounds of the pond" are treated as a welcome insertion into the scene, with the *silver notes* ringing *pure and clear and lovely*.

This is by no means an exhaustive analysis of lexical strings in this text. Nonetheless, our analysis reveals that the linguistic web of references to setting and tone goes far beyond the "color of the sky" and "sounds of the pond". If used in the classroom, such an activity would require students to look closely at specific details in the text, enable them to offer and organize textual evidence in support of the interpretation they rendered on the text, and provide more than enough text-based evidence for fourth/fifth grade readers to respond to the sample performance task.

Conclusion

Analysis of lexical strings, or cohesion analysis in general, is a fairly simple way to determine how an author weaves the semantic veins of a text and to identify details and examples in the text as evidence. The analysis, which can be done with either a literary or an information

text, answers the calls by the CCSS and a growing number of literacy scholars (e.g., Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2011; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008) to stay close to the language of a text and to render the linguistic basis of textual inferences visible. The most challenging or least prescriptive part of the analysis is determining what the category or "head word" should be from the outset. Teachers can help students learn to find key words (2-3 at first) or note repetition links to get started. Initial categories may be revised as the strings are developed.

Literary works can seem daunting to read on the outset, and students may often feel that some kind of special insight is needed to engage with the text. Using functional language analysis tools, such as cohesion analysis, teachers can help students generate textual evidence to support whatever judgment, claim, inference, or interpretation they make about a text and in the process develop sensitivity to language and appreciation for verbal art. With the recent emphasis on evidence-based reading, a linguistically-informed approach, such as functional language analysis, opens up a refreshingly new arena for exploration of meaning in text, offering teachers a powerful tool to help their students meet the demands of the CCSS.

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Middle School English Language Arts: Design and Implementation of a Unit on Argument

Using Genre-Based Strategy Instruction

Zoi A. Traga Philippakos

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Charles A. MacArthur

University of Delaware

Sarah Narvaiz

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Abstract

The goal of this work was to develop and evaluate a unit on argumentative writing in English Language Arts (ELA). Participants were 536 students in grades 6 to 8 and 17 ELA teachers. The study had a duration of one month and followed the guidelines of design-based research. Teachers participated in a workshop in which they learned about the instructional approach and were provided with instructional resources. Teachers were then asked to begin their instruction and received feedback using video and online coaching. Students' papers were collected at pretest and posttest. Results showed increases on writing quality. Based on observations and interviews with teachers, revisions to the instruction were planned for the next cycle of design research.

Keywords: argumentation, middle grades, English Language Arts, design-based research

Introduction

Middle school and high-school students seem to find writing as challenging as their elementary partners who develop their skills as writers. Findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reveal a trend of underperformance (National Center of Educational Statistics, 2012) across years and grades. The results of the 2011 nation's report card showed that only 3% of eighth and twelfth graders performed at Advanced level, 24% of them performed at Proficient level, and 54% of eighth graders and 52% of twelfth graders performed at Basic. These results indicate that a writing crisis may be present in the United States that should be addressed for students' academic success and for their later college and professional careers.

Based on standards and on instructional goals set in the elementary grades (Common Core State Standards, 2010), when students reach the middle grades, they should be able to compose papers that clearly communicate their meanings to readers, should be able to apply the writing process to support the development of ideas for different purposes, and should be aware of the various writing purposes and genres. One such genre that students need to be able to respond to is persuasion or argumentation, which is challenging for writers (Nippold, Ward-Lonergan, & Fanning, 2005; Midgette, Haria, & MacArthur, 2008). Several approaches have been used to support middle schoolers' persuasive and argumentative writing and one of those approaches is strategy instruction (Gillespie & Graham, 2014; Graham, 2006) with most prominent the use of self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) (Graham & Harris, 2003; Harris & Graham, 2009; Mason, Kubina, Kostewicz, Cramer, & Datchuk, 2013). Strategy instruction strives to explicitly teach conscious processes that support writers' composition (e.g., planning) using pedagogically sound methodologies (e.g., modeling).

Genre-based strategy instruction draws from SRSD and other theoretical frameworks. Specifically, it draws from the work of Englert and colleagues (Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, & Stevens, 1991), expanding their idea of text-structure strategies to include genre elements and linguistic features. Students are taught the elements of a genre and how to use those elements to plan a paper and revise it using genre-based evaluation criteria. Also, students are taught to use the genre elements to support note-taking and summarization, supporting a reading-writing connection (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). Purposely, summarization is incorporated as it is one of the most effective writing approaches to support comprehension (Graham & Hebert, 2011). Further, a strong emphasis is placed on evaluation and on the use of genre-specific evaluation criteria to self-evaluate and peer review (Cho & MacArthur, 2011; Philippakos & MacArthur, 2016). Students are supported to mastery through gradual release of responsibility (Graham, Bruch et al., 2016; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Finally, since the goal of learning is transfer and the goal of strategies is for students to independently use them without external stimuli and reminders, self-regulation (Harris & Graham, 2009) is incorporated in the form of goal setting, progress monitoring, and reflection on use of strategies and overall performance toward learning goals.

Current Study

The purpose of this study was to design and evaluate a unit of instruction on argumentation for middle school based on genre-based strategy instruction. The reason for this work was pragmatic as well as theoretical. The pragmatic reason derived from the request of middle-school principals and a school district that were already applying the Developing Strategic Writers work in grades K to 5 and wanted to establish a curricular continuity for students who transitioned into middle school. Theoretically, we wanted to examine how the

strategy for teaching strategies, which functions as the blueprint for the design of lessons, would be applied in middle schools and what modifications were necessary to support the needs of students and empower teachers' instructional decision making.

The questions that led this investigation were:

1. Are there changes on student writing quality across time?

2. Is this form of PD feasible within the setting of English Language Arts in middle school?

Instructional Approach

The instructional approach is based on cognitive strategy instruction, which provides systematic instruction in strategies with gradual release of responsibility and is mastery-based rather than time-based (Graham, 2006; MacArthur, 2011). Strategy instruction provided systematic instruction of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies, striving for transfer of knowledge and skills and student independence.

The genre-based strategy approach draws from the Self-Regulated Strategy Development model of instruction (Harris & Graham, 2009). Specifically, the approach (a) connects strategies for planning and evaluation using genre elements (Englert et al., 1991); (b) connects reading and writing through the use of read alouds in which students engage in note taking for summarizing and retelling using genre elements; (c) emphasizes evaluation for revision using genre-specific evaluation criteria; (d) includes mini-lessons that connect with linguistic or genre-specific organizational demands; (e) provides a gradual release of responsibility from the teacher to the student, and (f) promotes language and dialogic interaction about books and texts read. The design of lessons was based on a Strategy for Teaching Strategies (MacArthur & Philippakos, 2013; Philippakos, MacArthur, & Coker, 2015) that included the following components,

Introduction to the writing purposes; Introduction of genre via read-alouds; Evaluation of good and weak examples; Think-aloud modeling; A focus on Self-regulation and a mini-lesson; Collaborative practice; Guided practice; Preparation for peer review, self-evaluation, and peer review; Editing; Continuous practice to mastery and independence.

Professional Development Approach

This PD model of genre-based strategy instruction draws on effective research-based methodologies (e.g., Desimone, 2009; Harris et al., 2012), draws on guidelines of practice-based PD (Cohen & Ball, 1999), and strives to connect tasks and practices during workshops with tasks that took place in the classroom. Further, the goal was for teachers to actively participate in the process and collaborate, discuss, and reflect with their partners and peers (horizontally and vertically) in order to set instructional and professional goals. Therefore, the PD aimed to support teachers in understanding the principles of the instructional approach and the components that were integral to students' understanding. The PD included an initial workshop with explanation of the theories of writing and research findings, an explanation of the specific approach, and sample videos of instruction. Teachers sent videos of their instruction daily and received feedback daily in order to make revisions and instructional modifications.

<div align="center">

Methods

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Research Design

The study was based on design-based research (DBR) methodology (Brown, 1992) and utilized both qualitative and quantitative data to identify revisions from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2. The goal of this methodology is not only to examine whether an instructional approach is effective, but also how to best address the needs of a site and examine the factors that lead for an effective implementation of that approach within an instructional setting. Therefore, feedback from

teachers as members of the community is needed, and teachers are considered to be partners in the research process (Ivey & Broaddus, 2007). This work presents the first cycle of DBR.

Participants and setting

Participants were 17 middle-school teachers from two middle schools (Site A and B), their principals, and 563 student participants across the two sites. All teachers with the exception of one had more than 10 years of experience teaching at Site A; all ELA teachers had a Master's degree, one had received a doctoral degree, and one was in the process of completing her Ed.D. in special education. Analysis was conducted with writing samples that were administered across assessment times (See Table 1 for participants' information). The schools are located in a rural district in the Southeast United States.

Table 1

Demographics' Information for Students

	Grade Level		
	Site A	Site B	
Ethnicity			Total
Female	129	149	278
Male	145	140	285
Caucasian/White	235	188	211
African American	5	28	33
Asian	3	3	6
Latino	16	62	78
Other	15	8	23
Total	**274**	**289**	**563**

Procedures and Timeline

The study took place from the beginning of March to the end of April 2019. The researcher was approached by the sites to provide professional development support on writing instruction. However, the schools were willing to participate in research instead and for their teachers to receive support in their classrooms.

The researcher met with teachers, explained the study, explained and modeled the approach, and collected consent forms. Teachers were asked to conduct a preassessment and then they began their instruction. The researcher provided feedback on their instruction daily, addressing needed modifications and revisions and/or confirming instructional choices. Teachers

were asked to assess students at the end of the project. All papers were typed and shared with the researcher and de-identified using Google Classroom.

Student-Level Data

Student-level data consisted of argumentative essays. ELA and science teachers asked students to read grade-level texts and respond to controversial topics. Students typed their papers that were then shared with the researcher. Papers were scored using a seven-point holistic quality rubric that addressed organization, ideas, conventions, sentence fluency, and tone (Philippakos & MacArthur, 2016) ($r =. 90$).

Teacher-Level Data

All teachers were invited to participate in an interview at the completion of the study. Teachers were asked to share instructional successes and challenges and to suggest revisions both on the instruction and on the provided professional development. Teacher and administration interviews were transcribed by a graduate student who was unaware of the scope and purpose of this study. A second graduate student listened to 50% of the tapes to confirm the accuracy of the transcriptions. Responses were analyzed by identifying patterns of responses per question using constant comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

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Results

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Argumentative Essays: ELA

The results of the paired samples t-test found that there was statistically significant difference from time one to time two. Specifically, participants wrote papers of better quality at Time 2 (M = 3.71, SE = .06) compared to Time 1 ($t(559) = -6.57$, $p <.001$, *Cohen's d=* .28, *r=* .14.

ELA Teacher and Administration Interviews

ELA Teachers and their administration at both sites were positive about the approach and about the PD support. Regarding the approach, teachers appreciated the organization, scope and sequence, structure in the application of strategies and the systematic use of those strategies with goal setting. Teachers commented both on themselves feeling more confident to teach and on their students' confidence. As one of the teachers shared,

> Overall, I really like it especially because I've seen their confidence and writing ability increase a lot and I've noticed that particularly my ESL student and my struggling readers and writers really thrived with the approach because it was [a] structured method and were able to do this exactly.

Another teacher explained that in the process of teaching, she did not know how much information to provide and second-guessed herself about the amount of direct or upfront instruction to provide. Having a structured instructional approach supported the teacher's understanding about how to teach and her confidence to directly deliver instruction.

> I guess I really never knew exactly how to teach them to write I would give them suggestions and I would back off because I thought I was giving them too much. I always had a hard time teaching them how to get started because that was always their struggle- they would be given a topic, and we would brainstorm and we never really talked much about genre. So I think that helped. It helped me to teach them how to start and that it's okay to tell them how to start and it's ok to give them sentence starters.

Teachers also commented on students' growth and noted that the students were confident as well as able to use strategies to identify what they were expected to do and at least try to do it instead of giving up. One of the teachers thought that the change on students' responses and overall work was visible.

> I think it's a night and day difference. I think this has benefited them a lot. We've been doing writing so much that it's targeted their reading as much, too. Just with their comprehension. Being, being able to find the author's purpose … they struggled with [this] all year and now they get it so easy. I think it's from evaluating all those essays and really looking at the text and the prompt so closely.

Teachers identified challenges with regards to rigor, time, student stamina, differentiation for lower-performing students, and student buy-in. As one of the teachers explained,

> I will admit, the reading had been very much a focus, because they were three to four years, in many cases, below reading level, so that had been my primary [focus]. Not as much into the writing as I have been this past year so when you came aboard and the writing increased they were a little, you know, "wow." Besides that, just, I think, overall, they liked it. The engagement was there. They just weren't used to the rigor.

A general challenge that was evident both from teachers and from the administration was time. One of the principals explained,

> I think that the staff really liked the format of it but they felt like it was kind of rushed and if we had started earlier in the year they would have felt more comfortable with it but they love all of it. They love the format and the graphic organizers and the things they have to help them but I think going from March to May was a little rushed for them to feel like they truly knew what they are doing.

Planning for a new approach or for changes in the instruction within an academic year can be challenging. Even though teachers were positive on the approach, they needed more time to practice, understand, and apply it with confidence.

PD Approach

Teachers shared positive comments about the PD support and its components. Overall, all ELA teachers shared that they found the workshops helpful, but they found more helpful the videos and the live modeling by the researcher. Specifically, eight teachers from Site A and eight teachers from site B had watched the available videos that the researcher had developed. The six teachers (three per site) who did not watch the videos shared that they did not have the time to do so. Teachers also praised the direct and immediate feedback that was provided by the researcher. Teachers appreciated the opportunity to understand what they needed to modify in their instruction for the next day. One of the teachers said,

It helped a lot because you were able to point out that I had skipped part of the process in planning, I was doing the ideas and then the FTAAP, and in reality it's supposed to be FTAAP and then ideas and you explained why and gave me some other tips for teaching them the other sections in the middle.

Future Goals

Teachers requested more time to prepare to teach writing and for the PD to begin earlier in the academic year so they can read, practice, and better understand how to teach. Teachers also shared that they would like to see their students be able to complete tasks and have confidence in their responses. These comments were also present in the principals' comments.

Revisions from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2

Teachers' comments indicated that students struggled with background knowledge. Therefore, in the second cycle we do not plan to provide responses on stand-alone controversial topics, but we will integrate all responses in writing after the reading of relevant texts.

Regarding the PD in the next cycle we will need a full day with teachers in ELA. Time was needed to model live in front of teachers how to apply the reading and writing strategies. Even though we have provided videos of the researcher completing such work, teachers' interview data indicated they benefitted by watching the thinking process unfold in front of them, live, with a text they had selected.

Further, teachers' responses showed that different components of the strategy were more helpful and effective for their students and their needs. In the next cycle, we plan to explicitly address the process of modeling, collaborative practice and evaluation to revise and still stress the importance of the gradual release of responsibility; however, we will share with teachers that the process of collaborative practice can include digital collaborations, include synchronous drafting and revision, as well as asynchronous.

Finally, we plan to share better how to address goal setting and progress monitoring. This was not evident in teachers' instruction during observations even to those who fully applied the cognitive strategies.

Discussion

The purpose of this work was to examine the application of the genre-based strategy instruction strategies in the middle grades and examine whether the PD support was helpful, feasible, and effective to support teachers' instruction. The results from student writing showed improvements, while teacher responses praised the approach and the PD. These findings show that the consistency in an instructional approach and methodology was welcomed by middle-school ELA teachers, their science and their social studies colleagues. Teachers also shared that their confidence and their students' confidence was affected, and they saw students apply taught strategies during testing time, even though this was not consistently reported by all teachers.

Limitations

The design employed in this study was intended to help the identification of needed revisions within iterative cycles; thus, it is not possible to determine whether the instruction was more effective than some other approach. Future research could examine the effects of this approach compared to a different instructional method.

In addition, in this work teachers reported student challenges with reading comprehension that functioned as an inhibiting factor on students' writing performance. This was a limitation in this present work as no comprehension measure was used.

An additional limitation is the time that this study took place. We worked with teachers at the end of the academic year, which might have been an unfortunate time as they were more

focused on covering the content and preparing students for the upcoming testing than on learning how to apply a relatively new approach in their instruction.

Practical Implications

Argumentation and persuasion are challenging but needed skills for secondary learners (Wolfe, 2011). Strategy instruction is an effective approach that can significantly improve students' writing quality and confidence (Graham, 2006). In this work, the use of a systematic instructional approach for whole group seemed to support young learners and their teachers across subject areas. The argument of whether a content-area teacher is a writing teacher is a controversial one. However, if the goal is to increase students' critical thinking, application of reading and writing strategies across the curriculum can only increase students' frequency of application, fluency and comfort of use, and opportunity to write about what they learn.

Indeed, if education strives for equity, educational opportunity for success should be consistently provided to students. In this work, this goal was evaluated for a short-period of time. However, curriculum developers for K to 5 should carefully consider the transition of those approaches in the middle grades to further support students' application and their academic growth. In addition, curricula developers should keep in mind teacher confidence and needed PD. The latter should also be a consideration for district policy and school administrators.

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Positioning the Learner: How the Instructor Uses Technology Matters

Susan Taylor
West Virginia University
Monongalia County Schools

Aimee Morewood
West Virginia University

Abstract

This exploratory pilot study examines the use of technology and how it positions adult learners in an online learning environment. Utilizing an exploratory case study approach, course documents were examined across different educational and technology frameworks from the field. This research sought to better understand the alignment between research and practice for effective technology integration. The observations made from this examination will provide insights for future dissertation work.

Keywords: educational technology; exploratory case study; online learning; adult learners

Introduction

Technology is part of our daily lives inside and outside of the field of education. The rate at which tools are being developed and the availability of the tools can be overwhelming. When selecting tools to integrate into online instruction, it is important to research and critique a tool's uses and features to ensure that the tool aligns with the course's learning targets and desired outcomes. Good technology integration transforms student learning and promotes active learning through the use of higher order thinking skills (Bloom, 1956). This study examined how the instructor's use of technology positioned the learner by utilizing three popular frameworks, Bloom's Digital Taxonomy (BDT) (Churches, 2008), Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition (SAMR) Model (Puentedura, 2013), and the Passive, Interactive, or Creative (PIC) and Replacement, Amplifying, Transformative (RAT) known as the PICRAT Matrix (Kimmons, 2016). Course artifacts housed on a literacy MEd. program's learning management system (LMS) were examined to identify technology tool usage to answer the following research question: *How does the instructor's use of technology tools position the learner in an online learning environment*?

Literature Review

Online Learning

Originally, the Community of Inquiry (COI) framework (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000) was specifically developed to study the use of online discussion boards in distance education courses. It includes three presences that can also be applied to other online instructional tools. The three presences are social, cognitive, and teaching; all of which are essential in creating an optimum online learning environment. *Social presence* refers to how participants in a community (instructor and students) interact and relate to one another. *Cognitive*

presence is the construction of meaning through communication (e.g., discussion, feedback, reflection) with others. *Teaching presence* refers to the design and facilitation of the course. The design function of this presence, includes the course design (setup and structure) as well as the development and delivery of content and assignments. The facilitation role can be conducted by the student or teacher (depending on the instructional design) and its purpose is to provide support to enhance learning. It is important to not isolate or focus on one presence, rather it is the interaction among these elements that make for a successful online learning environment. The goal of any course is to master both the cognitive and social aspects of the COI. To do this, instructors must meaningfully and purposefully design and facilitate instruction that integrates technology.

Technology Integration

Online learning and technology are synonymous with one another; we can't have one without the other. Merely using technology as the mode to deliver online instruction is not enough. How instructors leverage technology tools in the course design directly impacts student usage of technology and learning of content (Whiteside, 2015). As highlighted above, teacher presence (Garrison et al., 2000) impacts both cognitive and social presences through active learning activities that are part of the course design and facilitation (Morewood, Ankrum, & Swan Dagen, 2019). Effective technology integration is intentional and aligns with the planned learning outcomes. Frameworks like SAMR (Puentedura, 2013), PICRAT (Kimmons, 2016), and BDT (Churches, 2008) help educators determine the level of technology integration as well as its impact on student learning when planning course design, content delivery, and assignments.

Technology Frameworks

The SAMR Model (Puentedura, 2013) concentrates on the level of technology integration. The linear-like model proposes four levels of technology integration: substitution, augmentation, modification, and redefinition. The model further groups the four levels into two categories, enhancement (substitution and augmentation) and transformation (modification and redefinition). The SAMR model defines *substitution* as the use of technology as a replacement to a traditional practice with no functional change to the assignment (Puentedura, 2013). For example, having the students type answers to comprehension questions in a word document or Google form replaces the use of a worksheet. *Augmentation*, like substitution, is a use of technology as a direct replacement, however, there is significant improvement through functional enhancements (Puentedura, 2013). Adding to the example above, including a hyperlink to the word document or Google Form to enhance student understanding of the content. *Modification* moves the level of technology integration from enhancement to transformation where there is significant redesign of the task (Puentedura, 2013). From the example above, students create a new digital product to demonstrate their understanding of content after collaborating and receiving feedback from their peers through document sharing. The last level of the SAMR Model, *redefinition*, calls for the creation of new tasks that would not be possible without the use of technology (Puentedura, 2013). For this, students create a new product to synthesize their learning and share their work not only with the students in their class or school, they also share with and receive feedback from peers at the global level.

The PICRAT matrix developed by Kimmons (2016) builds off of the technology integration framework of Replaces, Amplifies, or Transforms (RAT) (Hughes, Thomas, & Scharber, 2006). This model illustrates the use of technology through the lenses of both the student and the teacher by looking at the students' relationship to technology and how the

teacher's use of technology influences traditional practice. Unlike the SAMR Model

(Puentedura, 2013), the PICRAT (Kimmons, 2016) is arranged as a matrix containing six

criteria, three of which align with the student (PIC) and three that align with the teacher (RAT).

The PICRAT Matrix frames our thinking in two ways: what are the students' interactions with

technology and what is the impact of the technology on pedagogy?

First, passive, interactive, and creative all refer to the student's interactions with the

technology being utilized. In this model, the tool is evaluated to see if the student is using the

technology as a passive consumer of the content, or if they interact with the technology in some

way to better understand the content, or to see if students create new products to demonstrate

learning. Moving from student to teacher, RAT focuses on the pedagogical practices impacted by

the technology. For example, did the use of technology merely replace a traditional practice, or

amplify that practice with the use of technology, or transform the practice in a way that did not

exist with replacement?

The six levels of the matrix then form nine quadrants at the intersection of PIC and RAT:

passive replaces (PR), passive amplifies (PA), passive transforms (PT), interactive replaces (IR),

interactive amplifies (IA), interactive transforms (IT), creative replaces (CR), creative amplifies

(CA), creative transforms (CT). This allows users of the framework to look at the impact of

technology on the student and the instructional design. For example, PR identifies the student's

role in their learning as passive and the technology serves as a replacement to traditional

pedagogical practice. Whereas, CT (the apex of the matrix) identifies the learner's role as

creative producer in their learning and the technology transforms the pedagogical practice.

Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) focuses on student thinking by listing cognitive skills in a hierarchal framework ordering the skills from lower order-thinking skills (LOTS) to higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwhol, 2001) modified the original skills listed as nouns (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) to verbs. The revised version also changed knowledge to remembering, comprehension to understanding, and synthesis to creating. Additionally, the order of evaluating and creating (formerly synthesis) changed, moving creating to the highest level of the taxonomy. The revised version lists the verbs in order of: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Further, Churches (2008) expanded Bloom's Revised Taxonomy to include the use of technology and digital tools by creating BDT. BDT aligns specific uses of technology and digital tools to each of the verbs. For example, bookmarking and searching align with the remembering, requiring the learner to utilize LOTS while blogging and producing align with creating, which requires the learner to utilize HOTS.

Active Learning

Active learning takes place when students engage with the content in which they are learning. Students who are active learners can interact with the content individually by creating their own path for learning, as well as, collaboratively. When students create their own path, they do so by making their own choices about which materials to read, create, and/or which tools to use to enhance their own understanding. Collaborative engagement occurs when students actively work with others to better understand the content through discussion and/or creation of products. Ultimately, design and facilitation by the instructor will position the learner as either active or passive. Technology integration that facilities active learning should be at the forefront

of lesson design (Clarke & Watts-Taffe, 2014). No matter the mode of the course, there are

practices instructors must consider when designing courses for adult learners.

Desimone's (2009) work focuses on characteristics of effective professional

development. Professional development (PD) includes college courses and myriad situations and

contexts (e.g. workshops, conferences, school-level, district-level, mentoring). Desimone (2009)

proposes five core characteristics of effective professional development: content focus, active

learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation. *Content focus* refers to the

authenticity of the topic to the learner's context as well as a learner's interest in the topic. In

addition, PD should include opportunities for the learner to engage in active learning rather than

as a passive consumer. *Coherence* is in reference to the learner's understanding of the relevance

of the content to their specific context. *Duration* is the length of the PD over multiple periods of

time (not just one setting). Finally, learners need to have the opportunity to collaborate with their

peers. Morewood, Ankrum, & Swan Dagen (2017, 2019) explored Desimone's (2009)

characteristics of effective PD to support the COI (Garrison et al., 2000) presences. The

researchers found that active learning spans all three presences (social, cognitive, and teaching).

Theoretical Framework

This exploratory case study is grounded in constructivist learning theory in which

instructors facilitate student learning by assimilating and accommodating new and old

experiences through the design of instruction (Piaget, 1976). Constructivists posit that

knowledge is constructed through social interactions in which students produce knowledge based

upon the experiences they engage in. In an online environment, technology plays an integral part

in both the course delivery (set up and structure) and instructional design (content and

assignments). The social constructivist perspective aligns well to the research on active learning

across the three presences (e.g. Garrison et al., 2000; Morewood et al., 2019). The use of

technology supports constructivism by enhancing and transforming student learning experiences through meaningful and purposeful uses as highlighted in the technology frameworks SAMR (Puentedura, 2013), PICRAT (Kimmons, 2016), and BDT (Churches, 2008).

<div align="center">

Exploratory Process
</div>

Context

This exploratory case study is bound by time focusing on a single, three-credit online course, *Content and Disciplinary Area Literacy Instruction*, situated in a graduate-level Reading Specialist preparation program at West Virginia University (WVU), a public, land-grant, research-intensive institution located in the rural state of West Virginia. The Literacy Education (LE) program at WVU offers a 30 credit Masters in Education degree, that has been fully online since the fall of 2017. In 2019, the LE program received *National Recognition with Distinction* from the International Literacy Association. This course is one of ten, three-credit courses offered in this program. At the time of the study, the course was taught asynchronously for 16-weeks, using eCampus as the primary Learning Management System (LMS). This exploratory study examined archived documents from one section offered in the spring semester of 2019.

Data Sources and Preliminary Investigation

This exploratory study included multiple sources of data from a total of 35 different artifacts including 19 announcements, five unit openings, six discussion boards, and five assignment overviews. These artifacts were collected and observed for instances of technology use and then coded on how the instructor's use positioned the learner. Extensive notes were taken on how each artifact was saved, organized, and reviewed so that further research can be conducted on other cases and data sources (e.g., interview, survey, etc.). First, each artifact was reviewed for the usage of technology, then grouped by two categories: those provided by the University's LMS (e.g., announcements, discussion boards, and VoiceThread) and technology

not offered by the LMS (e.g., hyperlinks and Screencastify®). Finally, each instance of tool

integration was coded using the frameworks described below.

Data were analyzed using the data analysis spiral (Creswell & Poth, 2017) of managing,

reading and memoing, classifying and interpreting, and representing and visualizing. Each

artifact was coded using the level of technology use and engagement from the SAMR

(Puentedura, 2013), PICRAT (Kimmons, 2016), and BDT (Churches, 2008) frameworks (see

Table 1).

Table 1. Framework Types and Focus

Framework	Criteria	Model Type	Focus	Apex
SAMR	Four	Linear-like	Level of technology integration	Redefinition/Transformation
PICRART	Six	Liner-like	Student interaction/ Teacher instruction	Create/Higher-order thinking
Bloom's	Nine	Matrix/ Quadrants	Student thinking	Creative Transformation

Points to Consider

Given that this was an exploratory investigation intended to gain insight on how to

conduct future research for dissertation work, all the analysis was conducted by the lead author.

Additionally, this exploratory study was confined to the documents within one archived course;

therefore, no student or teacher interviews were conducted. As a result, neither student nor

teacher perceptions of the instructor's use of technology were taken into account.

Observations

The following is a rich description of the observations from the examination of each artifact. The observations are organized by tool (see Table 2). First, a description of the tool is provided, followed by the number of instances and use of each technology tool. Lastly, the coding results are shared to address the research question, *How does the instructor's use of technology tools position the learner in an online learning environment*?

Table 2. Artifact Observations

Tool/Activity	LMS Tool	Total	SAMR Level	PICRAT Level	Bloom's Level
Announcements	Yes	19	Substitution	Passive Amplify	Lower Order
Discussion Boards/Units	Yes	5	Substitution	Creative Amplify	Higher Order
Discussion Board/Tool Talk	Yes	1	Substitution	Creative Amplify	Lower Order
Hyperlinks	No	47	Modification	Interactive Amplify	Lower Order
Screencastify®	No	2	Modification	Interactive Amplify	Lower Order
VT/Audio Chats	Yes	2	Substitution	Creative Amplify	Higher Order
VT/Introduction	Yes	1	Substitution	Creative Replace	Higher Order
VT/Tool Talk	Yes	1	Substitution	Creative Replace	Higher Order

Announcements

The instructor used announcements as a way to convey information to the students. Announcements can be sent to students in two ways, either as an announcement or as an announcement via email. Announcements sent as emails are sent to students' school email accounts and are visible in both their email inbox and the announcement tab in the LMS. Announcements not sent as an email are only visible in the announcement tab once the student has logged in to the LMS. Further, the instructor can choose to attach an internal link to a specific location or tool (e.g., unit folder, discussion board, etc.) provided in the course to the announcement. For example, when reminding students about an assignment, the instructor may choose to provide a link to the assignment folder that contains the assignment overview and

rubric. Students can click the link in the announcement to go directly to the folder. Internal links are only visible to students in the announcement tab when logged in to the LMS. There were 19 total announcements shared during the semester. Of the 19 announcements, 13 included a direct link to a location/tool in eCampus and were sent as an email. Four included a link but were not sent as an email. Only two announcements did not include a link and were sent as an email.

Each announcement was coded using each of the frameworks highlighted in Table 1. Announcements were coded as substitution (SAMR), passive amplify (PICRAT), and lower-order thinking (Bloom's) (see Figure 2). The use of announcements in this course, replaced face-to-face and/or written communication. The student interaction with the tool is passive; the instructor's use of technology improves the efficiency of the communication by adding new functions to the task as email and/or link. Students engage in the lower-order thinking skills of recall, remember, and locate. The additional layer of technology enhances the level of student engagement and amplifies the functionality of the announcement. Simply adding the layer of email or the layers of email and link to the announcement amplifies the functionality of the tool.

Discussion Boards

There were a total of six discussion boards used throughout the course. Each unit included a discussion board assignment in which students participated in a discussion specific to the content in that unit. In addition to the discussion boards in units 1-5, an additional discussion board thread was created to share the student created flyers from the *Tool Talk* assignment. The discussion board threads in units 1-5 were coded together while the *Tool Talk* discussion board was coded separately. Units 1-5 discussion boards were coded as substitution (SAMR), create amplifies (PICRAT), and higher-order thinking (Bloom's). The discussion board replaces face-to-face whole/small group discussions. The discussion boards require students to create an original post and the instructor's intentional placement of a hyperlink amplifies the assignment.

Students use higher-order thinking skills of synthesize, and analyze to create an original post and

evaluate to provide feedback to peer posts.

The *Tool Talk* discussion board was coded as substitution (SAMR), passive replaces

(PICRAT) and lower-order thinking (Bloom's). This use of the discussion board served as a way

to display student work (substitution). Students use of the discussion board was as a passive

consumer as the teacher is using this platform to replace a bulletin board or method of displaying

student work. Students utilize lower-order thinking skills of recall and locate to share the flyer.

Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks were embedded in many of the course artifacts. For the purposes of this study,

a *hyperlink* is defined as a link embedded in a file or document that links to another location or

file activated by clicking on a URL or designated text. While the LMS allows for the creation of

a hyperlink, the hyperlink and its destination are not provided by the LMS. Hyperlinks were

added to unit overviews for content delivery, discussion boards, and assignment overviews. A

total of 47 hyperlinks were used throughout the course. The frequency of the hyperlinks can be

analyzed in two ways; the number of instances hyperlinks were utilized across the artifacts and

where the link directed the user.

Hyperlinks were utilized a total of 31 instances across units 1-5. Units 2 and 3 had the

highest number of occurrences with 11 each, while units 1, 4, and 5 had two, four, and three

occurrences respectively. The remaining 16 hyperlinks were used in assignment overviews. Of

the 47 links, 14 links directed users to additional readings in the form of PDFs; 15 links were

connected to videos; nine links took users to a website; five links opened an instructor created

PowerPoint; two links routed users to blog posts; and an infographic and podcast were each

linked once. This information illustrates that units 2 and 3 are content-driven, while Unit 1

(getting started activities/introduction) is activity based and Units 4 and 5 are application-driven.

The hyperlinks were coded as one item, modification (SAMR), interactive amplifies (PICRAT), and lower-order thinking (Bloom's). The use of hyperlinks modifies the student experience by allowing the user to interact with the content. Student use of the hyperlink is interactive and the teacher is using this technology to facilitate and enhance understanding by using a variety of ways to deliver and interact with content. The use of hyperlinks requires students to use the lower-order thinking skills of locate and find.

Screencastify

Screencastify® is one of two tools utilized by the instructor that was not provided by the LMS. Screencastify® is a tool that enables users to record his/her screen with voiceover that can be edited and shared via a link. The instructor created and shared two screencasts to provide additional directions on the use of VoiceThread (VT) for three assignments (introduction, audio chats, and *Tool Talk*). Both instances were coded together as modification (SAMR), interactive amplifies (PICRAT), and lower-order thinking skills (Bloom's). Through the use of Screencastify®, the instructor was able to provide step-by-step directions (both visually and orally) to enhance functionality of the technology being used in the assignment. Students were able to interact as an engaged consumer using the playback, stop, and pause video features. The instructor's use amplifies the efficiency and effectiveness of the tool used in the assignment by adding new functions to the task. Students use the lower order thinking skills of locate and recall when using Screencastify®.

Both hyperlinks and Screencastify® serve as an example of how student interaction does not necessarily correlate to higher order thinking. For example, when examining the use of hyperlinks, student interaction was observed. The hyperlinks enhance student learning by allowing them to actively engage with the content in a variety of ways (PDFs, websites, blogs, etc.). Likewise, the use of Screencastify® amplifies functionality and increases student

interaction through the playback features. However, in both uses, students were consumers of the content and engaged in LOTS.

VoiceThread

VoiceThread (VT) is a communication tool offered by the course LMS that allows users to create, share, and comment on videos, documents, PowerPoint presentations, etc. VT was utilized four times throughout the course. In unit 1, VT was used for introductions; in units 2 and 4 students participated in small group, asynchronous audio chats; and in unit 5, students used VT to present and provide feedback on the *Tool Talk* assignment. VT use in unit 1 and 5 were coded separately while unit 2 and 4 were coded together.

Student introductions were coded as substitution (SAMR), creative replace (PICRAT) and higher-order thinking (Bloom's). VT replaces small group, face-to face introductions. Students use VT to create an original post to introduce themselves to the instructor and their peers. The instructor utilizes VT to replace first day introductions in the classroom. Students utilize the higher-order thinking skill of create when developing an original video to share. For the small group audio chats, VT use was coded as substitution (SAMR), creative amplify (PICRAT), and higher order thinking (Bloom's). The use of VT for audio chats replaces small group, face-to-face discussions. Students use VT to create an initial video post to share based on the units' content. The teacher uses VT to amplify student learning through video and audio feedback. The use of VT for the *Tool Talk* assignment was coded as substitution (SAMR), creative amplify (PICRAT), and higher order thinking (Bloom's). In this instance, VT was utilized to replace a face-to-face presentation. The student is creator and producer of the flyer and presentation. The teacher's use amplifies student engagement through video and audio feedback. To complete this assignment, students utilize the higher order thinking skills of analyze, synthesize, and evaluate to create the flyer, presentation and provide peer feedback.

Considerations for Future Work

      This exploratory study has focused the direction of my dissertation work and brought up some important questions. Based on this process and the observations, I plan to consider the following when conducting future research. First, the instructor's use or design of the course structure and content (including assignments) directly impacts the position of the learner as seen in the multiple uses of technology tools throughout this case. This can be seen through the different levels of integration (SAMR), cognitive skills (BDT), and pedagogical practices (PICRAT). Had there been no impact, there would not be observed differences among the tools used (announcements, discussion boards, hyperlinks, Screencastify ®, and VT) across the different artifacts (announcements, unit openings, discussion boards, and assignment overviews). Therefore, the desired position of the learner should be taken into consideration when designing the course structure and content through the use of frameworks such as SAMR (Puentedura, 2013), PICRAT (Kimmons, 2016), and BDT (Churches, 2008).

      Given the impact of active learning and higher order thinking skills on student learning, it is important to continue to research how the instructor's design and facilitation of an online course positions the learner at these two levels. Based on this, I plan to narrow the scope of my research to these two topics. I feel that instructors need to create tasks that target HOTS (BDT) as well as design tasks which impact student learning through strong pedagogical practices (PICRAT). Therefore, I plan to continue the use of the PICRAT (Kimmons, 2016) Matrix and BDT (Churches, 2008) to target this particular research. While SAMR (Puentedura, 2013) is an important and effective tool to use for technology integration, it does not specifically target my current research question.

A second consideration, teacher presence (Garrison et al., 2000), is the crux of technology integration. The instances of technology use in which students utilize HOTS and are active in their learning were instances in which learners use the tools to communicate and interact with one another because of instructional design. It is through intentional and purposeful integration of technology that the optimal learning environment is created. To further investigate this phenomenon, I plan to conduct teacher interviews to gain insight of the teachers' perspectives in their use of ,and intent for, the technology being utilized.

A third consideration is exploring the use of LMS tools to answer the following questions, are instructors limiting the impact of technology when using only the tools provided by the LMS? Is it practical to use other technology tools to deliver content? Is it practical to ask learners to use other tools/programs outside of the university supported technology to complete assignments? It is because of this pilot study work that I was able to realize these three important aspects of how teachers' instructional design impacts their students' learning in a literacy education course. I will continue to explore how the instructor's design and facilitation of an online course positions the learner.

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Refocusing on Writing Instruction: Navigating the 2017 ILA Standards for Literacy

Professionals

Adam R. Brieske-Ulenski

Bridgewater State University

Jennifer A. Manak

Rollins College

Introduction

With the influx of new ways to communicate through texts, tweets, blogs, email, and social media, it is more important than ever for today's students to be prepared to engage in writing, broadly defined. Within the International Literacy Association (ILA) 2017 Standards for Literacy Professionals (ILA, 2018), there is a shifted emphasis on a broader range of literacy skills including writing, new literacies, content area literacies, and the integration of literacy processes. These new standards will impact the preparation and development of reading specialists by further emphasizing the need to support writing instruction and develop students' wide-ranging writing proficiencies. This article highlights the key shifts in the standards toward increased attention to writing and provides suggestions for how this will influence the preparation and professional development of reading specialists.

Historical Background

In 2003, The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges emphasized every teacher's responsibility for delivering writing instruction and highlighted the need for teacher professional development in this area. Moreover, the same commission doubled the amount of time students should spend writing at school. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reiterated the need for high-quality teacher training and professional development in literacy practices while also emphasizing the need for literacy specialists to provide support for struggling and at-risk readers and writers (IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). Since then, reading specialists' roles have become more ambiguous (DiMeglio & Mangin, 2010; Kissel, Mraz, Algozzine, & Stover, 2011). Reading specialists' role vary widely such as those that support classroom teachers in delivering

effective literacy instruction for all students while balancing the need to provide intensive

intervention to struggling readers and writers.

Previous research shows how challenging it is to explicitly define the role of the reading

specialist. For example, reading specialists have been viewed as being school leaders, as well as

faculty that support data analysis, diagnose and provide interventions, and act as change agents

(Galloway & Lesaux, 2014). Galloway and Lesaux (2014) concluded that a lack of consensus

surrounding the role of the reading specialist "presents a professional dilemma" (2014, p. 518).

This level of uncertainty surrounding the reading specialist's role persisted despite efforts by

ILA to bring some clarity to the role with their release of the 2010 Standards for Reading

Professionals (ILA, 2010). However, the former standards combined the reading specialist and

literacy/reading coach roles into one set of standards. As a result, this may have added more

confusion than clarity surrounding the role of the reading specialist.

There were six standards for the reading specialist/ literacy coach role in the previous

2010 ILA Standards for Reading Professionals (ILA, 2010). In the 2010 standards, reading

specialist/ literacy coaches were expected to analyze the environment in the classroom for

reading and writing motivation, support cross-grade level collaboration in developing reading

and writing curriculum, develop and deliver professional development for instructional practices,

and analyze data as seen through the language in the various standards (ILA, 2010). Since then,

ILA published a new set of standards for reading specialists. The new standards separate the role

of the reading specialist from that of the literacy coach. As such, much of the language

surrounding the role of the reading specialist, as stated above in the previous standards, has been

adjusted in the new standards. For example, in the new standards there is a lack of explicit

language for analyzing the classroom environment, developing and leading whole-school

professional development, and developing whole-school structures for cross grade level

collaboration. Instead, much of this can now be found in the new ILA standards for literacy

coaches. Thus, it can reasonably be assumed that the new ILA 2017 Standards for Literacy

Professionals (ILA, 2018) provide clearer roles and responsibilities for the reading specialist

position than the previous set of standards.

Larger Shifts in Reading Specialist Role

Most recently, the role of the reading specialist has been defined by the ILA 2017

Standards for Literacy Professionals as "an instructional one, with the reading/literacy specialist

working predominantly with students who are experiencing difficulties with reading and writing"

(ILA, 2018, p. 3). Furthermore, the new set of standards explicitly state the level of emphasis

that a reading specialist should have in their role with students, teachers, and systems. In this

new set of standards, ILA left little room for interpretation when illustrating the reading

specialist role as the one with the largest emphasis on working with students (ILA, 2018). In

addition, the revised standards place less emphasis on reading specialists working with teachers

and an even further reduced focus on working with systems (ILA, 2018).

With an emphasis on working with students, specialists need to address their reading

needs and have a renewed attention toward supporting their writing proficiency (ILA, 2018).

Writing curriculum and instruction is directly stated as well as implied throughout the standards'

components (ILA, 2018). As such, reading specialists will need professional development

related to the new ILA standards, specifically when the standards call for supporting struggling

writers. This suggests that current reading specialists may need to shift the focus of their work to

one that spends more time supporting students. This would require additional learning

opportunities around the new standards for the reading specialist, the literacy coach, and

administrators.

What the ILA 2017 Standards Say About Writing

The 2017 ILA Standards provide guidance to current and pre-service reading specialists

regarding their roles and responsibilities. For example, ILA suggests that reading specialists

should provide instruction to scaffold struggling students' writing development in addition to

supporting classroom writing instruction. At first glance, writing is not a topic explicitly stated

within each standard nor in each of the standards' components. At times, the reader must delve

deeper into the new standards by reading the descriptions of each standard's components. It is in

these descriptions where the reader can find further evidence of how the reading specialist may

address the topic of writing within their role. While some standards do explicitly include writing

within the standard or component themselves, we encourage our readers to seek information

beyond the surface level of the standards document and read into the descriptors of each

component.

As we reviewed the 2017 ILA Standards for evidence of a reading specialist's role in

supporting and addressing writing instruction, we examined the language of each standard, the

components within the standard, and the descriptions of the components. Below we offer

insights into each standard regarding the reading specialist's role in writing instruction and the

implications for their preparation and professional development.

Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge

In this standard, Foundational Knowledge, reading specialists are expected to have an

understanding of the foundations for writing instruction and writing processes. For example,

component two of this standard explicitly calls for reading specialists to "demonstrate knowledge

of the major theoretical, conceptual, historical, and evidence-based aspects of writing

development, writing processes" (ILA, 2018, p. 34). Explicit language such as this highlights

the need for reading specialists to have content knowledge about how writing develops from the

early ages to proficiency in the later ages.

Bean, Cassidy, Grumet, Shelton, and Wallis (2002) highlighted the shifting role of a

reading specialist toward supporting in-class instruction. As such, a reading specialist would

need to be knowledgeable about the ways in which writers write and their processes. This may

include the components and implementation of a writer's workshop or the iterative process of

writing. Graham, Harris, and Mason (2005) noted that the writer's workshop framework is a

commonly used structure for engaging students in the writing process. Current and future

reading specialists are expected to have a strong foundational knowledge of what writing

instruction, for instance in a writing workshop, looks like and how writing acquisition develops

across the years.

Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Within the Curriculum and Instruction standard, reading specialists are expected to

design, implement, and evaluate writing curricula, instruction, and materials integrated across the

content areas texts while being responsive to the needs of their diverse learners. This standard

emphasizes reading specialists' roles across content areas and within the traditional literacy

block, often 90-120 minutes set aside in schools for literacy instruction integrating the language

arts and incorporating a variety of instructional practices. Within the literacy block and beyond,

reading specialists must be knowledgeable of how to differentiate writing instruction.

Additionally, they must support the reading and writing of narrative and informational texts

across the academic disciplines. For instance, standard 2.2 requires specialists to be aware of

how the reading and discussion of informational texts during science instruction could be

capitalized upon as models for students' writing of informational texts during the literacy block.

Reading specialists must have the ability to find texts at students' appropriate reading levels and

be able to scaffold writers in authentic, meaningful writing assignments that demonstrate their

abilities as writers. In order to support struggling students in various academic settings,

specialists are also expected to "select, adapt, teach, and evaluate evidence-based, supplemental,

and intervention approaches and programs" that will support classroom writing instruction (ILA,

2018, p. 36). This highlights the need for reading specialists and classroom teachers to work

collaboratively in determining the curriculum and instruction that best meets the needs of their

diverse writers.

Standard 3: Assessment and Evaluation

The reading specialist role for supporting writing instruction and struggling writers in the

classroom does not appear explicitly at the surface level of standard three or the components.

The reader must read the descriptions of the components to find a discussion that addresses

writing. For instance, the description for standard 3.2 states, "candidates administer and analyze

multiple sources of data (e.g., assessments, writing artifacts, student self-assessments, work

samples, classroom observation, parent interviews)" (ILA, 2018, p. 37). Based on this

description, the reading specialist role is intended to guide and support the analysis of student

writing across the grade levels.

Calkins and Ehrenworth (2016) explained that a way to support writing across the grade

levels is for the reading specialist to meet with teams of teachers to define the expectations for

writing and to analyze student writing with "shared lenses" (p.11). As such, reading specialists

take on a collaborative leadership role with their classroom teacher colleagues in facilitating the

analysis of student writing data based on their shared expectations for students. Furthermore,

Calkins and Enrhenworth (2016) discussed the importance of analyzing students' writing data

within and across grades as a way of lifting writing instruction in a school. These vertical and

horizontal grade-level meetings in collaboration with reading specialists intentionally scaffold

the trajectory of student writing skills from the primary to intermediate grades. This

collaboration would develop a shared understanding of students' writing expectations when

entering and exiting each grade level. In addition, this understanding would enhance a reading

specialist's ability to develop students' writing proficiency as they worked with students across

the grade levels.

Standard 4: Diversity and Equity

While not explicitly addressing writing, the Diversity and Equity standard emphasizes the

need for reading specialists to be knowledgeable of culturally responsive literacy instruction.

Culturally responsive literacy instruction fosters culturally and linguistically diverse students to

become successful readers and writers by building upon their existing strengths while addressing

issues of culture and language (Au, 2009; Beaulieu, 2002). Furthermore, culturally responsive

literacy instruction promotes high achievement among students from diverse cultural and

linguistic backgrounds (Delpit, 1995/2006; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

In order to motivate and engage all writers, specialists are expected to be familiar with

ways to embrace students' linguistically and culturally diverse experiences within the writing

classroom. In addition, this requires reading specialists to create curriculum that values diversity

and students' funds of knowledge to enrich their literacy learning. This may include being

knowledgeable of culturally authentic children's literature that reflects students' language,

culture, and life experience that students can view as mirrors of their own lives (Bishop, 1990) as well as models for their own writing. In order for reading specialists to most effectively work with diverse students and develop culturally and linguistically relevant instruction, they must develop a culturally diverse knowledge base and be aware of their own identities, privilege, and biases (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Culturally responsive teachers focus on developing self-awareness by reflecting upon their own social locations and how these identities have influenced their experiences of power and privilege. Since unconscious bias undermines students' success as readers and writers, reading specialists must be aware of their personal biases and learn how to intentionally act in ways that maintain high expectations for all students thus limiting their impact on students. Furthermore, reading specialists design writing instruction that bridges the gap between students' school and home worlds and adapts instruction to meet all writers' needs (Algozzine, O'Shea, & Obiakor, 2009; Gay, 2000). Overall, this standard urges reading specialists to be advocates for diversity and social justice. Additionally, standard four empowers reading specialists to convey to their students that their words and experiences matter and need to be written and shared.

Standard 5: Learners and the Literacy Environment

The fifth standard in the ILA standards focuses on Learners and the Literacy Environment. Again, the reader will need to move beyond the language in the standard and component by reading the description of the components. Writing is emphasized for the reading specialist in the description for standard 5.2. The description states that reading specialists should "integrate literacy pedagogy and content knowledge with technology-enabled learning principles to expand opportunities for reading, writing, and collaboration" (ILA, 2018, p. 39). In order to enhance the writing environment, reading specialists are encouraged to use a variety of

digital tools when engaging with students in the writing process. For instance, students could

use digital tools during the prewriting process as they conduct research on their topics, as they

select and use apps to support and enhance informational writing with various text features, and

to share their writing with a wider audience (Beschorner & Hall, 2017). Furthermore, reading

specialists would want to strategically use the same digital tools in their intervention that

classroom teachers use during their writing instruction. Bean et al. (2002) emphasized that

instruction provided by reading specialists should be more congruent with that provided by the

classroom teacher. This would require the reading specialist and the classroom teacher to

collaborate on developing instruction that incorporates digital tools for writing that occurs in and

outside of the classroom.

Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership

Inherent within standard six, reading specialists are expected to be committed to

continual professional development, leadership, and reflection as they create supportive

instructional contexts for writing, engage with diverse writers, and lead the development and

implementation of differentiated writing curriculum and instruction. Specialists are asked to be

"critical consumers of research, policy, and practice" (ILA, 2018, p. 58) who seek out recent

research supporting writing instruction within inclusive classrooms. Further, reading specialists

must also ensure that students' production and distribution of written texts in various genres for

multiple purposes are aligned with the state standards. While standard 6 does not explicitly

include writing within the standard, the second component of the standard emphasizes that

reading specialists must, "engage in collaborative decision making with colleagues to design,

align, and assess instructional practices and interventions within and across the curriculum"

(ILA, 2018, p.40).

Reading specialists need to be their own agents of learning as well as collaborate with teacher colleagues to improve student learning. Professional development, often led by reading specialists, provides teachers with a system of supports to work collaboratively with colleagues to examine, understand, and reflect upon their curriculum, instructional practices, and their students' progress (McCarthy & Woodard, 2018; Peck, 2010). When teachers are provided with support and high-quality professional development focused on writing instruction, they are more comfortable critically analyzing and adapting a writing curriculum (McCarthy & Woodard, 2018). Teachers and reading specialists must regularly engage in collaborative, professional discussions regarding their students' progress. These discussions would include the differentiation of instruction and ensure that instruction provided during intervention complements the students' classroom writing instruction. Effective writing instruction flourishes in schools where teachers engage with specialists in a variety of professional development opportunities and share instructional practices to best support their students' writing.

Implications

In December of 2019, literacy professors, literacy coaches, and K-12 administrators discussed the role of reading specialists during writing instruction and intervention as seen through the new ILA standards. Our conversation led to suggestions for how reading specialists can be supported and further prepared as they take on the new standards with an increased emphasis on writing and writing instruction. In the next section, we share our ideas as they relate to reading specialists and how school districts and administrators along with those in higher education can support pre-service and in-service reading specialists during this transition.

Suggestions for Reading Specialists

In order to support reading specialists in providing writing interventions that complement and support students' classroom instruction, specialists must align their work with the classroom teacher. Thus, it would make sense that the intervention curriculum would be similar if not the same as the one that the classroom teacher is implementing in the classroom. As such, using similar instructional frameworks and curricular materials would allow for the smoothest transition for students between their writing in the classroom and during their intervention session. Furthermore, this would build coherence in instruction for the students so they would view their learning in both settings as building upon one another.

Additionally, reading specialists should integrate the writing intervention process, as much as possible, within the grade-level classroom instruction as a means of reinforcing and promoting struggling students' writing acquisition and development. Incorporating intervention within the grade-level classroom reinforces the prior suggestion of aligning the instruction and curriculum by teaching in a common setting with similar materials. This inclusive, push-in model of intervention welcomes on-going collaborative co-planning and possible co-teaching between the classroom teacher and the reading specialist during writing instruction. The teacher and reading specialist can utilize students' conversations, including explanations and descriptions, as a way to develop the ideas and details in their writing.

As seen through the new ILA standards, specialists need to support the use and development of language as a means of supporting writing development. A richer, more developed understanding of language, vocabulary, and nuances within the English language will serve as a scaffold for the writer as they engage in writing. In addition, as students are provided opportunities to engage in oral discussions about their ideas, they will be able to compose more

well-developed writing that includes a variety of details. As such, it would be necessary for the specialist to support classroom teachers in implementing classroom discussions that foster language development as a means of scaffolding the writer and the student's writing.

Suggestions for School Districts and Administrators

When transitioning to the new ILA Standards, school districts and administrators can establish structures that provide time for colleagues to collaboratively develop their own professional repertoire for teaching struggling writers and supporting writing instruction. For instance, district and building level administrators can identify time for the reading specialists and classroom teachers to collaborate on lesson planning for writing instruction, analyze writing data, and reflect on writing curriculum and instruction. While reading specialists may regularly work alongside classroom teachers, there are a variety of other collaborative, mentoring opportunities between colleagues that could be leveraged. For instance, literacy coaches could mentor reading specialists in applying effective differentiated writing instruction during intervention sessions and model how to best support the classroom teacher by providing complimentary writing instruction that supports classroom instruction during intervention. This is just one example of how administrators can develop a system of mentors. More experienced teachers of writing could serve as mentors for other classroom teachers as well as model lessons for their colleagues as part of a lesson study. Although this would require scaffolding from the reading specialist and literacy coach, it lends itself to growing literacy leaders and the literacy capacity in a school for writing instruction. Building instructional capacity is an effective way of raising student literacy achievement.

School districts and administrators can support reading specialists' implementation of writing instruction by explicitly emphasizing the need to incorporate more writing with reading

during the intervention. Districts and school building administrators need to communicate that

professional development for reading specialists will include developing additional knowledge

regarding the writing process, writing acquisition and development, and assessments needed to

address the needs of all writers. Administrators must emphasize the importance of writing and

demonstrate this focus as part of the school's culture. This can be achieved by celebrating

student writing through displays, writing celebrations or publishing parties, and allocating

funding to support professional development for writing instruction.

      High-quality professional development focusing on writing instruction is necessary to

support reading specialists and teachers as they collaborate to support their diverse writers.

Administrators enhance literacy instruction and student success when they are committed to

professional development and are knowledgeable of effective literacy practices (Peck, 2010).

Administrators can be change agents at their schools by leading the way for embedding the

importance of writing instruction in their words, actions, and budgets. By aligning district and

school-level actions to the writing needs of students, everyone will have opportunities to grow

and learn.

Suggestions for Higher Education

      Educator preparatory programs for reading specialists should consider ways to revise

their current programs to integrate the new ILA standards. This would require graduate degree

programs in literacy to incorporate feedback from K-12 practitioners that reflect desired

experiences and skill sets needed for reading specialists within their revised roles. For example,

future reading specialists need a field-based experience applying the theories, instructional

strategies, and methodologies including writing instruction and assessment, diversity and equity,

technology, and culturally and linguistically appropriate practices. Modeling must occur as a

way of apprenticing future reading specialists with the skills and tools needed for incorporating

the ILA standards in their work, especially with regards to writing instruction and assessment.

The new standards call for a renewed focus on writing. As such, faculty in educator preparation

and graduate reading programs would want to revisit their courses to determine where and how

writing should be included from theoretical, pedagogical, and assessment-based viewpoints

throughout their program. Upon close examination of the new ILA standards, including their

components and descriptions, faculty may consider revising courses, assignments, and

presentations to better address writing including writing instruction, writing across the

curriculum, writing with a critical lens, and writing assessments to better prepare reading

specialists for the tasks they will take on in their schools and districts. This review by faculty

should help prepare future reading specialists in their work supporting classroom teachers and

delivering writing interventions that complement classroom instruction.

　　　In addition to reviewing a graduate program to address writing instruction and

assessment, faculty will want to conduct an additional review of their program to address the

topics of technology, media literacy, digital literacy, multimodal text, and culturally responsive

instruction that appears in the standards for reading specialists. Additionally, faculty should

review their programs to include topics and assignments that support future reading specialists in

developing culturally responsive writing instruction. The language in the new set of standards

provides faculty with a vision for how this may look as part of a presentation or in assignments

that engage future reading specialists with the various technological tools and practice culturally

responsive writing instruction to support writing and writing assessment.

Summary

In many ways, the new ILA standards offer us the opportunity to revisit our graduate preparatory programs, in-service training, and address new ways of supporting and developing reading specialists as they further engage in analyzing, developing, and implementing writing instruction. By revising the standards for reading specialists with more of an emphasis on writing instruction, ILA has provided clarity to the role that should be taken into account when revising programs and offering professional development for reading specialists. Through careful examination of the ILA standards and suggestions for supporting in-service and pre-service reading specialists that were offered in this article, all reading specialists can be better prepared for the tasks and roles specifically addressing writing that they will take on in their educational settings.

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Teachers as Writers: Engaging in a Writing Marathon to Reclaim the Neglected R

Tamra W. Ogletree, Jennifer K. Allen, Robert A. Griffin, and Bethany L. Scullin

University of West Georgia

Abstract

Educators need to experience the transformative power of writing in order to convey their passion for writing and inspire their students to be writers. A writing marathon empowers educators and students by providing time for self-selected writing without fear of judgment. In this article, we walk readers through the history and educational importance of writing marathons, describe the steps and procedures for implementing a writing marathon, and share what a writing marathon might look like in a variety of contexts. Our goal is to inform educators about the writing marathon, a non-threatening writing experience that can help teachers develop their own voices as writers as well as encourage the development of student voices.

Keywords: writing marathon, authentic writing, teacher and student empowerment, teacher-as-writer mindset

Teachers as Writers: Engaging in a Writing Marathon to Reclaim the Neglected R

A group of teachers gathers together with notebooks or computers in hand. They are outside, and the day is bright and beautiful. The smell of salty ocean air breezes by. Multicolored cabanas and beach chairs pepper the sandy shore. Seagulls squawk and dive all around, tempting writers to notice them. The setting is ideal for a writing marathon.

A facilitator encourages the writers to turn to one another and say, "I am a writer." Then, the facilitator invites the writers to break into groups of three or four and choose three nearby places they would like to visit. Groups of writers will stay at each location for about half an hour, absorb their surroundings, write, and then share. After all groups have decided where they will go, the facilitator reminds the writers to remember that the writing marathon on which they are about to embark is about the writer and the writing. There are no rules to this writing marathon experience; participants are just to be in the moment and write.

The facilitator reads a short passage of inspiration and then instructs the groups to be back in two hours to debrief and share some of their writing with the whole group. As the groups depart for their first destination, the facilitator overhears a participant remark, "This is so different than I had thought it would be. I did not know a writing marathon would be without writing prompts and we would have a voice in where we go and what we wish to write. I think I will like this."

This vignette depicts what occurred during the writing marathon session at the American Reading Forum annual conference in Sanibel Island and sets the stage for the possibilities that an authentic writing experience, such as this one, can offer writers. The purpose of this article is to (re)introduce teachers and teacher educators to the authentic writing experience, known as a writing marathon, which promotes the joy of writing by giving writers the time and freedom to

write what matters to them. Many times we, as teachers and teacher educators, become bogged down with teaching, grading, preparing lessons, going to meetings, etc. that we lose the joy of simply writing for pleasure. Sometimes we just need permission to write just for the sake of writing without fear of judgment.

This article will share information about writing marathons (Goldberg, 2005), walk the reader through the history and educational importance of writing marathons, describe the steps and procedures for implementing a writing marathon, and share what a writing marathon might look like in a variety of contexts. Our goal is to help develop the teacher-as-writer mindset and inform educators about a non-threatening writing experience that will help them develop their own voices as writers as well as encourage the development of student voices.

What is a Writing Marathon?

The writing marathon was conceptualized by Natalie Goldberg (2005), who was inspired by American author Ernest Hemingway's (1964/2010) *A Moveable Feast*, a memoir in which he shares his observations and experiences as a struggling young migrant journalist and writer in Paris in the 1920s. The writing marathon was later developed at the New Orleans site of the National Writing Project (NWP; Louth, 2010; Louth, 2015) and has become a consistent and transformative experience at many NWP sites. A writing marathon is not complex—it is about giving writers the freedom to be inspired by their surroundings and select topics that are meaningful to them in the moment. Participants experience how writing and sharing "in the world" (Louth, 2015, p. 6) not only affects their writing, but also their sense of place and self.

Writing "must be personally experienced to be understood" (Smith, 1994, p. ix), that is teachers need to experience the power of writing before they are able to teach writing effectively (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 2003; Murray, 2004; Murray, 2005). As writers are exposed to a stress-

free environment in which they can freely engage in autonomous writing of all types, their

inhibitions naturally fall away (Fletcher, 2017; Smith, 1994). Writing marathons help educators

revitalize their instructional repertoire, (re)build their own writerly identities, and rekindle their

students' passion for writing (Woodard, 2019).

Educational Importance of Writing Marathons

School districts have traditionally neglected to provide authentic professional learning in

writing instruction for educators (Philippakos & Moore, 2017), and much of the writing that

occurs in P–12 schools is focused on preparing students for success on standardized tests

(Calkins et al., 2012). As such, teachers and students have become frustrated by this prescriptive

and formulaic approach to writing instruction, and their creative selves have been suppressed by

the onslaught of these one-size-fits-all approaches to writing and writing instruction. Writing

marathons provide an escape from the prescriptive and test-centered kind of writing that

permeates today's classrooms and gives teachers and students an opportunity to connect with

writing in a way that promotes creative thinking and enjoyment. Thus, writing marathons are

beneficial because they help teachers (re)connect with writing, promote student engagement with

writing, and create a writerly community.

Writing Marathons Develop a Teacher-as-Writer Mindset

Experts agree that the best teachers of writing are writers themselves (Calkins, 1994;

Graves, 2003; Murray, 2004; Murray, 2005). When teachers do not see themselves as writers,

they can feel hesitant about their abilities to teach writing (Calkins & Ehrenworth, 2016).

Teaching writing is complex as teachers are tasked with making the internalized processes of

writing visible to students (Morgan & Pytash, 2014). Students benefit from the insight they gain

from seeing their teachers select their own meaningful writing topics for authentic purposes and

work through the often messy process of writing.

Teachers who write become experts on the writing process and how it should be taught

(Calkins et al., 2012; Gillespie, 1985). Whitney et al. (2014) discuss the idea of teacher-writers

and how teachers who write increase their knowledge of writing and resultantly improve their

teaching practice. In other words, teachers who are close to the experience of writing gain a

deeper understanding of writing itself as well as expert knowledge of writing pedagogy, which

helps them make more informed instructional decisions because of their first-hand knowledge of

and experience with writing (Morgan & Pytash, 2014).

When teachers experience the possibilities that writing has to offer, they are more

credible teachers of writing who can invite students to experience those possibilities alongside

them (Whitney et al., 2014). The first-hand successes and challenges teachers experience in

writing help them better know and support their students as they compose and revise (Brooks,

2007). Thus, when teachers view themselves as writers and engage in the act of writing, they are

able to sharpen their writing pedagogy by wrapping their teaching around truths they discover

about writing through experiencing writing themselves. Writing marathons can encourage

teachers to reconnect with themselves as writers, inspiring them to provide their students with

quality instruction and meaningful opportunities to write.

Writing Marathons Promote Student Engagement with Writing

The current focus on writing forms assessed through standardized testing has resulted in a

narrowing of writing instruction (Creely & Diamond, 2018). The tendency to lean more heavily

in the direction of prescribed and formulaic writing has left students experiencing less choice in

writing and seeing writing as irrelevant work (Fletcher, 2017). Assigning assessment-based

writing prompts stifles student creativity and causes students to disconnect from the joy of writing. This results in students who do not feel invested in their writing, which leads to a lack of engagement. This is problematic as there is a clear link between students being engaged with writing and the quality of literacy outcomes (Creely & Diamond, 2018). The key to increasing students' engagement with writing is to make writing meaningful and pleasurable by giving students choice in writing, providing opportunities to be creative with their writing, and helping them connect writing to things they know and care about (Calkins & Ehrenworth, 2016; Creely & Diamond, 2018.)

Consequently, one of the byproducts of the writing marathon is that it can serve as a catalyst for improving student performance on standardized writing assessments as students more fully develop their connection with writing and, thus, their identities as writers (Calkins et al., 2012). Writing is something all students can be taught to do well (Duke et al., 2018), and our goal as educators should be to develop students who are "motivated, confident writers who see writing as an everyday, useful, even enjoyable tool" (Routman, 2005, p. 4). Teachers can implement writing marathons as one way to create a community of writers who feel personally invested in their writing because they are interested in the topic and write for an enjoyable, meaningful purpose.

Writing Marathons Foster the Development of a Writing Community

Not only do writing marathons promote a teacher-as-writer mindset as well as increased student engagement with writing, but they also help to create a "responsive, literate community" of writers (Ray & Laminack, 2001, p. 36), through which writers learn from other writers, share ideas, and listen to the ideas of others. When writers work alongside one another and get support from other writers, they create a trusting community where they can be "authentic, real,

vulnerable people" (Calkins, 1994, p. 145). This safe environment helps writers feel free to take

risks, composing purposeful texts that they are willing to share with others to receive feedback

(Håland et al., 2019; Korth et al., 2017). Because "we cannot write well if we are afraid to put

ourselves on the page" (Calkins, 1994, p. 143), teachers should be intentional about building a

community of writers. When teachers write with and in front of their students and model the

writing process, students are more likely to see them as an integral member of the classroom

writing community (Graves, 1983; Zumbrunn et al., 2017). Writing marathons provide one

avenue for creating a classroom writing community where teachers and students alike feel free to

write what matters to them in a supportive, low-risk environment.

Implementation of a Writing Marathon

Having no set rules, a writing marathon can be as formal or relaxed as one wishes. The

structure and steps for implementation are straightforward (Figure 1). The setting can be

anywhere imaginable, and the time limit can be anywhere from two hours to multiple days.

Listed below are possible steps to get started, though facilitators can add or delete steps to suit

each marathon or classroom context.

Figure 1

Seven Possible Steps for Implementing a Writing Marathon

1. Gather at a predetermined meeting place and time.

2. Divide into groups of three or four and elect a timekeeper.

3. Depending on the time length of the marathon, decide on places within the area that your group will go and write. A good rule of thumb is around 30 minutes at each place. Five minutes to walk to the destination, 20 minutes to write, and 5 minutes to share.

4. Decide on a time to return to the predetermined whole-group meeting place.

5. The group facilitator reads a short piece of inspirational prose to stimulate the excitement of writing.

6. The participants turn to each other and affirm, "I am a writer."

7. The participants head to their destination.

The intent is to focus on the writer and the writing and experience enjoyment with writing. After writing for about 20 minutes at each writing marathon stopping place, the timekeeper will begin sharing what they have written. If a participant, including the timekeeper, does not wish to share, then they can simply ask to "pass." After a participant has shared, the other group members simply respond, "Thank you for sharing," with no added critique. This is a risk-free, low-stress experience, so it is not the time to share specific feedback.

Participants are encouraged to gather at places that are interesting and unique, or perhaps everyday places that they might view in a new light. In reference to the vignette at the beginning of this paper, possible places participants might choose include the poolside, beachside, a cabana, or hotel lobby; participants in a community-wide writing marathon might visit a nearby local restaurant, a coffee shop, hair salon, bookstore, or other local place of business. A university campus might offer locations such as a fountain, student center, coliseum, or dining hall, while an elementary school might offer a media center, playground, lunchroom, breezeway, or gym. The choices are endless. The writing can be about any topic and in any format. Writers should be encouraged to open all their senses. What are you seeing, smelling, feeling, tasting, etc.?

Writing Marathons in Different Contexts

Writing marathons empower teachers and students alike and can be implemented in a variety of settings. For example, one of the authors, while attending a conference, participated in a writing marathon at a nearby university campus. The participants gathered around the campus

water fountain which was a focal point at this particular institution. Groups divided and went to places such as the dining center, library, campus coffee shop, planetarium, football stadium, etc. One group even sat and wrote at the baseball stadium while a game was being played. To end the marathon, the group regathered at the water fountain. After sharing their writing, they celebrated by sitting beside the fountain and dunking their feet in the water.

Another location for a writing marathon could be at a school setting. Participants could go to places such as the empty cafeteria, stadium, band room, media center, courtyard, auditorium, gym, etc. An important note for a P–12 setting is to make sure the groups go where they will not disrupt instruction. Another would be to gain permission in advance if the room or location is usually locked. A final thing to keep in mind about P–12 campuses is that mundane, everyday locations are places where the unique can be found. Finding the unique in the mundane encourages students to live like writers as they learn to look for stories in everyday, familiar places.

Writing marathons can also take place virtually anywhere, such as at a farm, zoo, corn maze, museum, etc. One great place to have a marathon is in a small community. Two authors attend an annual writing marathon sponsored by a local National Writing Project site that incorporates a writing marathon to celebrate the National Day of Writing. It is held in October and begins and ends at the downtown amphitheater in the heart of the historic downtown. Students from the nearby university regularly attend along with families (who sometimes bring pets with them), business owners, local P–12 teachers and students, university students, writing clubs, etc. Some of the favorite places participants have visited during this community marathon have been a tattoo shop, church sanctuary, hair salon, the top of a parking deck overlooking the town square, restaurants, pool hall, shops, and bookstores. The town embraces the writers each

year and no place is off limits for the participants with the exception of private meetings. If

participants decide to go into a business, we encourage them to introduce themselves and simply

explain that they are writers and would like to observe and write. If participants are at a

restaurant and wish to eat or drink, we encourage them to do so. If participants are in an art store

and wish to purchase an item, that is encouraged as well.

Many times, the writers receive unexpected surprises. One group visiting a church

sanctuary was given a private organ performance, and then afterwards the organist joined them

in the marathon. Another group who visited the tattoo parlor was invited to look at the tattooists'

art. It turned out that he was an impressionistic oil painter. It was his dream one day to have his

art sold in galleries. Another group had their dinner paid for by an anonymous person who

witnessed them writing at a restaurant. The person saw the group writing and overheard them

sharing. The person told the cashier, "This event is fantastic. I did not know there was such a

thing as a National Day of Writing."

Closing Thoughts

Many great pieces of writing have been inspired by a writing marathon, so we will

continue promoting the idea of inviting participants to join us in exploring themselves as writers

in an inspiring setting that elicits creative thinking and leads to powerful writing. We conclude

this piece by reminding teachers and teacher educators that writing marathons can happen at any

place and at any time. They do not need to happen in a resort environment. As long as the

writing marathon promotes engagement with writing through a low-risk, supportive

environment, it will be a success. Also, because there are no rules to a marathon except to focus

on the writing and the writer, who is to say that educators could not have a spontaneous

marathon? If you are stuck in a writing fog or have writer's block, grab a couple of friends, take

pen and paper or laptop, step outside of your offices or classrooms, choose three places, and

write. Write for the sake of pleasure and for the sake of writing. Look around as if you have

never been there before. Go Write Win!

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The Integration of Bibliotherapy in the Classroom: A Literature Review

Angela Curfman & Aimee Morewood, West Virginia University

Abstract

To forge a community of learners and achieve multiple learning goals, classroom teachers have long employed children's literature. Through the usage of children's literature, critical thinking skills are fostered and factual information is obtained (Hancock, 2000). Contingent upon trends in education, the manner in which children's literature has been utilized has differed (Tunks, 2015). Varied cultures, linguistic backgrounds, families with diverse socio-economical, and academic backgrounds constitute our public school classrooms today. The role of the educator has shifted and the demand to address the social and emotional needs of each student is great (Cook, 2006). The purposeful selection and guided reading of written material, bibliotherapy, has the potential to support both the affective and cognitive domain to create an inclusive classroom setting (Morawski, 1997, 2000). The goal of this literature review is to situate the integration of bibliotherapy in the classroom.

Key Words: children's literature, diversity, bibliotherapy, developmental bibliotherapy

History of Bibliotherapy

Practitioners, educators, and philosophers have long exercised literature for various treatments, including as a means of delivering a message, telling a story, and lesson building. From ancient Greeks to the present day, storytelling has been recognized for its healing powers (Kearney, 2007). Stories and books can serve as models for development and may impact human emotions (Pehrsson, 2007). A tale as old as time, literature has the broad capacity to support both the cognitive and affective domain.

References to the therapeutic nature of literature have been declared over time and across cultures (Morawski, 2000). Similar to curriculum and instructional trends, the term *bibliotherapy* has evolved over time. In 1916, one of the first employments of the term *bibliotherapy* was recorded. *Atlantic Monthly* published an article in which Samuel McChord Crothers described the institutional prescription of reading for the therapeutic process and value (Beatty, 1962). Crothers created the term by the fusion of the Greek word for book *biblio* with *therapy* to name the beneficial value of reading for healing. Since the 19th century prescription of books, bibliotherapy has progressed to a technique utilized by mental health professions, family health counselors, social skills development, and curriculum planning for the gifted (Catalano, 2008; Morawski, 2000). Bibliotherapy may be conceptualized and summarized *as the purposeful selection to literature to address and support the affective domain, including sensitive topics and issues* (Catalano, 2008; McMillen, 2006; Morawski, 2000).

Developmental Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy is most commonly categorized into two fields of practice: clinical and developmental. Early roots defined bibliotherapy as a technique utilized by mental health professionals to support and guide clients through their problem by direct reading. This is labeled

clinical bibliotherapy with the literature as the venue in which discussion of difficult issues is

ignited or to facilitate resolution of more significant issues (Catalano, 2008). For the educator,

developmental bibliotherapy is the conceptual framework that is suggested for implementation in

the classroom. Developmental bibliotherapy can be used in the classroom where the primary

objective is to facilitate and educate students about attitudes, feelings, and behaviors. Topics may

include, but not limited to, divorce, bullying, and self-image (McMillen, 2006).

Developmental bibliotherapy can also be described as the classroom teacher using

literature to promote positive attitudes towards life's challenges (Kramer, 1998). The principal

difference between clinical bibliotherapy and developmental bibliotherapy is that educators use

developmental bibliotherapy to support their students in handling difficult and, sometimes,

sensitive issues, that may occur in everyday life; whereas clinical bibliotherapy is operated by

mental health professionals to provide a more specific and targeted intervention (Rozalski,

2010).

Children's Literature

To employ developmental bibliotherapy, educators often use children's literature.

Children's literature can be used to address difficult topics and issues by encouraging students to

make connections with characters in books; this personal connection promotes a reflection of

their own behaviors and emotions through the lens and experiences of the characters in the story

(Forgan, 2002; Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006). A variety of children's literature can be utilized in the

employment of developmental bibliotherapy. Children's literature presents a plethora of formats

and story elements, all which may evoke various responses. Picture storybooks combine the art

of storytelling balanced with illustrations and vary in content; Mother Goose stories, retellings of

traditional folktales, animal and dream fantasies, concept books, and predictable texts are

examples of picture storybooks (Russell, 2001). Folk literature, poetry, fantasy, realistic and

historical fiction, biography and informational books are additional genres that are included in

literature for children (Russell, 2001). Developmentally appropriate, juvenile fiction books,

chapter books, and picture books typically are the most utilized in developmental bibliotherapy

(Prater, 2006). Picture books provide powerful illustrations that support in the delivery of the

story elements. Juvenile fiction books and chapter books often present relatable characters with

similar conflicts, feelings, and emotions reflective of the classroom population.

The History of Children's Literature in the Classroom

How children's literature is employed in the classroom is often contingent upon trends in

education, curriculum, and instruction. In the first half of the 20th century, children's literature

was primarily utilized for story time or supplemental reading; this was a time period where the

understanding for teaching children to read primarily included phonics, controlled vocabulary, or

sight word approaches (Tunks, 2015). In the 1960s and 1970s, the challenge of exclusive basal

readers for teaching children to learn how to read encouraged the admittance of quality

children's literature into the curriculum for reading instruction (Tunks, 2015). Literature-based

reading programs were introduced in the 1980s (Martinez, 2000) and an increase was seen in

children's literature in the classroom.

Legislation Impacting Children's Literature in the Classroom

Legislation has influenced the utilization of children's literature in the classroom.

Examples include A Nation at Risk (States, 1983), the National Reading Panel Report

(Panel, 2000), Reading First (Herlihy, Kemple, Bloom, Zhu, & Berlin, 2009), and The

Common Core State Standards (National Governor's Association, 2010). In 1983, the National

Commission on Excellence in Education released the report, A Nation at Risk. The report called

for educational reform, including increased rigor in instruction. Recommendations included a

demand that English instruction should provide students with an opportunity to reflect on literary

heritage, how literature enhances imagination and ethical understanding, and how it relates to

customs, ideas, and values of today's life and culture (States, 1983). The findings published in

the 2000 congressionally mandated National Reading Panel (NRP) outlined suggested best

practices for effective reading instruction (NRP & NICHHD, 2000). The findings outlined key

components in teaching reading, including fluency and comprehension. Next in 2008, the

Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education published research

findings on Reading First, a centerpiece of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (Herlihy,

Kemple, Bloom, Zhu, & Berlin, 2009). To receive federal funding, districts had to adhere to and

adopt materials aligned to the NRP, including comprehension and fluency.

　　　　The implementation of the *Common Core State Standards* (National Governors

Association, 2010) is the latest educational initiative meant to improve student achievement. The

CCSS have had an impact on the use of children's literature in the classroom. To fulfill the

learning goals and standards set forth by the CCSS, children's literature plays a significant role

(National Governors Association, 2010). Educational essentials and learning goals include the

need for students to read a range of classic and contemporary literature and a balance of fiction

and nonfiction on varied topics. While there is flexibility for other types of literature as dictated

by individual states and school districts, critical content that includes myth, multicultural

literature, and historical documents are required reading (Tunks, 2015). For effective

implementation of the Common Core State Standards, classroom teachers must be familiar with

and dispense a wide array of children's literature.

Implementation of Developmental Bibliotherapy in the Classroom

A common misconception about bibliotherapy is that it is used only for students who are experiencing a trauma. However, in the classroom, developmental bibliotherapy need not only be utilized with children that are experiencing suffering. In fact, this approach to using children's literature can be used as a preventive measure to promote awareness and support critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Catalano, 2008). For implementation, an agreement among most proponents of developmental bibliotherapy designate primarily three stages: Identification, Catharsis, and Insight (Morawski, 1997; Kramer, 1998). A fourth stage, Universalization (Hebert & Furner, 1997), and a fifth stage, Projection (Wilson & Thorton, 2006), have been recently added to the theoretical framework.

Regardless of clinical or developmental practice, the theoretical process of bibliotherapy is situated in psychotherapy principles. Identification is the process of connection with a real or fictional character with oneself (Morawski, 1997). This step is done through encouragement of the students to recall common experiences from their own lives. The next stage is Catharsis. It is at this point in which tension is released and students may connect at a deep emotional level (Morawski, 1997). Typically, this process occurs as the character resolves conflict and releases emotional tension. When the readers develop knowledge about themselves, Insight is the third stage (Catalano, 2008). This stage is facilitated through the use of activities, such as discussion. Interaction with the teacher provides an opportunity for insight into how a problem is met or solved for the character and then they can support the students to make connections to their own lives through the character's actions (Catalano, 2008). In Universalization phase, one recognizes that they are not alone and promotes positive change (Hebert, 1997). In the Projection stage, individuals are able to envision for themselves a different identity (Wilson, 2006).

Applicable and aligned with the psychotherapy principles for developmental

bibliotherapy, Prater et al. (2006) discuss a ten-step model for implementation of bibliotherapy.

The model includes the following steps (Catalano, 2008; Prater, 2006):

- Develop rapport, trust, and confidence with the student.

- Identify other school personnel who may assist.

- Solicit support from the student's parents or guardians.

- Define a specific problem the student is experiencing.

- Create goals and activities to address the problem.

- Research and select books appropriate for the situation.

- Introduce the book to the student.

- Incorporate reading activities.

- Implement post-reading activities.

- Evaluate the effects of bibliotherapy on the student.

Theoretical Framework

Rooted in the theoretical basis of the socio-constructivist perspective, the implementation

of developmental bibliotherapy in the classroom provides an opportunity for knowledge to be

acquired through social interaction. Influenced by Rosenblatt's Transactional Reader Response

Theory, knowledge is gained as the reader personally constructs meaning as all readers have

individually unique reading experiences (Tracy & Morrow, 2006). The individualized experience

is based upon the background knowledge and experiences that the reader has brought to the

reading experience. Rosenblatt advocated for a reader-centered experience and emphasized the

importance of the reader's background, as well as future experiences (Davis, 1992).

Developmental bibliotherapy provides readers with an opportunity to reflect on one's own

experiences, thoughts, and behaviors as identification with the characters in the books occurs. Through meaningful dialogue among peers and the teacher, developmental bibliotherapy promotes the opportunity to foster and support an inclusive classroom setting. This literature review is situated through a socio-cultural lens and Rosenblatt's Transactional Reader Response Theory.

Effectiveness

Children's literature may be designated to promote awareness, model critical thinking and problem-solving skills and address sensitive issues through character identification, resolution, and discussion. While traditionally utilized in a clinical setting, it has been utilized in a school setting in order to help students develop social skills and reduce and cope with significant fears for creating an inclusive classroom (Cartledge & Kiarie 2001; Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006; Lenkowsky 1987; McCulliss & Chamberlain, 2013; Nicholson & Pearson, 2003). Research studies have shown that developmental bibliotherapy can be used to influence students' behaviors and attitudes (Rozalski, 2010; Tolin, 2001) provided evidence of structured bibliotherapy sessions that decreased obsessive-compulsive behaviors in students.

Teachers have reported that developmental bibliotherapy has impacted and changed students' perceptions and attitudes towards students with disabilities in their school and classroom (Rozalski, 2010). Rozalski et. al (2010) found that the use of developmentally appropriate, thematically selected stories could support students that are experiencing challenges in the classroom and outside of the classroom. Among pre-service teachers, through the engagement of developmentally bibliotherapy, math anxiety has been decreased (Furner, 2018). Stories and relatable characters impact human feelings; multiple studies have demonstrated that

teachers can support the emotional development of their students through the use of children's

books (Furner, 2018).

In order for developmental bibliotherapy to be effective, the theoretical process,

including a meaningful follow-up discussion and powerful dialogue, must be engaged (Catalino,

2008; Furner, 2018; Rozalski, 2010). Aligned to the metaphor that books are like mirrors and

windows (Bishop, 1990; Galda, 1998; Glazier & Seo, 2005), the employment of developmental

bibliotherapy presents the opportunity to support the cognitive and affective domain in the

classroom. The purposeful selection of children's literature allows reflection on self and to view

the world the way others perceive it. As Rosenblatt advocated, this is essential for humanity to

achieve an equitable, peaceful society (Boyd, Causey, & Galda, 2015). Developmental

bibliotherapy in the classroom has the potential to support this achievement, along with the

affective and cognitive domain.

Implications

Future research on the integration of developmental bibliotherapy in the classroom is still

an area of need, including the effects on aggressive behavior (Shechtman, 2009). Bibliotherapy

has also been acknowledged as important in teacher education (Morawski, 1997). A study

completed by Shechtman and Tutian (2016) presented that in-service teachers were trained to use

bibliotherapy as intervention in order to reduce their students' aggression; however, it appears

that bibliotherapy has not been sufficiently applied with prospective teachers. While Morawski

(1997) has identified the importance of the role of bibliotherapy in teacher education, the context

has predominantly been utilized in math teacher education (Kaasila 2002; Hannula et al. 2007;

Kaasila et al. 2008; Wilson and Thornton 2005, 2008; Wilson 2009; Lutovac and Kaasila 2011,

2014). The effects of developmental bibliotherapy may be limited to the availability of resources,

materials, and readiness (Abdullah, 2002). Additionally, classroom teachers must view developmental bibliotherapy as an innovative approach that can be employed to help children deal with their problems (Akinola, 2014).

Developmental bibliotherapy goes beyond read-alouds and character education. Educators have long used stories to explore and approach issues that are considered critical for students' educational experiences (Rozalski, 2010). The classroom population and the role of children's literature in the curriculum have experienced significant shifts. The instructional and societal changes greatly impact schools, teachers, and students, causing many students to struggle (Prater, 2006).

The integration of developmental bibliotherapy in the classroom provides an innovative, multifaceted opportunity to support and foster both the cognitive and affective domain. The reviewed literature situates the integration of bibliotherapy in the classroom, including the theoretical process of Identification, Catharsis, Insight, Universalization, and Projection (Wilson, 2006; Hebert, 1997; Morawski, 1997; Catalano, 2008). The purposeful selection and employment of children's literature in the classroom can be a powerful intervention tool, preventive measure, and positive influence on emotional development. Through the lens of storybook characters, personal growth and meaningful dialogue, the integration of developmental bibliotherapy in the classroom may positively impact the classroom and propel progressive student behaviors and attitudes.

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Writing that Values Multiple Ways of Knowing: Supporting Early Career Teachers'

Efforts to Promote Literacy Development

Lauren A. May and Heather Wright

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Abstract

Early career secondary English teachers must manage the challenges that complicate their efforts to support students' literacy development. The feelings of inadequacy experienced by early career secondary English teachers is just one of the many challenges that our field must address. This paper focuses on specific low-stakes writing strategies that early career secondary English teachers might use to promote literacy development in the classroom and decrease their feelings of inadequacy. Researchers use the critical lenses of dialogic pedagogy and the reflective turn to draw upon existing literature on the blending of reading and writing instruction and examine their own efforts to support students' literacy development. Working from the literature reviewed and their reflections on their own practice, the authors offer suggestions for instructional practice that teacher educators, novice teachers, and experienced teachers might use their efforts to support students' literacy development. Our key findings explore the utility embracing multiple ways of knowing and low-stakes writing activities.

Keywords: low-stakes writing, writing to read, reading comprehension, secondary education, early career teachers

Writing that Values Multiple Ways of Knowing: Supporting Early Career Teachers'

Efforts to Promote Literacy Development

Lauren reflects on the first year of teaching: They swear they read it. A seventh-grade classroom of 26 students claims to fully comprehend Chapters 4-6 of *The Outsiders* from last week's in-class readings. However, the shifting eyes and inanimate discussion tell the first-year teacher that this is not the case. The question still arises on how Bob was killed, and silence follows a discussion question on why Ponyboy feels bad about cutting his hair. For fifteen minutes at the beginning of every class, this first-year teacher lost vocals reading aloud in the text in an effort to promote literacy. Similarly, Heather reflects on the second year of teaching in a ninth-grade classroom: The twenty-two students are mystified as to their low grades on yesterday's quiz. Earlier in the week, they were following along in class, reading aloud *Romeo and Juliet*, quoting the prologue from memory, and talking about nuances of the characters' family dynamics. But on the in-class quiz based on the homework readings, the majority of students cannot recall if Tybalt is a Montague or a Capulet, nor remember the sequence of events that led to Romeo's exile. They swear they read Act 3 for homework. The second-year teacher is perplexed.

Reading comprehension pedagogy is one of the many challenges that early career teachers can struggle with. Both Lauren and Heather in their early years of teaching were baffled by the lack of student comprehension despite seemingly adequate time devoted to the readings. Empirical studies and literature reviews have shown writing has a positive impact on reading (Applebee, 1984; Fitzgerald and Shanahan, 2000; Graham & Hebert, 2010; Graham, et al., 2018; Graham & Santangelo, 2014; Klein, 1999) and that one way to promote literacy in the classroom is through writing (Collins, et al., 2017; Gao, 2013; Graham & Hebert, 2010; Rhodes, 2013). The

connection between reading and writing to promote literacy provides a unique vehicle for exploration in the secondary English classroom, but what does the early career teacher do when he or she does not feel equipped to make such connections in their classroom? In this paper, we examine ways early career teachers can use low-stakes writing to engage students and develop students' reading and writing skills.

The Relevancy for Early Career Teachers

Despite hoping their efforts in the classroom will bring positive transformations to the field of education, early career secondary English teachers often encounter more challenges than anticipated (Smagorinsky, et al., 2011; Stewart, et al., 2019). Given recent statistics on secondary student reading levels and low proficiency levels (The Nation's Report Card, 2019), teaching literacy is a discipline that the secondary English teacher needs to improve.

The literature suggests numerous challenges faced by early career teachers, such as the lack of continued pedagogical support in a first full time teaching position (Smagorinsky, Ryhm, & Moore, 2013; Stewart et al., 2019) and the lack of direct writing instruction in teacher education programs (Haskins, 2017; Morgan & Pytash, 2014; Tremmel, 2001). The most prominent issue the literature addresses, however, revolves around the feelings of inadequacy concerning the teaching of reading (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2010) and writing (Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, & Radencich, 2000; Gallavan, Bowles, & Young, 2007).

The feelings of inadequacy concerning reading and writing pedagogy by secondary English teachers have the potential to encourage negative classroom situations and stunt student growth. These feelings of inadequacy can encourage an early career teacher to implement simplistic forms of pedagogy that mimic personal education experience (Smagorinsky et al.,

2011) in attempts to metaphorically conceal a lack of confidence. Often, if engaging pedagogical practices were not retained from education programs, early career teachers will look to the school district to provide acceptable pedagogy (Smagorinsky et al., 2011), allowing the district to dictate how the reading and writing should be conducted in the classroom. Placing an emphasis on school district protocol can encourage teachers to shy away from the more student-centered, engaging practices that may have been a prominent component of teacher education programs. Smagorinsky et al. (2013) articulated this as they referred to the conforming pressures a first-year teacher felt, "campus-based influences faded in weight, propinquity, and perspective in her vision of how to teach" (p. 178). This aligns with the idea that feelings of inadequacy can appear even if reading and writing instruction practices were taught in teacher education programs. Therefore, early career teachers, regardless of prior experience, may have feelings of inadequacy that need to be addressed in the hopes that student-centered, engaging practices can then be implemented in the classroom.

Teaching Context of the Researchers

We, as researchers and former secondary Virginia and North Carolina educators, know that the teaching of reading and writing are demanding tasks requiring student interaction and engagement. Lauren comes from two widely different teaching backgrounds where one school district required the utilization of specific writing strategies; the other district allowed freedom over the pedagogy implemented in the classroom. Heather's district aligned with this latter description of educators implementing instruction at personal preference. Though we both grew to appreciate the minimal instructional guidance in our districts, we understand the many challenges that early career teachers have with the implementation of reading and writing instruction.

Theoretical Framework

To explore ways in which early career teachers can use low-stakes writing strategies to enhance reading comprehension in the secondary English classroom while simultaneously attempting to address a lack of pedagogical confidence, we use two critical lenses, dialogic pedagogy (Bakhtin, 1986; Fecho, 2011; Stewart, 2010, 2019) and the reflective turn, (Schön, 1992) as part of our theoretical framework. These lenses also allowed us to thoroughly reflect on our own teaching experiences.

Working from a Dialogic Stance

Dialogic pedagogy seeks to bring content into dialogue with students' lives (Bakhtin, 1986; Fecho, 2011; Stewart, 2010, 2019). It "values questioning, examines context, explores multiple perspectives, challenges hierarchical structures, and views learning as a generative act" (Stewart, 2019, p. 213) which fits well with our goal of supporting adolescent's literacy development that values multiple ways of knowing. To review the literature through a dialogical perspective, we sought advice on what exactly a dialogic classroom should look like. According to Stewart (2010), "Creating opportunities for multiple perspectives to transact with one another is the heart of dialogic teaching" (p.12). This style of thinking allowed us to quickly sift through examples that focused on multiple perspectives. We also looked for things like student-centered classrooms, students in active roles, safe environments, and growth mindsets on abilities and knowledge (Stewart, 2010).

The Power of Reflection

The second lens through which we reflected was Schön's (1992) reflective turn, involving the detailed process of reflexivity. Schön (1992) explained that the reflective turn comes from cerebrating personal histories and shifting from a "tacit" knowledge to an "explicit"

knowledge (p. 122). Within the field of education, involving both students and teachers, the

"reflective turn" can serve as a means of "a communicative and self-reflective practice of

reciprocal inquiry" (p. 122). This reflective turn can be an effective tool for educators to

participate in as it encourages the internal processing of what is already known. Some teachers

engage in elements of this process already as they reflect on daily events from within their

classrooms (Schön, 1992).

   We understood that participation in the reflective turn would offer benefits to practical-

based educational research and instructional practices because, "reflection on knowing-and-

reflecting-in-action is a process of getting in touch with the understandings we form ... it is

central to the work of criticism, coaching, learning, and teaching" (Schön, 1992, p. 126).

Therefore, we knew this dialogue would be a necessary step in discovering successful strategies

for suggestion to struggling early career teachers. In continuation of the process, it was important

for us to be critical of our own prior teaching strategies. With Lauren being six months removed

from the secondary English classroom and Heather being 18 months removed, recency allowed

us to remember detailed accounts of successful writing strategies. Schön's reflective turn

allowed us to engage with our personal teaching histories and reflect on successful strategies.

Low-stakes Writing

   In order to absorb the theoretical framework, the concept of low-stakes writing is

necessary to address. Low-stakes writing is explained in detail in the work of Biancarosa and

Snow (2004) as they suggested the combination of reading and writing pedagogies, "students

who are given the opportunity to write in conjunction with reading show more evidence of

critical thinking about reading. Likewise, many of the skills involved in writing-such as grammar

and spelling-reinforce reading skill" (p.19).

Low-stakes writing is one example of a combined reading and writing pedagogy practice. Low-stakes writing, also commonly known as writing-to-read which stems from the concept of writing-to-learn, is used in this paper to refer to teaching that combines reading and writing strategies in the classroom that focus on literacy enrichment through writing activities (Graham & Hebert, 2010). By writing about what they have read, students' reading skills improve (Graham & Hebert, 2010). Rather than formal essays or grammar-focused assessments, tasks are simple, low-stakes assignments that allow the student to connect their writing topic to the literature content. The idea behind these strategies is for students to make connections to textual content while increasing writing frequency without the pressure of a formal essay. When this occurs, writing can cease to be a daunting task to students and teachers and is transformed into a strategic way of reflecting on the literature.

Using low-stakes writing in the classroom can serve as a means of giving teachers feelings of confidence in the process of writing instruction. These activities promote engagement with content as the primary focus and allow form to follow function (Smagorinsky, 2019). As a result, students can work towards the development of texts that allow them to engage with content in personally meaningful ways (Boggs, Stewart, & Janksy, 2018). If more activities yield student engagement, the confidence level of the teacher will rise as well (Denzine, Cooney, & McKenzie, 2005; Gay, 2000; Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012; Shaughnessy, 2004; Smagorinsky et al., 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Since studies show that early career teachers have difficulties with confidence in reading and writing pedagogy, our purpose was to find specific strategies that support adolescents' literacy development that values multiple ways of knowing (Smagorinsky, 2019) and ways to bring the texts students read and construct into dialogue with their lived experiences. We

determined that the best way to address this problem was through the low-stakes writing strategy (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). Therefore, this paper provides specific pedagogical, low-stakes writing instruction recommendations for early career teachers that can help respond to the challenge of engaging and supporting students as both readers and writers.

Methodology

The methodology for this study uses elements of co-autoethnography which allowed us to collaboratively reflect and discuss our teaching histories (Coia & Taylor, 2009; Stewart & McClure, 2013). The initial stage of our data collection process involved a literature review to examine combined reading and writing strategies from other secondary English teachers. The second stage involved the utilization of Schön's reflective turn to compare classroom experiences. Synthesizing our experiences assisted in integrating our histories with the literature.

Stage One: Exploring Existing Literature

We reviewed existing literature using complete databases JSTOR and EBSCOHost. Google Scholar was also used to find comprehensive reports on reading and writing. From the two reports used, both from the Carnegie Foundation (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Graham & Hebert, 2010), an ancestral search was conducted. Criteria for relevant strategies included narrowing our search to keywords, "secondary education; beginning teachers; low-stakes writing; reading comprehension; writing to read; early career teachers," and perusing abstracts in order to select the studies that involved the inclusion of low-stakes strategies and the impact on reading comprehension. We examined the articles we read to identify the pedagogical practices they referenced to find common themes and trends in the methods of instruction including: the need for students to craft their own new texts based upon readings and materials covered

(Graham & Hebert, 2010) and the need for students to connect their lives and prior knowledge to the text (Gaughan, 2001; Irvin, 1997).

Stage Two: Reflective Turn

After generating the themes above, we examined our own practice. We asked ourselves, "*What low-stakes writing strategies in literature-based units were successful in our own classrooms*?" and "*Which of these successful low-stakes writing strategies also assisted in the student's reading comprehension*?" in order to focus on relevant and successful strategies. This provided us with a wide data set prior to examining the strategies with our critical lenses.

In our desire to provide early career secondary English teachers with successful strategies to implement, the first part of our data analysis required us to examine our combined strategies and literature review findings under the critical lenses of dialogic pedagogy (Bakhtin, 1986; Stewart, 2010) and reflective turning (Schön, 1992). Using the study of Stewart and McClure (2013) as a model, we implemented a stance of engaging in dialogue with our combined teaching experiences: "This stance frees us from having to appear alone in the instructional state; instead, it enables us to engage in the collaborative process of learning together as a community" (p. 95). Since dialogue generates conditions for meaning to be made (Bakhtin, 1986), we were able to identify successful instructional strategies in our teaching histories; it was essential for us to dialogue about writing practices that resulted in student literacy enrichment. Our reflection through this lens enabled us to think about successful strategies that were conceived through the implementation of student-centered discussion, teacher reflection on student interest, challenges to standard assessments, and active class participation in learning. We discarded most instructional strategies on the basis that we did not perceive these strategies to fit within the schema of our understanding of Bakhtin (1986) and Stewart's (2010) explanation of dialogic

pedagogy. The strategies that remained were considered upon completion of our personal reflective turns.

Utilizing Schön's (1992) idea of the reflective turn as a lens, we gathered examples of emotions and memories pertaining to the teaching of writing in the beginning of our separate careers. Heather, who taught at a rural high school, reflected on writing-based and project-based assignments used in the secondary English classroom. Assignments reflected on were from across all grade levels that drew upon student understanding and connections to various texts. Lauren, a former middle and high school teacher, looked back at the specific texts read in classes and pulled out strategies that involved the implementation of successful writing instruction strategies.

After engagement in dialogue with the existing literature, making the reflective turn on our own teaching experiences, and dialoguing with each other, we prioritized two key strategies that combined low-stakes writing methods with reading enhancement: crafting new texts to privilege student experiences and making connections between the lives of students and texts. These strategies created pathways for success in our own classrooms and posit suggestions that can support early career secondary English teachers' own efforts to provide high-quality reading and writing instruction in contemporary classrooms.

Understandings

The literature reviewed supports the notion that students gain more insight on English content when the text at hand connects with low-stakes writing (Graham & Hebert, 2010). Our reflective work, in dialogue with the existing literature, highlights two examples for effective literacy instruction that supports students. First, based on themes of crafting new texts (Graham & Hebert, 2010), students can write narrative essays or diary entries using the voice of a selected

character to study the nuances of characterization and plot. The students' work is encouraged to be creative and complex, from imagining the frustrations of specific characters to examining reflections on character's lives. This work privileges student experiences, allowing them to predict events based on personal experience or imagination. Second, based on themes of connection (Gaughan, 2001; Irvin, 1997), students focus on prior knowledge to reflect upon characterization and setting. This is shown in activities that reinforce prior knowledge connections such as the designing of travel brochures, inclusion of props, incorporation of character voice and appearance, or implementation of interdisciplinary activities. Making interdisciplinary connections based on personal histories encourages students to understand the concepts and connect the class content as it unfolds.

In order to support early career teachers, we suggest these two strategies for adaptation into their secondary English classrooms. Through the detailed analysis of each strategy and associated examples listed below, we defend how these multiple ways of knowing, low-stakes writing strategies, can promote student literacy development. Lauren and Heather felt these strategies lessened their feelings of inadequacy concerning the teaching of reading and writing that is often felt during the first years of teaching.

Crafting New Texts

Imagination plays a key role in the crafting of a new text. Responding to the text first requires the student to have opinions. The response could be, "a personal reaction to the text or analysis and interpretation of it" (Graham & Hebert, 2010, p. 14). A personal reaction, or individualized experience-oriented reflection, requires that the students comprehend and engage with the material. Extending ways of responding to the text, through personal and analytical reactions, allows for more thorough textual comprehension (Graham & Hebert, 2010). Therefore,

the crafting of new texts allows the teacher to not only see that the student comprehends the initial text, but also that the student can personalize the assignment. The character diaries and monologue narratives offer specific examples of effectively requiring both personal and analytical reactions to the text.

Hamlet. Heather used Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to teach narrative inquiry. The goal was for the class to find personal and social connections with the text before transitioning into narrative essay writing. Following the reading of *Hamlet*, students wrote narrative essays using the voice of a character, using a specific plot moment for the character to narrate a potential inner monologue. Examples of essays that students composed were creative, nuanced, and rooted in text for support. One essay was told by Ophelia as she was drowning, reflecting upon the perceived loss of Hamlet's love and the juxtaposition between her anger towards him and her continued devotion. With the Ophelia essay, a character whose narrative is limited in the play is literally given an audible voice in the tale. The student who constructed the essay, not a confident writer, expressed in her post-essay reflection that she had never been prouder of an assignment.

Other essay perspectives included the gravedigger as he's trying to concentrate on his craft; Hamlet as he struggles with whether to kill Claudius or not; and Gertrude as she reflects on her grievances towards her son with her dying breath. Because students had already read, analyzed, and researched *Hamlet*, they had a common text that they felt confident in and had related with prior to the writing process. This created the groundwork for students to apply connections to the text, resulting in a complex understanding of the material, the chosen character, and universal themes. In order to write Hamlet's inner struggle on whether or not to kill Claudius, the student had to discern what the relationship between Claudius and Hamlet was like before, during, and after the scene, as well as understand why Hamlet would have a divisive

relationship with his uncle. With that understanding, the student was able to construct a new narrative that showcased personal perspectives.

Lord of the Flies. While the *Hamlet* example offers the crafting of new texts as a summative assessment, the journals of *Lord of the Flies* offer a more formative style of assessment. In the English classroom, Lauren read and analyzed *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding with the students. Pausing at critical sections during the reading, students kept journals with discussion questions and responses, which gave the students a safe space to craft new texts, as these entries were only read by Lauren. It was in these journals that Lauren would create various assignments asking students to craft their own texts based on the readings. One of these assignments was a diary entry, similar to the *Hamlet* narrative that Heather describes. After finishing certain chapters and having discussions on character development, students were asked to choose one character: Ralph, Jack, or Piggy and write a diary entry, imagining and articulating the deeper feelings of the character based on events in the novel. This approach to crafting new texts allowed students to make connections with characters in the story while, simultaneously, having them show understanding of the plot. This assignment was enacted on several occasions at various points in the novel, allowing for a low-stakes writing strategy that engaged students with the content and promoted literacy development. Students commented on their enjoyment of combining a character's personality with their own to create these entries.

Connections

The second strategy of making connections can be seen in a variety of forms. It is engaging for students when they can bring their personal lives and ideas into dialogue with classroom texts. Irvin (1997) referred to "metacognition" which is referencing how, "readers and writers must monitor their progress, understanding, and purpose for reading and writing" (p.8).

Irvin discussed how students need to incorporate reflections into personal learning as much as possible. The examples of this strategy that Lauren and Heather present offer two ways teachers can not only assist students in comprehending their lack of content knowledge, but also how to gain that knowledge and apply it in their lives. The two examples of brochures and interdisciplinary activities follow Gaughan (2001)'s advice on, "creating opportunities for students to read and write about their lives… to try on different voices .... to think and write about ethical dilemmas" (p.63) and the importance of that process.

Transylvania Brochure. While teaching *Dracula*, Heather saw that the students were intimidated by the setting, the characters, and the structure of the story. In efforts to help students build confidence through better comprehension of the text, Heather's students crafted brochures for tourists in Transylvania. As brochures or guides are a means of packing a large amount of material into a digestible text with the purpose of drawing in a reader, the goal of the assignment was for students to compile information about the gothic setting and its importance towards the novel's plot while developing an understanding regarding characters considered both insiders and outsiders of Transylvania. For the assignment, students were to take on the persona of Count Dracula and think about why he would want to lure people to his home. Then, students were to consider how rhetoric within a text could entice visitors to travel to Transylvania. Knowing why Dracula wanted to lure visitors, how could he do so in written form on a brochure? What would bring people to a land far different than their own? The tone used in the brochure could be serious, sarcastic, or even ironic. Students were to research Transylvania while also using the text of *Dracula* as evidence.

Images and illustrations were encouraged to help students visualize the novel's setting as well as add additional elements of persuasion for the imagined reader. Heather saw that students

were excited about the activity and were invested in their research, actively sharing new findings with their peers, asking questions about discoveries, and playing around with language in their texts. Doing research on Transylvania, from the history, myths, location, and culture, allowed students to find information apart from traditional lecture. This information directly related to the classroom text and provided background knowledge for students as the unit continued.

   Interdisciplinary Reflection. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne offered Lauren's students a chance to be immersed in the Holocaust experience by following the son of a Nazi. Prior to beginning this novel, Lauren realized that most of the students had never heard of the Holocaust. In Lauren's school, students were separated into teams. Each team had one teacher for each content area, this allowed for easy collaboration with the team's History teacher. Together, Lauren and the history teacher developed slight accommodations to their units in order to align Holocaust learning with *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas.* Discussion questions, historical overviews, and videos were all shared between the teachers so that information would overlap for students and be fully digested. With this full immersion, Lauren incorporated time for students to write personal reflections. These personal reflections were required to implement both textual evidence of the Holocaust from the novel as well as historical facts learned and reviewed in the History and English classes. Students were encouraged to include questions they had concerning the novel or additional historical details. The writing was reviewed for accuracy in both subjects and many students commented on how much more engaged they were with the content during this collaboration. This form of low-stakes writing offers students a way to gain literacy skills by connecting with the text at a more personal and interdisciplinary level.

Implications

This paper offers engaging ways of utilizing low-stakes writing in the secondary English classroom that can be adapted to a variety of texts. When teachers have strategies that work, that they can see be successful in the classroom, their confidence grows. Based on data from the literature and our personal teaching histories, the two strategies of creating new texts and connecting prior knowledge are the recommendations that we suggest for early career secondary English teachers to implement in their classrooms, as they were successful in ours. Though our study was limited to the teaching experiences of Lauren and Heather's personal histories, we believe that the practice we engaged in has broader usefulness in aiding early career teachers. This type of research leads to three implications, or calls to action, for teacher education programs, early career teachers, as well as experienced teachers.

Concerning teacher preparation programs, it would be beneficial to pre-service teachers if programs provided additional opportunities to reflect on reading and writing pedagogy strategies. This can be done by reflecting after strategy-share practices, journals during student teaching, or other activities that model and inspire this kind of reflection on self-efficacy. Therefore, teacher preparation programs, by acknowledging the struggles of beginning teachers, such as with struggles in teaching writing, can better support pre-service teachers.

For early career teachers, reflection is the key to this process; reflection embraces the fact that teaching is about learning and growing. It is our belief that early career teachers should continue the practice of reflection when they enter into the classroom, reflecting each day on strategies that work and those that are not successful. For Lauren and Heather, even unsuccessful strategies as early career teachers bore new ideas in the classroom, developing into strategies that were engaging and insightful.

For mentors and colleagues of early career teachers, we believe that it is important to acknowledge that the latter group would benefit from additional support; a key facet of this dynamic starts with veteran teachers remembering the difficulties that come when first entering the field. Just as we have presented strategies that have been successful in our teaching careers through participating in the reflective turn, mentors and colleagues of early career teachers can be intentional about sharing strategies that work and do not work in their classrooms. Such deliberate moves not only assist early career teachers in developing tools that can be utilized in their classroom, but have the potential to strengthen the spirit of collaboration with new colleagues. That spirit of reflection and sharing will aid early career teachers throughout their career.

Though it is a central focus of our paper, the real issue is not regarding how beginning teachers connect writing and reading. The real issue is larger and more complex, but not insurmountable. Beginning teachers can feel that they do not have the tools they need in the classroom. Feeling unprepared for the profession that they have been working towards is a jarring prospect and could impact their sense of confidence. It is our assertion that beginning teachers need concrete instructional strategies that can support student learning and build their confidence as beginning teachers.

The strategies of crafting new texts and making connections have the potential to not only engage students in a text, but also increase student reading and writing skills and teacher self-efficacy in secondary English classrooms. Through our review of the literature, analyzing examples through a lens of dialogical pedagogy, as well as making a reflective turn in considering our own successful strategies, we recommend these as low-stakes writing strategies for early career secondary English teachers. Finally, we call on teacher education programs, early

career teachers, and experienced teachers to act upon this research and overcome the low self-

efficacy that can arise for early career secondary English teachers behind reading and writing

pedagogy.

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